Mother Figures in Charles Dickens' Novel "David Copperfield": A Pragma-Discoursal Analysis of Social Deixis

Dr. Farah Abdul-Jabbar Al Manaseer[1] & Aysar Basheer Hasan Radhi[2]
[1]Asst. Prof., Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts, Al-Mustansiriyah University, Baghdad, Iraq
[2]M.A Student , Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts, Al-Mustansiriyah University, Baghdad, Iraq

ABSTRACT :*The theme of motherhood and mother figures constitutes a core pillar in the novel "David Copperfield". Relying on the context in which the different deictic expressions of person, social, time and place construct the language used to portray mother figures, a pragma-discoursal study can best fit in the interpretation of literary texts. This article aims at identifying specifically the social deixis mostly used by the mother figures Clara Copperfield, Clara Peggotty and Miss Betsey in Charles Dickens' novel "David Copperfield" and how they determine mothers' roles in relation to David's life from early childhood. The data involve three extracts selected from three chapters of the novel. Based on Fillmore's (1975) and Levinson's (1983) models of social deictic expressions, a mixed method approach in conducted. The article concluded that David Copperfield used basically the family social deixis to represent the three mother figures (Clara Copperfield, Clara Peggotty and Miss Betsey) stating clearly that mother roles such as loving, caring and nurturing are not necessary to be performed by the biological mother.*

KEYWORDS: discourse analysis, fictional autobiography social deixis, mother figures, motherhood, pragmatics

INTRODUCTION

Mother's love, care, support and encouragement are unconditional and their powerful force for social interaction and integration is very important. Writers, like Charles Dickens, reflect the relationships of their characters through using different linguistics devices. The purpose is to let the reader identify and analyze such relationship and judge how the relationship evolves throughout the novel. The article is conducted through proposing the following questions:

1. What are the social deixis that represent mother figures in Charles Dickens novel "David Copperfield"?
2. How social deixis determine mothers' roles in relation to David in the novel?
The above questions are intertwined with hypothesis that: As far as family members are concerned, relational deictic expressions are used more frequently than the absolute ones.

In order to analyze, trace and explore the link between mothers and their use of social deixis, a review of the novel, social deixis, and motherhood is needed.

The Novel "David Copperfield"
The personal history of David Copperfield which was written by the English writer Charles Dickens is one of the classical literary works that achieved great attention before and even in the current time. It has always been among Dickens' most popular novels and was his own "favorite child" (Hartnett, 2012, parag.4). The work is semi-autobiographical, and although the character in the novel differs from the author in many ways; yet, Dickens related many situations of his personal experiences to himself such as working in a factory, his school days, reading, and most importantly his emergence from parliamentary reporter into prominent novel writer (Britannica, 2016). Though Charles Dickens' novel "David Copperfield" was written a long time ago (1849-50); and it was acted as a movie first in 1935; it is still one of the favorite novels for the population because it attracts the attention towards social issues and basically motherhood since mothers are "the most affective agents in the life of a child" (Dedeoglu, 2010, p.1). Furthermore, the novel covers different themes, in addition to motherhood, such as social class, poverty, marriage, youth, religion, and work class.

Deixis: Definition and Types
Deixis original meaning is to point. It means that certain referential expressions rely on the elements of the used context. It is used in pragmatics as well as in pragmatics to denote the use of demonstrative and personal pronoun, specific time and adverb of place such as "now" and here, and a variety of other grammatical elements. For example, the meaning of an utterance such as "let's hold a meeting tomorrow" relies upon who utters it, where the speaker and addressee are, and what day it is. Deixis expresses indexicality within language structure. Words like us and tomorrow are called deictics, indexicals, or shifters, due to the way the referent of any such words shifts as per the context of use (Lyons, 1977, p.636). According to Yule (1996:9) "deixis is a form referring that is tied to the speakers context, with the most basic distinction between deictic expressions being 'near speaker' versus 'away from speaker.

Levinson states that deixis major concern is the way in which language encode or grammaticalize features of the context of utterance or speech event and thus also concerns ways in which interpretation of utterances depend on the analysis of the context of utterance" (1983:54).

Examples of deixis are first- and second-persons' pronouns, verb tense, verbs of motion, adverbials of time and place (Yule, 1996). The purpose behind using deictic expressions is to refer to some elements including person, place or time and to draw the attention of an addressee to it. Demonstratives such as this, that, those and, these express both the location of a referent and draw the attention of both the speaker and addressee (Diessel, 2006).

