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A STUDY OF DEIXIS IN THE NOVEL CONFESSIONS OF A SILENCER BY MOONIS AL-RAZZAZ

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the use of deixis in the novel *Confessions of a Silencer* by Moonis Al-Razzaz, focusing on how deictic expressions function as linguistic and pragmatic tools for constructing perspective, identity, and ideological positioning within the narrative. Drawing on a qualitative discourse-pragmatic framework, the research analyzes selected passages from the novel to identify and classify major categories of deixis, including personal, spatial, temporal, social, and discourse deixis. The analysis demonstrates that deictic markers play a central role in shaping narrative voice, shifting points of view, and guiding readers' interpretation of political and psychological dimensions of the text. Personal deixis is shown to reflect power relations and fragmented identity, while temporal and spatial deixis contribute to the construction of memory, tension, and narrative layering. Social deixis further encodes hierarchy and solidarity among characters, reinforcing themes of authority and resistance. The study argues that deixis in the novel is not merely a grammatical feature but a strategic narrative resource that supports ideological critique and reader engagement. By integrating pragmatic theory with literary analysis, this research highlights the value of deictic study in uncovering deeper meanings in modern Arabic fiction and contributes to broader discourse-analytic approaches to the novel.

KEYWORDS: Deixis, Arabic novel, pragmatics, narrative voice.

1. INTRODUCTION

Deixis is concerned with the basic constituents of communication and the hypothesis of what constitutes understanding between speakers, as attested to by its preoccupation with the communicative and informative role of language. The challenge of Deixis appears in "the study of indexical symbols—that is, ambiguous expressions—within the conditions of their use, i.e., their context of utterance... It was Peirce who coined the terms 'index' and 'indexical sign' (Hamdawi, 2015). Moreover, "the utterance and its moment, as at least three deictic categories (the I, the Here, the Now) converge within a single discourse" (Al-Shihri, 2004). This study tackles the novel *Confessions of a Silencer* as its database due to its richness in terms of time and space, as well as the relationship between ego-centric and collaborative discourse.

A. Personal Deixis

This is denoted by pronouns that refer to the speaker alone. To be more precise, it can be said that it includes the speaker pronoun along with others such as 'we', as well as pronouns referring to the addressee in the singular, dual, or plural, whether masculine or feminine. Present-tense pronouns are always deictic elements because their reference depends entirely on the context in which they are used (Mustafa, 2016).

Al-Razzaz used the first-person pronoun through the voice of the killer in his confessions:

"I assure you that I am human... I have loved... I have known the taste of tears; I cried for a woman, and once when I heard a song by Farid Al-Atrash, and a fourth time when I attended two movies... I cried in the darkness of the theater twice.. Oh, how I loved Nadia Lutfi.. Yes, I cried for a woman. I met her in Beirut. What was I doing in Beirut? I was studying" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The "Silencer" starts his confessions by using the first-person singular suffix, the first-person object/possessive clitic, and the implicit "I" in a chained triad. The purpose is to express his personality and "humanity"; he loves and experiences passion, he is touched to tears by romantic movies, and he is an educated man who is pursuing his education. Among the linguistic functions Karl Popper listed for the indexical/signaling function is "the individual's communication of various pieces of information regarding their internal states to others" (Mustafa, 2016).

He continues in the same manner, introducing himself as a man of refined feelings who does not smoke in the presence of children ("I refrain," "I paid,"

"I smoked"...). He develops his personality through the first-person suffix and the implicit pronoun (I), listing the occupations he had before becoming a "Silencer"—avoiding the use of the expression "hired killer":

"I used to jump on ropes... I used to draw applause... I held the position of a librarian... and the library contained seven important books" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

It is clear that the first-person pronouns have merged and followed each other in an intensive way to indicate the persona of the speaker, highlighting his position and situation accurately. Thus, they became an active part in recognizing the meaning of this social climber, pretentious, and empty character.

