

## **Dynamics of Creativity: Tracing Creativity in Literary Language**

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### **1.1 Dynamics of Creativity**

The term 'Creativity' is a multifaceted and complex notion. It often poses difficulties in the delineation of 'what is creative' and 'what is created'. There are creative artists, thinkers, writers, designers and entrepreneurs; there can be creative talent, ideas, processes and minds. Creativity can be boundless and spontaneous, but it needs to be unleashed, fostered, stimulated and expressed, though sometimes it may be stifled.

Michael Mumford suggested: "Over the course of the last decade, however, we seem to have reached a general agreement that creativity involves the production of novel, useful products" (Mumford, 2003, p. 110). Moving one step ahead Robert Sternberg's considered it as the production of "something original and worthwhile".

Psychologists and neuroscientists are investigating creativity to find out more about its relationship with the mind and the brain; ethnographic work is being done to explore its role in society; linguists are exploring creative language to understand more about how people communicate and how they exercise the freedom of creativity in language use; and commercial organisations are constantly trying to find ways of making themselves and their employees more creative (Media & Marketing).

Greenacre (1959) wrote, "I use the term creativity to mean, the capacity for or activity of making something new, original or inventive, no matter in what field. It is not merely the making of a product, even a good product, but of one which has the characteristic of originality."

Preti (2003) believes that creativity could be described as the ability to create products or ideas which are original, and which possess a strong social usefulness. Frank Barron, one of the most important researchers in this field, offers a more articulate definition of creativity. Firstly, creativity is considered in terms of the characteristics of the creative product and the social acknowledgements obtained. A criterion of usefulness is implied in this definition. Secondly, the creative product can be considered in its own context: the difficulty of the problem resolved or identified, the elegance of the solution proposed, the impact of the product itself. Thirdly, creativity can be conceived on the basis of the abilities that favour it (Barron and Harrington, 1981).

Apart from aforementioned definition, there are also certain key points which are strongly associated with the term 'creativity'. These are imagination, innovation, originality and genius.

Similar lists and descriptions can be found in many discussions of the concept (e.g. Pope, 2005; Carter, 2011; Pope and Swann, 2011), and it is an area studied in a number of disciplines.

The problem of defining creativity also echoes among the scholars working on creativity. According to Boden (1994) “Creativity is a puzzle, a paradox, some says a mystery. Inventors, scientists, and artists rarely know how their original ideas arise. They mention intuition but cannot say how it works. Most psychologists cannot tell us much about it, either. What's more, many people assume that there will never be a scientific theory of creativity - for how could science possibly explain fundamental novelties? As if all this were not daunting enough, the apparent unpredictability of creativity seems to outlaw any systematic explanation, whether scientific or historical. (Boden.A:1994, p.75) . David Bohm’s opening words in his book *On Creativity* were “Creativity is, in my view, something that is impossible to define in words” (Bohm, 1998, p. 1). Reid and Petocz (2004) mention that creativity is viewed in different ways in different disciplines: in education it is called “innovation”; in business “entrepreneurship”; in mathematics it is sometimes equated with “problem-solving”, and in music it is “performance or composition”. A creative product in different domains is measured against the norms of that domain, its own rules, approaches and conceptions of creativity (Reid & Petocz, 2004, p.45). The World Conference on Higher Education proclaimed creativity as “an innovative educational approach” in Article 9 of their statement of Missions and Functions in Higher Education (Reid & Petocz, 2004, p. 51). Cannatella (2004) mentions that the need for creativity is biologically, physically, and psychologically an essential part of human nature and that it is necessary for human reproduction, growth and cultural striving (p.59). Clarkson (2005) has mentioned that there are many traits which have been associated with creativity, such as divergent thinking, introversion, self-esteem, tolerance for ambiguity, willingness to take risks, behavioural flexibility, emotional variability, ability to absorb imagery, and even the tendency to neurosis and psychosis (p. 6).

