RESEARCH ARTICLE	**Deixis in the Qur'anic Discourse: A Textual-Pragmatic Approach**	
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Abstract

This study explores the phenomenon of deixis in the Qur'anic discourse from a textual-pragmatic perspective, considering deixis as linguistic elements whose interpretation depends on their contextual and situational use. The research aims to uncover the pragmatic dimension of deictic expressions by analyzing their functions and roles in constructing meaning within the Qur'anic text. It focuses on three main types of deixis: pronouns, temporal adverbials, and spatial adverbials, highlighting how these elements guide comprehension and structure the communicative relationship between speaker and addressee.

The study adopts a descriptive-analytical methodology, drawing upon insights from pragmatic linguistics, particularly theories related to context and situation. It concludes that Qur'anic deictic expressions are not static or merely grammatical tools, but rather dynamic semantic structures whose meanings shift according to the discourse situation. This dynamism grants the Qur'anic text a unique communicative character that aligns with the reader's context and enhances the depth of interpretation.

The findings emphasize the importance of integrating a pragmatic perspective in contemporary Qur'anic studies, as it offers a more precise understanding of textual structure and semantic fluidity, and reveals the text's ongoing capacity to interact with diverse interpretive contexts.

Introduction

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Deixis represents one of the most prominent linguistic phenomena that has garnered considerable attention in contemporary linguistic studies, particularly within the domains of textual and pragmatic linguistics. It is not merely a set of simple linguistic tools but rather constitutes central elements in understanding the structure of discourse and analyzing its interaction with context. The complexity of this phenomenon lies in its dynamic nature, as its full meaning does not stem solely from its verbal structure but from the context in which it appears and the situation in which the discourse is used. This makes deixis especially significant in texts characterized by deep semantic structure and stylistic diversity, such as the Qur'anic text.

The Qur'an, being a religious, normative, and directive text at once, employs deixis with artistic precision, necessitating an analytical examination to uncover how these elements are utilized in weaving meaning and directing understanding. Pronouns, demonstratives, and temporal and spatial adverbials are tools that can only be understood within their textual context. They form bridges between parts of the discourse, linking the absent and the present, the speaker and the listener, and the temporal moment with the broader message of the discourse.

This study falls within this framework, aiming to shed light on deixis in the Qur'anic text from a textual-pragmatic perspective. It assumes that these elements operate within an integrated semantic system governed by the requirements of context and the characteristics of situation. The study also seeks to offer a scientifically interpretive reading that transcends traditional approaches to the Qur'anic text, moving toward a more complex understanding of the mechanisms of meaning production. It questions the ways in which deictic relationships are constructed within the text and the methods by which they are used to frame discourse and guide its interpretation.

In this sense, Qur'anic deixis is neither neutral nor random; rather, it participates in the meticulous architecture of discourse, performing argumentative, communicative, and interpretive functions. Thus, delving into its analysis can enrich contemporary Qur'anic studies and provide an effective tool for reading the semantic contexts of the text.

1. The concept of Deixis:

"Deixis" represents the first level of pragmatic analysis, which is concerned with clarifying the presence of the addressee and the temporal and spatial context within the discourse. This is only possible by tracing the deictic elements represented in pronouns, temporal and spatial adverbials, and what they refer to in the context in which they appear. They are considered linguistic markers whose referents can only be determined within the framework of pragmatic discourse.[1]

1.1 The Linguistic Definition:

The meanings of the word "ishara" in Arabic come from the root (sh, w, r), and they revolve around the notions of appearance and form. Among them is the act of presenting something visibly, especially when offering it for sale. It is said, "shara al-dabba yashuruha" when someone offers the animal for sale. In the same sense, pointing is done with the finger or hand, which is why the index fingers are called "al-mushiratan". A person "yushir" when he points or gestures with his hand. It is also used in the context of giving an opinion, when a matter is presented for consultation.[2]

In Mukhtar al-Sihah it is stated: "He pointed with his hand –he gestured; and he pointed with his opinion he advised. Al-shuwar and al-shara refer to clothing and appearance."[3]

Thus, "ishara" in the linguistic sense goes back to the root (sh, w, r), and its meanings revolve around form and outward appearance. It may indicate the visible presentation of something, such as offering an animal for sale, or a gesture by hand or finger, as in signaling and clarification. It is also used to refer to giving advice or expressing an opinion. One of its derivatives is "shara", meaning clothing or outward form. Therefore, ishara is related to everything that reveals or clarifies meaning through motion, shape, or display.

