

A Study of the Form and Functions of Indirect Speech in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

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Abstract

The study examines the form and functions of indirect speech in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by M. Hamid. Taking insight from the model suggested by Semino and Short's (2004) for exploration of the presentation of discourse in texts, the present research explores how the structure of indirect speech in fiction delineates meaning of the narrative. The study is descriptive and makes use of mixed method: quantitative method to measure the frequency of the happenings of indirect speech, however the functions of the said category in the selected novel are explained through qualitative methods. The present research is significant as it makes the reader move away from the customary methods to a more comprehensive way of exploring meaning in fictional texts.

Key Words: Presentation of speech, indirect speech, narrative, form and function of speech, meaning in text

Introduction

Fiction can be explored and understood in a variety of ways, but the reader usually occupies two significant positions. In the first position, the focus of attention is the content of the novel and it is taken as imaginary world fashioned by the novelist. It is when the reader takes this position, events and actions seem to be associated with the characters and not with the author. The second approach, however, makes the reader take the novel as a text and a piece of art. It is assumed that the writer has created certain figures to produce certain effects. The reader has to anticipate about the speaker of the speech and the actor of the action in novel. The diversity of methods of the presentation of discourse of fictional characters help the reader understand the voices in text.

The present paper explores the presentation of indirect speech of the narrator and that of the characters in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), a novel written by Mohsin Hamid, a Pakistani author in English.

Though there exist several ways to present the speech in fictional texts but the present study is delimited to the investigation of indirect speech only. Secondly, it also is delimited to the analysis of representative extracts from one novel only and does not take into account any other fictional text by the same author or that of any other author from Pakistan.

Literature Review

Thought and speech presentation is commonly recognized as the discourse presentation. Semino and Short (2004) prefer the term 'presentation' to the report of the speech as they suggest that "Presentation is thus helpfully neutral for the discussion of speech, writing and thought presentation" (p.3). 'Report' refers to the connection between presentation of character's speech and the innerdialogue that is being narrated. Many analysts of critical discourse like Fairclough (1988) and Caldas-Coulthard (2002) employ the idea of 'representation' to denote the misappropriations and misrepresentation in reporting the anterior discourse. When the speech is presented in novel, it has a peculiar effect on the reader and the author either makes the characters speak and disclose their personalities or a narrator is given place to speak on behalf of the author. This may facilitate in developing the empathies and sympathies of the reader towards the story.

Presentation of the various forms of speech in the Israeli radio news was investigated by Roeh and Nir (1990). The study intended to find out the elements that make the news on radio appear more objective and unbiased to the listener. The findings made it obvious that the indirect form of speech was the preferred mode of expression as it made the news more trustworthy and acceptable. The extensive use of direct speech was usually avoided but in cases when a prominent figure was introduced to the audience through his or her speech or when the most striking news was broad casted.

In both types of narration whether direct or indirect, the location of reporting clauses is also very significant. Ikeo (2001) aimed to study the news texts with special focus on the inversion of the reported and reporting clauses. A mixed method approach was employed in order to carry out the analysis. It came out that the contextual and pragmatic structures played a substantial role in comprehending the location of reporting clauses.

Both reporting and reported clauses have a syntactic connection because their function is of dependent and independent clauses. On the contrary, in direct speech, the reporting clause is always context based. If the reported clause appears before the reporting clause, it results in the elimination of the conjunction 'that' and it produces the impact of free indirect speech particularly in novel. However when the reporting clause takes its place in the middle or the final part of the sentence, it may form questions or sentences of exclamatory type. (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan. 1999)

The manipulation of direct and indirect speech in typical story telling was the concern of the study carried out by Griswold (2016). The data of the study was taken from the telephonic talkin English language by the native speakers of North America. The data was analyzed through conversational analysis techniques. It came out that the speakers employed the reported speech for certain social aims. The speakers moved to the direct speech while telling the tale of some specific character; however the indirect speech was employed while taking about a phenomenon. The indirect sort of reported speech laid more emphasis on the content of the conversation thus facilitating the narrator in concentrating on what is communicated and not on how it is communicated. The

grammatical features of the reported form of speech enabled the story tellers to impart peripheral or central place to the characters.

