

Tribhuvan University

Dissolution of the House of Representatives, 2020: Politics of Representation in the  
State-Owned English Broadsheet *The Rising Nepal*

A Thesis

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Dharma Prasad Rimal has completed this thesis entitled *Dissolution of the House of Representatives, 2020: Politics of Representation in the State-Owned English Broadsheet The Rising Nepal* under my supervision. He carried out his research from January 2020 to April 2021. I hereby recommend this thesis be submitted for *viva voce*.

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Approval Letter

This is to certify that the thesis entitled *Dissolution of the House of Representatives, 2020: Politics of Representation in the State-Owned English Broadsheet The Rising Nepal* submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English, by Mr. Dharma Prasad Rimal, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## Abstract

*This research divulges the politics of the state-owned English broadsheet, The Rising Nepal, in the representation of the dissolution of the House of Representatives, 2020, within the discursive parameter, and its constructive role in the ideological construction. The broadsheet has manipulated the capital—literal and symbolic, and, played a constructive role in ideological construction by working in positive or productive ways to generate, sustain and perpetuate discursive regime of representation and providing it with a representational legitimacy to serve the government’s ideology. The study analyzes the language and visual in The Rising Nepal: news stories, headlines, word choice, visual depiction and page layout on the front pages, and the editorial arguments concerning the discourse; taking the equivalent elements from the privately run newspaper The Kathmandu Post as a foil. Employing cultural theory of representation (constructionist approach), the study, for the textual analysis, mainly falls back upon James Paul Gee’s concept on “seven building tasks of language” and the “Discourses” tool of inquiry. Likewise, for the analysis of visual grammar, it has resorted to Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen’s Visual Social Semiotics, especially the tools related to the three layers of visual meanings : representational, interactive and compositional. The study, finally, aims to create critical language awareness, to make the readers/viewers able to read between the lines and to see the “unseen,” to surface the underlying and to divulge the hidden while dealing with media discourse.*

Key words: Media Discourse, Newspaper, Representation, Politics, Critical Discourse Analysis, Critical Visual Analysis.

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## Chapter 1

### Critical Discourse Analysis of Media Discourse: An Introduction

#### 1.1 Preliminary Introduction

This thesis postulates that *The Rising Nepal*, the state-owned English broadsheet daily, has manipulated the capital—literal and symbolic—to discursively represent the dissolution of the House of Representatives, 2020, and played a constructive role in ideological construction, by working in positive or productive ways to generate, sustain and perpetuate discursive regime of representation and providing it with a representational legitimacy to serve the government's ideology.

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli-led Cabinet's move of dissolving the House of Representatives of the Federal Parliament (hereafter HoR) on December 20, 2020, has generated a critical and litigious media discourse and created a visible clash among the politicians, advocates, political analysts, and the citizens themselves. Constitutional experts, civil society members, human rights activists and the anti-Oli faction within the ruling party, NCP, as well as opposition parties in the dissolved HoR have termed the PM's move as a constitutional coup and condemned it as being unconstitutional and undemocratic. As many as 13 writs have been registered in the Supreme Court (SC) claiming the Oli Cabinet's decision unconstitutional and therefore asked the SC to revoke the decision. Though the government and the Oli-led faction of the ruling NCP justified the move as the Prime Minister's prerogative in the Westminster model of parliamentary system, the petitioners who have challenged the HoR dissolution in the SC argued that the model did not apply in Nepal as the Constitution envisages the dissolution of the HoR only if a new government could not be formed.

President Bidhya Devi Bhandari, on the recommendation of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's Cabinet, swiftly endorsed the proposal of the HoR dissolution two years prior to its full five-year term on December 20, 2020. Since the date, almost each day the edit pages of the broadsheet dailies covered with the news and visuals regarding the issue, the subsequent political developments, and/or the legitimacy of the government's December 20 move for more than two months. The print media, nevertheless, did not represent the issue univocally, rather practiced to represent within the discursive parameter as per their own preexisting ideology.

The representation of the debate in opinion laden texts and visuals made the main coverage in all newspapers nationwide. However, at the heart of the representation lie the discursive narratives that embody invisible ideologies. The ideologically motivated representation in the state-controlled broadsheet, *The Rising Nepal*, becomes more pronounced when compared with the representation of the same issue in the privately run broadsheet *The Kathmandu Post*.

Though both newspapers have covered the same news events, their works of representation exhibit a significant amount of variations. This opens the way for politics of representation—a struggle over meaning. Against this backdrop, the study poses these questions: What permutes the different versions of representation? Why, and how, the media industries participate in contests over the construction of the real?

With its motto “ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL,” the nation's first English language broadsheet *The Rising Nepal* is published by Gorkhapatra Corporation, set under a government-sponsored legislation in 1963. As per the media guidelines, the duty of the daily is:

[T]o provide information about native and foreign news, gather useful matters to the general people in a simple, easily accessible and

affordable manner, containing healthy, responsible and entertaining materials from the standpoint of national viewpoint and coverage with a feeling of nationality and democratic spirit. (Khatiwada 2)

The state owned English broadsheet remained unrivalled until another privately owned English broadsheet *The Kathmandu Post* was launched in 1993. In such a social milieu, the Gorkhapatra Corporation, which also publishes the oldest surviving Nepali broadsheet daily *The Gorkhapatra*, had all the favorable circumstances to invigorate their organizational capabilities, expand the number of periodicals and multiply audiences bases. They grabbed all the opportunities.

Privately owned and published by Kantipur Publications Pvt. Ltd. with the motto “WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR,” *The Kathmandu Post* claims itself to be Nepal’s largest selling English daily. It is a member of the Asia News Network, an alliance of nineteen Asian newspapers. After *Post* was launched in February 1993 as the first privately owned broadsheet daily in English, the media was freed from the monopoly of the government, and journalism underwent a paradigm shift from ‘mission journalism’ to a profession.

Special editorials and/or ‘Publisher’s note’ on *The Kathmandu Post* published on the each occasion of their anniversary, reiterate the publications’ commitment to lofty ideals of professional journalism. On the occasion of their first anniversary, they issued a note on *Post* and delineated the objectives of their newspapers as “to remain free from political bias, refuse to become the preserve of any business house, and to remain active in promoting democracy, human rights, nationalism and national interest” (“Publisher’s Note” Feb. 19, 1994). Similarly, they expressed pride on “having contributed to the development of independent journalism in Nepal,” and renewed their pledge “to keep and present fearless and impartial news as it happens

and to give balanced views so that the readers can make their own independent judgments” (editorials, “Looking ahead” Feb. 19, 1999; “Back on track” Feb. 19, 2004). On the occasion of their 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the private publications seek to deliver a message which reads as “[i]n our journey of nearly three decades, we have been a witness to many ups and downs and faced various challenges” (“Publisher’s note” Feb. 19, 2021). The publications, with their motive to justify their position, further claim: “What we are doing at Kantipur Publications is not just business; we are fulfilling our responsibility towards society. We have always stood by the people whenever the country has faced a crisis” (Feb. 19, 2021).

However, the news reporting of *The Kathmandu Post* is also not impartial and ideologically neutral. In this regard Paudel and Pandey also write: “Interestingly, the journalist/editor thinks that s/he collects facts, reports them fairly and without bias, in a language designed to be unambiguous, distorting and agreeable to readers” (2). This idea of professionalism, as a professional ethos, is just claimed by all linked to the news media, press and publication houses. The entire professionals in this field, irrespective to the nature of the institution they work for—state-owned or private—would claim that they render their “readers [with] an important and well-informed picture of what was really happening” (qtd. in Fowler, *Language in the News* 2).

This research, however, refutes the claim put forth by the media professionals by uncovering the opacity of the ideological imposition. It offers a comprehensive treatment of how images, language and discourse work as a system of representation in political discourse practiced by the print media, and how meanings are inevitably implicated in relations of power—especially who is practicing representation and who or what is being represented with what consequences.

Theoretically, media ethics can and should conduct, irrespective to the nature of the institution, that the diverse voices, images and opinions emerged from around the world are represented more neutrally and less ideologically. Generally, people believe that media ideally reflect and report a truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the events/happenings like ‘the mirrors of the world’. They hardly identify the hidden ideological position of the media.

Nevertheless, the dynamic social variables like state power, political ideology, dominant sociopolitical scenario, commerciality, and the like do not let media be neutral and value free. Thus, their practices of representation are laden with ideologically saturated linguistic and visual text and talk. The linguistic and visual communication through print media has become a powerful tool to affect and control not only the communicative actions but also the minds of their recipients.

The state-owned media in Nepal seem to be greatly influenced by the state-power. They tend to mediate powerful voices of the power elites as the carrier of sociopolitical ideology and aim to shape the attitude of the recipients. Their work of discursive representation produces knowledge that connects with state-power, constructs identities and subjectivities, and defines the way certain things are thought about and practiced.

Representation is presently a much debated topic not only in media discourse but in the larger cultural milieu. It is a dominant cultural theory in which language is one of the media through which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture. Representation, in the common-sense usage of the term, is a presence or appearance of things in the form of language, image, material reproduction, performance and/or simulation. It can also be defined as using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people.

However, the definition of representation in current studies on culture is much broader and it does involve making meaning by “forging links” between three different orders of things: world of things, the mental concepts, and the signs.

It is Stuart Hall who gives a new constructionist meaning to representation. Representation, it is argued, “is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to *refer to* either the ‘real’ world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events” (“Work of Representation” 17, *emphasis* in original). As he argues, the relation between things, concepts and signs lies at the heart of the production of meaning in language. Thus, it is this constructionist nature of meaning which leads Hall to describe representation as “the process which links these three elements together” and meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture (19). However, this is a far from simple or straightforward process (15).

Representation and mass media are interconnected. Mass media is expected to be the medium to convey real pictures of events/agendas to the audiences. However, because of the constitutive nature of language, representation is “always ‘someone’s’ point of view and never a mirror of reality capable of reflecting a universal truth” (Barker 177). Thus, representation, it is argued, “is always implicated in questions of power: who says what about whom, and with what consequences?” (177). Representation, in this sense, is not bound up to merely reflecting things and producing meanings, but is closely tied up with the effects and consequences of such meanings—its politics.

In his *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, James Paul Gee demonstrates a constitutive relationship between language and ideologically motivated social

practices. He argues, “[A]ny use of language gains its meaning from the ‘game’ or practice of which it is a part and which it is enacting. . . . [S]uch ‘games’ or practices inherently involve potential social goods and the distribution of social goods, which . . . [is] central to the realm of ‘politics’” (9). By “social goods,” Gee means “anything a social group or society takes as a good worth having” (*How to Do Discourse Analysis* 118). Gee views social good as “the stuff of politics,” and politics, as Gee argues, “is not just about contending political parties. At a much deeper level it is about how to distribute social goods in a society: who gets what in terms of money, status, power, and acceptance on a variety of different terms, all social goods” (*Introduction to DA* 7). Thus, politics is to risk being seen as a winner or loser in a given linguistic practice in which social goods are always at stake. When we use language, Gee further posits that “we build viewpoints about how we think social goods are or should be distributed in society or among social and cultural groups. This is . . . how and where language is ‘political’” (*How to Do DA* 120).

The work of representation in media, therefore, is not free from their politics. However, some scholars are of the contrasting views that they idealize the role of the media. To address the universal issue concerning civic and democratic functions of newspapers, *The Guardian* editor Alan Rusbridger, in his “The Inaugural Hugo Young Lecture,” asks “What is a newspaper for?” and “What task should it set itself?” (qtd. in Franklin 4). “For generations there has been a quiet understanding”, as Bob Franklin quotes Rusbridger’s claim about the three key tasks he attributed to them, that newspapers are there,

[1] primarily to tell society about itself, to act as a pollinator of information. To be a conduit between subjects and rulers, citizens and legislators, legislators and citizens, citizens and citizens . . . Of course,

[2] newspapers sought to entertain as well. [3] And they were also there to challenge power – to hold it to account. (4)

Rusbridger further asserts: “[I]n the story we told to others in our attempts to win our freedom of speech, not to mention additional privileges and protection – there was at its heart the civic value of news telling” (qtd. in Franklin 4).

However, Jackie Harrison posits that “[n]ewspaper news is one type of editorial format, which can and does take different forms” (37). She further writes: “News events are rarely straightforward; they are usually ambiguous and reflect different histories and competing spatial stories and are reported from a particular perspective” (38). Similarly, Roger Fowler defines news not necessarily as a reflection of reality but as a product shaped by political, economic and cultural forces (qtd. in Biebuyck 7). Members of elite groups like politicians, journalists, scholars, judges and businessmen use news stories to convey knowledge, change attitude and influence the opinions. For this reason, news itself has become a type of discourse. Geis, in the like manner, posits: “Perhaps the most influential power of news media is that it has the right to report what event is important at certain time and to choose whose voice to be heard about a particular issue” (qtd. in Biebuyck 7). The print media, therefore, have become the site for exercising sociopolitical power and hegemony, and their works of representation are directed to legitimize them. Allan Bell, hence, maintains, in his *The Language of News Media*, that media discourse can be targeted as the research object in order to discover how media mask their ideological positions, embodied their attitudes and opinions, in the way they represent.

The goal of this study is to divulge the politics of the state-owned English broadsheet in the representation of the HoR dissolution, 2020, within the discursive

parameter, and its constructive role in the ideological construction. It aims to analyze the discursive practices and ideological hegemony within the linguistic and visual representation and to disclose how the manipulative exploitation of the capital—literal and symbolic—plays a constructive role. The study, finally, aims to create critical language awareness, to make the readers/viewers able to read between the lines and to see the “unseen,” to surface the underlying and to divulge the hidden while dealing with media discourse.

The rationale behind carrying out this study is the necessity of dealing with and understanding the manipulative use of language and visual in the representation of political discourse. Being able to do this effectively is essential to us all. This research specifically considers the politics in representation of political discourse in the state-owned English broadsheet. The state-controlled print media has become the dominant site for power abuse and operation of discourse in its ideologically significant sense. Furthermore, it mediates the connection between power, language/visual and social processes that reduces everything to normal discourse. In this context, critical discourse/visual analysis can be the apt and prominent approaches to empower readers/viewers so that they could de-automatize the seemingly automatic and deceptively natural messages of the texts, and excavate the tiers of meanings in the visual composition.<sup>1</sup>

The study is based on the assumption that a critical analysis of language and visual would contribute to more responsible and emancipatory role that the critical

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<sup>1</sup> The authors engage with the terminology around critical approaches to discourse analysis in different ways. Critical discourse analysis spelled in capitalized form as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a research program associated with the work of Norman Fairclough and his associates. Following Gee’s model, it is spelled in this study as “critical discourse analysis.”

discourse/visual analysis could play by taking issue of political discourse in media representation which otherwise seem to be normal and natural. It is expected to be significant to the newspaper readers to unmask the invisible ideology in the political news and discover power abuse and hegemony. It will be equally useful to the language teachers and students, linguists and the upcoming researchers as it concerns how power and ideology is exercised and communicated through language and visual.

## 1.2 Methodology

The methodology of a research is relative to the objectives of the study and the nature of variables put under scrutiny (Paudel 5). With regard to its interdisciplinary nature, the description of the object of investigation of critical discourse analysis is carried out from a widely differing perspective (Amoussou and Allagbe 14). This entails that critical discourse analysis does not have its own specific methods different from other social studies.

As the nature of the study, this thesis, for the textual analysis, mainly falls back upon Gee's concept on "seven building tasks of language" and the "Discourses" tool of inquiry that he proposes to uncover the construction process of "areas of reality" (*Introduction to DA* 17). The "seven building tasks of language" are significance, practices, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and sign systems and knowledge. Likewise, for the analysis of visual grammar, it has resorted to Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Social Semiotics, especially the tools related to the three layers of visual meanings : representational, interactive and compositional (*Reading Images*). Employing cultural theory of representation (constructionist approach), this study dramatizes the politics of representation—a struggle over meaning—of the political discourse in the print media and its effects and consequences.

Although the study employs certain linguistic elements (such as subject and predicate, object, actor, lexis), their selection mainly depends on the specific research questions. The research is problem oriented so it is not focused on specific linguistic items.

This thesis analyzes the language and visual used in the representation of the HoR dissolution, 2020, in *The Rising Nepal*, taking the equivalent elements from the privately run newspaper *The Kathmandu Post* as a foil. For this purpose, news stories, headlines, word choice, visual depiction and page layout on the front pages, and the editorial arguments concerning the discourse that were covered from December 21, 2020 to February 24, 2021, are put under close scrutiny. The rationale behind the choice of such time period in the present study is that the SC verdict overturned PM Oli's December 20 decision to dissolve the HoR and reinstated it on February 23, 2021.

