



Manifestations of Cultural Identity in Narrative Discourse: A case Study of Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North

Salwa Osman Ahmed¹

ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the manifestations of cultural identity in narrative discourse through a pragmatic approach, based on the premise that cultural identity constitutes one of the fundamental components in the construction of literary discourse, and that pragmatics, as a modern linguistic approach, is capable of uncovering both the explicit and implicit meanings embedded in texts. The research examines the concepts of identity and culture, clarifies the relationship between them, and introduces pragmatics along with its principal analytical mechanisms, namely context, speech acts, and conversational implicature, highlighting their role in the analysis of narrative discourse. The research adopts a descriptive-analytical method and takes Season of Migration to the North by Tayeb Salih as its primary corpus in order to identify the major manifestations of cultural identity in the novelistic discourse. It analyzes a number of textual examples that reflect spatial, social, linguistic, and civilizational identities, as well as Arab-African identity and the related issues of belonging and interaction with the Other. The findings reveal that the narrative discourse of the novel embodies multiple cultural dimensions. The pragmatic approach proved effective in uncovering the communicative and cultural functions performed by language within the text. Furthermore, the research demonstrates that cultural identity in the novel is not a fixed construct; rather, it is a dynamic formation shaped through the interaction of place, language, history, memory, and culture.

Keywords: *Cultural Identity; Culture; Pragmatics; Speech Acts; Narrative Discourse; Tayeb Salih.*

1-Associate Professor- Department of Arabic Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Al-Neelain University

مستخلص:

هدف هذا البحث إلى الكشف عن تجليات الهوية الثقافية في الخطاب السردى من خلال مقارنة تداولية، انطلاقاً من أن الهوية الثقافية تمثل أحد المكونات الرئيسة في بناء الخطاب الأدبي، وأن التداولية تعد من المناهج اللسانية الحديثة القادرة على استجلاء الدلالات الظاهرة والضمنية للنصوص. وقد سعى البحث إلى بيان مفهوم الهوية والثقافة والعلاقة بينهما، والتعريف بالتداولية وأبرز آلياتها المتمثلة في السياق، والأفعال الكلامية، والاستلزام الحواري، وبيان دورها في تحليل الخطاب السردى واعتمد البحث على المنهج الوصفى التحليلي، واتخذت من رواية موسم الهجرة إلى الشمال للطيب صالح متناً تطبيقياً، للكشف عن أبرز تجليات الهوية الثقافية في الخطاب الروائي. وقد تناول البحث عدداً من النماذج النصية التي أبرزت الهوية المكانية والاجتماعية واللغوية والحضارية، فضلاً عن الهوية العربية الإفريقية وما يرتبط بها من قضايا الانتماء والتفاعل مع الآخر وتوصل البحث إلى أن الخطاب السردى في الرواية يحمل أبعاداً ثقافية متعددة، وأن المقاربة التداولية أسهمت في الكشف عن الوظائف التواصلية والثقافية التي تؤديها اللغة داخل النص، كما أكدت أن الهوية الثقافية في الرواية ليست بنية ثابتة، بل هي بناء متحرك يتشكل من خلال التفاعل بين المكان واللغة والتاريخ والذاكرة والثقافة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الهوية الثقافية، الثقافة، التداولية، الأفعال الكلامية، الخطاب السردى، الطيب صالح.

Introduction:

Contemporary linguistic and literary studies have shown growing interest in issues of cultural identity because of their significant role in shaping both individual and collective consciousness. Cultural identity serves as a repository that preserves the distinctiveness of societies and reflects their civilizational memory. The importance of this concept has become even more pronounced in light of the transformations characterizing the contemporary world and the resulting cultural and civilizational interactions, which have profoundly influenced literary production, particularly narrative discourse. Narrative discourse has thus become a fertile space for representing issues of identity and exploring their diverse manifestations.

Pragmatics, as one of the modern linguistic approaches, has provided broad analytical possibilities for discourse analysis and for uncovering both explicit and implicit meanings. Rather than limiting itself to the research of language as an abstract system, pragmatics examines language in use, drawing on several analytical mechanisms, most notably context, speech acts, and conversational implicature. This has made it an effective approach for the analysis of literary texts and for revealing their cultural and communicative dimensions

Against this background, the present research seeks to investigate the manifestations of cultural identity in narrative discourse through a pragmatic approach. It begins by examining the concepts of identity and culture and the relationship between them, before outlining the principal pragmatic mechanisms that can be employed in the analysis of narrative texts. It then proceeds to the applied section, which takes *Season of Migration to the North* as its corpus, with the aim of identifying manifestations of spatial, social, linguistic, and

civilizational identities, as well as the issues of belonging and interaction with the Other associated with them.

The research adopts a descriptive-analytical method, drawing on insights from contemporary pragmatics to analyze selected narrative texts. Its objective is to reveal the cultural functions performed by novelistic discourse and to highlight its role in constructing cultural identity and preserving the collective memory of society.

Research problem:

Sudanese literature is among the Arabic literary traditions that have engaged most extensively with the question of cultural identity, owing to the country's rich civilizational, ethnic, and cultural diversity, as well as the dynamic interaction it reflects between the local and the global, and between the self and the Other. Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* stands at the forefront of narrative works that offer a profound vision of this issue through its characters, events, dialogues, and cultural symbols.

How does Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* utilize narrative and symbolic structures to deconstruct the post-colonial Sudanese identity, and to what extent does it transcend the binary dialectic of the Self (East) and the Other (West)?

Research questions:

- 1- How does the novel demonstrate that cultural identity is an evolving performative construct rather than a static heritage? In what ways do space, memory, and the "Other" continuously shape this identity?
- 2- How do pragmatic mechanisms decode non-literal, culturally embedded meanings within the narrative dialogue? How do speech acts function performatively to negotiate social status and cultural agency?

- 3- In what ways does the narrative discourse refute monolithic identity paradigms? How does the novel assert and define a hybrid, composite Arab-African identity?
- 4- How do spatial settings (such as the diwan or the Nile) and non-verbal behaviors (such as deliberate silence) operate as pragmatic strategies? What do they convey about resistance, alienation, and cultural continuity?

