COPY OF PUBLISHED RESEARCH ARTICLES
Making of a Celebrity: An Imagined Community Construction by Indian Press

Silajit Guha* and Sudipta Paul†

Abstract

With the arrival of graphic revolution, it has become increasingly impossible to draw the lines between personal and political, private and market. Television, social media and their imitative versions of newspapers have become dependent more on selling the images, literally and metaphorically to negate the pressure of public opinion in public sphere. Media as a social institution, serve the purpose of legitimizing the efforts of hegemony construction by different other social and religious institutions and in the process get involved in producing 'metalanguage'. The efforts of media to turn everyone into celebrity enjoy the advantage of drawing public attention to farcical and construct an air of simplicity and ease. The emergence of celebrities with the help of pseudo-events in our social world has been able to foster a culture of consumption and leisure. Newspapers, supposedly a more sober and less instantaneous medium are also forced to follow the business rules set by the visual media. The intrinsic difference between a celebrity and a star happens to be one that a celebrity is in most cases incapable of becoming a star, which requires a certain amount of qualities. With the boundary between public and private closing down, the celebrities are in control of public imagination. Their existence in public life has been internalized giving birth to new kind of political discourses. The discursive elements of celebrity

* Reader, Department of Mass communication, Assam University, Silchar
email: silajitguha@gmail.com

† PhD Scholar, Dept of Mass Communication, Assam University, Silchar.
discourse are capable of giving birth to a new kind of 'metalanguage' also. The article looks into the construction of a celebrity in the pages of India's most famous English newspapers and tries to analyze how these discursive elements are giving birth to new possibilities of a narcotizing dysfunction or collective amnesia.

**Keywords:** Discourse position, discourse strand, celebritisation, para-social interaction, ideological square

**Prologue**

With the narrowing down of sky by mediatised events and the replacement of public concern by 'publicisable public and pseudo-events' (Boorstin, 1961), the public place has become a veritable battleground for hogging limelight with the help of media. While the pamphleteering for public personalities by media has been a recognizable goal for many years, especially with media emerging as a corporate institution serving political and hegemony building purposes, the graphic revolution in the last thirty odd years even in India has set new parameters for transformation of stardom into celebritydom. Celebrities have been able to initiate a culture of consumption, leisure and inimitable private life leading to mass desire of consumption. Media have been able to obliterate the importance of the existence of at least some qualities as a prerequisite for stardom from public perception by introducing celebritydom, which essentially thrives on liberal doses of consumption. In a public discussion dominated by 'mediated interaction', which suffers from asynchronicity of time and space, celebrities have the ability to introduce a completely new interpretation of existing social values. While 'mediated interaction' (Thompson, 1995) through the introduction of social media has taken over the other more established forms of media, the interpretation of celebrity culture promoted by media as vacillating between democratic populist and cultural decline theorem of popular politics is gaining momentum. Foucault (1979) has been instrumental in talking about the power in modern societies emanating from discourses and how power is increasingly shifting out of the hands of established political machineries. While both liberals and Marxists are aghast at this understanding of
diminishing capabilities of established political blocks, his understanding of politics being essentially decentralized and giving birth to new forms of social movements and power blocks with the help of emerging discourses available in new kinds of 'metalanguages' (Barthes, 1991) could land the understanding about celebrity coverage of media on a different plane altogether. Evans, J. et. al (2005) argue that “Celebrity is a resource created and deployed by a range of often interlocking media- such as the press, films and television programme- to which audiences respond in all manner of ways”. Celebrity is usually defined in popular discourse as a well-known person to the public for their actions who finds space in media coverage frequently. A celebrity is a person who is known for his 'well knownness' (Boorstin, 1961).

Celebrity news makes the famous person more real and provides sense of commonality with people. Celebrities provide a constellation of recognizable and familiar people to reconnect both with celebrities and with each other (Marshall, 1997). Celebrity journalism presupposes that it can create an aura about the celebrity, bring out their ordinariness along with their extraordinariness and bridge the gap between celebrity and their fans by providing intimacy with their everyday lives. Marshall (1997) considers this as 'affective investment' in celebrities by readers because of the personal background of the celebrities as is provided in newspapers, magazines and elsewhere. Celebrity journalism which dates back to Nineteenth century essentially means news coverage of celebrities of their personal details, scandals, vacuous discussions, gossips, profile of celebrity, public moments involving celebrities, sensational news, famous personalities to speak on their programmes and promotional events, individual achievements and news about their ordinariness along with extraordinariness which can be related with everyday life.

The entire celebrity culture is based on self-representation, positive approach towards celebrity, which represents individualistic power based on the distinctive characters of the persons alone, which are famous for what they are. It has been termed as a process of social levelling (Gray, 2002; Cowen, 2000; Garrat, 2002) which is the development of a capitalist market society. Again, for Boorstin
a celebrity is one who suffers from narcissistic self-obsession and is a mere cultural decline where instant gratification is preferred. Due to celebrity culture, different spheres are merged together—public and private, information and entertainment, facts and fiction.

Mass media as a mediating plane for fostering liberal aspirations, new ideas and societal change have its own set of discourses. Discourse of print media is different from the broadcast media discourse. Mass media as an important negotiator of the society are in a continuous process of developing its own discourse and eroding the boundaries between the producers and consumers. Media's responsibility is to negotiate between public order of discourse and private order of discourse. News produced by media are received and consumed in private context. According to Norman Fairclough (1995), any discourse can be divided into the communicative event and the order of discourse. Discourse is a multidimensional social phenomenon (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). It can be a linguistic object, an action, social practice, mental representation, communicative event, and a cultural product. Communicative events in a society mean production of news and chain of events on celebrity and their actions, which go through from the process of production to the process of consumption; order of discourse here essentially means celebrity discourse. In a discourse like that, chain of events is determined by the ideological position of the producer since the nature of media power and ideologies of media are interconnected.

