
“Ask PK anything”: Language and Power relationship in PK

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Abstract

This study is going to examine an Indian movie PK from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis. It focuses on how actors manipulate language in their favor – to inculcate their agenda – to exploit common man. CDA tends to explore the hidden meanings of a written or spoken text. It studies and analyzes the role of language, power, dominance, ideology, and inequality in different contexts. This analysis is rooted in Fairclough's three-dimensional models of discourse analysis which focus on the text, representation of that text, and its interpretation. The findings show that it is the use of language that helps social actors to maintain their power and supremacy over others. They exploit people's emotions by creating fear of the unknown in their body and soul. The present study confirms that multiple ideologies showing the preferred perspectives can easily be inculcated in the minds of the common people through movies. It further confirms that stereotypical characteristics prevailing in society can easily be enforced through movies.

1. Introduction

Language is a way of communication distinctively human. People use language to express their emotions, feelings, and ideas in the best possible and acceptable way. Language is a social practice by which power relations, dominance, inequality, and ideology are reproduced or contested in a society. (Janks, 1997).

Discourse can be taken as a power that is circulated in the society and it can be attached to strategies to get domination and resistance (Diamond & Quinby, 1988, p.105). CDA should be taken as a theory as well as a method (Chuliaraki & Fairclough 1999:16). Moreover, discourses need to be interpreted and explained in their respective social contexts (Rogors 2004:2). “CDA is the analysis of linguistic and semiotic aspects of social processes and problems”. (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, 271).

1.1 Media Discourse

Media discourse has its roots in ethnography. Media discourse is considered as multi-disciplinary as it involves cultural studies conversational analysis (CA), critical discourse analysis, and so on. Media has a very powerful impact over structuring and restructuring people’s ideology, understanding of the world, reshaping culture, norms, values, and advocating power. Bollywood movies exercise themes as love, social power abuse, inequality, and warfare. e.g. Devdas, Raajneeti, Border, Baby, etc. Producers use specific tools like well choreograph dances, songs, actions, melodrama and well-knit plot to target Hindi speaking people. Hindi movies and dramas are of and for Hindi culture.

There are movies and television drama series on gods and goddesses like “Oh My God” “Life Ho To Aisi” and “Neeli Chatri Waale” but no one ever questioned like “god created you or you created god”

At the end of 2014 an Indian movie namely PK is released. The movie is a record blockbuster in the history of Hindi Cinema. The movie dually affects the viewers. People relate themselves to the situation faced by PK. First, they enjoy the acting of presenter Amir Khan, but afterward, they are forced to think about his pinching questions about social power, inequality, and beliefs. Here below is some main information about the movie.

Film: PK is an Indian film released on 19 December 2014. In Hindi, PK means a drunk? It is not the name given to him by his parents rather due to his question, people having implicit knowledge of society, culture and beliefs, call him PK, a drunken.

Writer, Producer, and Cast: Mr. Hirani and Amir Khan have presented this movie. Almost whole of the cast belongs to Hinduism except presenter Amir Khan.

Issues: The movie proposes several domestic as well as universal issues in an interesting way like power relations, dominance, beliefs, inequality, ideology, etc. The main issue of the movie is humanism. Viewers get this message at the end of the movie in the debate between PK and Tapasvi.

Characters: There are two main characters PK and Tapasvi. Supporting characters are Jaggu, Cherry Bajwa, Jaggu’s father.

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- (i) *PK*: He is a humanoid alien. He is an astronaut and researcher. Aim of his research is to get familiarized with the living style of the people on earth. But he gets confused with their living how and why, I will discourse later. He is a rational being doesn't accept anything blindly; his transmitter called remote is snatched. To get that remote back, he comes across many queries.
 - (ii) *Tapasvi*: Tapasvi representing his class (Pandit). Tapasvi is a godman. He is a social actor having thousands of followers, a religious person who is using his social power in his interest. He has a strong grip over the mind of his followers. They can do anything on his orders. People respect him and trust him. He has gain people's trust with their respect for his devotion of time to solve their problems.