Research objective:

The research adopts a descriptive-analytical method, drawing on insights from contemporary pragmatics to analyze selected narrative texts. Its objective is to reveal the cultural functions performed by novelistic discourse and to highlight its role in constructing cultural identity and preserving the collective memory of society.

importance of the research:

This research makes several key contributions to Arabic literary scholarship and applied linguistics:

- 1- Addressing Literature Gaps: While existing scholarship on Season of Migration to the North predominantly employs postcolonial, psychoanalytic, or thematic frameworks, this research fills an empirical gap by applying a rigorous pragmatic methodology to literary dialogue.
- 2- Methodological Integration: It demonstrates the utility of pragmatic analytical tools—traditionally applied to real-time verbal interaction—for decoding complex literary discourse and character psychology.
- 3- Preservation of Cultural Memory: The research systematically articulates how literary prose records, safeguards, and reproduces Sudanese cultural heritage and collective memory within globalized discourse network

Research limitations:

The scope of this research is defined by specific theoretical and empirical constraints:

1- Corpus Scope: The analysis is restricted to selected narrative excerpts from Season of Migration to the North and does not encompass Tayeb Salih's complete literary oeuvre or broader Sudanese prose fiction.

2-Framework Boundaries: Pragmatic mechanisms are limited to context, basic speech act theory, and conversational implicature. Extended pragmatic frameworks, such as Politeness Theory or Relevance Theory, fall outside the scope of this research.

3-Linguistic Translation: The primary analysis was conducted on the original Arabic text. English translations provided in the text are illustrative and may not fully replicate the nuanced dialectical registers (Ammiyya/Fusha) present in the original Arabic prose.

Cultural Identity:

Cultural identity is one of the most prominent issues in contemporary human thought, particularly in light of the rapid transformations brought about by globalization, intercultural interaction, and social and political change. The concept of identity is no longer confined to its individual dimension; rather, it has become closely associated with the cultural structures that shape collective consciousness and determine patterns of behavior and perceptions of the world.

Within this context, there has emerged a growing need to examine cultural identity as a multidimensional concept in which the individual intersects with the collective, the historical with the social, and the cultural with the symbolic. Consequently, a proper understanding of cultural identity requires an analysis of its fundamental components, foremost among them the concepts of identity, culture, and the relationship between the two.

Accordingly, this section aims to provide a theoretical framework for the concept of cultural identity by examining the definition of identity, followed by that of culture, before clarifying the nature of their relationship as a prelude to investigating the manifestations of this concept within the context of Sudanese cultural identity.

Literature Review

Examining the manifestations of cultural identity in narrative discourse from a pragmatic perspective requires a clear understanding of the key concepts that constitute the theoretical foundation of this research. A comprehensive treatment of the research topic cannot be achieved without identifying the conceptual bases upon which it rests. Accordingly, this section discusses the concept of cultural identity by first defining the notions of identity and culture and clarifying the relationship between them. It then introduces pragmatics and its principal analytical mechanisms, namely context, speech acts, and conversational implicature, as a theoretical basis for the analysis of the selected narrative texts.

The Concept of Identity:

Identity is considered one of the fundamental concepts in cultural and social studies because of its significant role in defining the characteristics of both individuals and communities. Al-Mu‘jam al-Wasīṭ defines identity as "the true nature of a thing or a person that distinguishes it from others; it also refers to an identification card that records a person's name, nationality, place of birth, and occupation." (1)

According to Mohammed Imara, identity is defined as "the enduring characteristics of an individual that are continuously renewed without changing their essential nature. Identity manifests and expresses itself without giving way

to its opposite; it is like a fingerprint that distinguishes one person from another." (2)

For Mahmoud Amin Al-'Alim, identity "is not a unitary structure; rather, it is the outcome of the interaction of multiple elements, including religion, language, ethnicity, culture, emotions, morality, and personal experience." (3)

Similarly, Mohammed Ibrahim Eid argues that "social identity is a socio-psychological concept that refers to how a people perceive themselves and distinguish themselves from others. It is based on general cultural assumptions historically associated with social, political, and economic values." (4)

These definitions demonstrate that identity is neither a fixed nor a simple entity; rather, it is a complex construct shaped by the interaction of various cultural, social, and historical factors.

The Concept of Culture:

Culture constitutes the framework within which identity is formed, and it has been approached by scholars through various definitions. From a linguistic perspective, Ibn Manẓūr defines culture as "skilfulness, understanding, and quickness in learning." (5)

In Western thought, Edward B. Tylor provided one of the most widely recognized definitions of culture, describing it as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs, traditions, and the capabilities acquired by human beings as members of society." (6)

Among the most significant characteristics of culture are:

It is acquired rather than inherited.

It is closely associated with human existence.

It develops through social interaction.

In this regard, Nasser bin Saeed bin Saif states that culture is "an acquired human phenomenon that cannot exist outside human society, as individuals acquire it through their interaction with others and through the development of their social lives." (7)

The Relationship Between Identity and Culture:

The relationship between identity and culture is a close and inseparable one, as culture represents the content of identity, while identity represents the manifestation of culture in reality.

Every identity embodies a particular culture, and multiple cultures may exist within a single identity, a phenomenon known as diversity within unity. A people's identity may derive from several cultures whose elements interact and merge, ultimately producing a composite identity.

