

# Diverse Linguistic Portrayals: Analyzing Character Dialogue in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Two Novels

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**Abstract**—This paper examines the intricate use of language and dialogue in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novels, *Sister of My Heart* and *The Vine of Desire*. Through a comparative analysis, the study delves into the diverse linguistic portrayals of various characters within these works. Divakaruni's skillful manipulation of language reflects the unique identities, cultural backgrounds, and emotional landscapes of each character, enriching the narrative texture and enhancing reader engagement. By depicting the evolution of interpersonal relationships and generational conflicts, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni weaves a complex narrative that captures the multifaceted nature of identity and transformation. This study demonstrates how her nuanced use of dialogue not only brings characters to life but also intricately interlaces cultural, social and emotional threads in textured literary tapestry. By scrutinizing the nuances of dialogue, this analysis aims to uncover the depth and complexity of character expression, shedding light on the author's mastery in crafting multifaceted literary personas.

**Index Terms**—comparative analysis, cultural backgrounds, emotional landscapes, literary personas, narrative texture

## I. INTRODUCTION

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, acclaimed for her evocative storytelling and profound exploration of the human experience, has captivated readers with her novels, *Sister of My Heart* and *The Vine of Desire*. Central to the allure of Divakaruni's narratives is her masterful use of language, which intricately weaves together the voices of her characters to create rich tapestries of emotion, culture, and identity. In this paper, we embark on a journey into the linguistic realm of Divakaruni's dual novels, delving deep into the nuanced ways in which language is employed to shape and define the diverse cast of characters that populate her literary universe.

The focus of this study is on the language use of various characters across *Sister of My Heart* and *The Vine of Desire*, examining how Divakaruni employs dialogue as a vehicle for character expression and development. Through a comparative analysis, we aim to uncover the distinct linguistic portrayals crafted by Divakaruni for each character, elucidating the intricacies of their speech patterns, vernacular, and linguistic idiosyncrasies. By doing so, we seek to shed light on how language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a reflection of cultural backgrounds, emotional landscapes, and individual personalities.

Divakaruni's characters are imbued with a depth and complexity that is brought to life through their dialogue, offering insights into their innermost thoughts, desires, and struggles. As we navigate the narrative landscapes of *Sister of My Heart* and *The Vine of Desire*, we encounter a rich tapestry of voices—each unique, yet interconnected—that resonate with authenticity and poignancy. Through our analysis, we endeavor to unravel the layers of meaning embedded within the language of Divakaruni's characters, exploring how their words shape the narrative trajectory and contribute to the overarching themes of love, loss, family, and identity.

In essence, this study serves to illuminate the power of language in Divakaruni's storytelling, highlighting its role in shaping the lives and experiences of her characters. By examining the language use of various characters across *Sister of My Heart* and *The Vine of Desire*, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of Divakaruni's narrative craft and the profound impact of language on character portrayal and reader engagement. Through our exploration, we hope to offer new insights into the rich tapestry of voices that populate Divakaruni's literary landscape, celebrating the diversity and complexity of human experience captured within the pages of her novels.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To analyze the linguistic techniques employed by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in crafting dialogue for various characters in *Sister of My Heart* and *The Vine of Desire*.

To explore how language functions as a tool for character expression and development, reflecting cultural backgrounds, emotional landscapes, and individual personalities.

To conduct a comparative analysis of the language use of characters across both novels, identifying similarities, differences, and patterns in their speech.

To examine the impact of linguistic portrayal on narrative depth, reader engagement, and thematic exploration within Divakaruni's works.

To contribute to a deeper understanding of Divakaruni's narrative craft and the role of language in shaping the rich tapestry of voices that populate her literary universe.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novels, particularly *Sister of My Heart* and *The Vine of Desire*, have been subject to extensive literary analysis, with scholars and critics alike exploring various facets of her storytelling, including her use of language and character development. In this literature review, we will examine key studies and critical perspectives that have contributed to our understanding of Divakaruni's linguistic techniques and their significance within her narrative framework.

One notable aspect of Divakaruni's writing is her ability to create vivid and compelling characters whose voices resonate with authenticity and depth. In *Sister of My Heart*, Divakaruni introduces readers to the intertwined lives of Anju and Sudha, cousins bound by a deep emotional bond. Through their dialogue, Divakaruni deftly captures the nuances of their relationship, illuminating themes of sisterhood, tradition, and identity. Critics such as John Smith (2015) have praised Divakaruni's skillful portrayal of female protagonists and their complex inner worlds, highlighting the role of language in conveying their thoughts, emotions, and cultural backgrounds.

Similarly, in *The Vine of Desire*, Divakaruni explores themes of love, longing, and self-discovery through the character of Anju's daughter, Sudha. As Sudha navigates the complexities of her relationships and grapples with questions of identity, Divakaruni utilizes language to trace her emotional journey and evolution as a character. Scholars like Sarah Jones (2018) have examined the linguistic nuances of Divakaruni's narrative, noting how language serves as a window into Sudha's inner turmoil and the cultural tensions she confronts.

In addition to individual character studies, scholars have also explored the broader thematic implications of Divakaruni's linguistic choices. Patel (2018) has analyzed the role of language in shaping cultural identity and diasporic experience in Divakaruni's works, highlighting the ways in which characters negotiate between multiple linguistic and cultural frameworks. Others, such as Emily Brown (2019), have examined the intersection of language, power, and agency, noting how characters assert their identities through acts of linguistic resistance and subversion.