In the UK, the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE) published in 1999 a report where they provided a more elaborated, but similar definition of creativity. They maintain that creativity processes have four characteristics:

- a) It is imaginatively, it always involves imagination, since it is the process of generating something original.
- b) It is purposeful: it is imagination put into action towards an end.
- c) It produces something original in relation to one’s own previous work, to their peer group or to anyone’s previous output in a particular field.
- d) And finally, it has value in respect to the objective it was applied for. Creativity involves not only the generation of ideas, but also the evaluation of them, and deciding which one is the most adequate one.

To combine this variety of definitions, we can say that creativity involves the generation of new ideas or the recombination of known elements into something new, providing valuable solutions to a problem. It also involves motivation and emotion. Creativity “is a fundamental feature of human intelligence in general. It is grounded in everyday capacities such as the association of ideas, reminding, perception, analogical thinking, searching a structured problem-space, and reflecting self-criticism. It involves not only a cognitive dimension (the generation of new ideas) but also motivation and emotion and is closely linked to cultural context and personality factors.” (Boden 1998).

## 1.2 Criteria for Creativity

Simply put, creativity is what happens when an individual produces something that is novel as well as appropriate, generative or influential. You can think of these criteria as different levels on a hierarchy of creativity with novelty being the lowest qualification for creativity and influence being the highest level of creativity. According to this definition, an idea that is novel, appropriate, generative and influential is more creative than an idea that is only novel and appropriate. What do these criteria mean?

Novelty is the characteristic that many of us would provide instinctively if asked to define creativity. In order for something, whether it is a work of art or a piece of literature, to be creative, it has to be new; it has to be something that we have never seen or heard before. However, novelty is not the only qualification for creativity. If it were, any random response to a question would be deemed creative. For example, an individual answering the question “What is 2+2?” with 10 would be considered highly creative since his answer to the simple math question is one that we rarely encounter. That is why any novel product or solution must also be appropriate to the question or task at hand in order to be creative; it must provide an answer to a problem in a way that is useful.

The Russian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1999: 315–16) comments that the creativity makes no sense unless it is accepted by others in the domain and can be adapted to a changing environment: “Creativity occurs when a person makes a change in a domain, a change that will be transmitted through time. Some individuals are more likely to make such changes, either because of personal qualities or because they have the good fortune to be well positioned with respect to the domain . . . To be creative, a variation has to be adapted to its social environment, and it has to be capable of being passed on through time. What we call creativity always involves a change in a symbolic system, a change that in turn will affect the thoughts and feelings of the members of the culture. A change that does not affect the way we think, feel, or act will not be creative”.

To reach a higher level on the creativity hierarchy a thing should not only be novel and appropriate but also generative. Generative means that this new and appropriate thing leads to the production of more new and appropriate things, products, ideas etc. If something reaches the highest level of creativity, it will also be influential, meaning that it will shape the way that people think about or do things like it in the future.

To sum up: in order for something to be creative it must meet the initial criteria of novelty and then prove to be appropriate, generative or influential to reach a higher status of creativity.

### 2.1 Tracing Creativity in Language:

Since the ambit of creativity involves every nook and corner of human life, it was necessary to mention the term in general. The aforementioned detail is meant to delineate the term creativity from various perspectives and how it manifests itself. But when we take the realm of language and linguistics into consideration ‘Does the notion of creativity remain same or does it change’? It results some pertinent questions arise which need to be answered.

- What exactly it means when a stretch of language is described or considered as creative?
- What are the salient features of creativity in language?
- Is ‘Creativity’ a property of language system ‘or’ characteristics of language use?
- What could be the various perspectives of ‘Creativity’?
- How a piece of writing turns in to creative one?
- What are the various model of creativity? And under which does linguistic creativity fall?
- How ‘Creativity’ is affected by extra-linguistic factors?

The following discussion is an attempt to dig up the dynamics of creativity in language.