Within this framework, Abdulaziz Al-Tuwaijri argues that "cultural identity may be formed through the interaction of several cultures, as is the case with Islamic identity, which encompasses multiple cultures that have blended with Arab-Islamic culture, making it an open rather than a closed identity." (8)

Shaheeb Adel further explains that "the relationship between culture and identity refers to the relationship between the self and cultural production, as no cultural production can exist in the absence of a thinking subject." (9)

In the same context, UNESCO defines cultural identity as "the individual's belonging to a linguistic, cultural, or national group, with its ethical and aesthetic values; this includes the way in which the history, traditions, and customs of the group are understood and the participation in this cultural heritage." (10)

Pragmatics and Narrative Discourse:

9	SUST Journal of Educational Science ISSN (text): 1858-7224	Vol.26 No .1(26)
---	---	------------------

The Concept of Pragmatics:

Pragmatics is considered one of the most prominent modern linguistic approaches concerned with the research of language in the context of its use. It no longer views discourse as a linguistic structure independent of its surrounding environment; rather, it considers it a communicative act associated with the speaker, the recipient, and the circumstances surrounding the process of communication. Pragmatics emerged within the framework of the development witnessed by contemporary linguistic studies and became connected with several fields of knowledge that intersect with it in examining linguistic phenomena. This has contributed to the diversity of its definitions and the expansion of its areas of interest. (11)

Researchers argue that the difficulty of providing a comprehensive definition of pragmatics is due to its interconnection with other disciplines and the diversity of issues it addresses. Nevertheless, the common element among various perspectives lies in its focus on language in use and in revealing the mechanisms through which meaning is produced within different communicative contexts. (12)

Pragmatics does not limit itself to studying linguistic structures alone; rather, it extends to analyzing the relationship between discourse and its users while taking into account the social, cultural, and psychological conditions surrounding the communicative process. Therefore, it is not considered a linguistic science in the traditional sense, but rather an interdisciplinary field of knowledge that intersects with linguistics, philosophy, cognitive psychology, communication studies, and other disciplines that contribute to explaining the phenomenon of human communication. (13)

Pragmatics is based on the research of the relationship between linguistic structures and the contexts in which they occur, while focusing on the mental processes and communicative strategies that contribute to the production and interpretation of meaning. Thus, it moves beyond linguistic description to reveal implicit intentions and the cultural and social dimensions embedded within discourse. (14)

Accordingly, pragmatics holds particular significance in narrative studies because it enables researchers to analyze literary discourse in light of its cultural and social context and to uncover the meanings generated through the interaction between the text, its producer, and its recipient. This makes it an appropriate analytical tool for studying the manifestations of cultural identity in narrative discourse and for revealing the linguistic and communicative mechanisms that contribute to constructing and reproducing identity within the literary text. (15)

Pragmatic Mechanisms:

Context:

Context is considered one of the central concepts in pragmatic studies, as discourse cannot be understood or its intentions recognized independently of the circumstances and conditions surrounding its production. Meaning is not determined solely by linguistic structure; rather, it is formed through the interaction between the speaker, the recipient, and the situation in which the discourse occurs, along with the social, cultural, and psychological dimensions associated with it. Therefore, pragmatics has given special attention to context and considered it a fundamental basis for interpreting both explicit and implicit meanings and for revealing the communicative intentions underlying utterances. (16)

The significance of context in narrative studies lies in its role as a tool for interpreting dialogues, events, and cultural symbols and for connecting them with the social and cultural environment in which they were produced. This contributes to uncovering the dimensions of cultural identity within the literary text. (17)

Speech Acts:

Speech act theory is based on the assumption that language is not merely a means of conveying information; rather, it is a tool for performing various actions. Through discourse, the speaker may command, prohibit, promise, apologize, persuade, or direct. Accordingly, the linguistic utterance becomes an act that performs a specific communicative function. This theory has contributed to expanding the scope of pragmatic studies by focusing on the illocutionary force of discourse and revealing the intentions that speakers seek to achieve through their utterances. (18)

This mechanism is useful in analyzing narrative discourse through the research of dialogues between characters and by revealing the pragmatic functions they perform, as well as the social and cultural values they carry that contribute to the construction of cultural identity within the text. (19)

Conversational Implicature:

Conversational implicature is based on the idea that speakers may not explicitly state everything they intend to convey; rather, they leave the recipient to infer certain meanings based on context and the contextual clues accompanying the discourse. Therefore, meaning is not limited to the literal denotation of words but extends to the implicit meanings determined by the communicative situation and the relationships between its participants. (20)

Conversational implicature holds particular importance in narrative discourse analysis because it helps uncover intellectual and cultural meanings that are not directly expressed by the text. It also highlights the perspectives and values embedded in dialogues and narrative situations, which reflect the identity and culture of society. (21)

Pragmatics and Narrative Discourse:

Pragmatics is closely connected to narrative discourse because the narrative text is based on a communicative process in which several elements interact, most notably the author, the text, the recipient, and the cultural and social context. Through pragmatic mechanisms, it is possible to uncover the implicit meanings produced by discourse, analyze the functions of dialogue, events, and cultural symbols, and clarify their role in shaping the text's worldview.

From this perspective, the pragmatic approach is considered an appropriate analytical tool for studying the manifestations of cultural identity in narrative discourse. It enables the exploration of the relationship between language and culture and reveals the mechanisms through which literary discourse contributes to constructing identity, preserving its components, and reproducing it amid cultural and social transformations. (22)

Applied Study: Selected Models from Tayeb Salih's (Season of Migration to the North):

Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North is considered one of the most prominent Arabic narrative works that engages with the issue of cultural identity. The novel presents a profound artistic vision of the relationship between the Self and the Other, and between East and West, through characters and events rooted in Sudanese reality while interacting with different cultural spaces. This

rich semantic dimension has made the novel a fertile field for critical studies approached from various perspectives.

The significance of selecting this novel for the present research stems from the fact that it represents a narrative discourse in which cultural, social, and historical references intersect. It also highlights aspects of Sudanese identity through language, dialogue, characters, narrative space, and cultural symbols. Moreover, the novel presents a clear image of the conflict between local belonging and openness to the Other, making it an appropriate model for exploring the manifestations of cultural identity.

This research seeks to approach the novelistic text from a pragmatic perspective, based on the assumption that narrative discourse is a communicative act in whose construction several elements interact, most notably context, speech acts, and conversational implicatures. These mechanisms allow for the uncovering of implicit meanings and cultural references embedded within the text. Therefore, the research relies on a selection of textual excerpts from the novel and analyzes them in light of these mechanisms in order to reveal their role in constructing cultural identity and embodying its features within narrative discourse.