1.2 The Terminological Definition of Deixis:

Deixis is defined as "a linguistic sign whose referent cannot be determined except within the context of the discourse in which it appears, as it holds no intrinsic meaning by itself. For this reason, it is called an ambiguous or variable element.

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While every word in a language refers to a certain referent, deictic expressions exist in the speaker's mental lexicon without being associated with a fixed meaning."

This definition concerns deictic expressions—referred to in linguistics as deictics which are words that do not have a fixed meaning unless used in a specific context. Simply put:

- These words such as I, here, now, this, there, tomorrow, yesterday only become meaningful when we know who is speaking, when, and where.

- For example, the word I has no specific meaning on its own. But when someone says: "I am hungry," we know that the speaker is the one who is hungry. The meaning of I changes depending on who is speaking.

- For this reason, they are called ambiguous or variable elements because they do not carry a fixed referent. Their meaning shifts according to context time, place, and speaker.

While most words in language refer to a stable meaning (such as pen, tree, house), deixis exists in the speaker's mind but is not associated with any referent unless used within discourse.

In Western linguistic research, the term deixis, derived from Greek, refers to "pointing" or "indicating," which is close to the designations found in our own linguistic tradition. Several scholars have studied deixis descriptively and illustrated it with examples that align with the communicative situations in which these expressions occur. They typically classified such linguistic signs under the category of definiteness and indefiniteness, except for adverbials, which were given a separate classification.

Thus, deictic expressions are linguistic markers whose referents are not determined except in the context of discourse. They are devoid of intrinsic meaning, which is why classical grammarians referred to them as ambiguous elements (mubhamat). To understand the referent of such expressions, it is essential to at least know the identity of the speaker and the addressee, as well as the temporal and spatial framework of the linguistic event.[4]

2. Types of Deixis

2.1 Personal Deixis:

Personal deixis refers to pronouns of all kinds and is often referred to as personal pronouns. Grammatical works have long examined their classifications, subcategories, and the function of each element in the sentence, along with their manifestations in everyday discourse just as Sibawayh did by analyzing real-life examples drawn from the linguistic environment of his time. The use of pronouns is especially evident in ordinary speech, where communication is direct between interlocutors.

In reality, deictic expressions are primarily used in face-to-face verbal interaction. Our utterances are understood by those present, but they require interpretation for those who were not present at the moment of speech.[5]

Studies in this regard often extend into the field of sociolinguistics. Some researchers refer to personal deixis as social deixis,[6] because its usage is influenced by social contexts and class distinctions particularly in reference to first-person pronouns (ana – I, nahnu – we) and second-person pronouns (anta – you [sing.], antum – you [pl.]). This holds true across many languages, although in some, third-person pronouns (huwa – he, hiya – she, hum – they) are also included.

These pronouns are used according to the social circumstances and class differences between interlocutors, especially in direct forms of communication. In many languages, personal deixis is structured around distinctions in social rank for example, when a speaker from a higher social class addresses someone from a lower one.[7]

The choice of such forms implicitly suggests a particular communicative relationship without stating it directly namely, the level of familiarity or social distance that may exist between the speaker and the addressee.[8]

Thus, to a large extent, we can identify social relationships through the use of these or those pronouns.

2.2 Spatial Deixis

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The idea underlying spatial deixis also known as spatial adverbials centers around the degree of proximity or distance of objects or persons in relation to the speaker or the listener.

The psychological dimension plays a key role in the speaker's choice of linguistic markers that indicate location. As George Paul notes, this becomes especially important when considering spatial deixis in speech, as it is essential to recognize that locations for the speaker may be identified both mentally and physically. [9]

Paul explains this idea by referring to our frequent use of the word "here". A typical example is when one uses it while being far from home, reflecting the strong psychological bond between a person and their home. [10]

However, intentionality what the speaker intends by using the word "here" along with the listener's interpretive ability, helps remove ambiguity and ensures clarity when such deictic expressions are used.

Intentionality is the pragmatic dimension that allows the speaker to assume that their use of such linguistic signs presumes shared understanding with the listener. Another pragmatic layer involves the presence of background knowledge that facilitates interaction between interlocutors, including shared understanding of the world and elements surrounding the speech event.

George Paul also introduces the concept of deictic extension, [11] which becomes evident in verbs like "go" and "come".

For example, when someone says:

I will come later, this implies movement toward the location of the listener. [12]

This concept is tied to the psychological associations speakers have with places they expect to move toward. Paul adds another example:

I am not here right now.