The rationale behind selecting *The Rising Nepal* as the primary source of data and *The Kathmandu Post* as a foil is based on two reasons: 1) these newspapers (the former as state-owned and the latter published by big media house like Kantipur Publications) have, on the main, influence on the formation, circulation and reception of the discourses providing them with the representational legitimacy as per the ideology of the institution; 2) the area of study (representation of political discourse like the HoR dissolution, 2020) is quite relevant to them as they, from the outset, actively participate in the discursive representation and struggle over meaning through their news contents and editorial arguments.

Based on critical discourse analysis, the study has committedly qualitative orientation to linguistic and social understanding. The purpose of this study is not to

capture some neutral and objective knowledge but to offer a refracted version of reality.

### 1.3 Review of Literature

As a part of interdisciplinary research, related literature is reviewed from three main areas of social inquiry: (a) theories of discourse/semiotics (including visual images), (b) representation, and (c) media discourse.

Michel Foucault's theories have been concerned with knowledge and discourse, and his influence is clear in a great deal of poststructuralist, postmodernist, feminist, post-Marxist and postcolonial theorizing (qtd. in Mills 1). Subsequently, his theories have appeared increasingly untenable, however. They are mainly criticized for losing standpoint and aiming to dismantle the norm without prescribing an alternative or a better solution (Paudel 11). However, the tools offered by Foucault can be used to make a critique of the abuse of power. They can be used to strip away the opaqueness and taken-for-granted-ness of meaning (Louw 2).

Fairclough, Fowler, Hodge and Kress, Trew, van Dijk, and Wodak, among others, have scrutinized the language of the media communication, and identified patterns within language which legitimate and/or naturalize the dominant social order (Conboy, *The Language of the News* 24). The most prominent works in this tradition are *Language and Control* by Fowler et al., *Language in the News* by Fowler and *Language as Ideology* by Hodge and Kress.

Norman Fairclough's *Language and Power* provided an introduction to the critical study of discourse by carefully setting out critical discourse analysis: its intentions, goals, basic tenets as well as providing a model of analysis. Similarly, Frank Amoussou and Ayodele A. Allagbe's "Principles, Theories and Approaches to

Critical Discourse Analysis” sheds light on the principles underlying the concepts, the methods it draws on, as well as the focal approaches to critical discourse analysis that have thus far been put forth by prominent scholars.

Gee’s *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis and How to Do Discourse Analysis* are built around explaining the role of language in the construction of seven building tasks or “areas of reality”: significance, practices, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and sign systems and knowledge; and tools of inquiry which help an analyst uncover these construction processes: Situated Meanings, Social Languages, Intertextuality, Figured Worlds, Discourses and Conversations. The books do a great job of explaining the interactive and constitutive nature of language as embodied in recipient design, position design and response design.

Barthian visual semiotics deals with the layering of visual meanings of images: denotation and connotation. The first level of meaning is a descriptive level and is not problematic for Roland Barthes. But the second, the superimposed meaning, is the layer of the broader concepts, ideas, values, etc. He describes it as ideological meaning and calls ‘myths’ in his *Mythologies*.

Similarly, Theo van Leeuwen, in his “Semiotics and Iconography,” attempts to demonstrate how visual images express meanings through iconological meanings and connotations (92-118). He provides a comprehensive picture of iconography and iconology borrowing ideas mainly from Barthes and Panofsky.

Likewise, Gunther Kress and van Leeuwen’s *Reading Images* is a resource that focuses upon the nature and practice of visual rhetoric. These Theorists have been highly influential in shaping ‘social semiotics’ into a methodological framework for the analysis of photography, video, art and their relations with language (Paudel 124).

Drawing on Michael Halliday's ideas upon linguistics, they extend his ideas to visual social semiotics and construct an extensive grammar of visual design to read images. In doing so, they "concentrate on 'grammar' and syntax, on the way in which these elements are combined into meaningful wholes" (Kress and van Leeuwen 1). They take the view that "language and visual communication can both be used to realize the 'same' fundamental systems of meaning that constitute our cultures, but that each does so by means of its own specific forms, does so differently, and independently" (19).

Peter Hamilton's "Representing the Social: France and Frenchness in Post-War Humanist Photography" attempts to demonstrate that visual language does not reflect a truth about the world which is already there, rather it produces meanings through representation.

In Nepalese context, Ram Chandra Paudel in his study *Gender and Sexuality in Magazine Advertising: A Critical Discourse Analysis*, divulges the mystificatory and discriminatory functions of visual and textual codes of advertising. As a part of interdisciplinary work, his study breaks the disciplinary boundaries between the visual and the verbal and between the linguistics and social (v).

*Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* is one in a series of books developed by The Open University. The book explores representation as a signifying practice in a rich diversity of social contexts and institutional sites. The book discusses contested and critical questions of meaning, truth, knowledge and power in representation, and the relations between representation, pleasure and fantasy.

Semiotic approach provides a method for analyzing how visual representations convey meaning (Hall, "Work of Representation" 41). Semiotic approach, which

makes the study “of signs in culture, and of culture as a sort of ‘language,’” claims that “not only words and images but objects themselves can function as signifiers in the production of meaning” (36, 37). However, “[s]emiotics seemed to confine the process of representation to language, and to treat it as a closed, rather static, system” (42). Later, Kress and van Leeuwen deployed a social-semiotics approach to analyze the signs. In the social-semiotics view, sign makers have a meaning of their interest, the signified, which they express through the semiotic mode. Sign makers use the forms they consider most plausible and most apt for the expression of their meaning in any medium in which they make signs (Kress and van Leeuwen 8). In this view, sign making is not an arbitrary process, it is the process in which the motivation, the sign maker’s interest is coded directly.

To analyze the language of media, P. Eric Louw, in his *The Media and Cultural Production*, deploys the political economic approach and invites to focus on how meaning is made by people within a productive process. “[P]eople are positioned differently by the power relationships into which they are embedded and these positions impact on the access, production and circulation system of meanings,” he argues (4). Political economists like Louw are interested in “examining the possible relationships between the content of the newspaper and political/economic affiliation of the paper” (Paudel 29). They believe that the discourses are produced and circulated through various sites of struggle such as newsrooms, television studios, the media, to name but a few. However, “as power shifts take place, so do the dynamics of meaning-production,” Louw argues (5).

Divulging modern mass media’s power to construct deep ideological messages out of any nature of social phenomena in the modern societies, Blommaert, in his *Discourse: A Critical Introduction*, writes no ideological process today can be

understood without taking into account the way in which messages, images, and discourses are being distributed and mediated by mass media (163). “No idea in itself is ‘ideological,’” offering an interlinear explanation, Paudel writes, “it may become ideological as soon as it is picked up by power-regulating institutions such as the media and inserted into the ideological reproduction system they organize” (32). So as to study the saturated ideology in the media discourse, “[w]e need to investigate the ways in which the message is organized, mediated, modulated, and reconstructed by the ideological actors using it,” he argues (32).

To explore the role of language and visuals in media discourse, Norman Fairclough, Roger Fowler, Bednarek, Richardson, Conboy and Allan Bell, among others have worked closely with the language of the English broadsheet dailies published in the foreign. Two prominent figures in the field of critical discourse analysis, Norman Fairclough and Roger Fowler are mainly concerned with the constructive role of language.

Fairclough, in his *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, divulges how the use of language in media discourse contributes in constructing ideology, hegemony, domination, power, solidarity and other social relations and affiliations among other social actors. In the like manner, Fowler’s *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press* makes visible the constructive role of language to shape the biased and stereotyped views of the society. Fowler discovers the socioeconomic factors that play meaningful roles for the selection of news and reports in the newspaper.

Bednarek, in her *Evaluation in Media Discourse: Analysis of a Newspaper Corpus*, brings to light how the opinions about the events, people and situation are made while news writers report on them. Similarly, Richardson, applying the tools of

critical discourse analysis, comes into the conclusion in his work *Analyzing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis* that newspapers arrange the language to construct ideology and worldviews. Likewise, Conboy's *The Language of Newspapers: Socio-Historical Perspectives* dramatizes the influences of political and social changes on newspapers and how these changes become manifest in their use of language. In the same vein, Allan Bell, in his *The Language of News Media*, emphasizes the importance of the processes which produce media language, as stories are molded and modified by various hands. He is also concerned with the role of the audience in influencing media language.

In Nepalese context, Ramchandra Paudel and Hem Lal Pandey were committed to interpret the components of the English broadsheet dailies published in Kathmandu namely *The Rising Nepal*, *The Himalayan Times* and *The Kathmandu Post*. Through the lenses of critical discourse analysis and critical visual analysis, they interpret the components of these newspapers as described in the book *Pulling the Newspapers Apart*. In their work *Politics of Newspapers: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Broadsheet Dailies*, Paudel and Pandey come to the conclusion that various layers of the texts in newspapers are designed not for disseminating an impartial view of the world but to serve the interest of social actors who have access and control over them. They are, indeed, designed to construct, perpetuate and maintain hierarchies along the lines of social variables such as that of nationality, gender/sex, class, age, and ethnicities. They further explore that in the underlying levels of newspaper discourse in Nepalese context, the ideology of capitalist and consumerist culture, the belief of patriarchy, and the interest of neighboring country India are operating.

Similarly, Hemanta Kumar Khatiwada, in his *Politics of Representation in Selected News of The Rising Nepal and The Kathmandu Post: A Critical Discourse Analysis*, has concentrated on the reporting of the state-owned media and presents how it highlights political discourse and makes it a social good along the line of its interest.

#### 1.4 Outline of the Study

This chapter has offered a blueprint for the entire study. First, it has furnished the major claim and set the stage for critical discourse analysis of media discourse supplying the context and background of the study. It has presented the research problem, research questions, objectives, rationale behind carrying out this study, and significance of the study. Second, it has presented methodology and analytical tools employed in the study, and the rationale behind selecting the source of data. Third, it has presented a review of literature, and finally, it has offered an outline of the study.

As theoretical section, chapter 2 sets the stage for theoretical framework and scaffolding. First, it introduces representation and cruises into theories of representation. Then, it attempts to refract the term discourse through different disciplinary lenses. Further, it cruises into discourse analysis and concerns with underlining the main tenets that characterize critical discourse analysis, critiques and focal approaches. Finally, the chapter concludes with the presentation of working definition of the terms “representation,” “politics” and “discourse,” and specifies the employed approach to representation and discourse analysis in this study.

Chapter 3 presents the analytical framework (both textual and visual). The first part deals with the linguistic framework that presents textual analytical tools and discourse analytic questions. The second part presents visual tools for analysis of visual communication.

Chapter 4 concentrates on the thorough analysis of the language and visual used by *The Rising Nepal*, taking the equivalent elements from the *The Kathmandu Post* as a foil, and divulges the politics of the former in the representation of the HoR dissolution, 2020, within the discursive parameter through the manipulative exploitation of the capital—literal and symbolic—and its effects and consequences.

Chapter 5, as a concluding chapter, first, attempts to recapitulate the research problem, the methodology and analytical tools employed in the study and the rationale behind selecting the source of data. Second, it surmises the findings of the research and draws the conclusion. Further, it attempts to mention some of the limitations of the study and, finally, indicates the direction for further lines of research in the field.

## Chapter 2

### Approaches to Representation, Discourse, and Discourse Analysis

#### 2.1 Introduction

Meaning is produced by the practice, the 'work', of representation. It is constructed through signifying—i.e. meaning-producing—practices.

(Hall, "The Work of Representation" 28)

As a theoretical section, in this chapter, an attempt has been made to set the stage for conceptual framework and theoretical scaffolding required for this study. The first part of the chapter introduces representation and cruises into theories of representation. The second part attempts to refract the term discourse through different disciplinary lenses. The third part cruises into discourse analysis and concerns with underlining the main tenets that characterize critical discourse analysis, critiques and focal approaches. Finally, it offers working definitions of the terms "representation," "politics" and "discourse," and specifies the employed approach to representation and discourse analysis in this study.

#### 2.2 Representation

Representation—the production of meaning through language, discourse and images—occupies a central place in current studies on culture. Representation, in the common-sense usage of the term, is a presence or appearance of things in the form of language, image, material reproduction, performance and/or simulation. It can also be defined as using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people. However, the definition of representation in current studies on culture is much broader and it does involve making meaning by "forging links" between three different orders of things: world of things, the mental concepts, and the signs.

It is Stuart Hall who gives a new constructionist meaning to representation. Representation, it is argued, “is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to *refer to* either the ‘real’ world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events” (“Work of Representation” 17, *emphasis in original*). As he argues, the relation between things, concepts and signs lies at the heart of the production of meaning in language. Thus, it is this constructionist nature of meaning which leads Hall to describe representation as “the process which links these three elements together” and meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture (19). However, this is a far from simple or straightforward process (15).

### 2.2.1 Theories of Representation

There are broadly speaking three approaches to explaining how representation of meaning through language works: reflective, intentional and constructionist.

In the reflective approach, meaning is thought to lie in the material world, and language reflects the true meaning that is already there and fixed in the world. However, it is not the object—real world—but the shared code which links the concept with a particular word or image and the meaning is communicated. One cannot think or speak with an actual object (Hall, “Work of Representation” 24-25).

The second approach to meaning in representation argues that words mean what the speakers intend they should mean. It is the speaker who imposes his or her unique meaning on the world through language. This is the intentional approach. However, the essence of language is communication and that, in turn, depends on shared linguistic conventions and shared codes. As a result, our private intended meaning, however personal to us, have to enter into the rules, codes and conventions

of language to be shared and understood. One cannot be the sole or unique source of meaning in language since language can never be a private game (Hall, “Work of Representation” 25).

The third approach, however, recognizes this public, social character of language. It acknowledges that neither things in themselves nor the individual users of language can fix meaning in language. “Things don’t *mean*: we *construct* meaning, using representational systems—concepts and signs” (Hall, “Work of Representation” 25, *emphasis* in original). Hence, it is called constructionist approach to meaning in language. Constructionists do not deny the existence of the material world. However, it is not the material world which conveys meaning: it is the symbolic practice (25). “[M]eaning does not inhere *in* things, in the world. It is constructed, produced. It is the result of a signifying practice—a practice that *produces* meaning, that *makes things mean*” (24, *emphasis* in original). Representation, therefore, as constructionists argue, is a practice, a kind of work, which uses material objects and effects. The meaning depends, not on material quality of the signs, but on its symbolic function.

Language provides one general model of how representation works, especially in what has come to be known as the ‘semiotic’ approach. In this conventional constructionist view, representation is a process of secondary importance since it holds that ‘things’ exist in the material world; that their material characteristics are what constitutes them; and that they have perfectly clear meaning, outside of how they are represented (Hall, “Introduction” 5). Semiotics seemed to “confine the process of representation to language, and to treat it as a closed, rather static system” (“Work of Representation” 42). Such conventional preoccupation with meaning, however, has taken a different turn, being more concerned, not with the details of how language works, but with the broader role of discourse. This “discursive turn” in the

social and cultural sciences has been occurred as one of the most significant shifts of direction in our knowledge of society (“Introduction” 6).

The discursive approach examines not only how language and representation produce meaning, but how the knowledge which a particular discourse produces connects with power, regulates conduct, constructs identities and subjectivities, and defines the way certain things are represented, thought about, practiced and studied. The emphasis in this approach is always on the historical specificity of a particular form or ‘regime’ of representation: not on language as general concern, but on specific languages or meanings, and how they are deployed at particular times, in particular places. In a nutshell, as two different versions of constructionism, semiotic approach concerns with “the how of representation, with how language produces meaning—its ‘poetics’”; whereas the discursive approach is more concerned with “the *effects and consequences* of representation—its ‘politics’” (“Introduction” 5-6, *emphasis* in original).

### 2.3 Refracting Discourse

The shift of attention from language to discourse is one of the most significant shifts of direction in our knowledge of society. The subsequent developments became “more concerned with representation as a source for the production of social knowledge—a more open system, connected in more intimate ways with social practices and questions of power” (Hall, “Work of Representation” 42). Since then, the term ‘discourse’ has become common currency in a variety of disciplines: critical theory, sociology, linguistics, philosophy, cultural theory, and others. It has perhaps the widest range of possible significations of any term in literary and cultural theory, and yet is least defined term within theoretical texts (Paudel 36). It is interesting therefore to trace the ways in which we try to make sense of the term.