Manifestations of Cultural Identity in Language and Discourse:

Tayeb Salih opens his novel *Season of Migration to the North* with the following passage:

“I returned to my people, gentlemen, after a long absence—seven years, to be exact—during which I had been studying in Europe. I learned much and little, but the most important thing is that I returned to my people. I convinced myself that I had learned much and returned... Through the window, I looked at

the green fields, the towering palm trees, and the land whose roots extend deep into history.” (23)

From its very beginning, this passage establishes the centrality of cultural identity in the novel. The narrator does not merely report his return from Europe; rather, he presents this return as an existential event through which he restores his relationship with place, people, and memory. The repeated phrase “I returned to my people” carries a meaning that extends beyond its direct sense, indicating the recovery of belonging to the community and to the cultural system within which the narrator’s personality was formed.

From a pragmatic perspective, this discourse performs an illocutionary function that goes beyond mere narration. It represents a declaration of belonging and a renewal of the relationship with cultural roots. The utterance also contains a presupposition that distance from one’s homeland does not lead to a severance of connection with it; rather, it may intensify the feeling of attachment, a meaning that the recipient recognizes through the broader context of the novel.

Context plays a central role in producing meaning, as the narrator returns after years of residence in the West, making every element of place carry a particular cultural significance. The Nile, palm trees, green fields, and the land deeply rooted in history are not merely descriptive elements; rather, they function as cultural signs that evoke the collective memory of Sudanese society and reflect the individual’s connection to his land and heritage.

The passage also contains a conversational implicature represented in the idea that the experience of the Other was unable to erase the narrator’s original identity; instead, it contributed to strengthening it. His insistence on returning to his people and his sense of familiarity with the place reveal that cultural identity

remains the individual's primary frame of reference despite the diversity of his cultural experiences.

It can also be observed that the speech acts in this passage take an expressive form, as the narrator conveys feelings of nostalgia, reassurance, and belonging. Thus, language becomes a tool for evoking the cultural and social values of Sudanese society, giving the discourse a human dimension that transcends direct narration.

Therefore, this text does not present the return merely as a temporal event; rather, it transforms it into a return to the cultural self. It emphasizes that the narrative discourse in the novel contributes to constructing cultural identity and preserving its components through the evocation of place, memory, and social bonds.

After his return from Europe, the narrator continues describing his sense of place, stating:

“Through the window, I looked at the green fields, the towering palm trees, and the land whose roots extend deep into history... I felt that I was not a feather carried by the wind, but rather like that palm tree: a creature with an origin, with roots, with a purpose...”

He then describes his encounter with the villagers and his sitting among them, until his attention is drawn to a stranger whom he had not known before: Mustafa Sa'eed. (24)

This passage reveals that cultural identity in the novel is closely connected to place. The fields, palm trees, and land are not merely natural components; rather, they become cultural symbols reflecting the stability of Sudanese individuals and their connection to their environment and history. In this context,

place appears as a repository of collective memory and a source of belonging and continuity.

From a pragmatic perspective, the narrator's statement, "I felt that I was not a feather carried by the wind, but rather like that palm tree: a creature with an origin, with roots, with a purpose," represents an expressive speech act that reveals a psychological and intellectual stance toward the issue of identity. The utterance does not merely convey a personal feeling; rather, it performs the act of affirming belonging and rejecting the sense of loss that may result from the experience of alienation.

The discourse is also based on a number of presuppositions, most notably that human beings cannot exist without roots, and that belonging to land and history constitutes an essential part of constructing the self. These meanings are not explicitly stated by the novel; instead, the recipient infers them through the broader context of the return from the West to the village.

Conversational implicature emerges through the implicit contrast between two images: the image of a person uprooted from his origins and the image of the palm tree firmly rooted in the earth. The choice of the palm tree rather than another symbol carries a particular cultural significance within the Sudanese environment, as it represents stability, generosity, and continuity, making it a symbolic equivalent of cultural identity.

On the other hand, the transition of the narrative from contemplation of place to the encounter with the villagers and then to the appearance of Mustafa Sa'eed indicates that identity is not shaped solely through the individual's relationship with the land, but also through the network of social relationships to which they belong. The communal gathering, hospitality toward the guest, and

exchange of conversation represent cultural manifestations that reflect the nature of Sudanese society, which is based on social cohesion.

Therefore, this passage confirms that the narrative discourse in *Season of Migration to the North* employs place, symbolism, and human relationships to construct a deeply rooted cultural identity. It transforms the return to the village into a return to a civilizational self whose features could not be erased by the experience of alienation.

Cultural Identity and Its Manifestations in Spatial Setting:

“...But it was an ordinary house, indeed better and more spacious than the homes of the well-off people in the village. It was divided into two courtyards: a courtyard for the women, and the section containing the diwan for the men. Connected to the diwan was a rectangular red-brick room with green windows...” (25)

Tayeb Salih does not present this passage as a mere architectural description of the house; rather, he transforms the spatial setting into a carrier of a set of cultural and social values that reflect the nature of Sudanese society. The house, with its division into a courtyard for women and a section designated for receiving men, embodies a social system based on respect for privacy and the organization of relationships within the family and society. These values constitute an essential part of local cultural identity.

From a pragmatic perspective, this description occurs within the context of the narrator’s attempt to discover Mustafa Sa’eed’s personality and understand his world. Therefore, the description of the house does not perform a purely narrative function; rather, it represents a communicative act that prepares the recipient to perceive deeper meanings related to the owner of the place and the

culture to which he belongs. Context thus makes the place part of the construction of character and the revelation of identity.

The discourse also contains a conversational implicature, represented in the idea that material structure reflects the cultural structure of society. The distinction between male and female spaces, and the presence of the diwan as a place for receiving guests, indicate the rootedness of values such as hospitality and social solidarity. These values are not directly stated by the text; rather, the reader infers them through the description and the surrounding context.

The passage also reveals that cultural identity is not limited to language or dialogue; rather, it is manifested in place and in the symbols and social relationships it contains. The house here represents a cultural memory that preserves the customs and traditions of society, becoming an essential component of the narrative discourse.

