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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Involvement Strategies and Interpersonal Engagement in *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*: A Multidimensional Analysis

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Abstract: This study examines linguistic features used to create intimacy and an interpersonal relationship between the narrator and the reader in the novel *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* by Moni Mohsin. It also examines the involvement strategies employed in Moni Mohsin's novel through the lens of Biber's (1988) multidimensional model. The research aims to identify how linguistic features associated with involvement are used to construct an interactive and engaging narrative style. It also demonstrates how specific patterns of language, through Biber's dimension of involvement, shape tone, identity, and reader engagement. The data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively, with reference to all the dimensions and their relevant aspects, indicating involvement strategies. Dimension 1 has a very high frequency and includes features such as personal, interactive, first- and second-person pronouns, contractions, emphatics, and private verbs. The research focuses on how the narrator engages the reader's involvement throughout the story. The relevant linguistic features were extracted and interpreted by using a qualitative and quantitative approach. It has been concluded that the narrator's voice is purely "involved" which involves characteristics such as emotional, expressive and social. The analysis also clearly shows that involvement features have special significance in shaping the humorous and conversational tone of the text. The novel has been written in a diary format, and its language usually looks like spoken, casual and revealing social identity. The narrator has used an intimate and conversational voice, which involves the reader in the whole narration. The findings reveal that the text strongly favours involved strategies by using conversational, personal and reader-oriented discourse. The study demonstrates that Biber's multidimensional model is an effective framework for analyzing involvement strategies in literary texts.

Keywords: Involvement Strategies, Interpersonal Engagement, *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*, Linguistic Features, Social Identity

Introduction

In recent years, corpus data have been acknowledged as resources that provide descriptive insights that are relevant to how people use language and tools that can directly affect learning and teaching processes. Biber's Multidimensional Analysis Model is now used as a tool for exploring variation across registers and text types. This model includes six main dimensions, and dimension 1: Involved vs Informative is a frequently used dimension focusing on how language constructs interpersonal engagement. The main features of this model are private verbs, contractions, first- and second-person pronouns, emphatics, discourse markers, and an involved conversational style. All these features exhibit spontaneity, subjectivity, and interpersonal relations, which are usually concerned with the spoken domain.

The novel in the present study is based on identity issues, particularly in the context of the Pakistani elite class. The identity of the heroine, Butterfly, is covered by her social status, family and cultural expectations. She struggles very hard to improve her social status by ignoring life's difficulties and revealing her efforts through her diary entries. Actually, her diary entries are an indication of how she hides her real identity and

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her struggle for the fulfilment of materialistic desires and the achievement of a high social status. In this way, she also reveals the bitterness and hollowness of the world. She also speaks broken English and gives the impression that she possesses all the luxuries of life. She is not only suffering from an inferiority complex but also tries to conceal her anxiety and nervousness by doing different things. Her whole life revolves around attending parties, meetings, functions and occasions, which are the traits of American culture and are now also found in our culture. She is not satisfied with her position and is busy showing off all the time. The novel is a satire on the fashion, status, parties and lifestyle of the Pakistani elite class. There is a contrast between what the characters say publicly and think privately. Butterfly does not care for national interests and issues; rather, she is interested in improving her so-called social status, and she is always anxious about her social status. She has quite different views about her in-laws, whom she considered as opposite and mismatched with her lifestyle. Even she wanted to celebrate religious festivals like Eid by following the elite class. So, she objected to her in-laws' Eid menu that it did not include fast food and other sweet dishes liked by the elite class. She liked the elite and Western culture so much that she wanted to adopt not only their way of life but also their eating habits and foods.