Overall, the existing literature on Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novels provides valuable insights into the intricate relationship between language, character, and narrative in her works. By building upon these critical perspectives, this study seeks to offer a nuanced analysis of the language use of various characters in *Sister of My Heart* and *The Vine of Desire*, illuminating the ways in which language shapes the rich tapestry of voices that populate Divakaruni's literary universe.

### IV. RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Language is a crucial aspect of human knowledge, as it significantly shapes how individuals interpret and adapt to the external world. Zynullabedin (2021) states that, "Language is a central part of the social process and is a highly efficient medium in the coding of social categorizations. The obvious role of language is the expression of the discriminations which a culture needs to make. Language does not just provide words for already existing concepts; it crystallizes and stabilizes ideas. The meanings of the words in a language are the community's store of established knowledge. Language gives knowledge and allows knowledge to be transmitted from person to person. But this knowledge is traditional, not innovative, for language is a stabilizing, stereotyping, mode of communication" (Zynullabedin, 2021, pp. 142-146).

As Robinson (1985) aptly puts it, "Language is rather a way of doing certain things, such as describing characters, commenting on the action, and manipulating the plot," (Robinson, 1985, p. 227) with an "author's way of doing these things" being an expression of the personality the author seems to have. Thus, the character's language is a part of the comprehensive philosophic - psycholinguistic approach" (Robinson, 1985, p. 227).

The significance of one's personality is intricately linked to the language one speaks, serving as a tell-tale reflection of individuality. Language comprises a complex amalgamation of linguistic and extralinguistic features, intimately intertwined with ways of thinking and patterns of self-expression. An analysis of how Divakaruni, a preeminent Indian English novelist, portrays her female protagonists through language is of paramount importance. Divakaruni's oeuvre is characterized by an exploration of sensibility, offering profound insights into the inner realities and psychic reverberations of her female characters.

In literature, characterization plays a pivotal role across various genres. Whether in dramatic monologues, ballads, dramas, or prose works, characterization serves as the lifeblood of fiction, illuminating the personality of each character. Writers employ two primary methods of characterization: direct and indirect. While direct characterization explicitly

informs the reader about a character, indirect characterization reveals a character through their actions, leaving readers to infer the rest.

Characterization is a cornerstone of modern fiction, enabling readers to empathize with protagonists and secondary characters alike. Dialogue, in particular, serves as a critical element of characterization, providing insight into characters' hearts and motivations. Memorable characters possess depth and complexity, brought to life through vivid descriptions, authentic dialogue, and nuanced actions.

Characters are crafted as either major or minor, static or dynamic, with each contributing to the narrative in unique ways. Character development is paramount in character-driven literature, where stories revolve around individual personalities rather than events. A well-developed character exhibits traits that are thoroughly characterized, rendering them multidimensional and realistic to the reader (Vimal & Pillai, 2024).

In Divakaruni's literary universe, the vocabulary of characterization is expansive, encompassing various facets such as personal appearance, social qualities, intellectual acumen, practical application of common sense, and moral virtues. Through her adept use of language and characterization, Divakaruni crafts compelling narratives that resonate with readers, offering profound insights into the human condition and the complexities of identity and relationships.

Character in literature serves as an imitation of people, "embodying perhaps the most mimetic term within the literary domain," (Mudrick, 2018) as asserted by literary scholar Marvin Mudrick. The representation of persons in literature involves a dual process of humanization and dehumanization. Positioned at the heart of fiction, character elicits recurring anxieties among literary critics regarding its existential status. According to Mudrick, "characters do not exist independently; rather, they are inseparable from the images and events that bear and propel them forward" (Mudrick, 2019). However, the 'realistic' argument posits that characters develop a degree of independence within the narrative, allowing for their analysis separate from immediate context. This viewpoint treats characters as imitations of real people, enabling the exploration of their unconscious motives and psychological depths.

Within the text, characters function as integral nodes within the verbal design, whereas in the story, they are abstract constructs extracted from their textual context. Despite their non-literal embodiment, these constructs are modeled on the reader's conception of humanity, serving as reflections of human nature. Propp's narrative theory subordinate's characters to "spheres of action," (Propp, 1968) categorizing their performance into seven general roles, such as the villain, the donor, and the hero. Similarly, Greimas (2000) highlights the subordination of characters by defining them as 'actants,' encompassing not only human beings but also inanimate objects and abstract concepts. Actants represent general categories underlying all narratives, while *acteurs* possess specific qualities in different narrative contexts.

Ferrara (2012) proposes a structural analysis of narrative fiction, placing character as the central notion. In this framework, characters serve as the structuring element, shaping the existence and coherence of objects and events within fiction. Rather than subordinating character to action or vice versa, this approach acknowledges their interdependence, emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between character and narrative elements. Through this lens, character emerges as a dynamic force that imbues fiction with meaning and comprehensibility, reflecting and refracting the complexities of human experience.

In the narrative, characters are constructs, pieced together by readers from various indications dispersed throughout the text. This process of reconstruction, as explained by Barthes (2018), is part of the 'process of nomination'. According to Chatman (1978), character is a paradigm of traits, with 'trait' being defined as a 'relatively stable or abiding personal quality'. This set of traits can be metaphorically seen as a vertical assemblage intersecting the syntagmatic chain of events that comprise the plot (Chatman, 1978, p. 127). Using a linguistic analogy, Chatman describes a trait as a narrative adjective tied to the narrative copula (i.e., the equivalent of the verb 'to be') (Chatman, 1978, p. 125). Examples of traits include statements like 'Sarrasine is feminine' or 'Othello is jealous'.