Such an utterance requires the listener to have prior knowledge of the speaker's location. Paul points out that this type of utterance is typically produced by an answering machine, which intends for the words "now" and "here" to apply to any moment the message is played, not necessarily the time it was recorded. [13]

If these linguistic markers refer either to signs mentioned within the speech context or to non-linguistic signs known to the recipient, they become an additional factor in interpreting the speaker's intent. This is particularly clear in narrative texts or when relaying speech that contains defined contexts for the deictic expressions used.

George Paul offers another example, noting that a similar deictic extension occurs in performative speech. This happens when direct discourse is used to refer to a person, place, feeling, or object. For instance, describing a visit to a pet store, one night say: I point to this little puppy in the cage. Sadness covers his face. It's as if he's saying: "I am very sad here. Will   you   set   me   free?" In this case, the adverb "here" does not refer to the speaker's actual physical location, but rather to a holistic position embodied by the puppy. [14]

The textual dimensions between interlocutors determine the success of communication especially when it comes to temporal or spatial deixis. Spatial and temporal adverbials are subject to the perceived proximity or distance from the speaker and the listener, as well as the time of utterance. These are all part of the pragmatic dimension, which, as previously mentioned, depends on shared knowledge between the interlocutors.

In fact, the true pragmatic basis of spatial deixis (spatial adverbials) might be better understood as psychological (mental) distances. Objects that are physically close to the speaker will seem near due to psychological factors, while distant objects will appear far for the same reasons.

For example: That man over there. Nevertheless, the speaker might refer to something physically near as if it were distant such as a perfume the speaker is smelling by using referential language like: I don't like its beauty.

In such an analysis, a word like "that" does not have a fixed referential meaning, but its context-bound interpretation is shaped by what the speaker intended. [15]

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From the speech examples offered by George Paul, we can conclude that textual dimensions can convey nuanced, context-dependent meanings derived from the surface structures of utterance. This is clearly evident in the use of spatial deixis.

2.3 Temporal Deixis

Temporal deixis refers to what is known in traditional grammar as adverbials of time, often grouped by grammarians under the category of ẓarf (which also includes spatial adverbials). As temporal indicators, and based on their lexical meaning, these expressions convey the notion of "in" (as in "in time"), and thus express the temporal environment of speech that is, the era or moment which helps the addressee interpret the discourse. When a speaker situates an utterance within a specific timeframe—explicitly using a temporal deictic or referring to it through linguistic or non-linguistic cues—it necessarily contributes to clearer and more effective communication.

One of their pragmatic characteristics, in addition to specifying the time of the discourse, is that they require shared knowledge between interlocutors. Temporal deixis includes both definite and indefinite types. The definite type answers the question "When?", while the indefinite type does not and therefore relies on contextual clues.[16]

Some grammarians refer to the first type as goals, which are time adverbials that indicate a known point in time shared by speaker and listener.[17]

An example of this is the verse:

Surat Yousuf.80 ﴿وَمِنْ قَبْلِ مَا فَرَّطْتُمْ فِي يُوسُفَ فَلَنْ أَبْرَحَ الْأَرْضَ حَتَّى يَأْذَنَ لِي أَبِي أَوْ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ لِي وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ﴾.

Among their pragmatic features is that each of these temporal terms specifies a particular time depending on the speaker's communicative intent and the listener's need for such specification. Additionally, temporal deixis also possesses socio-psychological dimensions, much like spatial deixis.[18]

This is because the interlocutors' perception of time as a sequence of events can treat those events as if they were objects or locations, subject to the same notions of proximity and distance as found in spatial deixis.

2.4 Zero Anaphora

The absence of a linguistic element within a structure is a prominent linguistic phenomenon found across all languages and is referred to as ellipsis that is, omitting part of the speech in discourse based on contextual meaning, supported by verbal or non-verbal cues.

In the case of deixis particularly personal deixis (pronouns) the phenomenon of lacking an anaphoric (backward) or cataphoric (forward) reference requires a further degree of shared knowledge between interlocutors within their physical environment. George Paul notes that when we are required to interpret meaning but no linguistic expressions are explicitly present to indicate it, this is referred to as zero deixis or ellipsis. Such usages, which rely on implicit reference, create an expectation that the listener will be able to infer and recognize what the speaker intends demonstrating a state of communication without the need for explicit verbalization.[19]

In such cases, the communicative process involves ellipsis, and all our discourses reflect another pragmatic principle namely, the principle of implicature. This means that our utterances carry both surface meanings, conveyed through the words and linguistic signs used, and deeper implied meanings, which the listener must uncover through inference, using both material and conceptual cues.

