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A Pragmatic Analysis of Nabrat Al-Farādees al Mu‘aqqata by Lutfia Al-Dulaimi

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تداولية النص السردى في قصة نبرة الفارديس المؤقتة للطفية الدليمي نموذجاً

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جمهورية العراق / جامعة الأنبار / كلية التربية للبنات / قسم اللغة الانكليزية

Abstract

This study adopts a pragmatic analysis to analyze the narrative discourse exemplified by Lutfia Al-Dulaimi's short story "Nabrat Al-Farādees al-Mu‘aqqata". This paper explores how can language function as a communicative tool that helps authors to construct hidden meaning, intentions and guide interpretation within a specific context. Every linguistic choice in narrative texts which are rarely arbitrary serves a deliberate function, by embedding different social, cultural, and temporal dimensions. By using a qualitative descriptive-analytical methodology, the study examines contextual clues, intentionality, and conversational implicatures, including the application and occasional violation of Grice's maxims. The paper's findings show that Al-Dulaimi's short story employs strategic linguistic and rhetorical mechanisms to show the human consequences of migration, war, and displacement while involving the reader in an interpretive and interactive process. This research highlights that pragmatics is an appropriate tool to understand the various communicative dynamics in contemporary Arabic fiction

Key words: Pragmatics, contextual clues, intentionality, conversational implicature, Grice's maxims

الملخص:

يعول هذا البحث على مجموعة افتراضات مسبقة تهدف إلى دراسة الخطاب السردى القصصى من جهة تداولية، ويأتي هذا الأمر من خلال القاء الضوء على الجانبين الاستعمالي والتواصل للغة بعدها من الأدوات المهمة التي تحفز الكتاب على التعبير ورصد الأبعاد الخطابية وبيان المقاصد والغايات التي من أجلها كتب النص، ولا سيما ان الخطاب السردى يبتعد عن العشوائية في التوظيف؛ لان كل ما كتب يحمل وظائف سياقية مختلفة وضعت بشكل مقصود، وقد اتخذت الباحثة من قصة نبرة الفارديس المؤقتة للطفية الدليمي نموذجاً للتطبيق، معتمدة على المنهج التداولي في دراسة النص القصصى من اجل قراءة الدلالات والمعاني ورصد الاشارات والقرائن السياقية، فكانت الوقفة الأولى حول المهاد التطويري الذي عرض فيه بشكل موجز لمفهوم التداولية ولا سيما نشأتها وتطورها، ثم جاء المهاد الاجرائي ليرصد القرائن والقصدية والاشاريات والاستلزام الحوارى لمسلمات (غرايس)، وفق المنهج التحليلي الوصفى الذي عُدَّ وسيلة اساسية في العمل التطبيقي.

كلمات مفتاحية: التداولية، القرائن السياقية، القصدية، الاستلزام الحوارى، مسلمات غرايس

1. Introduction

The study of language has long been marked by debates and controversies among cognitive scientists and linguists regarding the relationship between structure and function. Scholars have often been divided between those who favor formal linguistic systems and those who differentiate clearly between language as an abstract code and speech as its contextualized form. Yet these discussions did not cut clearly the question of how context influences linguistic behavior. This gap made the conceptual point of departure for pragmatics, especially as a response to structuralist approaches such as Chomsky's, whose approach emphasized the grammatical rules and syntax while neglecting the social and functional dimensions of language (Alshahri, 2004). Pragmatic thought appeared as a corrective to this limitation, by emphasizing the necessity of considering language use in context,

