

# Analysing Tamil Films with Critical Discourse Analysis Approach

K Pradeep

*Ph.D. Department of Journalism and Communication*  
*University of Madras*  
*cpradeepklee@gmail.com*

**Abstract**— Cinema is very distinctive place of arts in the first place, it can be considered as the most significant form to appear since the advent of opera in the late 19th century. In India, Tamil film has attracted worldwide influence, particularly in the visual text and visual elements are mapped with multicultural sense. In the film study domain number of methodological perspective used to study Tamil films, apart from Critical Discourse Analysis perspective. The present study is an attempt to introduce the possibility of doing research in the manifestation of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach with Tamil films

**Keywords**— Cinema; Critical Discourse Analysis; Multicultural Sense; Tamil Film

## 1. Introduction

The present study is an attempt to introduce the possibility of doing research in the manifestation of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with films specifically in Tamil films. Cinema has very distinctive place in arts, in the first place it can be considered as the most significant form to appear since the advent of opera in the late 19th century. In the concern of Indian cinema it is complex in the term of identifying the Indian film because there are different regional film industries in India such as Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Bengal, Malayalam and so on. Unfortunately, Hindi language films only probably overloaded the name if Indian Cinema. However, within the short period of time, it attracts all type of people because of its visual potential.

In a very short era of time, Tamil cinema industry highly praised one of the foremost film productions in world wide. Since the silent period, Tamil film has grown into a million dollar industry located in Chennai, Tamil Nadu produces 150- 200 feature films annually. It is often referred to as Kollywood, an amalgam of words Kodambakkam and Kollywood. Tamil cinema has a long history comparable to other Indian language cinema (Velayutham, 2008). Apart from other film industry, Tamil movies attract different region and world audience for its style and sophistication of cinematic technique. However, in the visual element it has the complex ideological political and cultural terrines that are inbuilt in the narrative process. In this concern to study, the inner dimensions of Tamil film discourses should need the critical perspective to analyse the narrative genre.

## 2. Approaches in Film Discourse

Film studies today have reached the peculiar manner of sophistication and number of approaches exists for the study of film. Other country scholars have focused on different aspects from different perspectives of methods for the analysis and study of films. The existing rang from Semiotics, Content analysis, Ideological analysis, genre criticism, feminist perspective, discourse analysis, psychoanalysis, sociological analysis, Marxist approach Ethnography etc. Visual Images are never innocent: It is always put up through diverse practices, technologies and knowledge. A vital approach to visual images is hence needed: one that believes about the agency of the image considers the communal practice and special effects of its viewing and reflects on the specificity of that viewing by various audiences, including the academic critic.

The significant role of media, in general and the movies, in particular, in disseminating information and creating an image of the real life by use of the language as a powerful social tool is totally irrefutable. Although the analysis of the movie discourses is an important aspect of the critical discourse analysis (Amirian, Rahimi and Sami, 2012).

Many studies have been encouraged due to the indisputable power of the media throughout the world, most of which are critical in various disciplines: semiotics, linguistics, pragmatic, and discourse studies. Their approaches have been mostly content analytic which have revealed the stereotypical, discriminatory, racist or sexist image in the text, photos and illustrations. The basic studies of media language focused mostly on easily observable surface structures, such as a prejudiced use of words in the description of 'us' and 'the' ( and our/ their action and characteristics), especially in representing the communists along the socio-political line (ibid). In generally serious of studies which are in the perspective of the news, good news bad news and the favour of media, the stereotypic news content gender discrimination and so on.

## 3. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The 1970s shows the emergence in the form of discourse and text analysis that identified the role of language in structuring power relations in society. At that time, much linguistic research elsewhere was focused on a formal aspect of language which constituted the linguistic competence of speakers and which could theoretically be

isolated from the specific instance of language use (Chomsky, 1957). During this time much sociolinguistic research at the time was meant on unfolding and explaining language variation, language change and the structure of communication with limited concentration to issues of social hierarchy and power Hymes, 1972.

