Prior to Austin, the structural or formal aspect of language was the focal point of linguists. The use of language and its significance was somehow ignored. It was J.L. Austin who diverted the attention of philosophers, linguists etc. from its structural point of view to the functional perspective. Linguistics is ‘a scientific study of language’ and Pragmatics is the study of language in use. The central concept of Pragmatics is the Speech Act Theory. The emergence of Speech Act theory lies in the assertion of J.L. Austin, who claimed that the speaker does actions with words. The book, *How to Do Things with Words* proves to be a landmark in the emergence of pragmatics.

The core of the Speech Act Theory is the notion that the speaker performs actions via words. Performing actions with words is called Speech Acts. Various actions are performed via words such as requesting, asking, ordering, suggesting, promising, complaining and so on. Austin’s Speech Act Theory was further expanded by Searle who divided Speech Acts into Direct and Indirect Speech Acts. Direct Speech Acts are those where the utterance and intention of the speaker is one and same such as asking a question for seeking an answer. On the contrary, when the speaker’s intention behind the utterance is different than its literal meaning, it is called as an Indirect Speech Act. For example, asking a question for requesting or pursuing the listener to do something. Keeping this distinction in view the present research aims at establishing a link between human utterance and human behaviour.
The present research entitled ‘A Study of Indirect Speech Acts in the Selected Novels of Indian Writers in English,’ is principally aimed at investigating and examining the application of Indirect Speech Acts in various conversational pieces in different incidents taken from the selected novels and their significant role in the development of the novels. It is an honest endeavour to compare these novels in the light of Indirect Speech Acts due to certain resemblance observed between them. The selected novels for the purpose of analysis are:

*The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga- 2008,

*The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai- 2006,


These novels are selected due to certain resemblance found in them. First of all, these novels are written by immigrant writers. Secondly, they offer broader (globalized) point of view encompassing India and other countries.

*The Inheritance of Loss* is set in the Indo-Nepal insurgency period. Kalimpong, a small border town near Darjeeling is the main setting of the novel. It is a novel of complex plot and Kiran Desai deals with the recent problems emerging in India like issues of fundamentalism, social unrest, problems of illegal immigrants and thereby cultural identity.

*The White Tiger* is a harsh and realistic novel. The culture of servitude in India and the conflict between the rich and the poor has been brought forward wittily in this novel. It is narrated by the protagonist Balram who travels from the post of a driver to a successful entrepreneur. The development of the contemporary...
Indian society has been mirrored through the development of the protagonist, Balram Halwai. Dark humour and moments of introspection are abundant in the novel. Especially, Indirect Speech Acts in this novel are highly loaded with layers of meaning covered under simple and basic utterances. The novel has been written over a period of 7 days and addressed to the Premier of China-Wen Jiabao. It is an implicit satire on Indian politics and politicians, corruption, feudal system, cast system, election system etc.

*Afterwards* reveals the complexity of relationship and love among the characters. It is the story of Rahul Tiwari who helps ‘Maya’ Warrier to escape from the clutches of her suspicious husband. However, her so called elopement to London ends tragically. Maya’s father and grandmother die due to the humiliation brought upon their family honour. Maya too dies in an accident instantaneously as if a punishment given to her by Almighty. Rahul becomes lonely once again and ‘Anjali,’ a daughter of Maya, has to go back to India to her biological father. One hasty decision as well as the implied attraction of Maya and Rahul destroys the lives of other people surrounding them.

A comparison between India, Indian people and foreign countries such as America, London, China etc. and foreign people as well as NRIs has been carried out inherently. As the novels are composed in the contemporary period that is after the year 2000 they have been compared with each other simultaneously.
The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is introduction. It presents hypothesis, the scope and limitations of the study, significance of the research, selection of the novels and methodology for analysis.

The second chapter provides a theoretical background to the study. ‘Pragmatics’ and its development till date, ‘The Speech Act Theory,’ Direct and Indirect Speech Acts, Various conversational principles, relevant terms like Sentence and Utterance, Context, Deixis, Implicatures, Presuppositions, Turn taking and Adjacency pairs, Cohesion and Coherence etc. are explained. Some significant issues related with the present research such as immigration, problem of identity, Diaspora, code mixing and code switching, multiculturalism etc. have been explicated. Thus, an attempt has been made to build a theoretical background to the present research.

In the third chapter, rhetorical questions have been segregated according to their characteristics and contribution. The significance of these questions has been analyzed and explained in detail. Incongruity of the form and function of utterances in the light of Indirect Speech Acts in the selected novels have been analyzed in detail.

The fourth chapter analyzes Irony and Sarcasm that give rise to satire and humour in the selected novels.

The fifth chapter analyzes miscellaneous Indirect Speech Acts such as various figures of speech like simile and metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, euphemism etc. Varieties of illocutionary forces,
circumlocution, emphatic statements, hedging such as denial have been analyzed.

Chapter six is the conclusion. In this chapter, main findings observed in all the previous chapters have been highlighted systematically. Pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research have also been noted down.

The study has revealed that conglomeration of the forms of Indirect Speech Acts can be used in various manners to convey the message or expression of the speaker. One can witness the combination of different illocutionary forces in the one and same utterance.

Inference of the utterance is based on its illocutionary force, which in turn relies upon the shared contextual background of the speaker, the listener and the reader as well.

Dr. Munira Lokhandwala  Sushma Bidwai
Research Guide          Research Student