CHAPTER –VI

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6.1 Preliminaries

The objective of the present study was to explore the Indirect Speech Acts employed in the selected novels of Indian writers in English. Various Indirect Speech Acts were selected from the novels and categorized under different titles such as Rhetorical questions, the incongruity between form and function of the utterances, Irony and Sarcasm, different figures of speech like Simile, Metaphor, Euphemism, Hyperbole, Litotes, Metonymy, Synecdoche etc. and varieties of illocutionary forces like blaming and accusing, complaining, inviting, hedging and denial etc. were analysed in detail. Similarly, emphatic statements and circumlocution too were analysed from their indirect view point. It was an endeavour to bring to the fore certain observations and findings with regard to the significance of Indirect Speech Acts particularly in the novels under consideration. The major findings of the research are given below.

6.2 Main Findings

It has been observed that the characters in the selected novels have made use of Indirect Speech Acts skilfully and effectively. Indirect Speech Acts are preferred more by the interlocutors in their conversation. The major motives of using Indirect Speech Acts, the function of these acts and their consequences have been brought out in the present study. As the selected novels are written by immigrant
writers, the distinguishing ways of applying Indirect Speech Acts through the medium of their characters in these novels have been examined in depth. The major findings are as follows:

1. Rhetorical questions function as indirect emphatic statements.
2. People ask rhetorical questions for performing the function of complaining, expressing, sympathy, helplessness, protest, anger and frustration, teasing, suggesting, refusing, praising and posing doubt.
3. Rhetorical questions give rise to irony and sarcasm.
4. Rhetorical questions are applied as a face saving strategy of the speaker. They are also a means of showing politeness as can be seen in the case of the cook in *The Inheritance of Loss*
5. Rhetorical questions are able to explicate the difference in the power structure of the high and the low class people and their relationship with each other.
6. Poor people observe the principle of politeness and they break the cooperative principle for being polite in front of their masters whereas, masters break the politeness and cooperative principles to show their superiority over their servants.
7. The combination of sugar coated words and a rhetorical question is more effective than a plain, direct statement. This combination helps in achieving the intended goal as can be observed in the case of Balram. He praises his master via rhetorical questions and gets the job as well as excellent salary in *The White Tiger*.
8. Rhetorical questions are means of letting out one’s intensive feeling of agony and grief.
9. Rhetorical questions give rise to humour as a consequence of perlocutionary effect.
10. Rhetorical questions carry an ironical tone giving rise to grief.
11. Rhetorical questions are used when the speaker is utterly desperate especially due to the loss of someone very close to him. Rhetorical questions are used on such occasions to exhibit the meaninglessness of life as can be seen in *Afterwards* (2004).
12. Rhetorical questions are strongly used for exchanging arguments on a controversial issue.
13. One and the same rhetorical question can be interpreted differently as per the speaker’s perspective especially in arguments on trivial issues.
14. Direct questions can be responded indirectly via rhetorical questions.
15. Rhetorical questions are used by one who is deceived by others. By using rhetorical questions the speaker vents his/her fury against the deception and the deceiver.
16. Rhetorical questions also perform the task of indirect satire on something (like Indian election system, shopping malls etc.)
17. Rhetorical questions are asked to indicate disgust and disapproval of something.
18. Rhetorical questions are asked to vent the speaker’s fear and anxiety. The speakers, on such occasions, mix the two languages one of which is his own mother tongue out of fear and anxiety. Thus, code mixing can be observed in such conversations.
19. On some important occasions such as public speech, leaders or politicians ask rhetorical questions to motivate or provoke
people against something or someone, the Nepali leader in *The Inheritance of Loss* can be cited as an example.

20. Declaratives seem to be more polite than imperatives concerning giving order.

21. By expressing one’s helplessness and humble condition, the speaker can persuade or dissuade the listener about something. Thus, a declarative can be used for imperative function. It is an act of camouflaging with the different linguistic forms.