integrating syntactic, semantic, and communicative levels to produce meaningful discourse (Alshahi, 2004). Pragmatics presents a range of concepts, including instrumentalism, utilitarianism, and actualities, all of which link language to context in actual communication (Jahfa, 2000; Talha, 2012). Pragmatics studies the intended meaning of the speaker, the inferential processes involved in communication, and how language conveys more than literal content (Yule, 2010). It encompasses gestures, clues, presuppositions, and indirect speech acts to facilitate the interpretive process (AbdulHakeem, 2009). Scholars have long agreed that pragmatics fills the gap between abstract grammatical structures and utterances embedded in specific contexts, making it essential for understanding how discourse conveys meaning (Blanchet, 2007; Alwardani, 2007). Most scholars believe that pragmatics emerged in the United States of America in the nineteenth century, gaining prominence in the philosophical and semiotic studies of Peirce (1914). Peirce is considered as the pioneer of this trend when he laid the foundations of semiotics, which is the science that is based on the study of various signs, whether single or compound. Peirce's three threshold model of the sign—the representamen, the object, and the interpretant—laid the foundation for understanding how meaning arises through the interaction between signs, their referents, and interpreters. Peirce outlined these three basic levels upon which the text is built. The first level lies in the extent of the sign's relationship to itself, the second, the textual planning of script that reveals the sign's relationship to the subject, and the third: the semantic rings through which the sign's relationship to the interpreter is deduced. From here, pragmatics came within the third dimension after which it became the most prominent dimension of semiotics, because it is a basic means in the process of cognitive communication, as it examines the recipient's interpretation of the sign, whether at the level of grammatical, syntactic, or semantic construction, through which it contributes to revealing the speaker's meaning and the extent of its realization, his intention in speech (Abdhali, 1999; Armenco, 1986). Later, Charles Morris (1938) expanded this framework, distinguishing among syntax, semantics, and pragmatics to examine the relationships between signs, their meanings, and their use in context by making a chart through which he studied these signs at the previously mentioned three levels (Fakhoury, 1990). In narrative discourse, pragmatics helps scholars to analyze language structure in addition to other social, contextual, and intentional dimensions. Van Dijk emphasized the idea upon which pragmatics in narrative texts is built; that these texts perform social actions through which rhetorical objectives are achieved within the communicative context between the speaker and the addressee (Dijk, 2000, 292). The process of studying narrative discourse within a pragmatic approach calls for opening several broad linguistic horizons in which the various cognitive fields are organized (Talha, 2012, 26); narrative rhetorical formulas didn't come arbitrarily, but rather are an intentional product and a major factor in the success of the rhetorical process. This comes about by involving the recipient in the textual inference and revealing the implicit connotations (Al-Hajj, 2016, 88). This paper analyzes Lutfia Al-Dulaimi's short story "Nabrat Al-Farādees al-Mu'aqqata" from a pragmatic point of view by examining contextual clues, intentionality, and conversational implicatures, in addition to the application and occasional violation of Grice's maxims.

2. Literature Review

The Arabic studies witnessed an increased concern in literary texts analysis, especially the short story from different perspectives related to contextual clues, social functions and pragmatic analysis. Many scholars handled the varied characteristics of the narrative discourse with its expressive styles. One of the most known studies in this doctrine is that of Salah Alfadel (1992) which concentrated on structural and cognitive analysis of short stories. It explained how the text is built to accomplish aesthetic and advertising functions by focusing on the narration factors as the characters, events, place and time with their relation to the social and cultural messages involved. Another study by Masood Sahrawi (2005) discussed the short story topic as a means to portray the social circumstance. He emphasized the communication between the narrative and the reader in grasping the meaning and how can the writer invest language tools to accomplish his narrative goals. In pragmatic analysis studies for Arabic texts; that of Ahmed Abdul-Nabi (2003) which analyzed the short story from a pragmatic point of view. It explained how contextual clues are used to achieve affective communication, how narrative discourse is manipulated to assure the social and political goals specially within the major transformations in the Arabic society. The scholar also pointed that the narrative implied many levels of textual and contextual meaning that can be best invested by the narrator through his use of signs and contextual clues. While Fatima Al-Marnisy (2010) focused on the analysis of the narrative and story in Arabic literature. She explained that short texts have intellectual and cultural dimensions that reflect messages of identity and affiliation with emphasis on structural and semantic aspects. She also used anti-binaries to enhance

perfect interaction with the reader. Many studies have confirmed that pragmatic analysis allows deeper understanding for the narration by the readers through facilitating the interaction strategies between the writer and the receiver which is clearly manifested in short stories that handle social and political issues as Dulaimi's short story "Nabrat Al-Farādees al-Mu'aqqata". Eventually, these studies show that Arabic literature; especially the short story can be a very decisive means to transfer social issues. It plays important role in the interaction between the narrative and society by using the suitable language tools, contextual clues, intentionality in a way that implements esthetic and artistic goals. This conforms with the pragmatic approach in literary texts analysis.