Regarding the referent and the chosen referring expressions,[20] successful reference does not depend solely on strict syntactic relations, but rather on the interaction between interlocutors, built upon shared prior knowledge. It requires cooperation in the use and interpretation of linguistic markers. Ellipsis, therefore, becomes necessary, as it saves effort for speakers and allows them to fulfill communicative needs with greater ease.

The more shared knowledge exists between interlocutors, the less they need to rely on explicit language to recognize things intuitively.[21]

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3. Applications of Deixis in selected Qur'anic examples

In this practical section, we aim to analyze presence-related deixis, particularly first- and second-person pronouns, as well as temporal and spatial deixis. The objective is to clarify their primary functions and their reference to the communicative situation, and to show how understanding these components contribute to interpreting the message or text in a way that maximizes its semantic richness.

In studying these deictic elements for discourse analysis where the text is treated as a relatively autonomous construct, somewhat independent from the conditions of its producer we have chosen the Qur'anic text as the subject of our investigation. The goal is to understand the referential and deictic rules that provide a verse or surah with its intended meaning. We apply these theoretical principles to selected verses from the Noble Qur'an in order to identify the utterance dimensions specific to the Qur'anic verse, whether these are spatial or temporal specifications related to the speaker.

3.1 Personal Deixis

a. Pronouns:

The most frequently occurring pronoun in Qur'anic texts is the second-person pronoun, and its high frequency is justified by the centrality of the addressee, who is the primary target of the Qur'anic message as a whole. While earlier discussion addressed the role of the addressee in speech acts, what concerns us here in referential analysis is the interpretation of ambiguity in pronouns something that can only be resolved through identifying the referent, which is typically the person being addressed. This referent is only known within context.

The Almighty says:

﴿فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيهِمْ أَنبَاءُ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِن قَبْلِهِم مِّن قَرْنٍ مَّكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا لَمْ نُمَكِّن لَّكُمْ وَأَرْسَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْهِم مِّدْرَارًا وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَنْهَارَ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُم بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَنشَأْنَا مِن بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا آخَرِينَ وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي قِرْطَاسٍ فَلَمَسُوهُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ لَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ وَلَوْ أَنزَلْنَا مَلَكًا لَّقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ ثُمَّ لَا يُنظَرُونَ وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ مَلَكًا لَّجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا وَلَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّا يَلْبِسُونَ وَلَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ انظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ قُل لِّمَن مَّا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُل لِّلَّهِ كَتَبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ لَيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ Surat al-Anaam5–12

We observe in these verses six instances of referential ambiguity involving the second person: (lakum – "for you"), ('alayka – "upon you"), (qablaka – "before you"), (siru – "travel"), (unzuru – "observe"), (layajma'annakum – "He will gather you").

From these ambiguous expressions, the following central question arises:

Who is being addressed in each of these six instances of deixis?

In other words:

To whom do these deictic references point? Identifying the referent of each pronoun is essential for understanding the contextual meaning and interpretive framework of the verse.

Directed shift in address (Iltiwat Muwajjah):

1. Regarding the pronoun **"lakum"** (for you):

   Al-Tahir Ibn Ashur said: "The address here is to the disbelievers, because they were the ones empowered on earth at the time of the verse's revelation, and the Muslims were not yet empowered."[22]

   Here, he used contextual knowledge namely, the Muslims' lack of power to exclude them as the addressees. Therefore, the referent of the pronoun in this case is **the polytheists**.

2. Regarding the second and third cases, **"alayka"** (upon you) and **"qablaka"** (before you):

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Al-Tabari said: "This is God informing His Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, about those people who associate idols and other gods with their Lord."[23]

Thus, the referent is **the Prophet**, who is not explicitly mentioned in the verse but is known from the context.

3. Regarding the fourth and fifth cases, **"siru"** (travel) and **"unzuru"** (look):

Al-Tabari said: «Say, O Muhammad, to those who associate idols and rivals with Me, who deny the truth that you brought: 'Travel through the land,' meaning: go through the lands of those who denied their messengers before them, and see what happened to the deniers: destruction, ruin, and disgrace, and the wrath of God upon them."[24]

Again, the **polytheists** are the addressees, identified not through explicit mention but through the context.

4. Regarding the sixth case, **"layajma ʿannakum"** (He will surely gather you):

Ibn Ashur said: "The pronoun in 'He will gather you' refers specifically to the polytheists being addressed, because they are the ones spoken to from the beginning. It serves as a warning and a threat, and as a response to a possible question arising from the statement: 'He has prescribed mercy upon Himself'."[25]

So, the pronoun here also refers to **the polytheists**, and the address has the function of **warning and admonition**.

