

A Stylistic Discourse Analysis of Paulo Coelho's Narrative Techniques in The Alchemist

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| Article Info | Abstract |
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| <p>Article History</p> <p>Received: May 01, 2021</p> <p>Accepted: August 03, 2021</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords: Stylistic-Discourse Analysis, Paulo Coelho, The Alchemist, Narrative Techniques, Psychonarration, Narrated Monologue</p> <p>DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.5156208</p> | <p><i>This paper presents a stylistic-discourse analysis of Paulo Coelho's novel 'The Alchemist'. In this paper, we (the researchers) specifically look at the discourse perspectives of the novel and carry out a detailed examination of the narrative style adopted by Coelho to extend his messages and morals in the novel. A mixed approach to stylistic-discourse analysis has been used to examine Coelho's narrative techniques by employing Leech and Short's (2007) model of 'style in fiction'. The findings reveal that Coelho has used multiple techniques to establish a narrative situational discourse in The Alchemist. These techniques include an external, heterodiegetic form of narration, an overt narrative voice, variable focalization, shifts in point of view (third- and first-person point of view), different modes of narration (dialogues, telling, summarizing), a variety of speech styles (direct speech, indirect speech, free direct speech, narrative report of speech acts) and a series of thought presentation styles (direct thought, indirect thought, free direct thought, free indirect thought, including psychonarration and narrated monologue, and narrative report of thought acts). Coelho's style of using these narrative techniques interchangeably with abrupt and frequent shifts helps him convey the philosophical meanings underpinned in the novel.</i></p> |

Introduction

In literature, stylistics is defined as the study of linguistic features of a literary text. According to Leech and Short (2007), the key purpose of literary stylistics is to identify and demonstrate the connection between language and the artistic function of literature as art for art's sake or art for life's sake. Similarly, Verdok (2002) states that the style in language refers to a particular linguistic expression that makes a distinctive choice of method to convey something. There is always a deliberate purpose behind making a particular choice that produces marked effects upon the readers. This implies that analyzing style is important to get a complete understanding of a literary text, and the study of stylistics helps to meet this goal.

In fiction, it is the narrator who shares the author's responsibility of describing characters or situations, telling events, and conveying certain perceptions, thoughts, and experiences to the reader. Hence, a great part of the author's style in a fictional piece of work pivots around his¹ choice of narrative techniques. A narrator's style may include point of view (first or third person), perspective (individual or multiple), and tone (subjective or objective). Another dimension of analysing the author's narrative techniques or style is the way he presents his characters' speech and thoughts to the reader.

Keeping the aforementioned aspects in view, the present paper aims to carry out a stylistic-discourse analysis of Paulo Coelho's fictional narrative, *The Alchemist*, by examining how discourse is created with the use of different narrative techniques in the novel.

Literature Review

A language is a tool for communication. Examining linguistic features helps us approach a literary discourse well. Literature abounds in various theories to interpret the narrative aspects of fictional discourse. To begin with a review of the previous literature on the topic of the present research, it is important to present a brief introduction to the theories and the basic terms and terminologies of the narrative fictional discourse which are relevant to the present paper.

Theoretical Framework

The term narrative discourse or narratology refers to the aspects such as who tells or sees the story and in what manner or sequence. Childs and Fowler (2006, p. 151) define narratology as 'the study of narrative [concerning] acts of human communication [and] elements of constructive form that coalesce and interact [...] to make a story sensible to the observer/reader.' The foundation of the theory of narratology or narrative discourse can be traced back to Dorrit Cohn's (1978) work titled *Transparent minds: Narrative modes for presenting consciousness in fiction*. In her masterpiece, Cohn (1978) referred to different forms of a narrator's voice (first-person and third-person narration). She further explained three different methods to represent characters' consciousness: (i) psychonarration, (ii) quoted monologue (interior monologue), and (iii) narrated monologue. Next to Cohn (1978)

is Chatman (1978) who contributed to narratology by explaining the degrees of the narrator's audibility or 'overtness' in fiction. According to Chatman (1978), if the narrator's voice is prominently heard in fiction, it is an overt narration. In contrast, if the narrator's voice is completely submerged with that of the character, it is called a covert narration. Pursuing this, Genette (1980) explained the aspects of perspective, point of view, or focalization. According to Genette (1980), the narrative perspective includes homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrators. Moreover, the story may be told from either an individual perspective or multiple perspectives. Genette's (1980) theory of narrative voice included the aspects of 'who speaks', 'when', and 'from where'. Next to this, Aczel (1998) made an extension to Genette's (1980) theory of narrative voice by adding one aspect, i.e., 'how' a story is told (p. 496). Aczel (1998) further added three classes of narrative perspective or point of view (i.e., metadiegetic, extradiegetic, and intradiegetic narrators) to Genette's construct of diegetics which was limited to only two types of narrative perspective, that is, heterodiegetic and homodiegetic.

After Aczel (1998), the next work in narratology is that of Leech and Short (1981) who combined the aforementioned aspects of narratology all together in their comprehensive model of Style in Fiction. Leech and Short (1981) added some more strands to stylistic aspects in narratology, such as linguistic and stylistic categories, the language of fiction, mind style, the rhetoric of the text, discourse situation, conversation in the novel, and speech and thought presentation. Leech and Short's (1981) work won great appreciation because it approached fiction from the viewpoint of stylistics. Leech and Short (1981) revised their model of stylistic analysis of fiction in 2007 with the addition of a few more aspects of narratology. The newly added aspects include plot, character, viewpoint, writing presentation, and practical analysis of different works of literature. These elements, however, do not make part of the investigation for the present paper.

Previous Research

Coming to the research on stylistics and narratology, we found some studies on different aspects of narrative discourse. Concerning the aspect of focalization, Grethlein (2012) identified a heterodiegetic internal focalizer, named Xenophon, who serves both as a narrator and character in *Anabasis*, a Greek novella authored by Lucian. Using Genette's (1980) framework of focalization, Mabrouk (2012) analyzed the discourse of Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* and Alaa Alaswany's *Yacoubian Building*. Mabrouk (2012) observed the use of multilayered perspectives in both novels where the story is described from the viewpoint of different characters. Hence, the reader is confronted with multiple internal focalizers, which cause confusion. Mabrouk (2012) further examined the element of dual focalization in these novels because the character and narrator's voices are merged when describing events or representing mental states. Additionally, she observed that the authors of both of the narratives choose a covert style of narration so much so that the narrator becomes depersonalized, and the reader cannot find any of her opinion or judgment about characters or events.