The Silencer moves to the academic level:

"I am a graduate of the school of life, the greatest school in the world, more prestigious than Oxford, which I have never seen, and broader than the Beirut Arab University, where I failed yet frequented its library" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

In order to make-believe an academic value for himself, he implements the prominent first-person pronoun (I), as if introducing himself in an introductory meeting:

"I know philosophy; I studied it at the Beirut Arab University" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

He chose philosophy because it is the "mother of human sciences" that enhances the status of intellectuals. He again uses the first-person suffix, sticking to a phrase coined by writers all over the world, "Life Taught Me" (Al-Sibai, 1997; Amin, 2013), to introduce his trinity in life:

"Success lies in three things: esotericism, duality, and extraordinary boldness" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

Implementing the same pronoun preceded by emphasis, he declares his first confession:

"I despise intellectuals, I fear them, and I wish them death" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

This detestation for intellectuals, along with academic failure, drove him toward self-aggrandizement through the first-person past-tense suffix:

"I was born 'chosen,' possessing full leadership qualities. But it is a leadership that needs direction from above, from a leader of a higher and loftier level" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The Silencer temporarily veiled the first-person pronoun, since the suffix involved a meaning that is different from his former self-praise, ascribing deficiency and the demand for leadership instead.

Going back to the first-person pronoun in explaining the crushed figure longing to become part of the leadership, he shifted to "the Doctor," Ahmed's

father, who was put under house arrest. The suffix appeared when showing his field-monitoring of events involving the Doctor in a dramatic scene:

"I got into my car... I went to the Doctor's house, and I saw... tanks and soldiers... my heart sank... I stopped the car... I fixed my gaze... I took to my heels..." (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

He began by accompanying this party leadership and ended by loitering at the doors of embassies, organizations, and agencies:

"I began knocking on the doors of embassies... offering my services and expertise..." (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The first-person suffix returns to highlight the pathological state of the crisis-ridden character submerged in the desire for control:

"I began to control Ahmed's life... I convinced him... I convinced him..." (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The Silencer is still there in the hidden pronoun, as expected in the absence of his human conscience that drove him to the point of ultimate malice. His anger escalates at the mere happiness of the victim, the son of Dr. Murad, Ahmed:

"Joy is power. And I fear the powerful. My victim must be weak and fragile, so that my hand does not tremble when I fire. I must feel an internal sensation, akin to intuition and faith, that I am stronger than it" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

Regarding the diseased self of the Silencer in "Youssef," it appears when he hits the chord of his masculinity, leading to the loss of his mental balance. Youssef says "I am a stallion," through Ahmed's words, highlighting the independent pronoun (I):

"This means that I am his opposite. That is, I am impotent or effeminate... this word touches the most dangerous nerve controlling my mental balance" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

In this paradox, the independent first-person pronoun (I) disappears as the "Silencer" is overwhelmed by a state of masculine crushing before the victim. The "Silencer" uses first-person pronouns (I,, to show the height of his psychological disturbance caused by Dependent Personality Disorder from which he suffers (www.msmanuals.com):

"I stand before the Doctor like an idol... I refuse to smoke... I tremble from within... I loathe his humane treatment of me... he must remember that I am not his friend or his son's colleague. I am here a disciplined young man awaiting his leader's orders with reverence" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

When he was lacking the state of dependency, which he craved in leadership, he was torn by malice, reaching a very high level of hatred despite a respect that borders on sanctity:

"A wave of overwhelming hatred sweeps over me... I feel hatred for him because I love him..."

This course of the crisis-ridden character justified the silenced pistol murder of the Doctor's son in Beirut. This is not surprising; the dependent appears to be ready to give up his autonomy in order to fulfill his subservient self. His condition is articulated through "I was" and "to be," which leads to concluding the motive that threw him into the arms of embassies and dens:

"I was in desperate need to be someone's shadow, but Dr. Murad was unwilling to have any shadow" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

Together with the anxiety disorder that defines the personality of the "Silencer," he rarely employs the first person plural pronoun. Rather, he intentionally clouds the identity of the group he belonged to:

"I was a member of the organization before they dismissed me on the pretext of breakdown, confession, and denunciation..." (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The first person plural is also absent in the context of family or social environment. Rather, the use of the first person singular pronoun (I) is repeated in the process of recalling social tragedies surrounding his upbringing. These tragedies were some of the main catalysts in the creation of a disturbed, anxious personality fixated on the concept of dependency:

