

Power and Resistance in ‘Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya’: A CDA Approach to Television Talk Shows in Nepal

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Abstract

Television interview programs entail the circulating power on the part of the interviewer based on the background of media power; simultaneously, the interviewee attempts to maintain resistance as the counter power circulation emerges out of the socio-political underpinnings. This study aims at denaturalizing the strategy of circulating power and resistance and exploring the unequal relationship between the participants of discourse, especially of the popular television interview program ‘Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya’ aired on API HD television. The demystifying process was established through the analysis of the language of the spoken texts unfolding the strategy of representation, concealment, and construction of identity of self and others, mainly through the play of ideology and hegemony in relation to power through the data collected from official youtube channel of API HD and Approached with CDA to reveal the underlying intentions of power and resistance. The research reveals that the interviewer, as an established journalist, exercises power over the interviewee; however, the interviewee, as a political person, makes efforts to resist. Talk show program, as a form of media discourse, cultivates the ideological functions for both power and resistance.

Keywords: *interruption, CDA, power, ideology, identity, representation, media*

Introduction

While the audiences enjoy the hot debate on television talk show programs, the circulation of power and resistance from either side may remain unnoticed. Although the interviewer, as a media representative, derives the power from the position to question the guest, the guest himself or herself tries to present up to the mark for the resistance. The talk show conversation seems to be natural without any traces of ideology of circulating power and resistance. Such naturally appearing discourse carries the load of hidden intentions of discourse participants. When the talk show is of political nature and the guest is from the political party which has recently been established and performed well in its promise to fulfill, the talk gets hot with the arrows of verbal forms.

The presenter, Tikaram Yatri, is a renowned journalist with years of experience in talk show programs

in various domains. He keeps the knowledge and information related to the issues debated. On the surface, his intention to circulate power does not get manifested. However, his use of language in the context of issues of debate and the background of guests conceals his interest in power. When we use language, we are conscious of the semiotic choices in order to achieve our aims through language (Machin & Mayr 2012). The language we use consciously is not the dead language, but rather, it carries out its intended functions for language users. So, the language used by Tikaram Yatri and his guests is ideology-laden discourse because discourse is the medium for ideology to naturalize unequal social relations or bring out the strategy of concealing the real intentions of the discourse users (Machin & Mayr 2012).

Although immense studies have been conducted on language and its functions, the study of the use of

language in conversation, especially the talk show program of a political nature, needs to be explored more with a critical discourse analysis approach, which provides the basis for analyzing power and resistance through the use of discourse. Moreover, discourse analysis of Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya can uncover the power of the presenter and the resistance of the guests. Thus, this research aims at revealing the hidden intention of circulating power behind the curtain and creating resistance through the discourse. The aim of the analysis is to uncover the power relation between the talk show participants through Critical Discourse Analysis. For that utterances spoken by them are taken into analysis critically to extract out their hidden strategies through the use of language. This analysis aims at revealing media power and resistance from other discourse participants as an interviewee.

Review of Literature

Various studies on television talk shows reveal that political talk shows are guided by institutional arrangements. The media, as an institution, has the power to circulate against the guest. However, the interviewer needs to maintain neutrality according to media ethics.

It is possible to perceive the institutionalized interaction as distinct from informal conversation in many respects, as it shapes the conversation of both the interviewer and the interviewee (Atkinson, 1982). The conversation between interviewer and interviewee is guided by restricted interactional rules (Heritage, 2004). However, sometimes, the interviewer goes beyond the rules and asserts his or her power in the conversations. Meanwhile, interviewees have the ability to steer the subject of their discussion by choosing to ignore the preceding questions, which entails talking about something other than their response (Greatbatch, 1986), which creates resistance to the interviewer.