Therefore, Tayeb Salih employs spatial setting as a cultural sign with a pragmatic function that contributes to meaning production and reveals the uniqueness of Sudanese society. It confirms that cultural identity is embodied in the details of everyday life as much as it is embodied in ideas and attitudes.

Cultural Identity and the Construction of the Image of the Other:

The narrator says:

“Suddenly, I remembered a face among those who had received me, a face I did not recognize. I asked them about him and described him to them... My father said: ‘That is Mustafa.’ Mustafa who? Is he one of the expatriates from the village who has returned? My father said: ‘Mustafa is not from the people of this village, but he is a stranger who came five years ago. He bought a farm, built a house, and married Mahmoud’s daughter... A man who keeps to himself;

they do not know much about him. I do not know exactly what aroused my curiosity, but I remembered that on the day of my arrival, he was silent. Everyone asked me questions, and I asked them questions..." (26)

This passage reveals one of the central issues in the novel, namely the question of recognizing the Other and integrating him into the cultural community. The narrator's question, "Is he one of the expatriates from the village who has returned?", reflects a presupposition that a person unfamiliar to the collective memory must have an explanation that corresponds with the community's experience. Therefore, the narrator first attempts to associate him with the villagers before discovering that he is an outsider who came from elsewhere.

From a pragmatic perspective, the discourse is based on a series of speech acts that begin with questioning and inquiry, followed by informing and identification. The narrator performs the act of asking in search of knowledge, while the father performs the act of introducing and providing information about Mustafa Sa'eed, explaining that he is a stranger who settled in the village, purchased land, built a house, and married one of its women. These speech acts do not merely convey information; rather, they perform a social function by introducing the new character and integrating him into the narrative structure.

Context plays an important role in shaping meaning, as this dialogue occurs after the narrator's return from Europe. This makes his encounter with Mustafa Sa'eed the beginning of an unspoken confrontation between two experiences that appear similar on the surface but differ fundamentally in depth. The narrator returns to his roots after an academic journey, whereas Mustafa Sa'eed remains a mysterious figure surrounded by questions and silence.

The text also carries a clear conversational implicature, represented in the idea that Sudanese society deals with the stranger through his actions and social behaviour rather than through his origin alone. The fact that he “bought a farm, built a house, and married” implicitly indicates that he has become part of the community and that cultural belonging can be achieved through participation in the life of the group and adherence to its values.

The passage also highlights the significance of silence. The narrator states: “He was silent,” an expression with pragmatic value because silence here is not merely the absence of speech; rather, it functions as a communicative strategy that arouses the recipient’s curiosity and gives the character an element of mystery. Thus, silence itself becomes a form of discourse carrying meanings that are gradually revealed as events develop.

Therefore, this passage establishes the construction of Mustafa Sa’eed’s character as “the Other” within the community. It also reveals that cultural identity in the novel is not a closed structure; rather, it is a space capable of accommodating the newcomer whenever he becomes integrated into the system of values and social relationships governing the community.

Cultural Identity Between the Arab and African Dimensions:

Mustafa Sa’eed says:

“She asked me: What is your nationality? Are you African or Asian?
I said to her: I am like Othello, Arab African. She looked at my face
and said: Yes, your nose is like the noses of Arabs in pictures, but
your hair is not jet-black and smooth like the hair of Arabs.” (27)

This passage reveals one of the central issues in Tayeb Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North*, namely the issue of the composite identity that characterizes the Sudanese personality. The woman’s question, “What is your

nationality? Are you African or Asian?”, is not limited to seeking information; rather, it carries cultural and civilizational dimensions that reflect the other’s perception of human beings through racial and geographical classifications.

From a pragmatic perspective, this question performs an interrogative speech act; however, it contains a presupposition that identity must belong to one specific and clearly defined category. This leads Mustafa Sa’eed to introduce himself through a formulation that combines both the Arab and African dimensions, stating: “I am like Othello, Arab African.”

The reference to the character of Othello carries profound cultural significance, as it evokes in the recipient’s mind the image of the Eastern or African figure within Western imagination, along with the historical and cultural perceptions associated with it. Therefore, this reference is not incidental; rather, it represents a discursive strategy through which Mustafa Sa’eed seeks to define himself in response to the Other’s perspective.

The dialogue also contains a clear conversational implicature, represented in the idea that Sudanese identity is not a monolithic identity; rather, it is a composite identity in which multiple elements interact. This is confirmed by the woman’s attempt to interpret his physical features by comparing them with the Arab models familiar to her, only to discover that these features do not belong to a single stereotypical image.

Context plays an important role in producing these meanings, as the dialogue takes place within the framework of a relationship between the Sudanese Self and the Western Other. This makes identity a subject of cultural questioning and negotiation. Physical characteristics, within this context, become cultural signs that evoke issues of race, belonging, and civilizational difference.

Therefore, this passage demonstrates that the narrative discourse in the novel presents cultural identity as an open structure in which Arab and African dimensions intersect, rejecting reduction to a single aspect. The pragmatic approach also confirms that the true meaning of the dialogue does not lie merely in the question of ethnic origin, but rather in revealing the nature of the relationship between the Self and the Other and the way identity is constructed within the communicative act.

Cultural Identity and the Crisis of Belonging:

Mustafa Sa'eed says:

“Within me are contradictions that no one knows except God. I was like an actor performing a role on a stage; I moved from one life to another, from one world to another.” (28)

This passage reveals the problematic dimension of cultural identity in the novel, as Mustafa Sa'eed presents himself as a self-experiencing a state of division between multiple cultural references. The contradictions he refers to are not merely related to his psychological condition; rather, they reflect a conflict between two different worlds: the world of the East to which he belongs and the world of the West in which he lived and which influenced his formation.

From a pragmatic perspective, the discourse takes the form of a confessional speech act, as the speaker reveals a hidden aspect of his experience and discloses to the recipient what had remained concealed behind his prolonged silence. Moreover, his comparison of himself to an actor performing on a stage carries an implicit meaning, suggesting that he was compelled to perform different social and cultural roles according to the situations in which he found himself.