So, keeping all this in mind the focus of this attempt is to find out how power is exercised by certain characters to achieve their certain motives in PK movie.

2. Literature Review

Recently, dozens of scholarly and journalistic articles and several book-length studies (Chakravarty, 1998; Prasad, 1998; Kazmi, 1999; Mishra, 2002) have offered interesting textual analyses of aspects of Hindi films ranging from nationalism and 'culture' to the 'role of women' and 'nature of the hero'. It has gone through a transition in last almost hundred years ranging from the obsession from pure love stories that dominated mostly in the early years to the issues-oriented movies. In the last decade, Hindi movies have shown tremendous development towards the variety of themes concerning to the issues of social, cultural and religious implications. Earlier, in Indian movies, to discuss religious controversies against the mainstream prevalent ideologies with critical point of view was almost impossible; however, in present span of time, a number of movies have touched upon this sensitive topic, at least for the sub-continent, to objectively aiming to develop balance and tolerance against the one's opposite point of view though some of them have received public reaction.

The focus of the research is to search the contacts between media, new genres and social change. Genres are formed and transformed through several contexts over a specific period of time. In order to gain power institutions, capitalize substantial time to maintain and develop genres to bring social change (Ali & Masroor, 2017). Specific genres, historically speaking, become effective for manipulating in society. It is due to the fact that genres are cultivated merely for vested interests.

2.1 CDA of Media Discourse

For critical discourse analysis, media discourse has been a potential area. Strong and pervasive connections between linguistic structure and social structure have been identified with a claim that discourses are non-exist without specific social meanings. Linguists have attempted to find out ideological processes along with linguistic development in media.

This approach has been refined and re-applied last few decades by linguists and some of the scholars believe that the relationship between language and the media requires some peculiar dimension in research.

Critical linguistics, in the process of categorization, assigns a prominent role to the choice of vocabulary, particularly in media reports. Gender discrimination is a more obvious example in the choice of vocabulary in media reports. In addition to it, linguists from this background intend to produce enlightenment, insightfulness and emancipation. These theories aim to explain and root out a specific nature of delusion.

Critical theory manages to create cognizance with other concepts of ideologies for their needs. However, the limitation of critical linguistics is described in productive practices and interpretive practices of the audiences (Fairclough, 1995). Media studies have started giving more stress to the audience reception than to the text analysis, and that has generated criticism.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can be elaborated as the investigation of the discourse employment in its socio-cultural settings. It examines how language has been used in discourses and the implications of this use if the discourse is related to socio-cultural settings. Moreover, CDA tries to comprehend, show, and resist social inequality.

In recent studies, an aspect from CDA has been identified, and it has been termed as discursive practices. Discursive practices are defined as norms and models, mental, of those behaviors that are acceptable in society for specific relationships so as to receive or interpret a particular message. In other words, discursive practices are those procedures that are involved in talking, writing, listening and reading manuscripts.

One area regarding CDA applied so frequently in the last few years is media. Earlier the focus was on news media and most of the content regarding CDA was developed while considering print media like newspapers. However, with the new development in technology, the new dimensions of media have gain power like social media etc.; therefore, the role of movies, which are quite accessible through social media have gained more importance.

It has been pondered among theorists that the arena of discourse has come to close terms with a multiplicity of meanings given to the signifier's application of discourse. For instance, the discourse may be described as pieces of spoken as well as written language, particular context of the language usage, connection among writer, audience and text and peculiarities of the genre (Fairclough, 1992). Van Dijk (1997) has defined discourse as the act of talk and text in a particular context. This diversity is structured by separating micro from macro approaches towards both text and context.