To study the language use in context, it is relevant to approach with critical discourse analysis because critical discourse analysis “critiques the discourse and explain how discourse figures in existing social reality as a basis for action to change reality” (Fairclough, 2018). Critical discourse analysis deals with power through discourse analysis critically to demystify the ideology. “Critical discourse analysis deals with how power abuse is enacted, reproduced or legitimized by text and talk of dominant groups and institutions” (Van dijk 1996). “A central aim of CDA is to use linguistic analysis to lay bare the ideological positions which underlie the discourse of powerful institutions such as media” (Statham 2022). Critical Discourse Analysis critically analyzes the language of discourse participants and uncovers their hidden agendas. It is critical because it denaturalizes the language to reveal the ideas and commonsense assumptions in the texts as the kinds of power interests buried in the text and talk (Machin & Mayr 2012).

Discourse is any form of language in practice set in social settings that can be written or spoken form, music in singing to nonverbal communication like facial expression, body movements, gestures and visual images like photographs and films (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999). Seemingly, language and discourse are similar, but in-depth language has an abstract set of patterns and rules that work at the different levels of the system, such as in grammatical, semantic, and phonological levels, whereas discourse paves the way for such patterns to be used in the real context (Simpson & Mayr, 2010).

Ideology as a set of beliefs of individuals or groups (Statham, 2022) has the hidden intention of circulating power and hegemony. The ability and capacity to do things and to be done over other people collectively refer to power (Fairclough, 2015). Dominant groups achieve their way of domination through coercion but not all the time.

Language acts as a tool to persuade the subordinate groups to accept and internalize the dominant ideology, what Gramsci (1971) calls hegemony.

Both media and political parties are not untouched by the social structure of power. Media workers and Party cadres are both social actors functioning as dominant groups in the construction of their ideology for power. Since the interview takes place according to the arrangements of the interviewer in terms of question design and determining the time to put the views of the interviewee, the interviewer appears to be dominant among the discourse participants. Meanwhile politician as an interviewee manages to resist the ideology of journalist.

The reviews discussed here are related to the theoretical reviews and the thematic reviews, which provide immense references that political talk show programs are guided by institutional rules and power. So, the approach of critical discourse analysis can uncover the underlying intentions of discourse participants; however, the context of Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya needs to be explored.

The study aims to examine the issue of power and resistance in media discourse. In this regard, the presenter seeks to circulate the institutional power of media, whereas the guest, as General Secretary of Rastriya Swatantra Party, manages to resist the power circulations. The topic of power and resistance will be evaluated on the basis of how the presenter exercises power over the interviewee and meanwhile the guest tries to resist.

The research article is organized into four sections. Among them, the first section deals with an introduction that sets the background and significance of the study. The introduction section establishes the stage for the topic under exploration. It connects the broad topic to the specific title of the

research. The second section provides a literature review and the research questions, including the organization of the study. The third section sketches a map of the methodology, method, tools, and so on, which will provide the plan and procedure to search for the answer to the research questions. The fourth section concentrates on the results of the thematic analysis of the data, which will contribute to answering the research questions, and the fifth section deals with a discussion, which will interpret the result of the Mati interconnection through modernity theories. The final section includes a conclusion, which is followed by references at last.

Methodology

This study relies on the qualitative approach combining conversation analysis from the linguistic theories especially the theories of critical discourse analysis and conversation analysis itself. The primary data for analysis were taken from the talk show 'Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya' from official YouTube channel of API HD television which was aired on 20 March, 2023 on both platforms. The guest for the show was Dr. Mukul Dhakal, aged 29, General Secretary of Rastriya Swatantra Party. Although it was the talk show of about one hour and thirteen minutes, only the period of first half an hour was taken for analysis. The interview was transcribed in Nepali language and duly into English as a personal translation to achieve the goal of approaching with CDA. The analysis was focused on word choice rather than grammatical structures, body language, and gestures, for the analysis focuses on the circulation of power and resistance from both ends of discourse users relating to the theories of conversation analysis. Proper attention has been paid to ensure the ethical aspects of research.

