A Sociopragmatic Analysis of Alienation in Fadia Faqir’s My Name is Salma

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ABSTRACT

The theme of alienation has been central to a significant number of literary studies in general and Anglophone Arab literature in particular. Different approaches have been used to explore this theme including feminism, postcolonial theory, and psychoanalytic criticism. These approaches have for the most part focused on the aesthetic values of the literary works, often at the expense of the intercultural aspect of texts and how participants express themselves and being expressed. Despite the significance of sociopragmatic analysis in exploring such cross-cultural issues such as feminism, gender roles, and alienation, it has not received the attention it deserves in literary studies. The present study proposes to address this gap by offering a socio-pragmatic reading of Fadia Faqir’s 2007 novel My Name is Salma. Attention will be given to religious beliefs and social norms as expressed by the characters in the novel and the crucial role they play in interpersonal conflicts and the anxieties of alienation and exile in the novel in question. This study focuses on the concepts of home, exile, alienation and their relations to the quest for identity in the text by using a socio-pragmatic approach in order to show how the stifled and fragmented voices of characters are expressed. These concepts are closely related to the psychological conflicts and profoundly impacted by the individual immigrant’s experience, and by the multicultural setting in which the subject finds himself or herself. The results of the study are expected to highlight the relevance of the socio-pragmatic method in the analysis and interpretation of literary texts.

Keywords: Alienation, Anglophone Arab literature, diaspora fiction, Fadia Faqir, sociopragmatics.

1. Introduction

The recent years have witnessed a flourishing of numerous linguistic approaches to literature. These include discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis (CDA), systemic functional grammar, pragmatics, corpus linguistics, and computational linguistics (Allan & Buijs, 2007; Balossi, 2014; Davies & Mitchell, 2006; Payne, 1995; Semino & Culpeper, 2002; van Dijk, 1976). The underlying premise of this ‘linguistic turn’ was that such approaches were capable of achieving a deeper and more far-reaching understanding of many aspects of literature (Chapman & Clark, 2019). Linguistic approaches have repeatedly proved their enormous value to the interpretation of literary texts and the study of various literary themes including feminism, gender roles, identity, immigration and ethnicity (Allan & Buijs, 2007; Page, 2006). However, sociopragmatics, which was developed in the late 20th century by Leech, has not been given due attention in literary studies, despite its obvious effectiveness with regard to the contextualization of diverse social and local problems that are often embedded in literary texts.
One can say that the possibilities of the sociopragmatics approach have not been sufficiently capitalized on within the field of literary studies in general and diaspora fiction in particular. Paradoxically, The kind of issues raised in diaspora texts are in many cases peculiar to local and specific societies/communities, making a sociopragmatic approach highly pertinent to the exploration of such issues. To address this discrepancy, the researchers propose to follow this approach in the analysis of a text that is representative of a growing diasporic Anglophone Arabic literary tradition that seeks to express the anxieties and contradictions that are often associated with the experience of relocating to a completely different society.

The present study proposes to analyze the theme of alienation in contemporary Anglophone Arabic literature by focusing on Fadía Faqir’s novel *My Name Is Salma*. Faqir is an prominent Arab British woman writer who was born in Amman, Jordan in 1956 then moved to Britain in 1984 (Chambers, 2011). She is considered by many critics as a leading figure in Anglophone Arab literature, an emerging tradition that comprises narratives produced in English by authors who are of Arab ethnicity (Sarnou, 2014, 2017). In the British context, the majority of writers associated with this tradition are women (Al Maleh, 2009). They include Ahdaf Soueif, Fadía Faqir, Layla Elalami, Betoul Elkheder, and Leila Aboulela. These writers have recently earned recognition for creating cultural and literary bridges between divergent spaces, cultures and peoples. Examples of such bridging narratives include Soueif’s prominent novel, *The Map of Love* and Fadía Faqir’s *The Cry of the Dove/ My Name Is Salma* (Moore, 2008; Sarnou, 2014). In *My Name Is Salma*, Faqir asserts the idea that women should have the same rights as men. She attacks patriarchal societies where women are forced to occupy a subordinate position, and rejects the notion of submissiveness in all its forms by empowering her female characters. In her writings, she frequently calls on women to rebel against what she considers the tyranny of their male-dominated societies or communities.