"I do not wish to forget; rather, I wish to summon every moment... I do not wish to forget the insults, the humiliation... whether they were insults from my stepfather, the intelligence officer, the schoolteacher, or the leader of the neighborhood boy gang... I like to think of all the insults... to reenact them... I remember them clearly; I remember who said them and the occasion. I remember the faces... the movement of the lips... and I remember the taste of pain" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The first-person pronoun translates the character's descent into sadism through a remarkable lack of plural pronouns. This adds to the image of loneliness and isolation felt by the "Silencer," thus confirming that the first-person pronoun in this extract identifies the speaker's presence in the process of utterance and communication because of its link with reference and context (Al-Azzawi, 2016). What the Silencer said of himself summarizes this character's motives:

"Yet I remained a prisoner of that loathsome feeling that I am an insect" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

Concerning the theory of pronouns by Benveniste, pronouns are empty forms without content as long as they do not enter a context; however, these forms find content the moment a person utters them in a specific situation. The pronouns (I, you) have intrinsic significance for the speaker or addressee, and context

is what identifies who the speaker and addressee are (Al-Azzawi, 2016).

The context identifies the addressee, "Sylvia," whom the Silencer addresses his confessions to. He had refused to reveal his problems to a psychiatrist in Paris, and he had followed the advice of the murdered "Ahmed" to confess to a courtesan:

"I entrusted Sylvia with my secrets. Her name in Arabic is Sulafa – and I confessed to her everything I was hiding within. I aired all my laundry before her: the clean and the dirty" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The second-person feminine pronouns in these confession sessions is implemented in various ways:

"What is the matter with you that you insist on 'how'? I said: Ask why? It seems your Arabic is weak. It seems you understand Arabic, but you do not master its pronunciation..." (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

In contrast to this weak, silent persona, the first-person pronoun returns in scenes of dominance and authoritarianism as compensation for inadequacy and dependency:

"I tell you because I am capable of control... This is a capability Almighty Allah has bestowed upon me" (Al-Razzaz, 2004). The pronouns (I, and the first-person suffix appear in opposition to the second-person, reflecting his belittling of the mute listener.

Al-Razzaz used first and second-person pronouns in the dialogue between the "Silencer" (Youssef) and Sylvia, the girl whose hearing the killer rented to confess. Ironically, she does not hear; she observes the movement of his lips under his thick mustache. In these meetings, alcohol is a crucial ingredient for delirium, loss, and disconnection from the criminal past of a character who is always hired to kill:

"Drink your glass, drink" and "Drink, drink... you are a great listener... I rented your ears to confess before you" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

In this respect, the speaker uses language, which is a public property, and derives what is required to convey their needs. As soon as the utterance takes place, it becomes their speech; the collective aspects of language are pushed into the background to be replaced by individual aspects of language, which are linked to the here, the now, the I, and the you (Al-Zanad, 1993). In this respect, the role of deictics comes into prominence as one of the most important pragmatic features.

The use of second-person feminine pronouns by the Silencer, in contrast to the complete absence of the second-person masculine pronouns, indicates the status of authority that the speaker holds over the listener. He refers to her with her explicit name only once:

"Do not misunderstand me, Sylvia" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

By making this point about his dominance over her through the use of different pronouns, he arrives at an explicit statement of his complete control over her:

"Look at me, how I now control your mind" (Al-Razzaz, 2004). In this respect, the use of second-person pronouns goes beyond the boundaries of mere communication; the conversation between the killer and Sylvia reveals the nature of the relationship that exists between the two. When she asked him why he chose her, he said:

"Because you are nothing; you mean nothing to me. Because it is your job to listen and pay attention" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The goal was achieved when he told her that he had killed three men. The first was a Mossad agent, the second was a journalist, and the third, the most difficult one, was Ahmed, the son of Dr. Murad. In the middle of this dissociative conversation, the first-person plural pronoun is not present; its presence is only felt in the romantic conversations between Ahmed's mother and her husband, Dr. Murad. This happens after the confiscation of their photo album by the Lieutenant:

"They are confiscating our memory... our past" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

In the context of a short phone call with her son, Ahmed, her words included a mention of the house arrest she suffers with her husband and their young daughter, Sana:

"You are the only voice that connects us to this world" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