Text and Celebrity

According to Evans, J et al (2005), a celebrity text can be categorized into three layers of texts—core text, secondary text and tertiary text. Core text represents the work of the celebrity i.e. films, books, television shows, sport performances, political social actions etc. Secondary text refers to the texts of several genres including gossips, which promote the core work of the celebrity. Tertiary level indicates text constructed by the audience through production of fan fiction or fandom, which is excluded from the present study. This categorization helps to understand the relation between the discursive practices (language and thoughts in celebrity news) and
non-discursive practices (actions of celebrity); how core and secondary text interact. In the context of the present study, it helps to understand whether news and entertainment are blended together or the focus is on the individual rather than their actions.

The ideological work of media language can be determined from how the world is presented, what identities are set up and what relationship is built up among media producer and consumer, here celebrity and their readers. Horton and Wohl’s (2004) theory of Para-social interaction for radio and television can also be used to understand the production and consumption of celebrity text by the press and its readers. “Different but not dissimilar to ordinary social interaction of the face to face kind, Para-social interaction refers to the apparent familiarity between media personalities and audiences that can be established through routine use of radio and television . . . . This familiarity can become a substitute for or may complement more traditional sources of familiarity, such as interactions between family members, relatives and friends. An ‘illusion of intimacy’ (Horton and Wohl, 2004) can be fostered in the performance features of these media, such as their conversational style . . . .” (Laughey, 2007). Concept of ‘personae’ i.e. personalities are coupled with the Para-social interaction to form relationship with readers through media (Horton and Wohl, 2004). This creates an intimacy and a continuing relationship with the readers/audiences. Joshua Meyrowitz (1985) mentions, “The Para-social framework may explain why many singing stars turn to more and more personal lyrics and themes as their careers develop and why public officials often add more private information to their public speeches as they become more widely known”. Hence, it creates niche for more personalized information and entertainment through construction of illusion of interaction between those who are represented and their readers to minimize the gap. Viewers or readers feels intimacy with the celebrity projected in the media through the process of ‘celebritisation’ in which a person is portrayed and constructed as a celebrity by the media. According to Evans, J. et.al (2005), ‘celebritisation’ is a process of considerable social and even political significance. It’s an effort to reveal something that is normally hidden, to uncover the ‘true self’ (Dyer, 1979) of the celebrity.
Analyzing the Text

Analysis of a discourse has to presuppose that 'language use is always social' and that 'discourse both reflects and constructs the social world' (Rogers, 2004). Critical discourse analysis attempts to discover how the textual interpretation, discursive and non-discursive practices in a private situation and how socio-cultural situations are related to dialectics which creates new set of emerging discourse; these social practice and discourse practice are dialectical in nature i.e., two way. Discourse Analysis tries to find out the influence of social context on use of language. But Van Dijk (2008a, 2009) argues that no such direct influence exists, because social structure and discourse structures cannot be related directly, and need the mediation of an interface. The mass media have power to influence knowledge, beliefs, values, social power relations and social identities (Fairclough, 1995). It has the power to represent things in particular ways especially through the use of language. The power of media can be revealed through the analysis of preferred language use. "Language use in any text is always simultaneously constitutive of (1) social identities, (2) social relations and (3) systems of knowledge and belief" (Fairclough, 1995).

Study Objectives

The researchers attempt here to analyze the discursive practices (language and thoughts) of press in the arena of celebrity journalism in certain Indian newspapers. It is also attempted to underscore the linguistic and 'discoursal nature of media power'. The researchers also take an objective to explore the ideology of celebrity news, and how their messages are packaged for consumption of the readers. The protagonist of each story has been defined as actor in accordance with the practice of critical discourse analysis.

Evaluating the Discourse of Celebrity News Items

Three news items on celebrities from different fields are chosen for analysis. First is the interview of a political celebrity (8th January
Making of a Celebrity

2012, Times of India), second one is the news interview of an Indian film director (8th January 2012, Times of India) and third one is an article on a social celebrity (15th January 2012, Times of India).

The first sample of the analysis in the article had appeared on 8th January 2012, Sunday in discourse plane (here newspaper) Times of India's Times Nation section. The context of the news is a news interview of a political celebrity on the occasion of upcoming U.P. Assembly Election 2012. Here surface of the text has a headline with quotation of the celebrity “Rahul has worked hard. It will pay rich dividends”.

Actors mentioned here by the interviewer Manjari Mishra is Kalyan Singh, Mayawati, BJP, and JKD. Here Kalyan Singh is presented as a candid person who could not deliver his job in politics properly but now he is presented as an expert when it comes to commenting on other’s action. Other actor of the news item like Mayawati is presented as a corrupt politician, BJP as a corrupt political party and JKD is a party representing youth.

Language Used in the Select News is

Hyperbole: Gasping in the ICU

Adjective: Candid, Chastened Kalyan

Adverb: Candidly

Use of Superlatives: Greatest blunder

Use of Colloquialism: Neta’s Natter means chatter; chumming up means friendship

Use of Metaphor: Army of corrupt- here army signifies BJP workers

Anaphoric/Cataphoric Reference

“Anaphoric reference is where a word or phrase refers back to another word or phrase used earlier in a text” (Paltridge, 2006). And cataphoric reference is described by Paltridge (2006) as “an item, which refers forward to another word or phrase which is used later in the text”. As the analysis is on celebrity persona, the examples of references are chosen to find out how the actors are described or projected in the story. The distinct examples are shown in italics here:
“Frequent rumours of his return to the BJP do not amuse Kalyan Singh anymore. The two times UP Chief Minister has weathered many a political storms since his hey days. A much-chastened Kalyan candidly admits that rejoining BJP and chumming up with Mulayam Singh Yadav were “greatest blunders” he had ever committed. However, the successive betrayals helped him to re-invent himself. Therefore, after Ramdhun lost its appeal among UP voters, the one-time face of hardcore Hindutva has changed his profile of being a patron of the youth. (He even has a good word for Rahul Gandhi). In a candid interview with Manjari Mishra, the former UP CM says that more than 50% candidates fielded by Jan Kranti Dal headed by his son Rajveer are below 40 years. “JKD will do well because Unkepaas motor hain, to hamarepaas voter hain,” says Kalyan.