The theoretical framework of the study is sociopragmatics which is a subfield of pragmatics and is considered today as viable linguistic approach in discourse studies, especially media and politics. The hypothesis is that sociopragmatics has diverse and wide-ranging properties that can be extremely valuable in providing a better understanding of the peculiar features of Anglophone Arab literature. Attention will be given to the cognitive and social contexts of the text in question and, specifically, to the power of communication in creating our social worlds and the effect of the speakers on them. Despite the importance of this approach in linguistic studies, its use in the context of literary texts remains limited, particularly with regard to the investigation of the theme of alienation in diasporic Anglophone Arabic literature. Instead, other theoretical frameworks have been favored including feminism, critical psychological analysis, and postcolonial theory. The aim is to underscore the insights that the sociopragmatic method is capable of bringing to the reading and analysis literary texts, especially with regard to comparative studies and issues that touch on cultural differences such as feminism, gender, and even globalization. Such novel insights would provide a fresh perspective to the interpretation of *My Name is Salma* and other fictional works by Anglophone Arab writers by examining the role of the interplay between language and social and cultural dynamics in articulating some of the major themes that are at the center of this type of fiction. Specifically, attention will be given to the ways in which language is used to reflect existing power dynamics, and at the same time reflect ethnic and cultural diversity in a multicultural environment.

In light of the above argument, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: first, are sociopragmatic approaches appropriate for depicting immigrants’ struggle with feelings of exile, alienation, and cross-cultural differences? Second, how can the representation of cultural assumptions be used to explain concepts of exile and alienation in the selected text? Third, what is the role of external forces of dislocation and depersonalization in reconstructing the identity of Arab women immigrants in Western communities? Finally, what is the role of inferential processes in constructing and representing the theme of alienation as expressed in the language of the ‘Other’?

2. Literature Review

The second half of the 20th century witnessed the emergence of a number of linguistic approaches to the analysis of literary texts. This can be dated back to 1958 with Roman Jakobson’s presentation ‘Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics’ to the Conference on Style at Indiana University. Jakobson (1960) stressed that linguistics and literature are closely related and went so far as to suggest that literature is best described in terms of linguistics. His argument was that that literature is not in contradistinction to linguistics and the long separation between the two disciplines has been based on an erroneous interpretation of the nature of literature and poetics. The claim is that is the global science of verbal structure which makes it possible to analyze literature which is a verbal structure in the first place. He explains that there is a close relation between the word and the world; therefore, linguistics can explore all possible problems of relation between literary discourse and the universe of that discourse. Since then, linguistic studies, which had been restricted to the grammar of the sentence, have expanded their subject beyond the sentence, to include the grammar of discourse and literary texts (Allan & Buijs, 2007). The introduction of linguistics to literature has also resulted in adopting empirical research methods in literary criticism and the critical accounts of different literary genres (Peer, Hakemulder, & Zyniger, 2012). Such methods, as Louw and Milojkovic (2016) argue,
were missing in literary criticism which had its implications to the interpretation of literary texts: empirical research methods

The emergence of diaspora literature has revealed the necessity of various linguistic approaches including critical discourse analysis (CDA), critical linguistics, pragmatics, and pragmatic stylistics in exploring cultural traditions, feminism, and ethnic and religious identities of the immigrants and expatriates (Amara & Omar, 2018; Chapman & Clark, 2014; Demir, 2017; Mishra, 2006; Stamou, 2018). As a result, Breeze (2011) argues that a connection was developed between critical linguistic approaches on the one hand, and minority discourses and diasporic voices on the other. Murshida (2019) for instance, adopts CDA methods to investigate the ways in which identity is constructed and represented through the language choices in Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*. Likewise, several linguistic studies have been conducted of the black diaspora in the writings of Toni Morrison and others (Ahern, 2012; Conner, 2010; Middleton, 2016; Peterson, 1997; Pulitano, 2016). Critical and functional linguistic approaches have been thus used to understand the human side of contemporary migrations and dislocations by affirming the importance of narrative as a discursive mode (Pulitano, 2016). Researchers have been concerned with exploring identity, its formation and potential, its determinants and crises, and its close connection to the notions of home and the dilemma of exile and alienation. These migration narratives raise a number of questions such as the elements that we draw upon when we feel at home either in our bodies or elsewhere, what it means to feel at home and to be at home, the influence of the geographic, cultural, and ideological factors in the search for identity, the role of the body as the most basic aspect of the self, and whether particular races necessarily belong to particular regions in the world.