The existence of a political allegory was noted by Hartnell (2010) in the relationship of Erica and Changezin the same novel selected for the study. Though they are physically close to each other yet they are on different poles of thinking. An American white woman who is all in all in love for her ex-boyfriend has spell bound the Pakistani male. She goes on recalling her days spent with him ignoring all love from the protagonist. As a result, she gets ill and commits suicide. Her death signifies the non-accepting attitude that the Americans exhibit towards the people of other countries particularly of Pakistan after the incident of 9/11.

Darda (2014) believes that this novel is a masterpiece of recent global fiction. It informs the readers that life is never pre-determined; rather it is shaped and defined by social circumstances.

The story of the novel denotes the fears and apprehensions that lie at the very roots of American and Pakistani societies. Various linguistic choices in the novel were investigated that brought to light the fact that the grammatical and lexical choices in the text represented the disenchanted personality of the protagonist who leaves his promising career in a foreign land and returns to his native country (Hayat, Iqbal & Akhter. 2015)

The novel is taken as a kind of political discourse by Iqbal, Mahmood and Mahmood (2011). They find a link between the real political conditions of Pakistan and the situation portrayed in the novel. The poststructuralist approach was employed in data analysis that revealed that the narrative skill of the novel is adeptly exposing the tug of war between the colonizer and the colonized. The colonizer as a giant, a god like character remains behind the curtain and the colonized one turns out to be an extrovert as he has to speak and narrate the story.

The narrative style of the novel represents the fragmented personality of the narrator being trapped into diverse belongings as his aspiration and admiration of the fascinating life of America, his desire to love Pakistan, his ambition to come out as a well-educated modern person and the hope to be a religious fundamentalist as well (Driss, 2016).

The novel has been examined through trauma theory techniques as well. To Žindžiuviene (2014) the tale told in monologue symbolizes the personal suffering of the central character at a smaller scale and refers to the national as well as the universal ordeal that the world underwent after 9/11. This was the time when the world was separated into the division of us and other. The trauma fiction is filled with tensions and split personalities of the characters and the narrator. The narrator adopts monologue as a means to narrating his distressing experiences to the quiet audience in this novel.

vanDijk and Gilroy (2008) are of the opinion that the novel is composed from the standpoint of a stranger. The central figure belongs to Lahore where he was born and bred but now he is settled in America where he is still taken and accepted as an outsider. At the initial stage, he seems to be so pleased when he avails the opportunity of getting

education in a prestigious institution of the city, when he is appreciated for his abilities in a renowned organization and he spots a stunning woman as his beloved. But the incident of 9/11 makes him comprehend that he is a marginalized member of American society just because of his religion and nationality. The stunning lady is not happy with him and his fellow workers also suspect him a terrorist. His personal life is traumatic now and he admits his mistake of arrival in America.

Objectives of the Study

The narrative fiction is embedded in certain tensions, conflicts and values and they all are conveyed through the various categories of speech of either the character or that of the narrator. The aim of the study is to make it clear that studying a literary text with the help of linguistic approaches enriches our comprehension of the text. It is significant as it diverts the attention of the reader from traditional methods of reading a text to more rational ways of understanding the text.

Research Questions

- a. What is the peculiar form of indirect speech and what effects are produced by employing this category of speech in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for more than one reason. It calls to mind that fact that fictional works are having various layers of meaning and interpretation. The approach adopted in this study opens up new avenues to study discourse modes in novel. The study has pedagogical import too as it is highly useful in teaching and learning of literature in general and novel in particular.

Research Methodology

The study is hybrid in nature as it makes use of qualitative as well as quantitative methods in selection and interpretation of data. As the aim of this research is to discover the structure and functional worth of indirect speech, a corpus of small size was selected. The data contains 41 extracts that comprise of 10,772 words from the novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.

The word limit of 2000-5000 is enough if the analysis of linguistic choices like nouns, pronouns and adjectives in a text is required (Biber, 1990). The linguistic analysis of the aforementioned elements can be easily carried out through several computer programs and soft wares available but the analysis of the speech and the annotation of its categories cannot be done through any software as it is a context based phenomenon (Semino and Short, 2004). The task of the researcher turns out to be more laborious while investigating and annotating the elements of narration manually. Therefore the sample size is justified and representative.