The pioneer of critical discourse analysis is Norman Fairclough (1995), According to him Critical discourse analysis "systematically explore often an opaque relationship of causality and determination between a) discursive practice, event and text, and b) wider social and cultural structure, relations and process; to investigate how such practices, events, text argue out and are ideologically shaped by associations of power and struggle over power" (Fairclough, 1995). Critical discourse analysis is one of the peculiar apparatus that enable the researcher to reveal those inequalities of power which has not easily identify and especially useful in investigating the communicative strategies power relation of text and image privileged employ to transform their ideologies into commonsense via institutions such as , Film, television.

Kress gives an account of the theoretical foundations and source of Critical Linguistics. He indicates the term CL as "quite self-consciously adapted" (Kress, 1990, pp.88) from its socio-political counterpart, as a label by the group of researchers working at the University of East Anglia in the 1970s (Wodak, 1996a). By the 1990s the label CDA used more consistently to depict this approach to logistic analysis. Then the other deep understanding of CDA in the inventions of Fairclough and Ruth Wodak's (1997) took these criteria further and established 10 basic principles of a Critical Discourse Analysis Program. Finally, they state that CDA assumes that power relations are discursive, In other words, the power is transmitted and is practised through discourse. Therefore, we can study 'how power relations are exercised and confer in discourse' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, pp.272). According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997), the primary focus is on how power relations are exercised and negotiates in the discourse. So the analysis can show how the kinds of power relations involved in racism and are maintained through news text and political speech.

## 4. CDA Frameworks

### 4.1 CDA Framework by Fairclough

Fairclough is considered to have contributed to the field of CDA most significantly. This model may be the hub section of the whole field of CDA because he was the first to create a theoretical framework, which provided guidelines for feature critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001). He is the only scholar who explains the connection between power and language ( social power and ideology) in his research (Fairclough, 1989). Fairclough provide a three dimensional framework for the analysis of

text and discourse: 1) the linguistic description of the formal attributes of the text; 2) the understanding of the relationship between the discursive process/interaction and the text, where text is the end result of a process of text production and as a resource in the process of text explanation and lastly, 3) the elucidation of the connection between discourse and social and cultural reality ( Fairclough, 1989).

### 4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis Framework by Hodge and Kress

According to Hodge and Kress, the main focus of a meticulous vocabulary item will be on its source of classification, schema and ideologically significant relations of synonyms, antonym, and hyponymy, relational values and expressive. Hodge and Kress model treating " language and ideology" has been the main criterion. It is a "systematic model" made up of the suppositions regarding the interaction of the language, through, ideology and the classification system which consists of "actional" and 'relational'. Actional are divided more accurately into 'transactive' and non-transactive". Relational indicate the consequence of mental activities, suggest judgements, comments, etc. In this frame work ideology involves systematically organised presentation of reality (Kodge & Kress, 1993).

### 4.3 Critical Discourse Analysis Framework by Van Dijk

In the vision of Van Dijk from his work has provided some illustration of category that he believes to important in doing CDA studies. He asserts that the main point of the research is to show how a variety of ideologies are expressed in various kinds of structures. Here mention some category .

*Actor description (meaning):* Our ideologies will determine the way actor are described in the discourse.

*Authority (augmentation):* In contrast to racist talk, that out groups is compared negatively and in groups positively.

*Categorization (meaning):* generally people categorise people based on their social affiliation, race, ethnicity, etc. And this kind of further category is Disclaimer, Euphemism, Evidentiality, Generalization, Hyperbole, Implication, Irony, Polarization, Presupposition, Vagueness, Victimization ( Dijk, 1997).

### 4.4 Critical Discourse Analysis Framework by Van Leeuwen

According to Leeuwen CDA is the impact of power structures on the production and/or reproduction of knowledge and its effect on identity and subjectivity of the member of the community. In the framework consists of the following main section.

➤ Exclusion

- Suppression
- Back grounding
- Inclusion
- Activisation Vs.Assivisation
- Generalization vs. Specification
- Individualization
- Assimilation
- In determination
- Determination
- Nomination and categorization
- Fictionalisation and identification
- Impersonalized Social actors
- Abstraction
- Objectivation.

Critical Discourse Analysis is one of the effective approaches to studying films, and there are different framework following the study. However, the researcher should have well understood of the concept as well as the knowledge about the selection criteria made very effective analysis for the apt study.

