

CHARLES UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Social Sciences
Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism

MA THESIS REVIEW

NOTE: Only the grey fields should be filled out!

Review type (choose one): Review by opponent

Thesis author:

Surname and given name: Challapalli, Ishita

Thesis title: Cultural Identity Representation in Mainstream Indian Cinema (Bollywood) and South Indian Films

Reviewer:

Surname and given name: Zamir, Sadia

Affiliation: Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism, Charles university

1. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND THESIS (mark one box for each row)

		Conforms to approved research proposal	Changes are well explained and appropriate	Changes are explained but are inappropriate	Changes are not explained and are inappropriate	Does not conform to approved research proposal
1.1	Research objective(s)	Yes				
1.2	Methodology	Yes				
1.3	Thesis structure	Yes				

COMMENTARY (description of the relationship between the research proposal and the thesis. If there are problems, please be specific):

The thesis thoroughly aligns with the research proposal.

2. EVALUATION OF THE THESIS CONTENT

Use letters A – B – C – D – E – F (A=best, F= failed)

		Grade
2.1	Quality and appropriateness of the theoretical framework	B
2.2	Ability to critically evaluate and apply the literature	A
2.3	Quality and soundness of the empirical research	A
2.4	Ability to select the appropriate methods and to use them correctly	A
2.5	Quality of the conclusion	A
2.6	Thesis originality and its contribution to academic knowledge production	A

COMMENTARY (description of thesis content and the main problems):

The thesis conducts a comparative analysis of how South Indian culture is represented in both Bollywood and South Indian cinema. Utilizing Fairclough's three-dimensional framework for discourse analysis, the researcher conducts an in-depth examination of the films' texts, offering a detailed exploration of cultural representation within these cinematic traditions. The selected framework seems suitable for this research as it allows the researcher to analyze not only the content of the films (text) but also the production of these films (discursive practice) and the broader cultural and social contexts they reflect (social practice). The critical examination and application of the literature are robust, reflecting a deep understanding of existing research and its relevance to the study.

The theoretical framework is good-quality, providing a solid foundation for the analysis. However, it is suggested that the definition of Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony and a more detailed exploration of the applicability of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to the study could further strengthen the theoretical framework. Additionally, the conclusion effectively synthesizes the findings, offering clear and impactful insights. The research is original and makes a substantial contribution to academic knowledge by presenting new perspectives and significantly advancing the field.

3. EVALUATION OF THE THESIS FORM

Use letters A – B – C – D – E – F (A=best, F= failed)

		Grade
3.1	Quality of the structure	A
3.2	Quality of the argumentation	A
3.3	Appropriate use of academic terminology	A
3.4	Quality, quantity and appropriateness of the citations (both in the theory part and in the empirical part)	A
3.5	Conformity to quotation standards (*)	A
3.6	Use of an academic writing style, and correct use of language (both grammar and spelling)	A
3.6	Quality of the textual lay-outing and appendices	A

(*) in case the text contains quotations without references, the grade is F; in case the text contains plagiarised parts, do not recommend the thesis for defence and suggest disciplinary action against the author instead.

COMMENTARY (description of thesis form and the main problems):

The research demonstrates good quality in its textual layout, reflecting a well-organized structure that enhances readability and coherence. The argumentation is logically presented, effectively supporting the research findings. The quality, quantity, and appropriateness of citations in both the theoretical and empirical sections are commendable, offering a solid foundation for the arguments and ensuring the research is well-supported by relevant sources. These aspects contribute significantly to the overall credibility of the research. The research follows proper citations throughout. The language used in the thesis is academic, precise, and coherent. However, there are occasional instances of repetitive ideas that could benefit from consolidation or revision.

4. OVERAL EVALUATION (provide a summarizing list of the thesis's strengths and weaknesses):

The research study is interdisciplinary, contributing to film studies, cultural studies, sociology, and media studies. It offers a detailed examination of how media shapes and communicates cultural identities. This thesis contributes original knowledge to the field through a comparative, methodologically innovative, and culturally nuanced analysis of South Indian representation in two major film industries.

As the research is situated within a specific context, its comprehensive background information is essential for readers who may not be familiar with the context. The research includes an examination of the evolution of cinema, comprehensive synopsis of the films under study, a justification for their selection, the rationale behind the importance of researching this topic, and its relevance within the local context, while also addressing its broader implications. Besides, the given verbal, non-verbal examples have been fully explained. These elements collectively enhance the study's strength by offering a well-rounded understanding of the films' contextual relevance and the importance of the research focus. The analysis section effectively explores how Bollywood creates mainstream, homogenized narratives for a broad audience, while South Indian media presents counter-narratives focusing on regional identities and cultural specificity. It provides a detailed examination of the impact of these differing approaches on cultural representation. Overall, it is a sound piece of research, substantiated by ample examples and thorough discourse analysis.

However, certain modifications could further improve methodological rigor and offer a more thorough understanding of both the theoretical foundations and practical implications of the study.

It is advisable to include a section within the theoretical framework that addresses discourse analysis, detailing its relevance and suitability for this study, particularly explaining why Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is appropriate for this analysis. Additionally, the theoretical framework should encompass an explanation of the various theoretical assumptions underlying CDA. It also makes sense to address the researcher's positionality in this research. Understanding the researcher's perspective and potential biases is crucial for evaluating the objectivity and depth of the analysis. How does your personal background and viewpoint influence your interpretation of the data and the conclusions drawn? Furthermore, it would be valuable to provide recommendations aimed at achieving more accurate cultural representation in this context. These recommendations could address specific areas where current representations fall short and suggest ways to better reflect diverse cultural perspectives.

5. QUESTIONS OR TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED DURING THE THESIS DEFENSE:

5.1	What motivated you to choose this particular topic for your research?
5.2	How do you ensure that your application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) effectively addresses the research questions?
5.3	Were there any unexpected challenges during your research, and how did you overcome them?
5.4	How does your personal background and positionality influence your interpretation of the data and the conclusions drawn in your research?
5.5	What practical recommendations can be derived from your research for achieving more accurate cultural representation in media?

6. ANTIPLAGIARISM CHECK

The reviewer is familiar with the thesis' URKUND score.

If the score is above 5%, please evaluate and indicate problems:

6.1	
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6. SUGGESTED GRADE OF THE THESIS AS A WHOLE (choose one or two)

- A** excellent
- B** very good (above average but with some weaknesses)
- C** good (average with some important weaknesses)

- D** satisfactory (below average with significant weaknesses)
- E** marginal pass (meeting minimal requirements)
- F** not recommended for defence

If the mark is an “F”, please provide your reasons for not recommending the thesis for defence:

A

Date: September 07, 2024
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Signature:

<p><i>A finalised review should be printed, signed and submitted in two copies to the secretary of the Department of Media Studies. The electronic version of the review should be converted into a PDF and uploaded to SIS, or sent to the Department of Media Studies secretary who will upload it to SIS on the reviewer’s behalf.</i></p> <p><i>Do not upload PDFs with a scanned signature, the review uploaded to SIS must be without signature.</i></p>
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