The extracts were selected with the help of purposive sampling technique from all sections of the novel from beginning to end. The limit of words in each extract is not fixed as the aim was to find out the coherent units of texts that are able to convey

meaning. The analysis was done by following Semino and Short's (2004) model of the presentation of speech(not of writing or thought).

Model for Analysis

The model is basically offered to explore the ways the thought, writing and speech is presented in texts both nonfictional and fictional. It seems to be an enrichment of Leech and Short's (1981) model in the said field. As the focus of the study is on indirect speech, only the categories of speech as outlined in the model will be discussed. The following scale outlines the several forms of speech as employed in texts:

[N] NV NRSA IS FIS (F)DS (Semino & Short, 2004, p. 49)

Table 1. Speech Presentation Categories

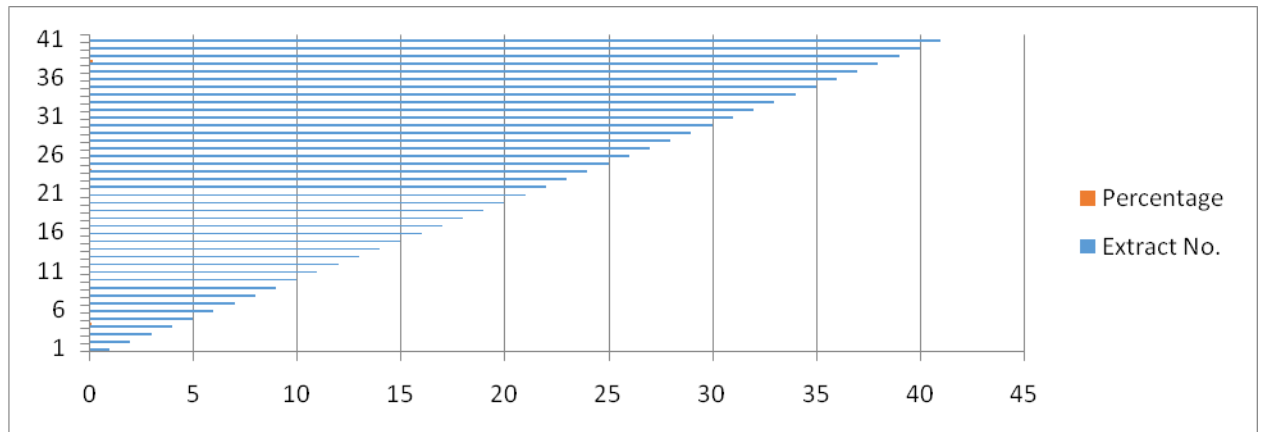
S.No	Name of the Category
1.	NV (Narrator's representation of voice)
2.	NRSA (Narrator's representation of speech act)
3.	IS (Indirect Speech)
4.	FIS (Free Indirect Speech)
5.	(F) DS (Free) Direct Speech

As the study investigates the form and functions of indirect speech only, the said category is explained in detail. Speech in this form includes only those instances that summarize and give a report of what was actually said. It contrasts sharply with the direct speech that expresses the utterances of the speaker as they were produced with little involvement of the reporter. When the direct speech is altered into the indirect one, certain differences take place. Firstly, inverted commas that are taken as the typical element of direct speech are taken away. Secondly, the conjunction 'that' which specified the reliance of reported clause on reporting clause is omitted and the third person pronoun takes place of the first and second person pronouns. Finally a sense of detachment is generated through adverbs that express remoteness and the change in tense. The narrator performs the role of a negotiator as all the instances of speech are presented from his point of view only. The speech is summarized that ultimately decreases the dramatic effects in text.

Data Analysis

In the selected 41 extracts, 28 occurrences of the indirect speech were noted. The frequency distribution of the said category in the sample extracts is as follows:

Frequency of the Occurrences of Indirect Speech in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*



The figure given here shows that this type of speech occurs in 14 excerpts only and the total number is 28 occurrences. The highest frequency is detected in extract 38 and extract no. 24 where it reaches up to 17% and 14% of the overall frequency of the occurrences of indirect speech in the chosen excerpts. The sample extracts 4, 5, 12 & 23 respectively also reveal a relatively greater frequency that accounts for 7% of the overall occurrences of this category of speech. It is obvious that the indirect speech can be reckoned as a recurrent type of speech in all extracts taken from the novel.