Traditional linguistics used the term discourse in its strict linguistic sense that is synonymous to the term text.

Writing from a social semiotic point of view, Hodge and Kress distinguish between text and discourse. They distinguish between these in defining a “text” as “a structure of messages or messages traces which has socially ascribed unity” and a “discourse” as “the social process in which texts are embedded” (*Social Semiotics* 5-6). In his “Ideological Structures in Discourse,” Kress further clarifies this distinction. The linguistic basis analysis aiming at materiality, form, and structure of language tends to be textual; where the sociological basis analysis aiming at content, function, and social significance becomes discourse (27-28). The point is that discourse “emerges in and through texts” (Paudel 38). In social semiotics, discourse is considered as meaningful symbolic behavior. Discourse “is language-in-action and its investigation requires attention both to language and to action,” Paudel concludes (43).

From a post-structuralist viewpoint, Michel Foucault gave a new constructionist meaning to discourse. By “discourse,” Foucault meant “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment” (Hall, “Work of Representation” 44). It is about production of knowledge through language in social practices. Since all social practices entail meaning, and meanings shape and influence human conduct, all practices have a discursive aspect (44). Discourse for Foucault, in this sense, is a unity of language and practice that

constructs, defines and produces the objects of knowledge in an intelligible way while excluding other forms of reasoning as unintelligible. Repeated motifs or clusters of ideas, practices and forms

of knowledge across a range of sites of activity constitute a discursive formation. (Barker 224)

The idea is that a discourse rules in certain ways of talking, doing or conducting and rules out other ways of doing them. Foucault's conceptualization of discourse as a social rather than a linguistic category has had an enormous influence on critical discourse studies (Rogers, "Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis in Educational Research" 6).

Hall posits that discourses "are ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice: a cluster (or *formation*) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society" ("Introduction" 6, *emphasis* in original). These discursive formations, as he argues, define what is and is not appropriate in our formulation of, and our practices in relation to, a particular subject; what knowledge is considered useful, relevant and 'true' in that context; and what sorts of 'subjects' embody its characteristics (6).

In this way, discourse creates knowledge which it links to power and constructs truth—"regime of truth." Foucault argues: "Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, . . ." (131). For Foucault, "nothing has any meaning outside of discourse" since meaning and meaningful practice is constructed within discourse (Hall, "Work of Representation" 45). Like semioticians, Foucault was a constructionist. However, unlike them, he was concerned with the production of knowledge (rather than just meaning), not through language, but through discourse. What concerned him the most was "relations of power, not relations of meaning" (42-43). Foucault advocates: "We take up the positions indicated by the discourse,

identify with them, subject ourselves to its meanings, and become its ‘subjects’” (Hall 60). Post-structuralism, in this way, has deconstructed the stable subject position to view the world, however, Paudel charges against it as he posits: “Its aim is to dismantle the norm without prescribing an alternative or a better solution” (43).

In the parlance of critical discourse analysis, Terry Locke comments on Fairclough’s notion on “discourse” as a “*practice*” that is “reflected in human verbal and non-verbal signifying systems” (7, *emphasis* in original). In other words, a discourse “implies ways of being and doing as well as ways of signifying” (7). Calling the ideas of Wodak upon discourse, Locke demonstrates how other writers on critical discourse analysis have a different slant on the object and process of revelation:

Discourses are *naturalized* for individual subjects, who, viewing the world through their own discursive lenses, regard their own position as ‘common sense’ rather than a particular construction of reality.

Revelation occurs when these ‘common sense’ positions are *demythified* or *denaturalized*, and exposed as discursive constructions.

(32, *emphasis* in original)

As this argument goes, subscription to a particular discourse at the individual level is likely to be an unconsciousness effect of the processes of discursive formation that occur at the societal level.

Gee, another critical discourse analyst, is widely known for the distinction between little “d” and “D” discourse. Little “d” discourse, for him, means “any instance of language-in-use or any stretch of spoken or written language” (*Introduction to DA* 205). He defines the term “Discourse” (which he habitually capitalizes) as “ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions,

ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity” (*Introduction to DA* 29).

Hence, for Gee, “Discourse” is “language-in-use” integrated with other stuff:

“language *plus* ‘other stuff’” (34, *emphasis* in original). The “other stuff” includes distinctive “ways of acting, interacting, valuing, believing, feeling,” as well as “bodies, clothes, non-linguistic symbols, objects, tools, technologies, times, and places” (46). Discourses, as Gee notes, “take us beyond language” (*How to Do DA* 181). In order to study them, “we have to research both language and people’s actions, interactions, values, beliefs, and uses of objects, tools, and environments within social or institutional settings” (181).

#### 2.4 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is a series of interdisciplinary approaches that can be used to explore many different social domains in many different types of studies (Jorgensen and Phillips 12). This means that discourse analysis “can be applied to all areas of research, with a method of analysis intrinsically linked to its theoretical and methodological foundations” (Ammoussou and Allagbe 12). It is interdisciplinary in its nature because many of its questions and conceptual frameworks were borrowed from other long-established academic disciplines. It owes to anthropology and sociology for the concept of wider socio-cultural context to language and language-use. From philosophy, discourse analysis concerns itself in the way language acquires meaning when it is used. Similarly, from linguistics, it concerns itself with the structure of language and the distribution of linguistic forms (Paudel 44-46).

#### 2.5 Critical Discourse Analysis

As a branch of discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis was developed by linguists like Roger Fowler, Gunther Kress, Robert Hodge and Tony Trew in the

1970s basically as an analysis with an attitude (Paudel 47). Later in the early 1990s, it was set forth as a cross-discipline by a group of scholars such as van Leeuwen, Gunther Kress, van Dijk and Norman Fairclough (Wodak and Meyer, Amoussou and Allagbe 11). At that time, theories and methods of critical discourse analysis have been formulated to differentiate this paradigm from other theories and methodologies in discourse analysis. Later on, the term has been known under many designation, such as Critical Linguistics, Critical Discourse Studies, etc. (Amoussou and Allagbe 11).

Concerning the difference between critical discourse analysis and other discourse analysis methods, Rogers claims that the former differs in the sense that it “includes not only a description and interpretation of discourse in context, but also offers an explanation of why and how discourse work” (Amoussou and Allagbe 12). As for critical discourse analysis, it “focuses on social problems, and especially on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse and domination” (van Dijk 96). Critical discourse analysis, then, “explores the relations between language and power and the ways in which language is being used to produce, maintain and reproduce positions of power through the discursive means” (Paudel 47). It tends to shift the attention from linguistic field to a domain of social and political relevance and thus offers a social critique by documenting structures of inequality. In this fashion, it does not only reveal structures of domination but also aims to use the analysis to effect change in the way power is wielded, maintained and reproduced in social organizations and relationships (Young and Harrison 2).

It is paramount to signal that it is not easy, as van Dijk opines, to precisely delimit the special principles, practices, aims, theories or methods of critical discourse analysis (Amoussou and Allagbe 12). Yet, any research which claims to be of this

paradigm ought to be characterized by some basic tenets. However, before underscoring these principles, it is expedient to clarify what makes discourse analysis critical, that is to elucidate how concept 'critical' is embedded in critical approaches to discourse analysis.

'Critical' in critical discourse analysis is not to be understood as in the normal parlance, i.e. criticizing. In a conversation best owed to Kendall Gavin, Wodak claims that 'critical' means "not taking things for granted, opening up complexity, challenging reductionism, dogmatism and dichotomies, being self-reflexive in one's research, and through these processes, making opaque structures of power relations ideologies manifest" (Ammoussou and Allagbe 12). 'Critical,' thus, implies as being skeptical to power relationships and inequalities embedded in society. It is often associated with "studying power relations" (Paudel 47).

Gee differentiates critical approaches from non-critical approaches to discourse analysis. According to him, non-critical approaches "tend to treat social practices solely in terms of patterns of social interaction" ("DA: What Makes it Critical?" 28). Critical approaches, however, "go further and treat social practices, not just in terms of social relationships, but also in terms of their implications for things like status, solidarity, the distribution of social goods, and power" (28).

As has been stated earlier, Fairclough and Wodak draw on the criteria originally put forth by Kress, and set up eight basic tenets of critical discourse analysis which, as viewed by Wodak, may most clearly distinguish it from other discourse analysis. The basic principles are as follows: i) critical discourse analysis addresses social problems; ii) power relations are discursive; iii) discourse constitutes society and culture; iv) discourse does ideological work; v) discourse is historical; vi) the link between text and society is mediated; vii) discourse analysis is interpretative

and explanatory; viii) discourse is a form of social action (Ammoussou and Allagbe 13).

Based on these characteristics, Wodak contends that critical discourse analysis “aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized and so on by language use (or in discourse)” (Ammoussou and Allagbe 13). Similarly, Fairclough postulates that its aims “are to explore the social function of language, to describe linguistic processes in social terms, and to reveal the ‘ideological’ and political investments” (Ammoussou and Allagbe 13). It follows from this to argue that exploring social otherness that is sustained or legitimized by ideologically and politically motivated use of language is the goal of critical discourse analysis.

In the light of aforementioned aims, Fairclough defines critical discourse analysis as “a form of critical social science geared to illuminating the problems which people are confronted with by particular forms of social life, and to contributing resources which people may be able to draw upon in tackling and overcoming those problems” (“CDA as a Method in Social Scientific Research” 125). Van Dijk regards it as “a type of discourse analytic research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (Ammoussou and Allagbe 13).

As Gee notes: “Critical discourse analysis deals with whose ‘interests’ are represented, helped, or harmed as people speak and write” (*Introduction to DA* 204). Critical discourse analysis regards language not as a neutral medium of the social practices, but as an active participant. Language to critical discourse, in Jan Blommaert’s view, “is never a neutral object, it is subject to assessment, value-

attribution, and evaluation and consequently it is subject to deep cleavages, forms of inclusion and exclusion and of oppression” (Paudel 56).

The central claim of critical discourse analysis is that the way certain realities get talked or written about—that is, the choices speakers or writers make in doing it—are never random, but ideologically patterned (Cameron 124). In Cameron’s view, institutions including the media are important sites for the operation of discourse in its ideologically significant sense (123). Similarly, Blommaert locates the focus of critical discourse analysis on institutional environments to manifest how the connections between language, power and social processes reduce everything to normal discourse (34). According to Ruth Wodak, critical discourse analysis “specially considers institutional, political, gender and media discourses (in the broadest sense) which testify to more or less overt relations of struggle and conflict” (“What CDA is About” 2). In the same line, Paudel also writes:

The growing enterprise of critical discourse analysis seeks to show how the apparently neutral, purely informative discourses of newspaper reporting, government publications, social science reports, and so on, may in fact convey ideological attitudes just as discourses which more explicitly editorialize or propagandize, and how language is used to convey power and status in contemporary social interaction.

(51)

It becomes all the more important to be able to read between the lines in order to glimpse at least the alternative view. Critical discourse analysis is one that seeks to provide the ways and means for this kind of reading between the lines. In essence critical discourse analysis is about the critical deconstruction of messages (from the

powerful to the less powerful) to explore how they legitimate and reproduce a dominant ideological perspective.

Critical discourse analysis has not, of course, gone uncontested. Norman Fairclough defends critical discourse analysis from the detractors who basically charge against it for not being impartial and neutral. He argues that critical discourse analysis does not make one immune from being ideological as it is better placed to identify its own partiality than most theories (“A Reply to Widdowson” 149). As critical discourse analysis has an intervening nature, Gee defends it from the barrage of criticisms made against its notion of critical approach. He contends that the goal of critical discourse analysts is “not just to describe how language works . . . They also want to speak to and, perhaps, intervene in, social or political issues, problems, and controversies in the world. They want to apply their work to the world in some fashion” (*Introduction to DA* 9). “Since Discourses and their interactions in time and space are inherently about the distribution of social goods,” Gee argues, “discourse analysis is or should be inherently ‘critical’ and even ‘political’” (“DA: What Makes it Critical?” 43).

It follows from this to argue that critical discourse analysts bear in mind the reference to social and political factors while analyzing language-in-use. For them, it is not enough to leave the analysis of the social at the level of how talk and text function in social interactions.

### 2.5.1 Central Approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis “does not have a unitary theoretical framework or methodology” (Ammoussou and Allagbe 14). “There are as many different approaches to analyses within critical discourse analysis as there are theories and problems to be studied” (Titcher, Meyer, Wodak, & Vetter; van Dijk; qtd. in Rogers,

“Critical Approaches” 10). There is a range of approaches to critical discourse analysis. Among them, the most influential traditions of critical approaches to discourse analysis are those of Fairclough’s socio-cultural approach, van Dijk’s socio-cognitive approach, Wodak’s discourse-historical approach, Kress’s multimodal social semiotic approach, and Gee’s critical approach. However, since it has already been stated in chapter one what are taken to be the limitations and methodology, this study outlines only Gee’s approach to discourse analysis.

#### 2.5.1.1 Gee’s Approach to Discourse Analysis

Gee’s approach to discourse analysis draws on three traditions: American anthropological linguistics and narratives; social discourse theories; and cognitive psychology (Rogers, “Critical Approaches” 11). It is a unique integrated approach to critical analysis of discourse: “[T]he approach to discourse analysis taken in this book is not ‘mine’. ... I have freely begged, borrowed, and patched together” (Gee, *Introduction to DA* 10). It incorporates both a theory of language-in-use and a method of research, and pays a lot of attention to the political and societal implications of ways of spoken and written discourse.

Gee introduces his ‘tools of inquiry’—theoretical devices that also express his theory of language—as Situated Meanings, Social Languages, Intertextuality, Figured Worlds, Discourses and Conversations. “These are the social and cultural frameworks for understanding how people use language to accomplish social goods” (Rogers, “Critical Approaches” 11). The “seven building tasks,” the second part of his framework, “are practices designed for analysts to discover what work is being done with language” (Rogers, “Preface” xix). Such building tasks include seven entry points that aid the analyst in constructing meaning from a network of discourse patterns. The tasks include significance, activities, identities, relationships, politics,

connections, and sign systems and knowledge. Each dimension, further, has a set of associated questions that aids the analyst.

## 2.6 Conclusion

The work of representation is closely tied up with the constitution of meaning through language, discourse and image. Though physical things and actions exist, they, as viewed by the constructionist theory of meaning and representation, only take on meaning and become object of knowledge within discourse. Such knowledge is always inextricably enmeshed in relations of power. The practice of representation, therefore, is not merely bound up to reflecting things and producing meanings, rather it is closely tied up with the effects and consequences—its politics.

The regime of representation is reproduced and sustained in discourse. Discourse “is an inescapably important concept for understanding society and human responses to it as well as for understanding language itself” (Paudel 56). Language is the key ingredient in the very constitution of knowledge which, in turn, is inextricably linked with the workings of power.

For the purpose of the study, the term ‘representation’ has been used in this study as “a practice, a kind of ‘work’, which uses material objects and effects” and produces “the meaning of the concepts in our minds” through signs—language and visual (Hall, “Work of Representation” 25, 17).

Similarly, the term ‘politics’ has been used as the “*effects and consequences of representation*,” (Hall, “Introduction” 6) and following Gee, as “any situation where the distribution of social goods is at stake,” (*How to Do DA* 118) i.e., what social goods are at stake in any work of representation and what effects and consequences it brings.

Likewise, the term ‘discourse’ in this study simultaneously refers to Foucauldian notion of discourse and Gee’s distinction between little “d” and “D” discourse. By discourse, Foucault meant “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about—a way of representing knowledge about—a particular topic at a particular historical moment. ... Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language” (Hall “Work of Representation” 44). Similarly, Gee defines discourse with two distinct meanings that exist together: “language-in-use or stretches of language” and “language *plus* ‘other stuff’” (*Introduction to DA* 34, *emphasis* in original).

This thesis adopts constructionist approach to representation and meaning, especially discursive approach. However, critical analysis of political discourse in media is a forensic task which requires a delicate balance dealing with the dynamic social variables like state power, political ideology, dominant socio-political scenario, etc.

