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# A Pragmatic Study of Deixis in English

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دراسة تداولية لأسماء الإشارة في اللغة الانكليزية

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## **Abstract**

It is generally acknowledged that perception of and orientation in space are determinant factors in human action and interaction. As such, speech mainly depends on knowledge of the context: Where and When is a sentence uttered, and by Whom. These three dimensions are traditionally seen as the so-called deictic center of all linguistic events, without which no linguistic expression can be properly interpreted.

With deixis we mean here all cues provided by a language that localized a speech event and its participants (Speaker, Hearer and narrated participant) in space and time. Anderson and Keenan (1985) distinguish three major categories of deixis: person deixis, spatial deixis and temporal deixis. The category linking social and psychological factors is tentatively labelled as 'psychological' deixis at the workshop.

**Keywords: Pragmatic study of deixis in English ,Semantic study .**

## المستخلص

من المسلم به عمومًا أن الإدراك والتوجه في المكان هما عاملان حاسمان في العمل الإنساني والتفاعل. على هذا النحو ، يعتمد الكلام بشدة على معرفة السياق: أين ومتى يتم النطق بجملة ، وبواسطة من. تُنظر إلى هذه الأبعاد الثلاثة تقليديًا على أنها ما يسمى بالمركز اللغوي لجميع الأحداث اللغوية ، والتي بدونها لا يمكن تفسير التعبير اللغوي بالشكل الصحيح ، لذلك نعني هنا جميع الاشارات المقدم من اللغة التي تضيف الطابع المحلي على حدث الكلام والمشاركين فيه بين (المتحدث ، السامع والمشارك المسرد) في المكان والزمان. يميز (Anderson and Keenan 1985) بين ثلاث فئات رئيسية من personal deixis : الشخص Spatial deixis ، المكانية personal deixis و Time deixis الزمنية. الفئة التي تربط العوامل الاجتماعية والنفسية موصوفة مؤقتًا "deixis"

الكلمات الافتتاحية: دراسة تداولي للاسماء الاشارة في اللغة الانكليزية .دراسة حرفية.



## Chapter One

### 1-Introduction

Our research paper is about one of the most important topics concerning pragmatic studies in general and deixis expressions in specific so as to explain the structure organization of my research paper. We can point to things as well as to people through deixis, and they are very important within the scope of speech act theory.

**First:** Chapter one is about the content of research paper, like what is deixis, deixis in context, and we have types of deixis.

**Second :** Literature review of pragmatics and pragmatics of deixis.

**Third:** Data analysis of the play “Twelfth night” which was by “William Shakespeare”. Within data analysis, we present general information about the characters and detailed information about deixis implemented within this play, for each model we have an example of deixis in order to show that we can apply pragmatics for literary works. Finally we present conclusions for our research paper.



## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

#### 2. Literature Review

Within literature we are going to shed light on most important topics concerning pragmatics which is branch of linguistics ,meaning investigating within pragmatics is co-related with context and how context influenced what is said In communication, people talk with the other in different circumstance with different listener. However, in communication, people not only recognizing the meaning of the word in their utterance, but also recognizing what the speaker meaning in their utterance. The meaning of utterance is not only lexical meaning, but also from the situation, called context. Halliday (1989:5) defines context as the events that are going on around when people speak (and write). When we used a language, the environment, circumstance and context are important aspect, which must be referred. From the definition above, the writer can simplify that the context can support to find the clarity meaning in utterance, speak or written form. By knowing the context that will make the sentence was clearer.)

#### 2.1 What is Deixis?

Deixis is a type of reference constituted by the meaning of a linguistic sign being relativized to the extra-linguistic context in which the sign is used. The semiotic nature of this kind of reference, its exact communicative prerequisites and functions, its acquisition by children, and its processing have long puzzled linguists, philosophers, psychologists, and anthropologist (Bohnmeyer, 2001: 1).



Based on Oxford dictionary, the word “deictic” is related to or denoting a word or expression whose meaning is dependent on the context in which it is used (such as here, or next week). Lyons (1999:40) point out that word deictic is originally a Greek ‘deiktikos’, which means to ‘able to show’; which comes from the word deiktos; which is a verbal of the word deiknynai, meaning to show. A related word is “deixis”, used in pragmatics and linguistics where it refers to a process whereby either words or expressions are seen to rely utterly on context .