Consequently, the indexical tendency reveals the essence of sociolinguistics, demonstrating the impact of social relations between interlocutors and their status, as well as the effect of the linguistic context on the selection of prominent linguistic varieties in their speech (Khalifa, 2009). In the speech of "Youssef Al-Tawil" – who was a member of the Party under Dr. Murad's command before becoming involved in the business of killing, there are clear indicators of this hierarchy:

"All members of the group are awaiting your instructions, ready and waiting... Sir." In response to the speaker's insistence on cloaking Dr. Murad in an aura of veneration, the latter despised this style, replying: "Sit down, Sheikh... enough with Sir... enough with that nonsense... call me Doctor or Comrade" (Al-Razzaz, 2004). The terms "Sir" and "Sheikh" demonstrate the extent to which the speakers are influenced by these markers, based on the veneration intended by the former and the sarcasm aimed for by the latter.

In the midst of the confessions, the "Silencer" (the protagonist) asks a hypothetical question, as if "Sylvia" were a brilliant writer interviewing him:

"What is your opinion on private property, Mr. Youssef?" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

He uses the title "Mr." on himself, a deep, burning need to place himself within a social, partisan, and familial context that he never had in his life. The title "Sir" comes back to the Lieutenant's lips in the midst of that terrible hour when he told Dr. Murad of his son's assassination in Beirut while the father was under house arrest and heavy guard:

"I ask that you sit down, Sir"

"Sir. He was killed by agencies hostile to us" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

B. Temporal Deixis

These are utterances that denote a time determined by the context, relative to the time of utterance, which serves as the center of the temporal index in speech (Mustafa, 2016). As the "Silencer" engages in his confessions, he removes time from his calculations, living in the absurdity of time and life. His personality disorder worsens in relation to the moment:

"At that terrible moment, I ask the earth to split open and swallow me".

"In such terrible and critical moments, I feel a longing to be the shadow of a man who walks with vanity, pride, and confidence".

"At that moment, a massive wave of hatred against this man sweeps over me" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The novel seldom indicates the time of speaking and often disregards the timing of the confessions. Nevertheless, the "moment" is a recurring element that helps to establish the framework of events within the category of poignant psychological memories. The "terrible moment" was the moment when he was compelled to shake hands with someone at a social gathering; the series of sudden and critical handshakes transformed them into "terrible, critical moments" that expose his dependent personality. When confronted with Dr. Murad, a leader who refuses to allow the creation of dependent personalities, the moment that fills his heart with malice towards this man is created. The revenge is exacted by stalking the son until killing him without pay. Dr. Murad had foreseen the danger of that "moment" via a temporal index during Youssef's arrest:

"The Doctor realized at that moment that this young man had turned into a time bomb that might explode at any moment, potentially crippling and tearing him apart, and crippling and tearing others apart as well" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The "moment" swerved from the usual chronological order and became associated with the

context of events that shook the rebellious young man, creating a gap towards the impending explosion and the emergence of the "Silencer" who stole the life of Dr. Murad's son. This "moment" referred to "a distant time determined by the context relative to the time of speaking, which constitutes the center of the temporal index in speech, because temporal deixis works to frame the communication process within its temporal scope" (Al-Azzawi, 2016).

In the prison, the temporal indexical expressions are reduced, showing the end of the perception of time for the prisoners. However, the narrator used the "hour" – the sixty-minute period:

"He disappeared for an hour" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

This hour was enough to finish the policy of destruction practiced by the security services. The context did not mention whether it was an hour of night or day, since the significance is not in the timing but in the short period that led him to "wet his pants" after the investigators accused him of being deviant, since his arrest was on moral grounds and not on his political activity.

In the prison setting, two temporal deictics appear: "the week" and "dawn." As indicated, "Youssef spent a full week pacing the cell... waiting impatiently to be summoned for interrogation" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

"at dawn, the old man woke up startled; he saw the young man lightly prodding his shoulder and sobbing" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

There is a close connection between "the week" and "dawn." The latter is the timing set by the interrogators to disturb the nerves of the prisoner through neglect and lack of questioning, with the aim of a complete breakdown. This was successful when the shameful moral accusations were raised against "the revolutionary Youssef," who returned to his cell speechless. However, "dawn" was the explosion of the repression caused by the shock that had tied his tongue and frozen his emotions. As indicated, whenever the narrator feels the need to clarify the temporal situation, he inserts:

"In the bygone era, the apparatus of the state had not evolved to this stage... nor had they reached the arts of torture in which the masters of the new era, the Doctor's associates, excelled" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The pragmatic function is useful. Without the specification of the time of utterance, the situation becomes unclear to the listener and hard to understand (Afif, 2025).

