

Deixis in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse***Submitted by****Badr Abdul Qayoom Abdulla****Abdul Hamid Ahmed Al-Madari****Assistant Lecturer****Assistant Professor****Ministry of Education****College of Arts****General Directorate of Al Anbar****Sana'a University****life.badr71@gmail.com****Received:8/9/2019****Accepted:2/10/2019**

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Abstract

Deixis is one of the sub-categories of pragmatics. It plays a very crucial role in making the context understandable. Obviously, understanding the deictic items in a literary text will make the process of interpretation easier. The objective of this research paper is to analyze deixis in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. The process of analysis is confined to some samples of the types of deixis that are used in the novel. The use of deictic items in *To the Lighthouse* participates in enriching the meaning and conveying certain effects. Through the use of deixis, Woolf succeeds in clarifying many details concerning the speaker of utterance, place of utterance, time of utterance etc. Accordingly, this leads to revealing the interior conflict of the characters and the psychological behavior of individuals with one another.

Key words: Deixis, pragmatics, Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

Introduction

Deixis plays a very significant role in the field of pragmatics. Without understanding the deictic items mentioned in a particular text, the meaning of that text will be blurred. These deictic items can be understood through context. "The most obvious need for context is in the interpretation of *deictic* terms. Such terms, which directly implicate the context, include *I*, *now*, and *here* . . . However, considered as an independent sentence free of context, the sentence has no meaningful content" (Segal, 1995,P.10). "Deixis is clearly a form of referring that is tied to the speaker's context, with the most basic distinction between deictic expressions being 'near speaker' versus 'away from speaker'" (Yule,1996,P.9). "Deixis refers to the phenomenon in which understanding the meaning of certain words and phrases in an utterance requires contextual information. Words or phrases that require contextual information to convey meaning are deictic" (Levinson, 1983,P.54).

The contextual information of the utterance mentioned consists of information about the speaker, the addressee, the time and the place (*ibid*).

The use of deictic items in a literary work helps readers to interact with it and react positively or negatively to the events of the story. That is to say, they experience the events of the story whether happily or sadly according to their nature. Through the use of person point of views, readers can immerse themselves inside the events.

The objective of this research paper is to examine the effective use of diexis in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and how that reflects the writer's style to communicate certain thoughts. On the other hand, it has not been concerned with counting the number of deictic items that exist in the novel. This study is significant in way that it opens a new linguistic horizon to the analysis of the novel particularly its focus on the deictic items that enrich its meaning.

Definition

Deixis is a term taken from the Greek word 'deiktikos', meaning pointing. Deixis is "pointing via language" and deictic expression refers to any linguistic form that is achieved through pointing (Yule,1996,P. 9) .

Deixis (pronounced daiksis) is the term used to refer to those linguistic elements which make interpretable reference only by virtue of an indexical connection to some aspect of the speech event. Typical exemplars for English include here-there, this-that, now-then, and I-you. (Sidnell,2009,P.114)

Deixis may be understood as linguistic pointing to relevant portions of the context of an utterance and is often accompanied by extra-linguistic gesturing or indication by a turn of the head or a nod in a particular direction (Perkins,1992,P.100). Deixis can be referred to expressions used to signalize elements of discourse context including the speech participants (speaker/listener), the place and time of the current speech event (Lyone,1977,P.5)

The term deixis denotes the phenomenon of using a linguistic expression to "point" to some contextually available discourse entity or property. Deictic expressions are a subtype of indexical expression (Birner,2013,P.114). "The use of certain linguistic items

to refer to entities by pointing at them linguistically instead of providing information about their type, size, colour and so on" (Brown and Miller,2013,P.125).

Generally speaking, it is very essential to identify the speaker of utterance, time of utterance, and place of utterance in order to know the nature of utterance and what it is meant for. That is to say, deixis is not only restricted to the referents located in a particular space during a particular time, there are also other participants in the events of speech and have to be taken into consideration. For example, *That cat is sitting under the chair now* includes deictic locative expression (*under the chair*) and tense marker (*now*). The cat is not only located with respect to the chair but also with respect to the speaker, which means that the cat is relatively distant from the speaker. Therefore, understanding the deictic items is very important in the process of interpretation. Deictic expressions such as *I, you, she, now, then, yesterday, tomorrow, today, here, there* etc. can be used as indicators and help to interpret what is said by the speaker.

Types of Deixis

Deixis is divided into four main types: personal, spatial, temporal, and discourse deixis. Personal deixis includes three kinds of persons: first person, second person, and third person. These persons can be singular and plural. The first person is represented in the speaker, and the hearer represents the second person, and the third person is someone who is not involved in the event of speech. "In personal deixis, a linguistic expression is used for the purpose of picking out a specific individual in the context who may not have already been linguistically evoked" (Birner,2013,P.116). Personal deictic are shown in italics as follows:

I will teach students tomorrow.

