

# A Study of Thought Presentation in “*The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman’s Memoir: A Stylistic Perspective*”

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## Abstract

*The present study focuses on analyzing the categories of thought presentation (TP) in the novel by adopting the model of Leech and Short (2007). This model stipulates that there are five categories of TP: a) direct thought DT, b) indirect thought IT, c) free direct thought FDT, d) free indirect thought FIT and e) narrative report of thought act NRTA. The study, as such, aimed to identify the thought presentation devices employed specifically in „the novel and to find out how these devices help to disclose characters“ state of consciousness. Following the pragmatic lens, the textual data have been collected through non random sampling techniques to meet the objectives of the study. Findings revealed that the FDT is the most frequently used technique which definitely increases reader’s involvement in the novel. Moreover, the ratio of FIT is higher than that of IT. The writer of the novel has also employed the narrative mode of thinking in order to reveal detailed information about the characters and the plot but its use is limited. The realistic narration and character portrayal have been made possible by the use of these techniques. The study endeavors to illustrate how linguistic choices help a reader explore the consciousness of the major characters and author’s view point thus enhancing the understanding in literature of protest.*

**Key words:** Literature of protest, direct thought, narrative report of thought act, free indirect thought, indirect thought, thought presentation.

## 1. Introduction

The notion of representing reality in fiction through the medium of language has long been a topic of discussion among critics and linguists. According to Ogden & Richards (1946), words are barriers between us and the world, and similarly other critics are of the view that words cannot explore the whole of complex reality. As reality is experienced through

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language, Waldron (1985) considers language at the centre of human thought and consciousness and closely linked to human thinking. The writers use different modes of representation for various effects. Both, the character and the narrator's discourse constitute the narrative.

The present study aims to probe the thought presentation (TP) in the novel „*The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoir*"" for which relevant passages have been selected to depict the different modes of TP employed by the author in this novel. The purpose of using categories of TP is to provide the reader with an access to the mind and behavior of the characters without or less intervention of the author. Modern writers have experimented in form and style and are more interested in impersonal feelings for which they devised new narrative techniques.

Writing in English by the authors other than native Englishmen is a Global phenomenon in which another form of literature is growing consciously. This form is called the literature of protest or Fourth World literature in which oppressed and marginalized sections of the society give vent to their feelings and voice against the cast ideologies and defiled social system.

In the last two decades, most of the prominent writers across the world have focused on presenting characters' thoughts and actions. This mode of (TP) is directly linked with the technique of stream of consciousness that appeals to the thoughts of characters' mind. The technique has been employed by many authors in many works like *Pride and Prejudice* by Austen, *Men without Women* by E. Hemingway and *Interpretation of Melodies* by Jhumpa Lahiri. In linguistics, many writers have focused on exploring the linguistic features of the fiction and specially the categories of speech and thought presentation which created a link between the text and the characters' behavior and mind. The novel selected for the present study focuses specifically on the representation of consciousness and thought process of the

characters „minds directly linked with the plot and events of the novel. This technique furthermore helps to enrich readers“ experiences through understanding of what is going on in the minds of the characters.

### **1.1. Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study can be generalized and further applied to the other novels produced by marginalized groups. Findings are important for the academicians, researchers and students of literature in comprehending fourth world literature and its innovative narrative style. Besides, the study is believed to be an input in the area of thought representation in literature of protest.

### **1.2. Objectives of the Study**

The study pursues the following objectives:

To identify the thought presentation techniques and devices employed in the novel.

To find out how these devices help to disclose and dissect characters „state of consciousness, point of view and thought process.

To investigate which categories of thought Presentation are employed most frequently to contribute to the thematic value of the novel.

## **2. Literature Review**

Character“s thoughts can be presented grammatically using DT, FDT, IT, FIT, NRTA and NRA and the norm for this process id IT Instead of DT.

### **2.1. Modern Narrative Fiction**

Modern writers are more interested in impersonal feelings for which they experiment in form and style. There exist five voice styles in narrative fiction: i) the thematic or topical voice, ii) the narrative voice, iii) coloured narrative, iv) the free indirect style, and v) direct character speech. Leech and Short (2007) opine that stylistics deals with the study of relationship that

exists between linguistic forms and artistic functions. Leech and Short (1981) also state that the writer decides to give us an access to the thoughts of character, even by simply use of thought act reporting thus invites us to see things from the point of view of this character.

