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The Significance of Personal Deictics in the Arabic Language

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ABSTRACT: This study rigorously examines the significance of personal deictics in Arabic from an integrated semantic–pragmatic perspective, using Ziyārat Wārith as an analytical case study. It proceeds from the central hypothesis that personal deictics—particularly pronouns and vocative forms—extend far beyond a merely neutral referential role; rather, they function as dynamic linguistic mechanisms that actively shape meaning, structure discourse, and direct its pragmatic intentions. The study uses a descriptive–analytical approach within a pragmatic framework, drawing on Benveniste's ideas about linguistic subjectivity and Levinson's classification of deixis as situational mechanisms. It identifies and examines the personal deictic expressions in Ziyārat Wārith related to the participants in the discourse (speaker, listener, and absent third party), along with a quantitative survey of deictic pronouns to uncover their discursive structure. Results show that the text heavily relies on first- and second-person pronouns, which create a direct, interactive mode that transforms Imam al-Husain (peace be upon him) from a spatially absent figure into a pragmatic participant. Conversely, third-person pronouns are used to reference historical figures and to shape the evaluative tone of the discourse. The study concludes that personal deictics are a key structural and semantic part of the pragmatic discourse in Ziyārat Wārith, playing a vital role in enhancing its emotional and devotional effect. This highlights the importance of studying deictics as an interdisciplinary area where semantics and pragmatics intersect, rather than as a purely traditional grammatical feature.

INTRODUCTION

Personal deictics are among the most prominent linguistic phenomena that reveal the profound interaction between linguistic structure and pragmatic context, as their meaning cannot be fully understood in isolation from the situation of use, the speaking subject, and the addressee. The shift from the structural conception of language—represented by Saussure, who viewed language as a system of internal relations—to contemporary pragmatic approaches has contributed to restoring attention to discourse elements tied to context, foremost among them deictics, understood as linguistic units whose meaning stabilizes only within the act of communication.

Within this framework, Émile Benveniste offered a foundational perspective on personal deictics by linking pronouns to linguistic subjectivity, treating them as indicators of the speaker's presence in discourse rather than merely neutral referential elements. For Benveniste, the pronoun is a linguistic tool that constitutes the self in utterance and determines its position vis-à-vis the addressee and the world. Based on this conception, personal deictics have become a fertile domain for pragmatic inquiry, serving as instruments that construct relationships among discourse participants and orient their semantic intentions.

Modern pragmatic scholarship, exemplified by Levinson, has further deepened this understanding by classifying deictics as core pragmatic mechanisms—encompassing personal, spatial, temporal, discourse, and social deictics—and emphasizing that their meaning varies with context and communicative situation. Accordingly, personal deictics are no longer studied solely as a grammatical phenomenon; rather, they have become an entry point for understanding the mechanisms of meaning production, strategies of influence, and the construction of discursive relations within texts.

The study of personal deictics in Arabic is particularly significant given the richness of its pronominal system and the high degree of pragmatic density characteristic of Arabic texts, especially religious texts. *Ziyarat Warith* stands out as a textual model that brings together the devotional and discursive dimensions, relying markedly on personal deictics to construct an interactive relationship between the visitor and the visited, and to evoke absent figures, recontextualizing them semantically within the discourse.

On this basis, the research problem is articulated in the following central question: How do personal deictics in *Ziyarat Warith* contribute to the construction of semantic meaning in its pragmatic sense, to the orientation of discourse, and to the realization of its semantic and communicative purposes?

From this main question stem several subsidiary questions, most notably:

- What types of personal deictics occur in *Ziyarat Warith*?
- What semantic and pragmatic functions do these deictics perform within the text?
- How do personal deictics contribute to constructing the relationship between the speaker, the addressee, and the absent third party?
- To what extent do these deictics enhance the persuasive and affective dimension of the text?

The study aims to achieve a set of objectives, foremost among them:

- Identifying the patterns of personal deictics in *Ziyarat Warith* and analyzing them from a semantic–pragmatic perspective.
- Clarifying the role of personal deictics in constructing meaning and directing discourse within the religious text.

Accordingly, the study seeks to offer a semantic–pragmatic reading of personal deictics in *Ziyarat Warith* that reveals their expressive potential and communicative function, and affirms that this phenomenon is not a marginal linguistic element, but rather a central tool in shaping discourse and constructing meaning. To this end, the study is structured into an introduction, two main sections, a conclusion presenting the most important findings and recommendations, and a list of sources and references.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive–analytical approach, as it is the most appropriate methodology for examining linguistic phenomena with a pragmatic dimension, particularly personal deictics, whose meaning is determined by the context of use. The descriptive component is concerned with identifying and classifying the linguistic phenomenon, while the analytical component undertakes the interpretation of its semantic and communicative functions within the text under investigation.