Along with written and spoken discourse as mentioned earlier, visual images are of great significance for the discourse study (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). CDA can be applied by contemplating on special features of visual semiotics. A movie is based on visual images can be taken as an outcome of the human interaction in a specific culture and, therefore, the movie more often depicts the values of members of that culture along with their spirit, beliefs and ideologies. Being an artwork based on culture, cinematography can be presented with sound though earlier, in the beginning, it was without sound.

Trianton (2013) is of the view that movie being an influential media of mass communication transmits messages with critical ideas to the public. A movie may be defined as a living image of a group of people having their own stories. Besides, McLuhan (1997) thinks that it is a phenomenon having non-verbal form just like photography that

contains a specific form without syntax. A movie, similarly, represents the cultural understanding of a specific group along with their ideology, belief and ideas.

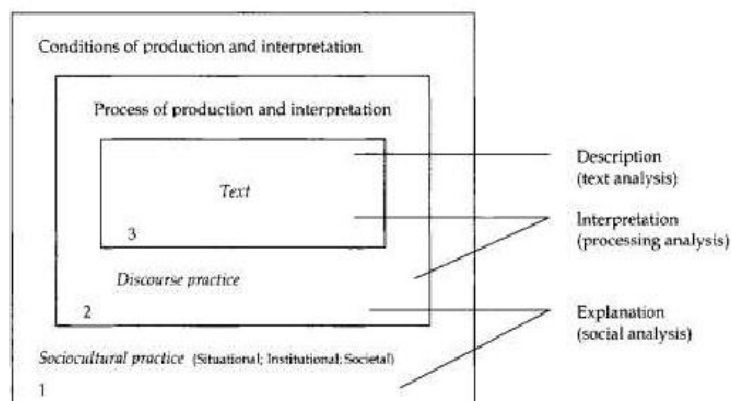
CDA is the most important area to investigate and explore the phenomena of linguistic variances in social contexts. A substantial framework has been provided to analyse the relationship of society and discourse, context with the text, and power with Language (Luke, 1995/1996, 2002; Fairclough, 2001).

3. Research Methodology

We all agree movies allow us to escape from routine life. We favor this escape because today the man has become a machine. He has no time to enjoy life but on the other hand, movies take us to a world quite different from our own. They provide us with a channel through us which can probe into the wider perspective of the world. Movies are a form of art. Lewis considers art working as a window into the unseen reality of the world. He says in an Experiment in Criticism, we as humans “seek an enlargement of our being. We want to be more than ourselves. Each of us by nature sees the whole world from one point of view with a perspective and selectiveness peculiar to himself. we want to see with other eyes, to imagine with other imagination, to feel with other hearts, as well as with our own”. When we watch the movie, we relate ourselves to the characters and happenings in one way or the other. Movies highlight the issues which we take for granted in our daily life but we are forced to consider them when they are shown in the magnifying glass as Cinema. The movies we enjoy the most are not those which are different from our day to day life. On the other hand, they are the ones that we feel quite near to our well-known world.

Our interest in this movie is to explore how stereotype social actors behave in society. How, outwardly they behave like spiritual personality but inwardly they are having materialistic gains. The qualitative research method will be applied. The aim of the study is to show how social actors implicate social power, dominance, stereotype and particular linguistics features behind the characters.

The qualitative research method has been used to analyze this text. To analyze this movie Fairclough three dimensional model is used. Fairclough focuses on three points to critically analyze any communicative event [i.e.] text, discourse practice and social and cultural practice.



Fairclough (1989, 1995) has offered his model for critical analysis with sub-division of three dimensions.

a. Text analysis (description)

“The object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts)” (Janks, 1997: 26).

b. Processing analysis (interpretation)

This stage can be defined as “the processes by which the object is produced and received (writing/speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing) by human subjects” (Janks, 1997: 26).

c. Social analysis (explanation)

It can be allocated to “the socio-historical conditions that govern these processes [of production and reception]” (Janks, 1997: 26).