Results

Table 1: Power and Resistance in the Discourse of Talk show

Power	Resistance
How	How
Constructing Self-Identity as intellectual traveler	Defending himself and his party as resisting media influence.
Using complex language structure, presupposition	
questioning and counter-questioning, interiorizing and making puzzled	
Representing immature	
Reducing the political party to the belonging of a single person. devaluing and debasing	
Creating image of Ra.Swa. Pa. connected to media created Kathmandu centered citizen created and image created by those living out of the country., Ra.Swa.Pa is not representing those people in the remote areas.	
Presenting the interviewee as an immature person to hold the second highest position in party portfolio.	
Taking longer time rather than guest	
Questioning about the roadmap of the party and goes on to characterize him having only feelings, emotions, thirst and dream.	
Controlling of interview mechanics and making correction of the words spoken by interviewee.	

The findings demonstrated that the interview program was the institutional setting of the media domain where the interviewer enjoyed the position of power. Meanwhile, the interviewee also managed to resist the power circulation against him. The interviewer used different strategies for the maintenance of power, such as constructing self-identity, using complex language structure, questioning and counter-questioning, representing negatively to the guest, devaluing and debasing the political party of the guest, and creating the identity

of Rashtriya Swatantra Party as the party of urban people, and controlling the interview mechanics. However, the interviewee attempted to manage his resistance by obscuring and deriving references from different sources.

The study manifested the interaction between power and resistance from the side of the interviewer and interviewee, both of whom have roots in media and politics. This revealed the dominance of the media in portraying the newly established political party as immature and partially represented.

Discussion

API HD is a popular TV in the Nepali media, particularly television. It gets its name from the interview program ‘Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya’ and the presenter Tikaram Yatri, who was the editor-in-chief of API HD television. This program was aired every Monday from 9:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Its YouTube channel has 1.01 million subscribers, from which we can also get information on its popularity. The information about the program provided in the link below exposes that TamasomaJyotirgamaya is the nation’s most popular television talk show. As the name suggests, it is an effort to explore the true knowledge of the national and international affairs that matter to the communities and the human race as a whole. The guests of the shows include top political leaders and renowned figures from different walks of life, mostly associated with contested affairs.

The show was aired after the verdict of the Supreme Court of Nepal, which nullified the citizenship of Rabi Lamichhane, the president of Rashtriya Swatantra Party, consequently losing the post of Deputy Prime Minister, Home Minister, Member of Parliament, and the chairpersonship of his party. The guest was Dr. Mukul Dhakal, who talked about the dream, vision, and mission of the Rashtriya Swatantra Party and related other contemporary issues.

Before we enter into the analysis of real talk, it is worthy to reveal the host's choice of the word 'Yatri' in the place of his surname. Generally, Yatri means the traveler who travels physically far and wide. But in the context of him, he is the intellectual traveler searching for true knowledge. In the description below the YouTube video of the official YouTube channel AP1 HD, he has mentioned the real purpose of TamasomaJyotirgamaya as an effort to explore true knowledge of the national and international affairs to contribute to the communities and human race as a whole. If he is Yatrising for true knowledge, it is no more than his strategy or hidden intention to construct his new identity. Concealing his real surname and choosing Yatri as his nickname fulfills his strategy to construct his identity as an intellectual traveler. The ideology of presenting himself as Yatri has some connections with his manner of choosing words that are highly classified words and language that an ordinary person cannot approach. Here the question arises if such words are really necessary in the talk show in such a country where high level literacy rate is significantly less. Language has a primary function of communication. If the function of language is not fulfilled, the words or utterances turn into dead things. However, the other side of using such utterances can be seen as the conscious use of such tough words, which may be to fulfill the intention of presupposition. It is the hidden strategy to show one's own superior, constructing the frame for others. He might have tried to withhold his identity as an intellectual traveler, presupposing his utterances are comprehensible to the community. Such utterances are, for instance, unprecedented, critical conscience as such. The program's objective gets gainsaid if we relate his spoken utterances because his intention to contribute to the community and human race gets dismantled since most of the community members do not get him what he speaks. Machin

and Mayr (2012) clarify about presupposition as a "presupposition to do with what kinds of meanings are assumed as given in a text."