The research also draws on the pragmatic approach in analyzing personal deictics by relating them to the discourse situation and the participants in the communicative process (speaker, addressee, and absent third party), and by elucidating their semantic intentions in accordance with contemporary pragmatic theory—especially in light of Benveniste's conceptions of linguistic subjectivity and Levinson's classification of deictics as contextual pragmatic mechanisms.

In its procedures, the study traces the personal deictics occurring in the text of *Ziyarat Warith*, identifies their various patterns—such as attached and detached pronouns and forms of address—and then analyzes them within their textual context to uncover their semantic functions, including magnification, evocation, the construction of interactive relations, and the enhancement of the text's affective and emotive dimension. The analysis is conducted by integrating linguistic data and pragmatic theory, rather than being confined to a purely formal grammatical description.

Accordingly, the scope of the study is defined within clear thematic boundaries. The research is limited to examining the significance of personal deictics in Arabic, without extending the analysis to spatial, temporal, discourse, or social deictics, and focuses specifically on the pragmatic functions of these deictics within the text under study. Consequently, the analysis is confined to the text of *Ziyarat Warith* as a religious–pragmatic textual model, distinguished by its high degree of referential and discursive density, which allows for an in-depth semantic analysis of personal deictics.

The study employs a descriptive–analytical methodology within a semantic–pragmatic framework, avoiding extensive statistical comparisons or comparative studies across multiple texts. It draws on contemporary pragmatic perspectives, particularly

Saussure's contributions to establishing the relationship between language and system, Benveniste's concept of linguistic subjectivity, and Levinson's classification of deictics, without claiming comprehensive coverage of all pragmatic approaches.

The research is not confined by specific temporal or spatial boundaries, as it approaches the text as a linguistic discourse that remains fully amenable to pragmatic analysis across diverse and comparable communicative contexts.

SECTION ONE: DEICTICS BETWEEN SEMANTICS AND PRAGMATICS

Deictics are among the linguistic phenomena that have clearly revealed the limits of the traditional semantic approach and have contributed to the emergence of pragmatics as a scientific field concerned with the study of meaning in context. Semantics, in its structural conception, focuses on the stable meaning borne by linguistic units within the system, as articulated by Saussure, who distinguished between *langue*, the abstract system, and *parole*, the individual realization of that system (Saussure, 1916/1983, p. 14). However, this conception has difficulty accounting for linguistic units whose meaning varies with the speaker, the addressee, or the context—an essential characteristic of deictics.

Émile Benveniste represented a decisive turning point in this regard by linking personal deictics, especially pronouns, to the concept of subjectivity in language. He emphasized that the first- and second-person pronouns do not refer to a fixed external referent outside discourse, but rather derive their meaning from the act of utterance itself. The pronoun “I,” for instance, does not denote a general concept, but a self that is constituted at the moment of speech (Benveniste, 1971, pp. 224–226). In this way, personal deictics emerge as linguistic units with a semantic structure, yet they acquire their full meaning only within a pragmatic context.

Within the framework of modern pragmatics, Levinson classified deictics among the core pragmatic phenomena, alongside conversational implicature and presupposition, and regarded them as a clear example of the interface between semantics and pragmatics. Levinson maintains that semantics determines the general framework of deictic meaning, whereas pragmatics identifies the actual referent in context (Levinson, 1983, pp. 54–55). Consequently, deictics cannot be reduced to either domain in isolation, as they constitute an intermediate zone in which linguistic meaning and the communicative situation are mutually integrated.

This view was further reinforced by the work of Grice, who demonstrated that understanding meaning is not limited to what a sentence literally says, but also includes what is intended in the context of communication—a principle that applies clearly to deictics, which presuppose knowledge of the speaker, the addressee, and the surrounding circumstances of discourse (Grice, 1975, p. 44). Accordingly, deictics have come to represent a paradigmatic example of the complementary relationship between semantics and pragmatics: they possess a linguistic structure with an initial meaning yet remain open to contextual interpretation.

Thus, it may be concluded that deictics embody the epistemological intersection between semantics and pragmatics. They are linguistic units whose meaning cannot be fully grasped without combining semantic description with pragmatic analysis. This perspective acquires particular significance in the analysis of religious and discursive texts, which rely on deictics to construct interactive relations among discourse participants, direct meaning, and enhance the text's pragmatic impact.

Pragmatic studies expanded markedly in the second half of the twentieth century, broadening their scope to encompass multiple aspects of linguistic inquiry. As pragmatics is defined as the study of language in use, scholars of pragmatics have been concerned with all components of discourse (the participants involved, the place of speaking, the time of speaking, and the psychological or emotional states of the participants). Since pragmatics emerged from within semantics and analytic philosophy, it devoted particular attention to the analysis of different utterances in discourse. The works of Austin, followed by his student Searle, announced a new era in the history of linguistic and semantic studies—the era of pragmatic studies.