Concerning the aspect of speech and thought presentation, we found a study by Sang (2010) who observed the use of interior monologue and free association in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and noted that these two techniques help the reader to approach the characters' consciousness. Later, Blivona (2015) analyzed the use of free indirect discourse in Hemmingway's short stories. Blivona (2015) found that this technique helps the author either to detach the narrator from the character or to pull them together in one voice. Another study in this domain was conducted by Isti'annah (2018) who used Leech and Short's (2007) revised model of style in fiction to identify speech and thought presentation in *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri. Isti'annah's (2018) findings revealed that Lahiri has used the methods of free direct speech, direct speech, indirect speech, and indirect thought in the narrative. Isti'annah found that these methods help the author to make his readers engaged in the story and reveal his characters' inner-self.

Having discussed the theoretical aspects of narrative discourse, it is apt to move on to a discussion on *The Alchemist*, the sample narrative for the present study. *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho (1995)² is an amalgamation of philosophy and wisdom. Using a flamboyant imagination, Coelho puts forth his story in a way that transmits a variety of themes rooted in the realms of philosophy, mysticism, theology, and psychology. The novel is rich in the use of a variety of techniques to narrate events, describe characters, present their speech and display their inner thoughts. With the help of these techniques, multiple themes and morals are so delicately interwoven that the unity of plot and the coherence of ideas are never put at stake. Rather, one feels a thorough diversity and a profound symmetry attached to the narrative.

As for *The Alchemist*, we found limited literature on the topic. Whatever work is available on the said narrative mainly deals with the philosophical, theological, and thematic aspects of the novel. For example, Nursecha (2014) examined *The Alchemist* purely as an individual's spiritual journey. Soni (2014) highlighted the riddles in the book leading to the realization of life. Iswara (2018) traced out the development of Santiago's personality and self-defense mechanism in the novel. In a similar vein, Baba and Raina (2018) analyzed *The Alchemist* as a journey to self-actualization. Suwasono, Thoyibi, and Candraningrum (2019) sensed an optimistic view of life in Coelho's style in the narrative, while Juneja (2020) sorted out the elements of the law of attraction in *The Alchemist*.

To the best of our knowledge, no study has been conducted on the narrative aspects of *The Alchemist*. Moreover, very little literature is found on the topic of examining multiple aspects of narrative style, all together

in a single piece of fiction. The research studies discussed above deal either with the aspects of focalization or with the representation of characters' speech and thought in different pieces of literary work. Keeping in view the aforementioned observations, in this paper, we aim to examine the narrative techniques used in *The Alchemist*. We also aim to analyze the techniques which enabled Coelho to represent his characters' speech, plans and thoughts. Considering the said objectives, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. Which narrative techniques does Coelho use in the narrative discourse of *The Alchemist*?
2. How does Coelho present his characters' speech and thoughts in the narrative discourse of *The Alchemist*?
3. How is the discourse situation realized in *The Alchemist*?

Methodology

In this paper, analytical and descriptive methods of investigation have been employed. The analytical methods used to investigate Coelho's use of narrative techniques in *The Alchemist* encompass the disciplines of stylistics and discourse. The target sample is an English translation of Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* by Clarke (1995). Before we explain the methodological framework used to examine the stylistic discourse in *The Alchemist*, it is apt to shed light on the contextual background of the major trends in stylistics.

In linguistic studies, different approaches to stylistic analysis have been used. One of the approaches, as Pope (2002) reports, is to trace out the linguistic features which make literature 'literary' and poems 'poetic' (p. 88). The main target of this approach, which Pope (2002, p. 88) calls 'Russian Formalism', is to point out the aspects of aestheticism streamlined through the use of linguistic tools at different levels of language, i.e., phonology, graphology, morphology, lexis, and syntax. In comparison, another approach to stylistic analysis, which, according to Pope (2002), follows 'Prague School of Functionalism', steps ahead to explore the connection of literature to life. It analyses linguistic, literary, and figurative devices to interpret various strands of meaning in a piece of text. This approach to literary stylistics works upon the level of semantics.

Following this, a more recent approach in stylistic studies, as Jeffries and McIntyre (2010) point out, is to analyze a piece of text as a communicative event. Considering text as discourse, the followers of this approach examine a literary piece as 'the center of a communicative event which may take place in a range of places and timescales, and which includes the producer and the recipient' (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010, p. 71). Such a method of stylistic analysis surpasses the microstructural concerns of basic linguistic features, i.e., phonology, graphology, morphology, syntax, and semantics; and operates upon the level of discourse. This scheme of literary stylistics examines perceptions, ideas, beliefs, experiences, and interactions of the participants involved in the textual event, such as the author, the reader, the narrator, the characters, and the society in which the text is placed. This approach further analyses the techniques of narration used in fiction, assuming narrative as a collection of events and dialogues presented in the form of textual discourse. For this purpose, a comprehensive and detailed model of stylistic analysis, which meets the macro-structural concerns beyond the basic requirements of purely linguistic features, is proposed by Leech and Short (2007). Apart from covering all basic levels of language, the peculiar feature of the said model is that it deals with 'the presentation by a narrator of others' words (written or spoken) or of their thoughts that are sometimes presented by narrators as though they were witnessed directly' (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010, p. 87). The simple definition of style, as derived from the model in question, is the way an author conveys his message to the reader. This implies that Leech and Short's (2007) model considers style as a discourse between the author and the reader.