3. Methodology

Narrative discourse varies in style and scope—narrative, descriptive, argumentative, or scientific—but universally performs social and communicative functions. Pragmatics addresses critical questions: Who is the speaker? Who is the addressee? How does language convey meaning beyond literal content. This study adopts a descriptive-analytical method to investigate these questions, focusing on three main analytical dimensions: contextual clues, intentionality, and conversational implicatures. These dimensions are applied to "Nabrat Al-Farādees al-Mu'aqqata" a short story by Lutfia Aldulaimi, to reveal how linguistic choices construct meaning and convey the author's communicative goals. In this story, the writer/sender addresses a very important issue, which is migration and its repercussions on the Iraqi family (the message), presenting the main effective cause of it, which is war and its weakening of the social structure. However, the poetic formulation of the narrative text came mixed with an Iraqi flavor in which reality was mixed with imagination.

3.1. Data Collection Technique

The researcher chose this narrative of Lutfia Aldulaimi's "Nabrat Al-Farādees al-Mu'aqqata" due to its rigorous pragmatic clues that reveal the author's professional mastery to portray the suffering of immigration from Iraq. By reading the short story many times, each time manifests a new dimension to communicate meaning; the researcher could extract the contextual clues used in the text, the varied intentions and thematic purposes, and the conversational strategies represented by Grice's Maxims whether being followed or violated by the speakers within the narrative.

3.2. Model of Analysis

The study uses a qualitative, descriptive-analytical methodology. The narrative text is analyzed through:

1. Contextual Clues: Specifying temporal, spatial, social, and cultural signs that guide interpretation.
2. Intentionality: Analyzing how linguistic and stylistic choices show the author's objectives and thematic concerns.
3. Conversational Implicature and Grice's Maxims: Evaluating conversational strategies, including following or violation of Grice's maxims, in order to uncover implied meanings.

Data were collected directly from the text, and textual analysis was supported by pragmatics and semiotics theory to ensure a rigorous interpretive framework.

4. Analysis

4.1 Contextual Clues

Pragmatics emphasizes language use within context (Al-Sarraf, 2010). Accordingly, it becomes clear that "context plays an effective role in the communication of discourse and its coherence in the first place, and it would not have been possible for the discourse to have meaning without knowledge of its discursive context" (Al-Khattabi, 1991, 56). Also John Firth pointed out the social function of language, emphasizing that the meaning of a word cannot be determined except through the context in which it appears (Lyons, 1987, 83). In order to present a pragmatic reading of the story "Nabrat Alfaradis Almo'aqata" by Lutfia Al-Dulaimi, we must first stand on some contextual clues which include spatial, temporal, social, and personal markers. The contextual data that are related to reality in all its aspects may contribute to highlight the collocative structures and textual circumstances and their effects, the interpretive conditions, and the lexical and non-lexical semantic surprise for which the text was written. Accordingly, we will first stand on the three elements of context:

the sender

→→→

the message

→→→

the addressee

In this story, the writer/sender addresses a very important issue, which is migration and its repercussions on the Iraqi family (the message), presenting the main effective cause of it, which is war and its weakening of the social structure. However, the poetic formulation of the narrative text came mixed with an Iraqi flavor in which reality was mixed with imagination. Characters are situated within realistic and symbolic spaces: Baghdad,

Amman, Florence, and the domestic sphere. The language of the story is manifested by the absent person, but in its demonstrative processes, it evokes the speaker and the addressee (a series of direct and indirect dialogue pauses to feed the textual fabric with the directions of the standardized signifiers. However, persistence with these intentional directions revealed the theme for which the text was drawn, and this is what we will address later. Lutfia Al-Dulaimi assumes (a reader/addressee) who is interpreted through the communicative process; so she mentally evokes him to share the bases of the text with, by presenting the historical aspects that occurred on the ground. Then the narrative discourse came to document it as influential facts in the history of contemporary country (Al-Dulaimi, 2002, 26).