The title of the day-specific program for Tamasoms Jyotirgamaya is quite interesting.

Nepali: Sabailai prashna garera udayeko Ra.Swa. Pa ko prabakta lai prashna pratiprashna Personal Translation: Question and counter-question to the spokesperson of Ra.Swa.Pa that rose with questioning all.

Here, the title appears to be a commonsense issue about Ra.Swa.Pa. As it is the talk show, participants are the interviewer and interviewee, and the interviewer is likely to ask questions and counter-questions, which is the format of talk show in general, from which audiences get amused. The program's general format does not reveal the underlying agendas about what the interviewer will do with question and counter-questions. It states that the political party(Ra.Swa.Pa.) rose with questioning all. Let's have a look closely to uncover the hidden intention of the presenter here. Does the party really ask questions? If we delve in-depth, we get the root of the president of Ra.Swa. Pa, Rabi Lamichhane, who used to be a presenter of a popular program, 'Sidha Kura JanataSanga.' Through that program, Lamichhane not only became popular but also won the hearts of many people. If the presenter refers to Rabi Lamichhane, then the question arises of whether a single person can form and run a political party. It is not relevant to ask the question and counter-question to the spokesperson because the party has been reduced to the belonging of a single person. In this context, the presenter's intention may be to devalue and debase the Ra.Swa.Pa as a party and reduce party to a single person's possession. The presenter feels to be privileged to question and counter-question. The tendency of question and counter-questioning is applied to inferiorize and make puzzled in the

interview, so the presenter exercises power and simultaneously persuades the audience.

When the program begins, the presenter goes on with the background information of that specific day program, he mentions that Ra.Swa.Pa. has got relatively unprecedented success even in the short period of time of six months. The presenter's use of words 'unprecedented success' surprises to those who look the things critically because except Ra.Swa.Pa. there are many other political parties of which the number of MPs is higher in the parliament. Activities beyond the six months' period have been discredited. It is quite considerable to take into account the activities of the present members of Ra.Swa.Pa. in the background before the political party was formally announced. Presenter's role of setting background of the talk show is not free from prejudices.

The presenter furthermore goes on to categorize the image of central committee members, MPs and others as image in the level of common citizens in the villages and media created and Kathmandu focused citizens created image. He does not explicitly tell which image Ra.Swa.Pa. carries. Although he does not reveal, it is not difficult to understand the image of Ra.Swa.Pa. connected to media created Kathmandu centered citizen created and image created by those living out of the country. Here the presenter digs out the shortcoming of Ra.Swa.Pa. not being able to reach the common people living in the remote places which means Ra.Swa.Pa. is not representing those people in the remote areas.

Nepali: *Uhaharu kina aaunu bho? Bhanne bisayako prohatsahan ta mediale gardaina. Uhaharulai jawafdehi banaune, prashna garne, aalochana garne, kamjori khotalne ho (Yatri).*

Personal Translation: Why they came? Media does not promote it. Media makes them accountable, questions them, criticize them and digs out the weakness (Yatri).

The presenter in the background setting wants to validate his discourse through the reference to the function of media. As the party has a short history of its existence, and no more things have been done on the behalf of citizens and the nation as a whole, the utterances support him to remain in power. He uses the ideology of accountability and digging out weakness which serves his interest of remaining in dominant space. He adds that it is not the duty of media to promote on why they came. It is not just case of not promoting but digging out the reason of their entry in politics. He does not explicitly state but implies their vested interest behind entering in politics.