In the above lines it is apparently clear that the emphasis is given to portray the protagonist as a human being who has learnt from his mistakes and transformed into a better person. Here the political actor is individualized. He is referred to as a ‘chastened’ person, who ‘candidly’ admits in a ‘candid interview’ his past faults, ‘greatest blunders’ which implies the decision to go along with Mulayam Singh. The author tries to draw attention to the actor’s human nature and referring him as humble person. Mulayam Singh is referred to as a sub-human who acts on the basis of money (Unke pass motor hai; they have cars) where as his son’s party JKD has large vote banks of people rather than money.

“No chance! Why should I go back to a party, which is gasping in the ICU? BJP is critically ill and no “Sanjivani” can revive it and UP. It’s a party of liars. Today they claim to maintain a distance with Mayawati and they would be the first to crawl back to her if they get a signal from her. I resisted Mayawati thrice during my stint in the party. In fact I was the lone voice of dissent. Mayawati suits this army of corrupt and unscrupulous elements.” “... her avarice backed by a cabinet equally greedy and reckless is well known ... everyone wants to know what made her tolerate the band of corrupt till the very end of her tenure?”

With the emphasis on “I”, the author tries to show the greatness of Kalyan Singh who controlled himself falling in a trap of corruption and restrained himself from joining hands with Mayawati (avarice,
Making of a Celebrity


greedy) who is undermined here as a greedy politician (greedy and reckless, band of corrupt) with irresponsible party members. Anaphoric references with use of pronouns 'it', 'they' refers to BJP which is a sinking ship because of its coalition with Mayawati. BJP is portrayed as "party of liars" which means the party lacks responsibility towards people and also lacks social values.

Discoursal Nature of the News Item

The lead of the interview begins with the turn positioning Kalyan Singh as a candid but underachiever who lost his field in politics. The interview presents him as an expert predicting future results of several political parties in coming Uttar Pradesh Assembly Election, 2012. Sentence connector "however" is used in the lead which is balancing both sentences - "... greatest blunders he had ever committed. However, the successive betrayals have helped him to re-invent himself". Here "however" provides a base for the second sentence and in this turn interviewee's position is made somehow not a pitiable one but more of an experienced player in the game of politics. The interview presupposes (in the sentence- it's a party of liars) that BJP workers are committed to lies, corruptions other than working for common people. In the turn in question no. 2 (Aren't your views on BJP a bit too harsh ... ?), the interviewer is implicitly trying to project BJP as a less corrupted party, opposing the claim of the actor. The interview is rich with rhetorical means like argumentation. The interview argued in favour of Kalyan Singh claiming him as a truthful person who learnt from past mistakes (. . . the successive betrayals have helped him to re-invent himself). The actor claims here that U.P. politicians will face resentment from public in coming polls due to their involvements in corruptions (Corruption is sure to haunt U.P. politicians).

The interviewee raised the issue of BJP going bankrupt in U.P. It is a typical political position with reference to mainstream politics. The ideological strand revealed in the story is one that yields a dominant meaning (Hall, 1980). It is the politics of a society, which is thoroughly casteist and talks about a man who is looking for a space in that set of casteist politics. Here actor of the story, Kalyan Singh is shown as a person who seems to have learnt from his past mistakes and now with his experiences is trying to foretell the condition of the parties in the upcoming poll. It is only a public
relation exercise by a seasoned politician who is trying to mend fences with his electorate through the most popular newspaper of India. It is the public posturing of a politician who happens to have lost his political ground. The story is peculiar in the sense that it reveals both self-gloating and identity crisis of a seasoned politician. It rarely happens in Indian politics that a seasoned politician is admitting his mistakes. The story has discursive knot or entanglement of discourse strands of politics and discourse of corruption (... Corruption is sure to haunt UP politicians. Maya of course lead the pack. Her avance backed by a cabinet equally greedy and reckless is well known).

The second sample of the analysis is from also print media discourse plane, Times of India. News appeared on 8th January, Sunday in Life style section of the newspaper. The context of the story is celebrity news on the occasion of the film DAM999 made its entry to the nomination of Best Pictures Awards in Oscars. Surface of the text is a quoted remark of the actor ‘Ra.One gets 4 stars. DAM999, a half.Sad’.

Actor mentioned here by the author PurbaDutt is an Indian film director Sohan Roy who is portrayed her as an immensely talented person.

Language Used in the Select News Is
Hyperbole: Maestro, heartening
Adjective: Solid
Noun phrase: Use of three noun together - Rock-solid conviction, which means quality of the actor
Idioms: Rock-solid, maestro
Implication and allusion: Lesser mortals, Navarasas, Navagrahas, 9 forms of lost love

Anaphoric/Cataphoric References
“He was happy but not surprised. Rock-solid conviction of this kind is often interpreted as smugness, especially when you are talking the Oscars. But Sohan Roy isn’t going to change his answer. “I was on a flight to Bali when the Academy Awards team tried...”
contacting me, I got off, and logged on to their site. And there my film was. My objective was to make it to Oscars, and I went about methodically...