Would *you* like to go to the party?

Spatial deixis is used to indicate a location that is relative to the location of the speaker or the addressee. It can be recognized by the use of the locative (demonstrative) adverbs *here* and *there*, and the demonstrative pronouns *this/that*. *Here* and *this* are proximal, and *there* and *that* are distal" (Levinson,1983,P.55). Spatial deictic are shown in italics as follows:

He studies at *this* college.

The book is put over *there*.

Temporal deixis is used to indicate different points of time: past, present, and future. "Temporal deictic function to locate points or intervals on the time axis, using (ultimately) the moment of utterance as a reference point" (Cruse,2000,P.321).The deictic words of time are shown in italics as follows:

The bell is ringing *now*, so he stopped reading.

What did she do *yesterday*?

Discourse deixis refers to expressions that are used within an utterance to indicate part of the discourse in that utterance. *This* and *that* can be used in discourse deictic expressions to indicate things that are about to happen and things that happened in the past, respectively. Consider the following two examples: *Listen to this, I will be one of the speakers in the conference.*

That was a good piece of news.

In short, the following example *I have to go* can be modified to indicate the four main types of deixis:

I have to go. (personal deixis)

I have to go there. (spatial deixis)

I have to go there now. (temporal deixis)

That was good to go there. (discourse deixis)

About the Text

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) is an English novelist. She was regarded as one of the most celebrated and influential writers in the first half of the twentieth century. Her writings are remarkable for the use of stream of consciousness which is used as a narrative device. Her notable literary works are *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *A Room of One's Own* (1929), *The Waves* (1931). The main focus of the current study is Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*.

To the Lighthouse is a landmark in the development of the English novel. It is regarded as Woolf's greatest novel. It is divided into three sections: 'The Window', 'Time Passes', and 'The Lighthouse'. In the first section, Mr. Ramsay and Mrs. Ramsay bring their eight children to summer residence in the Hebrides in Scotland. James Ramsay, a six-year-old child, hopes to visit the lighthouse, and his mother agrees if the weather permits. His father tells him that the weather is bad, so the child comes to a conclusion that his father is harsh with him and his siblings. The Ramsays host a number of guests, among them Charles Tansley, the young metaphysical

philosopher, and the painter Lily Briscoe. In the second section, ten years pass; during this period of time, Mrs. Ramsay dies and two of her children. Their house is neglected: weeds grow and spiders build nests. Later, the housekeeper employs some women to set the house in a proper order before the return of the family. In the third section, the rest of the family and some guests return to their summer home.

Deictic Analysis of *To the Lighthouse*

Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* is a novel that is full of deictic expressions. In the following sentence, Mrs. Ramsay promises to take her six-year-old child, James Ramsay, to the lighthouse if weather permits, saying "Yes, of course, if it's fine tomorrow" (181). She uses a temporal deictic word which is *tomorrow* to refer to a time after the time of utterance. However, Mr. Ramsay interrupts them commenting that the weather will not permit. Later, young James Ramsay starts to resent his father as much as he adores his mother, who reassures him "But it may be fine - I expect it will be fine" (182). *It*, in the previous expression, refers to the weather, and the first person pronoun is deictically used to refer to Mrs. Ramsay, who brings joy and hope to the heart of her child by these words. She also has an optimistic look that tomorrow things will be fine. On the other hand, like Oedipus, who accidentally kills his father and married his mother, James feels the need to murder his father: "Had there been an axe handy, a poker, or any weapon that would have gashed a hole in his father's breast and killed

him, there and then, James would have seized it" (182). The third possessive pronoun *his* and the third accusative pronoun *him* are both used deictically to refer to James's father, Mr. Ramsay, whom James wishes to murder.

Like Mr. Ramsay, the guest Charles Tansley agrees that the weather will be bad, which makes the child upset. Tansley declares that "There'll be no landing at the Lighthouse to-morrow" (184). He uses the spatial deixis *there* to refer to the lighthouse, and the time deixis *tomorrow* to refer the time during which the weather is still not good. Woolf adds that:

That is to say, the wind blew from the worst possible direction for landing at the Lighthouse. Yes, he did say disagreeable things, Mrs. Ramsay admitted; it was odious of him to rub this in, and make James still more disappointed; but at the same time, she would not let them laugh at him. "The atheist", they called him; "the little atheist". (183)

In this interior monologue that is made by Mrs. Ramsay, the person deixis *she* refers to Charles Tansley, the atheist, who always agrees with Mr. Ramsay and says disagreeable things. The rest of the characters in the novel do not accept his ideas because of his atheism. Moreover, they mock him. About this point, Woolf uses the deictic accusative pronoun *him* to show how the other characters ridicule him: "Rose mocked him; Prue mocked him; Andrew, Jasper, Roger mocked him; even old Badger without a tooth in his head had bit him" (183). However, Mrs. Ramsay forbids her daughters to laugh at Charles Tansley.