4. Data Analysis

Before going into details of the analysis, it is pertinent to keep the main theme of the view before in mind. PK is set in a multicultural society. People belong to different beliefs, culture and social background. They are living in homogenous society acting according to their own beliefs and performing specific cultural norms and values accordingly.

He comes naked on earth like a newborn baby. Here he comes to know that people wear the dress to cover their body. He doesn't know the language because on his planet people don't use language. They interact with each other by holding one's hand at first he is confused by the lifestyle of the people. He realizes the importance of money when no one accepts Gandhi's photo on anything else except a Note (currency) to buy anything. He comes on earth with a transmitter called remote to send his message home. That remote is stolen by a villager. Outwardly the whole story revolves around the recovery of that remote because that's the only way to get back home. To get his remote back, everyone tells him that only Bhagwan (god) can help him. He is surprised that god who created this universe

is living with his creature. He searches for god. He goes to worship place of all religions to get help.

At last, he meets Tapasvi, a very influential religious person. PK questions Tapasvi logically but he doesn't answer. PK finds his remote with Tapasvi but he doesn't return as he says: *Shiv e ke Damroo ka toota hua manka hy (PK) (What happened to the broken Damroo of Shiv ge)*. PK introduces a new term as Managers for social actors. He proves these managers are running a business of fear because they know *Jo dargaya who mandirgaya (Those who feared dead)*. At the end, he conveys the message of Humanism. He emphasizes that everyone should be treated as a human being above all differences.

4.1 Textual Analysis

The first point of Fairclough three dimensional model is text. According to Fairclough (1992), textual analysis involves linguistics analysis on the levels of vocabulary, grammar, semantics, the sound system, and cohesion organization above sentence level. In textual analysis, our focus is to analyze how things are described in the particular text. In his every movie Hirani introduces different vocabulary like *Jaadokijaphi* (magical hug) in Munna Bhai MBBS, *all is well* in 3idiots. In PK it is *managers and wrong call*.

The main pole of the movie is portrayed as a humanoid alien. A question arises why the movie maker has taken help of an alien character to get answers to his queries? The moviemakers belong to Hinduism having thousands of queries about their beliefs, norms and rituals. Instead of going to some religious persons they have created a character as PK peeping through the realities in a very interesting and comic way. According to CDA linguists and semiotic structures of a communicative event are linked with society. CDA reflects the relation of transformation between the symbolic and non-symbolic, discourse and non-discursive. (Chuliaraki & Fairclough 1999).

Someone can question like why spacecraft lands in the desert? Why not somewhere else in India?

In our view, PK as a newborn baby possesses a pure soul. He doesn't tell a lie, can't hide his emotions because he is unaware of the language. As he says "hum ko jhoot bolt away hi nihi" (I don't know how to tell a lie). Desert, in the movie, symbolizes nihilism. The true soul of humanity is dying under the burden of materialism.

PK is wearing chains, rings and lockets. What do these ornaments show? For me the answer can be when something very dear to us is lost we can do anything to get it back. PK performs rituals of every religion to get his remote back but in vain. An interesting thing PK comes to know is the contrast of ideologies. For Van Dijk "ideologies...are the overall, abstract mental system that organizes...socially shared attitudes (p.18). Mental representations "are often articulated along Us versus Them dimensions, in which in-group ideology is positive and out-group is negative" (1998,91,93,95,96,98a,98b), just to maintain supremacy.

Muslims having one Allah Almighty, Hindus thousands of gods, Christian's god is hanged for their sins, Sikh 's god died a few centuries ago. Where to go, whom to assert for help? He is shown in a Mandir with PoojaThal. God doesn't reply to him in Mandir then goes to church with some same PoojaThal. Viewers really laugh when he takes off his shoes in

Church where people are sitting for worship with shoes. He has been thrown outside after committing a sin of cutting coconut in church. He is told that god was hanged for his sins 2000 years ago. But he surprisingly asks how god could have hanged for his sins when he has come now.