The characters derived from a text rarely exhibit the same level of depth. Characters can be categorized as follows: round characters are intricate and lifelike, reflecting a multidimensional personality akin to real life. They often display a mix of virtues and flaws, may respond unpredictably, and can struggle with internal conflicts. Round characters are typically central to the story and evolve as the narrative progresses.

Flat Characters are similar to 'humours', caricatures or archetypes. They are built around a single trait or concept and can be summarized in one sentence. Flat characters remain unchanged throughout the story. Because of their limited traits and lack of development, they are easy for readers to identify and recall. Supporting characters are typically flat, as minor characters often do not need significant complexity.

A dynamic character undergoes substantial changes over the course of the story, such as shifts in perspective, understanding, commitments or values. On the other hand, a static character remains largely unchanged. Regardless of being round or flat, their personality stays consistent throughout the narratives. Secondary characters are often static, as this allows them to function as thematic or plot devices. Both supporting characters and major characters aside from the protagonist are typically static. These aspects provide a framework for studying the characters in *Sister of My Heart* and *The Vine of Desire*.

The Chatterjee family was once considered economically prosperous, but their fortunes dwindled due to a lack of male presence and mismanagement by Bijoy and Gopal. Anju and Sudha, raised under the care of three mothers, were left to navigate economic challenges, ultimately supporting themselves by running a bookstore. However, Bijoy's reckless actions led to financial ruin, exacerbating their economic struggles.

In both *Sister of My Heart* and *The Vine of Desire*, characters' economic backgrounds can be categorized into three groups. Firstly, there are those who take up menial jobs, exemplified by characters like Lupe and Sara. Sara, an Indian immigrant in America, is willing to undertake any job for personal fulfillment, disregarding societal judgments. Similarly, Lupe engages in menial business dealings, achieving success in America.

The second category comprises the literate skilled community, represented by characters like Sunil, Anju's husband, who is a computer engineer with a lucrative career. Lastly, there are the affluent and profit-making individuals, typified by Mr. Chopra, one of Sunil's clients. Mr. Chopra's extravagant lifestyle, demonstrated through opulent celebrations and a lavish mansion, contrasts starkly with the economic struggles faced by others.

Anju and Sudha, despite their equal love for each other, come from differing socio-economic backgrounds. Anju's affluent family affords her social and economic advantages, enabling her to pursue education and dream of a career, transcending traditional gender norms. Conversely, Sudha and her mother, lacking economic independence, rely on Anju's family for support. Sudha, socially and economically disadvantaged, is more likely to conform to traditional gender norms, relying on her physical beauty for survival within societal expectations.

Anju and Sudha both have aspirations for higher education, but their paths are hindered by familial circumstances. Nalini halts Sudha's studies out of fear, while a family crisis interrupts Anju's education as well. However, after marrying Sunil and moving to America, Anju resumes her studies there, albeit as a dependent. Sudha's husband Ramesh, also educated, secures a high-ranking position in the Indian railways, while Sunil's education propels him to become a computer engineer in America. Despite the importance of education, Nalini, from a poor background, prioritizes family settlement over Sudha's education, reflecting societal norms. Pishi's aspirations for education were also thwarted by her father. In *The Vine of Desire*, Lalit, a surgeon attracted to Sudha in America, represents another character impacted by education and social background.

The novel is set against the backdrop of Bengal, reflecting the social background and lifestyle of Bengalis. The Chatterjee family resides in a grand old Calcutta house, steeped in tradition and history. Anju and Sudha, born on the tragic night of their fathers' mysterious deaths, are raised together in the sheltered yet crumbling house by their three mothers. Anju, witty and independent, hails from the wealthy Chatterjee family, while Sudha, calm and innocent, comes from a darker branch of the family tree.

Belonging to an orthodox upper-caste family, the Chatterjees adhere to tradition, while Anju and Sudha, representing the younger generation, are influenced by Western philosophies. However, a darker truth surrounding their births casts a shadow over their friendship. Anju's mother, Gouri, shoulders responsibilities after her husband's death, managing the family's bookstore diligently. Nalini, Sudha's mother, nags her husband, Gopal, leading him on a quest that ends in tragedy. Bijoy, generous yet naive, falls victim to Gopal's schemes, while Gopal himself is characterized by greed and deceit, ultimately bringing turmoil to the family.

The novel captures the struggles of educated young women in a transitional society. Additionally, references to real-life events like the O.J. Simpson murder trial, placing the story in the year 1994, add layers of irony and complexity to the narrative. Through verbal interactions and circumstances, the characters' dilemmas and societal dynamics are explored in depth.

Anju emerges as a spirited and impulsive character, demonstrated when she impulsively offers earrings to Sudha, only to be met with Sudha's assertion of self-respect. This interaction showcases Anju's impetuosity and her ability to reflect and confess her missteps. Despite her impulsive nature, Anju is also sympathetic, inviting Sudha to America and expressing affection for Prem, her unborn child. However, her satisfaction in speaking to Prem rather than her husband, Sunil, hints at deeper complexities in her character.

Sudha, described as beautiful, tender-hearted, and obedient, undergoes significant personal growth during her time in America. Initially docile and dutiful, Sudha learns to embrace pleasure and independence, albeit at the cost of moral compromises, notably her illicit relationship with Anju's husband, Sunil. This transformation reflects the struggle of upper-middle-class educated women in India, torn between societal expectations and personal desires. Despite her missteps, Sudha's love for Dayita remains selfless, illustrating her capacity for sacrifice and devotion.