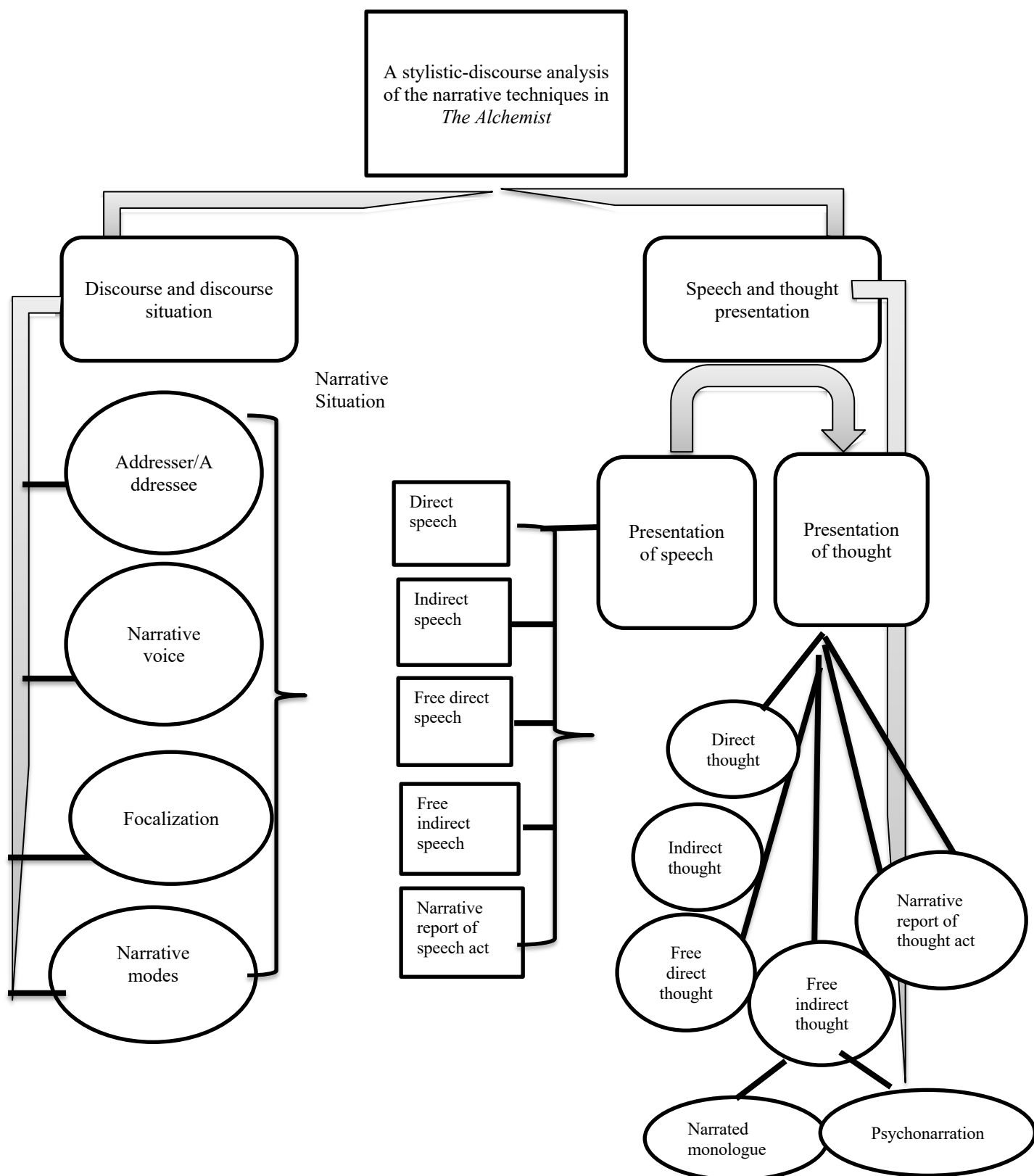


Figure 1: Framework for stylistic discourse analysis (partially based upon Leech & Short, 2007)

Henceforth, including discourse aspects in the stylistic analysis of fiction and approaching the thematic concerns of the author through characters' speech and thought presentation, Leech and Short's (2007) model seems appropriate to carry out a stylistic discourse analysis of *The Alchemist*. The said model encompasses numerous angles of analyzing style, such as choice of linguistic categories, the association between style

and content (monism, dualism, and pluralism), deviation, foregrounding, fictional sequencing, rhythm in prose, realism in discourse, sentence structure, segmentation, iconicity, etc. However, to meet the objectives of the present paper, we (the researchers) have chosen only two aspects to analyze *The Alchemist*. These two aspects are:

- i. Discourse and discourse situation
- ii. Speech and thought presentation

The rationale behind choosing the above two strands is to focus exclusively on the narrative techniques used and the distinctive choices made to present characters' speech and thoughts. The adopted framework for analysis is presented in Figure 1 above.

Before explaining the two strands of Leech and Short's (2007) model of stylistic discourse analysis in fiction, it is important to share that a few elements in these strands are originally embedded in the earlier theories of narrative discourse, such as those of Cohn (1978) and Genette (1980), which have already been discussed above. Hence, we explain the selected strands of Leech and Short's (2007) model with all-inclusive definitions of the terms so that readers may have a better conceptual understanding of the terms relevant to our analysis. Leech and Short (2007) recommend the following factors to examine the discourse of a narrative piece:

Discourse and Discourse Situation

According to Leech and Short (2007), discourse situation in literature refers to how a message is conveyed from one entity to another. The sender of the message is termed as *the addresser*, whereas the receiver is called *the addressee*. Different transitional roles are assigned to both the addresser and the addressee in varying situations. The role of the addresser may be partaken by the author, the implied author, the narrator, and the character; while the roles assumed by the addressee may include the reader, the implied reader, the interlocutor, and the character. A pictorial description of these different transitional roles is given in Figure 2 below.

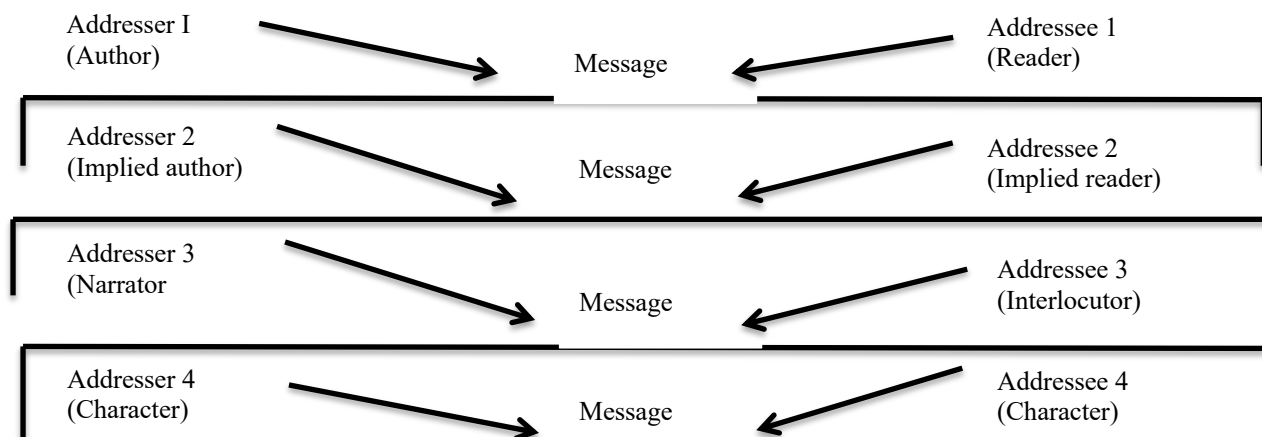


Figure 2: Levels of narrative discourse (adopted from Leech and Short, 1981, p. 269)