## Chapter 3

### Analytical Framework

#### 3.1 Introduction

Critical discourse analysis “does not have a unitary theoretical framework or methodology” (Ammoussou and Allagbe 14). The analytical tools for textual analysis have been employed in this study from Gee’s approach to discourse analysis. In the first part of this chapter, ‘tools of inquiry’ have been presented and these tools are not meant to be applied categorically to the concerned data, but they are to be employed eclectically to the degree of their relevancy in the problematic in question. Further, the ‘seven building tasks’ are introduced followed by a set of discourse analytic questions. In the second part of the chapter, analytical tools for the analysis of visual grammar are presented.

#### 3.2 Textual Framework: Gee’s Approach to Discourse Analysis

In his approach to discourse analysis, James Paul Gee proposes ‘tools of inquiry’ that help to uncover the construction processes of ‘areas of reality’—‘building tasks’ of language—followed by a set of discourse analytic questions.

##### 3.2.1 Tools of Inquiry

Gee’s “tools of inquiry”—theoretical devices that also express his theory of language—are “the social and cultural frameworks for understanding how people use language to accomplish social goods” (Rogers, “Critical Approaches” 11). They are Situated Meanings, Social Languages, Intertextuality, Figured Worlds, Discourses and Conversations. Gee recommends that these tools of inquiry “are not meant to be rigid definitions,” rather they are meant to be “‘thinking devices’ that guide inquiry in regard to specific sorts of data and specific sorts of issues and questions” (*Introduction to DA* 11-12).

By and large, all these tools are about generating, sustenance and interaction of discourses in society. As the nature of the study, this research employs “Discourses” tool to uncover the construction processes of ‘areas of reality.’

“Discourses,” with a capital “D,” are “ways of enacting socially significant identities and associated practices in society through language (social languages) and ways of acting, interacting, valuing, knowing, believing and using things, tools, and technologies at appropriate times and places” (*Introduction to DA* 108). “Discourses” are always “language *plus* ‘other stuff’” and they take us beyond language (34, *emphasis* in original).

### 3.2.2 Building Tasks

The action accomplished using language allows the language user to build or destroy things in the world. The chain of such actions are usually carried out in order to build something in the world or to sustain it across time (Gee, *How to Do DA* 88). Such worlds are continually and actively built and rebuilt not just through language, but “through language used in tandem with other actions, interactions, non-linguistic symbol systems, objects, tools, technologies, and distinctive ways of thinking, valuing, feeling, and believing” (88).

Gee asserts that any piece of language-in-use always and simultaneously engages in building one of “seven areas of ‘reality’”—“seven building tasks” of language (*Introduction to DA* 17). These “seven building tasks” of language are significance, practices (activities), identities, relationships, politics (the distribution of social goods), connections, and sign systems and knowledge. (17-19).

### 3.2.3 Discourse Analytic Questions

Gee proposes for discourse analyst to ask seven different questions about any piece of language-in-use. The present study adopts such analytic questions for the analysis of discourse as follows:

1. How is this piece of language being used to make certain things significant or not and in what ways?
2. What practice (activity) or practices (activities) is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e., get others to recognize as going on)?
3. What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e., get others to recognize as operative)? What identity or identities is this piece of language attributing to others and how does this help the speaker or writer enact his or her own identity?
4. What sort of relationship or relationships is this piece of language seeking to enact with others (present or not)?
5. What perspective on social goods is this piece of language communicating?
6. How does this piece of language connect or disconnect things; how does it make one thing relevant or irrelevant to another?
7. How does this piece of language privilege or disprivilege specific sign systems? (*Introduction to DA* 17-20)

Besides them, Gee proposes one more question to ask while not all building tasks will be as readily apparent in all pieces of data. He notes: “One more device that helps us

think about what something means is to ask in what other ways it could have been said or written” (22).

### 3.3 Visual Framework: Critical Visual Analysis

The visuals in media discourse these days have become as prominent form of communication as text. They have become an integral part of communication to construct and disperse ideas and beliefs in the media discourse. Kress et al. maintain that “[i]t has become impossible to read texts reliably by paying attention to written language alone” (Kress et al. 257). The images, therefore, are the gimmicks on the news contents that the newspapers can resort to. The print media themselves are making more deliberate use of a range of modes which are efficacious and can co-occur within the same news story. The images in the newspaper do not only supply proofs that events really happened, they let the viewers witness the related settings as well with their own eyes. “Visual mode of communication is more forceful and effective than the verbal mode since the viewer can easily and instantly receive, however partially, the visual meaning of an image” (Paudel 124). The textual message of a text requires “more effort” and consumes “more time,” for the reader, to get the message across. Unlike in visual mode of communication, very little could be achieved from the verbal medium at a quick glimpse (124).

Margaret Bourke-White, an American photographer working on social documentary in the 1930s, argued that “with a camera the shutter opens and closes and the only rays that come in to be registered come directly from the object in front” (qtd. in Hamilton 86). She made a binary opposition (photography=objectivity: writing=bias) as she labeled writing as less objective: “whatever facts a person writes have to be coloured by his prejudice and bias” (qtd. in Hamilton 86).

However, the central issue is: Does visual language reflect a truth about the world which is already there or does it produce meanings about the world through representing it?

The way people feel and experience about themselves and the world is “in part at least, a by-product of particular ideological/discursive regime” (Paudel 134).

According to Barthian visual semiotics, an image represents a certain participant (human or not) and that participant may have a range of meaning associations. These images may have meaning associations in a continuum starting from the most literal or transparent meaning (“denotative”) to the most symbolic or opaque meaning (“connotative,” what Barthes calls “myths”). The first meaning is already established one, however, the connotative, the superimposed one, is ideological meaning serving to legitimate the status-quo and the interests of those whose power is invested to it (Paudel 127-28). Photographs are good vehicles for such ideological meanings because they naturalize such ideologies. They can be thought of as just “finding” such meanings on the street, as it were, rather than constructing them (van Leeuwen, “Semiotics and Iconography” 97).

The dominant visual language is now controlled by the global cultural/ technological empires of the mass media through the spread of image banks and computer-imaging technology, which, through the visual representation, exert a “normalizing” rather than explicitly “normative” influence on visual communication (Kress and van Leeuwen 5). Gee also argues that “[i]mages, just like communication in language, do not just ‘say’ things (carry ‘messages’), but seek to do things as well” (*Introduction to DA* 195). This entails that images do not necessarily communicate truth with the viewers. They indeed actively participate in world building—

constructing areas of reality—and legitimate the ideology of the image producers. Thus, they play crucial role in the representation.

Most often, newspaper news, at least lead story, coexists with visual content.<sup>2</sup> In such a case, the texts and the visuals complement one another. Moreover, the verbal and visual modes together form the holistic picture of the media discourse. Similarly, the dominant images also function as an independent means of representation.<sup>3</sup> The repeated motifs or clusters of ideas represented through the dominant images privilege certain discourse over others. Such visual contents do not simply depict the world but narrate visual narratives as well. These images also include captions, which provide information on what is depicted and can emphasize the newspaper's editorial stance.

### 3.3.1 Exploring Visual Grammar: Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Social

#### Semiotics

Gunther Kress and van Leeuwen's *Reading Images* is a resource that focuses upon the nature and practice of visual rhetoric and provides a methodological framework for the analysis of photography. The analytical tools employed in this study for the analysis of visual composition belong to Kress and van Leeuwen's visual social semiotics, especially the tools related to the three layers of visual meanings. However, not all the proposed tools have been used. At the risk of oversimplification, a brief synopsis of such tools relevant to this study is presented in the subsequent sub-sections.

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<sup>2</sup> Lead story stands for the main news story accompanied by largest headline as well as a photograph on the front page.

<sup>3</sup> Dominant images in this study stand for privileged/largest images on top front pages that may or may not accompany news headlines.

### 3.3.1.1 Representational Meanings

Kress and van Leeuwen depict visual syntactic patterns in terms of their functions of relating visual participants to each other in meaningful ways (Paudel 137). Images involve two types of participants: “represented” and “interactive”; and three types of relations: i) relations between represented participants, ii) relations between interactive and represented participants (the interactive participants’ attitude towards the represented participants), and iii) relations between the interactive participants (the things interactive participants do to or for each other through images). Interactive participants are the participants in the communication—the producers and viewers of images; and the represented participants are the participants who are the subject of the communication—participants within the picture frame (Kress and van Leeuwen 114).

### 3.3.1.2 Interactive Meanings

Images, through the relations between viewers and the world inside the picture frame, interact with the viewers and suggest the attitude viewers should take towards what is being represented. Kress and van Leeuwen give illustrations of “how the systems of ‘contact’, ‘social distance’ and ‘attitude’ interact to create more complex and subtle relations between represented and interactive participants” (149).

There is a fundamental difference between pictures from which represented participants look directly at the viewer’s eyes, and pictures in which this is not the case. When represented participants look at the viewer, vectors, formed by participants’ eyelines, connect the participants with the viewer. Contact is established, even if it is only on an imaginary level. The visual configuration has two related functions. First, it creates a visual form of direct address. It acknowledges the viewers explicitly, addressing them with a visual “you.” Second, it constitute an “image act.”

The producer uses the image to do something to the viewer. It is for this reason that Kress and van Leeuwen have called this a “demand”: the participant’s gaze (and the gesture, if present) demands something from the viewer, demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation with him or her. In doing so, images define who the viewer is and in this way exclude other viewers (117-18).

Other pictures address the viewer indirectly in which the viewer is not object, but subject of the look, and the represented participant is the object of the viewer’s dispassionate scrutiny. No contact is made. The viewer’s role is that of an invisible onlooker. All images which do not contain human or quasi-human participants looking directly at the viewer are of this kind. For this reason, Kress and van Leeuwen have called this kind of image an “offer”—it “offers” the represented participants to the viewer as items of information, objects of contemplation (119).

Image producers must choose to depict participants as close to or far away from the viewer. The choice of distance can suggest different relations (though it is on an imaginary level) between represented participants and viewers. Close personal distance (close-up) is the distance at which one can hold or grasp the other person and suggests an intimate relation. Far personal distance is the distance that extends from a point that is just outside easy touching distance by one person to another, the distance at which subjects of personal interests and involvements are discussed. Close social distance begins just outside this range and is the distance at which impersonal business occurs. Far social distance is the distance to which people have more formal social relations. Public distance, finally, is anything further than that, the distance between people who are strangers to each other (Kress and van Leeuwen 124-25).

Producing an image involves not only the choice between offer and demand, and the selection of a certain frame, but also, at the same time, the selection of an

angle, a point of view, and this implies the possibility of expressing subjective attitude towards represented participants (Kress and van Leeuwen 129).

The image can have either a frontal or an oblique point of view. Similarly, the represented participant(s) in the picture frame can be seen from high or low angle, or from eye level. However, this is not strictly an either/or distinction. There are degrees (Kress and van Leeuwen 135). The difference between the frontal and the oblique angle is the difference between involvement and detachment. The frontal angle says, as it were, “What you see here is part of our world, something we are involved with.” The oblique angle says, “What you see here is *not* part of our world; it is *their* world, something *we* are not involved with” (136, *emphasis* in original). Likewise, in the course of depicting represented participant, a high angle suggests the interactive participant’s power over the represented participant; and a low angle suggests the represented participant’s power over the interactive participant. If, finally, the picture is at eye level, then the point of view is one of equality and there is no power difference involved (140).

In sum, three factors play a key role in the realization of interactive meanings: distance, contact and attitude. These are “simultaneous systems”: any image must either be a “demand” or an “offer” and select a certain size of frame and select a certain attitude (Kress and van Leeuwen 148). The following figure summarizes the interactive meanings in images:

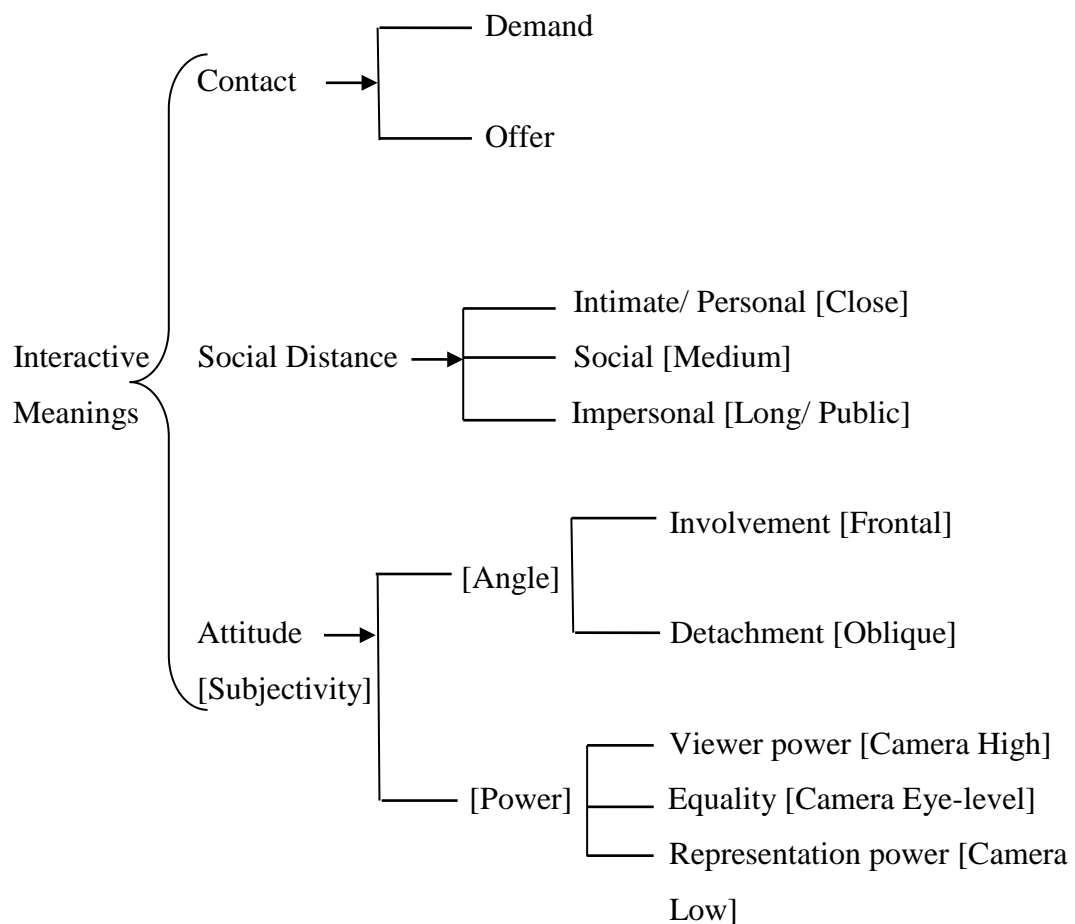


Fig. 1. Interactive Meanings in Images (Kress and van Leeuwen 149)

As shown in Fig. 1, by observing an image on the newspaper, one can infer the distance of the image from the viewer (picture frame), the angle of viewing and the position of the image in terms of camera placement. “These three dimensions tell us many things about the social status, power and solidarity among the participants” (Paudel and Pandey 55).

### 3.3.1.3 Compositional Meanings

Information values are realized by the placement of the elements of a composition. The idea is that the role of any particular element on the whole will depend on whether it is placed on the left/right, in the center/margin, or in the upper/lower part of the picture space or page (Jewitt and Oyama 147, Paudel 147).

Left/right placement, according to Kress and van Leeuwen, creates a Given/New structure. The elements placed on the left are presented as “Given,” the elements placed on the right as “New.” For something to be “Given” means that “it is presented as something the viewer already knows, as a familiar and agreed-upon point of departure for the message.” For something to be “New” means that “it is presented as something which is not yet known, or perhaps not yet agreed upon by the viewer, hence as something to which the viewer must pay special attention.” The “New” is therefore problematic, contestable, the information is at issue, while the “Given” is presented as commonsensical, and self-evident (181).

As for top and bottom, again, if some of the elements are placed on the top and others at the bottom, then what is placed on the top is presented as what Kress and van Leeuwen call the “Ideal” and the elements placed at the bottom as the “Real.” For something to be “Ideal” means that “it is presented as the idealized or generalized essence of the information,” and hence ideologically most salient part. The “Real” is then opposed to this in that its meaning potential is “down-to-earth”—more real or more practically oriented information (Kress and van Leeuwen 186-87, Paudel 147).

If a visual composition makes use of the center, placing one element in the middle and other elements around it, Kress and van Leeuwen refer to the central element as “Centre” and elements around it “Margins.” For something to be presented as “Centre” means that it is presented “as the nucleus of the information to which all other elements are in some sense subservient.” The “Margins” are thus dependent elements. Margins, in many cases, are very similar to each other, so that there is no sense of a division between Given/New and/or Ideal/Real elements among them. Not all Margins, however, are equally marginal (196). The compositional meanings are summarized in Fig. 2.