Deictics constitute one of the principal domains upon which semantic and pragmatic research is founded. They comprise diverse elements, including first- and second-person pronouns, temporal expressions, spatial expressions, and verbal tenses. The meaning of these deictics is determined only within the context of use, a linguistic concept that brings together all linguistic elements that directly refer to the communicative situation in terms of the presence of the speaking subject, time, or place in which the utterance—upon which its meaning depends—is produced¹. The speaker seeks to convey discourse with a specific

¹ See *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Pragmatics*, Jacques Moeschler and Anne Reboul: 110; *The Texture of the Text*, al-Azhar al-Zinād: 116.

intention to a particular addressee, in a given place and time, according to the context of use. Discourse, therefore, is produced by “a specific speaker or creator, with a particular intentionality, within a specific speech situation, at a specific time and place, and for a specific addressee, or at least for a collective or even an imagined addressee”².

From this perspective, it becomes evident that deictics do not perform an isolated referential function; rather, they contribute to the construction of the text as an integrated pragmatic unit, in which linguistic structure interacts with the speaker's intentions and the context of use. This view is consistent with al-Azhar al-Zanād's conception of the text as a semantic–pragmatic fabric whose meaning is not complete except through its internal and external contextual relations (al-Zanād, 1993, p. 116).

SECTION TWO: THE APPLICATION OF PERSONAL DEICTICS IN ZIYARAT WARITH

Ziyarat Warith is among the well-known devotional texts dedicated to Imam al-Husain (peace be upon him). It is transmitted on the authority of Imam al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) and has been reported in the major Shi'i canonical sources and others. It was narrated by Ibn Qūlawayh (d. 368 AH) in his work *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, and it is also recorded in *Bihār al-Anwār* by al-Majlisī and *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid* by al-Ṭūsī. The text is recited on various occasions during the visitation of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him).

A recurring expression in this ziyārah is the term “Wārith” (heir), which signifies Imam al-Ḥusayn's inheritance of the legacy of the prophets who preceded him—those whom God Almighty singled out to disseminate the teachings of His religion among their peoples throughout the ages. In this sense, Imam al-Husain represents a continuation of the prophetic, messianic path and the culmination of the prophets' sacrifices, offering the greatest sacrifice in history by sacrificing his entire family to uphold the word of truth.

Accordingly, this section focuses on Ziyarat Warith to shed light on the semantic and pragmatic roles of personal deictics and on how these deictics are employed to generate significant meanings that enrich the text with connotations that point to the importance of the selves referred to in the ziyārah. Personal deictics, by indicating the participants in the communicative process—speaker and addressee—may also refer to a participant outside the immediate communicative act, namely the absent third party.

Personal deictics are realized through attached, detached, and implicit pronouns. The pronoun “I” refers to the speaker in discourse; it is not always explicitly uttered, yet it is inferred by the addressee, as it denotes the speaking self³. The pronoun, as defined by al-Murādī, is “that which is established to specify its referent while indicating speaking, addressing, or absence”⁴. From al-Murādī's definition, the pronoun's pragmatic dimension becomes evident, as its reference to one of the discourse participants reveals the communicative aspect that links all parties to the interaction. Thus, “the pronoun plays the role of transferring linguistic signs from the domain of language to the domain of discourse”⁵.

The early Arab grammarians and rhetoricians addressed pronouns because of their central importance in linguistic communication. Al-Sakkākī (d. 626 AH) states: “Know that the pronoun is a noun that inherently contains deixis, pointing to the speaker, the addressee, or another referent previously mentioned; this is its fundamental nature. That is to say, the pronoun—considered in terms of its formal realization—is divided into two types: one with which sentence initiation is not permissible, called the attached (clitic) pronoun, and another with which it is permissible, called the detached (independent) pronoun”⁶.

The significance of the pronoun lies in its deictic function, referring to a speaker, an addressee, or an absent third party, thereby clarifying the intended meaning for the speaker and completing the mental representation without ambiguity or confusion. Thus, “every time 'I' is uttered, this word can only indicate (point to) the individual who said 'I' for the purpose of speaking

² Pragmatics of Discourse and the Parameters of Narration and Reception, Maḥrūs Muḥammad Ibrāhīm ‘Alī, Journal of Linguistic Sciences, vol. 1, no. 1, 2007: 173.

³ See: al-Shahrī, Discourse Strategies: 82.

⁴ Clarifying Purposes and Paths in the Commentary on Ibn Mālik's Alfiyya, al-Murādī: 1/359.

⁵ Analysis of Theatrical Discourse in the Light of Pragmatic Theory: 32.