In the novel, interpersonal relations are very important in shaping the narrative and its satire. The Butterfly wants to maintain her social status through interaction with people. Her relations with people are not based on emotional attachments. She prefers appearance, popularity and wealth in her relations. Her desire to be with the elite class in social gathering highlights how interpersonal engagement has been used as a tool for social status instead of genuine bonding. Butterfly's marriage is also an example of interpersonal relations in socially elite culture. There is lack of emotional attachment in her relations with her husband. In this context, it can be said that marriage is a social institution shaped by class expectations instead of emotional fulfillment. The novel also highlights that rivalry, gossip, and competition are the chief characteristics of female friendships. These friendships are based on fashion, parties, and show off and often prove fragile and superficial because loyalty is replaced by jealousy. The writer wants to convey her message there is lack of trust and sincerity in elite classes and engagement among friends is often characterized by selfishness rather than sincerity and purity. The writer's unique style of writing in diary format and her satirical attitude add to the novel's impact and create the reader's interest. Societal differences between the modern ways of life of the elite class and the lives of common people also enrich the themes of the novel. The reader feels fully involved as one of the characters of the novel while reading it. Credit goes to the writer for how beautifully she has involved the reader in the novel by using Biber's multidimensional involvement strategies. Although the novel is widely recognized for its humour and social satire, its linguistic construction of intimacy has not been examined through a systematic model. So, the following questions have been asked in the study:

Research Questions

1. Which involvement features are most prominent in Butterfly's narration?
2. How do these features contribute to the narrator's persona and to the novel's satirical tone?
3. In what way does this involved style enhance reader engagement?

Significance of the study

The Novelist Moni Mohsin has employed different involvement strategies using Biber's model to involve the reader in the novel and create their interest while reading the novel, as well as to convey her message and highlight the social issues of modern Pakistani society. She has done it skillfully and masterfully. The reader feels himself as part of the story from beginning to end. The present study makes a meaningful contribution to the existing literature. This novel has already been examined by feminist, postcolonial, and satirical perspectives. By using involvement strategies, the study fills a gap in the literature. This linguistic perspective provides a new methodological contribution. By using Biber's multidimensional involvement model, the authors can achieve their desired results and targets through their writings more easily and skillfully.

Literature Review

Douglas Biber's multidimensional analysis provides a theoretical framework for the study. Biber, Conrad, and Rappen (1998) state that linguistic choices have reduced social distance, and these choices involve the reader as a participant instead of an observer. Biber focuses on different dimensions that differentiate texts from communicative perspectives. The scholars have paid much attention to dimension number 1: Involved vs Informative due to its relation with interpersonal interaction and discourse immediacy. This dimension involves emphasis on personal pronouns, particularly first and second person, private verbs that include think, feel, believe, etc., contractions and present tense verbs. So, this dimension has been frequently used for the analysis of texts due to these categories. These categories ensure the speaker/writer's presence and interaction with an implied audience (Biber et al., 1999). The texts that provide information depend on nouns and noun phrases, prepositional phrases and content-focused communicative style. Jones and Walter (2015) consider a corpus a collection of spoken or written texts which are searchable as electronically stored data. Trask (1999) opines that corpora give reliable information about actual use of language and do not involve judgements and opinions.

Most of the studies have employed the MDA framework successfully in different genres (Anwar & Maryam, 2017). It has been investigated that texts written in diary or epistolary form make use of dimension 1 just because of conversational tone and presence of the writer (Biber, 1995; Irshad & Anwar, 2021). It shows the relevance of involvement features and reader engagement in literary texts. Scholars in Pakistani English have frequently used MDA to investigate register variation and stylistic hybridity. These scholars often make use of formal and informal features to examine socio-cultural norms and multilingual influences (Mahboob, 2009; Anwar, 2012). A limited number of studies have analysed the language of advertisements through multimodal analysis. (Kayani, Mangrio & Anwar, 2022; Anwar, 2024). However, most of the scholars prefer large corpora instead of single-text literary analyses.