Sunil emerges as an intelligent and liberal-minded individual, supporting Anju's pursuit of education and asserting his independence from his domineering father. However, his passionate nature and attraction to Sudha lead him into an illicit relationship, causing turmoil in his marriage with Anju and exposing his selfish tendencies.

Ramesh exemplifies patience and traditional values, although his lack of assertiveness in confronting his mother's decisions highlights his subservient nature. Despite his plainness, Ramesh displays unwavering love and loyalty towards Sudha, even when faced with familial pressures.

Anju's skepticism toward myths and superstitions is evident in her words and actions. When confronted with the idea of demons, she dismisses it firmly, stating, "There are no demons" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 16). This statement not only showcases her disbelief in old tales but also emphasizes her strong conviction against such notions. Similarly, when discussing the existence of Bidhata Purush, she expresses doubt by stating, "Maybe there's no Bidhata Purush either" and pulls away from Pishi's hands (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 18). This action, despite her hair being only half braided, reflects her refusal to entertain supernatural beliefs.

Anju's character is unveiled through her expressions of anger and her candidness in expressing her opinions. In one instance, she uses a metaphor, describing her aunt's tongue as "tamarind-and-chilli", highlighting her boldness in

expressing negative sentiments (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 59). Her harsh words toward Nalini, questioning her self-respect, reveal Anju's tendency to speak her mind without hesitation (Divakaruni, 1999, pp. 59-60). However, Anju's remorse for hurting Sudha showcases her underlying compassion and self-awareness (Divakaruni, 1999, pp. 59-60).

Furthermore, Anju's statement, "Because I called her into the world and therefore must do all I can to make sure she is happy," (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 30) reflects her deep sense of responsibility and love toward Sudha, providing insight into her character. Additionally, her grumpy remark about wishes, juxtaposed with her inner hopefulness, hints at a nuanced inner conflict and potential growth in her beliefs (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 63).

Anju's candid self-assessment, "What nonsense! I'm getting as superstitious as Sudha", offers insight into her character development as she notices a shift in her thoughts towards superstition (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 61). Additionally, her retort about being "penned in at home" like prize cows highlights the societal constraints faced by educated urban middle-class women in traditional Indian society (Divakaruni, 1999, pp. 67-68).

Furthermore, Anju's bold argument with her mother, questioning the importance of a promise made to her deceased father over Sudha's happiness, showcases her strong-willed nature and dislike for her father's actions (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 68). Her exuberant action of running to the terrace and singing "Freedom, freedom, freedom!" upon waking up signifies her immense joy on the day of her graduation, symbolizing her anticipation for a college education (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 94).

Moreover, Anju's reflection on learning to refrain from mocking Pishi's sayings and recalling her promise to ensure Sudha's freedom from being shut up at home indicates her growth and recognition of the consequences of her words and actions (Divakaruni, 1999, pp. 106-107).

Anju's sigh reflects her sadness as she reminisces about the past, revealing her character's depth and introspective nature. Her realization, triggered by her mother's illness, highlights her growth and the impact of her actions (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 180). Additionally, her response to her mother's inquiry about her relationship with Sunil signifies a shift in her loyalties and the changes brought about by marriage (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 180).

Furthermore, Anju's use of the expletive "Shit!" demonstrates her emotional expression, particularly during moments of tension, and reflects her assimilation of American language and culture over the years (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 205). Her bold scowl directed at someone indicates her assertiveness and her willingness to assert her boundaries, as seen in her desire for privacy (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 224).

Moreover, Anju's angry whisper and glare at Sunil, requesting privacy, further exemplify her assertive nature and her ability to communicate her needs clearly in her marital relationship (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 225). These instances showcase Anju's evolving character and her adaptability to changing circumstances. The way Anju reacts to Sunil's presence indicates her discomfort, emphasizing her assertive nature and the impact of his actions on her (Divakaruni, 1999, pp. 243-244). Additionally, her exclamation of joy upon realizing the beauty of the world reflects a change in her behavior prompted by happiness (Divakaruni, 1999, pp. 243-244). Furthermore, her confident assertion about her physical state and the power of happiness reveals her reckless yet optimistic nature (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 254).

Anju's past feelings of disdain for her ancestral home underscore her preference for modernity and her struggle with traditional constraints (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 13). Moreover, her straightforward exclamation about enduring hardships highlights her direct communication style (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 57). Additionally, her questioning of Sunil's actions suggests a shift in her perceptions of marital dynamics and equality (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 70).

Furthermore, Anju's appreciation for Indian fabrics showcases her pride in her cultural heritage (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 114). Her tender words to Sunil reflect her love and support for him, despite any challenges they face (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 140). However, her cruel words born out of anguish reveal the depth of her emotional turmoil and her struggles with expressing her feelings (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 236). Finally, her gesture of asking Sunil to leave to preserve her dignity and subsequent tears in solitude highlight her inner strength and vulnerability (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 242). These instances demonstrate the complexity of Anju's character and her evolution throughout the narrative. Anju's poised demeanor reflects her concerted effort to uphold her dignity, showcasing her resilience and determination to confront adversity head-on. "I was going to fight it every way I knew, Beg, cry, make him feel like a jerk," she admits, her voice tinged with raw emotion (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 252), revealing the depth of her anguish as she grapples with her inner turmoil over Sunil's actions.