⁶ Miṣbāḥ al-‘Ulūm, al-Sakkākī: 1/66.

about himself. 'You' can only indicate the individual whom the speaker addresses for the purpose of speaking about him as an addressee⁷. In this way, the referential value of the pronoun is unified through the context in which it occurs, anchoring it to a specific speaker or addressee. Accordingly, "the function of 'I' is the speaker's utterance of 'I' at the moment of enunciation, while 'you' points to the listener who receives the discourse. Discourse is formed and crystallized between these two parties"⁸.

Interaction thus takes place through directing discourse from a speaker to a recipient by means of deictic elements that signal them and by the circumstances of utterance. "Arabic pronouns are classified according to presence within the speech situation or absence (that is, according to whether the persons referred to participate in the act of enunciation or not) into two branches: pronouns of presence and pronouns of absence. Pronouns of presence are further divided into the speaker, who constitutes the center of the deictic situation and is the emitter, and the addressee, who shares presence within that situation"⁹.

Kashshaf Istilahāt al-Funūn states: "That which is indicated as being external refers, in reality, to the expression that denotes the entity itself; the attribution to it is metaphorical, or else 'entity' is intended to mean that which denotes it metaphorically. Thus, definiteness and indefiniteness are among the attributes of the entity—that is, among the attributes of that whose denotation is an entity—and therefore they apply only to nouns and not to other parts of speech. On this basis, if 'entity' were replaced by 'noun,' it would be more appropriate. By 'external' is meant that which stands in contrast to the mind. The reason it is said 'to the external' is that every noun is posited to denote something that is already established in the addressee's knowledge as being denoted by that noun. Hence, it is not proper to address someone in a language unless that person has prior knowledge of that language. Accordingly, every expression constitutes an indication of that which is established in the addressee's mind as the referent for which that expression was posited"¹⁰.

We shall examine the personal deictic expressions occurring in *Ziyārat Wārith* and seek to investigate their semantic and pragmatic dimensions as follows:

First: First-Person Pronouns

These are the pronouns that refer to the speaker, who is "the central self in discourse, for it is the one who articulates it to express specific intentions and to achieve a particular purpose within it"¹¹. Thus, "when the speaker possesses language and exercises control over it, he renders it part of his own capacities and positions himself at a higher level within the discursive process"¹².

1. The Attached First-Person Pronoun

The attached pronoun is that which is affixed to the end of a word and forms an integral part of it; it does not occur at the beginning of a word or at the beginning of a sentence. Hence, "it is not permissible for it to occur at the beginning of speech, nor after *illā* ('except') in normative usage"¹³.

Among the attached first-person pronouns identified in the text of the *Ziyāra* is the first-person suffix (*yā* 'al-mutakallim), as found in the following passages: "*innī bikum mu'minūn*, ..., *bi-sharā'i dīnī wa-khawātīmī 'amalī*, ..., *wa-qalbī li-qalbiikum silmun wa-amrī li-amriikum muttabi'un*, ..., *bi-abī anta wa-ummī*, ..., *yā mawlāya*, ..., *wa-an yaj'alant*"¹⁴.

⁷ Enunciation, Jean Cervoni: 117.

⁸ Pragmatics and Communication Strategy, Dhahabiyya Ḥammū al-Ḥājī: 157.

⁹ The Texture of the Text, al-Azhar al-Zinād: 117.

¹⁰ Encyclopedia of the Definitions of the Arts and Sciences, Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Ibn al-Qāḍī Muḥammad Ḥamid ibn Muḥammad Šābir al-Fārūqī al-Ḥanafī al-Tahānawī (d. after 1158 AH), ed. Dr. 'Alī Daḥrūj, Maktabat Lubnān Nāshirūn, Beirut, 1st ed., 1996: 2/1586.

¹¹ 'Abd al-Hādī ibn Ḍāfir al-Shahrī, Discourse Strategies, p. 33.

¹² Linguistics of Enunciation and Discourse Pragmatics, Dhahabiyya Ḥammū al-Ḥājī: 97.

¹³ Clarifying Purposes and Paths in the Commentary on Ibn Mālik's Alfiyya, al-Murādi: 1/359.

¹⁴ See Mafātiḥ al-Jinān.

The use of *inna*, which serves a function of emphasis, in conjunction with the first-person suffix conveys a sense of insistence and firm conviction, expressing complete and unwavering belief in the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them).

It may be observed that the deictic element (the *ya'* suffix) realizes a pragmatic dimension manifested in the linkage between the speaker's self and that of the addressee—namely, Imām al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him). This is most clearly evident in the expression (*wa-qalbi li-qalbiikum*) (“and my heart is at peace with your heart”), for the heart is the locus of love and obedience; moreover, “the heart is the seat of discernment, the center of the spiritual senses, and the locus of cognition and awareness”¹⁵. God the Exalted says: “Indeed, in that is a reminder for whoever has a heart” (Q 50:37).