Deictic expressions involve the deictic and non-deictic uses. Falling under deictic use is the gestural and symbolic use. This kind of deictic use can only be understood by observing the physical movement and body language performed by the speaker. When a coach is selecting

his/her team by saying (you, you and you are in), one would only understand who is being selected by looking at the hand movement of the coach. When a speaker says that this market sells the best kind of diamonds, the addressee is assumed to easily understand what market is because the location is known to him/her (Huang, 2012). As for non-deictic use, there is no need to the context to understand because the demonstrative expression used does not refer to a specific time or place. Examples of such kind is this, that, here, and their idioms (Al-Tekreeti, 2016).

Griffiths (2006) believes that deictic expressions are represented by words, phrases and elements of grammar that should be understood as per the context in which they are used. Griffiths also points out that deixis dominates the languages due to the fact that they point to 'when', 'where', 'who' and 'what'. Accordingly, it can be understood that deictic expressions can deliver context-related cues for the communicators in the performed discourse. In this, such expressions determine the person, the time and the place. Practically, there are different types of deixis involving the following:

Person Deixis
According to Yule (1996:10), person deixis clearly operation on a basic three-part division, exemplified by pronouns for first person (I), second person (You) and third person (she, he, it). Person deixis involves the speaker (I) and the addressee (You). In conversation, each person constantly changes from being *I* to being *you*. The choice of one of these forms instead of another, because of the surrounding social circumstance is sometimes described as social deixis.

Place Deixis
According to Levinson (1983:79 in Lyons) place or space deixis concerns the specification of locations relative to anchorage in the speech event. According to Cruse (2000:320) "spatial or place deixis manifests itself principally in the form of locative adverbs such as 'here' and 'there' and demonstratives or determiners such as "this" and "that".

Time Deixis
Time deixis can also be called as temporal deixis. According to Cruse (2000:321) "temporal deixis functions to locate points or intervals on the time axis, using the moments of utterance as a reference point".

Social Deixis
According to Fillmore (1975) and Levinson (1983) "social deixis concerns that aspect of sentences which reflect or establish or are determined by certain realities of the social situation in which the speech act occurs". In Fillmore's word the social deixis encodes the social relationships on the port of the participants in the conversation that determined, for example, the choice of honorific or polite or intimate or insulting speech level in addition to honorifics, examples include nicknames, informal names, and title of respect.

Discourse Deixis

"Discourse, or text, deixis concerns the use of expressions within some expressions that utterance refers to some portion of the discourse that utterance (including the utterance itself)", Levinson (2000:85).

Motherhood and Mother figure

Since mothers are "the most affective agents in the life of a child" (Dedeoglu, 2010, p.1, the theme of motherhood and mother figures in which a child identity is affected by his /her mother personality constitutes a main point that is usually tackled by novelists. Good-hearted mothers bring up good children whereas bad mothers produce evil ones. Mothers have an important role in shaping children's identities and future. Tackling mother-child relationship in "David Copperfield" gives a lesson to all mothers that they have different social roles and their roles in their children's life is major and un-substitutable. The current paper is concerned with the theme of mother figures which shapes the type of language used to present David's relations to his real mother and other mother figures in the novel.

METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted through the mixed method approach in which the selected extracts will be analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative analysis gives a depth of understanding of the social problem under investigation and moreover, it gives the respondents the ability to disclose their feelings, thoughts and experiences without any constraints (OnePoll,2002: parag.5). The quantitative analysis is carried out in order to provide more objectivity to the data analyzed. The data involves extract selected originally from Charles Dickens' novel "David Copperfield" to be analyzed through identifying the social deixis and the mother roles they determine. The three mother figures are Clara Copperfield, Clara Peggotty, and Miss. Betsey. The details below are collected from different websites including basically DickensLit.com, etc.usf.edu.

Charlesdickens.info and Britannica.com.

Table (1) Details of the characters representing motherhood theme in Charles Dickens' novel "David Copperfield

No.	Character	Relation to David	characters' Details
1	Clara Copperfield (Later Mrs. Murdstone)	David's real mother	She is a kind and goodhearted mother who dies early in the novel. David's remembers her as an angle who is spiritually destroyed by her second husband Mr. Murdstone.
2	Clara Peggotty (Later Mrs. Barkis)	David's Nanny and caretaker	She is selfless, gentle and faithful character. She accompanies David's family and never abandons David, his mother or even Miss Betsey.
3	Miss. Betsey Trotwood	David's Aunt	She is a generous, kind-hearted aunt who acts as David's second mother.