The narrative text/message ranges between several dualities whose presence forms the basic features upon which most of the events are based, especially despair and hope, disappearance and eternity, dream and wakefulness, shedding light on the reality that befell Iraq as a result of the successive wars that ravaged the classes of Iraqi society. The story, as a (message), from its first threshold represented by the title, has a certain goal which is to arise the issue of immigration in an effort to find an alternative life in the awaited paradise. However, the reality reveals the temporary moments in which happiness is imagined in the form of false paradise that do not exist, knowing that the communicative purpose upon which the events of the story were built is not based on (narration) only, but rather presents some implied interpretations and questions. These questions include: why do textual connotations make paradise a fleeting, non-lasting happiness? What is the nature of these paradises, which appear in the plural form despite their temporary absurdity? There is no doubt that the dualities presented in the context were imposed by several circumstances, including social, political, and cultural ones. This was evident in the awareness of the characters in the text, starting with the character of (the mother) who represents caution and awareness of the situation. Therefore, her answers were characterized by clarity and precision. She is a conscious character who interprets reality from distance. Then came the character of the girl (Zainab al- Baghdadi), whose story formed the largest part that outlined the course of the narrative text. She is a life-loving and patient character who is an example of sincerity and calmness. She is distinguished by strength despite the difficult situation in her engagement to her cousin (Furat), who immigrated with her brother (Salwan) to the West in an effort to find a life far away from war. "two years have passed since the war, two years of faces dried up by losses...two years of grief at seeing bombed buildings, shattered windows, and cracked walls. (Salwan) left suddenly without specifying his destination. He carried his bag and went without looking back for fear that his mother's tears and his sister's sobs would deter him." (Al-Dulaimi 2002, 26). The story describes these young men as "absent immigrants who responded to the temptations of paradises that enchanted their youth and promised them bliss that was not theirs" (Al-Dulaimi 2002,24) in addition to the association of the name Zainab with the spatial character represented by the city of Baghdad which became a symbol of destruction due to the remnants of war, which made it in contrast mourning for a beautiful past that was lost due to ill- considered policies. The last character is the character of (Sa'ud Al-Nakhal) i.e. palms' climber as the story calls him (Uncle Majeed), who represents the national identity and rootedness. In addition to the briefly mentioned characters of (Alaa and Laith), and (Salwan's) Iraqi friends who left the country in search for another life. Lutfiya Al-Dulaimi

identified the spatial references within the framework of (the house, the garden, and the window). However, the text includes places that support the narrative event, such as (Amman, Italy, and Florence). Temporal references situate events in the 1990s, highlighting the consequences of conflict and displacement. The interplay of hope and despair, permanence and transience, creates interpretive tension. "Dozens of Zainab are lying in wait of heavenly promises, dozens of Zainab are proposed by young immigrants only by mail letters and phone conversations, whose families sent packaged like postal parcels across the long desert road to Amman, accomplished by a male relative to deliver the girl safe and sound to the stranger who made the deal with them through the mail: humiliating deals born of the genius of wars, sieges, and the migration of men.(Al-Dulaimi 2002, 32) note that through such employments, the writer does not seek to remind the reader of what happened, because he may have witnessed. However, the desired goal in this narrative is to establish a textual engineering whose goal is to achieve communicative interaction between the writer and reader. Therefore, we notice that the narrative ended with an open ending, which makes the reader interact and captivated with what happened and is still happening on the ground.