The lead begins with cataphoric reference "he" which refers to the actor Sohan Roy who is described as a balanced person who can take success gracefully with the use of attributes "happy", "not surprised", "rock-solid". The emphasis is given to depict him as a focused person (my objective went methodologically).

"A quick scan of Roy's bio reveals he is not likeliest of filmmakers. The entrepreneur who holds a BTech in Naval Architecture moved from being a marine engineer..." "Your personal website calls you a 'marine engineer', naval architect, director, lyricist, actor and artist'. Quite the Renaissance man."

Here with anaphoric references the actor is portrayed as multi-talented person referring him as a businessman, marine engineer along with his film making skills. Both cataphoric and anaphoric references along with adjectives are used here to glorify the aura of the celebrity persona mentioning him as "Renaissance man". Author tries to show the revival of Indian cinema through the actor's work influenced by his experience in various fields.

"You said you had visited the Mullaperiyar dam site because "it is my moral responsibility, fundamental duty" to do so. Why did you feel compelled to make the trip? "...It's my way of protesting peacefully. More than 40 lakh lives are at stake, and we need to act fast..."

The above references of the actor clearly show that the actor is projected as a responsible person towards society who is actively involved to protest the socio-political dysfunctions in his own way (my way), which makes him ahead of other activists.

Discoursal Nature of the News Item

In the lead, the actor is depicted as an unusual celebrity who takes the Oscars fame graciously and without dumping his chair. Thus, the author here is showing him as a confident master of his creation. In question no. 4 "So, the film has personal connect", the interviewer tries to take turn towards personal experiences of the director which worked as background information for the film
From answer no. 4 to answer no. 5 the interviewee's turn remained towards social issues and personal knowledge. In the question no. 6 to question no. 8 the interview takes turn on controversies and criticism faced by the film. The story presupposes that standards of Hollywood movies are high and the actor wants to meet the Hollywood standards with Indian crews (**I wanted to make a 100% made-in-India movie of Hollywood standards**). The presupposition also extends the art of mythification (Barthes, 1977) by turning Hollywood into the final destination of filmmaking, which in reality is not for experimental films. The story claimed for inspection of the structures of the dam – **"There are 5,000 dams across India today that are in urgent need of structural revision. In 2020, this number will rise to 40,000.**" There is an ideological tenet of naturalistic fervour lurking behind external veneer of professionally equipped filmmaker. The actor also wants to get his act ratified by Western standard which is indicative of post industrialized citizen. The story tries to establish for readers that celebrities have moral responsibility towards society and success comes if work is planned and executed properly. It tries to keep people informed about the threats from inappropriately built dams, which can cause havoc to mankind.

The discourse strand of the story is that it deals with the celebrating a filmmaker's entry into the world of glitz as his film is nominated for Oscar's awards. The story is in fact not exactly a public relation activity to give a chance to misunderstand film and its maker to be heard in public life. The discourse position of the story is about a filmmaker who belongs to a different field or background but is still successful in leaving an impression in creative field far away from his professional domain. The news story is an attempt to celebrate the person by investing in him certain qualities, which are not to be found in an average filmmaker. A whole lot of attributes from different fields have been brought into play to impose a larger than life image. The discourse position shows the beginning of imposing celebritydom on an individual who is so nearly a product of globalized India.

The third sample of the article is from Life style section of Times of India's Sunday issue, 15th January 2012. The context of the story is news of a social celebrity on the occasion of the writer's book
release. Surface of the text is heading with quotation from the actor, 
"It's my most erotic work yet"

Actor mentioned here in the story by the author PriyankaDasgupta is writer KunalBasu who is promoting his latest literary work The Yellow Emperor's Cure.

Language Used in the Select News Is
Hyperbole: Excited the West
Implication and allusions: Far from apologetic
Use of simile: Pornography is like Disneyworld

Anaphoric/ Cataphoric References
"The novel seems to have excited the West even before its India launch. A Hollywood producer, intrigued by its flaming sensuality, has approached Basu's agent for film rights. And the author is far from apologetic about the draw. That's not unexpected when you hear him speak of spending two consecutive nights at Khidderpore brothel, where he took shelter as a political activist during the Emergency." "The overt obviously finds no favour with a man who admits he is aroused by mystery. "Strangers and anonymity arouse me.” And it’s this fascination that’s now prompting him to dig into secrets that lie within closed doors of unknown address in contemporary Kolkata, to feature in his next novel."

It’s a clear promotion of the novel to catch the attention in India and emphasis is given on novel’s theme (flaming sensuality). The actor is referred as political activist irrespective of his work who spent nights in brothels which projecting him as bold man with brave statement of taking shelter in brothel. Normally in society persons afraid to speak publicly about spending nights in brothel due to fear of being misunderstood. The author directly addresses the readers in the form of conversation (when you hear him speak of ..), here “you” refers to readers.

Discoursal Nature of the News Item

The story talks about a laissez faire economy where a certain dosage of sex is usually required to sell a book. The story tries to
provide the concept of a society, which is matured enough to date with sensuality. The actor here argued on the difference between pornography and erotica - claim 1- "There is a difference between pornography and erotica", claim 2- "Erotic writing leaves enough cues for you to imagine it yourself" and claim 3- "When the mind engages with body, it results in erotica. Otherwise, it's porn."

The story underscores the promotion of Kunal Basu's new novel, The Yellow Emperor's Cure though the story begins with the actor's background information and gradually unfolds the theme of Kunal Basu's sensual literary work for the Indian readers, which attracted much attention from the Western world. The discourse position of the story is aimed at attracting the readers about current trends in novel writing in the West and how an Indian author can be appreciated if he follows the trend. The USP of the story is that level of erotica present in the novel is enough to mesmerize even the Westerners as well as Hollywood. The story only talks about the glitz associated with an author earning fame in the West.