Deixis is an important field studied in pragmatics, semantics and linguistics. Words or phrases that require contextual information to convey any meaning are deictic”; and furthermore “Deixis concerns the ways in which languages encode ... features of the context of utterance ... and thus also concerns ways in which their interpretation utterance/es depends on the analysis of that context of utterance.” In deixis, there is so much attention given to the circumstances that form the setting of an event, statement, or idea in the words. The parts that immediately precede and follow a word or passage and clarify its meaning also play a vital role in understanding the phrases and utterances in the context(Lyons;1977:70). Many words reflect multiple meanings. Levinson remarks that “Deixis does not only have the function of a grammatical constituent, but it has the duty to point out the different meaning the words have even in cases they are used in the same way in different situations” (Levinson;1995: 10). The structure of the language— syntax and morphology— cannot show the ways in which the words are different. The context of the word contributes in the clarification of the meaning of the word. Parts of the context are “The timing, place, message bearers” and all “have their importance in the communicating process” . As



Levinson puts it, “ If the language did not have a pragmatic approach toward itself it could not evolve, transform itself, adapt into a modern or tomorrow’s form” .This indicates that the word should be more flexible to be used within a context to avoid obsolescence.

## 2.2 Deixis in Contexts

Deixis is one of the fundamental design features of human language that the interpretation of linguistic utterances may strongly depend both on the linguistic and the non-linguistic context. This context dependence of linguistic reference is known as indexicality ( Levinson,2004: 3). It has been argued by philosophers that in fact without some such underlying indexicality in all referring expressions, no successful reference to the world would be possible (Putnam; 1975:6).

Take, for example, the utterance *She* brought this flower for me yesterday. The noun flower has a meaning that can be defined independently of context (e.g. the reproductive organs of a plant and their colored (non-green) envelope), and it can be used to refer to real or imaginary flowers that fulfill this definition. Yet, in order to successfully refer to a plant as a flower, more than mere knowledge of the meaning of flower is required: speaker and addressee have to agree on the plant being identifiable by that term (botanists for example use the term differently – they do not require the envelope to be colored) (Bohnenmeyer, 2001-2). However, there are expressions that point to the context in their very meaning, such that they cannot be used to refer to anything before the relevant information from the context is retrieved. In the above example, the pronoun *she* takes up a referent of feminine gender that must have been introduced in the preceding stretch





of discourse (if the speaker announced in the preceding utterance that he is planning to marry his girlfriend Helen, then it will be inferred that it was Helen who brought him the flowers). This illustrates anaphoric reference. Deictic reference occurs whenever a linguistic sign receives part of its meaning from the extra-linguistic context. For example, the pronoun *me* refers to the speaker - it has a different meaning depending on who utters it. Through demonstrative we can select a referent in the speaker's proximity as in "this flower", as opposed to "that one over there" (at least in its most simple spatial use). The verb *bring* designates transport to a deictically defined location (here); this could be the location at which the conversation takes place, or the speaker's home (there are in fact many possibilities). The past tense of *brought* indicates that we gain the flowers at this location prior to the time of utterance, and the adverb *yesterday* restricts this time interval to the day before the day of utterance. So in order to know what exactly is meant by *She brought flower for me yesterday*, and whether this statement is true, one first needs to know who uttered it, on what day, and where (Bohnmeyer, 2001: 2).

It can be argued that reference denotes a lot of objects (including people), places, and times in the real world (to be precise, to all those that neither have a proper name nor a unique status, such as celestial bodies) ultimately requires some form of deictic anchoring. To understand this claim, one may select an object at random from the environment and try to make a statement about it that avoids any form of deixis. If the claim is correct, it follows that language could not be used to talk about the real world (other than in generic statements) without deictic reference .



Textual deixis occurs when (part of) an utterance or discourse is itself the referent of a deictic expression, it has been suggested that some form of textual deixis is present in every anaphoric reference, to the extent that anaphors direct the addressee's attention to an earlier mention of the referent. As long as it is clearly discernible as deixis, textual deixis will always have a metalinguistic reference. But as soon as any part of the meaning of an utterance becomes the target, textual deixis becomes increasingly indistinguishable from anaphoric reference. An intermediary case is constituted by reference to propositions, facts, or events (Lyons;1977: 6).