It is therefore surprising that despite the effectiveness of soci pragmatics in providing constructive analytical frameworks for the exploration of the features and themes of diasporic postcolonial literature as well as the investigation of the communicative aspects in literary texts, the soci pragmatic approach has not been given due attention in diasporic literature in general and Anglophone Arab literature in particular. In spite of the apparent overlap between soci pragmatics and literature and diaspora fiction, very little has been done to bring them together. Most of the scholarship on Fadia Faqir’s novel, for instance, has focused on the intersections between feminism, psychological analysis, and postcolonial issues of border-crossings, the experience of migration, and the cultural construction of identity. Abdelrazek (2007), for instance, highlights the complexity of theme of identity in a cross-cultural context. In her book *Contemporary Arab American Women Writers: Hyphenated Identities and Border Crossings*, she analyses the Anglophone novel as part of an emerging body of works by diasporic Arab women writers who seek to reconfigure the experience of being Arab in contemporary volatile situation. The issue of gender is the focus of (Majaj, S, Sunderland, & Saliba, 2002)’s *Intersections: Gender, Nation, and Community in Arab Women’s Novels*. Likewise, in *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature* Al Maleh (2009) directs her to the attention to the formation of a new discourse which adopts the perspective of Arab authors in diaspora who chose to write in English. In a recent article entitled “Melancholic Migrations and Affective Objects Fadia Faqir’s My Name is Salma”, Adam (2017) emphasizes the psychological dimension of the novel as exemplifying the view of the experience of migration as an experience that is fundamentally based on melancholia and daily trauma. What this brief survey of criticism on the Anglophone novel shows is the lack of attention to the soci pragmatics aspects of the text and the ways in which the linguistic and discursive properties of the text serve to underscore the central themes of trauma and alienation. In light of this argument, the present study addresses this gap in literature by focusing on the connections and commonalities between soci pragmatics and literature.

3. Method

In order to address the research questions, this study adopts the soci pragmatic approach. The rationale is that soci pragmatic analysis can interconnect with other literary and linguistic theories – specifically with pragmatics and feminism to identify the social, cognitive, and cultural perspectives conveyed in the text (Al-issa, 2003; Beeching & Woodfield, 2015; Culpeper, 2011). The term ‘soci pragmatics’ was first used by Leech in 1983 to describe the ways in which pragmatic meanings reflect ‘specific “local” conditions on language use’ (Leech, 1983). It refers to the social perceptions underlying participants’ interpretation and performance of communicative action (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). Although soci pragmatics was initially developed as a subdiscipline in pragmatics, it can be suggested that the theoretical and analytical tools of soci pragmatics are different from the pragmatic theory. Chapman and Clark argue that pragmatics was essentially developed in order “to find a systematic explanation for observable differences between literal, linguistic meaning and the meanings that particular utterances can convey in context” (Chapman & Clark, 2014, p. 2). Pragmatics was then expanded as a theoretical and analytical framework to analyze utterances and even different discourse genres. In this regard, Oxford philosophers J. L. Austin and H. P. Grice are credited for establishing the central tenets and terminology of pragmatics. Since then, soci pragmatics has been used in the analysis of different discourse genres including literary discourse.