In the midst of the environment of arrests, torture, and contracted killings, the temporal deictics concerning "tomorrow" and "the future" become absent for the "silencer," Youssef, who lives on the

fringes of life, and for the Lieutenant, who longs for a fleeting instant of solitude with his wife without surveillance and eavesdropping. Ironically, "tomorrow" is there for Ahmed:

"He used to say, feigning optimism: 'Do not worry, father, tomorrow I will marry... and we will have a son who bears your name'" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

However, with a bullet from a "silencer," that "tomorrow" and the bright future lived by "Dr. Murad"—despite being under house arrest—were over: "The last sound linking them to life and the future was severed" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

Dr. Murad laments his "tomorrow" even before lamenting his son upon receiving the news of his kidnapping:

"If only he had married and his wife had given birth to a grandson before I bid the world farewell... he is crawling now; tomorrow he will walk, sway, and stumble, then stand tall like an oak" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The grandson is "tomorrow" and the future, just as the twenty-first century: "A full year ago, the Doctor quit smoking to live and see the twenty-first century" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The deictic "tomorrow" appeared when Dr. Murad entered the kitchen after ascertaining the assassination of his son, Ahmed, to fetch his papers from under the refrigerator and proceed to his office. He then "sat at the desk and began writing in bold script the title of his new book: *Biased Toward Life*" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

He continued to resist the insistence of the Lieutenant and his superiors to commit suicide. He continued to think about the pistol they placed in his office. This is followed by a series of verbs in the past tense, interrupted by a verb in the present tense converted to the past through negation: "He took out the pistol," dealt with it, and extracted its magazine, then proceeded to the bathroom. He threw the bullets into the toilet and—contrary to his habit—did not flush; then he returned to his table, his papers, and his pen (Al-Razzaz, 2004). All of this is nothing but a desperate hold on to "tomorrow" and the future.

"Thursday" is a temporal deictic that refers to the start of the weekend, as it appears in the text as a relief from a reality filled with crises. On "Thursday," the memory of the confiscation of the photo album and the accompanying dialogues to convince the Lieutenant of its significance is remembered. This culminates in the family's surrender to get a reward: "Rest assured the telephone will not be disconnected today" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

"Thursday" is also associated with memories of the initial encounter between the woman and her husband, Dr. Murad, at his clinic where she

pretended to be ill. He was able to see through her trick and asked her to come every week for treatment. Regarding the Lieutenant, "Thursday" symbolizes growing anxiety and a fixation on the notion of surveillance devices being implanted in the homes of "the group" that may have extended to his own home.

The deictic "night" is used in different contexts:

"For thirty years I have been waiting for this blessed night... waiting, and waiting, and waiting" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

In the "Circle" chapter, Dr. Murad states:

"Night had entered its dark cloak while I was in my heavy coat..." "Like every night, we discussed, and the discussion grew long..." and "As is our custom in every nightly meeting" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

He further states:

"I strain my memory to provide me with details of what happened last night".

"My two friends called to inquire about what we discussed last night" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The deictic "night" was used in circular patterns until the old man awoke.

A Sufi element was introduced by the "blessed night," but the disappointment came when the "blessed one" was shocked to see him and did not say a word. The question is: Is Dr. Murad hinting at his religious deficiency by the shock that befell the "blessed one"?

The deictic "night" becomes more intense as a concomitant of the political nature of "Dr. Ahmed's" early career. He could not find a better symbol for that period than the night, since "temporal deictics are a framing of the communication process within the temporal scope and express the integration of both the speaker and the addressee within the textual, utterance-based, and communicative time" (Al-Azzawi, 2016).

In this context, the "night" deictic for the "silencer" Youssef progresses towards further schizophrenia and fragmentation following his confession about being tasked with killing Ahmed:

"On that night, Youssef consumed half a bottle of wine" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

This is followed by the "dawn" deictic:

"He woke to the sound of the dawn call to prayer and was overcome by a fit of hysterical sobbing for which he knew no reason."