Many Pakistani writers of this age have exhibited the social, political and cultural issues of people through their writings (Shamsie, 2018). Different scholars have analyzed Moni Mohsin's novel from different angles, and often it has been seen as a "political and social satire" (Saeed, Shahid & Haq, 2014, p. 3589). *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* is a masterpiece of Moni Mohsin (2013) in which she has satirized different aspects of the Pakistani elite social class. Hashmat and Saleem (2024) state that the novel can be said as Pakistani "chick lit" as it points out that the novel depicts traditional portrayals of Pakistani women, through a woman who is fond of identity, social status and class in socio-cultural perspectives. According to Zahid and Khalid (2025), the novel focuses on linguistic analysis showing the involvement of lexical and syntactic categories to create satire and humour. Batool, and Dustgir (2024) find mimicry and identity craze by following Western ways of life in Butterfly's attitude and lifestyle. Written in the form of a diary, the novel employs a first-person narrator who adopts a subjective, conversational and evaluative attitude while satirizing the ways of the so-called elite social class. The highly qualitative analyses point out the narrator's excessive use of colloquial and direct speech, including exaggerated self-representation to produce humor. These analyses do not quantify the linguistic features which contribute to the novel's involved style. Theoretical framework also indicates a gap in the literature. No writer has ever combined quantitative multidimensional with qualitative literary interpretation for the analysis of *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*. The present study proves how private verbs, personal pronouns, contractions, and complement clauses function to construct satire, narrator stance, and reader involvement in the novel.

Theoretical Framework

Biber's Multidimensional Analysis Model (1988) provides the theoretical framework of this study. The focus of the study will be on the relevant aspects of different dimensions. Biber presented the MDA method for the first time, and this method includes quantitative as well as qualitative analysis of different dimensions of registers, i.e., spoken and written language. This method focuses on the co-occurrence patterns of 67 linguistic features, and this is done through six different dimensions. Each dimension performs different

functions and is concerned with different variables of the register. Many researchers and scholars have used a multidimensional analysis approach to analyze register variation in corpus research (Biber, 1988). There are six dimensions of Biber's multidimensional model. All the dimensions do not contain categories directly concerned with involvement strategies. However, a few dimensions are directly concerned with involvement strategies, and the other dimensions include involvement strategies to some extent, but not in detail.

Dimension 1: Involved versus Informational

The features of dimension 1 are present tense, private verbs, first and second person pronouns, emphatics, direct addressing and contractions. All these features will be analyzed to find out how the narrator has used them to ensure the reader's involvement in the novel.

Dimension 2: Narrative versus Non-narrative

The features of this dimension are past tense, third person pronouns, public verbs like report, say, and present participle, which will be analyzed to find out how these features have proved helpful in involvement strategies.

Dimension 3: Explicit versus Situation-Dependent Reference

This dimension involves key linguistic features such as demonstrative pronouns and deictic expressions like this, now, here which are usually used in face-to-face communication, a key feature of involved discourse.

Dimension 4: Overt Expression of Persuasion

This dimension has only positive features i.e. Necessity and Epistemic Modals. Some examples are prediction modals and persuasive verbs. When these features occur together, they present an overtly persuasive and argumentative kind of discourse, where some point of view is made explicit.

Dimension 5: Abstract versus Non-abstract information

As the features of this dimension deal with abstract versus non-abstract information, these features are not relevant to the present study. So, this dimension has not been analyzed in the study.

Dimension 6: Online Informational Elaboration Directive/non-directive

High scores on this variable indicate that the text is informational in nature but produced under certain time constraints, as for example in speeches. A high score on this dimension means that the text presents many post-modifications of noun phrases (among other features).

Methodology

The main aim of the study is to investigate the involvement strategies in the novel. The sample of the study is the novel *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* by Moni Mohsin (2013). Biber's multidimensional model provided the theoretical framework for this research. The data were selected from the novel, and the focus was on diary entries displaying personal reflection and interaction. The more complicated issues can be solved through qualitative research. The details of the phenomena of interest can be given through qualitative research. Quantitative research uses statistical components. It answers the questions of how many and how much. On the other hand, qualitative research answers questions that start with words such as 'how' and 'why'. The focus of the study was to explore the involvement strategies in the novel. At quantitative level, the involvement strategies used in the novel were analyzed for their frequency occurrences in charts. These frequent occurrences were interpreted qualitatively to understand their significance. The quantitative analysis of different involvement strategies of different dimensions was also presented through charts. A detailed discussion of the results has been given. The frequencies were calculated through antconc. The reason to collect data through antconc is that such type of data is authentic and valid. So, the researchers decided to

inspect the text and collect data through antconc. Then linguistic features linked to involvement were identified and counted. The data analysis was shown through charts. This is standard practice in literary MD studies when full corpus tagging is not available.