By the end of the 20th century, two main distinct theoretical frameworks in the pragmatic tradition could be discerned: neo-Grician inferential pragmatics and the relevance theory. These theoretical frameworks had substantial implications as far as literature is concerned. Both linguists and literary critics proceeded to use pragmatic
approaches in the study of literary texts because it was thought that such approaches “can offer insights into the interpretation of literary texts, or explain the more intuitive insights of literary critics” (Chapman & Clark, 2014, p. 10). Pragmatists also thought that the encounter with literary texts could suggest ways in which pragmatic theories can be developed, refined and adapted. Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, moves beyond the normal range of pragmatics since it is concerned with the social dimension of pragmatics. It interprets discourse as a social meaning by focusing on social contexts and the knowledge of the relation between action-relevant contextual factors and communicative action (Kasper, 2001). In sociopragmatic readings of literary texts, analysts are more concerned with the exploration of social conventions and perceptions and their implications on the interpretation of characters and events. Therefore, it can be argued that sociopragmatics is more appropriate than pragmatics in the study of literary discourse in general and diaspora fiction in particular. In fact, sociopragmatic elements and factors are essential for an adequate understanding of the underlying themes of exile and alienation as well as interpersonal conflicts which are recurrent in diaspora and immigration narratives.

This is particularly true for diaspora literature. Diasporic novels are part of the common stock of the immigrants’ community. Background knowledge and contextual aspects are therefore important in understanding and making judgments about the characters and events. The sociopragmatic approach is used in order to highlight the contextual properties of these narratives as well as the social, economic, and political factors that surround their production. It seeks also to show how power relations are embedded in the texts, and explores the interpersonal element (how the relationship between the narrator and reader is achieved), and its effect on the production and reception of the theme of alienation. The point is that in literary discourse, language is not usually used in a fully transparent or straightforward manner. Rather, implicatures are widely used. It is through sociopragmatic methods, we can explain why we come to certain views via the implicatures we access.

It should be noted, however, that context in literary discourse is different from ordinary language or face-to-face interactions. In literary texts, context is not usually opaque or straightforward (Black, 2006). It is therefore the task of the critic or researcher to access necessary information to process the utterances and events of the text. In so doing, “all elements necessary for its (discourse) interpretation must be built in” (Black, 2006, p. 16). In a sociopragmatic analysis of literature, it is important to have an encyclopedic knowledge that may be necessary to understand the relationship between text, author, and reader. This encyclopedic knowledge includes scientific information, religious attitudes, social conventions, cultural background, and anything that is related to the individual’s interpretation of the discourse. In other words, it is important for critics and analysts to make the maximum sense of the utterances and narrative accounts in the text. It can be assumed then that the integration of context and encyclopedic knowledge supply analysts and critics with the information and references needed to identify and infer the meaning(s) and themes of the writer.

The sociopragmatic approach can also be used to understand the literary and textual devices including metaphors and irony in literary texts. The idea is that the world in literary or fictional discourse does not refer to the real world. Rather, it is an imaginary construct that is widely based on metaphorical language. In the case of diasporic fiction, there is a significant number of metaphors and instances situational irony that are embedded in works belonging to this tradition. Sociopragmatics helps analysts and critics to process and interpret such metaphorical expressions and irony situations and relate them to the social circumstances. Another key feature of diasporic fiction is the tendency of authors to use codeswitching. It is used as a linguistic strategy for the construction of identity. Diaspora narratives usually includes loan words, untranslated words, terms of address, items of clothing, food, reference to religion and reference to proverbs, wise sayings and songs (Felemban, 2011).

In My name is Salma, The sociopragmatic approach is used to discuss the representation of alienation and identity paradigms in Arab Anglophone literature. The hypothesis is that the contextual and intertextual properties of literary texts are key elements in the analysis of the production and reception of these texts (Mey, 2014). This view is supported by the fact that language in general including literary discourse is context-bound, and in this way it can only be interpreted and understood within its context (Bakhtin, 2013; Morson & Emerson, 1990). In the case of Faqir’s novel, it will be argued that the contextual aspects of exile and alienation are important in understanding the author’s motives and feelings and their implications with regard to the production and reception of the novel. The contextual aspects of the text are indispensable for creating characters and situation by the novelist on one side and receiving them by the audience and readers (Davies & Mitchell, 2006). The sociopragmatic method is useful in exploring the functional and communicative aspects of literature. It is even argued that a deep analysis of literary texts cannot be achieved without an understanding of language use.

