

A Critical Glimpse on the Narrative Techniques of Jhumpa Lahiri 's Namesake and Amitav Gosh's Shadow Lines

Research Scholar:S.Shobana Research Supervisor:Dr.A.A.Jayashree Prabhakar

Assistant Professor

Professor

Department of English

Department of English

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Introduction

Narratology, which was first founded by Tzevan Todorov, is described (by him) as the theory of narrative structures in Phelan (2008). Some authors have used a definition that is essentially the same for the term "narratology". These definitions provide us a general understanding that narratology is the study of the formal elements of a narrative. For example, Prince (1982) described as the study of the form and functioning of narrative. However, Schmid (2010) expressed that there is a criticism that cautions authors against restricting narratology to purely analytical work because doing so would produce objective descriptions that would be devoid of any room for creative interpretation.

This perspective suggests that narratology should expand its boundaries. It implies that narratology may be more informative if its scope is expanded. The age of post-classical narratology reflects this. Narratology investigates what all narratives have in common and the factors that make them distinctive from one another (Prince, 1982). Prince has identified a sensitive area in the definition of narratology, namely the notion that narratology is not concerned with "the history of particular novels or tales, with their meaning, or with their aesthetic value, but rather with the traits which distinguish narrative from other signifying systems and with the modalities of these traits" (Prince, 1982, p. 5). It is evident from this and other definitions that narratology does deal with the abstract levels of a particular narrative or the interpretative aspect of narratives; rather, it examines the structure and fundamental qualities of narratives, which ultimately define what a narrative is and what sets it apart from other forms.

Literature review

Related studies on Jhumpa Lahiri's novels

Ilyas & Afzal (2021) explored Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* as a narration of a mixed immigrant family's journey, navigating acculturation and deculturation. Using Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, the study revealed the novel's hybrid nature, reflecting diasporic ideology through themes of alienation, detachment, and expatriate sensibility. This analysis highlighted the multifaceted functionality of the text and effectively narrating the immigrant perspective on diaspora.

Dasgupta (2011) identified the similarities and differences that characterize the identity of a transcultural person in *The Namesake*. According to the study, Lahri illustrates the difficulties involved in giving a Russian name to

a second-generation Bengali child living in the United States. Gogol's identity crisis and eventual decision to adopt the name Nikhil are both highlighted by Lahri.

Mustofa (2011) presented a study on title "*Psychological crises in Jhumpa Lahiri's- The Namaste*". This study falls under the realm of literary critique, as it primarily focuses on the examination of the description, analysis and interpretation of a specific literary of Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Namesake*. The primary data for this study is derived from Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*. The researcher adopts a psychological perspective, particularly drawing upon Erik Erikson's theory, which delves into the psychosocial challenges faced by Gogol, predominantly rooted in his strange name.

Sonowal et al. (2022) studied Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*, focusing on the challenges of an American born to Indian immigrant parents. The narrative explores Gogol's struggle with his name, emphasizing his evolving connection to his Indian roots. Lahiri portrays the complexities faced by first-generation Indian immigrants, depicting characters like Gogol, Sonia and Moushumi as they navigate between Indian and American cultures, offering a compelling depiction of the diasporic experience.

Cabaret (2022) explores how the novel and film portray India for Indian American immigrants in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*. The study highlights the idealized perceptions of India, examining the differences in perspective between first and second-generation characters. It also delves into the political undertones, questioning the suppressed tensions in the seemingly benign portrayal of Hindu India in a post-9/11 American context.

Related studies on Amitav Ghosh's novels

Patil (2014) analyzed *The Shadow Lines*; Ghosh masterfully explores migration's deep impact on human lives. The novel skillfully depicts migration's distressing circumstances, encompassing both voluntary and forced movements. Ghosh disrupts conventional notions of time and space, employing migration as a narrative device. Characters move physically and narratively, challenging fixed national boundaries and cultural divisions.