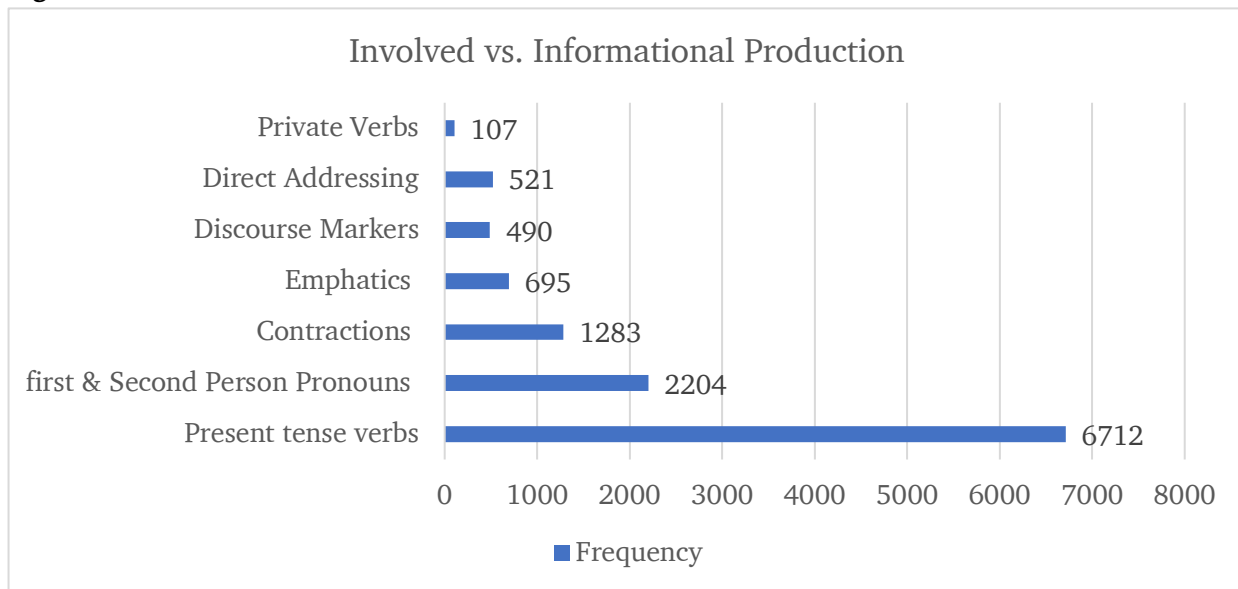
Data Analysis

The source text for the present study is the novel *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* written by Moni Mohsin (2013). In the beginning, the novel was written in a series of columns to discuss the issues of women such as 'joint family system, working women, women's health and so on'. As the column appealed to women readers, so, it got popularity overnight. The writer included in this column all the major events and happenings of her time. All these columns were compiled afterwards in the form of a book titled *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*. The present study investigates the involvement strategies used by the novelist to create intimacy and closeness between the writer and the reader. Douglas Biber's Multidimensional Analysis Model has provided the theoretical framework for the present study.

There are six dimensions of Douglas Biber's Multidimensional Model. All the dimensions do not contain categories directly concerned with involvement strategies. However, a few dimensions are directly concerned with involvement strategies and the other dimensions include involvement strategies to some extent and not in detail. The following charts show frequency of linguistic features of each dimension used in the novel.