In Leech and Short's (2007) model of Style in Fiction, the term 'author' refers to the writer of fiction with his self and identity in the real world. The 'readers' are also independent selves with their separate identities in the real world. However, Leech and Short state that 'although the author of a novel is in the dark about his readers from many points of view, he can, of course, assume that he shares with his readers a common fund of knowledge and experience' (Leech & Short, 2007, p. 207). These assumed entities of addresser and addressee who share knowledge and experience of the real world are called *implied authors* and *implied readers* respectively. Still, another distinction is important to consider in narrative discourse, i.e., between the author and the narrator. Sometimes, as Leech and Short (2007) report, 'the addresser may well be talking to someone distinct from the reader' (p. 210). The addresser in this case is termed as narrator, while the addressee is given the title of the interlocutor. This usually stands true for the first-person narration. In addition, Leech and Short (2007, p. 215) point out that 'embedded within the talk between the narrator and his interlocutor are the conversations which the characters have with one another and which that narrator reports'. The way who is conveying or producing the message, to whom and in what ways, is analyzed under the terms *narrative voice* and *focalization* in discourse situation. These terms are explained below.

Narrative Voice

Narrative voice refers to the person who speaks or tells the story. It can be viewed from two dimensions. The first dimension is *homodiegetic* or *heterodiegetic* voice. A homodiegetic narrator is the one who also plays the role of a character in the story, whereas a heterodiegetic narrator is the one who is not a character in the story (Genette, 1980). The second dimension is to see *overt* or *covert* voice. An overt narrator is the one whose opinions and perceptions are revealed in the story. There are two degrees of overtness of a narrator's voice: joint or detached. In the former, the narrator's voice echoes the voice, feelings, or perceptions of the character(s) concerned; while in the latter, the narrator's voice is completely isolated from that of the character. On the other hand, a covert narrator is the one who hides his voice, and does not disclose what he thinks, feels, and believes about the people, things, and situations in the story.

Focalization

Focalization refers to 'who sees the story?' (Jahn, 1996, p. 329). Usually, there are two types of focalizers. If the narrative is told from the perspective of a person who is external to the story, it is called external focalizer; or narrator focalizer. In contrast, if the story is told from the perspective of a character in the story, it is called an internal focalizer or character-focalizer (Rimmon-Kennan, 1983, p. 74). Further, focalization can be analyzed in terms of two aspects:

- i. Narrative perspective or point of view
- ii. Narrative distance

Point of view has generally been defined as the representation of thoughts from a particular perspective. Ehrlich (1990, p. 17) defines a point of view as something like 'discourse context'. There are two commonly known points of view:

- i. Third-person omniscient point of view in which the narrator is well informed of all the events and characters of the story, but he is not a part of the story.
- ii. First-person limited point of view in which the narrator is himself a character in the story.

The second aspect of focalization, i.e., narrative distance refers to the distance between the narrator and the character(s). A narrator can either be fully or partially close to the character or he may be completely detached from the character.

Speech and Thought Presentation

The most important work of a writer or narrator is to present the characters' speech and thoughts so that the events not only become comprehensible for the readers but also make an appealing construction of the plot.

Presentation of Speech

What characters speak to one another is usually described in direct or indirect speech. However, there are other intricate ways of presenting characters' speech in fiction, including free direct speech and free indirect speech (Leech & Short, 2007).

Direct and Indirect Speech

Leech and Short (2007) differentiate between the two traditional modes of narration: direct speech and indirect speech. In direct speech, the narrator states someone's words as they are, whereas in indirect speech one expresses other's ideas or statements in one's own words (p. 255). There are two features of direct speech: the reporting clause and the quotation marks. In indirect speech, both these features are eliminated. Leech and Short (2007) quote the following examples of direct and indirect speech:

He said, 'I'll come back here to see you again tomorrow.' (direct speech) (p. 255)

He said that he would return there to see her the following day. (indirect speech) (p. 256)

Free Direct Speech

This is a kind of discourse that eliminates either one or both of the features of a direct speech, i.e., quotation marks and reporting clauses. As a result, we find a freer form of discourse 'where the characters apparently speak to us more immediately without the narrator as an intermediary' (Leech & Short, 2007, p. 258).

He said I'll come back here to see you again tomorrow.

'I'll come back here to see you again tomorrow.'

I'll come back here to see you again tomorrow. (Leech & Short, 2007, p. 258)

Free Indirect Speech

In free indirect speech, either the reporting clause of indirect speech is eliminated, or the pronoun and tense selection coincide with the indirect speech.

He would return there to see her again the following day.

He would return there to see her again tomorrow. (Leech & Short, 2007, p. 261)

Narrative Report of Speech Acts

This is a more indirect way of reporting an indirect speech. In this speech, the reporting clause of the indirect speech is removed. The narrator does not come in to report happenings, rather the words themselves take the responsibility of telling about what a certain character did through his words. According to Leech and Short (2007), the narrative reports of speech acts version of the above-given sentences maybe like this:

He promised his return.

He committed himself to another meeting. (p. 260)

Presentation of Thought

In addition to speech presentation, there are some other, more intricate, ways of narration that aim exclusively to represent the characters' inner thoughts and consciousness. These forms of presentation make the characters' 'inner speech' or 'silent speech' displayed to the readers (Bonheim, 1982, p. 53). Although the character seems to keep his thoughts secret and continues to behave as routine, his thoughts, plans and consciousness are made exposed to the reader. Leech and Short (2007) identify the same five categories of thought presentation as are found in speech presentation. The five categories of thought presentation are explained below.

Direct Thought

In direct thought, characters' thoughts are quoted within inverted commas. According to Leech and Short's (2007) model, reporting clause and speech marks are the features of this discourse.

He wondered, 'Does she still love me?' (p. 270)

Free Direct Thought

When any or both of the essential features of direct thought (i.e., speech marks and reporting clause) are eliminated, the resulting expression is called free direct thought (Leech & Short, 2007). In fictional discourse, the alternate term used by Cohn (1978) for free direct thought is 'interior monologue' or 'quoted monologue'. The thoughts are presented in the first-person limited point of view. The conventions of formal writing, especially at the level of punctuation and syntax, are violated. In such kind of narration, one predominantly hears the voice of the character.