Jayashree Tripura and Gyanabati Khuraijam (2018) explored how different generations, ethnicities, and cultures might work together to develop their own unique culture. *The shadow lines* provide a platform for the intermixing of ethnicity and culture across borders. The researcher reported that Amitav Ghosh illustrated the possibility of a multicultural oriented society, where each person has a recognized identity. The borders remain to be a subsidiary concern of the particular person. Tridib is presented in the novel as a philosophical individual who finds the idea of love that transcends boundaries to be fascinating. The researcher further explored the diverse ethnic or national cultures across borders in the postcolonial age.

Prasad (2008) dissects Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Shadow Lines*, exploring narrative components and themes. The research focuses on Ghosh's innovative approach, examining memory's role, narrative techniques, and cartographic exploration against the backdrop of Bengal's division into Bangladesh and West Bengal. The study highlights Ghosh's artistic vision and thematic preoccupations.

Agarwal (2010) analyzed the Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* explores how the narrative technique, as per Lukac, acts as a governing narrative principle. Ghosh skillfully blends realism and symbolism, erasing temporal boundaries between past, present, and future. The story, rooted in reality, delves into themes of identity and autonomy while interweaving historical events with fiction. It was concluded that the novel transcends traditional labels, incorporating elements from both modernism and postmodernism.

Malathi (2013) analyzed *The Shadow Lines*, Ghosh's novel focused on historical events like Bengal's independence struggle and the Partition of India. Examining the concept of nationhood, Ghosh challenges established truths and borders, blurring personal and political lines. The narrative explores the intricate connection between personal freedom and political realities, emphasizing the elusive nature of "nation".

Gautam (2021) analyzed Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* to examine a narrative gap that hides the death of Tridib, who is likely the most significant character in the work, which is a key plot point. The novel explores the impact of Bengal's Partition on people across Asia and Europe, spanning generations in Dhaka, Calcutta, and London. Characters practicing different religions interact amidst historical events like World War II and the 1947 Partition. Thamma's character bridges pre-modern Dhaka with post-Partition Calcutta. Gautam contends the novel uncovers silenced histories, challenging mainstream narratives and filling historical gaps.

Devi (2021) research constitutes an endeavor to comprehensively explore the Delusion and Reality in the novel, *The Shadow Lines*. The study focused on examining the interplay of memory and imagination, revealing the blurred line between illusion and reality. Ghosh uses diverse geographical locations to emphasize global connections and diasporic themes. The study offers insights into the complex relationship between illusion, reality, time, space and shared human experiences.

These comprehensive studies collectively provide a rich tapestry of insights into Jhumpa Lahiri and Amitav Ghosh literary universe, demonstrating their mastery in narration and his ability to navigate complex themes with finesse and depth, resonating with readers across the world. While Jhumpa Lahiri and Amitav Ghosh's individual works have been the subject of extensive analysis, there is a noticeable research gap when it comes to directly contrasting and comparing their narrative techniques and narrative styles. This offers the chance to conduct a thorough comparison of the approaches used by these two well-known novelists in terms of narrative styles, character development and storytelling in their specific novels. An aspect that has not received enough attention is how Lahiri and Ghosh develop their characters and give them individual voices.

Through vivid descriptions, original dialogue, or other literary techniques, this research gap presents an opportunity to examine how these authors bring their characters to life and how these decisions affect the overall narrative impact. It is necessary to go deeper into how Lahiri and Ghosh use narrative approaches to convey themes and produce unique literary experiences. Investigating how these narrative choices of the authors align with their thematic explorations can provide insights into the nuances of their storytelling craft. The lack of comprehensive comparative studies that concentrate on the narrative techniques, character development, use of viewpoints, and portrayal of inner thoughts and feelings in the works of Jhumpa Lahiri and Amitav Ghosh is the overall research gap of the study. A study that takes these factors into account could greatly advance our

knowledge of how these authors use their narrative abilities to draw readers in and provide distinctive literary experiences.

Problem statement

Contemporary literature offers a fascinating setting for literary analysis. In this context, Jhumpa Lahiri and Amitav Ghosh's narrative techniques stand out as captivating subject of the study. Despite the extensive critical acclaim, they have received, a comprehensive comparative analysis of their narrative techniques and their impact on engagement of the readers and understanding remains notably absent from scholarly discourse. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the narrative approaches of Jhumpa Lahiri and Amitav Ghosh to identify the fundamental elements that define their storytelling prowess, examining how these elements contribute to the immersive experience of their readers, and ultimately, understanding the broader implications of their narratives within the literary domain. The investigation of the intricate thematic elements that Lahiri and Ghosh use in their works is the core of this study.