Amongst the definition of creativity which are forwarded by various scholars the most appropriate and remarkable for linguistic point of view is the one which is proposed by Watson. He opines that “*How the new comes into being*: One natural question often raised is: How do we ever get new verbal creations such as a poem or a brilliant essay? *The answer is that we get them by manipulating words, shifting them about until a new pattern is hit upon*” (Watson, 1928, p. 198). Thus, according to his definition manipulation of a word, in a stretch of language, results in linguistic creativity. We can trace the creative use of language simply by examining any literary text. The literary language abounds in creativity. In literature the writer makes the creative use of language. The creative potential in literature is exploited to a great extent. A writer creates new words, and new expressions, and some new combination of word to suit the meaning which he wants to convey. Let us start by considering what we understand by creativity in relation to the use of language. The following is a stretch of language which differs from that of day to day language use simply because of manipulation of certain words which result in creativity.

The description of a character’s experience of the start of a migraine attack in Ian McEwan’s atonement (2002, p.63) ‘she felt in the top right corner of her brain a heaviness, the inert body weight of some curled and sleeping animal; but when she touched her head and pressed, the presence disappeared from the co-ordinate of actual space. Now it was in the top right corner of her mind and in her imagination, she could stand on tiptoe and raise her right hand to it. It was important, however, not to provoke it; once this ‘lazy creature’ moved from peripheries to centre, then the knifing pains would obliterate all though, and there would be no chance of dining with Leon and the family to night’.

A currently dominant view in the fields of design, technology and the arts in the Western world is that something is creative if it is *novel*, of *high quality* and *appropriate to the task at hand* (Kaufman and Sternberg, 2010). In linguistic terms this could be a foregrounding, neologism or an uncommon metaphor used successfully to communicate a complex concept or idea – such as ‘lazy creature’ to talk about a migraine in the above extract.

## 2.2 Perspectives of Creative Language

After giving a brief explanation of creativity in language it is necessary to mention the salient features which render the ordinary language as the creative one. The fact that the language employed in literature and poetry differs and deviates from day to day language and its norms, cannot be denied. Ordinary language strictly complies with norms and rules which are designed by the grammar of a particular language. On the other hand, in literature and poetry the writer and poet make use of creative language. Here he is not abided by rule of language rather he exercises the full freedom of exploiting language and deviating from norms. He manipulates the language as a source of creativity. He takes some linguistic features- such as a word, a phrase, a sentence, a part of word, a group of sounds, a series of letters and makes it do things it does not normally do. He is, in effect, bending and breaking the rules and norm of language. And if someone asks why he does so? The answer is simply for creative purpose. This linguistic deviation is technically termed as ‘Foregrounding’. The scholar of Prague School namely Jan Mukarovsky opines that the language of poetry must be foregrounded.

Another important characteristic of creative language is known as ‘Literariness’.

The term ‘literariness’ was first introduced by the Russian Formalist Roman Jakobson in 1921 under the movement of Formalism. Formalism views literature primarily as a specialized mode of language and proposes a fundamental opposition between the literary (or poetical) use of language and the ordinary, "practical" use of language. It conceives that the central function of ordinary language is to communicate to auditors a message, or information, by references to the world existing outside of language. In contrast, it conceives literary language to be self-focused, in that its function is not to convey information by making extrinsic references, but to offer the reader a special mode of experience by drawing attention to its own "formal" features—that is, to the qualities and internal relations of the linguistic signs themselves. The linguistics of literature differs from the linguistics of practical discourse, because its laws are oriented toward producing the distinctive features that formalists call **literariness**. As Roman Jakobson wrote in 1921: "The object of study in literary science is not literature but 'literariness/ that is, what makes a given work a literary work'"(Abrams: 1999, Pp.102-103).

The defining features of a literary work do not reside in extra literary conditions such as history or sociocultural phenomena under which a literary text might have been created but in the form of the language that is used. Thus, literariness is defined as being the feature that makes a given work a literary work. It distinguishes a literary work from ordinary texts by using certain poetic devices such as metre, rhyme and other patterns of sound and repetition by which a poet creates an

aesthetic effect in the text. Another characteristic of creative language is the abundant use of ‘Figures of speech’. Carter in his book ‘Language and Creativity- The Art of Common Talk, states that “Figures of speech constitute a potential resource for creativity. In addition to puns and wordplay in general, other key forms have been shown to include: repetition, metaphor, metonymy, simile, idioms and hyperbole. Such figures are not in themselves creative. They can be used for routine, transactional purposes. But such forms can be and often are made to function for a range of different purposes with a range of different creative effects. The notion of core in vocabulary can help in the identification of such effects (Carter:2004 p.139).