Having decided on the characters who represent mother figures, (3) extracts are selected to be analyzed and interpreted according to the model adopted. The selection of the extracts involves

27

only those representing the three mother figures including Clara Copperfield, Clara Peggotty and Miss. Betsey. Both types of the social deixis (rational and absolute) will be stated clearly and interpreted identifying the social roles of the three mother figures in David's life as are implied in the novel.
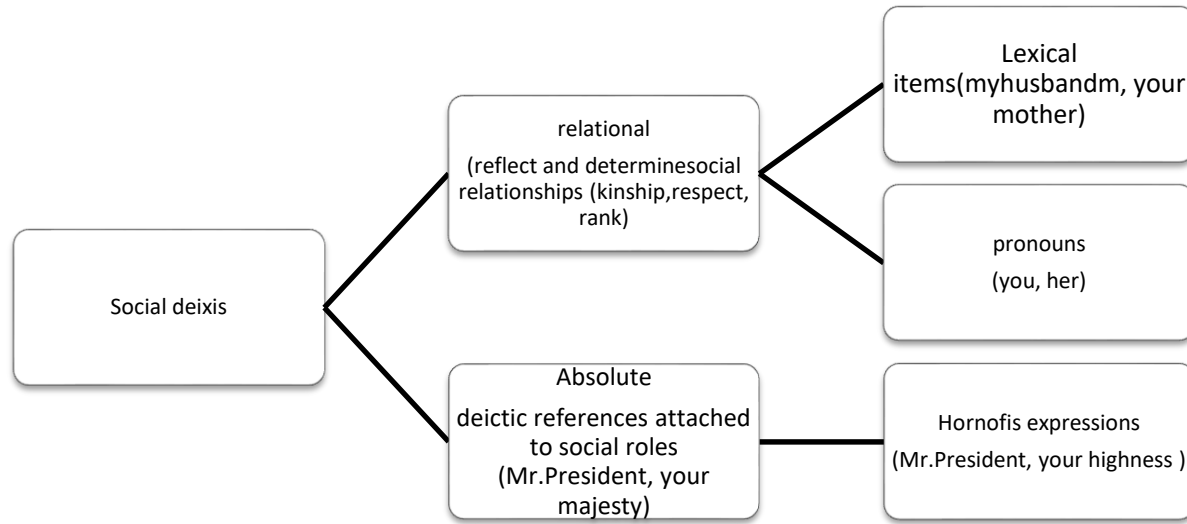

Fig (1): Fillmore's (1975) and Levinson's (1983) Social Deixis

Model of the Analysis

Fillmore (1975) and Levinson (1983) classify social deixis into two types: referential and absolute. The relational social deictic words are categorized into five types. They are kinship terms, occupation-related titles, personal names, pronouns and terms of endearment. The frequency percentages of these kinds were calculated along with the Absolute deixis used in the novel.

Social deixis expressions are used to establish the social roles of the participants of the discourse. They pinpoint the relation between them or the speaker and other referents and other audience. Examples of this type are the honorific forms in older English namely; the archaic second person pronoun (Thou,Thee ..etc) (Green, 1992). Levinson agrees with this view that these honorifics show respect and rank (Levinson, 1983). Title terms fall within this category and they are different as per the relationship between the speaker, the hearer, the audience and the speaker being referred to (Levinson, 1983, p.67, Fillmore, 1997).

Discourse deixis are deictics expressions relate deictic terms to various kinds of linguistic entities. Levinson (1983) defined discourse deixis as an encoding reference to discoursal parts where utterances are situated. Deictic expressions refer to phrases that guide readers or hearers in the text whereas it is written or spoken. Examples of discourse deixis are: in the next section, earlier, and lateritic (Fillmore, 1977).