Epilogue

The above example of news interview of political celebrity clearly shows that politics is now celebrated by making the political news more trivialized and less elitist through the action of public relation exercise in Indian context. In the three news stories, the celebrity journalism comes together with public relation and promotion of actors' activities. The stories contain key elements of celebrity culture juxtaposing the entertainment values, use of colloquialism with the news reports of their activities. Through the entire process of 'celebritisation', the celebrity news contributes to make actors as a social entity and help readers to make sense of the social world. Moreover, the textual polysemy draw attentions to serious issues like corruption, social issues, political decisions and implementation under entertaining coverage of celebrity news, thus decoding every news item associated with celebrities in accordance with dominant interest. The entire approach smacks of an effort to legitimize private action in public domain with an understanding of public interest in accordance with liberal laissez-affaire economic regime, which essentially talks about a culture of consumption.
In the above stories, the approach of celebrity reporting relies on adopting more rhetorically tailored language, underlying presuppositions to create the 'ideological square' (Van Dijk, 1998) either of glorified identity of the celebrity or through 'negative other presentation' (Van Dijk, 1998). In the case of first sample, other politicians are negatively represented and all three above samples show the positive glorified representation of the actors. Thus celebrity journalism is a powerful genre of communication employed by press with the use of argumentation, other rhetorical means and tries to organize understanding of mass people about the entire celebrity world. The stories try to create relations between the celebrities and readers as virtual relations between persons sharing common space and have Para-social interaction. The 'multifunctional text' (Fairclough, 1995) of the three news items shows trend towards conversationisation with the use of colloquial words to minimize the gap between projected celebrity and readers and marketization of celebrity persona.

References

Gray, J. (2002). Ulrika is a sign that we’ve got it all. New Statesman, 28 October, pp-28-30, in Evans, J. and Hesmondhalgh, D. (Eds)


CELEBRITY CONSTRUCTION BY INDIAN PRESS: AN ANALYSIS OF FEMALE CELEBRITIES
Silajit Guha & Sudipta Paul

Abstract

Media as a negotiator of society have its own journalistic discourse with specific textual characteristics, methods of production and consumption of texts. Works of media are entwined in its relation to social ideas and social institutions, its language use, its production and consumption of text. Media as a link between private order of discourse and public order of discourse construct and source its news from the actions of powerful social groups including celebrities. News on stars or celebrities always has an intoxicating appeal to the audience and media shape the celebrity stories in varied contexts to cater to its audience. Stars/Celebrities also use the media to increase their visibility for public consumption. Celebrities and their activities usually find space in media coverage sometimes for their professional lives – as the face of a product, star as a worker or sometimes for their personal lives. Celebrity as a mediated persona is nothing but a construction of an identity or image of the star both as an ordinary person as well as extraordinary person. Celebrity image is the antithesis of carefully constructed, mythologised identity of famous persons in media, which is subject to renegotiation between the dialectics of real self and manufactured persona. Through the creative construction of celebrity, the celebrity journalism creates an ‘illusion of intimacy’ between the celebrity and its fans. Celebrity news serves as a powerful discursive function to humanize the celebrity personality and redraw the boundaries between private and public sphere. Thus

1 Asst Professor, Dept of Mass Communications, Assam University
2 Ph.D Scholar, Dept of Mass Communications, Assam University
the paper employs the methodology of critical discourse analysis to find out the discursive elements in female celebrity news items of two national dailies The Times of India and The Telegraph. The paper tries to analyze the emerging celebrity discourse through select female celebrity news coverage by the Indian press. The paper attempts to explore the understanding of the celebrity world through discourses of celebrityisation in writings of print media.

Keywords: Celebrity, Celebrityisation, Celebrity Culture, Culture of Consumption, Discourse Position, Para-Social Relationship

Introduction

While media as a negotiator of society gives better understanding of the world and works between tension of providing entertainment and information, the acts by which gender is constituted bear similarities to performative acts within theatrical contexts’ (Butler1990: 272). Journalism as a ‘louderlifer for the powerful’ (Richardson, 2007) is a saleable commodity, which often devotes ample space to actions and opinions of powerful groups for entertainment and in a way reinforces the power of hegemonic constructions in the society. Formation of Celebritydom by medias in a carefully cavalier way in fact refers to a strange kind of media manipulation. Celebrities surrender themselves to media quite willfully while media keep on believing that it has been their success to galvanise public opinion in favour of a celebrity. Media keep on nurturing the hubris that their effort in maximimising or minimising the flow of public opinion in certain directions has been responsible for the longer or shorter shelf life of a celebrity or a place in the minds of fans. This is a zerosome game where both media and celebrities are engaged in a performative act of hoodwinking each other but the construction of celebrity discourse provides birth to an arena for media watchers to evaluate media machinations from a completely different perspective. Media play key role in transmitting the public truth in private order of discourse, which causes mass desire, or culture of consumption and intimacy of illusion between stars and fans. Fame and celebrities are always desirable objects for media and celebrity; a broader and preferred term used by media is a ‘publicisable personality’ (Boorstin, 1961) who is famous for his/her well knownness. Celebrity as a mediated persona is ‘absolutely dependent on the media to create and disseminate a persona to an audience’ (Evans and Hesmondhalgh, 2005). Celebrity in the age of modern mass media is not real but superficial commodity for mass consumption. Celebrities in the coverage of media actually create social meanings of the world because celebrity and media are mutually constitutive. “A celebrity always represents something more than him or herself. So celebrity conveys, directly or indirectly, particular social
values, such as meaning of work and achievement, definition of sexual and
gendered identity" (Evans and Hesmondhalgh, 2005). Media’s representation
of fabricated image of celebrity with the use of textual device is called process
of ‘celebritisation’. The process of celebritisation conveys symbolic meaning of
social world- how audience/readers perceive the sense of social world through
media’s celebrity construction. Actually the celebrity culture is based on the
ideology of positive self-promotion, public presentation and fabricated image
construction by cultural mediators. Holmes and Redmond (2006) prefer to
term the entire process of production and consumption of stars and circulated
images of celebrities as a process of celebritification. Marshall (1997) asserts that
‘celebrities- unique or idiosyncratic personalities attempt to achieve autonomous
statuses’. Thus celebrities have influential power to control the masses through
the constructed images (Marshall, 1997). While theorizing female stars, Rebecca
Williams (2007) in an article accounts how recent studies neglect mainstream
female stars with highly gendered discussions. According to Williams (2007),
conventional theories of stardom and celebrity either neglect the female stars or
portray them in gendered categories of masculinized as tough personality and
feminized as powerless female figures. Moreover, content of celebrity news even
if it is a trivial news piece actually has polysemy of texts. Therefore, the paper
employs methodology of critical discourse analysis to analyze female celebrities
within the ambit of representation and ideology.