## **2.2. Categories of Thought Presentation (CTP)**

TP is quite significant in literature. Categories of TP include: Direct Thought (DT), Free Direct Thought(FDT), Indirect Thought(IT), Free Indirect Thought(FIT), Narrative Report of Thought Act(NRTA) and Narrative Report of Act (NRA)

### **2.3. Direct Thought (DT)**

Leech and Short (20077) opine that direct speech (DS) and direct thought (DT) claim to be the faithful representation of speech and thoughts of the characters hence considered mimetic reports of discourse, presenting the exact words which were used in the original speech or thought being reported.

### **2.4. Free Direct Thought (FIT)**

The narrator presented the thought of the character directly without any intimacy; hence, the reporting clause is omitted in presenting the thought.

### **2.5. Indirect Thought (IT)**

The thought process of the character is reported with the reported verb in the third person. IT is considered fundamental because it ensures the closest possible representation of what was thought by the characters. However, Leech and Short (2003) are of the view that thought cannot be reported literally because it is not formulated orally.

### **2.6. Free Indirect Thought (FIT)**

It differs from DT by virtue of the backshift of the tense and the conversion of the first person pronoun to the third person (indirect features) and also by the absence of a reporting clause and the retention of the interrogative form and question mark. Leech and Short (2003) opine that

FIS distances the reader from the character whereas FIT locates the reader in the consciousness of the character without interference of the narrator. FIT is widely used mode of narration in fiction. The writers exploit this category to manipulate the narrative point of view, emotional reaction and sympathy of the readers successfully towards characters and events using different linguistic markers and specially the deictic words.

### **2.7. Narrative Report of Thought Act (NRTA)**

Simply, it involves the recording of thought process of the character. Guo (2017) states that thought presentation is included in both the fictional and non fictional works and is an essential part of many literary texts. The stylistic study of thought presentation is concerned with particular effects it has on the reader and how the effect is manipulated. Henardi (1972) was the first who introduced tripartite technique comprising of direct, indirect and free indirect speech and thought. He also indentified the three subcategories of free indirect style. Despite these main categories, the other categories remain unclear. McHale's (1978) model is not very often used in the actual identification of thought presentation as the gradational scaling of model relies mostly on the relative degree of mimesis. In addition, it does not provide vivid and operational statements for classification. This study follows Leech & Short (1981) model that alter the idea of mimesis with that of narrator influence over character's voice and actions. Moreover, this model is well recognized for its broad and systematized coverage of thought orders. According to Simpson (1993, 21), it remains "the most accessible introduction to the topic" and Leech & Short (1981) base their categories on explicit linguistic criteria and offer numerous examples from prose fiction in sport of their framework". So this model can be considered reliable for the stylistic analysis of thought presentation.

Leech and Short (1981) as the main proponents of "new stylistics", employ techniques of modern linguistics in order to study literature. According to them, stylistics deals with the

study of relationship that exists between linguistic forms and artistic functions. Leech & Short assert that one of its function is “to verify the validate intuitions “or personal opinions through which readers respond the literary text. In this sense, the analysis of language in literary texts is “a means to fuller understanding and appreciation of the writer’s artistic achievement.”

The present study follows the model of Leech and Short in order to analyze the modes of thought presentation used in the story. The study is undertaken in order to fulfill the two purposes namely the use of modes and the way it reveals the story’s characterization. By using the mode of indirect thought, the writer attempts to present the character’s inner feelings and thoughts.

Some scholars, however, have approached the novels from a biographical and feministic perspective. These authors talked about the subjugation and suppression of Dalit women. Many writers have explored the novel from the perspective of Dalit literature and representation of agony and suppression of outcast people. Since no study so far has been available from a stylistic perspective about this novel and Dalit literature in general and this novel in particular is relatively less explored, the researchers chose it as a special case to study. Roy (2019), attempts to analyze the novel keeping in view the humiliation and self assertion of the Dalits. Neyaz (2019) talks about the dual oppressiveness of Dalit women. Jerusha (2019) wrote an article with the title inclusion of the marginalized and he also talks about the marginalization of Dalit community and specially the women.

