



Vijay Tendulkar's play *Kamla* in the light of Critical discourse analysis

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ABSTRACT

CDA stands for Critical Discourse Analysis. It's an interdisciplinary approach to studying language that examines how discourse (written or spoken communication) reflects, reinforces, or challenges power relations and social inequalities. CDA focuses on the ways language is used in social contexts, considering factors like ideology, identity, and cultural norms. Vijay Tendulkar's plays, such as "Ghashiram Kotwal" and "Kanyadaan," offer rich material for critical discourse analysis (CDA) due to their exploration of power dynamics, social issues, and cultural norms.

Introduction

Vijay Tendulkar is one of India's most prominent playwrights, known for his powerful and provocative works that explore complex social issues. His plays often tackle themes of caste, gender, power, and morality, reflecting the intricacies of Indian society. Vijay Tendulkar's contributions as a playwright extend beyond mere entertainment; they serve as a critical lens through which to examine and question the fabric of Indian society. His bold themes, rich characterizations, and innovative styles have left a lasting legacy in the world of theatre. India has the richest tradition in theatre which is closely related to ancient rituals and seasonal festivities of the country. The earliest contribution to the Indian theatre dating between 2000 BCE and 4th century CE is Bharata Muni's 'Natya Shastra' which describes a theory of theatrical performance based on the style and motion. Theatre in India started as narrative with recitation, singing and dancing become an integral elements of the theatre. A search for an

authentic Indian theatre had begun within fifty years of William Jones' translation *Shakuntala* in 1798. Some of the notable Indian playwrights are Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar, Kalidasa, Badal Sarkar, Mohan Rakesh, Rabindranath Tagore.

The objective of the paper is to study and compare the various critical discourse analysis aspects of the selected plays of Tendulkar's '*Kamala*', '*Sakharam Binder*'. Karnad and Tendulkar are the giants of Indian theatre, who explored the overt and covert violence in human beings and reevaluated the socio-cultural, historical, gender, caste and abided the consciousness of vulnerability in Indian social hierarchy. Indian drama has a rich and diverse history that spans thousands of years, reflecting the country's varied cultures and traditions.

Here's a brief overview:

Ancient Period

Sanskrit Drama (c. 200 BCE - 400 CE): The earliest form of Indian drama is found in Sanskrit texts. Playwrights like Bharavi, Kalidasa and Bhasa, created works that combined poetry and performance. The *Natyashastra*, attributed to Bharata Muni, is a key text that outlines the principles of drama and performance.

Medieval Period

Regional Developments (c. 400 - 1200 CE): Different regions began to develop their own theatrical traditions. For example, *Kavya*, (poetry) and folk theater emerged in various languages, reflecting local stories and culture.

Colonial Period

Influence of Western Theater (19th Century): The British colonial period introduced Western theatrical forms, leading to the emergence of modern Indian drama. Playwrights like Rabindranath Tagore, and Mohammad Iqbal, began to experiment with themes and structures.

Post-Independence Era

Modern Indian Theater (1947 onwards): After India's independence, drama became a medium for social and political commentary. Prominent playwrights include Vijay Tendulkar, Girish Karnad, and Mahesh Dattani, who addressed contemporary issues through their works.

Contemporary Scene

Diverse Voices: Today, Indian drama encompasses a wide range of languages and styles, including traditional forms like, Nautanki, and Tamasha, as well as modern experimental theater. It reflects the country's ongoing social and political changes. Overall, Indian drama is a dynamic field that continues to evolve, drawing on its rich heritage while embracing new influences and perspectives. Indian drama has a rich and diverse history that spans thousands of years, reflecting the country's varied cultures and traditions. Here's a brief overview:

Themes and Power Structures

Social Hierarchy: Tendulkar often critiques the caste system and patriarchy. Analyzing dialogues and character interactions reveals how these hierarchies are reinforced or challenged.

Gender Roles: His portrayal of women often highlights their struggles against societal constraints. Examine how language reflects gendered power dynamics.

Language and Symbolism

Metaphors and Symbolism: Tendulkar uses powerful symbols (e.g., the figure of Ghashiram) to critique authority and societal norms. Analyzing these symbols can uncover deeper meanings related to oppression.

Dialect and Register: The use of regional dialects and varied registers showcases class distinctions and cultural identities, offering insights into the characters' backgrounds and societal positions.

Ideological Perspectives

Marxist Lens: Many of Tendulkar's works can be viewed through a Marxist lens, examining class struggles and economic disparities. Analyze how dialogues reflect or resist capitalist ideologies.