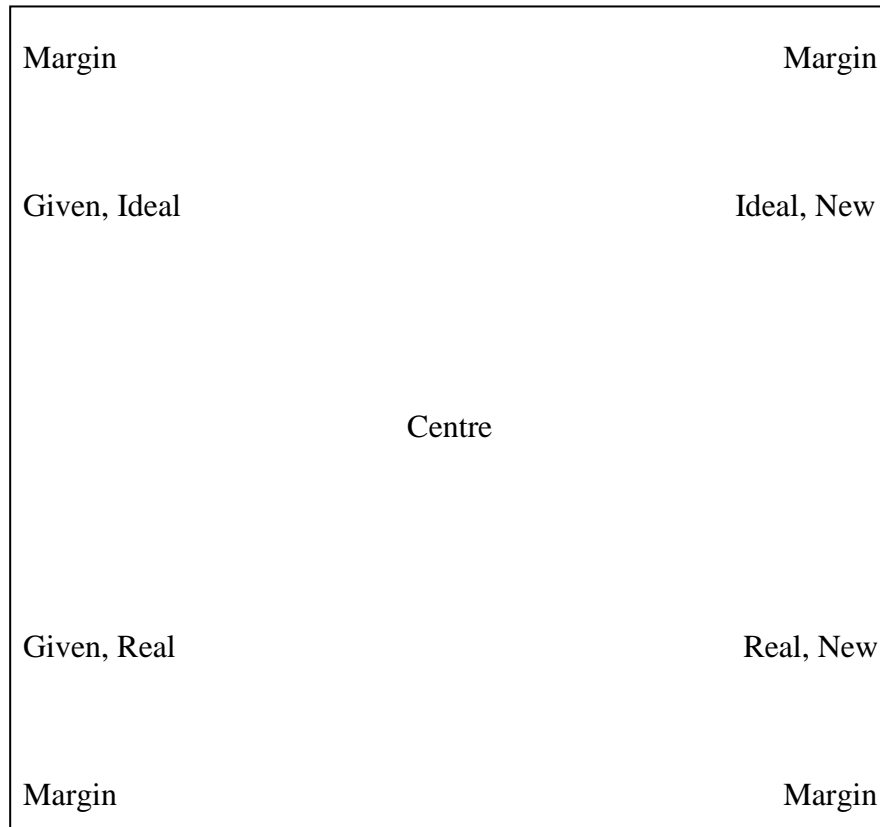


Fig. 2. The Meaning of Composition (Kress and van Leeuwen 210)

As shown in Fig. 2, by observing an image on the newspaper, one can infer the placement of the information value of a composition in terms of left/right, top/bottom and/or center/margin binaries and the meanings they imply.

## Chapter 4

### Politics of Media Discourse: Representation of HoR Dissolution, 2020 in the State-Owned English Broadsheet

[T]he primary purpose of CDA is to make *explicit* the Discourses . . . embedded in texts which would otherwise remain implicit, invisible and thereby all the more powerful. (Locke 51, *emphasis* in original)


The discourse in the newspapers is not ideologically neutral since the language and visual used by them privilege one group of people, society or party to the exclusion of others. Critical discourse analysis, however, “deals with whose ‘interests’ are represented, helped, or harmed as people speak and write” (Gee, *Introduction to DA* 204). Giving space to news items and visuals, arranging them in a certain layout, choice of lexicons, fixing headlines, choice and placement of the visual content, etc. on the front page of the broadsheets are not neutral practices, but arbitrary ones. The broadsheets have the politics of representing the issue of the HoR dissolution within their own ideological framework by the means of these practices. Moreover, the broadsheet dailies generate knowledge and truth through these means and disseminate among the readers/viewers in the society. Such exchanges, however, never represent a neutral way of understanding but are always implicated in questions of social authority.

While representing the issue of the HoR dissolution from December 21, 2020 to February 23, 2021, the state-owned broadsheet daily *The Rising Nepal* constructs a discourse of social good. Social good is “the stuff of politics,” and politics, as Gee argues, “is not just about contending political parties. At a much deeper level it is about how to distribute social goods in a society: who gets what in terms of money, status, power, and acceptance on a variety of different terms, all social goods”

(Introduction to DA 7). Thus, politics is to risk being seen as a winner or loser in a given linguistic practice in which social goods are always at stake. To construct discourse of social good, how the state-owned broadsheet represents the issue on its front pages both textually and visually can be illustrated with the news items, headlines, word choice, visual texts and page layout it exploited on its very first issue after the incident; taking the same elements from *The Kathmandu Post* as foil.

# Representatives dissolved for April 30, May 10 next year

had it to the the ability the that the as ticle that the ation l fix y in rime vote rime d. tates e of five rlier. n is n of



**Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli**

the leader of a parliamentary clause (5) fails to obtain a vote of confidence or the Prime

Representatives is completed within six months.

**Term of House of Representatives**  
Article 85 (1) states: Unless dissolved earlier pursuant to this Constitution, the term of the House of Representatives shall be five years.

Prime Minister Oli is the fourth Prime Minister of Nepal to dissolve the parliament and go for snap polls after the political change of 1990.

Earlier, Girija Prasad Koirala of the Nepali Congress, who was leading a majority government after 1992 general elections, had dissolved the erstwhile House of Representatives in 1994.

Likewise, Manamohan Adhikari had also announced a mid-term elections in 1995 when the then UML was leading a minority government after the 1994 snap polls, but the Supreme

**House division**

By Kailash Charikot, D

Spokesperson government for Commu Information Te Gurung has said of Ministers re dissolution of t order to preven nation. Addressing programme Gauri Shankar Minister Guru various games nationally and could invite a in the nation

Fig. 3. (*The Rising Nepal*, Dec. 21, 2020)

On its December 21<sup>st</sup> issue, the very first issue of the broadsheet after the incident, *The Rising Nepal* allocates more than two thirds of the front page for the news regarding the HoR dissolution. On top of the page, the banner head writes “House of Representatives Dissolved” (Dec. 21, 2020). As the sub-head, “Mid-term polls announced for April 30, May 10 next year” is written (Dec. 21, 2020).

Underneath the sub-head, the visual of PM Oli, as shown in Fig. 3, is printed on the upper central part of the page, surrounded by the news contents. Here, the visual message in the photo of the PM complements the textual messages in the headline and the sub-head, and vice versa. The position of the news item on the top front page along with the deified figure of the PM depicts his move as a social good. Besides, the news item coexists with a blue screened box-out story which cites the spokesperson of the government and Minister Parbat Gurung's speech as the headline. The headline reads: "House dissolution to prevent division of nation: Gurung" (Dec. 21, 2020). Juxtaposing the lead story with the box-out story which construes the House dissolution as a move to maintain national unity and to elude division, the broadsheet daily projects the HoR dissolution as an appropriate and valuable act.

Similarly, "House dissolution draws mixed reactions" has been published as the next headline in the middle of the front page, leaving a column on either of the wings (Dec. 21, 2020). The headline is in a small typeface, written without keeping space between the words; hence looks clumsy. The news item contains a photo of the miniature HoR building in the middle, surrounded by the comments of the six different leaders. By replacing the opponent leaders' photos with a non-human participant image, the broadsheet daily denies to identify their views individually. Moreover, it makes an indirect comparison between the PM's action and the opponent leaders' reactions, and mitigates the significance of their voices.

Likewise, "NC opposes House Dissolution" is another headline for the news about the main opposition party's negative reaction to the government's move (Dec. 21, 2020). The news is given marginal space and is limited to two short columns on the left wing at the foot of the page. By placing it at the marginal space, the state-owned broadsheet downplays its significance and signals its no or least relevance.

In contrast, the same news event represented on the front page of *The Kathmandu Post* can be used as a foil to unveil the politics of the state-owned media to construct and disseminate social good. However, it does not mean that the privately owned English broadsheet is ideologically neutral and does not practice building a world to practice a certain discursive formation. But because of the scope of the research, this thesis acknowledges the representation of the language and visual from *The Kathmandu Post* and offers the analysis of some of them.

## President dissolves House, polls for April 30 and Ma

Oli attacks the constitution one more time as the noose tightened aro



There were protests across the country after the prime minister recommended the dissolution of the House of Representatives.

POST PHOTO: HEMANTA SHRESTHA

Fig. 4. (*The Kathmandu Post*, Dec. 21, 2020)

Unlike *The Rising Nepal*, *The Kathmandu Post*, on its December 21<sup>st</sup> issue, writes as the headline of the lead story on the uppermost part of the front page as “President dissolves House, calls polls for April 30 and May 10,” followed by the sub-head “Oli attacks the constitution one more time as the noose tightened around him” (Dec. 21, 2020). Just below the sub-head, an image of a young protester

protesting the HoR dissolution in front of the HoR building, as shown in Fig. 4, is published. The caption of the image reads: “There were protests across the country after the prime minister recommended the dissolution of the House of Representatives.” The lead story is juxtaposed with the editorial on its left entitled “Democracy’s undoing.”

From the outset, *The Kathmandu Post* does not only incorporate news regarding the wide-ranging constitutional debate on the PM’s move and protests, the *Post* itself portrays the government’s December 20 move as an illegitimate and regressive act. “Democratic backsliding today begins at the ballot box,” writes the *Post* in the body copy of the lead story citing Levitsky and Ziblatt’s explanation on how democracies face threats in today’s world (Dec. 21, 2020).<sup>4</sup> The *Post* reports that the PM “crushed the Parliament” and his move is viewed as “constitutional coup” (Dec. 21, 2020).

Similarly, in the middle of the page, the *Post* devotes a column to write “This dissolution and those dissolutions: Looking for parallels to Oli’s move in history” as another headline (Dec. 21, 2020). The news item offers the uncanny historical parallels of dispute and discord among the political actors rather than any ideological differences. Moreover, the broadsheet daily presents a timeline on its left bottom wing under the title “The Road to Dissolution” as the origin story of the intra-party feud which instigates the PM to take the latest move (Dec. 21, 2020).

Thus, by representing the issue this way through the language and visual, both the state-controlled and the privately owned broadsheets involve in building entirely antipodal worlds. According to Gee, language users use language “to get people to

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<sup>4</sup> Body copy, also known as body story, stands for main part/writing of a news story.

construct pictures in their minds for many different purposes” (*How to Do DA* 73). As he argues, they put pictures in people’s heads so as to make things happen in the world. He calls this task of building in language as “world building” (73). He advocates: “We use language to build things in the world and to engage in world building” (*Introduction to DA* 16). While representing the issue in language and visual, *The Rising Nepal* and *The Kathmandu Post* do not merely deliver the message but attempt to do things out in the world. In this regard, the former appropriates, normalizes and naturalizes the issue and renders social good to it, whereas the latter destroys it. The power of texts and visuals in the media discourse can be realized, however, if one considers how specific linguistic and/or visual structures and patterns constitute a particular discourse to disseminate in the society.

While representing the news, *The Rising Nepal* has manipulated the symbolic capital, like language and visual, and privileged a particular discourse to build a world tantamount to the interest and ideology of the government. The manipulation becomes more apparent and seems arbitrary when analyzed through the tools related to the building tasks of language as propounded by Gee, namely significance, politics, connections, practices and the like. By doing so, the broadsheet daily, on its December 21<sup>st</sup> issue, has naturalized, built relevance and rendered significance to the government’s December 20 move. Gee argues that “when we use language, social goods and their distribution are always at stake, language is always ‘political’ in a deep sense” (*Introduction to DA* 7). In this sense, the practice of representing news by *The Rising Nepal* is also not free from the politics building task of the language. The politics, however, becomes conspicuous through the various levels of analyses.

*The Rising Nepal* makes juxtaposition of the visual message with the verbal message of the banner head and the box-out story to render social good to the PM’s

December 20 move. “Photographers are the visual thinkers as they are gatekeepers and agenda settlers for the visual message depicted in the newspapers. They decide which photo has to be juxtaposed with the given verbal message” (Paudel and Pandey 54). So that the photo published with the news content is not neutral practice but is the outcome of the ideological stance of the picture editor and/or layout artist.

On its December 21<sup>st</sup> issue, *The Rising Nepal* writes the banner head “House of Representatives dissolved” on the top of the front page followed by the sub-head “Mid-term polls announced for April 30, May 10 next year” (Dec. 21, 2020). Under the sub-head, the news story contains an image of the PM as shown in Fig. 3. The visual image depicts the PM KP Sharma Oli carrying out his duty of executive. The picture frame incorporates the national flag next to the PM. National flag evokes the feeling of nationalism; and each time any figure that exists under the national flag is reckoned as guided by the national interest. Here, purpose is more emotive and interactional than representational. On the right of the news content, exists a box-out story with the headline “House dissolution to prevent division of nation: Gurung” under the same banner (Dec. 21, 2020). The juxtaposition of the image with the box-out story further strengthens the feeling of nationalism and construes the PM’s move as guided by the ethos of nationalism, excluding other ways of feeling, thinking, believing, valuing, etc. The verbal message of the banner and the box-out story reinforces the representational meaning of the image.

The verbal text, according to Barthes, elaborates the image, or vice versa. The elaboration (restatement of same meanings in a more definite and precise way) is accomplished through two different techniques: “illustration” and “anchorage” (*Image-Music-Text* 39). By themselves, images are, he thought, too open to a variety of possible meanings. He argued, without textual message, the visual message may be

too “polysemous” with free “floating chain of signifieds” (39). Hence, he said, “in every society various techniques are developed intended to *fix* the floating chain of signifieds in such a way as to counter the terror of uncertain signs; the linguistic message is one of these techniques” (39, *emphasis* in original). To arrive at a definite meaning, therefore, language must come to rescue.

The image of the PM in the news content is emplaced just under the banner head and the sub-head. Here, the banner, which runs across the entire width of the page in large typeface, warrants greater attention of the viewers. In this regard, the image (existed next to the headline in placement) forms an illustration of the verbal message of the headline. Similarly, the image is surrounded by the news story. One tends to go through the news detail only after observing the image since the news detail is in small typeface. In this sense, the news story (existed next to the image at least in psychological level) forms more definite and precise restatement of the image—an anchorage of visual meaning by language.

At another level, the verbal message is etched in the psyche of the readers firmly through the visual message. The choice and placement of the photo, in this case, provides the psychological underpinnings to the dry linguistic message of the headlines. The photo of the PM has psychologically manipulated the readers/viewers’ psyche to privilege a certain layer of meaning and rules out others. The photo, in this discourse, serves as a pivot to construct meaning.

Drawing on Kress and van Leeuwen and simplifying, Paudel writes, images “interact with viewers and suggest the attitude viewers should take towards what is being represented” (141). The visual image in Fig. 3 is a medium close-up shot taken from the frontal angle with a low camera position. This entails the photographer’s (image producer’s) personal intimacy to and involvement in the world of the

represented participant, and, at the same time, the image invites the viewers for having the same attitude. With low angle (camera position), the image deifies the represented participant (PM Oli) and renders him power over the viewers.

Similarly, in the image, interaction is foregrounded whereas emotion (ethos of nationalism) and exposition are backgrounded. The represented participant makes contact with the viewers looking directly at them: the picture is a “demand.” Here, visual configuration constitutes an “image act”: it creates a “visual form of direct address” and acknowledges the viewers explicitly addressing them with a visual “you.” The interactional system of gaze dominates: the gaze of the represented participant directly addresses the viewers and so establishes an imaginary relation with them. Vectors formed by represented participant’s eyelines connect the participant with the viewers and contact is established. In this way, the image defines to some extent who the viewer is (pro-nationalist; representing the PM as a nationalist), and in that way excludes other viewers. (Kress and van Leeuwen 117-18).

Observing from the perspective of subject and predicate, it is found that the state-owned newspaper has organized the information with passive agent deletion so as to naturalize the incident. It is a linguistic form of representation that plays an important role to critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis. The noun phrase “House of Representatives” in the banner head is placed with the predicate “dissolved” which is an intransitive verb. The verb does not take any object; hence does not pass action named in the verb to the object. Since the banner does not state who dissolved the HoR, the construction does not reveal the purpose behind the dissolution to the readers/viewers and invites them to view the incident as a natural process. The actor is deleted from the representation and made anonymous, thereby

omitting to mention that the dissolution was a purposeful action. Such an arrangement treats the actor least purposeful. It further extirpates withholding of social goods and offers the actor social goods, namely attributing the incident as natural one. How the information is phrased has implications for social goods like guilt and blame, legal responsibility or lack of it, or the agent's (and the government's, too) bad or good motive.