Sreelatha (2016) wrote about the autobiographies of Dalit women with special reference to the novel the weave of life and discussed the anguishes of this group. He also suggested that the welfare measures should reach the marginalized groups.

Moreover, many studies have been conducted on different novels exploring speech and thought presentation and are related to the present study in one or the other way. Istianah

(2018) has analysed SP and TP techniques in short story by Jhumpa Lahiri's "Interpreter of Maladies" and the findings revealed that the writer has used IT more frequently as compared to the other techniques. IT techniques also indicate that Mr. Kapasi is an important character needs to be acknowledged according to his position. Guo (2017) conducted a study following the same model of Leech and Short SP and TP and focused on TP devices in the novel *Mrs Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf. The findings revealed that the writer had focused on the variation in mental state of the characters by using different categories of TP.

Apart from these studies, there appears to be no in depth analysis of the category of TP in particular fiction and writers especially the *Weave of my Life* by Urmila Pawar.

## **2.8. Research Questions**

The study rests on the following research questions:

1. How different categories of TP have been used in the novel by Urmila Pawar?
2. How much is the significance of TP in revealing the sense of oppression of the characters in the novel.
3. How far is TP an effective tool in portraying character's mind in the novel?

## **3. Research Methodology**

Following Multi methodological approach (qualitative and quantitative), a stylistic analysis has been preferred to analyze selected data as style is believed to be the most appropriate way to study literary work in linguistic studies. The textual data is taken from a novel "*Weave of my life- A Dalit Woman's Memoir*" (2008) by Urmila Pawar. The researchers took six representative extracts out of the novel according to their relevance to the topic following the purposive sampling technique. The categories of TP were observed in the selected passages and categorized into the categories of TP breaking down into technique as suggested by Leech and Short (2007). Later on; the data has been analyzed critically.

#### 4. Finding and Discussions

This part discusses the findings of the research. Through a rigorous analysis, an attempt has been made to explore the consciousness of major characters in the novel. The author of this novel has used different modes of TP including DT, IT and FIT.

The main question to answer was to figure out the categories and techniques of TP in the novel as used by the writer to explore the thought process of major characters of the novel.

From the analysis, the table below shows the summary of different modes of TP.

##### Passage No. 01

It was an extremely difficult and inconvenient terrain... so many curses from her! (p.03)

Types	Number	Percentage
DT	5	40%
FDT	6	75%
IT	0	0%
FIT	2	15%
NRTA	0	0%

This chapter presents an account of Dalit women's sufferings and hardships. Pawal describes how women are treated badly in upper society due to their lower caste and gender. She herself belongs to the lower caste of "Mahar". The tag of being "a poor woman" remains a stigma to her life. She, along with her community has been cursed several times by the people wielding authority. The author narrates how she and her family suffered and oppressed by the village. The thought process of the major character provides a clear picture of the struggle and agony of the narrator yearning for a life of dignity.



From the above analysis, it becomes apparent that all the three modes of thought presentation have been employed in textual extracts. It includes DT, FDT, and FIT. The FDT is a widely used process in this passage.

### **Passage No. 02**

Once when I had gone with Akka, a poor couple came to see... our patients in the mental hospital? (p.72)

<b>Types</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
DT	02	15%
FDT	05	55%
IT	01	12%
FIT	01	12%
NRTA	02	15%

The chapter reveals Pawar's thoughts about food difference between bourgeoisie (the upper) and proletariat (lower class). The poor people never thought about those dishes which are usually made by the rich people. Moreover, this chapter presents the various instances where Pawar gets humiliated by the people of the upper class.

The above data shows the percentage of different categories of TP in chapter-3 of the novel. There are three categories that are employed in this chapter: DT, FDT, FID and NRTA. The ratio of FDT is again higher as compared to the other categories.

### **Passage No. 03**

I somehow managed to mutter, getting up... this may not happen with all women. (p.154)

<b>Types</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
DT	05	50%
FDT	04	45%

IT	01	12%
FIT	02	15%
NRTA	02	15%

This chapter gives an account of Pawar's school life memories and her menstrual period session. It depicts their thoughts about the girl who faced period session very first time. In addition, it throws light on Pawar's physical relationship with her husband. This data shows that all the modes of thought presentation have been employed in this passage. While Direct Thought and Free Direct thought are the most frequent used modes.