Woolf uses different person deictic in this passage to reflect Mrs. Ramsay's interior consciousness.

For how would you like to be shut up for a whole month at a time, and possibly more in stormy weather, upon a rock the size of a tennis lawn? she would ask; and to have no letters or newspapers, and to see nobody; if you were married, not to see your wife, not to know how your children were, if they were ill, if they had fallen down and broken their legs. (182)

In the above passage the second person pronoun *you* is indirectly used deictically to refer to Mr. Ramsay; the third person pronoun *she* is also used deictically to refer to Mrs. Ramsay who is making this interior monologue; *you* again refers indirectly to her husband, and the possessive pronoun *your* refers to his wife (Mrs. Ramsay herself); the possessive pronoun *your* in *your child* deictically to the Ramsays' children; and third person deixis *they* refer to the children themselves. The writer produces skillfully a unique use of the person deictic using the technique of the interior monologue.

In the following passage, the third person pronoun *he* is repeated eight times and the third person possessive pronoun *his* is mentioned once and the accusative third person pronoun *him* is mentioned once; they all refer to Charles Tansley, whose point of view is objected by the Ramsays' children. The excessive use of the deictic pronoun *He* reflects that Tansley is unpleasant to most of the characters in the novel.

clapping his hands together as he stood at the window with her husband. Surely, he had said enough. She wished they would both leave her and James alone and go on talking. She looked at him. He was such a

miserable specimen, the children said, all humps and hollows. He couldn't play cricket; he poked; he shuffled. He was a sarcastic brute, Andrew said. They knew what he liked best. (184)

In the following text, Woolf uses deictically the third possessive pronoun *her* to refer to Mrs. Ramsay, describing the places of beauty in her body (her eyes, her hair, and her breast) and how she still looks stunning and loving to Charles Tansley though she is in her fifties and having eight children. The third person pronoun *he* is used deictically to refer to Charles Tansley, who accompanies her on an errand to the city.

With stars in her eyes and veils in her hair, with cyclamen and wild violets- what nonsense was he thinking? She was fifty at least; she had eight children. Stepping through fields of flowers and taking to her breast buds that had broken and lambs that had fallen; with the stars in her eyes and the wind in her hair - he took her bag.(189)

The proximal spatial deixis *this* is repeated seven times in the following passage.

They would, she thought, going on again, however long they lived, come back to this night; this moon; this wind; this house: and to her too. It flattered her, where she was most susceptible of flattery, to think how, wound about in their hearts, however long they lived she would be woven; and this, and this, and this, she thought, going upstairs, laughing, but affectionately, at the sofa on the landing (her mother's) at the rocking-chair (her father's); at the map of the Hebrides. (262-63)

Its repetition indicates that the party is very impressive and everybody feels that it is joyful especially Mrs. Ramsay who is flattered that she will be remembered by everybody in the party. Obviously, the party with its details including the night, the moon, the wind, the house etc. will live on each guest's mind. Noticeably, after Mrs. Ramsay leaves the party to go to the parlor to read with her husband, the harmony of the party dissipates.

There is a distal spatial deixis in the following sentence: "It was that horrid skull again" (263). The place deixis *that* refers to the boar's skull that is nailed on the wall of the nursery where the Ramsays' children sleep. Cam and James make a lot of noise: Cam could not sleep while the skull is still there, and James refuses to allow someone to move it to somewhere else. In order to solve this inconvenience, Mrs. Ramsay covers the skull with her shawl. So, Cam starts sleeping, and James asks her if they could go to the lighthouse the next day.

The discourse deixis, *That was*, in this sentence "That was what she minded, coming as it did on top of her discontent with her husband" (209), refers to an event that Mrs. Ramsay does not like to happen, but it happens. She is not in a position to expect that she will receive ingratitude from one of those who visit her; Augustus Carmichael ignores her, which hurts her feelings. In fact, she treats her guests in a good way. That is why she could not expect them to ignore her. Similarly, in this sentence, the deictic discourse *that was* "For that was the impression she gave, when she told him that his letters were in the hall" (241), indicates her smiling and pity to the botanist William Bankes, an old friend of the Ramsays; he was expected to marry Lily Ramsay but nothing happened. Here, the impression of smiling refers to an earlier event. Likewise, *that was*, in this passage "for that was true of Mrs. Ramsay -she pitied men always as if they lacked something - women never, as if they had something" (242), also indicates

her pity to Mr. Tansley; it means that it was true of her that she pitied men. Referring to Augustus Carmichael, Virginia Woolf describes his way of looking to things using the discourse deixis *that was*, "That was his way of looking, different from hers" (251). The third person possessive pronoun *Hers*, in this sentence, refers to Mrs. Ramsay's way of looking which is not like Carmichael's.