Objectives

The paper tries to find out the discursive elements in female celebrity news items of
two national dailies, The Times of India and The Telegraph. The paper undertakes
an attempt to analyze the emerging celebrity discourse through the select female
celebrity news coverage by Indian press. The paper also attempts to explore
the understanding of the celebrity world through discourses of celebritisation in
writings of print media.

Methodology of critical discourse analysis

Discourse is a multidimensional social phenomenon (Wodak and Meyer, 2009)
and can be a linguistic object, an action, social practice, mental representation,
communicative event, and a cultural product. Discourse analysis attempts
to show how use of language can provide different views of the social world
and different meanings of it. Norman Fairclough (1995) shows that discourse
includes representations of how things are and have been, as well as imaginaries,
representations of how things might or could or should be. Critical discourse
analysis is a method, which includes detailed analysis of texts- how gender,
ideology and identity are depicted in a particular text (Paltridge, 2006). For Paltridge (2006), critical discourse analysis means to "trace the underlying ideologies from the linguistic features of a text, unpacking particular biases and ideological presuppositions underlying the text, and relating the text to other texts and to people's experiences and beliefs." Methodology of critical discourse analysis helps discover how the textual interpretation, discursive practices (language and thoughts in celebrity text) and non-discursive practices create new set of emerging discourse. Macrostructure of each female celebrity story is analyzed here, which includes analysis of overall meaning from combining the propositions, language use and narrative to understand the multilayer of celebrity texts. Discourse position of a news story can be determined through the ideological position of the producer as ideology of media and nature of media power are interconnected. Ideological work of celebrity discourse can be understood how the celebrity world is presented, what celebrity identities are constructed, what relationship is built up among the female celebrities and readers. Five news items on female celebrities are selected here from Guwahati edition of two national dailies The Times of India and The Telegraph, which would involve qualitative analysis of the stories.

Analysis of the celebrity text

Five celebrity news items are selected here for the purpose of understanding the celebrity world depicted by the print media. The first sample is selected from 6th January 2012 issue of The Telegraph on Bollywood celebrity Sonam Kapoor. The interview was published in Friday supplement ETC of The Telegraph by interviewer Priyanka Roy. The context of the story is news on Bollywood celebrity on the occasion of a film release. The surface of the text is an evocative image with the headline "I am too young to regret". The actor is portrayed here as a fashion diva. The interview is an example of laissez faire discourse to establish the actress as a fashion diva with skillful use of attributes like- hot, iconic tags, fashionista, and star-struck person. The ideological square of the story is positive self-representation of the actor. The interview was published as a part of promotion of her upcoming film Players. The focus of the story is more on the individualized information than the making of film. The discourse position of the interview is aimed to promote the actress in glorified position by eulogizing over the actor's personality and talking about glitz associated with film actresses (star-struck person). It also tries to project that film actresses are actually very ordinary person with whom youngsters can correlate (I really missed home, like to travel, chill, hang out with friends.........at the end of the day, I am a normal girl). It's an investment of innocent womanhood in a film diva through the dexterous use of vocabulary (I am too young (26) to regret; I am quite dumb like that). The anaphoric references are used here to show the actress more as a fashion diva.
than a creative person in film. These lines underscore the glitz associated with film industry. Film and fashion go hand in hand. It’s a celebrityised way to sell her to the media ("...I take the tag in a very positive way and I feel proud of the fact that at such a young age I have been given an iconic tag ...I am a very star struck person. I get star-struck seeing our own Bollywood stars!").