What follows are a number of examples from Surah al-Baqarah centered on the event of resurrection, in which "the addressee becomes the subject" of several statements:

a. Allah Almighty said: al-Bakarah:203﴿وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَن تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَن تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ لِمَنِ اتَّقَى وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ﴾

b. Allah Almighty said: al- Bakarah:223 ﴿نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَكُمْ فَأْتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ وَقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُم مُّلَاقُوهُ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾

c. Allah Almighty said: al-Baqarah: 245 ﴿مَن ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ وَلَهُ أَضْعَافٌ كَثِيرَةٌ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْسُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴾

Analysis of the indications:

"The contextual clues of the address" appear in the following expressions: "annakum ilayhi tuhsharun", "annakum mulaquhu",

"turja'un".

1. **In the first clue:**

Ibn Ashur mentioned in his interpretation of the first clue: "al-hashr means gathering after dispersion, and thus the use of 'tuhsharun' matches the condition of pilgrims dispersing after

Hajj and then each group gathering in their hometowns.

The word 'tuhsharun' was chosen instead of 'taseerun' or 'turja'un' because 'tuhsharun' is more comprehensive. It implies return with an additional meaning: that they will be resurrected collectively, just as they were gathered during the Hajj, which is the state being recalled in this address. Since after Hajj people are gathered to their homelands, they were reminded of the great gathering; thus, the term 'tuhsharun' is more suitable in this context for many reasons." [26]

2. **In the second clue:**

Ibn Ashur said: "'al-mulaqat' is a form of mutual interaction from 'liqa', which means encountering someone either intentionally or accidentally. The root 'la-qa-ya' implies the occurrence between two entities, thus conveying reciprocity inherently. For this reason, 'laqi' and 'laqa' have the same meaning.

Allah commanded them to know that they will meet Him, even though Muslims are already aware of that, treating their knowledge as nonexistent in this matter in order to deepen their concern for it and strengthen their pursuit of it. Moreover, the sentence begins with 'i'lamu', showing the importance of the message and drawing attention to it." [27]

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3. **In the third clue**: "turjaʿun":

> **Al-Tabari said**: "Allah, exalted be He, means by that: to Allah is your final return, O people, so fear Allah regarding yourselves, that you do not neglect His obligations or overstep His limits. Let not the one who has been given abundance use it in disobedience to his Lord, and let not the one whose provision has been restricted be driven by hardship to sin, thus incurring upon his return to his Creator a punishment he cannot endure." [28]

Ibn Ashur said: "The phrase 'wa ilayhi turjaʿun' is used to awaken and remind, pointing out that what awaits them in the afterlife as a reward for spending in Allah's cause is far greater than what has been promised to them in this world.

It also implies that the one who withholds and is stingy in spending for the sake of Allah is deprived of much goodness.

Apparently, referring the verb back to the addressees implies generality over all creation, not only Muslims being addressed in the context of charity and spending.

Yet the statements of both al-Tabari and Ibn Ashur do not prevent that the address be specifically directed to the donors, making them the antecedent of the pronoun in this context.

This specificity adds 'an extra meaning' to the event of return, namely the good reward after giving, such that the particular address makes the resurrection after death carry an added meaning understood through the return to the setting."

3.2 Temporal Deixis

Reported speech may provide examples of deixis in which the temporal referent corresponds to the time of the event. This event may be anchored in human experience on earth, or it may be part of the unseen (ghayb) to occur in the future, and is reported in the text as revealed knowledge.

As previously mentioned, the speaker's relationship to time is divided into three categories: natural time, historical time, and discourse time.

Below are examples of texts that employ a single linguistic unit the word "al-yawm" (the day) as an indicator of temporal simultaneity with the speech. One such usage appears in texts narrating the destruction of past nations, which serve as referential signs of the end of the worldly order, as in the verse:

﴿قَالَ سَآوِي إِلَىٰ جَبَلٍ يَعْصِمُنِي مِنَ الْمَاءِ ۚ قَالَ لَا عَاصِمَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا مَن رَّحِمَ ۚ وَحَالَ بَيْنَهُمَا الْمَوْجُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُغْرَقِينَ﴾ houd 43

This verse is a reference to the power of God in destroying nations. It is a present sign of the reality of the end of the familiar world, and it narrates Noah's address to his son. If this speech is placed within its historical context, it can be classified as discourse that occurs simultaneously with the event, marked by the deictic expression "al-yawm".