Lakin hum ka kiya hum to abi abi ayaya han (But what about me, I came recently)

3rd question is why PK pastes stickers of god on his face when he thinks people will beat him? How has he learnt it? PK says pasting of stickers on his cheeks is self-defense. He has learnt this technique to save himself through the same visual. He observes that people do not act aggressively if there comes the name of the gods. Reply to Jaggu PK says its self-defense.

Jis tarah deewar pe Bhagwan ka fotu lagate hain (As god's picture is hanged on wall)

4th assertion is the title of the movie. The title is ironical. PK is an astronaut and researcher. He comes here for research, thinks logically and behaves neutrally. Why he is called as PK, a drunken. In fact, due to his questions, people think he is drunken because no one knows about his reality. He is an example of a rational being. Tapasvi suggests a remedy to an old man that his wife will be okay if he goes to a far off Mandir. PK asks the man;

Uncle jab tum ko likhat main na mily to jana nae Aunti ko chor kr (Uncle unless u get written permission don't go)

On the other hand, Jaggu's father says: *Dharam ky mamlay main sawal nahi uthaty yeh vishwas ki baat hai (Don't ask questions about religion, its game of faith)*

Then Jaggu asks: *Ager baghwan na chahty hum sawal na uthain tu who humian tark krny ki reason krnyki Shakti nadaty (If God didn't like he wouldn't have permitted us the power of reason to ask question)*

PK's language, which he has absorbed by holding the hand of a prostitute, shows that he is a common man. He calls godman with a new word manager. Why a manager not any other? In fact, there is a link between manager, if a bank manager, and godman that is the manager. The manager works as an organizer likewise godman works as an organized of religion. Tapasvi makes a direct phone call to god which for PK is the wrong call. He thinks there is a duplicate god who just enjoys those calls and does not responds. If the calls go to real god, he would definitely solve the people's problems.

4.2 Discursive Analysis

Language is a complicated phenomenon and the meanings are never apparent. Meanings are in layers like an onion. The term discursive means any utterance or written work under normal usage of language. It is a language which helps the people to maintain their power over others. According to Van Dijk (2000) "If there is one notion often related to ideology it is that of power". There are some questions. (1) Why is Tapasvi so popular and powerful personality? (2) Why people do believe him beyond doubts?

Tapasvi is a social actor. He belongs to that social class who has direct contact and control over the people's heart and mind. There are millions of his followers who can do anything for him.

As Cherry said: (*Tpasvi k bhktun ne a ky trishul ghusa diya*), (*The followers of Tpasvi stabbed him*). Cherry is the owner of a TV channel. He has a channel to share his views but he is afraid to question Tapasvi?

An assertion is that if a man like Cherry is afraid of Tapasvi's power what about a common man.

To reply there is a counter-question. Has anyone ever seen god? The answer is people know about god(s) what they are told by these godmen (managers for PK). The common man is not habitual to investigate and question because of a few reasons:

1: They have a lack of knowledge. 2: They consider it a sin to question any religious personality. 3: People are brainwashed in such a way that if they question about or on the god they will face god's anger.

People believe Tapasvi because he is the only way to approach god. It is a common phenomenon that man is afraid of superstitious and Tapasvi manipulates this fear in his own interest. He is running a business of fear because he knows: *Jo darr gaya wo Mandir gaya* (PK if you are afraid you will go to god). He has created such a strong power relation with people that even well-educated persons like Jaggu's father (a businessman) consider it a sin to question Tapasvi. He says "*dharm kemamlay me sawalnae*". He favors Tapasvi as compare to his daughter he is running people have created covers to protect themselves. Religion is Tpasvi's cover. Under this cover, he is running a business and earning money. He knows well that the world has become a global village. People are so busy that they have no time to perform their rituals. Interestingly he has created Internet Artian Online Darshan Courier Parsad. In these days, ladies are more conscious for their weight so parsad is even Fat Free; sugar-free. He is aware of people's weak points and use. After the interval, viewers come to know that he has many side businesses like oil, blankets and bags etc. with his picture (emotional manipulation).