28

Analysis of the Extracts
To identify the social deictic expressions, the three extracts selected from the novel are analyzed qualitatively and quantitively :

Analysis of Extract (1) / Chapter II "I OBSERVE" / (p.14)

I have an impression on my mind which I cannot distinguish from actual remembrance, of the touch of Peggotty's forefinger as she used to hold it out to me, and of its being roughened by needlework, like a pocket nutmeg-grater. This may be fancy, though I think the memory of most of us can go farther back into such times than many of us suppose; just as I believe the power of observation in numbers of very young children to be quite wonderful for its closeness and accuracy. Indeed, I think that most grown men who are remarkable in this respect, may with greater propriety be said not to have lost the faculty, than to have acquired it; the rather, as I generally observe such men to retain a certain freshness, and gentleness, and capacity of being pleased, which are also an inheritance they have preserved from their childhood.

The context of the situation in extract (1) which is taken from chapter two "I OBSERVE", David remembers his home, the churchyard where his father is buried and his memories with his mother and his nanny Peggotty.

The relational social deictic expressions identified in the extract include the personal pronoun '*I*' which is used six times and *'my'* and *'me'* which are used once referring to David himself when he tried to remember his family and specially his nanny Peggotty. The personal pronoun *'us'* is used twice to refer to all men including David himself. David tries to generalize his point of view concerning early childhood memories and how they play important role in the future of those who became great men.

The use of the personal pronouns *'they'* and *'their'* for once to refer to the men in general since David was generalizing his point of view concerning childhood memories The use of the name *'Peggotty'* followed by the personal pronoun *'she'* imply that David feels with intimate relationship towards Peggotty. She is close to him and therefore, he feels happy when he remembers the moments, he spent with her and the motherly touch by her forefinger. These unforgettable memories derive him to show that what he describes as "great men" in a reference to what he has become later, make him happy and these are the same feeling which he shares with all great men who grow up with their early childhood memories. The table below includes the frequency and percentage of the social deixis in extract (1):

Table (2): The Frequency and Percentage of the Social Deixis in extract (1)

Social deictic Expressions	Type	Form	frequency	Percentage
I (David)	Relational	pronoun	6	43%
Me (David)	Relational	pronoun	1	7.1%
My (David)	Relational	pronoun	1	7.1%
Peggotty	Relational	Name	1	7.1%
She (Peggotty)	Relational	Pronoun	1	7.1%
Us (David and other men)	Relational	Pronoun	2	14.2%
They (men who have strong memories of their childhood)	Relational	Pronoun	1	7.1%
Their (men who have strong memories of their childhood)	Relational	Pronoun	1	7.14%
		Total	14	100%

The extract shows that Peggotty's role as mother figure, who offered him love and care, is what he observed in his life and preserved in his mind.

Analysis of Extract (2) / Chapter IV "I FALL INTO DISGRACE"/ (p.55)

There is no Peggotty now, as in the old time. Again, I listen to Miss Murdstone mumbling the responses, and emphasizing all the dread words with a cruel relish. Again, I see her dark eyes roll round the church when she says 'miserable sinners', as if she were calling all the congregation names. Again, I catch rare glimpses of my mother, moving her lips timidly between the two, with one of them muttering at each ear like low thunder. Again, I wonder with a sudden fear whether it is likely that our good old clergyman can be wrong, and Mr. and Miss Murdstone right, and that all the angels in Heaven can be destroying angels. Again, if I move a finger or relax a muscle of my face, Miss Murdstone pokes me with her prayer-book, and makes my side ache.

This extract is taken from chapter four which is entitled "I FALL INTO DISGRACE" and this chapter presents David's unhappiness. The extract takes place when David's mother accuses Peggotty of spoiling her child and makes him hates her and her new husband Mr. Murdstone who later threatens to hurt David for not respecting his mother as she holds his name.

As far as the social deixis are concerned, the extract involves different deictics that are used to imply different interpretations concerning David's relationship with his mother, on one hand and Miss.Murdstone's (David's mother) relationship with Peggotty (David's nanny). David used the relational deictic name 'Peggotty' to refer directly to his nanny who takes care of him despite everything. This deictic expression indicates that Peggotty is no longer the close nanny responsible for all. In addition, David used the personal pronoun (relational deictic expression)*'I'* five times to confirm that he is now aware and know very well his mothers' intentions towards him and Peggotty.

David used the relational deictic expression *'my mother'* only once to reminds the reader that the situations he is facing are carried out by his own mother implying the point that she is not performing her social role as a protector for her child. He uses the family relationship this time through the social deictic expression "my mother" he wants to affirm that though she got married to be Miss. Murdstone, she is still his mother and he can confirm that her behavior has changed completely. He used the personal pronoun *'she'* twice and *'her'* twice also to refer to his mother and her behavior which he realized and confirmed clearly.