22. Via non-verbal actions the speaker can perform various functions like threatening, ordering etc.

23. Insincere or false praise by powerful gangs may perform the function of giving order. Such circumstances give way to irony.

24. The traditional concepts regarding the similarity between form and function of the utterance or sentence are deceptive and the form and function may overlap each other.

25. The speaker who uses verbal irony observes politeness principle under the garb of ironic remarks but flouts cooperative principle to some extent generally.

26. Irony and Sarcasm are tools for satirizing bitter aspects of individual society or nation like the Indian parliament and democracy, darker side of India like Indian rural doctors, the class discrimination between the poor and the rich, Indian election system, the deficient laws and judicial system, corruption in India, the public speeches of politicians, police commissioner as well as Indian police as can be seen in *The White Tiger* by Arvind Adiga.
27. The complexity of human nature has been brought out with the aid of irony and sarcasm.

28. Ironical remarks have also brought out the wide difference between India and America concerning the election system.

29. The contrast and comparison between the Indians and the Indians abroad have been brought out effectively with the aid of irony and sarcasm.

30. Irony and sarcasm are used for performing various functions like mocking, ridiculing, criticizing, taunting, blaming, jesting, teasing and expressing anger.

31. The indifference and lack of sensitivity regarding the Indian culture and religion of most of the Indian people who have gone abroad have been highlighted through irony.

32. Irony and sarcasm are also used as a sugar coated device cunningly to conceive the real (deceptive) intention of the speaker. Irony is used when the speaker is deceived or cheated. Thus, irony is a device of both the deceiver and the deceived.

33. Irony and sarcasm expose the contrast of viewpoints between the Indian, American and immigrant people.

34. Irony and sarcasm reveal the contrast of nature between the master and servant as well as their special linguistic features.

35. By using irony and sarcasm the speaker gives way to his emotions and feelings.

36. Lexical irony has been employed to exhibit sharp contrast between things, events, people, society and nations.

37. The combination of Direct and Indirect Speech Acts bearing ironical tone enhances the effect of conversational scene. Such combinations manifest the ascending order of events.
taking place through speech acts especially in *The Inheritance of Loss*.

38. Irony reveals the complication of human relationship and human understanding.

39. The combination of lexical irony and euphemism is employed in *Afterwards* to conceal the reality and save the situation from becoming worse.

40. Irony and sarcasm in speech acts cannot be identified without sharing the contextual background.

41. Irony and sarcasm not only satirize something but also create humour and thereby arouse laughter.

42. The combination of irony, simile and humour is highly interesting that leads the reader towards exact inference of the utterance.

43. Irony and metaphor in a combination are used for arousing humour and satirizing something.

44. Irony has also been used for satirizing the aristocratic and spoiled Indian people.

45. The combination of Irony, humour and satire perform the illocutionary force of threat.

46. The combination of irony, humour and ridicule make threats ineffective if the speaker is less powerful than the listener. (*The Inheritance of Loss*, and *The White Tiger*). However, if a powerful speaker threatens the listener the perlocutionary effect of it is achieved quickly and effectively.

47. Phrasal paradox brings out irony and laughter.

48. Irony and humour emerge due to the gulf between what is said and what is the actual situation.
49. Cultural difference between two countries brings out irony and humour simultaneously. The difference between the Indian woman, American woman and woman in England has also been displayed with the help of irony.

50. In *The White Tiger* the narrator has even used Socratic irony to satirize Indian election system.

51. Irony and sarcasm bear thematic significance in all the novels under consideration.

52. In the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* it has been found out that lovers compare each other metaphorically with tasty and delicious food items to reveal the importance of each other in their life or hearts.

53. Both Maya and Rahul use metaphors in their speech acts to reveal the miserable condition of Maya with Govind – her husband.

54. It is remarkable that Maya compares her house with a cage and like a bird she breaks the cage and flees with Rahul. This is the central part of the novel which has been expressed via metaphor.