The structure of indirect speech in sample extracts deviates of its customary syntactical construction as it hardly appears in the whole sentence by making its presence noticeable rather it is present in lengthy sections of narration where it is not easy to identify and label it. It occurs in the middle of two occurrences of direct speech in extract 2 for instance, "Ready?" I said that I was, and he... a curve ball" (p.13). The indirect speech happens just after Jim's direct speech. In this type of instances, the indirect speech is devised as a tactic to set the context for the upcoming speech that is stretched and becomes easy for the reader to perceive. In fictional texts, the narrator usually presents other characters' words in an indirect way and assumes the role of a commentator and a mediator. However in the novel, there is only one narrator who is the central character of the narration and he does recapitulate his own occurrences in indirect version. Changez is keen to narrate the account of his experience of being interviewed in America and calls reader's attention with the help of his stream of narration.

In the excerpts from the novel, the narrator moves to indirect type of speech when he wants to readdress the reader's focus from what he uttered to what the rest of the characters are gossiping about so as to evade uncovering his states of mind and passions. Erica's speech is recapitulated in indirect way particularly in longer parts of a sentence where it is surrounded by other types of speech or that of narration like NRSA. The sentence is divided into several other sections but all of these are in an indirect form. This sort of speech condenses the gossip between Erica and the protagonist. "...she said she thought...we meet" (p.124). In such instances, the relator takes help of the indirect speech when he is disinclined to provide space to the reader to approach the character's speech

directly. The intention of narrator seems to project Erica's character as an erratic and enigmatic being. Owing to it, rare chances are offered to the readers to approach to what she said. Erica's speech given in indirect way entails her decisions and contemplations which she put forward so as to detach herself from the story teller.

Indirect speech is not the central category in any sentence but it is positioned in insignificant places and is encircled by other kinds of thought or speech. This placement may suggest narrator's inclination to a particular stand point. The reader is kept at distance so as the rest of characters are exposed as per will of the narrator. In addition to that, the distance at psychological plane is maintained through the employment of indirect speech and narrator ignores the rest of the characters and shortens their speeches. The physical splendor of Erica and not her speech attracted him in the beginning, so in the example given Erica's words have been narrated and not quoted directly.

The archetypal description of the indirect speech recommends that it is essential to have a reporting as well reported clauses integrated by the conjunction 'that', however in the sample excerpts its arrangement deviates from the outdated norms because in many cases the conjunction 'that' is exchanged by 'if', "I asked... have jumped" (p.185). The tense is switched from the present to the past and aids the researcher in tagging it as indirect speech. The nonexistence of conjunction also makes it appear as a form of direct conversation between interlocutors.

Conclusion

The indirect type of speech assists in understanding the point of view of the narrator and that of the author in the novel. It is deviant from its customary syntactic features as it does not occupy the whole sentence; rather it appears in long stretches of speech joining many other forms of speech as well. In this context, it becomes hard to identify and tag it. In most of the cases, its function in the novel is to summarize the speech of a character, but also to suggest the dominant role of the narrator who himself takes the primary position in the novel and allocates a secondary position to the rest of the characters as they are given rare chances to speak directly. It may also suggest that the narrator is physically close to the characters and continuously listens to what others say. This may point out the active role of the narrator who has a keen eye on the course events.

The present study can help the readers in comprehending the discourse of characters and their perspectives in written texts. It is hereby recommended that Pakistani literature in English that is coming out to be well recognized phenomenon in the world of literature entity can be investigated by following the available models to present discourse. The students of literature in several parts of the world can be trained in these practices of comprehending the presentation of discourse in fiction that will eventually assist them in grasping the manifold perceptions on worldwide issues like terrorism, war etc. Understanding the speeches of characters through linguistic can relieve people from intolerance and biasness as well. Taking into consideration the point of view of the people

in verbal and written communication is crucial as through the inspection of several types of speech in literary and nonliterary texts the aim can be gained effectually.

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