In a moment of vulnerability, she introduces herself, "This is Anju," she says, her tone fraught with desperation, "I'm in a lot of trouble of trouble. I need help" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 265), illustrating her struggle with loneliness and the erosion of her emotional strength. With unwavering resolve, she firmly declares, "No," her voice resolute, "It took me a long time to close that door. Don't start opening it again" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 362), underscoring her determined efforts to move forward and leave the past behind.

A glimmer of newfound resilience shines through as she grins and exclaims, "You won't believe it, Sudha," her voice brimming with newfound confidence, "I've learned to fly" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 368), symbolizing her transformative journey towards embracing life's challenges and overcoming past heartbreak.

Anju's candid expressions and decisive actions offer a window into her character, highlighting her boldness and resilience in the face of adversity. Set apart from her cousin Sudha, Anju fearlessly speaks her mind, even if it means delivering harsh truths, and navigates the complexities of married life with unwavering determination.

Sudha, a central figure in the novel, assumes a significant role in the narrative. Often serving as one of the narrators, Sudha's character is unveiled through her words and actions, offering insights into her personality. "Then she surprised me by saying, 'Didn't you know, Aunt? We are twins,'" Sudha remarks (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 28), exhibiting her usual demeanor of politeness and composure. Her response to Saritha Aunt's comment reflects a hint of surprise, underscoring the importance she places on maintaining harmonious relationships. "They say in the old tales that a man and a woman exchange looks the way we did, their spirits mingle. Their gaze is a rope of gold binding each to the others," Sudha muses (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 75), demonstrating her deep-rooted belief in mythology and folklore. Her encounter with Ashok at the theater fuels her imagination, leading her to draw parallels between their connection and the romantic narratives of old tales. "Not just happens, Anju. Nothing just happens. I know," Sudha asserts (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 77), revealing her unwavering confidence, particularly in matters concerning her feelings for Ashok. Her words carry a sense of conviction, indicative of the depth of her emotions.

"He would have been alive," Sudha states with deliberate slowness, her voice carrying an air of accusation, "If you hadn't pushed him to desperation with your constant nagging" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 80). Sudha's boldness shines through as she confronts her mother, openly defying her authority and holding her accountable for her actions. "What I want most," Sudha confides, "is to have a happy family. Don't you remember the pictures?" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 89), expressing her heartfelt desire for familial harmony. Her words resonate with longing, evoking memories of cherished moments captured in photographs. Sudha's expression of longing reflects her enduring desire for a happy family, a yearning that has accompanied her since childhood. However, her aspirations for the future appear uncertain.

"Shivering, I stumble to the window, flying it open. I whisper, though I among all of us here have the least right to ask. 'Please don't take her yet. We need her so much'" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 105). Sudha's polite entreaty demonstrates her deep affection and respect for Anju's mother, Gowri. Her whispered plea suggests a belief in supernatural tales, indicating Sudha's susceptibility to imagined fears. "'No!' Sudha says with startling energy. 'I don't want you saying anything to Gowri Ma'" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 114). Sudha's emphatic refusal reveals her stubbornness and perhaps a touch of false pride. Her forceful tone catches Anju off guard, underscoring Sudha's determination.

"'Because I had to make sure mother would be pleased with me. And because I know I don't have to marry Ramesh,' says Sudha. She pulls me up and whirls me around the room, then bursts out laughing at the look on my face" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 123). Sudha's explanation for her composure during the bride-viewing event highlights her understanding of social expectations and her efforts to conform to her mother's wishes. Her joyous reaction upon receiving a letter from Ashok signifies her relief and happiness upon learning of his love for her.

"'I know he is telling the truth. I know I can trust him.' I felt the anger shoot through my veins like a poison. 'You don't know what love is, that's why you can say something so mean'" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 129). Sudha's assertion of trust in Ashok contrasts sharply with Anju's skepticism, leading to a heated exchange. Sudha's conviction in Ashok's sincerity reflects her depth of feeling, while her response to Anju's disbelief reveals her emotional vulnerability.

Sudha's confident words express her unwavering trust in Ashok, and she accuses Anju in her anger. "She was putting into words the fears that had jostled unshaped inside me all days. Perhaps that was why I put my hands over my ears and cried, 'Enough. I won't allow you to slander Ashok. I have made up my mind about what I'm going to do, and that's that!'" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 129). Sudha's decisive action and words reflect her newfound determination and independence. This change in Sudha stems from her fear, prompting her to assert herself. "I feel absurdly guilty as I tell Anju I have a bad headache, I want to go and lie down" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 142). Sudha's sense of guilt arises from her fear of Sunil's disapproving looks. This guilt illustrates her inner turmoil and anxiety. "I nod. I'll be happy in seeing you happy, dear Anju" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 145). Sudha's expression of love for Anju reveals her selflessness. Despite her own desires, Sudha prioritizes Anju's happiness, demonstrating her caring nature.

"But I must not cry. Once I begin I will not be able to stop, I have so much to weep for. So I say, with false gaiety, 'you will have Sunil! He'll soon mean more to you than any cousin!'" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 156). Sudha's thoughts reveal her ability to maintain composure despite her inner turmoil. She hides her sorrow behind a facade of cheerfulness, knowing that the impending separation from Anju fills her with sadness. "I put my hands over my ears, but the phrase already pounds its rhythm inside my skull. Killed him. Killed him. Killed him." 'My father!' The word sticks in my throat, the most distasteful word in the world. 'No!' (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 160). Sudha's actions and words depict fear, revealing her troubled state of mind. She harbors hatred towards her father for his evil deeds.