The second sample is an interview of Bollywood actress Bipasha Basu by interviewer Priyanka Roy. The interview was published on The Telegraph on 6th January 2012 in ETC supplement of The Telegraph. The context of the story is news on Bollywood celebrity on the occasion of film release. The surface of the text is again an evocative image with headline “Kissing on screen scares me”. The actor mentioned here is Bollywood actress Bipasha Basu. The actor is portrayed here as highly professional actress and fitness freak. Though the interview was published on the release of film but prefers to discuss more of the actress Bipasha Basu than the film. The story depicts Bipasha as a highly professional person, a fitness freak, and an independent modern woman who is happy to be single and can refuse old institutions like marriage from her life. The story goes along with evocative pictures of the actress, “When a shot like that is done, it will be discussed, no matter which country it is. It is supposed to be this very sexy, sensuous shot of a woman. And for Players, we needed that gloss and that package..." the sentences presuppose that film heroines do not mind to be typecast in sensuous roles to add voyeuristic pleasure for audience. It shows a neo liberal society with permissiveness where reel life and real life are blurred. “I am very lucky to have been born in Basu family.... I am an actress but I have cousins who are in their 30s and are not married...I am not against marriage...” the lines represent post feminist ideology where a woman in a society is personally empowered and rejecting the dominant belief where woman were expected to be married at right age and be an ideal wife. “Like kissing is such an intimate moment and emotion and I am not comfortable doing it on screen...it really scares me", the lines show an effort to establish that even a film heroine is a real human being with certain amount of inhibitions. The story has intersexual elements like reference of Halle Berry’s bikini shot from Hollywood James Bond film, Lakshman rekha from Indian mythology Ramayana to show the limitations or certain norms to be followed by everybody. Here in the interview the anaphoric references are used to project bold sensuous image projected by the actress. It’s a public relation exercise for keeping hope alive for getting roles in future (“I wore bikini thinking that it was in perfect sync with the film. Also, I am in great shape right now and because of that a bikini does not scare me anymore.............I am not against marriage, but I just can’t marry anyone. I have to find a guy first!”).

The third news item is selected from The Times of India’s 11th January 2012 issue. The story appeared in the Times Entertainment section. The context of the story is
gossip on celebrity presented by author Neha Moheshwan. Surface of the text is an evocative image with quotation of the celebrity as heading “I want to marry you right now”. Actors mentioned here are Mahak Chahal and Danish Khan. The actors are portrayed as loyal lovebirds. It is a public relation exercise for a positive representation of Mahak as a loyal partner and as an ideal Indian girl. The author shows views of the lover of a television celebrity. The story begins with the presupposition that media already have given importance to the rumor and ample space has been devoted to this issue (Much has been written about Salman Khan’s fondness for “Big Boss 6” contestant Mahak Chahal). Mahak Chahal’s personality is conforming to the feminine stereotypes as a good girl with traits of psychological dependency on her male partner, giving importance to marriage as per parent’s approval. Danish Khan was shown as a conformist male whose function is to give support to his female partner. The story idealizes Indian values and shows cross-cultural marriages are still not acceptable in Indian society. The author tries to give spices of face to face interaction like electronic media with the use of sentences like “we bring you the real Khan in Chahal’s life” which shows conversationalisation of news. The interview was taken online chatting, which can be understood with use of verb “signs off”. Anaphoric references refer to the actor in the story who was a contestant of a television reality show, which was anchored by Salman Khan. The references are used to refute the rumors talked about the actor and introduce the real man of her life. Though they live in Norway but by origin they are Indians. Indian society still gives values to marriage with parents’ approval than live-in relationships. Moreover, cross-cultural marriages are still not acceptable in an orthodox society (A computer Engineer by profession, he and Mahak grew up together in Norway. They kept their relationship under wraps because their parents weren’t comfortable with it. “She is a Sikh and you know how complicated it can be... She called me moments after her eviction from the house and told me, Danish no money is worth more than a relationship. I don’t care about anything else. You just come here and marry me right now”). The references are used to show Mahak’s moral character that values marriage and relationships more than any other material possessions. She is a one-man type woman and there is no scope for any rumors about Salman Khan and her.

The fourth sample of the analysis appeared on 11th January 2012 in the Times of India’s Entertainment section. The context of the news is celebrity news regarding online ‘hate messages’. The news is about actress Kim Kardashian who was defamed by online haters. The surface of the text is an evocative picture of Kim Kardashian in bikini along with headline “Kim to sue her online haters”. This small piece of news item tries to inform readers about the online uploaded hate messages for Kim Kardashian and the founder of the online defamatory website will be summoned to the court. The story deals with an actress who believes that her reputation has a market price and she should counter hate campaigns. The story is a typical example of laissez-faire economy where market determines
the reputation of an individual. It is assumed that the actor has got a positive reputation in the market. So, the story is based on a supposition that the actress has been wronged against and the media have a responsibility in giving her a voice in the public place. The story points out that it's a society which talks in terms of hate campaigns, compensations, legalities and ethicalities of hate campaigns and so on. It reveals the picture of a society where one fan decides to spread hate messages to become closer to the actor. The story reveals the public relation strategy where the audience and fans can consider themselves superior to the reality TV star. This bad publicity actually helps celebrity in re-imaging her celebrity status. The discourse position of the story reveals that a celebrity story can find place in the news section if an evocative picture accompanies it even if it is about a trivial issue.

The fifth sample of the analysis is a news item on celebrity context selected from the issue of The Times of India dated 25th January 2012. The news item is an agency copy of ANI and appeared on Times Entertainment section. The surface of the text is a provocative image with the headline—“She does not want to be typecast”. The news is on Hollywood actress Kate Beckinsale who was portrayed as a delicate and fragile woman in the Hollywood industry. It is a celebrity news item about an actress Kate who was assumed to get stereotypical roles in films and prefers to do more serious empowering female roles. The story comes along with collective symbol like sensual black and white picture of Hollywood actress Kate Beckinsale. This news item appeared in one of the leading dailies of India and shows that it’s a liberal society where a woman does not mind to give photo shoot in gown with evocative posture. It is a typical celebrity story where a heroine is interested with certain virtues borrowed from the world of innocence. The internal intertextual element and anaphoric references with the emphasis on “I” clearly shows that the star discursively positions herself as a professional performer and this piece of news item is simply a public relation exercise for her to get some roles in films, usually a tactic employed by film stars during a dull period for keeping hope alive for their film career in the industry (...I’ve got to play something about that has a little bit more edge to it. I love this character (Selene). I really am proud of the fact that I’ve gotten to play this king of rather iconic, empowered, empowering woman). The story also underscores the influence of Hollywood industry in the creation of a star persona with the deliberate use of media (We don’t know if we really want to see her for this part, cause it’s a cop, and she is really very delicate). Media and film industry often construct celebrity image and conventional theories of stardom polarize female stars in ‘highly gendered categories either masculine or feminine categories’ (Williams, 2007). Here in Kate’s case the media try to construct her image as a disempowered woman with the skillful use of adjectives “delicate” and “fragile” and also as a sexualized image with the use of evocative picture of the star.
Conclusion