Similarly, the expression (*amri li-amriikum*) (“my command is subject to your command”) encompasses all the affairs of allegiance, in prosperity and adversity, in secrecy and in openness.

It is also noteworthy that the addressee is invoked through the expression (*bi-abi anta wa-ummi*) (“may my father and mother be your ransom”), which signifies the magnitude of his rank in the speaker's estimation, to the extent that he would offer his parents as a ransom for him. This represents a lofty degree of affection, reverence, and exalted status, and reflects the devotee's readiness to sacrifice what is dearest to him for his master.

2. The Implicit (Understood) Pronoun (anā)

The implicit pronoun (*al-dāmir al-mustatir*) is defined as follows: “It is every pronominal element that is required by the structure yet for which no specific lexical form has been assigned, reliance being placed instead on the indication provided by the context of discourse. For example: *Zayd qāma* ('Zayd stood') and *Zayd muntalik* ('Zayd is departing'), for in both *qāma* and *muntalik* there must necessarily be a pronoun that refers back to *Zayd*. This pronoun has no specific form assigned to it, and thus it is not said to be omitted. This differs from your statement *ja' anī alladhī ḍarabtu* ('the one whom I struck came to me'), for *ḍarabtu* requires an object pronoun that refers back to *alladhī*; however, this pronoun is omitted, since it does have a specific form that could be mentioned, and its mention is permissible. Hence, omission in this case is actual, unlike the pronoun in *Zayd muntalik*, which, when mentioned, would not take a lexical form”¹⁶.

The significance of the implicit pronoun in the text of the *Ziyāra* becomes apparent in the expression (*wa-ashhadu*) (“and I bear witness”), which is repeated in several instances. The implicit pronoun therein refers to the speaker, who testifies to his establishment of prayer and to his fulfillment of all that God has commanded of acts of worship. This bears an indication of a luminous, spiritual rank that every believer is obliged to acknowledge, as stated by Imām ‘Alī (peace be upon him): “O Salmān, a believer's faith is not complete until he recognizes me through my luminosity (*al-nūrāniyya*). When he recognizes me in this way, he is a believer whose heart God has tested for faith, whose breast He has expanded for Islam, and who has become truly cognizant of his religion. Whoever falls short of this is doubtful and uncertain. O Salmān and O Jundub: knowledge of me through my luminosity is knowledge of God, and knowledge of God is knowledge of me; this is the pure religion.” He then said: “Muḥammad and I were a single light, glorifying God before all acts of glorification and shining before all created beings. God then divided that light into two halves: a Prophet, chosen, and ‘Alī, chosen. God said to one half: 'Be Muḥammad,' and to the other: 'Be ‘Alī.' For this reason, the Prophet—peace be upon him—said: 'I am from ‘Alī, and ‘Alī is from me’”¹⁷.

Absolute belief and complete assent thus lead the speaker to bear witness on behalf of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) in all matters, whether manifest or hidden within the realm of the unseen.

¹⁵ Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr in Creed, Law, and Methodology, Dr. Wahba ibn Muṣṭafā al-Zuhaylī, Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āṣir, Damascus, 2nd ed., 1418 AH: 19/222.

¹⁶ Al-Kinnāsh fī Fannay al-Naḥw wa al-Ṣarf, Abū al-Fidā’ ‘Imād al-Dīn Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Alī ibn Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ibn Shāhanshāh ibn Ayyūb, al-Malik al-Mu‘ayyad, Lord of Ḥamāh (d. 732 AH), study and ed. Dr. Riyāḍ ibn Ḥasan al-Khawwām, al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya for Printing and Publishing, Beirut, 2000: 1/249.

¹⁷ Jannat al-Ḥawādith fī Sharḥ Ziyārat Wārith, Ḥabīb Allāh al-Sharīf al-Kāshānī, ed. Nizār al-Ḥasan, Dār al-Anwār, Bātharī Press, 2nd ed., 1424 AH: 136.

Second: Second-Person Pronouns

The most frequently employed pronouns in the text of the *Ziyāra* are second-person pronouns. This is because the speaker directs his discourse toward addressing Imām al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him); accordingly, second-person forms predominate throughout the text.

1. The Second-Person Pronoun (kāf)

The *kāf* is an attached pronoun indicating the addressee, and it is the most recurrent pronoun in the *Ziyāra*, as the speaker addresses his master. This is evident in the repeated formula (*al-salāmu ‘alayka*) (“peace be upon you”), which appears in numerous passages. The meaning of *salām* is as follows: “*Salām* conveys the sense of safety and well-being. When people say ‘*al-salāmu ‘alaykum*,’ it means: safety from God be upon you. It has also been said that *al-Salām* is one of the Names of God, and it has been said that *al-salām* is God Himself; thus, when it is said ‘*al-salāmu ‘alaykum*,’ it is as though one is saying: God is over you”¹⁸.