4.2 Intentionality

Intentionality is central to understanding the author's communicative purpose (Beaugrand, 1998). The title of the narrative, foregrounds the paradoxical nature of transient happiness. Lexical choices, imagery, and narrative

structure reinforce the central theme: migration disrupts personal and collective aspirations. Through silence, letters, and symbolic gestures, Al-Dulaimi conveys the uncertainty and emotional weight of displacement. The interplay between direct and indirect speech acts invites the reader into the interpretive process, fostering active engagement with the narrative. In pragmatics, intentionality refers to the speaker's purposeful use of language to achieve communicative goals (Beaugrande 1998, 103). Its success depends on the interaction among speaker, addressee, text, and context, whether the intention is expressed explicitly or implicitly (Awad 2022, 38). In "Nabrat Al-Farādees al-Mu'aqqata", intentionality is central to revealing the political and emotional undercurrents of the narrative—particularly those shaped by war, migration, and loss. The title functions as the first site of authorial intention. As the most condensed form of linguistic economy, it guides interpretation (Al-Jazzar 1998, 10). "Nabrat" (tone) suggests a sonic marker or a fleeting emotional inflection; "Farādees" (paradises) in plural evokes promise and abundance; "al-Mu'aqqata" (temporary) introduces contradiction and impermanence. Together, these elements encapsulate the story's thematic concern with imagined but unattainable happiness—the illusion of migratory "paradises" contrasted with their transient nature. Intentionality continues through dialogue and symbolic imagery. Zainab's questioning—"Do you see, mother, the flocks of birds heading toward the sunset?" - communicates longing and metaphorical anticipation of westward migration. The mother's silence operates as an interpretive cue, signaling anxiety, loss, and an unspoken recognition of irreversible separation. Recurring images - the empty mailbox, trembling hands, absent letters—serve as semiotic devices reinforcing the theme of hopes undermined by reality. Salwan's letter discloses unexpected truths that collapse Zainab's expectations and reveal the fragility of imagined futures. From an interactive reading perspective (Holp 2000, 168), these intentional structures are designed to engage the reader in filling narrative gaps. The text's suggestive style and symbolic density invite interpretive participation, reflecting the instability of home, identity, and emotional belonging. The theme of "home" epitomizes this intentional layering. Home is depicted as a sanctuary of emotional stability, yet migration threatens its continuity. The mother's warnings function as pragmatic acts of persuasion, marked by indirectness, symbolic resonance, and emotional restraint. Thus, intentionality in the narrative is not merely thematic but deeply embedded in linguistic, structural, and symbolic patterns that communicate the author's message about exile, loss, and the illusion of return.

4.3 Dialogic Implicature and Grice's Maxims

Grice's theory of cooperative principles provides insight into conversational dynamics (Grice, 1975). In Al-Dulaimi's story, characters' dialogues generally conform to Grice's maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner, ensuring clarity and coherence. However, strategic violations create suspense and ambiguity, reflecting the uncertain realities of migration and separation. For example, the mother's cautious responses to Zainab's questions subtly encode warnings and suppressed fears, while moments of uncertainty, such as letters arriving empty-handed, create interpretive space for the reader. These pragmatic strategies reinforce the narrative's thematic tension and emotional depth.

5. Conclusions

This study demonstrates the efficacy of pragmatic analysis in understanding narrative discourse. Contextual clues, intentionality, and conversational implicatures reveal the layers of meaning embedded in Al-Dulaimi's "Nabrat Al-Farādees al-Mu'aqqata". The narrative conveys the human consequences of war and migration, illustrating the interplay between hope, despair, and cultural identity. Pragmatic tools illuminate the dynamic relationship between author, text, and reader, showing how meaning arises not only from what is said but also from what is implied and inferred. By integrating pragmatics and semiotics, the study highlights how narrative discourse communicates social, emotional, and ideological dimensions. Future research could apply similar approaches to other contemporary Arabic literary works to examine cross-textual pragmatic strategies, particularly in narratives addressing displacement, trauma, and identity formation. Such research will deepen our understanding of how language mediates human experience in literary texts.

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