### 2.3 Types of Deixis

Possibly the most common categories of contextual information referred to by deixis are those of person, place, and time - what Fillmore calls the "major grammaticalized types" of deixis (Fillmore, 1971: 1).

Deictic items are those "properties of utterances which are determined by, and which are interpreted by knowing, certain aspects of the communication act in which the utterances in question can play a role" (Fillmore 1975:39). Deixis includes the following categories: **person deixis** covering identities of interlocutor in communication, for instance personal pronouns; **place deixis** referring to the place in which interlocutors are located, for instance there, here; **time deixis** encoding the time at which a communication act takes place or the time at which the message is sent or received, for example now, then; and **discourse deixis**, which Fillmore (1975:70) characterizes as "lexical or grammatical elements which indicate or otherwise refer to some portion or aspect of the ongoing discourse", for instance, words and expressions like the former, the latter, in the following paragraph .



### 2.3.1 Social Deixis

Levinson (1979:206, referring to Lyons 1968:280) notes that these categories of deixis can be extended by adding one more category, the one of social deixis, which Fillmore (1975:76) defines as “the study of that aspect of sentences which reflect or establish or are determined by certain realities of the social situation in which the speech act occurs”. Under the cover term of social deixis Fillmore (1975:76) includes the following linguistic phenomena:

- devices for person marking, e.g. pronouns;
- the various ways of separating speech levels;
- distinctions in utterances of various types which are dependent on certain properties of the speech act participants;
- “the various ways in which names, titles, and kinship terms vary in form and usage according to the relationships among the speaker, the addressee, the audience and the person referred to”;
- linguistic performance which can count as social acts, such as insults, greetings, expressions of gratitude;
- linguistic performances which can accompany social acts, such as ‘there you go’, etc.;
- and, finally, the various linguistic devices that helps a speaker to “establish and maintain a deictic anchoring with a given addressee” (Muysken and Crevels;1999:34).

As can be seen above, the term social deixis defined by Fillmore (1975) absorbs various phenomena. Levinson (1979:206) proposes to “restrict the term to those aspects of language structure that are anchored to the social identities of participants (including bystanders) in the speech event, or to relations between them, or to relations between them and other referents”.



Besides, various aspects of language depending on these relations can be regarded as relevant to social deixis “in so far as they are grammaticalized”.

Further, Levinson (1979:207) distinguishes two kinds of social dimension that get encoded in languages: relational and absolute. The former includes relations between a) speaker and referent; b) speaker and addressee; c) speaker and bystander; and d) speaker and setting. The latter includes forms which are reserved for two specific kinds of speech act participants, namely authorized speakers and authorized recipients. Levinson (1979:207) exemplifies the forms which can be employed by a certain kind of speakers by the Thai polite particles *khráb* which is used only by male speakers and *khá*, used exclusively by women. The similar situation can be observed in speech of Japanese men and women. Both gender groups can be referred to as authorized speakers in such cases. Authorized recipients, on the other hand, are forms denoting titles of address, pronouns differing not only with sex of referent but also with sex of addressee, and other forms used for a particular kind of recipients.

### 2.3.2. Person

Person deixis concerns itself with the grammatical persons involved in an utterance, those directly involved (e.g. the speaker, the addressee), those not directly involved (e.g. overhearers—those who hear the utterance but who are not being directly addressed), and those mentioned in the utterance (Levinson, 2004:54). In English, the distinctions are generally indicated by pronouns. The following examples show how. (The person deictic terms are in italics, a signaling notation that will continue through this article.).



I am going to the movies.

Would you like to have dinner?

They tried to hurt me, but she came to the rescue.

In languages (like English) with gendered pronouns, the third-person masculine pronoun has traditionally been used as a default when using "it" is inappropriate but the gender of its antecedent is unknown or inapplicable.

For example:

To each his own.

In English, it is often now common to use the third-person plural, even when the antecedent is singular:

To each their own.