It may be observed that the deictic value of the element (*kāf*), which refers back to Imām al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), confers a particular specificity upon this salutation. The speaker's intent is: you in particular, my master, are the exclusive recipient of this greeting. The pronoun is linked to a prior referent to which it points—namely, the initial *kāf*—and this referent is then reiterated throughout the text, producing a unified textual pattern. In this way, a concentrated semantic value is achieved, characterized by the marked specificity of address.

2. The Second-Person Pronoun (tā’)

The presence of the second-person pronoun (*tā’*) is also clearly observable, appearing in multiple instances where the addressee shifts from the *kāf* to the *tā’*, which likewise denotes the addressee. Examples include: (*aqamta, atayta, nahayta, amarta, aṭa’ ta, ...*). These pronominal forms are deployed in the service of the overarching context, namely the particularity of the *Ziyāra* and the confinement of its intent exclusively to Imām al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him).

3. The Pronoun (kāf for the Plural Addressee)

This pronoun indicates a group of addressees. Al-Suhaylī explains this by stating: “The speaker dispenses with the explicit noun in the context of reporting because direct perception suffices to indicate it. Then, since the addressee shares with the speaker the very meaning of discourse—inasmuch as speech begins with the speaker and culminates with the addressee, and were it not for the addressee, the speaker's speech would not become an audible utterance nor would there be any need to express it—when both participate in the intent of speech and its benefit, they also share in the form that indicates the explicit noun, namely the *alif* and *nūn*”¹⁹.

Among the deictic instantiations of the independent pronoun found in *Ziyārat Wārith* are the expressions (*bikum mu’ minūn wa-bi-ḥabibikum*) (“I believe in you and in your return”). Here, the plural second-person pronoun acquires a pragmatic value that signifies belief in al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) and in his Ahl al-Bayt, for they constitute the wellspring of knowledge, and their ultimate point of reference is one—namely, the Noble Messenger (peace be upon him and his family).

Another relevant instance occurs in the text of the *Ziyāra*: “*Ṣalawātu Allāhi ‘alaykum wa-‘alā arwāḥikum wa-‘alā ajsādikum wa-‘alā ajsāmikum wa-‘alā shahidikum wa-‘alā ghā’ibikum wa-‘alā ḡābirikum wa-‘alā baṭīnikum*.”

Here, the second-person pronoun appears once in annexation to *ajsād* (bodies) and once in annexation to *ajsām* (corporeal forms), which suggests a distinction between the two terms. It has been proposed that *ajsām* may refer to the original, subtle bodies that do not change with the passage of time or the occurrence of corruption, whereas *ajsād* denote the elemental, temporal bodies that undergo diminution and increase. It has also been suggested that one of the two may signify the imaginal, intermediary (*barzakhī*) bodies, while the other refers to this tangible, physical structure in the present world. Another distinction

¹⁸ Lisān al-‘Arab: 7/265.

¹⁹ Natā’ij al-Fikr fī al-Naḥw, Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad al-Suhaylī (d. 581 AH), Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1st ed., 1412 AH / 1992: 172.

is sometimes drawn between *jasad* and *badan*, whereby the former is applied only to rational living beings, unlike the latter; it is also said that *badan* refers to the body exclusive of the head²⁰.

This passage also reveals another binary opposition, namely that of the present (*al-shahid*) and the absent (*al-ghā'ib*), both annexed to the plural second-person pronoun. It has been suggested that by “their present” is meant the eleven Imams who appeared among the people in their respective eras and were known to them, at least in general terms, whereas by “their absent” is meant the twelfth Imam (may God hasten his reappearance), concerning whose existence people have differed, advancing divergent views. According to the doctrine of the Imāmiyya, he is alive and present, though concealed from our sight for numerous reasons. It has also been suggested that “the present” refers to the living Imam in every age; consequently, the situation is reversed in the present time, in which the *Qā'im* is the one who is present, while the others are absent, having passed away and fulfilled their appointed terms. Thus, the *Qā'im* is the pole (*qutb*) of this age and the focal point of the circle of possibility; he governs the affairs of creation and exercises authority over the world by God's permission. It has further been said that what is intended is their state of presence with creation and their absence from all but God²¹.

The expressions *ẓāhirikum wa-bāṭinikum* (“your outward and your inward”) signify, respectively, what is manifest and what is concealed—that is, your public and your secret states.