55. Indians and immigrants have been compared in *Afterwards* by using similes. It contributes to the development of the plot and serves as a background to the main plot of the novel.

56. Metaphors and similes are used both to praise and dispraise certain things.

57. Euphemism is found in the obituary written on somebody’s death in a highly indirect manner. Sentences like ‘left for heavenly abode’, ‘snatch away’ etc. are used euphemistically in place of death. Especially, in *Afterwards* varieties of euphemistic expressions are used as a substitution to the
tragic word ‘death’ such as ‘a bit of crisis’, ‘in a serious condition,’ ‘gone away’, ‘not coming back’ etc. Similarly in place of ‘death rites’, euphemistic expression ‘terrible ceremony’, is employed. Thus, people avoid the mention of death or death rites directly.

58. People avoid talking about sex and prostitution publicly and directly. Elliptical utterances are generally used to mention the unmentionable – prostitutes, sex etc. Crooked, corrupt, cunning and lusty people use euphemism concerning this area and they use Indirect Speech Acts more than simple, straightforward people.

59. Deictic and Symbolic words are used euphemistically to convey something different than stated or to avoid offence.

60. One of the strategies of using euphemism is the avoidance of the precise words and replacing other less gaudy /sharp or direct words.

61. Rhetorical questions are used for euphemistic expressions.

62. The word ‘man’ is used euphemistically to hint at ‘a sexually capable man.’

63. Stating one thing and mentioning another or double meaning of the same utterance is a strategic use of euphemism.

64. Expression like ‘Ammonia break’, emptying bladder, to take a leak in peace are used to indicate the excretory activities. Similarly, in public place ‘wee wee’ is the expression used for children’s excretory activities.

65. Deictic phrase like ‘those spots and those veins’, ‘nothing up-nothing down’ etc. are also used to suggest private parts of woman’s body.
66. Verbal and non-verbal combination from the euphemistic point of view is more influential. If the combination of verbal and non-verbal actions contributes dysphemistic expressions then its impact is deeper and highly negative.

67. The combination of hyperbole and irony is extremely effective.

68. Similarly, the combination of hyperbole and simile brings the desired perlocutionary effect on the listener.

69. In *The White Tiger* we find the description of one driver as a ‘Vitiligo lips’ thus a part is used to indicate the whole.

70. Metonymic expressions are highly significant in *The White Tiger*. It serves the function of ‘prediction’ i.e. the future event that twists and turns Balram’s life completely.

71. The scene of Mr. Ashok’s murder in *The White Tiger* creates a great thrilling due to the metonymy used by Balram. The car metonymically stands for Balram himself through which the psychological struggle of Balram is revealed wittily.

72. Metonymic expressions bring out the difference between the rich and poor where the four wheeler (car) stands for the rich and the two wheeler (bicycle) stands for the poor.

73. Blaming and accusing take place indirectly by using interrogatives.

74. Irony arises when blaming or accusing proves to be insincere or false.

75. Blaming and accusing may be performed via superficially innocent questions as well as rhetorical questions; one can defend oneself from the accusations made on one by using rhetorical questions.

76. Abusive words are closely related with blaming or accusing.
77. Abusive words are used more by male than female. This is one of the characteristics of feministic language which has come to light through the investigation of Indirect Speech Acts.

78. A fine combination of irony, paradox and complaint achieves the expected perlocutionary effect.

79. Interrogatives are used for complaining against the prevailing unacceptable condition.

80. The perlocutionary effect of inviting is generally pleasant.

81. Interrogatives are used most of the time for ‘inviting’ the listener.

82. Emphatic statements are used to vent the anger of the speaker on the listener.

83. Emphatic statements may perform the function of abusing or cursing.

84. Punctuation marks, especially, exclamation marks intensify the emphasis in such utterances.

85. Emphatic statements display love and care, anxiety, protest, extreme emotions etc.

86. Emphatic expressions can be identified in repetition and rhetorical questions.

87. The speaker can threaten the listener in circumlocutory speech.

88. Hedging is a means of ‘face saving act’. It is used mostly by politicians.

89. Hedging is used by reciprocating a question by another question.
90. Denial to answer the question is also one of the tactics of hedging that is avoiding giving an answer or reaction to the question.