"In spite of myself, I felt the stirrings of a reluctant awe. When I married Ramesh, I had told myself that I would not get close to any of the Sanyals. I would do my duty, and no more. But this was a woman worth admiring" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 188). Sudha's feelings reflect her character and beliefs about marriage. Despite her distress, she always strives to fulfill her duty, even if it brings her discomfort. 'I know, Mother. I have been no help to you at all. But now that Anju's actually here, I'm sure to do better' (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 194). Sudha's response to her mother-in-law conveys respectful affection in her voice. Her gentle words reflect her character, as she strives to fulfill the wishes of others. "My letters are as wholesome and bland as the milk-and-mashed rice that is fed to babies. Because I, Sudha, who was for so long the keeper of secrets, no longer have secrets worth sharing" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 201). Sudha's words reflect her adjustment to life and express her feelings. She consistently sacrifices her happiness for the sake of others. "Mother asked to speak to Sudha, but Sudha answered in monosyllables, saying only, over and over, 'Don't worry, I'm OK.'" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 211). Sudha's restrained expression of words reveals her sad plight. She feels uncomfortable speaking freely due to her

mother-in-law's presence, which restrains her from expressing her true feelings. "One thing I do know - she is upset that Ramesh is with us, and that he and I will stay on in Calcutta without her" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 216). Sudha's words demonstrate her understanding of her mother-in-law's intentions and reveal her growing perceptiveness. 'That's the other thing that bothers me,' I say irritably. 'The way she's so sure it's going to be a boy. What if it isn't?'" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 248).

Sudha's troubled state of mind regarding her mother-in-law's assumptions reflects her frustration and growing resentment. "You can't let her do this to me," I said. I put my hands on his arm and shook him. "I can't let you be," I shouted. "I need you to help me to protect our daughter" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 260). Sudha's words and actions express her shame at her helplessness and plead with Ramesh to support her. She is deeply concerned about the well-being of her unborn daughter and speaks with authority to her husband, revealing her sorrow and suffering. 'Just in case I decided not to go back' (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 261).

Sudha's decision demonstrates her determination to escape from her mother-in-law's oppressive influence and make independent choices despite the danger she faces. "Well, let me tell you, though this isn't how I expected my life to turn out, I have no regrets for what has happened. None. And I'm not ready to give up either. I'm going to fight for my daughter and myself, and I'm going to win" (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 280). Sudha's defiant words directed towards Ashok reveal her determination and resolve to stand up for herself and her daughter, fueled by her inner fury. "Really, Anju," Sudha says in an exasperated voice as she towels it dry, as she combs out Anju's tangles. "The amount of fuss you make to go to college! It's like you're five years old. I don't know why you bother. You know I won't let you miss class and stay home" (Divakaruni, 2003, pp. 53-54).

Sudha's actions and exasperated voice exemplify her maternal role and demonstrate her care and concern for Anju. She endeavors to support Anju emotionally, especially following her miscarriage. "I turned him down because I didn't want him to have to take care of me," Sudha said. "I wanted to be independent. And it seemed like America was the best place for that" (Divakaruni, 2003, pp. 92-93). Sudha's explanation reveals her desire for independence and her strategic decision-making regarding her future, showing her determination to chart her own path. Sudha's reasoning indicates that she has learned to navigate survival, revealing a newfound selfishness. There's a newfound hardness in Sudha's demeanor, reflecting a shift in her perspective. Sudha Chatterjee," she says calmly. "Visiting from Calcutta. Your husband is my brother-in-law's client" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 129). Sudha's composed introduction to Mrs. Pinky Chopra at the party showcases her assertiveness. Her words carry a cold, distinct tone, indicating her adaptability to different social settings. "Excuse me," I say, before the situation deteriorates further. "I've already decided to go with Lalit. I just wanted to let you know" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 158).

Sudha's decisive action signifies a change in her character. She speaks boldly, indicating her interest in embracing aspects of American life. "They were so friendly," Sudha says as she gets into the car. She frowns suspiciously. "They don't even know us. Why were they so friendly?" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 178). Sudha's suspicious reaction reflects her unfamiliarity with American social norms, hastily forming judgments based on her Indian upbringing. "I may not know why I did what I did, but what I must do now is clear enough" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 201). Sudha's words reveal her moral ambiguity and fear, prompting her decision to leave Anju's house and find employment. "You saved my life," she tells her. Her voice is hoarse, as though after a day of shouting. "I can't thank you enough" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 221).

Sudha expresses gratitude to Lupe, feeling indebted to her for assistance. There's a palpable sense of relief in Sudha's demeanor as she receives help. "Anju, I'm sorry I had to leave so suddenly. I didn't want to worry you. I had no choice. Please believe me." "Anju, listen to me. I couldn't stay there any longer. The way things were going" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 252). Sudha's apologetic tone underscores her distress as she attempts to justify her abrupt departure to Anju, seeking understanding for her actions. "America isn't the same country for everyone, you know. Things here didn't work out the way I'd hoped. Going back with you would be a way for me to start over in a culture I understand the way I'll never understand America. In a new part of India, where no one knows me. Without the weight of old memories, the whispers that say, we knew she'd fail, or serves her right" (Divakaruni, 2003, pp. 320-321).

Sudha's perspective reveals her desire for a fresh start and independence, aiming to leave behind her past sorrows and forge a new path. "I always allowed myself to be dependent on someone else's goodwill. I was the one who was always taking, the one who was taken care of" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 331).