This discourse is based on several conversational implicatures, the most significant of which is that identity is not a fixed given; rather, it is a dynamic construction that may become unstable under the influence of interaction with other cultures. Furthermore, the transition from “one life to another, and from one world to another” suggests that the character was unable to achieve complete harmony between these two worlds, leaving him in a state of cultural tension.

Context plays a fundamental role in directing these meanings, as this confession occurs after a series of events that reveal Mustafa Sa'eed's past and his relationship with the West. This enables the reader to recognize that the crisis he experiences is not merely an individual crisis, but rather a reflection of the broader issue of identity in the context of civilizational interaction between East and West.

Therefore, this passage confirms that the narrative discourse in *Season of Migration to the North* portrays cultural identity as a composite and evolving identity shaped by competing references. It also demonstrates that the pragmatic approach contributes to revealing the implicit meanings contained in this confession and the cultural and civilizational dimensions embedded within it.

Cultural Identity and the Reconstruction of the Self-Image:

Mustafa Sa'eed says:

“I am not a black African; rather, I am a migrant to the North, a colonizer who goes to Europe to give it something of the flavour of the East.” (29)

This passage reflects a profound awareness of cultural identity, as Mustafa Sa'eed does not present himself according to traditional racial classifications; instead, he reconstructs his identity through a discourse that reverses the relationship between the Self and the Other. He refuses to be merely an object of

the Western gaze and seeks to become an active subject capable of influencing the Other.

From a pragmatic perspective, the utterance contains a series of speech acts, beginning with the act of negation in his statement: "I am not a black African." This negation extends beyond the linguistic level, as it represents a stance toward a stereotypical image that he believes the Western Other imposes upon him. He then moves to an act of asserting a new identity by stating: "I am a migrant to the North," thereby granting himself a civilizational dimension that transcends narrow racial boundaries.

His statement, "a colonizer who goes to Europe to give it something of the flavor of the East," also carries a profound conversational implicature, as it reverses the historical equation of colonialism. Instead of presenting the Easterner as an object of cultural colonization, he portrays himself as a subject capable of culturally and symbolically conquering the West. This meaning cannot be understood solely through the literal meaning of the words; rather, it is revealed through the context in which the statement occurs.

Context plays a decisive role in constructing meaning because this discourse is produced by a character who has experienced direct interaction with Western civilization, which has led him to reconsider the concepts of identity and belonging. Therefore, identity here is not presented as a fixed given; rather, it is portrayed as a cultural construction shaped through interaction with the Other.

The text also reveals that cultural identity in the novel is a composite identity in which Arab, African, and Eastern references intersect. This is what leads Mustafa Sa'eed to reject reduction to a single racial dimension and to seek a broader definition of himself.

Therefore, this passage confirms that the narrative discourse in Season of Migration to the North employs language and dialogue to highlight the dialectic between the Self and the Other. It also demonstrates that the pragmatic approach reveals the implicit meanings embedded in discourse, particularly those related to cultural identity and its struggle against the stereotypes produced by civilizational interaction.

Cultural Identity Between Alienation and the Search for Coherence:

Mustafa Sa'eed says:

“I do not want to be like those who go to the West and end up between two worlds, belonging neither to these nor to those. I want my children to grow up here, in this valley, in this atmosphere, under this sun... I know that there are contradictions within me, but I want them to be in harmony with themselves.” (30)

This passage reflects a profound awareness of the problematic nature of cultural identity and the tension that accompanies it as a result of interaction with other civilizations. Mustafa Sa'eed, who has experienced the West in all its complexities, expresses his rejection of the state of cultural fragmentation that leaves an individual suspended between two affiliations. This is evident in his statement: “They end up between two worlds, belonging neither to these nor to those.”

From a pragmatic perspective, the discourse contains multiple speech acts. It begins with an act of rejection in the statement “I do not want,” which represents an illocutionary act expressing an intellectual and cultural position. It then moves to an act of desire and aspiration in the statement “I want my children to grow up here,” emphasizing his attachment to the local environment as the natural context for the formation of identity.

Context plays a fundamental role in producing meaning, as this statement comes from a character who has experienced a long struggle between East and West. This makes his desire for his children to grow up in “this valley, this atmosphere, and this sun” an expression of his belief in the importance of place in shaping awareness and cultural belonging.

The text also reveals a conversational implicature suggesting that authentic cultural identity is not achieved through complete separation from the Other, but rather through harmony with the self. The desire for his children to be “in harmony with themselves” carries an implicit meaning of avoiding the fragmentation that the character experienced as a result of moving between two different cultures.

The cultural dimension of place is also evident in this passage, as the words “valley,” “atmosphere,” and “sun” are transformed into symbolic signs referring to the Sudanese environment and the collective memory that provides individuals with a sense of stability and belonging.

Therefore, this passage confirms that cultural identity in Season of Migration to the North is not merely a racial or geographical issue; rather, it is a state of harmony between the individual and their cultural and social references. The pragmatic approach also reveals that direct utterances conceal behind them a profound human experience based on self-reflection and the pursuit of internal coherence.

The Nile as a Symbol of Cultural Identity and Belonging:

The narrator says:

“That Nile, gentlemen, which has existed for a thousand years, and which does not change or alter... it is what connects me to this place; it is what reminds me that I have roots here extending deep

into the depths. It is my point of stability in this changing world. Whenever the paths become lost before me, I return to it.” (31)

This passage highlights place as one of the most significant components of cultural identity in the novel. The Nile is transformed from a natural element into a civilizational symbol that preserves the memory, history, and continuity of Sudanese society. The Nile does not merely represent a waterway; rather, it represents the historical and cultural extension that provides individuals with a sense of stability and belonging.

From a pragmatic perspective, the discourse contains expressive and assertive speech acts. The narrator does not merely describe the Nile; rather, he declares his emotional connection to it and affirms that this connection represents a stable point of reference in his life. The statement “It is what connects me to this place” performs an illocutionary function represented in affirming belonging and renewing commitment to cultural identity.