#### **Passage No. 04**

I felt that a woman was also an individual... (p.207)

<b>Types</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
DT	04	45%
FDT	06	55%
IT	0	0%
FIT	2	15%
NRTA	1	12%

Chapter-6 provides important insights into the lived realities of Urmila Pawar's life. The details of Pawar's marriage have been highlighted. The critical time of her life begins when she is married to Harishchanda. The thought process of the protagonist reveal her beliefs about the equality of womenfolk. According to Pawar, women should be given equal rights to men. Moreover, a woman has more capacity to bear the tough circumstances of life as compared to men. If a woman gives birth to a child, she can overcome all the difficulties of life. Rituals of marriage are also discussed in this chapter. This chapter discloses family's

thoughts and views about love marriage. all the categories of thought presentation are found to have been used. FDT is used in highest frequency.

#### **Passage No. 05**

I too grinned from ear to ear... (p.125)

<b>Types</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
DT	01	12%
FDT	03	33%
IT	02	15%
NRTA	01	12%

The passage is taken from chapter six. The data shows that four modes of TP have been used there which include DT, FDT, IT and NRTA. This textual extract is taken from the scene right after the marriage ceremony was over. The writer narrates the terrible condition of women. Here, she speculates about the pathetic plight of woman as a wife, mother and daughter. She gave birth to several children but gained nothing in return except their sorrows and worries. In her views, all women have to go through the same circumstances. At the same time, she can overcome her fate with inner power and resistance.

#### **Passage No. 06**

How is it so civilized? So cultured?.. (p.151)

<b>Types</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
NRTA	02	15%
FDT	06	55%
DT	01	12%

The above mentioned lines are taken from chapter eight. The data indicates that three types of thought presentation are employed in this passage which includes NRTA, FDT and DT. Here, again the ratio of FDT is quite significant (55%) while the other categories are less frequently employed. The thought process of Urmila Pawar reveals how the difference between the upper and the lower class is being promoted deliberately through culture and fiction. After listening to her friend's poetry, she becomes emotionally depressed. She thinks about the people and their hideous attitude towards the poor or the lower class.

#### **Summary of Thought Presentation**

<b>Types</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
DT	40	40%
FDT	44	44%
IT	3	3%
FIT	6	6%
NRTA	7	7%

The above table shows clearly that UrmilaPawar uses different categories of TP in the novel. The data reveal that almost all the categories of TP have been used in the novel but the frequency of FDT is higher (44%) as compared to the other categories. The second highest ratio employed by the writer is DT (40%). The other categories are less frequently used.

As pointed out by Leech and Short (2003) the choice of DT and FDT minimize the authorial intervention and the actual result is a monologue. A character is talking to herself or himself and the thought acquires a conscious value. In many cases of FDT quotation marks are omitted, however, reporting verbs are retained. The ration of FDT is significantly high as compared to other techniques.

FDT is relatively easy to identify which may be employed to present the instances of sudden apprehension of reality. FDT is used to present the mentally verbalized at dramatic and intense moments. According to Leech and Short (2007), the basic purpose of using the DT or FDT categories is to communicate the idea to the reader that these would have been the exact thoughts of the characters if their thought could have been made explicit.

The writer does not stand outside the community, but as a figure within. The writer places herself within a community, reconstructed in terms of a feminism whose origins are now not outside, but inside.

## **5. Conclusions**

The authorial voice has pointed out the oppression and sufferings of the Dalit women by using the technique of FDT skillfully. The writer of the novel has woven the themes of marginality and resistance and the muted groups of the marginal caste have been made speak and by employing the technique of TP, the invisible has been made visible skillfully. The process of subjugation and resilience of Pawar is portrayed vividly through the technique of TP and its different categories. The characterization of each character in the novel is affected by the selection of different techniques of SP and TP.

## **6. Future Implications**

The future researchers can conduct the studies using the same theoretical framework in analyzing the narrative to explore the subjugation and sufferings of womenfolk in other parts of this globe and to create a third space for them and raising awareness and understanding of such oppression in society. It is also suggested that future researchers should explore deeply what is said and what is thought by means of discourse analysis and TP categories.

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