Here, the practice of arranging the words in the banner this way is not an act of innocence. The banner could have been designed as “President dissolves House of Representatives” and the like, which provides the human subject as the do-er of action and presents it as a purposeful action. However, the broadsheet daily makes this choice over other sets of contrasting alternatives to privilege certain messages. In this regard, Gee opines: “Each different choice means something different and, in each, meaning is . . . used to do something different” (*How to Do DA* 55). Composing the banner head this way, the state-owned daily makes the HoR dissolution appear less as a construction of natural process than a reflection of it. Thereby it naturalizes the HoR dissolution and signifies its relevance.

In contrast, the same news item exists in *The Kathmandu Post* under the headline “President dissolves House, calls polls for April 30 and May 10” (Dec.21, 2020). Unlike in *The Rising Nepal*, the headline in the *Post* contains the noun “President” as the subject, followed by a transitive verb “dissolves” which passes the action named in the verb to the object “House”. The headline itself indicates that the action named in the verb is purposeful; hence is arbitrary.

According to Gee, “When we are using language, then, one thing we build is what counts for us as social goods” (*How to Do DA* 120). He further maintains: “Social goods are potentially at stake any time we speak or write so as to state or

imply that something or someone is ‘adequate,’ ‘normal,’ ‘good,’ or ‘acceptable’ (or the opposite) in some fashion important to some group in society or society as a whole” (*Introduction to DA* 19). Gee terms this nature of language as politics building task of language. *The Rising Nepal* through its use of language constructs the social good and distributes it as per its ideological bent to the government. For this purpose, the broadsheet divides the news content that exists under the banner head “House of Representatives dissolved” into three different sections (Dec.21, 2020). The first section narrates what the President did and for it what evidence were cited. The second part deals with what is in Articles 76 (1), (7) and 85 (1) of the Constitution and seeks to provide the legitimacy to the dissolution. In the third section, the broadsheet daily mentions the general term of the HoR and gives an account of the hitherto history of the HoR dissolution. On the ground of history, the third section validates the government’s action. It connects the PM’s current move with the practices in the past. Moreover, the news item coexists with a highlighted box-out story which claims that house dissolution is to preserve national unity and to prevent division of the nation. The division of the news content and juxtaposing with the box-out story build significance and relevance of the PM’s move and make it a social good.

The politics of *The Rising Nepal* in making the opponents’ stance on the PM’s move insignificant can be demonstrated with its use of generic term to represent them. The broadsheet daily writes as the headline on the lower half of the front page as “House dissolution draws mixed reactions” (Dec. 21, 2020). In the sentence, the noun phrase “mixed reactions” is in a generic term. Regardless of the majority voices of the leaders against the PM’s move, the broadsheet generalizes their reactions and labels them as “mixed reactions”. The news item incorporates the views of leaders from three major political parties in the dissolved HoR, in which five out of six leaders

present their views in negative. Citing the affirmative remark of a member of the National Assembly close to the PM, the English daily generalizes the negative reactions of the opponent leaders and puts them in the basket of “mixed reactions”. Moreover, the broadsheet does not acquaint the readers of the voices of the anti-Oli faction within the ruling NCP. Paudel argues that “[g]eneric sentences are evaluative devices that reveal the speaker’s attitude” (111). In the same line, van Leeuwen also opines: “The choice between generic and specific reference is another important factor in the representation of social actors” (“Representation of Social Actors” 35). The social actors and their views are represented either specifically or generally as per the ideological stance of the media. The views on the favor are often highlighted and the opposing views are generalized. By doing so, the state-owned English daily privileges a certain layer of meaning(s) and presents them as social goods, whereas it rules out other meanings withdrawing social goods from them.

Gee’s concepts of “politics” and “significance” are of paramount importance in the representation of the HoR dissolution as a social good on the front pages of *The Rising Nepal* from December 21 to February 23. The position of the news and visuals on the front pages related to the discourse, the headlines, use of dominant images, and the supportive rationales in the editorials are the tectonic stratagem to appropriate, naturalize and build relevance of the government’s December 20 move.

The rendering of the significance to any things/events is subject to the ideology of the language users. Gee opines that “we need to use language to render them [things] significant or to lessen their significance, to signal to others how we view their significance” (*Introduction to DA* 17). Thus, language is used to fix meaning or value to things or events in certain ways. In the course of doing so,

language constructs the social good, which is distributed to the social actors of the language users' preference.

The state-owned broadsheet, *The Rising Nepal*, has rendered significance to the government's move of dissolving the HoR by executing the binary opposition of the space on the front pages. Underlying assumption of the binary opposition of the government versus the opponent faction/parties seems to rule in allocating spaces to their voices and activities. Almost on its every single issue from December 21, 2020 to February 23, 2021, *The Rising Nepal* has made the PM's voice or activities the lead stories on the front pages with elaborated bold face headlines, marginalizing the voices of opponent faction/parties. Within this period, only two intervals exceeding one day are observed in which there is the absence of the PM from the (lead) news stories. The notable intervals are from December 27 to 30 and January 5 to 7, both of them not exceeding four days' gap. However, a single day's absence, in a half dozen cases, has been filled in by the use of seasonal images supplying the enlarged photo of the PM on the top of the front pages.<sup>5</sup>

On the basis of the layout of the front page, the upper half holds the prominent importance of regarding the lower half. The state-owned English broadsheet, to render significance to the government's December 20 move, foregrounds the PM's voices or activities on the front pages. From December 22 to 26, 2020, *The Rising Nepal* writes on the headlines occupying top or central space on the front pages as follows:

“Elections a chance to test popularity: PM,” “House dissolution obligatory, says Oli,”

“Oli expands NCP central committee,” “PM Oli stresses capable judiciary,”

“Participate in polls, says PM” and “PM Oli reshuffles Cabinet including nine new

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<sup>5</sup> Seasonal images in this study stand for variety use of contextual images on the front pages that do not accompany news headlines.

faces” respectively. The headlines are often juxtaposed with the enlarged photos of the PM taken at the real time of saying or doing. Conversely, during the same period, the voices or response of the opposition faction/parties are placed on the marginal spaces limiting them to two or less columns often without photos. “House still in existence: Nepal” (Dec. 22, 2020) and “NC begins discussion on House dissolution” (Dec. 23, 2020) are the headlines on the right wing of the middle part of the front pages. Similarly, another headline “Prachanda-Nepal faction takes to street” is put on the right wing at the foot of the front page (Dec. 26, 2020).

Similarly, *The Rising Nepal* further keeps on privileging the PM’s voices by making them the lead stories on the front pages. It writes “House dissolved to save democracy: PM,” “Foundation for development laid,” “Protection of children in primary: PM,” “House dissolution a compulsion: PM” and “House dissolution right of executive: PM Oli” respectively from December 31, 2020 to January 4, 2021, as the headlines on top of the front pages. The headlines are always juxtaposed with the PM’s photos. Nevertheless, during the period, the English broadsheet does not carry the news regarding the voices of the opponents.

In the like manner, the practices of signifying in favor of the government’s move continues from January 8 to February 23, 2021, in the state-owned English broadsheet. During the period, there are eleven issues on which the voices or activities of the PM do not appear as the (lead) news stories on the front pages. However, none of these intervals exceed one day. By privileging the voices and activities of the PM, *The Rising Nepal* seems to render significance to the PM’s December 20 move. The page designer, (the) layout artist and/or (the) sub-editor must have decided which news items to include and how much space to devote to each and at which part of the front page they have to be placed.

*The Rising Nepal* builds the significance of the PM's move dissolving the HoR and makes it a social good by persistently giving prominent spaces to the PM's claims regarding the issue on its front pages and making his part of speech news headlines. According to Mark Tattersall, when designing pages of a newspaper, "the designer attempts to present material in a way that retains the reader's interest" (202). As the PM's December 20 move has generated the critical and litigious media discourse, the views on it by people or institutions can facilely grab the readers' attention. Again, Tattersall notes, "The mindset of the front page has to be slightly different. . . . On the front page, you have to grab that attention in the first place" (202). The English broadsheet has seized all the opportunities to grab the attention of the readers and projected the PM's claims as truth. It writes as the headlines on top of the front pages as "House dissolution obligatory: says Oli" (Dec. 22, 2020), "House dissolved to save democracy: PM" (Dec. 31, 2020), "HoR dissolution a compulsion: PM" (Jan. 3, 2021), "House dissolution right of executive: PM Oli" (Jan. 4, 2021), "Only elections will restore House: Oli" (Jan. 9, 2021), "House dissolution constitutional: PM" (Jan. 11, 2021) and "House reinstatement will lead to dirty games: PM Oli" (Feb. 21, 2021). Besides, it often puts the PM's voice in the pull quotes in the middle of the news stories to create the cohesion with the claims made in the headlines.<sup>6</sup>

The headlines, which are often the windows for the contents of news below, could have been designed in otherwise ways. Nevertheless, Eamonn Rafferty has this to say about the practice in the media: "[T]he headline is thought up first, usually by the 'backbench,' . . . designed to fit the page and then the copy moulded to suit" (212). The effects of the headlines *The Rising Nepal* chooses to print, can be

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<sup>6</sup> Pull quote stands for a key phrase or quotation taken from the body copy.

summarized in a sentence as Rafferty argues: “[T]he headline is remembered long after the details of the original story . . . are forgotten” (212).

To mitigate the significance of the voices against the HoR dissolution, *The Rising Nepal* makes the news items concerning the registered writs against it and hearing on them in the Supreme Court subservient to the news regarding the PM’s opinions and claims. When one thing is made significant, another is obviously made insignificant or at least less significant. Gee posits: “We use language to make things significant in certain ways or to downplay their significance in certain ways” (*How to Do DA* 92). The state-owned broadsheet, when the news items regarding the subject matter oppose the government’s interest, makes them insignificant. Such mitigator stuff also enacts the practices of the broadsheet and the identities it takes on.



Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher JBR and Attorney General (AG) Agni Prasad Kharel attending a function organised to inaugurate the newly constructed building of the AG Office in Kathmandu on Wednesday. (Photo: Sujan Gurung TRN)

## House dissolution writs referred to constitutional bench

Fig. 5. (*The Rising Nepal*, Dec. 24, 2020)

*The Rising Nepal* writes, “House dissolution writs referred to the constitutional bench” on the center of the front page as the headline (Dec. 24, 2020).

### PM Oli capable

RSS  
Kathmandu, Dec. 23

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli Wednesday said the judiciary should be capable and aware for the effective implementation of laws, which changed according to new norms and values of the society.

He referred to the process of change in existing laws and norms as per the reforms in the social and level of public awareness. Prime Minister Oli was inaugurating a newly constructed building of the Office of Attorney General Ramshakpathi and the 3rd National Conference of Attorneys here.

Stating that the process of making new acts, amending the existing ones, issuing new regulations and proceeding in course of the implementation of Constitution was on, he said effective investigation, prosecution and speedy justice delivery.

On the occasion, Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher JB Rana said the criminal justice system would

Prachanda €  
parliamentary

By A Staff Reporter  
Kathmandu, Dec. 23

The news item is about hearing on the writs in the SC that were filed against the government's decision to dissolve the lower House. However, the news item is made subservient to the above image and a news story regarding PM Oli's stress on a capable judiciary. The image is published just above the headline, and making juxtaposition to the image another headline writes "PM Oli stresses on capable judiciary" on the right wing of the top front page (Dec. 24, 2020).

"The 'meaning' of the photograph . . . does not lie exclusively in the image, but in the conjunction of image *and* text. Two discourses—the discourse of written language and the discourse of photography—are required to produce and 'fix' the meaning" (Hall, "The Spectacle of the 'Other'" 228, *emphasis* in original). The photo depicts the PM, the Chief Justice and the Attorney General sharing the same stage at a function. The word "capable" in the headline is a modifier for the general efficiency and ability of the judiciary. The word also has the implied meaning that the SC used to be incapable of giving apt verdict in some historical moments in the past or is likely to be now. Whatever the sense it may imply, it is likely to influence the verdict of the SC. The position of the PM in the image and the headline on its right attribute the nuances of symbolic meaning to the ongoing discourse; hence make the news item regarding the filed writs against House dissolution subservient. However, on the same day, the same news item covered in *The Kathmandu Post* has got the prominent space.

Similarly, "Supreme Court asks for the House dissolution notice" is another headline for the news about the SC's demand for the dissolution notice published in Nepal gazette, and the government's inability to submit it (Jan. 22, 2021). However, it occupies the center part of the front page being subservient to another news about PM Oli's receiving Covid-19 vaccines from the Indian Ambassador to Nepal under grant assistance. Moreover, on the right of the news story, there lies another news item

about the PM's rationale for his latest move with the headline: "I was never supported by party insiders: PM" (Jan. 22, 2021). The PM's rationale on the headline and his receiving of Covid-19 vaccines make the emotional appeal to the readers to affirm the validity of his December 20 move, making the unfavorable news items subservient.

Another notable example is on its January 26<sup>th</sup> issue in which *The Rising Nepal* writes headline on the lower center part of the front page in small typeface as "PM has no right to dissolve House: Thapa" (Jan. 26, 2021). The news is against the government's December 20 move. It is possible, for this reason, the broadsheet daily makes it subservient to the news story regarding the PM's speech which has the headline "No alternative to polls: PM" (Jan. 26, 2021). The latter headline is bold face and the news item occupies twice the area of the former one. Likewise, the English broadsheet, on January 27, 2021, has another news item with the headline "Dissolution not a compulsive move: Advocates" on the center of right wing on the front page. The news is fixed in the two short columns and the headline is written clumsily without keeping space between the words. As the news item rebuts the HoR dissolution as a compulsive move, it is given a subservient position. The prominent space is given to "Nepali K2 summiteers boost national pride: PM Oli," the headline of another news story, in which a part of the PM's speech is put in the pull quote as "[o]urs is the country of brave people and you have again proved that this is the country who can fight against any obstacle and defeat it" (Jan. 27, 2021). Moreover, a photo of PM Oli receiving the national flag waved by Nepali climbers atop Mt. K2 is juxtaposed on the left to the news item. The juxtaposition between the symbolic meaning of the image and the pull quote makes the news item against the House dissolution subservient.

*The Rising Nepal*, in the like manner, on its February 16<sup>th</sup> issue, has “No intrinsic power to PM: Petitioners” as the headline on a small typeface on the far right wing of the front page (Feb. 16, 2021). The news item is about the petitioners’ concluding pleading against the HoR dissolution; hence is limited to a single column. On the contrary, the state-owned newspaper allocates the prominent space from top to lower central part of the page for the news item regarding the government’s achievement in its first three years. The headline writes, “There was a bid to run parallel govt within ruling party: PM” (Feb. 16, 2021). The news story contains an image of “Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli inaugurating the newly retrofitted office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers in Singha Durbar” (caption of the image) along with a blue-screened box-out within the body copy which has “We will achieve 10% growth in next FY: PM” as the headline. Though the news item is about the achievements of the government, the main headline tells a different story. The headline does not have any natural connection with the government’s achievement. The broadsheet daily’s choice of headline and the juxtaposition between the image and the box-out story downplay the significance of the petitioners’ claim and make it subservient. The politics of *The Rising Nepal* becomes more obvious when a news item published in *The Kathmandu Post* on the same day is read in tandem. The *Post* writes, “Oli says he was not allowed to work. But he flaunts his achievements” as the headline and on the sub-head it has “Analysts and leaders say prime minister is making contradictory statements to justify House dissolution” (Feb. 16, 2021).

However, the politics of the state-owned broadsheet becomes more apparent when it allocates the prominent spaces to the news items regarding the same issue if they underpin PM Oli’s December 20 House dissolution decision. Also, it either manages to write headlines in favor of the government’s move or posits pull quotes

giving a strong backing to it. The headlines like “Court should not interfere in political matter” (Feb. 6, 2021) and “Dissolution is PM’s choice” (Feb. 18, 2021) are on the right wing of top part, and “Elected PM always powerful” (Feb. 5, 2021) is on the right wing of the central part of the front pages.