Postcolonial Critique: His plays often address the legacy of colonialism, exploring the conflicts between tradition and modernity. Look for language that illustrates this tension.

Intertextuality

Cultural References: Tendulkar's works reference historical and mythological texts. Analyze how these references serve to critique or reinforce contemporary social issues. **Theatrical Conventions:** Examine how the use of theatrical elements (e.g., breaking the fourth wall, non-linear narratives) challenges audience perceptions and societal norms.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Kamla By Vijay Tendulkar.

In Kamla, a play by Vijay Tendulkar, critical discourse analysis helps uncover the dynamics of power, gender, and exploitation in the dialogues and interactions between characters. CDA examines how language constructs and perpetuates power relations, particularly how patriarchy and class hierarchy are reflected through speech.

Key Themes in Kamla:

1. Patriarchy and Gender Exploitation:

The play exposes how women are commodified and subjugated in a male-dominated society. Kamla, the tribal woman purchased by Jaisingh Jadhav, symbolizes the objectification and exploitation of women. Sarita, Jaisingh's wife, also embodies the quiet suffering of educated women trapped in the patriarchal structure.

2. Power and Class Dynamics:

Jaisingh, an influential journalist, represents the upper-class male who exercises his power not only in society but also within his household. Kamla, on the other hand, belongs to a marginalized class and is dehumanized as a victim of the human trafficking market.

3. Language and Power:

In the dialogue, language reflects the dynamics of control. Jaisingh's authoritative language toward Kamla and Sarita underscores his dominance. The difference in speech styles between characters highlights class and social distinctions. For instance, Kamla's simple, rural dialect contrasts with Sarita's educated manner of speaking.

Example of Dialogue for CDA:

Jaisingh: "I bought her. She is mine. I will use her to expose the system."

Sarita: "You bought her? A woman? Is she a piece of furniture to be bought and displayed?"

Kamla: (Timidly) "Babu, will you send me back? They will kill me."

Analysis:

1. Jaisingh's Dialogue: The phrase "I bought her" illustrates the commodification of women. Jaisingh sees Kamla not as a human being but as a tool for his journalistic expose. His use of possessive language ("mine") reflects ownership and objectification. Jaisingh's statement also reflects the power he holds over Kamla and Sarita. He uses Kamla for his gain, which underscores the inherent exploitation in his actions, despite his claim to fight for justice.

2. Sarita's Response:

Sarita challenges Jaisingh's objectification of Kamla, questioning the moral implications of treating a woman like a "piece of furniture." This shows her growing awareness of gender inequality, as she sees the parallel between Kamla's situation and her own subjugation in her marriage.

Her questioning of Jaisingh's morality begins a subtle rebellion against patriarchy, although Sarita remains trapped within it.

3 Kamla's Dialogue:

Kamla's fearful and submissive tone demonstrates the effects of years of marginalization and abuse. Her deference to Jaisingh as "Babu" (a term of respect) shows her internalized inferiority, as she pleads not to be sent back.

Kamla's dialogue reveals the stark contrast between her and Sarita: while both women are oppressed, Kamla's position is far more precarious due to her class and tribal identity.

Conclusion:

Through the dialogues in Kamla, Vijay Tendulkar presents a critique of societal power structures that oppress women through patriarchal norms and class exploitation. Critical discourse analysis helps unpack how language, power, and identity intersect in the play, showing how speech reflects deeper social inequalities. A CDA of Tendulkar's plays reveals how language shapes and reflects power relations in society. By critically engaging with his texts, we can better understand the complexities of Indian social dynamics and the playwright's enduring relevance. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) examines the relationship between language and power within various social contexts, revealing how discourse both shapes and is shaped by social structures, identities, and ideologies. To conduct a CDA, one begins with text selection, focusing on a relevant document such

as a news article or political speech. Contextual analysis is crucial, involving an exploration of the social, political, and historical background of the text, as well as intertextual references. The analysis then delves into linguistic features, examining lexical choices for connotations, syntax for agency, modality for obligation and certainty, and voice to identify representation. Thematic analysis follows, identifying main arguments and how power relations are depicted, while considering the text's potential impact on public opinion and societal norms. Ultimately, the findings highlight the interplay between language and power dynamics, illustrating how discourse influences perceptions and reinforces or challenges social ideologies. If you have a specific text you'd like to analyze, I can assist with a more focused examination!

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