### 2.3.3 Place Deixis

Place deixis, also known as space deixis, concerns itself with the spatial locations relevant to an utterance. Similarly to person deixis, the locations may be either those of the speaker and addressee or those of persons or objects being referred to. The most salient English examples are the adverbs "here" and "there" and the demonstratives "this" and "that" - although those are far from being the only deictic words (Fillmore, 1971: 4).

place deictic terms are generally understood to be relative to the location of the speaker, as in:

The shop is across the street.

where "across the street" is understood to mean "across the street from where I am right now" (Fillmore, 1971: 4). It is interesting to note that although "here" and "there" are often used to refer to locations near to and far from the speaker, respectively, "there" can also refer to the location of the addressee, if they are not in the same location as the speaker. So, although



Here is a good spot; it is too sunny over there.

exemplifies the former usage,

How is the weather there?

is an example of the latter (Austin, 1962: 60).

In some contexts, spatial deixis is used metaphorically rather than physically, i.e. the speaker is not speaking as the deictic center. For example:

I am coming home now.

The above utterance would generally be considered as the speaker's expression of his/her going home, yet it appears to be perfectly normal for one to project his physical presence to his home rather than away from home. Here is another common example:

I am not here, please leave a message.

Despite its common usage to address people who call with no one answering the phone, the here is semantically contradictory to one's absence. Nevertheless, this is considered normal for most people as speakers have to project themselves as answering the phone when in fact they are not physically.

Languages usually show at least a two-way referential distinction in their deictic system: proximal, i.e. near or closer to the speaker; and distal, i.e. far from the speaker and/or closer to the addressee. English exemplifies this with such pairs as this and that, here and there, etc.

In other languages, the distinction is three-way or higher: proximal, i.e. near the speaker; medial, i.e. near the addressee; and distal, i.e. far from both. This is the case in a few Romance languages and in Serbo-Croatian, Korean, Japanese, Thai, Filipino and Turkish (Snježana, 2004: 7). The archaic English forms *yon* and *yonder* (still preserved in some regional dialects) once represented a distal category that has now been subsumed by the formerly



medial "there" (Christopher 8). In the Sinhala language, there is a four-way deixis system for both person and place; near the speaker /me\_:/, near the addressee /o\_:/, close to a third person, visible /arə\_:/ and far from all, not visible /e\_:/ . The Malagasy language has seven degrees of distance combined with two degrees of visibility, while Eskimo languages have even more complex systems(Levinson; 1987:70).

### 2.3.4 Time Deixis

Time, or temporal, deixis concerns itself with the various times involved in and referred to in an utterance. This includes time adverbs like "now", "then", "soon", and so forth, and also different tenses. A good example is the word *tomorrow*, which denotes the consecutive next day after every day. The "tomorrow" of a day last year was a different day from the "tomorrow" of a day next week. Time adverbs can be relative to the time when an utterance is made (what Fillmore calls the "encoding time", or ET) or when the utterance is heard (Fillmore's "decoding time", or DT) (Fillmore, 1971: 4). Although these are frequently the same time, they can differ, as in the case of prerecorded broadcasts or correspondence. For example, if one were to write

It is raining *now*, but I hope *when* you read this it will be sunny. The ET and DT would be different, with the former deictic term concerning ET and the latter the DT. Tenses are generally separated into absolute (deictic) and relative tenses. So, for example, simple English past tense is absolute, such as in He *went*.

whereas the pluperfect is relative to some other deictically specified time, as in: He *had gone*.



## Chapter Three:

### 3 - Introduction

Within this chapter three, we are going to identify aforementioned different types of deixis on the selected play which is “twelfth night” by William Shakespeare. This play is popular, many theatrical producers in the past years treated the play as though its stage popularity had to be achieved in defiance of the text rather than through it (Yule;1983:70). Until recently have they trusted the play to conjure up its own sense of magic and imagination, it relies heavily on detailed realism instead of theatrical evocation. This literalized and revisionist approach dominated much of the play’s stage history during the restoration and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, despite evidence that “Twelfth Night (presumably as Shakespeare wrote it) was very popular in his own day and for some time after. After his death, his play had been acted on the same many times specially in 1618 and 1622. (Twelfth Night, 2004: xviii).

#### 3.1. Person Deixis

This form of deixis denotes grammatical structure of persons which are involved within an utterance as (the speaker, the addressee) and other forms which are not directly involved within such utterance like (over hearers) for those who hear the utterance but they do not directly addressed. Distinctions are generally made in English by the use of pronouns via italicized words.

A: Captain: Ay, madam, well, for / was bred and born Not three hour’s travel from this very place.