Third: Vocative Constructions

Sibawayh states: “Every annexed noun in which the vocative particle occurs is in the accusative by virtue of an implicit verb whose explicit expression is omitted; as for the singular, it is in the nominative, while occupying the syntactic position of an accusative noun”²².

Vocative expression (*al-nida'*) is defined as follows: “*Nida'*—pronounced with kasra or damma—is the raising of one's voice toward the person whose attention one seeks, so that he turns toward the speaker and is addressed, by means of one of the particles designated for this purpose; this is its original function. One may also call out to someone whose turning is not intended, but rather as an expression of lamentation, and these particles, or some of them, may also be used for exclamation, not for the purpose of calling someone to attend”²³. A vocative construction consists of a vocative particle and the vocative noun.

The vocative particle *yā* occurs repeatedly in numerous passages of the Noble *Ziyāra*. Al-Shāṭibī explains the repetition of the vocative particle by identifying three possible motives. First, the addressee may be turning away, such that one perceives he will not attend unless effort is exerted in calling him; this includes rational beings, as when one says *yā Zayd* or *ayā Zayd* while he is present, yet preoccupied with a matter that fully occupies his attention or heedless of the call. Second, the addressee may be asleep or heavy with sleep, responding only through intensified calling and prolonged vocalization; thus, one says *yā rajul* or *yā na'im*, in the hope that he will awaken and be addressed. Third, the purpose may be emphasis: the addressee is already facing the speaker and near to him, yet the call is intensified for a compelling reason, so he is addressed with the call of one who is distant—*yā Zayd*, *yā akhī*—to prompt a swift response²⁴.

The repetition of the vocative call in the text of the visitation imparts a communicative dimension between the speaker and the addressee, as though the speaker has inwardly summoned the presence of the addressee—within both mind and emotion—and addresses him as if he were physically present, through the vocative particle (*yā'*), which is employed for both the near and the distant.

²⁰ Jannat al-Ḥawādith: 181.

²¹ Ibid.: 182.

²² Al-Kitāb: 2/182.

²³ Al-Maqāṣid al-Shāfiya fī Sharḥ al-Khulāṣa al-Kāfiya (Commentary on Ibn Mālik's Alfīyya), Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā al-Shāṭibī (d. 790 AH): 5/233.

²⁴ Ibid.: 5/237.

The first passage is characterized by the conjunction of the vocative particle with the expression (*yā wārīt*), which appears in a sequential series: (*yā wārīt Ādam ṣafwat Allāh*), (*yā wārīt Nuh*), (*yā wārīt Ibrahim*), (*yā wārīt Mūsā*), (*yā wārīt ʿĪsā*), (*yā wārīt Muḥammad*), and (*yā wārīt Amir al-Muʿminin*).

Here, the mention of six prophets (*peace be upon them*) is repeatedly invoked through direct address. This mode of invocation generates a pragmatic dimension that manifests the continuity of the prophetic lineage from Adam to Muhammad (*may God's blessings be upon them all*).

This prophetic sequence then extends and converges with the legatee of this community, who thus becomes the heir of the Commander of the Faithful. In this context, the vocative particle is employed to confer an identificatory dimension upon Imam al-Ḥusayn, presenting him as the scion of this prophetic tree.

The vocative continues thereafter, culminating in the coupling of the vocative particle with the term (*ibn*): (*yā ibn Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā*, *yā ibn ʿAlī al-Murtaḍā*, *yā ibn Fāṭima al-Zahrā*, *yā ibn Khadija al-Kubrā*).

Here, the vocative acquires an additional signification through its association with the term (*ibn*), namely a genealogical connotation, affirming that al-Ḥusayn (*peace be upon him*) is the grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad (*may God's blessings and peace be upon him and his family*) and the grandson of Lady Khadija (*may God be pleased with her*). He is also the son of Imam ʿAlī (*peace be upon him*) and the son of al-Zahrā (*peace be upon her*).

The vocative then continues, culminating in the designation of al-Ḥusayn as the “avenger of God,” embodied in his uprising against tyranny, his rejection of injustice, and his supreme sacrifice for the exaltation of the word of truth.

Fourth: Numerical Enumeration of Deictic Pronouns in Ziyārat Wārith (peace be upon him)

First: First-Person Pronouns (the Visitor)

Type of Pronoun	Form	Frequency
1. Implied first-person pronoun	(ashhadu, jiʿtu, shahidtu ...)	9
2. First-person suffix -tu	-tu	7
3. Plural nā (collective)	-nā	3
Total	—	19

This enumeration indicates a marked prominence of the first-person pronoun, signifying the centrality of the visiting self as an active pragmatic agent participating in the production of meaning, rather than as a passive recipient.