Another example:

Allah Almighty said: ﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخَذْنَا مُتْرَفِيهِم بِالْعَذَابِ إِذَا هُمْ يَجْأَرُونَ لَا تَجْأَرُوا الْيَوْمَ إِنَّكُم مِّنَّا لَا تُنصَرُونَ﴾ Almuminuna : 64–65

This verse contains a number of events and statements that all take place at the time of the reported speech. Ibn Ashur commented: "The definite article 'al' in al-yawm ('al-yawm tujza...', 'la zulma al-yawm', 'limani-l-mulku al-yawm') indicates one single time. The parallelism among these phrases implies that they all refer to the same moment, which is both the time of speech and the time of the reported event." [29]

Allah Almighty said ﴿رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ يَوْمَ هُم بَارِزُونَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ لِّمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ﴾ Ghafir 15-17 .

This verse contains a number of events and statements that all take place at the time of the reported speech. Ibn Ashur commented: "The definite article 'al' in al-yawm ('al-yawm tujza...', 'la zulma al-yawm', 'limani-l-mulku al-yawm') indicates one single time. The parallelism among these phrases implies that they all refer to the same moment, which is both the time of speech and the time of the reported event." [30]

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Another example:

Allah Almighty said: 6-9 almaaridj ﴿إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا ۞ وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا ۞ يَوْمَ تَكُونُ السَّمَاءُ كَالْمُهْلِ ۞ وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ﴾

The content of the unseen events is mentioned in the verses: "Yawm takunu al-samaa'u ka-l-muhl", "wa takunu al-jibalu ka-l-'ihn", and "wa la yas'alu hameemun hameeman".

Their temporal occurrence is indicated by the expressions "ba'idan" and "qariban".

Al-Tabari explained the verses with a non-temporal interpretation: "They see the punishment—which they asked about—as far away because they do not believe in it and deny resurrection, reward, and punishment. Allah, however, sees it as near, because it will certainly occur, and whatever is coming is near." [31]

This interpretation does not eliminate the possibility of understanding temporal deixis through the referent of the speech, as their denial of resurrection implies that its realization is postponed indefinitely. But God's affirmation of its nearness implies proximity from the standpoint of the speaker at the moment of revelation.

Another example:

Allah Almighty said ﴿إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ ۞ وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انكَدَرَتْ ۞ وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ ۞ وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ ۞ وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ ۞ وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ ۞ وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ ۞ وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ ۞ بِأَيِّ ذَنبٍ قُتِلَتْ ۞ وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ ۞ وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ ۞ وَإِذَا الْجَحِيمُ سُعِّرَتْ ۞ وَإِذَا الْجَنَّةُ أُزْلِفَتْ ۞ عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا أَحْضَرَتْ﴾ al -takouir1-14

Ibn Ashur commented:

"The opening with 'idha' (when) is a rhetorical device of suspense, as idha is a temporal particle that demands a complement and also functions as a conditional particle that anticipates an answer. When the response is heard, it settles powerfully in the mind especially with the repetition of idha in twelve coordinated clauses. This repetition serves the purpose of intensification and awe, which is a natural consequence of such repetition." [32]

Here, it is known that the events are future, but the temporal reference in "idha" does not explicitly indicate that. Rather, it is a future temporal adverbial without anchoring to the time of reception or delivery. This neutrality in the temporal function and reference of idha supports the unseen nature of the Hour's timing, confirming its concealment from human knowledge.

Based on the above, and through the restricted referential connections to the reception context, two main markers emerge related to the temporal reference of the unseen event, as indicated by the deictic expressions in these verses:

- **First marker:** Near future, in expressions implying forward or backward deixis.

- **Second marker:** Undefined unseen, inferred from neutral temporal structures like idha, which lack explicit linkage to present or future time.

3.3 Spatial Deixis

Since the Qur'an is a communicative discourse, its spatial references rely on the presence of the addressee in the communicative situation as an interpretive factor for the spatial framework of the event. This spatial context becomes a referential point through which spatial deictic ambiguities in the text are understood, functioning as settings for events and statements.

These statements, in most cases, fall within non-metaphysical human experience, as Qur'anic texts often emphasize spatial frameworks drawn from human daily life. This makes the narrative more persuasive concerning the truth of the account, and the fact that these cosmic signs can be identified from the communication context is itself evidence against the recipient, who is capable of observing and reflecting upon them.