Dimension1: Involved vs. Informational Production

Figure 1



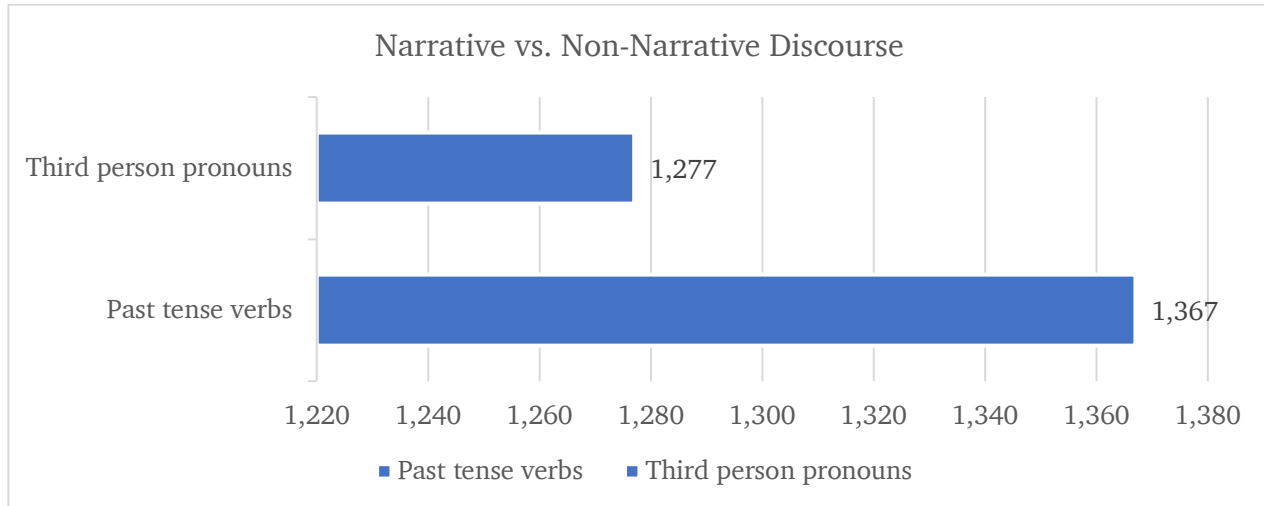
Discussion and Analysis

This is the most important and primary dimension that is used to study involvement strategies for the analysis of texts. This dimension focuses on personal interaction and engagement between the narrator and the reader. Dimension 1 is directly concerned with involvement strategies that a writer uses to involve the reader in narration. It also includes interaction and emotional immediacy between the writer and the reader. As the chart clearly shows very high frequency of present tense verbs indicating that the writer has fully involved the reader in current actions and states in his narration. In the novel, the present tense is often used with private verbs which also show high frequency in the text. The writer has shared personal feelings and emotions with the reader through the use of private verbs. Then the use of first and second person pronouns with high frequency can be seen in the chart. It means that the narrator has established a strong relationship with the reader by addressing him directly and involving him in the narration. The high frequency of contractions in the table and chart shows that the novelist has created a natural, conversational and friendly

tone not only to involve the reader in the text but also to create his interest in the novel. Similarly, the use of discourse markers, emphatics and direct addressing also show high frequency in the novel. The novelist has made use of all the strategies to involve the reader in the story. The reader feels himself as one of the characters of the story while reading the novel due to the involvement strategies employed by the novelist. Credit goes to the writer who has made the reader a part of the story by making the best possible use of involvement strategies of dimension 1.