In the following sentence, "So that was the story of the Rayleys, Lily smiled" (308), there is a discourse deixis. *That was* refers to something happened earlier which is the story of the Rayleys. The Rayleys is a name that refers to the newly married couple, Paul Rayleys and Minta Dolye. Paul is a young friend who visits the Ramsays, and Minta is a young woman who comes to visit them too; they finally marry each other at Mrs. Ramsay's wishes. The story of the Rayleys, which is the main concern here, is unsuccessful, according to Lily Ramsay.

In the following text, the third person pronoun *they* is used anaphorically. It refers to some people mentioned earlier; it refers to James and Cam: "Oh, but she never wanted James to grow a day older or Cam either. These two she would have liked to keep forever just as they were, demons of wickedness, angels of delight, never to see them grow up into long-legged monsters" (221-22). Similarly, the third person pronoun *they* is used anaphorically in this sentence: "And Nancy and Roger, they were both wild creatures now, scampering about over the country all day long" (222). On the other hand, the spatial deixis *there* is used cataphorically in this sentence "And indeed it was only by waiting patiently, and hearing that there was an old woman in the kitchen with very red cheeks, drinking soup out of a basin" (219). It refers to something mentioned later which is the kitchen.

Conclusion

It is very important for speakers and hearers (writers and readers) to understand the referents used in an expression or a text in order to make communication effective. These referents can be used deictically or anaphorically. Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* is rich in deictic expressions. There are many examples of deixis brought by the author including personal, spatial, temporal, and discourse deixis. These examples of deixis are used skillfully to enrich the meanings in the novel and the style of the writer, reveal the internal conflicts of the characters such as James Ramsay and Mrs. Ramsay, and convey certain thoughts and effects. For example, the use of the temporal deixis *now* in the following text refers to the time when Mr. Ramsay excites the feeling of hatred in his child, James Ramsay: "Such were the extremes of emotion that Mr. Ramsay excited in his children's breasts by his mere presence; standing, as now, lean as a knife, narrow as the blade of one . . . (182)." Another example, the deixis of time *tomorrow* in this sentence *There'll be no landing at the Lighthouse to-morrow* refers to the time that comes after the time of the utterance to indicate the emotion of frustration that Charles Tansley arouses in the heart of James Ramsay. The deictic referents are also used in the novel to indicate the psychological behavior of individuals towards each other, which shows that the human minds are constituted of different layers of awareness. That is to say, the use of deixis helps the readers to understand the nature of emotional and social relations among the characters in the novel and contribute to the depiction of psychological and social themes.

References

- Birner, B. J. 2013. *Introduction to Pragmatics*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Brown, K and Jim Miller.2013. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cruse, D. A. 2000. *Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Levinson, S. C 1983 . *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lyons, J 1977. *Semantics, vol. 1-2* . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Perkins, R. D. 1992. *Deixis, Grammar, Culture*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Segal, E. M. 1995. "Narrative Comprehension and the Role of Deictic Shift Theory." *Deixis in Narrative: A Cognitive Science Perspective*. Eds. Judith F. Duchan, Gail A. Bruder, and Lynne E. Hewitt. New York: Routledge
- Sidnell, J.2009 "Deixis." *Key Notions for Pragmatics*. Eds. JefVerschueren and Jan-OiaOstman. Amsterdam: John Benjamin Publishing Company, P 114-138.
- Woolf, V.1992. "To the Lighthouse." *Collected Novels of Virginia Woolf" Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse, The Waves*. Ed. Stella McNichol. London: Macmillan.
- Yule, G.1996. *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

الإشارية في رواية فرجينيا وولف الى المنارة

الاستاذ المساعد عبد الحميد أحمد المدري
جامعة صنعاء /كلية الآداب

م.م. بدر عبد القيوم عبدالله
وزارة التربية مديرية تربية محافظة الانبار

الملخص :

تعد الإشارية أحد فروع علم التأويل (التداولية). وتؤدي دوراً مهماً للغاية في جعل السياق مفهوماً. ومن الواضح أن فهم العناصر ، أو التعابير الإشارية في النص الأدبي سيجعل عملية التفسير أكثر سهولة. ويهدف هذا البحث الى تحليل الإشارية في رواية فرجينيا وولف الى المنارة من خلال تحليل التعابير الإشارية التي تسهم في إثراء المعنى وتجعله أكثر وضوحاً. ومن خلال استخدام الإشارات نجحت فرجينيا وولف في توضيح العديد من التفاصيل فيما يخص متكلم اللفظ (النطق) ومكان وزمن النطق. وعلى وفق لذلك فإن هذا يقود الى كشف الصراعات الداخلية بين الشخصيات وكشف السلوك النفسي لها.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: الإشارية، التداولية، الى المنارة