Van Dijk (Discourse, Power, Access 2008) says "Dominance is a form of social power abuse that is as legality or morally illegitimate exercise of control over others in one's own interests often resulting in social inequality". Power abuse not only involves the abuse of force as the followers did with Jerry Bajwa but can also affect the minds of the people. Dominance over the mind snatches individual rational ability and person sinks with the thought and ideology of others. As Tapasvi predicted Jaggu that Sarfraz will *Wo musliman Pakistani dokha dyga* (*That Muslim Pakistan will deceive*).

Jaggu did not believe it. She planned to marry but due to a misunderstanding was forced to believe Tapasvi's prediction. At the end of the film, PK realized and proves Jaggu that the incident was just a misinterpretation and Sarfraz was and is still loyal to her.

In the same dialogue comes the reflection of ideology. Ideology is defined as "The mental framework [i.e.] the languages, concepts, categories, imagery systems of representation" (Hall, 1996, p.26). Van Dijk (1995: 17) comments that "ideologies are typical, though not exclusively, expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication, including non-verbal semiotic messages, such as picture, photographs and movies."

Ideology is divided into in group and out group structures. The in group ideology is maintained by proving one's own self good and blaming others. *Musliman dokhybaz hain, wo tumhain dokha dy ga* (*Muslims are cheaters, he will cheat you*).

A question arises in one's mind why Tapasvi interprets Pk as Pervaiz Khan? Why not Pardeep Kumar or Pascal kaif? Why does he consider only Muslims as deceiver? For his survival as a social actor, a godman, he needs to give contrasts and controversies to people, in order to maintain his supremacy power and dominance over the followers. Without any solid reason while talking to a journalist he says check where this PK is a Muslim? *Kia yeh PK koi Muslman to nahi (Is PK not a muslim)*. Where the matter of the fact is all religions give peace and harmony a priority including Islam. Few basic concepts of different religions are as under:

- Islam says, “*Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth has been made clear from error. Whoever rejects false worship and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks. And Allah hears and knows all things*” (Surah al-Baqarah: 256).
- Sikhism says, “*Before becoming a Muslim, a Sikh, a Hindu, or a Christian let's become a Human first*” (Guru Nanak Dev).
- Christianity says, “*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind*” (Corinthians 6:9-11).
- “*Set Religion free, and a new Humanity will begin*” (Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel).
- Hinduism says, “*There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread*” (Mahatma Gandhi).

4.3 Social and Historical Analysis

PK is set in a multicultural society of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, etc. People behave according to their beliefs. Every culture has its own specific and different background.

Tapasvi knows that people have realized his true picture; they are no more blind believers. He plays another trick in the name of hope. Tapasvi challenges PK as *Baghwan per belief umeed deta hai kia tum logon ki umeed khatum krnachahty ho (Believe in God gives hope, do you want to exterminate the hope of people)*.

Tapasvi's choice of words and use of language is according to the situation. His selection of words shows his full control and command over the psychology of society. He considers PK his rival. He has prepared himself for a debate with PK. Tapasvi's question is just enough for PK to be answerless but he says: *Iss baghwan py yaqeen kro jo sab ko paida kia na ky jisko tum ny bniaya (Believe in God, who created you and everything)*.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze PK to see how social actors maintain their power and dominance by influencing people's beliefs and fear. How stereotypical ideas are promoted for materialistic gains. They do it by creating god's fear in people's mind and heart. They don't try to solve the problems rather divert people's attention towards something else. After watching the movie; viewers come to know a clear message of Humanism. PK emphasizes that if we want to see our next generations prosper on this land then we have to leave our fanatical creeds. People should be united, show brotherhood and try to solve their problems by themselves.

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