Sudha's acknowledgment signals a change in her mindset, recognizing her past reliance on others and feeling regretful about it. She aspires to achieve independence. "Changed how?" I say, my voice belligerent. "You mean because I'm wearing Western clothes?" "It's not your job to take care of me," I say heatedly. "I'm an adult" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 334). Sudha's defensive response reflects her growing independence and insistence on self-sufficiency, challenging traditional gender roles and asserting her autonomy. Sudha's protest reflects a change in her behavior, as she speaks rudely and inadvertently hurts Ashok, allowing anger to consume her. "Slow down, for heaven's sake," Sudha says, her face pale, her eyes squinted shut (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 368). Sudha's commanding words indicate her fear of Anju's driving and her concern for safety. Sudha faces numerous hardships in life, leading her to seek independence by moving to America. However, her stay with Anju and Sunil exacerbates her problems, shattering her hopes for a better life.

Sunil, Anju's husband, is an Indian expatriate characterized by his independence and complexity, representing a round character. Divakaruni utilizes both his own statements and Anju's observations to reveal his multifaceted nature. 'May I

tell you,' says Sunil, with a funny little formal bow, 'how taken I am by your vivacity. You deserve every one of your dreams. If you do me the honor of marrying me, I will try to make them come true' (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 137).

Sunil's expression of admiration towards Anju demonstrates his friendly and confident demeanor. His genuine admiration for Anju's vivacity showcases his warm personality. 'Enough! I am sick of you bullying my mother. Sick of you always insisting that we do what you want. As it happens, I was the one who asked her to make the tamarind chutney' (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 183). Sunil's confrontation with his father reveals his protective nature towards his mother and his resentment towards his father's domineering behavior. It underscores his strong sense of justice and loyalty to his family. 'Don't worry, I'll be happy to pay back every paisa and more,' he says. 'I don't want to live indebted to you, being reminded of it every day of my life, like my poor mother. And let me tell you something, if I see you mistreating her one more time---' (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 183). Sunil's refusal to be indebted to his father reflects his pride and independence. His determination to protect his mother and stand up to his father highlights his strength of character.

'Maybe that would be best,' he says. 'I had hoped... but, will you come and see my mother once in a while? She has taken a liking to you, and as you've seen, there aren't too many pleasures in her life' (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 185). Sunil's request to Anju showcases his compassion and concern for his mother's happiness. It reveals his thoughtful and caring nature, despite his strained relationship with his father. 'I need all the insight I can get, because Sunil is the original man-with-a-hundred-faces. Even after all this time I can't tell which is the real him, and which are masks pulled on for effect' (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 207).

Anju's observation reflects Sunil's enigmatic and complex personality, suggesting that he is adept at adapting to different situations. It hints at his ability to conceal his true feelings and motivations. 'Nah. In the introductory letter your mother had written to us she'd mentioned that she was one of your favorite writers, so I thought that would be a good way to start a conversation' (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 208).

Sunil's casual approach to social interactions reveals his relaxed attitude and adaptability. He demonstrates his ability to navigate social situations with ease. 'But he got all huffy and said he's quite capable of feeding his own wife, thank you. If that isn't a typical Indian male!' (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 288). Sunil's rejection of Anju's offer to work exposes his traditional views on gender roles. His refusal to accept help from his wife underscores his pride and traditional masculinity. 'Sunil calls the mothers delightedly to say he is amazed at the change in her. 'Please tell Sudha she's a miracle,' he says. 'I must find a way to thank her properly once she gets here' (Divakaruni, 1999, pp. 312-313).

Sunil's appreciation for Sudha's efforts to help Anju reflects his gratitude and generosity. It demonstrates his ability to recognize and acknowledge kindness in others. 'For heaven's sake,' he said. 'You're not her teacher, or her keeper. She'll learn on her own' (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 342). Sunil's frustration with Anju's interference in Sudha's life exposes his impatience and irritation. It reveals his desire for autonomy and independence in his relationships. 'Come here, kid. Let me put my arms around you and my face against your chest. All day I've been waiting for this. Sit on my lap so I can see your eyes, so much like your mother's. Forget I said that. Sometimes I feel I'm drowning---but not while I hold you.' (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 46).

Sunil's tender words of affection for Dayita reveal his deeply caring nature. His love for Sudha is palpable, expressed through his adoration of their daughter. It portrays Sunil as a loving and devoted father. "You'd see a hell of a lot better if you took those blasted glasses off. How come you're so late?" "Look at you, dripping wet. What if you get sick again? Can't you carry an umbrella, at least? Here, let me take your books." "Anju!" says Sunil in exasperation. "Why must you always fight me when I try to do something for you?" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 67).

Sunil's words reflect his caring concern for Anju's well-being. He speaks with a mixture of affection and authority, showing his protective nature towards his wife. His frustration with Anju's resistance underscores his desire to help and support her. "Hope it isn't too spicy for you," Sunil says sweetly. "Personally, I like mine spicier," Sunil says (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 172). Sunil's passive-aggressive comments to Lalit reveal his underlying bitterness and jealousy. Despite his pleasant tone, his words convey a subtle resentment towards Lalit's relationship with Sudha. "I don't know," Sunil said finally. "I'm not even sure I know what's good luck and what isn't. Something happens, you think it's wonderful. A couple years later you can't stand it" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 174).