Does she still love me? (Leech & Short, 2007, p. 270)

Indirect Thought

In indirect thought, the characters' thoughts are reported through a formal reporting clause, inverted commas are removed, and changes are made to tense and pronoun as per the formal conventions of indirect discourse (Leech & Short, 2007).

He wondered if she still loved him. (Leech & Short, 2007, p.271)

Free Indirect Thought

In free indirect thought, indirect speech appears in a direct manner (Gingerich, 2012). The narrator begins by setting the scene, representing the character's consciousness in a third-person omniscient point of view. However, the thoughts are presented as they occur in the character's mind. As the thoughts are directly reported in the third-person viewpoint, the narrator's and the character's voices are merged, and we hear a dual voice (Leech & Short, 2007).

Did she still love him? (Leech & Short, 2007, p.272)

The parallel concepts found for free indirect thought in Cohn's (1978) theory of representation of consciousness are *psychonarration* and *narrated monologue*. Cohn (1978) differentiates between these two types of free indirect thought.

a. Psychonarration

The first form of free indirect thought is *psychonarration*, as Cohn (1978) names it. In this type of thought presentation, the character's consciousness is represented from the narrator's perspective. (Cohn, 1978). Hence, we predominantly hear the narrator's voice. It follows the conventional rules of punctuation and uses formal syntax. Cohn (1978, p. 29) quotes the following extract from 'A portrait of the artist as a young man' depicting James Joyce's technique of psychonarration:

He shook the sound out of his ears by an angry toss of his head and hurried on, stumbling through the mouldering offal, his heart already bitten by an ache of loathing and bitterness.

b. Narrated Monologue or Reported Monologue

The second type of free indirect thought is called 'narrated monologue' or 'reported monologue', the term used by Cohn (1978). In this form of narration, the narrator distances himself from the character when representing his consciousness. Less formal syntax and non-conventional punctuation are used to give an impression of the originality of the character's mind. Because of the first-person narration, the character's voice tends to be more prominent. A clear example, quoted by Cohn (1978, p. 27) in this vein, is an extract from *Death in Venice* by Thomas Mann.

Too late, he thought at this moment. Too late! But was it too late?...Who can decipher the nature and pattern of artistic creativity? Who can comprehend the fusion of disciplined and dissolute instincts wherein it is so deeply rooted?

Narrative Report of Thought Acts

In this type of discourse, the narrator frees himself of reporting something, rather certain words in the sentence express what the character acted or decided to act through his thoughts. Leech and Short (2007) give the following example for a narrative report of thought acts.

He wondered about her love for him. (p. 271)

Narrative modes

Apart from characters' speech and thought presentation, there can be different modes of presenting the events in fictional prose. It is through these modes of narration that the story proceeds. The most common story progression device is to summarize the events through the narrator's words. This technique is called *summarizing*. The other may be to tell or describe the events closely in the narrator's words, which we call *telling*.

Findings

Discourse and Discourse Situation

Using Leech and Short's (2007) model of stylistic analysis of fiction, the discourse situation of *The Alchemist* is analyzed as below:

Addresser and Addressee

The discourse situation in *The Alchemist* is based on all four levels of addresser and addressee. The novel serves as a message between the author (Paulo Coelho) and his readers worldwide who are quite unknown to him. The reading of the novel indicates that the author and the readers share much of the background knowledge and experience upon which the happenings in the story are based. Hence, the entities of the implied author and implied reader are playing their part in the contextual discourse of *The Alchemist*. Next, as the story is told in third-person narration, the assumed entity who is receiving the narrator's message is called the interlocutor of the story. Apart from this, we also find dialogues between the characters of the narrative.

Narrative Voice

The following aspects of the narrative are observed in *The Alchemist*.

Heterodiegetic or Homodiegetic Narrator?

In *The Alchemist*, the story is told by a heterodiegetic narrator who is external to the story. The overall impression of the narrative presence³ in *The Alchemist* is that of a well-informed godlike person looking at all of the events and characters of the narrative and telling them in sequence as they occur. To illustrate this point, some extracts from the novel are given below.

The boy's name was Santiago. Dusk was falling as the boy arrived with his herd at an abandoned church. The roof had fallen a long ago, and an enormous Sycamore had grown on the spot where the sacristy had once stood (Coelho, 1995, p. 3).

The above lines indicate that the narrator is well aware of the scenes, locations, settings of the events, and the physical appearance of the characters.

He told himself that he would have to start reading thicker books: they lasted longer; and made more comfortable pillows (p. 3).

The above example explains the degree to which the narrator is aware of the character's inner thoughts and actions, hence proving him to be a heterodiegetic narrator.

The Overt or Covert Narrator?

The narrator in *The Alchemist* is a neutrally overt persona whose opinions and perceptions about facts, events, and characters are revealed either individually or in combination with those of the characters. A few instances are given in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Analysis of overt/covert narration

| | Text | Narrator | The Joint Character |
|---|--|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | <i>The shepherd told her [Fatima] of the Andalusian countryside and related the news from the other towns where he had stopped. It was a pleasant change from talking to his sheep (p. 5).</i> | overt, joint | The boy |
| 2 | <i>The boy had met the alchemist (p. 117).</i> | overt, detached | The boy |

In the second sentence of excerpt 1 above, the voice of the narrator is prominently heard as a comment on the boy's experience of talking to the girl, Fatima in comparison to his talking to the sheep. However, at the same time, the expression also reflects the boy's own feeling of relief and pleasure while telling stories of towns and countryside to the girl. Therefore, it may be referred to as a joint overt voice. In excerpt 2 above, we find a detached overt voice of the narrator talking to the interlocutor, as if at the boy's back. For, in the particular event of the boy's meeting with the alchemist, it is the narrator who knows that the person whom the boy had just met is the alchemist, while the boy himself is completely ignorant of the identity of the alchemist. The novel is rich in both of these kinds of overt voices. However, we do not find any instances of covert narration.

Focalization

As for the story of *The Alchemist*, it employs variable focalization, shifting from external to internal or internal to external points of perception. Surprisingly, sometimes, both types of focalization are drawn together through multiple points of view so that it seems that whatever is being said is well understood and conveyed by the character(s) as well as the narrator. The presence of both internal and external focalizers can be noticed in the passage given in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Presence of internal and external focalizers

| Text | Focalizer |
|---|---|
| <p><i>I never thought I'd end up in a place like this, he thought, as he leafed through the pages of a chemical journal. Ten years at the university, and here I am in a corral (p. 68). (Internal)</i></p> <p><i>But he had to move on. He believed in omens. [...] First, he had studied Esperanto, then the world's religions, and now it was alchemy. [...] He had tried in vain to establish a relationship with an alchemist. But the alchemists were strange people, who thought only about themselves and almost always refused to help him (p. 68). (External)</i></p> | <p>Multiple points of view</p> <p>Internal focalizer (the Englishman)</p> <p>+</p> <p>External focalizer (narrator)</p> |

The first paragraph in the above passage is an example of an internal focalizer because here the description of the Englishman's life is extended from the viewpoint of the Englishman himself who is a character in the story. It involves first-person narration. On the other hand, the second paragraph shows external focalization because here the story of the boy's intellectual journey is told exclusively from the narrator's perspective, and it involves third-person narration.