Nepali: *aimerma party ko portfolioma doshro jimmewari paunu bhayeko chha.... tapai raajnitima kina? (Yatri)*

Personal Translation: You have got the second position in the portfolio of party in early age. Why are you in politics? (Yatri)

Nepali: *Sanai dekhi desh banaune bhawana ... asamanata hataunu parchha bhanne bhawana, maile saat kakshya padhdanai baburam acharyako kitab padheko (Dhakal).*

Personal Translation: Had feelings to contribute to the country . . . to end inequality. I had studied the book of Baburam Acharya when I was in grade 7. (Dhakal)

Nepali: *Yo ekprakarko bhawana ra bhabukta bhayo, pyassapana bhawana ra bhavuktama traichhakimurtakhaka panichha? Ahile party banera sansadma sarkarma gaisake pachhi . . . yojana banna thalyo, samaj arthatantra, antarastriyee sambandha nai . . . Bewasthapika karyapalika ra nyayepalikaka kamkartaby aadhikar ra chunautilai pani bujhna thaliyo? (Yatri)*

Personal Translation: It is just a kind of feelings and emotions. Do you have any concrete roadmap except feelings, emotions, thirsts, and dreams?

Have you started to making plan after forming party, entering participating in government? Have you started to understand about society, economy, international relation and rights, duties of legislative, executive and judiciary and their challenges? (Yatri)

The presenter intends to present the interviewee as an immature person to hold the second highest position in party portfolio. When he provides background of the guest, he reveals the age of the guest. The hidden agenda or strategy behind the revelation may be inspired by his motive to represent the guest as immature for the post although it has not been explicitly stated in his efforts of background of guest. The question 'Why you are in politics?' is a bit direct and impolite. The presenter prepares the background of the first question characterizing the guest as immature and asks the direct question through it he has intended to circulate power over him. Dr. Dhakal tries to justify his entry in politics through his feelings and emotions for the nation since his childhood, intentions to end the inequalities prevalent in the country. He gives the reference of book by Baburam Acharya which he had studied when he was in Grade 7. Here the guest for the show tries to justify his entry into politics to the reply to the questions of presenter. If we evaluate the time taken until first four minutes and twenty-six seconds except 56 seconds all the time is taken by the presenter. The first question is answered to justify his entry in politics but before the guest completes his answer, the presenter interrupts. Such interruption is a tool through which the dominant participant of the discourse can dismiss or ignore the contribution considering that irrelevant (Simpson and Mayr 2010). Here the presenter thinks that the reply from the guest is irrelevant so he interrupts him within 56 seconds of time. The interaction takes place in the media which is a social institution. The social institutions where interaction takes place creates the hierarchical structure of power distribution (Thomas 1988). In this context the presenter seems to be powerful who

manages to interrupt the guest when he does not get the answer as his expectations.

Then the presenter adds another question whether the guest has any concrete road map in addition to feelings, emotions, thirst and dream. He goes on to question if the guest and his party have started understanding about society, economy, international relation, bureaucracy, and Legislative, Executive and Judiciary and their challenges with rights and duties.

Nepali: Yeslai dui khandama bibhakta garau, tapaiko rajnitima aagaman ra arko tapaiko party adhakshy ra tapaiharupraty lageka prashna ra apeksha ka bisaya (Yatri).

Euta silsilabadd arupma deshlai bhumarima pariyeko rahechha, tesbata nanikali samadhan hudaina bhannekura ramrari bujheko chhu (Dhakal).

Bhumarima kasle paryo? (Yatri)

Jo byakti sarkarma chha usko haatma sattahudaina, tesko legacyle deshlai bhumarima pareko ho (Dhakal). Nepalma bastavma loktantranai chhaina, sakshambyaktis attam apugnuparchha (Dhakal).

Dhritarastra Andho (Dhakal)

Dristibihin (Yatri). Shabda aafaiko artha hudaina (Dhakal). Shabdako artha sankuchan wa artha bist ar hunchha, Sapekshitsa majle nirdhara ngarne ho (Yatri).

Bichar ra khnapaune adhikarchh ainayeha (Dhakal). Kinachhaina? Rabi Ji le sarbajanik rupma k samma bichar rakhnu bhayo? (Yatri).

Personal Translation: Lets divide it into two sections, first about your entry in politics and second questions and expectations on your party president and party (Yatri).

Country was kept in a continuous political abyss, I have well understood that there is no solution to it until we take country out of the abyss. (Dhakal)

Who kept in abyss? (Yatri)

Person in Government does not have power in hand, this legacy has kept the country in abyss (Dhakal). There is democracy in Nepal at all (Dhakal). Capable person should reach to power (Dhakal).