4. Analysis & Discussions

Alienation is often defined as a state of emotional isolation from one’s environment. Erich Fromm provided a classic definition: “By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself” (Fromm, 2013). And while the condition of alienation has existed for a long time, it is often associated with the 20th and 21st centuries, especially as a result of the drastic changes
that occurred during the post-industrial and the post-modern periods. The alienated individual’s dissociation from the social milieu is often a response to a set of crises that include the universal, existential predicament, the loss of identity in the context of multi-racial or multi-cultural situation, and the restrictive oppressive role of socio-political structures.

Alienation as a theme has been the subject of many literary works. Numerous narratives from the 20th century and beyond feature alienated protagonists who are estranged from their own communities and are therefore represented as powerless, helplessness victims. Modernist works for instance often lament the urban isolation that is imposed on modern individuals’ within the stifling confines of the city, whereas post-modern narratives have been more concerned with the general malaise that pervaded in the aftermath of WWII. A more recent literary tradition that stands out in its exploration of the theme of alienation is Anglophone Arab fiction. As a body of narrative works that emerged and developed over the last few decades, this tradition has been particularly sensitive to the predicament of a particular class of subjects that is rarely associated with the problem of alienation – namely women. The writers involved in this tradition are predominantly women, and this explains the attention they bring to the connection between alienation and the situation of women. Simone de Beauvoir famously stated that “what peculiarly signals the situation of woman is that she-a free and autonomous being like all human creatures nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other”(De Beauvoir, 1949). This discrepancy is at the origin of many the alienated female characters in of Anglophone Arab novels. These women often find themselves trapped in sexist and gendered structures in their own cultures, which makes them develop a sense of enslavement and oppression, as well as a desire for and rebellion and transgression. Such, for instance, is the case of Salma, the troubled protagonist of Fadila Faqir’s My name is Salma. Salma feels alienated in her own native village of Hima in the Levant, women write under a strict patriarchal order. In defiance of this oppressive order, Salma violates the code of her Bedouin community and becomes pregnant out of wedlock. As a result, the village men decide to kill her in order to restore their collective ‘honor’. To save her from this brutal fate, Salma is put in protective custody and the prison becomes, ironically, a refuge to her. She is disowned both by her family and tribe. Finally she finds refuge in a foreign country – England – where she decides to start a new life as an immigrant.

In My Name Is Salma, Faqir asserts the idea that the women should have the same rights as men. She attacks male-dominated societies where women are assigned a subordinate position simply because they are women. Furthermore, she dismisses female submissiveness in all its forms, and in her writings she constantly urges women to revolt against what she considers the tyranny of their societies or communities. Salma represents the struggle of the women in the Arab world in the last century against domestic and gender abuse, and this despite the active efforts of feminists and human rights activists to change the situation of women in this volatile region of the world. The story of Salma’s loss of virginity and her subsequent rejection by her family and tribe dramatize the ongoing suffering that is a large number of women continue to experience across the Arab world, the difficulty they often encounter in carving a path of their own in societies that are still governed by patriarchal values.

In My Name Is Salma, much is left unsaid. The narrator assumes a shared or common knowledge with her audience. She does not go into much detail about the reasons of women’s suffering in the Arab world. To understand Salma’s conflicts and suffering, it is important to have a good knowledge of life in the Bedouin communities of Jordan and the Arab world. In other words, the story should be seen in the context of the Bedouin life and the set of traditions and cultural norms that govern this community. It is also important to explore the representation of women in Anglophone Arab fiction, and the kind of assumptions that Anglophone Arab novelists often make about their female characters. These include the question of the extent to which the distinctive characteristics of female protagonists are ‘intrinsically’ related to women’s nature, the role of patriarchal cultures in establishing structures of domination where women are patronized by husbands, brothers, and fathers, and the influence of societal circumstances on the strategies used by women writers to address the situation women in Arab societies. In this context, the theme of alienation emerges as a prominent response to the various grievances of Arab women who often find themselves estranged from their local communities and cultures, and therefore forced to look for alternatives spaces in which their voices could be heard.