B: Who governs here?





## Discussion

Captain tries to praise himself in front of Viola because he has gained higher status within society as a king and he is well-known about the country that he lives in because he has spent a long time ruling this country.

Well, for I was bred and born Not three hour's travel from this very place.

Person deixis within this example is indicated by the use of the personal pronoun "I", this pronoun also denotes subject pronoun, in order to inform as that the addresser has something to say.

### 3.2. Place Deixis

Place deixis denotes spatial locations implemented by the use of utterances, locations may refer to both addresser and addressee, or those of persons or objects being referred to. Like for example, adverbs "here" and "there" as well as deictic expressions or demonstratives such as "that", "this", "these" and "those". Place deixis can also denote other things rather than place deixis such as parts of the body as in the following example:

**Turn 1:** Maria Sir, I have not you by the hand.

**Turn 2:** Sir Andrew Marry, but you shall have, and *here's my hand*.

(Twelfth Night Act two, scene iii; 2004:17).

Maria wants to inform Sir that he is dealing with fools but Maria didn't understand him. He gave her his hand but she refused, in order to drink the wine together. Within these two examples, place deixis can be implemented within the word "here" which is referring pronoun for the parts of the body. In addition for that there are a lot of pronouns that indicate personal deixis such as "I", "you", the first pronoun denotes subject pronoun while the second one denotes second person pronoun "addressee".



**Turn 1:** Maria Sir: Let us quickly put on men's clothes to be ready to be for emergencies , and then meet again in the castle hall.

Sir Andrew: I will go to England .

(Twelfth Night;2004:129, Sc 111, Scene 1V).

### **Discussion**

Place deixis within these two examples are presented within the use of adverbs of place such as "in the castle hall", within the first one and we have "to England "within the second utterance which refers to adverb of place. We have different grammatical instructions , like let's within the first example denotes suggestion on the part of the speaker. Time within the first example denotes present tense while within the second one denotes future tense making connection between present and future.

### **3.3.Time Deixis**

This form of deixis denotes time of duration , we can denote this thing through what is called adverbs of time , like for example "tomorrow", "year", ect.

**Turn 1:** Sir Andrew Faith, I'll home tomorrow ,Sir Toby. Your niece will not be seen , or if she be , it's four to one she'll none of me.

**Turn 2:** Sir Toby : She'll none o'th Count. She'll not match above her degree ,neither in estate , years, nor wit; I have heard her swear't .Tut, there's life isn't , man.

(Twelfth Night;2004:19).

### **Discussion**

Time deixis within these two utterances can be indicated the use of adverb of time "tomorrow" ,"she'll", "she'll" as well as "years", which denote future tense, consecutive next day after every day. As well as the use



of model auxiliary verbs such as “shall” that indicates future tense, things or plans that will happen in next coming days.

### **3.4.Social Deixis**

This type of deixis denotes social relationship like love , hate, friendship as well as social relationships between interlocutors .Through these relations we can know the relationship between the interlocutors whether they are friends , strangers , higher or same status.

**Turn 1:** Valentine: If the Duke continues these favors towards you, Cesario, you are like to be much advanced .He hath known you but three days, and already you are no stranger.

**Turn 2:** You either fear his humor or my negligence , that you call in question the continuance of his love .Is he inconstant, sir, in his favors?

(Twelfth Night;2004:21).

### **Discussion**

Social deixis within these two turns can be indicated by the use of the following expressions such as “loves, favors, has”, ”fear “humor” These verbs can indicate social relationship or love affection (mutual relationship) between interlocutors. such as addresser and addressee.

### **4.5.Semiotics of Deixis**

This form of deixis refers to the relationship between the forms and their objects that they refer to for instance , pictures, blueprints, maps, as well as existential relationship between interlocutors such as pointing arrow, or smoke as sign of fire. In addition for that symbols constituted by convention e.g. hammer and sickle as a symbol of communism.

**Turn 1:**

*Clo.* Many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage; and, for turning away, let summer bear it out.

*Mar.* You are resolute, then?

*Clo.* Not so, neither; but I am resolved on two points.

(Twelfth night ;2004:12). (Act one, scene Five).

**Discussion**

Sir Col wants to inform mar that hanging bad women prevent bad marriage.