Second: Second-Person Pronouns (Imam al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon him)

Type of Pronoun	Form	Frequency
1. Independent second-person pronoun	anta	4
2. Second-person suffix -ka	-ka	11
3. Plural second-person -kum	-kum	2
Total	—	17

This demonstrates the high density of address pronouns, which confirms that the visitation is structured around direct discourse that transforms the Imam from one who is spatially absent into a pragmatically present interlocutor. This, in turn, reinforces the interactive semantic dimension of the text.

Third: Third-Person Pronouns (the Prophets – the Enemies – the Communities)

Type of Pronoun	Form	Frequency
1. Implied third-person pronoun	(warithta, qutla ...)	6
2. Third-person suffix -hu	-hu	5
3. hum / -hum (plural)	plural third person	4
Total	—	15

The significance of this distribution lies in the fact that third-person pronouns function as a discursive tool for evoking historical figures and for constructing a value-laden stance (*loyalty/disavowal*) within the discourse.

CONCLUSION

This statistical analysis reveals that first-person pronoun number *19, second-person pronouns 17, and third-person pronouns 15, yielding an overall total of 51 deictic pronouns*. This distribution demonstrates the dominance of first- and second-person pronouns over third-person forms, indicating that the discursive structure of the text is grounded in direct interaction between the visitor and the visited. By contrast, third-person pronouns are strategically employed to construct historical memory and to consolidate a normative value position. This distribution further confirms that personal deixis performs a central pragmatic function in the production of meaning and the orientation of discourse.

The study arrived at several findings, including the following:

1. Personal deixis in *Ziyarat Warith* constitutes a communicative dimension between the speaker and the addressee.
2. The clarity of deixis—manifested through first- and second-person pronouns—confers a distinctive quality upon the text, characterized by affective proximity between the speaker and the addressee, namely Imam al-Ḥusayn (*peace be upon him*).
3. Second-person pronouns appear with marked prominence, in both their attached and detached forms, a feature that accords with the general context defined by the particularity of addressing Imam al-Ḥusayn (*peace be upon him*).
4. The presence of vocative forms throughout the passages of the visitation imparts a pragmatic, communicative dimension, realized through the evocation of the addressee within the speaker's thought and consciousness, as though he were near and directly addressed. This, in turn, provides the speaker with a sense of psychological reassurance in addressing his Imam.
5. The total number of personal deictic pronouns in the text of the visitation reaches (51 pronouns), distributed among first-, second-, and third-person forms, indicating a high density of personal reference within the discourse.
6. First-person pronouns register the highest frequency, amounting to (19 pronouns), which reflects the centrality of the visiting self in constructing the discourse and confirms that the text is not based on passive reception, but rather on active subjective participation expressing testimony, loyalty, and doctrinal stance.
7. Second-person pronouns rank second, with (17 pronouns), revealing the interactive and dialogic nature of the discourse, whereby Imam al-Ḥusayn (*peace be upon him*) is transformed from one who is spatially absent into a pragmatically present interlocutor to whom speech acts are directly addressed.
8. Third-person pronouns number (15 pronouns) and are primarily employed to evoke historical figures and to construct the binary of loyalty and dissociation, thereby linking the pragmatic present to the collective doctrinal memory.

9. The numerical distribution of pronouns demonstrates a relative balance between first- and second-person forms, alongside a lesser presence of third-person pronouns, which confirms that the pronominal structure of the visitation is grounded more in direct interaction than in informative narration.
10. The findings indicate that personal deixis in *Ziyarat Warith* does not merely perform a referential function; rather, it contributes to the production of meaning and the orientation of the text's pragmatic intentions, through constructing relationships among the participants in discourse and enhancing its affective and devotional impact.
11. Personal deixis constitutes a central structural and semantic component in shaping the pragmatic discourse of *Ziyarat Warith*. The study reveals a deliberate deployment of pronouns as effective linguistic tools in meaning-making, rather than as neutral referential units. First-person pronouns reinforce the presence of the visiting self within the discourse; second-person pronouns play a fundamental role in establishing a direct interactive relationship with Imam al-Husain (*peace be upon him*); and third-person pronouns are utilized to evoke historical figures and to consolidate the text's value-based stance.
12. The quantitative analysis of pronouns demonstrates that the discursive structure of the visitation tends toward direct, interactive address, in harmony with the pragmatic nature of devotional religious texts, which aim at influence, communication, and the construction of doctrinal identity. The study further confirms that personal deixis constitutes an interface between semantics and pragmatics: while possessing an initial linguistic meaning, its full significance is realized only within the context of use and the situational frame of communication.

In light of these findings, the study recommends further semantic research of a pragmatic orientation focusing on deixis in visitation and supplicatory texts, and comparing them with other discursive genres, in order to uncover patterns of semantic and pragmatic deployment of deixis within the Arab–Islamic intellectual heritage.

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