Narrative Perspective/Point of View

The Alchemist has been written in the third-person omniscient point of view. Taking his responsibility as an omniscient narrator, the fabricated being who tells the story in *The Alchemist* appears to be very close to the characters' thoughts. However, there is a relative decrease and increase of closeness and distance depending on who is the subject of focalization in a particular situation. For example, at one point in the novel, the narrator seems detached from the boy, referring to him through a common noun 'a young Arab'. See the excerpt given below.

A young Arab, also loaded down with baggage, entered, and greeted the Englishman [...] other important things to do (p. 70).

Here, the boy has been referred to as 'a young Arab' who actually has been the central figure in the whole story before with a distinguished identity and also has been referred to with his name, Santiago. This reveals the narrator's shift in perspective or point of view. However, in the very next chapter, the narrative distance increases in the case of the Englishman, while it decreases in the case of the boy.

The stranger didn't answer; instead, he put his hand in his pocket and took out two stones that were the same as the boy's (p. 72).

Here, the Englishman is shown from a distant point of view as though the narrator, the readers, and the characters do not know him at all. That is why he is referred to as 'the stranger'. While the words 'the same as the boy's' indicate that the boy is considered as a point of reference in the description of the event. This demonstrates that the narrator's voice seems to drift from one consciousness to another in the book.

Speech and thought presentation

Presentation of speech

We find frequent use of direct and indirect speech in *The Alchemist*.

Direct Speech

"I didn't know shepherds knew how to read," said a girl's voice behind him (p. 5).

"Maybe we'd better ask someone," the boy suggested (p. 95).

The above examples fulfill the two major elements of direct speech, i.e., the presence of reporting clause and speech marks.

Indirect Speech

And the woman told the boy to leave, saying she had already wasted too much time with him (p. 15).

But finally, the merchant appeared and asked the boy to shear four sheep. He paid for the wool and asked the shepherd to come back the following year (p. 6).

The above examples fulfill the criteria of indirect speech through the existence of the following features: reporting clause, change in tense, and pronoun. The second example includes an additional feature of indirect speech by using the indirect version of the phrase 'coming year', i.e., 'the following year'.

Free Direct Speech

Besides the use of direct and indirect speech, *The Alchemist* also abounds in free direct speech. The instances are given below:

"What about one-tenth of my treasure?" (p. 25)

"That's what I'm going to do. I'm going to start now." (p. 100).

The above examples present direct words of the characters with the formal use of quotation marks; however, the absence of a reporting clause makes the utterances a free form of direct speech.

Free Indirect Speech

Despite much deliberation, we could not find any instance of free indirect speech in *The Alchemist*. Though the novel is replete with examples of indirect discourse, yet all this indirectness of expression occurs in the realm of

characters' thoughts, not speech. The reason behind this might be that the author has to present a deeply philosophical approach towards the journey of life, which demands more consideration of thought than speech.

Narrative Report of Speech Acts

The Alchemist contains many instances of reported speech acts. The instances are presented below:

*The shepherd **swore** that he would (p. 14).*

*The boy **reminded** the old man that he had said something about hidden treasure (p. 25).*

*The boy **thanked** him, ate it, and went on his way (p. 45).*

In the above examples, all words in bold suggest a reported speech act.

Presentation of Thought

The novel, *The Alchemist* revolves majorly around the thoughts of either one character or the other. We also find the narrator's thoughtful comments on characters, events, and happenings in the story. Paulo Coelho has used the following techniques to represent his characters' consciousness in *The Alchemist*.

Direct Thought

As compared to other techniques of thought presentation, only a few instances of direct thought are found in *The Alchemist*. The only examples of direct thought which the authors of the present paper could locate in the novel are given below:

"A practice of infidels," he thought to himself (p. 35).

"How strange Africa is!" thought the boy (p. 35).

The above sentences are marked with the use of both features of direct thought, i.e., quotation marks and reporting clause.

Indirect Thought

A large number of instances of indirect thought can be traced out in the novel, *The Alchemist*. A few examples are given below:

*In those days it had been wonderful to be selling crystal, and **he had thought** how he would become rich (p. 47).*

[...] and the boy sensed that he was going to have to make a decision (p. 48).

The boy estimated that, if he worked for six more months, he could return to Spain and buy sixty sheep, and yet another sixty (p. 57).

The above sentences show the reported thoughts of the boy at different points in time in the story. The key features of indirect thought in these sentences are: the reporting clause (words in bold), the past tense, and third-person pronoun ('he' for the boy).

Free Direct Thought (Interior Monologue)

We find a great number of instances of free direct discourse in *The Alchemist*. A few examples are given below:

1. *Here I am, between my flock and my treasure, the boy thought (p. 28). (no speech marks)*
2. *I've learned things from the sheep, and I've learned things from crystal, he thought. I can learn something from the desert, too. It seems old and wise (p. 76). (no speech marks)*
3. *Who knows... maybe it's better to be like the crystal merchant: never go to Mecca, and just go through life wanting to do so, he thought, again trying to convince himself (p. 66). (no speech marks)*
4. *He really was a king! He must be disguised to avoid encounters with thieves (p. 31). (no speech marks, no reporting clause)*

The first three examples above show that free direct thought of the boy has been produced by eliminating the speech marks from the first-person direct thought presentation, though the reporting clause is present (i.e., *the boy thought*, and *he thought*). Moreover, all of these three expressions follow the direct form of a tense, i.e., present tense. However, the fourth example is marked by the absence of both the speech marks and the reporting clause, conveying the boy's thoughts directly in a freer form of direct thought than that of the previous three examples.

Free Indirect Thought (Narrated Monologue)

The Alchemist is also replete in the use of free indirect discourse in which we hear a dual voice, as in such expressions, the voice of the character is merged with that of the narrator. The examples given in Table 3 below present the indirect thoughts of the boy without using speech marks and the reporting clause. They show non-conventional punctuation and speculative vocabulary. In addition, in these examples, we hear a dual voice, that of the narrator and of the boy. However, the boy's voice seems to be more prominent as his thoughts are exposed by the narrator.