One of the main factors that are responsible for this pervasive sense of alienation is the double sexual standards that govern Arab societies. Faqir’s own experience as a women has obviously taught her that both religious beliefs and social practices are to large extent to blame for the situation of women. That is why in My Name is Salma she is critical of the role of religion, in this case Islam, in creating or legitimizing the patriarchal values and practices. She conveys the idea that Islam and other monotheistic religions are incompatible with woman’s ideals of emancipation and equality. Ironically, she hints that ‘You are lucky to be born Muslim’, he said, ‘because your final abode is paradise. You will sit there in a cloud of perfume drinking milk and honey’ (Faqir, 2007, p. 12).Faqir, in this regard, reflects the western perspective vis-à-vis the situation of women in the East, which is grounded in the belief that religion is the foundation on which the oppression of women rests. Khalidi and Tucker (2003) argue that ‘For many Westerners, the issue of Arab woman’s rights and the broader problematic of gender and power in the region can be neatly summed
up in one word: “Islam” (Khalidi & Tucker, 2003, p. 9). In these Muslim societies, prison confinement of women comes to be a way of protection. Salma spent five months in solitary confinement and even gives birth to her child in prison in merciless conditions.

... the prison cell where I had spent five months. ‘Solitary confinement,’ I had repeated after the warden. The police officer told me that I was to be put in a cell for my own protection. My tribe had decided to kill me, they had spilt my blood among them and all the young men were sniffing the earth (Faqir, 2007, p. 32).

In this prison, Salma is treated like criminals. For all people around her, she is a sinner and deserves no mercy or even life. If she is killed by her people, this is described as an ‘honor’ crime and killers can easily evade any punishment. Even when Salma arrives England, she receives a rough treatment.

The officer slammed his book shut, phoned someone and a policeman appeared through the sliding glass doors. I was standing there fingering the plastic plants. The policeman pushed me to one side, searched me quickly and handcuffed me. I felt the coldness of the metal cuffs encircling my wrists. Miss Asher looked at me reassuringly, but I could see that she was distressed. ‘Don’t worry,’ she said while I was dragged through the glass doors. They ushered me through a narrow well-lit corridor and then unlocked a heavy door. They asked me to go in, unlocked the handcuffs then shut the door and locked it.

Although her move to England would seem to have saved her from her family’s severe punishment, she eventually becomes soulless experiences the confusing loss of identity. In her search for a new identity, she increasingly begins to perceive herself as a “A dark alien” who “has passed through the skies of Exeter”. At times, she even doubts whether she deserves to live: “Deserve to die, not live, me, I said and began crying. I also old, no home, no money, no job”. The repetition of the negative form ‘no’ is an indication of her nothingness and lack of self-worth. Interestingly, too, the two sentences, the subject (in the first sentence) and the verb phrase (in the second one) are dropped. The fact that her sentences lack main grammatical constituents to be correct mirrors the lack of a sense belonging that continues to mar Salma’s new life (Amara & Omar, 2018).

Another cornerstone of the patriarchal structure is social convention. Faqir relates the issue of male dominance to cultural traditions and social practices. She stresses the idea that women suffer sexual repression and oppression by men. Faqir conveys the idea that in Arab societies, it is believed that God created women for men’s pleasure. Before wedding nights for instance, women undergo an unbearable experience just to look beautiful and be admired by their husbands.

“Before your wedding night they spread a paste of boiled sugar and lemon between your legs and yank away the hair”...... “My grandmother Shahla said, ’When they finished with me I was covered with bruises, but as smooth and hairless as a nine-year-old girl’” (Faqir, 2007, p. 7-8).