The analysis of female celebrity texts gives the idea of individualism, success and failure of public personalities. This provides understanding of celebrity world of power play, image making, and achievements through journalistic discourse of print media. From these celebrity stories, it is easily understood that the celebrities use media for the purpose of celebritisation, the desire for fame, effort to be in the limelight, which gives them a space in the society; they share a common place with their fans. The select female celebrity news items act more as promotional public relation strategies for celebrities even if the news items convey bad publicity like news of Kim Kardashian. All the select stories together show media’s continuous effort of giving importance to constructed mediated star image as a real impression of star’s life. These female celebrity stories provide the ‘promotional outlets for carefully managed and produced publicity’ (Gamson, 1994) for mass consumption. Bipasha Basu and Sonam Kapoor’s interviews in The Telegraph show post-feminist perspective where ‘young women can link fashion with power rather than powerlessness’ (Walter, 1999, cited in Lough, pp. 115, 2008). Rebecca Feasy (2006) identifies this kind of surface appearance and celebrity fashion as a site of post-feminist empowerment. Mahek Chahal and Kate Beckinsale’s stories in The Times of India try to portray them as delicate women conforming to feminine stereotypes. The print media here try to portray ideology of femininity where these female celebrities are publicized into the frame of feminine persona- Mahek as an ideal girl, Kate as a delicate but empowered woman, Bipasha and Sonam as modern women who emphasize glorified personality and appearance. All these female celebrity stories accompany evocative pictures of the female stars and show media’s keen interest to represent female celebrities as sensual objects as well as to disseminate media’s dominant ideology of portraying female stars as pleasurable spectacles for mass consumption. Turner (2004) observes (as cited Rebecca Feasy, pp. 183, 2006) that these celebrity stories actually ‘woo readers by offering positive pictures and gossip features about celebrities.’ Moreover, through the tabloidised contents of Mahek’s gossip, portrayal of Bipasha, Sonam, Kate as ordinary women, these celebrities gain power in a society and the media leave ample scope for the readers to speculate and negotiate those mediated identities as highly visible and attractive spectacles. Female readers can view the stars as feminine role models who have been able to achieve sophistication and celebrity aura. Anaphoric references in these stories with the repetitive uses of “I” portray female celebrities as ‘possessive individuals’ (Albercrombie et. al, 1986) who want to gratify public narcissism. Repetitive use of “I” in celebrity quotations emphasizes the ideology of success and power as an individual. The media portray these actresses as narcissistic stars who love to create their own idealized images. These two national daily newspapers successfully create para-social relationship between the stars and their fans through celebritisation.
and use of conversationalisation. The para-social relationship is established through the creation of 'illusion of intimacy' where stars perform 'surrogate function, standing in for absent or non-existent friends' (Schickel, 1985). Para-social relationship provides a way of compensation for loneliness of the fans and involves 'life affirming connectivity' where stars-fans relationship shows actual form of sociability in the modern world as face-to-face relationship has decreased (Holmes and Redmond, 2006). Through the news on pleasurable identities, the national dailies try to provide instant gratification to readers by merging private and public spheres i.e., news of private lives of stars, their thoughts and soft thrill news enter into the lives of readers. Fans form psychological connection with the imagined celebrity world. It shows intoxicating effect of searching their similarities with the stars, following star's styles which foster fan's desire to share common sphere with their adored stars. The print media asserts its power to attract readers towards feminine attractiveness. The stories of Bipasha Basu to Kate are continuous efforts of media to give human touch for depiction of more real self of the celluloid personality. The representation of these female stars as ordinary beings and gossip about Malaek Chakal and Salman Khan's relationship not only enhance celebrity connectedness with their readers but also enhance the desire for the celebrity or culture of consumption. Sonam Kapoor's story portrays her as a fashion icon, which creates desire for readers to look at stylish iconic celebrity figures as 'fashionable femininity' to 'try on the looks of today's fashionable stars' (Rebecca Feasey, 2006). This celebrity news can be seen as bridging the gap between readers and celebrities by encouraging 'fantasies of belonging, of imagined communities' (Hermes, 1997). For Hermes (1997), "gossip tends to create closeness or familiar faces in a wider world by helping the reader to bring celebrities into her or his circle of family, friends and acquaintances." These efforts of discursive construction of celebrity sphere actually talks about culture of consumption in the regime of laissez-faire economy to unveil the natural person under the cover of manufactured celebrity image. Though the newspapers try to provide pleasurable spectatorship with sensual pictures of female stars along and portrayal of Mahek and Kate conforming to feminine stereotypes, these five select female celebrity stories all together present an empowering feminine discourse. Each news story discursively positions contemporary women in positive representation in the realm of celebrity aura and sophistication, which strengthens the culture of consumption. The press successfully constructs these celebrities as an object of desire; unveiling real persons behind the professional performer with whom fans can identify themselves. These stories show cocoonisation of a fantasy world by providing temporary satisfaction to the readers and provocation for desire of fame and star quality. The print media remains firm in its hegemonistic role of constructing imagined celebrity-fan discursive network through the process of celebritisation which actually intensifies 'fannish desire' (Kristina Busse, 2006) to see the authentic selves of stars behind celebritification.

43
References