91. By using both verbal and non-verbal communication one may refuse answering the question.

92. By posing ignorance or indifference and by showing off that the speaker is busy in doing something as well as by using rhetorical questions the speaker avoids giving a response.

93. People deny answering the question to save further quarrel or heated arguments.

6.3 Pedagogical Implications of the Study

The pedagogical implications are as follows.

The Indirect Speech Acts help in sharpening the readers’ perception of the novel. The development of the plot and characters can be understood in detail by analysing Indirect Speech Acts particularly. It helps the readers to interpret the utterances precisely. The procedure of teaching and learning can be made interesting by applying pragmatic terms in general and Indirect Speech Acts in particular. The analysis helps the teachers and students to explore the concealed interpretation under superficial utterances.

The authorial point of view, psychological mechanism of the speaker, the traits and peculiarities of characters can be carved out by the study of Indirect Speech Acts. The traditional approach of reading and learning literary works can be replaced pragmatically by Indirect Speech Acts.
Thus, the readers’ point of view may be broadened and they can analyse the work with the different view. Teachers can guide the students how to gather different threads and shades of meaning and weave them together to arrive at concrete interpretation. The diverse interpretation of literary works may get a proper direction and help in bringing harmony in various perspectives to arrive at particular conclusion in a combination by using Indirect Speech Acts.

In the light of Indirect Speech Acts, the novel can be studied from various perspectives such as psychological, social, personal, economical etc. Teachers can also point out the various strategies of Indirect Speech Acts such as irony, sarcasm, euphemism, varieties of questions performing many functions etc. using various figures of speech as per the context and shared knowledge etc. Teachers can train the students to explore various shades and layers of meanings of the utterances. Teachers can help the students in indentifying primary illocutionary force or combination of these forces in the utterance by applying Indirect Speech Acts, context and principles of conversation. They can demonstrate to students how implicatures lead to precise interpretation of the utterance under observation. The relevance and significance of the superficially irrelevant Indirect Speech Acts can be explained to the students in the larger context of the novel. A study of Indirect Speech Acts offers a great deal of explanatory possibilities and can guide teachers, students and the general reader to overcome the problem of interpreting the utterance. It will certainly lead them to appreciate the aesthetic value of literary work in general and Indirect Speech Acts in particular.
6.4 Suggestions for further Research

The present study was devoted to the analysis of those Indirect Speech Acts which were significant in arriving at the precise interpretation of utterances.

- While analyzing Indirect Speech Acts some other pragmatic factors were also observed such as non-verbal actions are compared to the verbal actions, address terms, indirect uptake, pragmatic acts, code mixing and code switching etc. Similarly, the comparison of expression between the Indians, NRIs and foreign people was explained simultaneously. A detail study of these factors can be done considering other genres of literature along with fiction such as short stories, plays, poetry etc.

- A separate study can be carried out regarding the significance of pauses and silence in conversational exchange.

- Interestingly a combined study of verbal and non verbal actions contributing to effective communication also can be studied in depth.

- The aesthetic use of figures of speech and its combination in day to day conversation or movies will also be an interesting topic.

- The strategic use of hedging and insinuation, the speech of politicians during election period could also be an interesting topic of research.

- The confrontation of Direct and Indirect Speech Acts in the language of advertisements and its effect on the audience can be analysed in detail.

- Similarly, the arguments between the husband and wife as well as between mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law can be an
entertaining research topic from its Direct and Indirect Speech Acts point of view. These conversational pieces can be taken from either literary works like novel or a drama or from ongoing TV serials or movies.

- Similarly, a comparison between the use of Indirect Speech Acts by males and females can be a research topic with reference to literary works.