"Dawn," together with the call to prayer, was a stinging blow to his human and religious conscience, though this soon wore off under the influence of alcohol and the indulgence in endless sleep.

C) Spatial Deixis

Spatial deixis includes the use of locative adverbs. Its usage and interpretation require knowledge of the

place of utterance or another place known to the discourse or the interlocutors (Hammadi, 2016). Although spatial deixis is not common in "Confessions of a Silencer", its usage begins with the words of Ahmed's mother, who wants to hear her son's voice:

"Then it was the mother's turn to lie... and she said they were comfortable here..." (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The family, who is subjected to house arrest, does not dare to mention their place; rather, they do not know it. Therefore, they have lost their place on this earth, and their space of living has become only "here." Even the garbage collector, who the family tries to keep for a longer time, competing to offer him hospitality, "exits from here... while silence and desolation enter from there" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

Clearly, "here" and "there" refer to the speaker's space in the story and other distant spaces (Mazid, 2010).

The narrator continues to use "here/there" with a reverse substitution, where "here" changes to "there." The "young girl" asks her cousin:

"I said: 'Will you travel and bring back my father's manuscript... and my diary?' He said he was ready to travel to there and return with a skyscraper. I asked him to forget what I said, because traveling to there is a risk" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The change of deictic markers was due to the "young girl" leaving the place of house arrest and going back to her birthplace, but the narrator was insistent on using "there" as a place that defies any form of revelation or disclosure. The place is also described by general spatial deictics, i.e., "behind, above, between," which were also used by the narrator to emphasize the ambiguity of the place and to point out the security grip around its inhabitants. The narrator writes, "One of the security men shouted from behind the fence" and "The lieutenant peeked with a pale face from above the wall." The use of the spatial deictic "between" is found in the speech of the "young girl," who says, "Daytime is a deep, uneventful sleep; we move between the kitchen, the hall, the bedroom, and the bathroom" (Al-Razzaz, 2004). The use of "between" adds a sense of harsh monotony, as there were no events occurring due to interaction with the outside world. The killer, who tries to separate himself from time, also separates himself from place, as he does not belong. However, spatial deictics follow the killer as a sudden and shocking incident occurs. When Sylvia moves closer to him and strokes his hair, he can only order her "to return to her place and stand behind him; he cannot confess while her face is above his face, so she turned

toward the window" (Al-Razzaz, 2004). The spatial markers (behind, above, toward) indicate a sense of frustration that is dominating the "Silencer." Just as he was not capable of facing his reality and his abnormal character, he was also not capable of facing Sylvia's gaze, as he points out "behind him" as the appropriate position for her to listen to his confessions.

The role of the contribution of spatial deixis is seen as "making the recipient's reception of the discourse's content and its branching significations successful. This is only achieved by knowing the referent to which the deictic points, based on the communicative needs of the speakers and the linguistic context that organizes the communication process" (Bin Hashimi, 2022).

In this context, the spatial deictics are seen in the scene where the lieutenant takes the soldier's house to be alone with his wife to escape the wiretapping devices. The wife, however, cries out in terror, and the lieutenant sees that the curtains are made of newspaper pages pasted on the windows: "The children were peeking with their heads from between the newspaper headlines talking about the General... eyes... eyes... eyes... above the news of the General, under the news of wars, to the right of the front-page advertisements, from the left of the rhetorical editorials" (Al-Razzaz, 2004).

The deictics (between, above, under, left), however, go beyond their primary function of indicating the physical or spatial position and move towards the issue, as it is perceived and understood in the context. "Deictics are linguistic signs that only determine their referent within a pragmatic-discursive context" (Al-Zanad, 1993). The issue of the strict censorship of the local press is raised by the prominent presence of the eyes, instead of the cameras placed in the house.

Here, the functional value of the deictics is manifested in the pragmatic system, and it highlights "its primary purpose of achieving communicative effectiveness by focusing on the priority of context in its relational frameworks with the structure of language" (Al-Shehri, 2004).

In conclusion, the deictics in the novel by Al-Razzaz have fulfilled their primary function, as intended by the narrator. They have helped the reader to go deeper into the message, as it is not related to specific time and space, and the recipient of the message can see the hidden meanings of the text by establishing the link between the linguistic signs and their physical, social, temporal, and spatial contexts.

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