Table 3: Instances of free indirect thought: first type (narrated monologue)

| Text | Punctuation | Voice |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>But he wanted to know what the "mysterious force" was; the merchant's daughter would be impressed when he told her about that! (p. 22).</i> | Non-conventional punctuation | Dual voice (narrator + the boy) |
| <i>Maybe the world had other hidden treasures, but he had a dream, and he had met with a king. That doesn't happen to just anyone! (p. 67)</i> | Non-conventional punctuation | Dual voice (the boy + the narrator) |

Psychonarration

Coelho is also observed to employ the technique of psychonarration to represent his characters' consciousness in *The Alchemist* through free indirect thought presentation. The instances are given in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Instances of free indirect thought: second type (psychonarration)

| Text | Punctuation and syntax | voice | Thoughts |
|---|------------------------|----------|----------|
| <i>The boy was shocked. The old man knew how to read and had already read the book. And if the book was irritating, as the old man had said, the boy still had time to change it for another (p. 18).</i> | Formal | Narrator | The boy |
| <i>It was as if the world had fallen silent because the boy's soul had. He sat there, staring blankly through the door of the café, wishing that he had died, and that everything would end forever at that moment (p. 49).</i> | Formal | Narrator | The boy |
| <i>But he had to move on. He believed in omens (p. 68).</i> | Formal | Narrator | The boy |

The above examples display the use of psychonarration. All these examples present the boy's thoughts indirectly without using the reporting clause and speech mark. The third-person narration has been used to convey the boy's consciousness. Formal punctuation and syntax have been used. They all give an impression of a dual voice; however, the narrator's voice seems to be more prominent while presenting the boy's thoughts.

Narrative Report of Thought Acts

We find many instances of narrative reports of thought acts in *The Alchemist*. A few examples are given below:

*The boy **promised himself** that, when he returned from Egypt, he would buy that sword (p. 39).*

*Relaxed and unhurried, he **resolved** that he would walk through the narrow streets of Tangier (p. 46).*

*He **decided** to return to his friend's stable by the longest route possible (p. 27).*

In the above examples, the words in bold show a reported thought act performed by the boy.

Narrative Modes

Dialogues

The story of *The Alchemist* makes a realistic feel to the reader because of the conversational dialogues between the characters. The dialogues between the boy and the gypsy woman, the boy and the old king, the boy and the crystal merchant, the boy and the Englishman, the boy, and the camel driver, and the boy and the alchemist all play a significant role in propounding the philosophy of self-identity. An instance of dialogue is given below:

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Fatima", the girl said, averting her eyes.

"That's what some women in my country are called."

"It's the name of the Prophet's daughter," Fatma said (p. 98).

Telling/Summarizing

The narrator in *The Alchemist* tells and summarizes the story instead of just showing it. Some examples are given in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Examples of telling and summarizing modes of narration

| Sr. No. | Text | Narrative mode |
|---------|---|----------------------|
| 1 | <i>He waited patiently for the merchant to awaken and open the shop. Then the two went off to have some more tea (p. 63).</i> | Telling |
| 2 | <i>Eventually, the merchant had to hire two more employees. He began to import enormous quantities of tea, along with his crystal, and his shop was sought out by men and women with a thirst for things new. And, in that way, the months passed (p. 62).</i> | Summarizing |
| 3 | <i>It had been eleven months and nine days since he had first set foot on the African continent. He dressed in his Arabian clothing of white linen, bought especially for this day. He put his headcloth in place and secured it with a ring made of camel skin. Wearing his new sandals, he descended the stairs silently (p. 62).</i> | Summarizing+ telling |

In excerpt 1 in Table 5 above, the narrator describes the mental state of the boy as well as the event he is engaged in. Excerpt 2 shows that the narrator has summarized the events which encompass a long period of time to proceed the story further for the readers. Excerpt 3 amalgamates the techniques of telling and summarizing.

Non-conventional Modes of Narration

Besides using any of the above techniques of narration, Coelho makes his narrative style exceptional by making abrupt shifts either in selecting a point of view or in adopting a narrative mode. The examples of both types of shifts are given in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Instances of abrupt shifts in narrative techniques

| | |
|---|--|
| <p><i>He had exchanged six sheep for two precious stones that had been taken from a gold breastplate. He could sell the stones and buy a return ticket. But this time I'll be smarter, the boy thought, removing them from the pouch so he could put them in his pocket (p. 42).</i></p> | <p>An abrupt shift in point of view (From third to first person)</p> |
| <p><i>Now he understood why the owner of the bar had been so upset: he was trying to tell him not to trust that man. "I'm like everyone else—I see the world in terms of what I would like to see happen, not what actually does." (p. 42)</i></p> | <p>Abrupt Shift in narrative mode (Indirect to direct speech)</p> |

The purpose behind making these shifts from direct to indirect (and vice versa) or from third to first person point of view (and vice versa) might be to develop a connection between internal and external or between the character's self and the universe, and this is how to suggest a way to explore one's identity by perceiving the outside world.

Discussion

The findings of the analysis of narrative techniques in *The Alchemist* suggest that Coelho has made a rich selection of stylistic choices to bring out aesthetic function from his literary work. The findings of this paper support that before digging deep beneath the lines for the philosophical meanings in *The Alchemist* (as examined by Baba & Raina, 2018; Iswara, 2018; Juneja, 2020; Nursecha, 2014; Soni, 2014; and Suwasono et al., 2019) the readers are engaged by Coelho's narrative style which is replete with multiple, innovative techniques. The literature shows that the use of different types of narrative techniques in fiction has not been so uncommon (Blinova, 2015; Grethlein, 2012; Isti'anah, 2018; Mabrouk, 2012; Song, 2010); however, it seems that such a great variety, high frequency, abrupt shifts and the novel combinations of these techniques are exclusive to Coelho alone.