Furthermore, when the headlines of the news stories do not reinforce the PM’s December 20 move directly, the state-owned newspaper deploys pull quotes in the body copy to create a favorable discourse. Published on February 8, 2021, it highlights an excerpt of the defendants’ logic on the pull quote which reads: “The move of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli to dissolve the House for a fresh mandate is not against constitutional ethics.” Likewise, the broadsheet cite the voice of one of the members of Amicus Curiae on the pull quote as “[t]he provision of dissolution which was in Article 53 (4) in Nepal’s Constitution-1990 still exists in Article 85 of the present Constitution, but silently,” in the news item published on February 17, 2021. In the similar vein, on its February 12<sup>th</sup> issue, the English broadsheet manages to put a pull quote in the body copy that reads: “Advocates pleading on behalf of the Prime Minister claimed that the Prime Minister was trapped from all sides, cabinet and from his own party” (Feb. 12, 2021). All these news stories have deserved either top or central space of the front pages. Gee opines: “Things are not trivial or important all by themselves. We human make them trivial or important or something in between” (*How to Do DA* 92). By all means, the state-controlled print media has produced and sustained discourse in favor of the PM’s decision to dissolve the HoR.

The perspective on social goods of the HoR dissolution built by *The Rising Nepal*—its politics—resorts to framing the same news events in different narratives. The politics can be shown in contrast with the news items published in the privately run newspaper *The Kathmandu Post*. Though both newspapers have covered the same

news events occurred on different dates, their narratives exhibit a significant amount of variation. This begs the question: What permutes the different versions of narratives? The answer to this question stems from the politics of the newspapers.

The questions like what social goods are relevant and at stake in this context of language use and how they are being distributed or how is their distribution being viewed are crucial to divulge the politics of the newspapers. Gee argues: “We use language to convey a perspective on the nature of the distribution of social goods, that is, to build a perspective on social goods” (*Introduction to DA* 19). The arrangement of headlines, sub-heads, pull quotes and news stories in these two English broadsheets make a great deal in building perspectives on social goods.

Both newspapers have made the PM’s decision to dissolve the HoR as the lead story on December 22, 2020. *The Rising Nepal* writes “House dissolution obligatory, says Oli” as the headline in the central left of its front page. Besides, it fixes a pull quote in the center of the body copy that reads as “PM Oli said the decision to go for a fresh mandate was not his wish but an obligation after he was left with no other alternative to save the country’s future” (Dec. 22, 2020). By doing so, the state-owned media delineates the PM’s move as an obligatory one and connects it with the country’s better future. Thereby it affirms the PM’s move as a social good in its version of narrative. Whereas, *The Kathmandu Post* keeps itself at distance and phrases the headline of the same day’s news in different form: “House dissolution: Whether it’s lawful is now for the Supreme Court to decide.” In this way the *Post* does not only disaffirm the claim that the PM’s move is an obligatory one but distinctly enunciates as well that in terms of its legality the final arbiter will be the court.

Similarly, PM Oli's written response to the Supreme Court's December 25 show-case notice has become the lead story on the front page of both English broadsheets. However, the difference lies in the narrative framework used in these broadsheets. *The Rising Nepal*, on top of the page, has "House dissolution right of executive: PM Oli" as the headline (Jan. 4, 2021). The broadsheet, in the body copy, cites the PM's written statement as "[t]he decisions taken by the Prime Minister in a certain political scenario is politically subjected to evaluation by the general public" (Jan. 4, 2021). It further goes on to acknowledge the PM's statement that a political question was involved and the issue did not fall under the standards of justice dispensation. In this way, the news in *The Rising Nepal* is spearheaded to represent the PM's claim as the ultimate truth. On the contrary, the same news in *The Kathmandu Post* is represented from a detached position in which the *Post* does not only cite the PM's statement but also presents the voices of constitutional experts on it. It writes the headline as "Oli argues House dissolution a political move, not matter of judicial review" and on the sub-head it writes "Constitutional experts say the prime minister either doesn't understand the constitution or he is twisting facts and constitutional provisions to defend his action" (Jan. 4, 2021).

Likewise, another different version of narrative is notable in the news covering of PM Oli-led NCP's mass gathering in Dhangadhi in the favor of the lower House dissolution, in which *The Rising Nepal* makes relevance of the HoR dissolution but *The Kathmandu Post* critically presents it. On the top of the front page, *The Rising Nepal* writes "Only elections will restore House: Oli" as the headline. In the body copy it is reported that the PM "would not let hard-earned democracy be in danger" (Jan. 9, 2021). While representing news, *The Rising Nepal* presents the PM as the guardian of democracy and attributes democratic ethics to his latest move.

Conversely, *The Kathmandu Post* has a more critical perspective as it writes the headline “Oli throws caution to the wind as he addresses a mass gathering” (Jan. 9, 2021). The *Post*, in the body copy argues that the PM, after dissolving the HoR, “has thrown the country into a political chaos and uncertainty,” and writes, “His house dissolution move has been described by the constitutional experts as extra-constitutional” (Jan. 9, 2021). In this way, *The Kathmandu Post* withdraws the social good from the PM’s move and questions its relevance.

In the similar manner, *The Rising Nepal* represents the news of the PM addressing a mass gathering in Kathmandu which was staged for seeking general public’s support for the PM’s move dissolving the HoR. However, the news exists in a different version of narrative in comparison to the news covered in *The Kathmandu Post*. Both broadsheets have made language and visual to represent the news. *The Rising Nepal*, on top of the front page has “Our goal is to make Nepal prosperous: PM Oli” as the headline. Just below the headline, two images of the PM addressing the mass, one public shot and another a close personal shot, as shown below, are printed.

## Our goal is to make Nepal prosperous: PM Oli



Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli addressing a mass meeting organised by Bagmati Pradesh Committee of NCP in Kathmandu on Friday.

(Photo: Shekhar, Sujana/TRN)

Fig. 6. (*The Rising Nepal*, Feb. 6, 2021)

Besides, the broadsheet inserts a pull quote just below the picture of the PM, which functions as the nucleus of the information to which all other elements (the polysemy of the visual to represent the event) are in some sense subservient and are thereby ruled out. “How can one who fought for democracy, social justice and equality for half of the lifetime, declare the restoration of monarchy?” wonders the PM as the pull quote reads (Feb. 6, 2021). The mass meeting took place in front of the Narayanhiti Palace, which used to be the seat of the abolished monarchy before the country was officially declared as a federal democratic republic. The choice of the location for the mass meeting by the communist PM is eccentric; hence he seems to be defensive in his speech. However, the broadsheet daily hides this fact by emphasizing on the hard news covering of the PM’s speech. According to Hall, “[i]t is by our use of things, and what we say, think and feel about them – how we represent them – that we *give them a meaning*” (“Introduction” 3, *emphasis in original*). The meaning is constructed through the frameworks of interpretation which the participant brings to the objects, people and events. The state-owned newspaper covers the speech of the PM in the body copy and connects it to the development and prosperity by the headline to validate his December 20 move.

Moreover, the newspaper makes use of the image produced with such a distance (size of frame) and angle (point of view) that it – to borrow the idea from Kress and van Leeuwen – “interacts” with the viewers and suggests the “relation” and “attitude” they should take towards the represented participants (124-31). The image is photographed from public distance as if the broadsheet has an impersonal relationship with the participants in the image, however, manages to place a close-up, cropped, image of the PM on the right, as shown in Fig. 6, to set-up its intimate relationship with the government.

The represented mass participants in the left image (and in Fig. 7 as well) are seen from the point of view of power. They are shown impersonally, as strangers with whom the viewers do not need to become acquaintances. They do not look at the viewers as the photographers have not aligned themselves with the subject, not faced mass participants, but viewed and photographed them from public distance.

The angle in Fig. 6 (left image) is medium high from public distance as if the interactive participants have power over the represented mass participants. However, the frontal angle of the image suggests, as it were, “[w]hat you see here is part of our world, something we are involved with” (Kress and van Leeuwen 136). The posters of the PM Oli hung on the polls at the side of the road are depicted as exercising symbolic power over the viewers: they tower high above the viewers and noticeably look down on the viewers. Covering as many participants as possible in the picture frame, the Narayanhiti Palace is positioned at distance in the background. What to bring at forth and what to keep away while producing an image is the politics of the image-producers. Image-producers must choose to depict participants “as close to or far away from the viewer.” (Kress and van Leeuwen 124). The choice of visual spacing, contact and distance, indeed, is guided by the intended relations between represented participants and viewers.

The scene neither depicts the Narayanhiti Palace nor the stage (platform) as close to the viewers. Whatever the setting is, the picture frame tries to keep the Narayanhiti Palace (the historical building that reminds the absolute power of monarchy in the bygone time) at distance. Furthermore, a medium close shot image that cuts off the subject (PM) approximately at the waist, is juxtaposed on the right to constitute an “image act” (Kress and van Leeuwen 117). “The producer uses the image to do something to the viewer”: to set up a connection between the viewers and

the authority figure (117). The frontal angle suggests the “involvement” and the low angle (camera position) suggests the point of view that the PM (the represented participant) is powerful. In the image, his gaze (in posters as well) and gesture demand something from the viewers, demand that the viewers enter into a relation of social affinity and form social bond with him. And, in doing this, the image defines to some extent who the viewer is (the supporter of the PM’s move), and in that way excludes other viewers (the viewers who retain critical perspective). By placing a close-up photo of the PM along with the mass participants and keeping miniature Narayanhiti Palace in the background, the state-owned broadsheet creates connection with the headline and pull quote, which collaboratively make relevance of the PM’s move and present it as a social good.



Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli addresses a mass meeting, organised by the Bagmati provincial committee of his faction of Nepal Communist Party, in front of Narayanhiti Palace, which used to be the seat of the abolished monarchy, in Kathmandu on Friday. POST PHOTO: PRAKASH CHANDRA TIMLSENA

## Oli counts his achievements as if in a poll rally and defends move of dissolving the House

Fig. 7. (*The Kathmandu Post*, Feb. 6, 2021)

Nevertheless, the relevance of the PM's move is questioned and its social good is challenged in the news coverage of the same event in *The Kathmandu Post*. On top of the front page, the *Post* has printed the above image. One element used in Fig. 6 and 7 is that of foreground and background. Unlike in Fig. 6, the Narayanhiti Palace as a represented participant in the Fig. 7 is foregrounded keeping the mass participants on the background. It is depicted to appear large and positioned closer to the viewers (medium shot) than in Fig. 6. The placement of the PM is at distance from the viewers (no use of cropped image) and looks as if placed at the foot of the Narayanhiti Palace. The angle is medium high and oblique: the interactive participants have power over the represented participants, and the represented world is the part of "their world," suggesting "detachment" of the image-producers as well as the viewers (Kress and van Leeuwen 136, *emphasis* in original).

Just below the image, the headline writes as "Oli counts his achievements as if in a poll rally and defends move of dissolving the House" (Feb. 6, 2021). In the body copy, it is argued that "Oli, who returned to power on the nationalist plank, lately has been trying to woo the pro-monarchy, pro-Hindu constituency" (Feb. 6, 2021). The *Post* also reports the organizer of the mass meeting as PM's "faction" of NCP, the attendants as "his supporters" and PM's activities as analogous to that of the abolished monarchy. By doing so, the *Post* does not only challenge the relevance of the HoR dissolution but withdraws the social good too.

In this way, both broadsheet dailies, as per their ideological stance, engage in building meanings in the narratives that build different perspectives on the distribution of social goods. Gee argues that "[n]arratives are important sense-making devices" (*Introduction to DA* 161). Such narratives incubate particular themes and motifs via discourses. In the similar line, Hall, too, argues as:

In part, we give things meanings by how we *represent* them – the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them.

(“Introduction” 3, *emphasis* in original)

Thus, the meaning is the matter of emphasis the participant puts on in different language games. The design of headlines, pull quotes, narratives and visual depictions in the news contents of these broadsheets have implications for building or destroying social goods—giving meaning to the HoR dissolution.

According to Gee: “We use language to signal what sort of relationship we have, want to have, or are trying to have with our listener(s), reader(s), or other people, groups, or institutions about whom we are communicating. We use language to build social relationships” (*Introduction to DA* 18). While representing things through language, the language user does not only produce and exchange the meaning, but simultaneously participates in enacting, recruiting, sustaining or harming different social relationships, too. Language, in any socially situated context, serves to build relationships with a person, group or institution, while at the same time, it tends to modify or end the relationship with others. When it comes in the context of media discourse, it is obvious that the newspapers, through their representation of news events, tend to enact, recruit or sustain close relationships with a person, group or institution, modifying or disconnecting their relationships with others.

*The Rising Nepal* assiduously foregrounds the monologic narratives of development and prosperity (connecting them with the PM’s activities) to validate the Government’s December 20 move. While doing so, the broadsheet daily enacts

intimate relationships with the PM and his government, and disconnects itself from opposition faction/parties. When the challenged legitimacy of the HoR dissolution was subject to judicial review and the discourse was prevailed on the media, *The Rising Nepal* was de facto spearheaded to practice the discourse of development and prosperity on its front pages. During the period, the broadsheet daily deployed the lead stories to depict the PM as the agent of development and prosperity. For instance, the broadsheet makes the PM's 'New Year wish' a lead story with the headline "Foundation for development laid" and its sub-head "Strides towards prosperity to reach meaningful point" (Jan. 1, 2021). Both the headline and the sub-head are the part of the PM's New Year benediction. In the body copy it is reported that the PM "assured that the campaign to make the nation prosperous and life of the people happy would reach a meaningful point" (Jan. 1, 2021). The reason why *The Rising Nepal* formulates language this way is what counts for it as social good. It relates the PM with development and prosperity and makes a base for valorizing his HoR dissolution move. In this regard, the broadsheet sets up a close relationship with the PM and his government and parts itself away from the opponents.

The state-owned broadsheet could have formulated the headline and sub-head quite differently had it wanted to. The headline could have been designed as "PM Oli extended New Year benediction" and the like. But the choice made by the broadsheet evokes positive feelings towards the government's activities. In this formulation of language, the relevance of the HoR dissolution and social good are at stake. Gee maintains that "how we construct our sentences has implications for building or destroying social goods" (*How to Do DA* 90).

Similarly, "Intensify development works: PM Oli" (Jan. 16, 2021) and "We are in nation building drives, says PM Oli" (Feb. 23, 2021) are other two headlines of

the news stories published on top of the front page on *The Rising Nepal*. The English daily, in these news items, enacts a close relationship with the PM by representing him in the do-er position. “We use language to build and sustain relationships of all different kinds” (Gee, *How to Do DA* 114). The broadsheet, in the former news story, writes, “Prime Minister Oli instructed that development works should not be delayed under any pretext”. Similarly, in the latter, it quotes the PM’s speech as “[w]e are busy in the campaign of nation-building. So we have no time for meetings and calls. In such condition, some unemployed group of people might confuse you all. So be careful,” in what looked like his response to allegations of the opponents. “The choice of the patterns of distribution of the linguistic elements is socially conditioned. The choice depends on the speaker’s social, political and cultural position and on the situation in which s/he is speaking” (Paudel 46). *The Rising Nepal*, as the mouthpiece newspaper of the government, is more closely aligned with it than the privately run English broadsheet *The Kathmandu Post*. Hence, *The Rising Nepal* persistently makes a choice of ideologically saturated linguistic patterns that serve to underpin its relationship with the government, enacting a distanced relationship to the opposition faction/parties. *The Kathmandu Post*, however, on its January 9<sup>th</sup> issue, argues that “[o]bservers say Oli seems to have completely lost the plot and is making illogical statements, while ignoring his primary responsibility [“governance”]” (Jan. 9, 2021).

Likewise, the English broadsheet covers three different news events regarding the PM’s address to mass gathering in different places and gives them the prominent space on the front pages. The headlines read as “Govt working to bring smiles on the faces of people: PM Oli” (Jan. 17, 2021), “Opponents upset with government’s progress: PM Oli” (Jan. 31, 2021) and “Our goal is to make Nepal prosperous: PM Oli” (Feb. 6, 2021). In all these news items, the headlines are designed to relate the

PM with development, prosperity and happiness. Thereby, the broadsheet daily has established a strong relationship of the PM and his activities with the much-touted slogan of prosperity (“Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepali”). This relationship, however, assigns the PM a social good and validates his December 20 move. On the other hand, *The Kathmandu Post* does not formulate the language to build close relationships with the government. It maintains critical perspective in the representation of the government’s December 20 move. Thus, its choice of words and phrases recruits a relationship with the government where it is a distant social observer. Gee posits that “[o]ur choice of what sorts of phrases to use, what words to put in them, and how to combine words and phrases is determined by the sort of picture we want listeners to form in their heads” (*How to Do DA* 71). Though Gee talks about the spoken discourse, it equally applies in the written one, too, as he writes: “The approach to discourse analysis in this book applies to both speech and writing” (x).