Semiotic deixis with these two examples are presented within the following words like a good hanging, a turning away , let summer bears it away. These examples represent real life situations.They differ from above examples because they denote or point to real things of the natural world.

**4.5.Semantics of Deixis**

Semantic deixis denotes the literal meaning or direct meaning in contrast with the implicit meaning or indirect meaning of the utterance

Viola On your attendance , my lord, here.

Orsino Stand you awhile aloof.[The others stand aside].

(Twelfth night , 2004:21).

**Discussion**

Viola orders orsino in order to welcome his lord , because he has the power over him .

Semantic deixis within this example is implanted within the literal use words , like lord, stand up , these forms denote the iconic meaning or direct meaning .Semantics according to Yule(2010:70) denotes or represents the literal meaning of words and expressions.



### 3.7. Pragmatics of deixis

**Turn 1:** Viola Make me a willow cabin at your gate  
And call upon my soul within the house.

Olivia runs after the same peevish messenger, The county's man.  
(Twelfth night, 2004:17, Act 1, scene 1V ).

#### Discussion

Viola wants to praise Olivia and she wants to serve her at any time and in different situations .She wants to save and protect her. She wants to work as a solider at her gate in order to direct and protect her from any danger. Pragmatics denotes implicit or underlined meaning within this example. It can be defined as the intended speaker meaning. We can infer about pragmatic aspects through the use of the following words such as “willow, cabin and peevish”.

### 3.8. Psychological Deixis

This type of deixis denotes information about the referent that is co-related with psychological framework of the speech participants instead of the localization of the speech event within space and time.

**Turn 1:** ORSINO (offering money ) There's for thy pains.

**Turn 2:** PESTE No pains, sir .I take pleasure in singing, sir. M  
(Twelfth night ;2004:67).

#### Discussion

Orsino wants to offer money for peste in order to relief him because he is psychologically suffering from bankrupt , money is a mean and not intend so without money you'll not feel happy . Happiness is co related with money because money is everything in life. case of the close relationship between interlocutors.



### 3.9. Discourse Deixis

Computational approaches to discourse understanding have a two-part goal: (1) identifying those aspects of discourse understanding that require process-based accounts, and (2) characterizing the processes and data structures they involve. To date, in the area of reference, process-based accounts have been developed for reference via anaphoric pronouns and via definite descriptors. In this paper, I propose and argue for a process based account of deictic reference in text. This account adds precision to common notions of discourse entity, discourse segment and focus and to relationships between the three.

**Turn 1:** FESTE Come away, death, And in sad cypress let me be laid.  
Fly away, fly away, breath; I am slain by a fair cruel maid.  
(*Twelfth night*, 2004:67, Act two , scene 111).

#### Discussion

Peste wants to inform us the life will be ended at the end and everything will be vanished , but only good deeds stay or remain after the death. Discourse deixis within this example can be encountered with the discourse makers such as the conjunction as the first example and , and we have referring pronouns such as I for subject pronoun .

Another example for discourse deixis is mentioned below in order to cover all the types of discourse as in :

.MARIA Madam, there is at the gate a young gentleman much desires to speak with you OLIVIA From the Count Orsino, is it?

MARIA I Know not, madam 'Tis a fair young man, and well attended. Maria wants to inform Olivia that there will be a gentle man who is waiting for her because he is eager to speaker her and she directs her to the desire



place. She accepts her invitation in order to join him. Within above examples discourse markers are implemented within the following words at the gate, it denotes adverb of place, also we well attended also denotes adverb of place .We rely on pragmatic interpretations in order to interpret discourse deixis.

## Conclusion

we concluded that" deixis" refers to all cues provided by a language that localise a speech event and its participants (Speaker, Hearer and narrated participant) in space and time. There are three major types of deixis: person deixis, spatial deixis and temporal deixis. The category linking social and psychological factors is tentatively labelled such as 'psychological' deixis at the workshop. They are very important in pragmatics because we can apply them for the study of literature as one type of stylistics. We get experienced with all types of deixis that can be applied on different types of literary works, as new style of literature as stylistics. Through this style we can make eclectic style of linguistics and literature.

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كلية الاسراء الجامعة



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للعلم الإجتماعية والإنسانية

دورية محكمة شاملة  
تصدر عن كلية الاسراء الجامعة



المجلد الاول  
العدد صفر