This extract involves absolute deictic expressions involving *' Mr. Murdstone'* (once) and *'Miss Murdstone'* (three times). This implies that David is not looking at his mother as he used to do before but rather the woman of another man, Mr. Murdstone who does not like him at all. David used the honorific deictic expression *'Miss. Murdstone'* to refer to the formality of the relationship between him and his mother.

The relational deictic expressions show that David's relationship with his mother is broken and he looks at her differently as she changed and accuses Peggotty of making David hates her because she got married. The absolute deictic expressions draw a formal relationship between David and his mother as well as her new husband. The table below presents the frequency and percentages of the deictic expressions used in the extract:

Table (3): The Frequency and Percentage of the Social Deixis in extract (2)

Social deictic Expressions	Type	Form	frequency	Percentage
Peggotty	Relational	Name	1	6.7%
I (David)	Relational	Pronoun	5	33.3%
My mother	Relational	Family	1	6.7%
She (his mother)	Relational	Pronoun	2	13.3%
Her (his mother)	Relational	Pronoun	2	13.3%
Mr. Murdstone	Absolute	Honorific expression	1	6.7%
Miss. Murdstone	Absolute	Honorific expression	3	20%
Total			15	100%

Analysis of Extract (3)/ Chapter XII "LIKING LIFE ON MY OWN ACCOUNT TO BETTER, IFORM A GREAT RESOLUTION"/ (P.188)

> Again, and again, and a hundred times again, since the night when the thought had first occurred to me and banished sleep, I had gone over that old story of my poor mother's about my birth, which it had been one of my great delights in the old time to hear her tell, and which I knew by heart. My aunt walked into that story, and walked out of it, a dread and awful personage; but there was one little trait in her behaviour which I liked to dwell on, and which gave me some faint shadow of encouragement. I could not forget how my mother had thought that she felt her touch her pretty hair with no ungentle hand; and though it might have been altogether my mother's fancy, and might have had no foundation whatever in fact, I made a little picture, out of it, of my terrible aunt relenting towards the girlish beauty that I recollected so well and loved so much, which softened the whole narrative. It is very possible that it had been in my mind a long time, and had gradually engendered my determination.

In chapter (12), David decided to go and find his aunt, Miss Betsey Trotwood. As far as extract (3) is concerned, David was told about the story of his birth from his aunt Mrs. Betsey. He imagines his aunt touching his mother's hair and feeling sympathy for her girlish beauty. He starts to wonder if his aunt might have some feelings towards him. Slowly, David realizes that his aunt is a good woman and she is the one to whom he should run away to find love and support.

The extract involves different social deictic expressions which play important role in determining David's points of view in relation to his mother and his aunt. The use of the personal pronoun 'I' in *"I had gone over that old story", "I knew by heart", "I liked to dwell on", "I could not forget" , "I made a little picture", "I recollected so well and loved so much"* represent a relational deictic expression which stands for how David lives in the memories of his birth which were told by his mother. This implies close relationship between the son and the mother since he builds his ideas and picture his aunt's personality depending on his mother's descriptions. He refers to his mother's beauty which he remembers and all the feelings associated with her including his deep love to her. The use of the personal pronoun 'my' in and my in *"my birth", "my determination", "my mind"* stand for David's memories live his present life and draws a picture of how early childhood memories build everyone's own personality. David refers to his own life and state of mind as narrator and a person who is telling his own personal story. The use of the personal pronouns 'me' in '*occurred to me"* is another relational deictic expression which asserts that the whole story or memories are his own and occurred to him.

As far David's mother is concerned, David uses the intimate address term "my *poor mother's"* twice and *"my mother"* once to state clearly that he sympathizes his mother situation. Concerning his aunt, he used also relational deictic expression and specifically family expressions "*my aunt"* twice pointing out that his vision about his aunt is changing as time is passes and he remembers his mother stories about her. The use of the personal pronouns '*she'* and '*her'* to refer to both his mother and his aunt and hence indicating a family relationship and intimacy to both. All the mentioned deictic expressions are of the relational type reflecting and determining the family

relationship between David his mother and his aunt. The table below shows the frequency and percentage of the social deixis in extract (3):

Table (4): The Frequency and Percentage of the Social Deixis in extract (3)