Dimension 2: Narrative vs. Non-Narrative Discourse

Figure 2

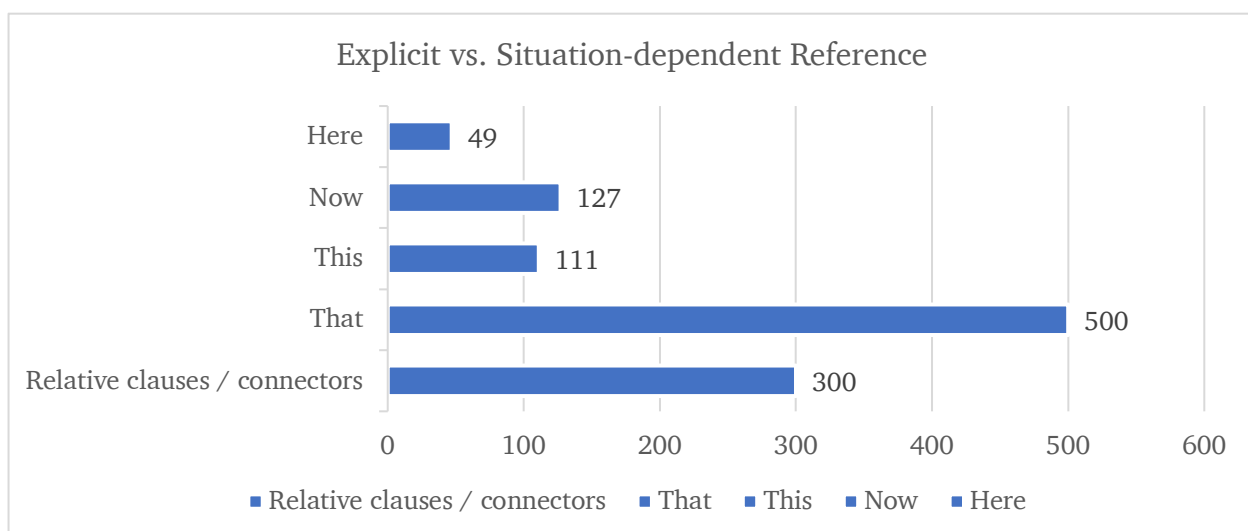


Discussion and Analysis

Key features of this dimension are past tense verbs and third person pronouns. There is no doubt that dimension 2 is not an involvement dimension but we cannot deny the fact that the dimension supports involvement strategies indirectly especially in novels and diaries. In the chart, high frequency of past tense and third person pronouns indicates that the narrator involves readers into events and experiences in such a way that the readers feel themselves as participants. The narrator develops attitude of sharing personal experiences. The writer has completely engaged the reader by using these two strategies This dimension can be helpful only if involvement is created through storytelling and personal anecdotes. So, the narrator has engaged the reader by sharing personal experiences and major events of those days.

Dimension 3: Explicit vs. Situation-dependent Reference

Figure 3

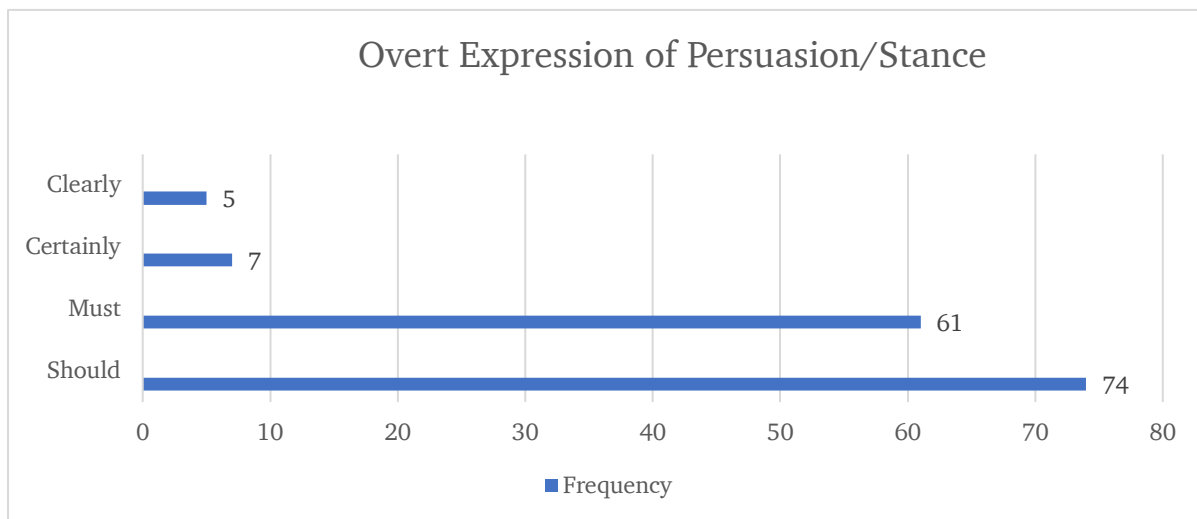


Discussion and Analysis

The above chart clearly shows that one of the main features of dimension 3 is the use of clear and elaborated relative clauses or the use of connectors in the text. The narrator has used connectors to elaborate the statements so that the reader may understand the text clearly. Similarly, demonstrative pronouns and adverbs of time and place have been used so that the reader may understand and infer meaning from the context which is based on shared knowledge between the writer and the reader. It can be concluded that reliance on situation-dependent reference increases reader involvement. The writer involves the reader mentally and engages him thoroughly. We can infer from the discussion that dimension 3 also contributes to involvement strategies.