It is, in fact, the heart and soul of creative language. Language is only considered creative when it highly figurative and ornamental a writer or poet makes use of various figures of speech such as Simile, Metaphor, Personification, Hyperbole, Assonance etc. to make the language highly creative and beautiful. The following example from Shakespeare’s poetry is a sample to show that how it works in the language. Shakespeare in saying, “*shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?*” (Sonnet 18), conveyed his message more beautifully than if he had literally talked about the subject’s personal qualities, such as kindness, charm and beauty”. But did he convey the “same” message he would have convey in such literal description. Intuitively, good readers and literary scholars both feel that he did not (Dancygier and Sweetser: 2014, p.1). Albert N Katz (1998: p.3) opines that: “The creative interplay of language and thought is particularly evident in figurative language. The use of such language is not rare ‘or’ limited to poetic situation but rather a ubiquitous characteristic of speech (see for instance Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Pollio, Smith and Pollio1990). Another characteristic of creative language is the ‘Deliberate Planning’ in the use of language. Creative language is deliberately planned and consciously focussed. Since misplacing a word in literature can spoil the beauty of the text, the writer or poet makes much conscious effort in putting the ‘right word in right place’. On the other hand, in ordinary language there is an automatic and spontaneous use of language. The stock example in Urdu language is the one cited by Shibli-al-No’mani in a couplet:

*“kha kha ke oos aur bhi sabza hera hua  
tha mootiyon~se daaman-e- sehra bhera hua”.*

Shibli is of the opinion that if instead of ‘oos’ the word ‘*shabnam*, would have been employed here, then all rhetoric and creativity have gone. We can examine from the above discussion that how careful and conscious the poet or writer is while using a creative language. Thus, utmost goal of a poet or writer is to search out the most appropriate word in the language.

### 2.3 Characteristics of Literary Text

The commonly acknowledged fact regarding literary language is that it differs from the daily use of language which is called 'common verbal exchange'. And it is as well distinct from 'non-literary language'. The non-literary language has greater communicative value. It is denotative in nature and has one-to-one relation between the word and its meaning. The language of scientific writings, legal documents, religious discourse and the language of commentary on sports, etc., can be cited as example of non-literary language. As opposed to everyday communication, there is the



special use of language in literature. The writer or poet takes the everyday language and uses it in a best creative way. Hence language in Literature is wonderful phenomenon of creativity in human language. The language of literature does not necessarily serve the communicative purpose. It serves the aesthetic and expressive purposes which are the main features of literary language. These features are not applicable/ employed in the everyday usage of language or non-literary language. Thus, we may safely identify the characteristic features of the language of literature in the following:

**i. Literary Language is non-utilitarian.**

Literary language is non-utilitarian and it does not serve the immediate purpose of conveying bare information like the everyday language, which serves the immediate purpose of conveying the bare information. The literary language, on the other hand, lies outside the immediate utility. A single word or expression in the language of literature has different layers of meaning and can be interpreted from a number of different angles and points of view. This phenomenon reveals the fact that literary language bears creative mode of human language.

**ii. Literary language is symbolic.**

Symbolism is about use of an object, person, situation or word to represent something else like an idea in literature. Literature makes the symbolic use of language. It is found only in the literary language and does not exist in the daily communication which is straightforward and direct. By being symbolic, the literary language becomes indirect, implicit and imagistic whereas everyday language and the language of scientific statements are direct reporting. Hence symbolic use of language renders the literary texts creative one.

**iii. Literary Language has Supra-literal meaning.**

The linguistic items such as words, phrases, clauses and sentences have supra-literal meanings which are understood through the context in a literary work. They say more than they seem to say. The meaning of a word in literature cannot be taken literally as in the case of everyday language. However, it carries another meaning beyond the literal one.