The discourse is also based on a number of presuppositions, the most significant of which is that place plays an essential role in shaping human identity and that the loss of this connection leads to alienation and a sense of being lost. These meanings are not directly stated by the text; rather, the recipient derives them through the broader context of the novel.

The passage also reveals a conversational implicature, represented in the idea that the world is constantly changing, yet there are fixed elements that preserve human balance, including land, history, and memory. Therefore, the narrator describes the Nile as “my point of stability in this changing world,” suggesting that cultural identity represents a refuge through which individuals confront civilizational transformations.

The image of “roots extending deep into the depths” performs a symbolic function with cultural significance, as it connects individuals to their past, their community, and their civilizational heritage. It confirms that genuine belonging is not based solely on geographical attachment, but also on awareness of the shared memory that unites members of society.

Therefore, this passage reveals that the narrative discourse in Season of Migration to the North transforms the Nile into a symbol of Sudanese cultural identity. Through the pragmatic approach, it demonstrates that the relationship with place is not merely a material relationship; rather, it is a symbolic and cultural relationship that produces meanings of belonging, stability, and harmony with the self.

Linguistic Identity as a Manifestation of Cultural Identity:

Mustafa Sa'eed says:

“He looked at me again with a long, scrutinizing gaze... Then he said to me: You speak English with astonishing fluency.” (32)

This passage reveals one of the principal dimensions of cultural identity in Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North, namely the linguistic dimension. Language here does not merely serve a communicative function; rather, it becomes a cultural sign that expresses the speaker's identity and his civilizational position.

From a pragmatic perspective, the dialogue is based on a series of speech acts, beginning with questions about age and destination, and then developing into an act of affirmation and admiration when the man expresses his astonishment at Mustafa Sa'eed's mastery of the English language. This affirmation is not limited to praise; rather, it carries an implicit meaning that the

recipient did not expect a young Sudanese man of that age to possess such linguistic competence.

The context reveals that language represents a means of crossing geographical and cultural boundaries. The protagonist moves from his local environment into a broader sphere, and mastery of a foreign language becomes a means of interacting with the Other and asserting the self. Therefore, language in this passage performs a cultural function that extends beyond its linguistic dimension.

The text also contains a conversational implicature represented in the idea that linguistic competence is associated, within Western perception, with a particular civilizational image. This explains the astonishment at Mustafa Sa'eed's command of English. This implicature highlights the relationship between language and identity and demonstrates how language can contribute to reshaping the image of both the Self and the Other.

Therefore, this passage confirms that linguistic identity represents one of the fundamental components of cultural identity in the novel. It also shows that narrative discourse employs dialogue to reveal the impact of language in constructing human and civilizational relationships and in expressing the ability of the Self to engage with other cultures while maintaining its own distinctiveness.

The selected applied models from Season of Migration to the North have revealed that cultural identity represents a central axis in the construction of Tayeb Salih's narrative discourse. It appears across multiple levels, including spatial, social, linguistic, and civilizational identity, in addition to Arab-African identity and the issues of belonging and alienation associated with it.

The research has also demonstrated that the pragmatic approach contributes to uncovering the implicit dimensions of narrative discourse through the analysis of communicative contexts, speech acts, and conversational implicatures. This has made it possible to identify the cultural functions performed by language in constructing the image of the Self and the Other and in consolidating collective memory.

The examined models have shown that identity in the novel is not a rigid structure; rather, it is a dynamic construction shaped through the interaction between human beings and their place, culture, language, and history. The narrative discourse succeeds in embodying this vision through its characters, dialogues, and symbols, making the novel a cultural document that reflects the uniqueness of Sudanese society and its interaction with civilizational transformations.

Methodology of the research:

This research utilizes a qualitative, descriptive-analytical research design grounded in modern pragmatic discourse theory. The methodology is implemented through a two-stage process:

- * Theoretical Modeling: Constructing an analytical framework based on three core pragmatic pillars:
- * Contextual Analysis: Evaluating situational, cultural, and historical contexts to interpret textual intentionality.
- * Speech Act Classification: Categorizing textual dialogues using Searle's taxonomy (assertives, directives, expressives, commissives, declarations) to determine illocutionary force.
- * Gricean Implicature: Applying the Cooperative Principle to decode implicit subtexts, cultural presuppositions, and symbolic representations.
- * Corpus Selection and Analysis: The empirical corpus comprises purposively selected textual excerpts from Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North

(13th ed., Dar al-'Awda, 1981). Excerpts were selected based on their explicit representation of spatial, social, linguistic, and hybrid identity markers.

Discussion:

The findings demonstrate that literary discourse operates as a communicative act where language and cultural identity are inextricably bound. By deploying pragmatic tools, this research shows how character dialogues do not merely describe pre-existing identity positions but actively construct them through performative communication.

The narrator's return to the village illustrates how context activates spatial signifiers—such as the Nile and palm trees—transforming physical geography into symbols of cultural stability against the fragmenting effects of Western exile. Conversely, Mustafa Sa'eed's discourse demonstrates the strategic deployment of language to dismantle colonial power dynamics. Through irony and intertextual implicature ("I am like Othello"), Sa'eed challenges Western orientalist tropes, transforming the subaltern into an active discursive subject.

Ultimately, the pragmatic lens reveals that Salih's novel models' identity as a dynamic dialogue between self-preservation and intercultural engagement. Cultural integrity is preserved not through isolation, but through adaptive, self-aware integration of composite traditions.

8. Conclusion

This research has examined the manifestations of cultural identity in narrative discourse from a pragmatic perspective, based on the premise that cultural identity represents one of the fundamental foundations in shaping the collective consciousness of nations, and that literary discourse is one of the most significant mediums capable of preserving this identity, highlighting its components, and revealing its transformations. The research has sought to explore the relationship between identity and culture and to demonstrate the role of the pragmatic approach in uncovering the explicit and implicit meanings embedded within narrative discourse.