An example of texts that define spatial context is the verse from Surat al-Ra'd:

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَاوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ۖ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۖ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۖ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُم بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُوقِنُونَ ۞ وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا ۖ وَمِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ ۖ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ۞ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطَعٌ مُّتَجَاوِرَاتٌ وَجَنَّاتٌ مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَزَرْعٌ

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وَنَخِيلٌ صِنْوَانٌ وَغَيْرُ صِنْوَانٍ يُسْقَىٰ بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ وَنُفَضِّلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فِي الْأُكُلِ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ۞ وَإِن تَعْجَبْ فَعَجَبٌ قَوْلُهُمْ أَإِذَا كُنَّا تُرَابًا أَإِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ﴾ al-Raʿd 5–2 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ الْأَغْلَالُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ

This verse refers to a series of cosmic signs that affirm that Allah is true and capable of resurrecting the dead. The location of these signs is indicated relative to the position of the reader, making their significance clearer and their use as argument more forceful.

1. The spatial indicator in the word "rafaʿa" (raised):

Its meaning is derived from its lexical definition, as it is a spatial semantic marker indicating movement from a lower place to a higher one.

Ibn Manzur said: "Rafʿ is the opposite of placing (wadʿ). I raised it, so it rose; it is the opposite of lowering in everything... It is said: a thing rose by itself if it became elevated." [33]

The word rafaʿa contains two central meanings:

- First: **motion**

- Second: **the direction of this motion—from below to above**

Determining the direction of motion implies the existence of a reference point relative to which the movement is measured—like all observable physical phenomena. This reference point is clearly a human frame of reference, as understood from the text.

Thus, the raising of the heavens by Allah was relative to human perception, where the human being is both the recipient of the text and its intended addressee. In the Qur'anic explanation, the sky is a sign of divine power, and a proof that the One who raised it so visibly before human eyes is surely able to resurrect decayed bodies back to life. In this way, the verse completes its argumentative structure.

2. The spatial meaning of the preposition "fi" (in):

This appears in the following instances, each time in connection with the word "earth":

Allah Almighty said ﴿وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطَعٌ مُتَجَاوِرَاتٌ﴾، ﴿وَمِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ﴾، ﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا﴾ :

Grammarians attribute to the preposition fi the meaning of spatial and temporal containment, which are its most significant usages.

The spatial aspect here lies in the fact that the earth, the object governed by the preposition, contains all the partial signs listed in the text: the mountains, rivers, fruits, adjacent lands, gardens of grapes, crops, palm trees, and other indicators.

Through this, the text locates the cosmic signs that point to divine power within the earth, which is also the dwelling place of the human being as recipient. One of the functions of this structure is to map out the spatial dimension of signs and evidences, clarifying their referentiality and familiarity to the intended audience. [34]

3. Specification through other prepositions, such as "ʿala" (upon):

al-Kahf 7–8 ﴿إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَهَا لِنَبْلُوَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۞ وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرُزًا﴾

4. Spatial specification through demonstrative pronouns:

Demonstratives are considered stronger indicators of presence than other deictic expressions, as they point to the presence of their referents such as cosmic signs in the context of discourse or reception. An example appears in Surat Fatir: ﴿وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُم مِّن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِن نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ۚ وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أُنثَىٰ وَلَا تَضَعُ إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ ۚ وَمَا يُعَمَّرُ مِن مُّعَمَّرٍ وَلَا يُنقَصُ مِنْ عُمُرِهِ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ ۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ۞ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْبَحْرَانِ هَٰذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ سَائِغٌ شَرَابُهُ وَهَٰذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ وَمِن كُلٍّ تَأْكُلُونَ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُونَ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا ۖ وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ فِيهِ مَوَاخِرَ لِتَبْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾

Fatir12–11

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This verse illustrates that most instances of spatial reference aim to locate the cosmic signs that confirm the setting of the communication situation. The spatial markers vary between:

- **Verbs** such as *rafa'a* (raised)

- **Prepositions** such as *fi* (in), *'ala* (on)

- **Adverbs** like *bayna* (between), *fawq* (above)

- **Demonstratives** like *hadha* (this)

Among their clearest meanings is the indication of presence—that is, the presence of the signs within the same context that includes the recipient.

As for spatial deixis related to unseen events, based on the communicative situation, it is rare. This rarity may serve the meaning of concealment, similar to what was discussed regarding temporal reference. Thus, the time and place of unseen events remain veiled from the recipient in worldly life.