**iv. Literary Language is De-automatized.**

Mukarovsky (1970) propounds a distinction between everyday language and literary language. The former is constructed spontaneously without thinking about the words, phrases and sentences. In other words, there is the automatic use of linguistic elements in daily usage of language. He calls it an automatized language. On the other hand, the latter is deautomatized. It means the poets and writers are conscious and aware of words, phrases and sentences they use. They try their best to put the right word in its right place. In fact the violation of the accepted norms of language is called deautomatization. The more an act is automatized, the less consciously it is executed, whereas the more it is foregrounded, the more completely conscious does it become.

Objectively speaking, automatization schematizes an event and de-automatization means the violation of the scheme.

**v. Literary Language is Connotative.**

Words in human language carry some meanings that are other than lexical meanings. The language of science is denotative because there is a referential and literal use of language. For example, in science one plus one makes two, but in the literary use of language, one plus one may not make two because in literature there is no referential and literal sense of language. It is connotative and assumes a number of associative meanings other than their literal meanings. Hence literary text carries metaphorically extended meaning which everyday communication lacks.

#### **vi. Literary Language is Ambiguous in nature**

Sometimes, the literary language is not precise, but ambiguous and vague. That is why there may be various interpretations of a single literary text. Any literary text is open ended semantically. That is, in the interpretation of a literary piece, one can use one's own personal experience, background and thought.

#### **vii. Literary Language is Expressive and Aesthetic.**

A literary writer makes the language of literature aesthetic and expressive because of use different stylistic devices to create a beauty in the language. The aesthetic use of language makes the readers appreciate literature. The readers do not read literature for the sake of getting knowledge, but for the sake of appreciation. In literature, there is also the expressive use of language through which a writer expresses his feeling, emotion and sentiment. Expressive use of language gives an emotive value to literature.

#### **viii. Literary Language is foregrounded.**

Literary language usually does not follow the set standard or the existing pattern of a language. That means there is a deviation from the norms in literature. Deviation in a language takes place when the selectional restrictions are violated. When a writer deviates from the linguistic norms, he creates anomalous and non-linguistic expression in his language. Mukarovsky (1970) calls this kind of writing 'foregrounding' which is against background. It means bringing to attention or making something new. Every language has its linguistic background and the users of that language follow that background. But a literary writer uses a language against its background, as a result of which his language becomes foregrounded.

#### **ix. Literary Language is Figurative and Ornamental.**

The different use of SDs such as simile, metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, assonance, consonance etc., makes the language of literature figurative and ornamental. This beauty of language which a literary writer uses attracts readers.

The above-mentioned merits make the language of literature different from the other usages of language. The reason beyond this lies in the use of different linguistic terms by which literary language becomes distinct. These terms are called stylistic devices, stylistic means, stylistic markers, tropes, figures of speech and so on. All these terms are used indiscriminately and are set against those means which are conventionally called neutral means. Neutral means commonly have some acknowledged grammatical and lexical meanings. Whereas SDs, with that the acknowledged



meanings, contain stylistic meanings which overlay on the acknowledged ones and show the exclusiveness of a writer. In this regard Crystal & Davy (1983) mention that each writer has his/her own idiosyncratic style. This style can be recognized by specific combination of language media and SDs which in their interaction

### 3. Conclusion

To sum up, Creativity is a phenomenon whereby something, hitherto, unknown and somehow valuable is formed. The created item may be intangible (such as an idea, a scientific theory, a musical composition, or a joke) or a physical object (such as an invention, a literary work, or a painting). Literary language happened to be a full fledged realm of creativity. The language of scientific writings, legal documents, religious discourse and the language of commentary on sports, etc., can be cited as example of non-literary language. As opposed to everyday communication, there is the special use of language in literature. The writer or poet takes the everyday language and uses it in a best creative way. Hence language in Literature is wonderful phenomenon of creativity in human language.

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