Dhritarastra Blind (Dhakal)

Vision impaired (Yatri). Words do not have their own meanings (Dhakal). Word meanings are narrowed or expanded relative to the society (Yatri).

There is not freedom of expression (Dhakal). Why not (Yatri). To what extent Rabi Jihās expressed? (Yatri)

The above interaction gets exacerbated when the show moves further. The presenter proposes to divide the program into two sections, first with guest's entry in politics and second with the questions about the party president and Ra.Swa.Pa overall. Here interviewer is in control of interview mechanics as he can start it, ask questions and has privilege to terminate as well (Kress and Fowler 2019). It is the media power of interviewer to ask questions as representative of news organization (Simpson & Mayr, 2010). Dr. Dhakal makes it clear that he has understood well that the power is not in the hand of a person who is in Government and the country has been kept in continuous abyss of politics. Here it is meaningful that Dr. Dhakal being a General Secretary of the party and the party having participated in the Government tells that power is not in the hand of person in Government. Answers are not to the point of question asked. The guest rather obscures it because he appears to be less powerful in the institutional interaction. Simpson and Mayr (2010) argue that a less powerful participant may use the vague utterances to deal with powerful participants in institutional interaction but at the same time powerful person may ask the guest to state clearly. The presenter asks who the actor of continuous political abyss in Nepal is. The host exercises his power over the guest to make his statements less ambivalent. Dr. Dhakal gives the

example of democracy from Mahabharata to argue that Nepal has no democracy at all. He makes use of word 'blind' which the presenter makes correction as vision impaired. But Dhakal states that words do not have their own meanings but they gain meanings from the society. Here the interviewee is using the resistance. Simpson and Mayr (2010) argue that in the news interview, the interviewer holds the powerful interactional position than the interviewee but meantime strategies of resistance are managed by interviewee.

When Dr. Dhakal realizes and accepts to use 'vision impaired' instead of 'blind', we can see the power of presenter over the interviewee. Meantime question arises when Dr. Dhakal tells that we do not have freedom of speech and the democracy for capable person to reach to power. Of course, power should go in the hand of capable person for the good governance but through the practice of general election. If the capable person does not reach the power, can't it be a democracy? Here Dr. Dhaka obscures the concept of democracy and his intention and the agendas of Ra.Swa.Pa. to send their president to power.

The presenter most of the time is in the way to target his questions related to the president of Ra.Swa.Pa. as he tells that the second section deals with the questions about the president and his party overall. He goes further to mention the boundary-less freedom enjoyed by Rabi Lamichhane. This implicitly refers to the press conference organized by Ra.Swa.Pa but in essence by Rabi Lamichhane in the name to telltale the activities of media, particularly mainstream media, what he called Twelve Brothers Media.

Conclusion

Talk show is the interactive program done in the presence of interviewer and interviewee. They are the participants of discourse and through which they expose their strategy of power circulation and

resistance simultaneously. The hidden agendas have been uncovered through the approach of Critical Discourse Analysis.

'Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya' aired on 20 March, 2023 on AP1 HD and official Youtube channel has discourse participants as presenter, Tikaram Yarti and guest, Dr. Mukul Dhakal. From the day's program specific title throughout the entire talk show, the presenter entertains the privileged position to exercise power over the guest participant by asking personally directed questions, creating the identity of the guest and Ra.Swa.Party as young. He takes control over the arrangement of time and interview mechanics. Providing long background, interrupting in the middle before the guest completes his answer and objecting the choice of words by the guest visualize the presenter's hidden intention to maximize his power.

The interviewee often obscures his answers and uses the tools of resistance strongly. Despite his image as politician, the presenter seems dominant in his intentions to inferiorize the guest. So, it can be concluded that the talk show has the unequal power relation between the participants. However, both of the participants try their best to establish their ideology to be dominant in the use of discourse.

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