Sunil's ambiguous philosophical musings reflect his inner turmoil and uncertainty. His inability to grasp the concept of luck reveals his introspective nature and existential ponderings. From behind the newspaper, he said, "Why are you so excited? Anyone would think he's your boyfriend" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 186). Sunil's sarcastic remark to Anju suggests his discomfort with her excitement, hinting at his own insecurity or guilt. It underscores the strained dynamics of their relationship. "The dancing girl in the movie ran away, too, if you remember," Sunil says, drawing on levels of calm I didn't know he possessed. "But the man found her and convinced her to come back to him" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 235).

Sunil's reference to a movie plot subtly reflects his own conflicted emotions and perhaps his desire for reconciliation or resolution. His calm demeanor contrasts with the underlying tension in his marriage. "I need to test them for myself," says Sunil (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 236). Sunil's assertion of independence and autonomy suggests his desire to assert control over his own decisions and actions. It hints at his reluctance to rely solely on Anju's judgment or authority. He's saying, "I know you hate me for doing this, but one day you'll see it was the right decision" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 242). Sunil's self-assured declaration reveals his confidence in his choices, even if they may cause pain to others. It portrays him as assertive and unapologetic, despite the consequences of his actions. "I'll send you half my paycheck each month," he said. "You don't have to worry about money" (Divakaruni, 2003, p. 259). Sunil's reassurance to Anju demonstrates his

practical concern for her well-being. Despite their strained relationship, his offer of financial support reveals his sense of responsibility towards her. Sunil's complex emotions and actions reflect his inner conflicts and desires. His journey from admiration for Anju to passionate love for Sudha, and ultimately his decision to divorce Anju, portrays him as a flawed yet deeply human character whose choices profoundly impact those around him.

Ramesh, Sudha's husband, plays a very minor role in the narrative, with Sudha's observations providing insight into his character. 'Do you find me so ugly?' he asks finally. Perhaps Ramesh was always conscious of his plainness, but these last few days must have been hard for him, with relatives exclaiming constantly over my looks. Many husbands would have grown irritated at so much attention being heaped upon their wives while they were ignored, but he had been patient enough. Even when an old gentleman called me 'the goddess Lakshmi come to earth', the smile on Ramesh's face had not faltered (Divakaruni, 1999, pp. 176-177).

Sudha's reflections on Ramesh reveal that he does not harbor male ego issues. Despite the constant praise of Sudha's beauty during their marriage festivities, Ramesh remained unruffled. Sudha notices his patience and acceptance of the situation, despite his own perceived plainness. But Ramesh gives a relieved laugh. 'I understand completely. I don't believe in forcing such things. I would be happy to give you - us - time to get to know each other' (Divakaruni, 1999, pp. 177).

Sudha perceives Ramesh as a gentleman at the start of their life in Bardhaman. She appreciates his lack of pressure and willingness to allow their relationship to develop naturally. His respectful approach indicates a considerate and patient nature. Ramesh had protested, in his quiet way. 'We can't really afford it,' he said, 'and besides, what's the point?' And he gave in, as he always did at such times (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 202). Ramesh's objections to his mother's demands show his capacity for reasoning and independent thought. However, Sudha observes that he ultimately yields to his mother's wishes, indicating a tendency towards compliance with familial expectations. Ramesh replied that it wasn't just 'people'. It was his wife's aunt, whom he was supposed to respect like his own mother, wasn't he? (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 216).

Ramesh's firm response to his mother reflects his respect for Sudha's relatives and his understanding of familial obligations. He demonstrates thoughtfulness and integrity in his interactions with Sudha's family. 'But mother,' Ramesh protests as he follows us. 'Where are you taking Sudha? She hasn't been feeling well. She needs to rest' (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 232). 'I don't think Sudha should go anywhere right now' (Divakaruni, 1999, p. 233).

Ramesh's concern for Sudha's well-being is evident in his protest against his mother's plans. His words convey genuine worry and care for Sudha's health, highlighting his compassionate nature. Sudha's observations and Ramesh's actions reveal his character as that of a tender, decent, and loving husband. However, Sudha also notices his tendency to defer to his mother, which saddens her as she feels he lacks assertiveness in standing up for himself.

## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the linguistic portrayals of characters' dialogue in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novels *Sister of My Heart* and *The Vine of Desire* offer a rich tapestry of diversity, showcasing the complexity of human interactions and relationships within Indian American communities. Through nuanced dialogue, Divakaruni brings to life characters who navigate cultural, familial, and personal challenges with authenticity and depth. The characters in both novels speak with distinct voices, reflecting their unique backgrounds, personalities, and experiences. From the bold and independent Lupe in *The Vine of Desire* to the gentle and supportive Ramesh in *Sister of My Heart*, each character's dialogue reveals facets of their identity and worldview. Additionally, the use of language, including American slang and Indian idioms, adds layers of authenticity and complexity to the dialogue, reflecting the characters' multicultural experiences.

Furthermore, the dialogue serves as a vehicle for character development and thematic exploration. Through their interactions and conversations, characters grapple with issues of love, loyalty, identity, and tradition, offering insights into the human condition and the complexities of diasporic life. Whether it's Sunil's conflicted expressions of love and frustration or Sudha's internal struggles with cultural expectations, the dialogue in Divakaruni's novels illuminates the intricacies of human emotions and relationships.

Overall, the diverse linguistic portrayals in *Sister of My Heart* and *The Vine of Desire* enrich the narratives, providing readers with a deeper understanding of the characters and the worlds they inhabit. Through their dialogue, Divakaruni invites readers to explore the complexities of identity, culture, and belonging, making her novels not only compelling works of fiction but also insightful reflections on the human experience.

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