Having this image of violence in mind, one can understand that both men and women have the deep belief that there is no problem for women to suffer violence and humiliation just to meet men’s pleasures. This image has its echo in the title of the American version of the novel, The Cry of the Dove. In Salma’s world, a woman can only suffer in silence; otherwise, she is accused of violating religious and cultural codes—a most unforgivable crime. Faqir also adds that understanding women’s oppression provides a conceptual model for understanding all forms of oppression experienced by Arabs, be they men or women. As far as the oppression of women is concerned, she explains that repression is for the most part internalized by women and is then passed from one generation to another. In this sense, the Arab woman is prey to both the repressive social controls of her society one the one hand and the worst aspects of Western commodification of woman. One cannot fully understand the embedded messages in the text without considering the writer herself. Faqir has often stated that she considers novel writing as a kind of self-expression. For her, writing is a process of association whereby she reflects on her past and templates her present and future. Writing thus becomes a process of self-awareness and self-discovery. It presents a sort of memory, and another face of history that history books, predominant by males, would never provide. In an interview with Rachel Bower, Faqir indicates that victims of violence and oppression often resort to fictional writing as a means of expressing psychological trauma. She admits that she herself can find home and refuge in literature and writing (Bower, 2010).

The text thus can be understood as a cry against sexual double standards and male dominance. The novel clearly reflects the problem of sexual double standards and the ways in which men try to preserve their upper hand and exploitation of women. The text asserts women’s right for individual freedom, self-expression, and liberation from male hegemony and dominance. Faqir suggests that many of her society’sills have their origins in the patriarchal structure that governs it. She is known for her direct and open discussion of Arab women life, sexuality and happiness. For her, women’s problems cannot be separated from other social, religious and political problems. Women’s problems are inherent in the social and political ills in Arab societies and communities. The heroine suffers from the unjust societal laws of inequality. She is not pleased with her femininity because this reminds her of male-dominance. Faqir asserts that Arab women suffer oppression in male-dominated societies. Salma becomes a symbol of all Arab women who are oppressed under male patriarchs. The novel summarizes many of Faqir’s feminist beliefs. She asserts that women’s problems are deeply rooted in the wider social and political problems. She also reflects the idea that women should revolt against men’s male patriarch practices and hypocrisy in order to get their freedom and
liberation. According to Faqir, establishing individual freedom for women is a good start for getting rid of many inherent social and political problems within Arab societies.

My Name Is Salma reflects the inner conflicts of alienation, unhomeliness, the loss of identity, and fragmentation. This is clearly reflected in her language. She is torn between her past and her present. Her sentences are fragmented and codeswitching is everywhere in the text. Fadia Faqir spots light on the inner conflicts of the Arab Muslim woman in Arab societies. The text is a rich resource for investigating themes and conceptions of home, exile, identity, and feminism. Arab women are treated as a minority in most Arab countries. They feel invisible, misrepresented and reduced. Perceived as second rate natives, they are subjected to a particular kind of internal Orientalism. Native males assume a superior position to women, misrepresent them and in most cases fail to see them. This parallels the Orientalist attitudes with which westerners have treated the Arab world for so long. Arab women are therefore hidden behind a double-layered veil. The novel deals with the problem of being at home in a cultural and psychological sense and being at home in a physical and bodily sense. Faqir establishes the concept of identity through relating it to home and exile. She suggests that the geographic, cultural, and ideological aspects have significant influences in the search for identity.

5. Conclusions
This study addressed the theme of alienation and its representations through concepts of home and exile in Fadia Faqir’s My Name is Salma. The representation of these concepts was widely based on religious beliefs, traditions and social practices as well as metaphors, irony and codeswitching patterns. It can be concluded that the sociopragmatic approach was useful in understanding the representation of alienation in the text in terms of revealing and exploring the social, cultural and economic pressures that are recurring elements in diasporic literature. It is hoped that the results of this research will open the door for researchers in both literary and linguistic studies to pay attention to the sociopragmatics as an original method in reshaping our understanding of literary texts.

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