


## The Ideological Dimension of the Linguistic-narrative Implications in Ahmad Mahmoud's *The Neighbours*: An Investigation of Modalities and Discursive Conflict

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### Abstract

Ahmad Mahmoud realistically narrates his *The Neighbours* to represent/popularise party belief/knowledge. In this regard, its decoding necessitates an understanding of the textual discursive conflict and its fabricating modalities. This study employs the three modalities of name, adjective, and adverb of implication to interpret the discursive conflict in *The Neighbours*. This article claims that the ideological nature of the subject of representation and the inevitable transcendence of the associated subject has leveled the plot sequence, which, in turn, has divided the narrative into pre-heroic, heroic, and reinforced-heroic segments. Although the pre-heroic possesses four discursive conflicts/agreements, modalities tend to represent a sense of intellectual and emotional stagnation which surrounds the subjects, such as Khaled, who is the protagonist and the actor-narrator of the narrative. During the heroic era, a critical conflict between the party subjects and the authority, invokes the implicit author and the three modalities to condemn the authority and glorify the fights of the party subjects. Lastly, the reinforced-heroic regards the hardships that Khaled and his associates endured in prison as their legitimisation and heroism. In this regard, in accordance with all the modalities and both narrational trajectories, the narrative attempts to legitimise the fabricated reality built around the party-belief, so much so that, at times, the text suffers from propagandism.

**Keywords:** Ahmad Mahmoud, *The Neighbours*, Party Orientation, Discursive Conflict, Modalities

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## Extended Abstract

### 1. Introduction

Ahmad Mahmoud realistically narrates his *The Neighbours* to represent/popularise party belief/knowledge. In this regard, its decoding necessitates an understanding of the textual discursive conflict and its fabricating modalities.

### 2. Methodology

This descriptive-analytical study investigates the ideological dimensions of the linguistic-narrative implications in Ahmad Mahmoud's *The Neighbours* in light of linguistics, narratology, and discourse analysis.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

In its linguistic and expanded form, modality entails planned choices and options from the addresser/signifier to declare his stance on the truth/reality of linguistic propositions in terms of commitment and familiarity. In this regard, rather than verifying the truth of the proposition, a mode highlights the epistemic and deontic dimensions of the addresser's stance (Lyons, 1383 [2004]:423). The epistemic dimension expresses the possibility and prediction about the represented subject, while the deontic indicates obligation and permission or pleas and hidden desires in the dialogue.

The linguist and modality theorist, Michael Halliday claims that while the positive and negative poles verify or reject propositions, the polar distance entails possibilities, uncertainty, and indecision, all of which create the modality dimension of language. In other words, modality represents and interprets this uncertain and probable dimension. Halliday and Matthiessen classify modality into the epistemic "modalisation" and the deontic "modulation" (2014:176-178).

Of note here is that grammaticalisation has moved modals beyond verbs to adjectives and adverbs (Frawley, 2006:133). The Dutch linguist and social semiologist, Theo van Leeuwen, points out that although linguists are fond of modal auxiliary verbs which entail lower, middle, and upper modalities, one can also highlight these qualities in nouns, adjectives, and adverbs (1395 [2016]:310-311). Functional linguistics would aid in a better understanding of this notion.

Modality goes hand in hand with point of view in narratology which expands the modality's reach toward the narrator and its focalising aspects. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan conceptualises point of view's focalisation in three modes: perceptive, cognitive, and ideologic (1378 [1999]:110-113). All of which

impact the perception/representation of the addresser's stance. Likewise, Fawler divides the ideological mode of point of view into two forms: direct, in which the characters or the narrator employ modal structures to directly discuss their beliefs and arguments, and indirect (Fawler, 1395[2016]:225-226).

#### 4. Discussion and Analysis

Ahmad Mahmoud's *The Neighbours* realistically represents/popularises party knowledge/action against an-other who is the capitalist system and its followers. In light of the main character's ideological transcendence, this study classifies the represented discursive conflict into three segments: pre-heroic, heroic, and reinforced-heroic.

In the first segment, the discursive conflict flows like a river among the traditional, renegade, border-like, and inquisitor subjects. A close examination of the noun, adjective, and adverb modalities shows that most subjects are in a state of intellectual and emotional stagnation. Misnomers, close-mindedness, addiction, and unemployment paint a putrefied atmosphere, all of which are in accordance with the subjects' anxiety and lack of privacy. Rather than highlighting the ongoing conflict among the subjects, this form of representation functions as a background for the main character and embellishes his beliefs and actions.

In the second segment, the conflict is between the party subjects and the authority. Khaled's awareness and actions present him as a hero. All the modalities embellish the party and condemn the authority. The noun modalities of party members are colorful and filled with hope, faith, and freedom, all of which are in stark contrast with the opposition, whose names are satiric or loathed. In addition, the adjective modalities represent the party as charismatic, responsible, brave, revolutionary, and supportive. The authority, on the other hand, is presented as carefree and unappealing, whose colorful eyes alienate them as foreigners. Lastly, the adverb modalities exaggerate the numbers to amplify/popularise the sense of revolution.

The third segment deals with the continuation of the conflicts which are now in prison. Despite torture and humiliation, Khaled leads the strike and reinforces his heroism. His actions, just like the previous segment, represent his bravery, charisma, and passion for freedom. The descriptive language and slow narrative pace highlight the negative face of the authority. In this segment, Self-embellishment and other disfigurement reach their climax as the numeral modality of 101 represents Khaled's limitation/prohibition.

## 5. Conclusion

The implicit author employs the linguistic-narrative implications, or the plot in general, in accordance with the spatial and temporal movements and the modalities to legitimise the party belief/action, and redirect the hegemonic conflict among the conflicting subjects in favour of the conformed subjects. Although, at times, the propagandism of the party manifesto suspends the dramatic and artistic dimensions of the narrative.

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