Moreover, a perusal of all of Coelho's narrative techniques in *The Alchemist* demonstrates his distinctive choices to convey different meanings and messages at different places in the novel. The excerpts from the novel, quoted in the findings section, seem to be small pieces of a whole philosophy propounded through the story of Santiago. Having reviewed the overall findings, we conclude our paper by answering our research questions as below:

1. Which narrative techniques does Coelho use in the narrative discourse of *The Alchemist*?

Coelho has used a variety of techniques to create the narrative discourse of *The Alchemist*. Firstly, for describing events, Coelho has used an external, heterodiegetic narrator. Secondly, at all places in the situational discourse of the novel, we hear an overt voice of the narrator showing his personalized opinions, perceptions, and judgments about the characters, situations, and events of the story. Thirdly, the story is mainly told from a third-person omniscient point of view. However, Coelho makes frequent shifts from the third-person viewpoint to the first-person viewpoint where he wants to convey characters' perceptions, feelings, experiences, and thoughts directly through their own words. Fourthly, the discourse situation of the novel is established through a variable focalization, moving from external to internal and vice versa, which are sometimes combined to produce a joint viewpoint, combining the narrator's and the characters' perceptions, opinions, judgements, and thoughts together in a single voice. Finally, the narrator's distance from different characters in the story also varies from situation to situation. Moreover, Coelho uses three different modes of narration to move his story further: (i) characters' dialogues, (ii) narrator's telling of events, and (iii) narrator's summarizing of events.

Looking at the findings of discourse and discourse situation in *The Alchemist*, we observe that the choice of a heterodiegetic, external, omniscient, all-knowing narrator helps Coelho to disclose all episodes of Santiago's journey to self-recognition smoothly (as examined by Baba & Raina, 2018 and Soni, 2014). Coelho's overt narrator helps to expose the hidden spiritual realities (as examined by Nursecha, 2014). However, a sense of suspense, human ignorance, and insignificance as compared to the universal phenomena is also maintained through his choice of joint voices which convey meager presuppositions, raw judgments, rough plans, bodily desires, self-drawn decisions, and weird determinations by a corporal being (see Iswara, 2018). We note that as the novel proceeds, the joint voices fade away gradually until the end of the novel, giving way to more firm, stronger, overt statements by the narrator about the theory of life, self, universe, fortune, decisions, optimism, and existence (see Suwasono et al., 2019). Coelho's frequent switches from first to a third-person viewpoint and vice versa indicate a character's identity from two different perspectives: (i) how he stands as an individual alone and (ii) how he is analyzed in connection with the people and the universe around.

The above-given findings may be compared to those of earlier studies in a similar domain. Our findings of the presence of a heterodiegetic narrator in *The Alchemist* are similar to those of Grethlein's (2012) analysis of the existence of a heterodiegetic narrator in *Anabasis* by Lucian. However, Lucian's narrator, as Grethlein (2012)

reports, is an internal character in the story, while the narrator in *The Alchemist* is an external person looking from out of the story. Next, with a view to focalization, our findings of Coelho's *The Alchemist* may be compared to Mabrouk's (2012) examination of Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* and AlaaAlaswany's *Yacoubian Building*. In her examination of both of these novels, Mabrouk (2012) found the use of multiple internal focalizers. She observed that the use of the viewpoint of different characters in both novels causes confusion for the readers. On the other hand, our analysis of *The Alchemist* reveals that though like Malcolm Lowry and AlaaAlaswany, Coelho uses variable and multiple focalization; his focalization makes transitions between external and internal personae, i.e., the narrator and the characters respectively. Moreover, in the case of internal focalization, the story of *The Alchemist* is told from the viewpoint of multiple characters, such as the boy, the merchant, the alchemist, the camel driver, the Englishman, etc. However, unlike the aforementioned two novelists, Coelho employs his narrative techniques in a way that does not cause any confusion in the story. This might owe to Coelho's use of frequent transitions in his characters' speech and thought presentation. Additionally, unlike *The Alchemist*, where Coelho uses overt narration, Mabrouk's (2012) examination of *Under the Volcano* and *Yacoubian Building* reveals that the authors of these novels have employed a covert style of narration where the narrator is depersonalized and his opinions, feelings, and judgments are completely kept hidden.

2. How does Coelho present his characters' speech and thoughts in the narrative discourse of *The Alchemist*?

Coelho employs ten types of speech and thought presentation techniques in *The Alchemist*. To present his characters' speech, Coelho has used four techniques of narration: direct speech, indirect speech, free direct speech, and narrative report of speech acts. To represent his characters' consciousness, Coelho has used six techniques: direct thought, indirect thought, free direct thought, two forms of free indirect thought, i.e., psychonarration and narrated monologue, and narrative report of thought acts. These techniques of speech and thought presentation are found to occur in continuous transitions from one technique to the other in the situational discourse of the novel.

As for the analysis of speech and thought presentation, our finding of the presence of free direct thought or interior monologue in *The Alchemist* is similar to Sang's (2010) observation of interior monologue in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. Additionally, our findings of *The Alchemist*, which do not show any instances of free indirect speech, stand in contrast to Blivona's (2015) study which shows frequent use of free indirect discourse in Hemmingway's short stories. Moreover, our findings may also be compared to those of Isti'anah's (2018) study on the use of speech and thought presentation in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*. Isti'anah's (2018) study exposed the use of four kinds of speech and thought presentation in the said novel, i.e., free direct speech, direct speech, indirect speech, and indirect thought. However, the findings of this paper reveal the use of ten different techniques of speech and thought presentation, i.e., direct speech, indirect speech, free direct speech, narrative report of speech acts, direct thought, indirect thought, free direct thought, free indirect thought, including psychonarration and narrated monologue and narrative report of thought acts.

3. How is the discourse situation realized in *The Alchemist*?

The discourse situation in *The Alchemist* has been realized through frequent and abrupt shifts in focalization, narrative voice, point of view, narrative distance, narrative modes, and techniques of speech and thought presentation. These transitions play a key role in his creation of an intricate situational discourse of the narrative.

Conclusion

In sum, Coelho is an author with a particular narrative style. Coelho's work, *The Alchemist*, is unique in the way that he has employed multiple narrative techniques with a frequent and abrupt transitional style. Though the language used in *The Alchemist* is simple, and the utterances, statements, descriptions, and dialogues in the story contain short sentences; yet the reader gets an impression of having encountered an intricate situational discourse. This fascinates the reader to read the story till the end and prepares them to derive a profound philosophy from the simple story of a shepherd, the protagonist.

Limitations and Study Forward

Our paper has examined Coelho's peculiar narrative style in only one of his novels, *The Alchemist*. Further study can be conducted to analyse if Coelho uses multiple narrative techniques and speech and thought presentation styles in his other novels too. Furthermore, future research is also recommended to carry out an in-depth analysis of how Coelho's narrative techniques and his speech and thought presentation styles in *The Alchemist* are directly linked up to philosophical and mystical themes in the novel.

Acknowledgement

This research paper is an outcome of the authors' personal research interests. It received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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