Dimension 4: Overt Expression of Persuasion/Stance

Figure 4



Discussion and Analysis

While dimension 1 involves the reader in the text directly through different linguistic features, dimension 3 and 4 contribute to involvement strategies indirectly through contextual intimacy and evaluative engagement. Evaluative language is based on personal comments that increases reader engagement. The writer has made use of modals so that the reader may feel that he is being addressed, advised or persuaded. The reader is free to make his own judgements and give opinions that he thinks suitable. This feature makes the reader a part of the narration. The features of dimension 4 can prove helpful when evaluative involvement is added in the text. The novelist Moni Mohsin has beautifully used the features of this dimension to involve the reader in the novel.

Dimension 5 and 6: Abstract vs. Non-Abstract Information and Online Informational Elaboration

Discussion

Both these dimensions do not contribute directly to involvement strategies. It can be said that these dimensions play their role indirectly to some extent by shaping how information is evaluated and contextualized. Keeping in view minor and moderate role of these two dimensions, their features have not been analyzed in the novel.

Qualitative Analysis of Dimensions

Qualitative analysis of the novel reveals how the novelist has used different involvement strategies in the novel just to create reader's interest and presence in the novel. The following textual examples discuss the role of these strategies in producing different meanings. It is worth mentioning here that the choices of involvement strategies on the writer's part not only suggest satirical positions of the narrator but also they unearth some of the structural constraints imposed by the Urdu language structure in the use of involvement

strategies. The novelist has sometimes used urdu language for humorous and satirical purposes. The following pages show different textual examples of different dimensions used in the novel and these linguistic features have been qualitatively analyzed to explain their role in establishing relationship between the writer and the reader by involving the reader in the text.

Examples No 1

Text : She's so thin, spends all her time in the gym and has a personal trainer, and I think so thori si liposeduction bhi krwai hai. Also I think she's had chemical peel done. I don't think so it's just Jolen ka kamaal, And she wears killer heels and killer clothes, all designer, and looks tabahi. (The Diary of a Social Butterfly, p.50)

Analysis

The use of contractions in the text shows involvement of the reader because its purpose is to minimize linguistic distance between the narrator and the reader. So, contractions can be termed as grammatical markers of interpersonal involvement. Similarly, the use of private verbs and present tense also strongly contribute to involvement strategies. As private verbs show inner feelings, perceptions and attitudes of the writer or speaker.

Example No 2

Text: It's an injection that you put it into your face and all the lines and things vanish, and your face becomes plump and smooth like an inflated cushion. I forget the name of the dawai. Haan, I've remembered, it's called Buttocks. Bus, I'm ordering two crate-fulls tomorrow. (The Diary of a Social Butterfly, p.63)

Analysis

The use of first and second person pronouns, present tense and contractions in the text has fully involved the reader in narration. It seems as if the narrator were addressing the reader directly and talking to him face-to-face in a conversation style in the story. It may be pointed out that spoken interactions usually use present, making the text feel closer to speech.

Example No 3

Text: I'm so excited na, so excited na, keh bus. Why? Haw, on which planet are you living? Apollo thirteen? Don't you know about Basant? Vaisey there too they must know, I'm hundred percent sure. (The Diary of a Social Butterfly, p.4)

Analysis

The use of questions and emphatics in the text has created direct interaction between the narrator and the reader. Obviously, when a question is asked, it invites response engaging the writer and speaker and the audience in a conversation. On the other hand, emphatics have been used in the text to intensify the writer's personal stance. So, the narrator has made use of questions and emphatics as interactional and affective devices to involve and engage the reader. These are the key features of dimension 1.