### 5. Possibility of studying Tamil film Discourses

In all disciplines, there are long traditions of analysing and the meaning-making process in visual communication, such as in Media and Cultural Studies, Film Studies and Semiotics, especially in Tamil film domain. In Tamil film, Industry produced such as Star value films as well as low budget itself. These two poles are always producing the multiple visual and textual discourses in the everyday life. At the point of time, each film has the own political sense some are deals with mainstream politics and others are open the political discourses in a very close manner to everyday life. However, number of methodological perspectives has been employed with Tamil films and its elements.

Tamil films since its beginning itself involved in the mainstream politics, for instance, From MGR to Present Chef Minister J.Jayalalitha have established their identity along with cinema. In this concerned films and politics are close relations in its narrative discourses. In the beginning of Dravidian party proclaimed their ideology and its strategy implement through cinema. In the contemporary films like Manithan wich emphasis whith anty political discourse, which center the main stream politics and its political discourse. These films were released in the very short period of Tamil Nadu election. These kinds of films have many coplex political discourses.

The other aspect to do CDA with Tamil films discourses are inbuilt with comedy, in south Indian film tail films, comedy is very familiar, but the inner meaning and the buried ideology sense is so complex and double meaning in the ordinary experience. The general meaning for laugh it at the same time in the inner dimension offer the complex social system and its existing social condition.

Caste and social discourse are the important discourse in Tamil film industry, for instance (Devarmakan, 1992), (Chinnakawnder, 1991), their films are highly sensitive and problematic in the Tamil film scenario. In the narrative sense, we could analyse how the cast, issues and its politics are carried by the film and the filmmaker and its identity through the narrative discourse.

The songs are the other domain of doing CDA , it carries the many aspects of everyday life which are highly complex in the concern of meaning making process. Every song is the masculine prominent; probably the women protagonist is represent as commodity. Its masculine identity and the hidden ideology and power notions are in the concerns of many scholarly attempts but in the CDA offer the new dimensions in the narrative.

### 6. Conclusion

The Tamil films language have the decisive ways of representing people, particular construction of social identities and the particular construction of social relations. These relations are strongly bonded with ideology and power discourses in visual text. These dominant narrative texts are the complex identity to produce meaning. This invisible textual sense is very crucial in representations of people identity, gender discourse, narrative elements, location, cast identity, socio-political and economic aspect itself. In this context of the narrative, note only possible to reveal the dimensions of invisibility in the narrative. It also help to the dominant ideology of narrative text, and image. The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) like specific framework helps to unveil the hidden dominant discourse of textual meaning and its intertextuality.

### References

- [1] Amirian,R. M., Rhahimi,A., & Sami, G. A Critical Analysis of the Images of Iranians in Western Movies: The case of Iranium, *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & Vol. I*,2012.
- [2] David, M., & Mayr, A. *How To Do Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage Publication,2012.
- [3] Dijk.V.,T.*Discourse as social Interaction*. London: Sage Publication,1997.
- [4] Fairclough, N. *Language Power*. London: Logman, 1987
- [5] Fairclough, N. *Media Discourse*. London :Edword Arnold, 1995
- [6] Fairclough, N,*Critical Discourse Analysis. A Critical Study of Language*. London and New York: Longman, 1995
- [7] Fairclough, N. & Wodak, R. "Critical Discourse Analysis" T.A van Dijk, *Discourse as Social Interaction*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., Lon.: Sage, 1997, pp.272.
- [8] Leeuwen, T. *Discourse and Practice. New tool for Critical Discourse Analysis*. London. Oxford University press, 2008
- [9] Norman, F. *Language and Power*. New York: Lagman.Theo Bakker. S, (2013). *The eye of the Serpent: An Introduction to Tamil Cinema*. New Delhi, East West Book. 2001
- [10] Van Dijk, T.A. *Communicating Racis: Ethnic Prejudice in Thought and Talk*. London: Sage Publication, 1987
- [11] Velayutham, S. *The cultural politics of Indian's other film Industry*, United States: Routledge. 2008
- [12] Wodak, R & Meyer, M. *The method of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage Publication, 2010.