Ghosh's narratives are deeply rooted in historical backgrounds, environmental concerns and socio-political issues; whereas Lahiri's narratives, which frequently explore the difficulties of immigrant identity, family dynamics and cultural dislocation. By analysing these themes in depth, the research aims to unravel the unique perspectives each author brings to their storytelling, shedding light on the socio-cultural influences that shape their narrative choices. Another important area of investigation is the relationship between language and narrative structure. Lahiri's precise prose and Ghosh's lyrical storytelling both contribute to the immersive experiences they offer readers. This study aims to reveal the linguistic techniques used by the authors to provoke particular emotions and create particular atmospheres within their narratives by analysing their language use and narrative structures.

Objective of the study

- The objective of the work is to present narratives and narrative style of Jhumpa Lahiri's *Name Sake* and Amitav Ghosh's *Shadow Lines*.
- To show art and techniques of Jhumpa Lahiri's *Name Sake* and Amitav Ghosh's *Shadow Lines*.
- To discover how language functions as a tool for identity expression of Jhumpa Lahiri's *Name Sake* and Amitav Ghosh's *Shadow Lines*.

Research Methodology

The present study is an analytical type of the literary works of Jhumpa Lahiri and Amitav Ghosh such as *Namesake; The shadow Lines*. The primary focus has been on critically analysing these texts, constituting the fundamental source of research material. The researcher has undertaken a detailed examination of the narratives, characters, thematic elements and narrative styles employed by these two eminent writers. This comprehensive methodology guarantees a holistic understanding of the literary techniques of the authors and the broader contexts within which their works are situated. The study seeks to provide insights through this rigorous analytical process, thereby enhancing the reader's understanding of Lahiri and Ghosh's contributions to modern literature.

Significance of the study

This study holds an immense significance in the field of literature and cultural studies. This study provides a profound understanding of the literary strategies, thematic decisions, and cultural influences used by acclaimed authors Jhumpa Lahiri and Amitav Ghosh by analysing their narrative techniques. The study enriches literary studies by offering critical insights into the distinctive storytelling methods employed by Lahiri and Ghosh. Analysing their narrative techniques not only deepens our appreciation for their works but also sheds light on the broader narrative traditions and innovations within contemporary literature, fostering a understanding of the craft of storytelling. Furthermore, by revealing the cultural contexts embedded in Lahiri and Ghosh's narratives, this study makes an important contribution to cultural studies.

These authors often explore themes of identity, migration, and globalization, providing readers with a lens through which to understand intricate cultural landscapes. Understanding their narrative styles aids in deciphering the complex interactions between literature and cultural identity, thereby enriching discussions on multiculturalism and global literature. This study bridges the fields of literature and cultural studies and serves as a vital intellectual endeavour. By unravelling the narrative complexities of Lahiri and Ghosh, it not only elevates the appreciation for their literary contributions but also enhances our comprehension of the intricate tapestry of cultures and identities woven into their stories and makes it a valuable contribution to the academic discourse.

Expected outcome of the study

This study gives a comprehensive examination of Jhumpa Lahiri's *Name Sake* and Amitav Ghosh's *Shadow Lines* narrative styles, giving readers a profound understanding of their literary strategies. The research mainly concentrated on narrative styles, closely tying Lahiri's personal journey into her literary narratives and it focused on the substance of her immigrant experiences. This autobiographical element adds depth and authenticity to the study, grounding it in the reality of immigrant life. The study provides insight on the difficulties faced by immigrants in a foreign country by analysing the interaction between identity crisis and cross-cultural conflicts. Additionally, this work goes beyond simple literary analysis; it offers readers a lens through which they can view the immigrant experience from fresh angles. The study hopes to affect readers by encouraging them to view these narratives through a new and sympathetic lens, so promoting a greater knowledge of the complexities of immigrant life.

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