Example No 4

Text: Food was from Avari, although Twinkle pretended her cook had done it. Jhoothi. I've ordered those fat-fat, fried-fried prawns myself so many times. I don't know why people have to lie, particularly when they know they're going to be found out. Also pretended she'd done the flowers herself, when I know she'd stolen the arrangements from the Gurgling Fridges-walon ka function yesterday. I saw her with my own eyes. (The Diary of a Social Butterfly, p.37)

Analysis

In Biber's Multidimensional Analysis Model , past tense verbs and third person pronouns are key features of 2 that is narrative and discourse. Past tense and third person pronouns are used in novels to describe events that had taken place in the past. Past tense verbs contribute to narration and reporting of events and create a narrative flow. Although past tense verbs and third person pronouns reduce interpersonal involvement, yet

these features contribute to the construction of event-based narration. However, the use of first person pronoun and private verbs links the text with involvement strategies used by the novelist.

Example No 5

Text: Taubah, baba, this shows you should never trust anyone. Not best friends, not husbands, not anyone. (The Diary of a Social Butterfly, p.3)

Analysis

This text shows the features of dimension 3 and 4 of Biber's Multidimensional Analysis model. Modals such as must and should have been used by the novelist to show opinions and stance in the novel *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* just to develop intimacy between the writer and reader. Here the writer directly advises the reader not to trust anyone in life because nobody is sincere in the world. The writer has established a strong relationship with the reader by involving him and addressing him directly. The reader also feels attached with the writer and takes it as a piece of advice by the narrator. Similarly, the use of deixis expressions like 'this' and 'that' also refer to the shared context between the writer and the reader and situation-dependent reference.

Example No 6

Text: Kehti ha, 'Something you know', Sarrhial jaisi, as if I know nothing. I know so much, so much that if I start telling, half of Lahore will have to flee Pakistan. Who knows Mulloo's real age, hain? Kehti tou hai she's thirty nine only, but my foot thirty nine. (The Diary of a Social Butterfly, p.11)

Analysis

It may be noted that the novel is a beautiful example of code-switching and code-mixing. The novelist has frequently used the words and sentences of Urdu language in the text to create humor and satire. The use of first and second person pronoun, private verbs and present tense verbs make the reader feel involved and as part of the story while reading the novel. All these features belong to dimension 1 of Biber's Multidimensional Model.

Conclusion

The focus of the present study was to investigate the use of involvement strategies in the novel *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* by Moni Mohsin. Douglas Biber's Multidimensional Analysis Model provided the theoretical framework for the study. The primary aim of the study was to explore involvement strategies used by the novelist Moni Mohsin in her novel *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*. Douglas Biber's Multidimensional Analysis Model provided the theoretical framework for the study. The novel has been written in a Diary format and it contains a series of events and happenings that took place during the period between 2001 to 2008. The data for the use of involvement strategies in *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. In the quantitative analysis it was observed that the frequency use of dimension 1 involved vs information is significantly different from all the other dimensions. Even qualitative analysis of the examples from the text shows highest percentage occurrences of dimension 1 in the novel. For qualitative analysis, textual examples were cited to explain how the choices of linguistic features and involvement strategies on the narrator's part not only establish a strong relationship between the writer and the reader but also involve the reader fully in the narration from beginning to end. The narrator has employed all the possible involvement strategies effectively in the novel. The study of Biber's Multidimensional Model (1988) is exhaustive enough for capturing reader's attention and involving him in the text. This study may prove a road map for the researchers to make use of involvement strategies of Biber's Multidimensional analysis model in their investigations of text analysis. Biber's Multidimensional analysis model has the potential to describe all the linguistic features of different dimensions. So, if MDA is employed for the analysis of texts using involvement strategies, we, as researchers or writers, can come up with some agreed upon effective strategies for readers' involvement purposes. It is envisaged that the future researchers can make their findings and investigations fruitful by following this study and by applying MDA Model to their studies.

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