Social deictic Expression	Type	Form	Frequency	Percentage
Me	Relational	Pronoun	2	12.5%
I	Relational	pronoun	5	31.3%
Her (his mother)	Relational	pronoun	2	12.5%
My poor mother	Relational	Family	2	12.5%
My mother	Relational	Family	1	6.3%
My aunt	Relational	Family	1	6.3%
My terrible aunt	Relational	Family	1	6.2%
Her	Relational	pronoun	1	6.2%
She (his mother)	Relational	pronoun	1	6.2%
		Total	16	100%

The table below states clearly the total frequency and percentages of the social deixis identified in the analysis of the extracts:

Table (5): The total of frequency and percentage of social deixis in the data analyzed

Types of social deixis	Frequency	Percentage
Relational deictic expressions	22	32.83%
Family	6	8.95%
Pronouns	33	49.25%
Names	2	2.99 %
Absolute	2	2.99%
Honorific expressions	2	2.99%
Total of social deixis	**67**	**100%**

CONCLUSIONS

Having investigated the data qualitatively and finding the frequency of the types of the social deictic expressions used by David Copperfield to represent the three mother figures (Clara Copperfield, Clara Peggotty and Miss. Betsey) in the novel, the study has come to the following conclusions:

1.   David Copperfield uses the relational deictic expressions with (32.83%) in which the pronouns constitute (49.25%), family deictics formulate (8.95%) and finally, the names constitute only (2.99%).

2.   The use of the relational deixis reflects the types of the relationships between him and the three mother figures (Clara Copperfield, Clara Peggotty and Mrs. Betsey) in his life.

3.   David relies on using the relational deictic expressions to show the intimate relations he holds in mind and heart to him mother as well as his nanny and his aunt.

4.   When David talks about Peggotty, he uses the relational deictic expressions (name, family and pronouns) to show the intimate and closeness of the relationship between him and her. For him, she is a good mother figure who offered him love and care.

5.   The absolute honorific expressions are used with (2.99%) only and basically when David talks about his mother after marriage and his aunt relation with his mother.

6.   David uses the absolute deixis from time to time to talk about his weak relationship with his mother after her marriage and when he reflects the type of the formal relationship between his mother and his aunt.

7.   Mother figures involving Peggotty and his aunts perform the roles of mother such as loving, caring , supporting, encouraging and offering home.

References

Al-Tekreeti, A. S. S. (2016). *A Pragmatic Analysis of Deixis in John Austin's 'Pride and Prejudice* (Unpublished Master Thesis, Suleyman Demirel University, Isparta, Turkey).

Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2016, January 7). *Wilkins Micawber*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Wilkins-Micawber

Cruse, D.A. 2000. Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dedeoglu, A. O. (2010). Discourses of motherhood and consumption practices of Turkish mothers. *Business and Economics Research Journal*, *1*(3), 1-15.

Diessel, H. (2006). Demonstratives, joint attention, and the emergence of grammar. *Cognitive Linguistics, 17*(4), 463-489. doi: 10.1515/COG.2006.015.

Fillmore, C. J. (1971). Towards a Theory of Deixis. The PCCLLU Papers (Department of Linguistics, University of Hawaii).

Fillmore. C. J. (1975). Santa Cruz Lectures on Deixis. Mimeo, Indianna University Linguistics Club.

Fillmore, C. J. (1997). *Lectures on deixis*. Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.

Green , K. (1992) . Reflections on deixis in poetry. *Language and Literature, 1*(2), 121-140.

Green, G. M. (2012) *Pragmatics and natural language understanding*. New York: Routledge.

Griffiths, P. (2006). *Introduction to English semantics and pragmatics* (2nd Ed.). UK: Edinburgh University Press.

Hartnett, K. (2012, August 12). *Dickens's Best Novel? Six Experts Share Their Opinions.* The Millions.https://themillions.com/2012/08/dickens-best-novel-6-experts-share-their-opinions.html.

https://uhn.ac.id/files/akademik_files

Huang, Y. (2012). *The Oxford dictionary of pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Huang, Y. (2012). *Pragmatics (Oxford Textbooks in Linguistics)* (2nd Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hammarberg, K, Kirkman, M., de Lacey, S. Qualitative research methods: when to use them and how to judge them, *Human Reproduction*, Volume 31, Issue 3, March 2016, Pages 498–501, https://doi.org/10.1093/humrep/dev334

Levinson, S. C., Levinson, S. C., & Levinson, S. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lyons, J. (1977). *Semantics* (Vol. 1 & Vol. 2). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.