On the theoretical level, the research has addressed the concepts of identity and culture and the relationship between them. It has also examined pragmatics as a linguistic approach concerned with the research of language in use, with particular focus on its major mechanisms, including context, speech acts, and conversational implicature, and their role in analyzing literary discourse.

On the applied level, the research has adopted Tayeb Salih's novel *Season of Migration to the North* as its narrative corpus for investigating the manifestations of cultural identity through a selection of textual models that reflect spatial, social, linguistic, and civilizational dimensions of identity, in addition to Arab-African identity and the issues of belonging and cultural alienation associated with it. The research has also demonstrated that the narrative discourse in the novel succeeds in embodying the distinctiveness of Sudanese society and in employing language, dialogue, and cultural symbols to construct a vision that reflects the interaction between the Self and the Other and its attachment to its civilizational roots amid the transformations experienced by the world.

The pragmatic approach has revealed that meanings in narrative discourse are not determined solely by linguistic structures; rather, they are shaped through the cultural and social contexts surrounding the text and through the implicit meanings and communicative functions embedded in dialogues, which contribute to constructing cultural identity and highlighting its various components.

Therefore, this research confirms that cultural identity in *Season of Migration to the North* is not a fixed or closed entity; rather, it is a dynamic construction shaped through the interaction of place, language, history, memory, and the Other. It also demonstrates that the pragmatic approach represents an effective critical tool for revealing these dimensions and highlighting the cultural and civilizational values embedded within narrative discourse

Findings :

The pragmatic analysis of Season of Migration to the North yields the following core findings:

1- Dynamic Constructivism: Cultural identity in the novel is not a static heritage but an evolving performative construct continuously shaped through interaction with space, memory, and the Other.

2- Pragmatic Efficacy: Pragmatic mechanisms effectively decode non-literal, culturally embedded meanings within narrative dialogue, demonstrating that speech acts function performatively to negotiate social status and cultural agency.

3- Rejection of Essentialism: Narrative discourse in the novel refutes monolithic identity paradigms, asserting a hybrid, composite Arab-African identity.

4- Semiotic Space and Silence: Spatial settings (e.g., the diwan, the Nile) and non-verbal behaviors (e.g., deliberate silence) operate as pragmatic strategies that convey resistance, alienation, and cultural continuity.

Recommendations:

In light of the findings reached by the research, the researcher recommends the following:

1- Giving greater attention to the application of pragmatic approaches to Sudanese narrative texts, due to the effective tools they provide for revealing the cultural dimensions embedded in literary discourse.

2- Conducting academic studies that examine cultural identity in contemporary Sudanese literature while benefiting from modern linguistic and critical approaches.

3-Paying attention to the research of linguistic identity in Arabic fiction, as it represents one of the main components of cultural identity and a means of preserving social memory and popular heritage.

4- Encouraging comparative studies between Arab and African narrative models in order to explore the mechanisms of representing cultural identity and the forms of civilizational interaction between them.

Sources and References:

(1) Al-Mu‘jam al-Wasīt, a group of authors, Arabic Language Academy in Cairo, 2nd edition, 1972, Vol. 2, p. 998, entry: “Hā’.”

(2) Muhammad ‘Imārah, The Dangers of Globalization on Cultural Identity, Dar Nahdat Misr, 1999, p. 6.

(3) Mahmoud Amīn al-‘Ālim, Identity: A Concept in the Process of Formation, p. 376.

(4) Muhammad Ibrāhīm ‘Īd, “Arab Cultural Identity in a Changing World,” Childhood and Development Journal, Arab Council for Childhood and Development, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2001, p. 110.

(5) Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-‘Arab, Dar Ṣādir, Beirut, 3rd edition, 1414 AH, entry: “Thaqafa.”

(6) Shuhaib ‘Ādil, Culture and Identity: The Problem of Concepts and the Relationship, p. 8.

(7) Nāṣir bin Sa‘īd bin Saif, Identity and Culture, p. 7.

(8) ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Tuwaijrī, Preserving Islamic Identity and Culture, p.9.

(9) Shuhaib ‘Ādil, previous reference, p. 6.

(10) Ḥamdī Ḥasan al-Maḥrūqī, The Role of Education in Confronting the Impacts of Globalization on Cultural Identity, p. 164.

(11) Mas‘ūd Ṣaḥrāwī, *Pragmatics among Arab Scholars: A Pragmatic Study of Speech Acts in the Arabic Linguistic Heritage*, Dar al-Ṭalī‘ah, Beirut, p. 22.

(12) Mas‘ūd Ṣaḥrāwī, *ibid*, p. 14.

(13) Mas‘ūd Ṣaḥrāwī, *ibid*, p. 18.

(14) Mas‘ūd Ṣaḥrāwī, *ibid*, p. 21.

(15) Mas‘ūd Ṣaḥrāwī, *ibid*, p. 32.

(16) Jamīl Ḥamdāwī, *Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis*, Salma Cultural Library, Casablanca, 2017, p. 63.

(17) Jamīl Ḥamdāwī, *ibid*, p. 22.

(18) Jamīl Ḥamdāwī, *ibid*, p. 74.

(19) Jamīl Ḥamdāwī, *ibid*, p. 26.

(20) Jamīl Ḥamdāwī, *ibid*, p. 34.

(21) Jamīl Ḥamdāwī, *ibid*, p. 61.

(22) Jamīl Ḥamdāwī, *ibid*, p. 101.

(23) Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*, 13th edition, Dar al-‘Awda, Beirut, 1981, p. 112.

(24) Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*, *ibid*, pp. 5–6.

(25) Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*, *ibid*, pp. 6–7.

(26) Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*, *ibid*, pp. 6–7.

(27) Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*, *ibid*, p. 42.

(28) Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*, *ibid*, p. 24.

(29) Tayeb Salih, Season of Migration to the North, ibid, p. 52.

(30) Tayeb Salih, Season of Migration to the North, ibid, p. 80.

(31) Tayeb Salih, Season of Migration to the North, ibid, p. 86.

(32) Tayeb Salih, Season of Migration to the North, ibid, p. 90.