One of the few verses that includes such spatial references appears in Surat Qaf:

﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِن لُغُوبٍ فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَأَدْبَارَ السُّجُودِ وَاسْتَمِعْ يَوْمَ يُنَادِ الْمُنَادِ مِن مَّكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ يَوْمَ يَسْمَعُونَ الصَّيْحَةَ بِالْحَقِّ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُرُوجِ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْنَا الْمَصِيرُ يَوْمَ تَشَقَّقُ الْأَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ سِرَاعًا ذَٰلِكَ حَشْرٌ عَلَيْنَا يَسِيرٌ﴾

Qaf: 38–44

The phrase "min makanin qarib" (from a near place) provides a spatial reference to some implicit referent. It raises the question: Near to what? This very question functions as the referential anchor a point of measurement by which the spatial dimension of the reported events is understood.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study yielded a set of theoretical and applied findings that confirm the importance of deixis as central pragmatic elements in Qur'anic discourse. These elements contribute to the semantic construction of the text and guide the interpretive process for the recipient. The analysis showed that deixis in the Qur'an does not function independently of context; rather, its semantic effectiveness is conditioned by the pragmatic situation in which it appears whether textual, communicative, or cultural.

On the theoretical level, the concept of deixis was defined based on linguistic and pragmatic literature. It was agreed that deictic expressions are linguistic units that do not refer to their referents through their lexical meanings, but through the context of use. Within this framework, several types of deixis were identified:

- **Personal pronouns** (ana, huwa, nahnu...) which are based on the relationship between speaker, addressee, and absent third party.

- **Demonstratives** (hadha, tilka, ula'ika...) used to identify positions or elements within discourse.

- **Temporal deixis** (alyawm, ghadan, heena'idhin...) which locates events in relation to the moment of utterance or a broader context.

- **Spatial deixis** (huna, hunaka, fawq, tahta...) which refers to physical or symbolic locations within the discourse.

- **Discourse deixis** (amma ba'd, fi dhalik...) used to organize textual sequence or refer to earlier or later parts of the text.

The study demonstrated that these deictic elements function as cohesive mechanisms that ensure textual coherence, while also performing pragmatic functions by framing situations and guiding the addressee toward a specific interpretation.

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On the applied level, analysis of selected Qur'anic examples revealed that deixis is employed with deep semantic intentionality. It is used to intensify meaning, direct the interpretive context, and establish referential coherence within the discourse structure. For instance, third-person pronouns are used to create a symbolic distance from the referent (as in verses concerning disbelievers or hypocrites), while first-person plural pronouns (nahnu) emphasize divine authority and honor.

It was also shown that the repetition of certain deictic expressions, or their reformulation in different forms, is not arbitrary. Rather, it is part of a linguistic strategy to stabilize and reinforce meaning—especially in argumentative or legislative contexts.

Accordingly, the study highlights that the analysis of deixis cannot be separated from textual pragmatics, as its understanding is linked to its internal relations within the text and the functions it performs in its construction. This calls for a reconsideration of traditional interpretive approaches to the Qur'anic text, by incorporating tools from modern linguistics to achieve a deeper and more complex understanding of the sacred text.

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[20] See: Ibid., p. 24.

[21] See: Ibid., p. 24.

[22] Al-Tahir bin Ashur, *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*, Tunisian Publishing House, Tunisia, 1st ed., 1984, vol. 7, p. 138.

[23] Muhammad bin Jarir Abu Ja'far al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan fi Ta'wil al-Qur'an*, ed. Ahmad Muhammad Shakir, Al-Risalah Foundation, 1st ed., 2000, vol. 11, p. 265.

[24] Al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, vol. 11, p. 272.

[25] Al-Tahir bin Ashur, *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*, vol. 7, p. 153.

[26] Al-Tahir bin Ashur, *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*, vol. 2, p. 264.

[27] Same source, p. 375.

[28] Al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, vol. 5, p. 290.

[29] Al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan fi Ta'wil al-Qur'an*, vol. 19, p. 51.

[30] Al-Tahir bin Ashur, *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*, vol. 24, p. 112.

[31] Al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, vol. 23, p. 603.

[32] Al-Tahir bin Ashur, *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*, vol. 30, p. 140.

[33] Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, entry: (rafa'a), vol. 6, p. 160.

[34] Iyad Younes, *Al-Nahw: Dalalat wa Ma'ani*, Dar al-Kitab, Cairo, Egypt, 1st ed., 2008, p. 98.

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Deixis in the Qur'anic Discourse: A Textual-Pragmatic Approach
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