In the like manner, the different kinds of relationships enacted through language and visual used on the front pages of *The Rising Nepal* become apparent when analyzed the space allocated for the opponent faction/parties. The broadsheet daily, from December 21 to 26, 2020, and from January 8 to February 23, 2021, allocates the prominent space of the front pages to represent the voices and activities of the PM Oli and his government, whereas the opponents’ views and reactions are emplaced at the bottom and marginal spaces. Similarly, the broadsheet daily allocates no space for the news regarding opposition faction/parties from December 27, 2020 to January 7, 2021. In so doing, the state-owned English daily enacts the hierarchical relationships with the government and the opponent faction/parties. It sustains the close relationship with the government and maintains the differential relationship with

the opponents. On the contrary, the privately run English broadsheet *The Kathmandu Post* gives space to the news items concerned to the demonstrations staged by the opponent faction/parties as well as others demanding reinstatement of the HoR. In this regard, *The Kathmandu Post* implies its proximal relationship to the opponents, however it represents them with skepticism.

Regarding the functions of language, Gee forefronts the connections among saying, doing and being in language and demonstrates how it serves more than communicating information. He argues: “Language allows us to be things. It allows us to take on different socially significant identities” (*Introduction to DA* 2). Because of this peculiar quality of language, *The Rising Nepal*, while representing news on its front pages, does not only enact different socially situated relationships, but engages in building identities as well. Such identities are authorized and issued for different purposes and effects. Gee posits that “the identity we construct for ourselves in any context is often defined, in part, by how we see and construe our relationship with other people, social groups, cultures, or institutions” (*How to Do DA* 114). For Gee, the relationships and identities go hand in hand. *The Rising Nepal*, in the course of reporting news regarding the HoR dissolution, makes the hierarchical relationships with the government and the opponents. Thereby, the broadsheet daily enacts a certain identity or role to them. For example, giving prominent space to the PM’s monologic narratives of development and prosperity, as exemplified earlier, the English daily has established close and strong relationship with the PM on the one side, then again it recognizes him as an only agent of development and prosperity—his social role, his identity. At the same time, the broadsheet daily denies to give the same role and identity to the opponent leaders since it keeps a differential relationship with them. It constructs through its news coverage an identity for the PM which contrasts with the

opponent leaders. In this regard, *The Rising Nepal* depicts the PM as an advocate of development and prosperity, whereas the opponent leaders are denied to be attributed with such quality.

Identity, to borrow an idea from Gee, but not his analysis, is reflexive in nature. What identity is enacted to other, works in comparison or contrast to the identity of the language user. Gee writes, the language users “often use the identities they are building for others to further the work they are doing building their own identity” (*How to Do DA* 110). Language is not a neutral medium of message. Different identities are always enacted in and through language while message is represented. In the context of news reporting, the text and image serve to build different identities to others, enacting a certain identity to the media itself. Therefore, the broadsheet dailies like *The Rising Nepal* and *The Kathmandu Post* do not only enact the identities to the government and the opponents, they also recognize and act out different social positions—their own identities. In this regard, Gee opines, “We often enact our identities by speaking or writing in such a way as to attribute a certain identity to others, an identity that we explicitly or implicitly compare or contrast to our own” (*Introduction to DA* 18).

The identities enacted by *The Rising Nepal* in comparison to *The Kathmandu Post* can be observed “in the way the social actors are represented by different sectors of the press” (Leeuwen, “Representation of Social Actors” 35). Here, social actors are the leaders of the different political parties. *The Rising Nepal* has published “No threat to democracy from govt” as the headline of a news item which has “PM addresses Democracy Day function” as the sub-head (Feb. 20, 2021). The broadsheet has reported only the hard news of the program organized at the Army Pavilion in Tundikhel without making any opinion. It writes, “Prime Minister Oli clarified that

there was no threat to democracy from the government” (Feb. 20, 2021). However, the news event does not secure the space in *The Kathmandu Post*. Instead, the *Post* has chosen to make the citizen’s march at Tundikhel, organized by civil society members hours after the government’s Democracy Day event, a lead story. “To reclaim democracy, citizens hold Tundikhel march,” reads the headline of the news story which has the sub-head as “*Brihat Nagarik Andolan* vows to fight to protect country from falling into an abyss” (Feb. 20, 2021). The *Post* reports: “According to them [the campaigners], Oli’s December 20 House dissolution dealt a massive blow to democracy, risking that the hard-earned gains of various movements in the past could fast unravel” (Feb 20, 2021). By choosing the different events of the same day to make the lead story, the broadsheet dailies represent the PM with his antithetical identities. *The Rising Nepal* identifies him as a democratic ruler, whereas *The Kathmandu Post* depicts him as a dictator.

Similarly, *The Rising Nepal*, on its January 8<sup>th</sup> issue, gives an account of the achievements the government claimed to have made in the previous fiscal year, under the news headline “Notable achievements made in prosperity, good governance” (Jan. 8, 2021). Through the various descriptions quoted from the government’s progress report and the headline itself, the broadsheet attributes the PM and his Cabinet with good governance. Besides, it incorporates in the front page a cross-reference image of a “12-page special supplement highlighting the achievements of the government that completes three years today,” provided under the title “The Journey To Prosperity” (Feb. 15, 2021). Such cross-reference stuff is centrally about the interaction of discourse. Nevertheless, *The Kathmandu Post* does not endorse such identity attributed to the PM by the state-owned media. The *Post* writes, “In three years, Oli took measures to impair federalism until he dealt a blow to the constitution, throwing

stability dream down the drain and inviting uncertainties” (sub-head) underneath the headline “He was chosen to strengthen the charter. He has left it weakened” (Feb. 15, 2021). In the body copy, the *Post* reports: “There is hardly anything remarkable about Oli’s three years as prime minister except that he got a new map [of Nepal] published, according to them [the analysts]” (Feb. 15, 2021). In this manner, the state-owned broadsheet and the privately run newspaper identify the PM with the contested identities as per their own stance to the government.

Meanwhile, the broadsheet dailies enact their own identities, too, by attributing identity to the PM. As Gee argues, “We use language to get recognized as taking on a certain identity or role, that is, to build an identity here and now” (*Introduction to DA* 18). The state-owned media, as it vehemently seeks to retain close relationships with the government by persistently marginalizing the opposition faction/parties, takes on the identity as a careful claimer and knower since it is a mouthpiece newspaper of the government. Whereas, *The Kathmandu Post* enacts in its language an identity as a social observer since it opts out of the government as well as the opponents maintaining critical perspective in news reporting. “Tired of Oli’s actions, Dahal and Nepal decided to join hands. But can they coexist?” (Dec. 27, 2020) and “Why the Congress is hemming and hawing, failing to make a firm stance” (Jan. 12, 2021) are the exemplary headlines to represent its stance to the opponents.

Similarly, the political actors who comprise the news play a significant role in the media discourse. *The Kathmandu Post*, though skeptically, has frequently represented opponents and their voices in the prominent space of the front pages, but the state-owned media, during the entire period of the discourse, does not. The identities of the broadsheets are rooted in difference to the degree that signification is so grounded in the representation of the political actors.

The representation of the language and visuals on the front pages through various approaches to privilege a certain layer of meaning(s) of the PM's December 20 House dissolution move and to rule out others has become a practice. Language-in-use, according to Gee, "is always part and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, social practices . . ." (*Introduction to DA* 68). By practice, Gee means "a socially recognized and institutionally or culturally supported endeavor that usually involves sequencing or combining actions in certain specified ways" (17). In this sense, the endeavor of representing the discourse regarding the HoR dissolution via language and visuals in the media has become a practice.

The role of institutional or cultural norms is pivotal to shape the practice of the media since their practice is institutionally or culturally supported sequence of activities. Ergo, the practice carried out by the media is not free from the influence of such invisible powers. It tends to be synonymous to the ideology of the institution under which it is carried out.

*The Rising Nepal*, while representing the discourse concerning the issue of the HoR disbanding through language and visuals, has made it practice. "What we say, do, and are in using language enacts practices" (Gee, *Introduction to DA* 18). As a mouthpiece newspaper of the government, the practice *The Rising Nepal* carried out has become an endeavor to construe the meaning of the government's December 20 move, and circulate the favorable discourse to make it a social good. Though both English broadsheet dailies have made practice of representing the concerned news on their front pages, the main concern of this study is to divulge how the state-owned media manipulates the language and visuals for this purpose. The main business is to dramatize how this practice functions politically in social interactions and has

“implications for inherently political things like status, solidarity, the distribution of social goods, and power” (Gee 68).

*The Rising Nepal*, on the very first day of the discourse, practiced the binary opposition of the space on the front page in representing news to enact the relevance of the government’s House disbanding move, and then continued it for the entire period. The broadsheet writes the banner head “House of Representatives dissolved” on top of the page followed by the sub-head “Mid-term polls announced for April 30, May 10 next year” (Dec. 21, 2020). Underneath the sub-head, an image of PM Oli, as given in Fig. 3, is positioned surrounded by the news content. As analyzed earlier, the practice of placing the close up image of the PM taken from the frontal angle with low camera position suggests the superiority of the represented participant, involvement of the photo editor, and the personal attachment of the represented and interactive participants. Therefore, the combination of the banner, the sub-head and the image of the do-er suggests the validity of the PM’s move dissolving the HoR. Moreover, the news item coexists with a blue screened box-out story which has “House dissolution to prevent division of nation: Gurung” as the headline (Dec. 21, 2020). Juxtaposing the lead story with the box-out story, the state-owned broadsheet projects the PM’s move as appropriate and valuable act. On the contrary, the English broadsheet allocates the lower part of the front page for the voices and reactions of the opposition faction/parties. Moreover, it makes use of the generic term “mixed reactions,” a mitigator stuff, to render insignificance to the stance of the opponents.

*The Rising Nepal*, in the same vein, carries out the same practice throughout the entire period. Almost on its every single issue from December 21, 2020 to February 23, 2021, the state-owned broadsheet has rendered significance to the PM’s voice or activities making them lead stories on the front pages with elaborated bold

face headlines. Whereas, the significance of the opposition faction/parties is downplayed as their voices are emplaced at the bottom of the pages. Moreover, the broadsheet daily rules out the opponents' views on its issues from December 27, 2020 to January 7, 2021. By doing so, the state-owned media engages to privilege a certain layer of meaning(s) of the PM's House dissolution move. "We use language to get recognized as engaging in a certain sort of practice or activity" (Gee, *Introduction to DA* 17).

Similarly, the state-owned newspaper has practiced to make the news items regarding the registered writs against the PM's move and hearing on them in the Supreme Court subservient to the news regarding the PM's opinion and claims. As has been analyzed earlier, the broadsheet daily makes the news items subservient when they oppose the government's interest. However, the newspaper allocates the prominent spaces to the news items if they underpin PM Oli's December 20 House dissolution decision.

The practice of representing the news and visual regarding the protest against or support for the government's House dissolution move on the front pages of *The Rising Nepal* has implications for inherently political things as advocated by Gee like "status, solidarity, the distribution of social goods, and power" (*Introduction to DA* 68). Highlighting the news regarding the mass meetings addressed by the PM, the broadsheet daily attributes all these qualities to the government's December 20 move. Whereas, by limiting the coverage of the protests against the government's decision, it mitigates the significance of the opponents' stance.

In comparison to the privately owned broadsheet *The Kathmandu Post*, the news coverage of protests in *The Rising Nepal* is less in number and is limited to the major opposition party, NC, and the Dahal-Nepal-led rival faction of the ruling NCP.

Moreover, the news items incorporate no photos of the launched protest rallies and are emplaced at the marginal position on the front page. “Prachanda-Nepal faction takes to street” (Dec. 26, 2020), “Prachanda-Nepal faction of NCP stages demonstrations” (Dec. 30, 2020), “NC holds nationwide protest against House dissolution” (Jan. 10, 2021) and “NCP failed to fulfill poll promises due to disputes, says Prachanda” (Jan. 23, 2021) are the headlines for the protest news emplaced either at bottom of the page or subservient position. More, the last headline is modified to make it as if the news item is not related to the protest against the PM’s move. The eyes of the readers first fall on the headline of news, then only they tend to go through the news story. The modified headline, however, may not grab the attention of the readers and distract them.

Conversely, highlighting the mass meetings staged on the support of the government has become the big deal to *The Rising Nepal*. The broadsheet daily makes the news items prominent by assiduously placing them on the uppermost position, illustrating visuals and designing the headlines with parts of the PM’s speech. “Only elections will restore House: Oli” (Jan. 9, 2021), “Govt working to bring smiles on faces of people: PM Oli” (Jan. 17, 2021), “Opponents upset with government’s progress: PM Oli” (Jan. 31, 2021), “Our goal is to make Nepal prosperous: PM Oli” (Feb. 6, 2021) and “House reinstatement will lead to dirty games: PM Oli” (Feb. 21, 2021) are evidentiary headlines for such news. However, the contrast on the practice of the state-owned broadsheet can be shown by taking sample headlines published on *The Kathmandu Post*. The practice *The Kathmandu Post* enacted is not imbued with the interest of the government. It writes as the headlines on the front page as “Oli throws caution to wind as he addresses a mass gathering” (Jan. 9, 2021) and “Seeking to change narrative, Oli resorts to show of force” (Feb. 5, 2021).

Gee writes, “We use language to build up (or Privilege) or denigrate various sign systems (communicational systems) and different ways of knowing the world” (*How to Do DA* 135). The use and maintenance of language and visual and claims to knowledge, for *The Rising Nepal* in the representation of the news regarding the HoR dissolution, are means to privilege a certain layer of meaning(s) and create its relevance. Gee further argues: “We can use language to make certain sign systems and certain forms of knowledge and belief favored or not, relevant or privileged, ‘real’ or not in given situations, that is, we can build privilege or prestige for one sign system or way of claiming knowledge over another” (91). While representing the news regarding the issue of the HoR dissolution, the state-owned newspaper manipulates certain communicational systems that give psychological underpinnings to the readers in favor of the government’s move. Moreover, its use of visual images creates a certain version of reality of the going on discourse.

*The Rising Nepal*, on the one hand, recurrently privileges the discourse—its way of knowing and claim to knowledge—through the exploitation of both language and visual on the favor of the House dissolution. However, such way of knowing and claim to knowledge is the outcome of the steering force of the government’s interest. From the outset, the state-owned newspaper persistently privileges the messages through the manipulation of language and visuals claiming that the government’s December 20 move is constitutional and compulsive act to prevent division of the nation and safeguard the hard-earned democracy. For this purpose, it privileges the PM’s voices and claims giving prominent space on the front pages and renders them social goods. In so doing, it indirectly suggests the readers/viewers the perspective they should have to the government’s move. On the other hand, the state-owned newspaper denigrates the other forms of knowing and claim to knowledge. It

disavows the stance the opponents take, protests they stage and the allegations they make over the government's move. For this purpose, it limits the news coverage on the voices and protests of the opposition faction/parties and put them in the marginal spaces, often disprivileging the related images. Moreover, it remains silent to the voices and protests of civil society members, human rights activists, women, youths, and the like. Gee posits, "Not saying something—staying silent about it—can be a way of privileging what you do say, since you leave unsaid information that might make the listener or reader think differently about viewpoint" (*How to Do DA* 142). Therefore, it is clear that being silent or offering a limited information about certain things is also one important device to enhance building the significance and relevance of the represented knowledge.

In this way, the state-owned broadsheet privileges the promotional language and claims its knowledge on the HoR dissolution, which ultimately reinforces the government's interest. It reflects the politics of the broadsheet as well since "constructing privilege for a sign system or a way of knowing the world is to create and offer social good" (Gee, "DA: What Makes it Critical?" 33). The sign systems privileged in the news reporting in *The Kathmandu Post*, however, represent a different view of knowledge and belief on the PM's move—its different way to know the world. The *Post* makes use of language and visual to construe certain sign systems that do not endorse the claims of knowledge made by the state-owned broadsheet. Its wide coverage on discord voices, protest rallies staged by the opposition faction/parties, civil society members, human rights activists, women, youths, etc. in the news and the seasonal images privileges contrasting sign systems and knowledge with that of the former. Unlike *The Rising Nepal*, *The Kathmandu Post* reports the news regarding the PM's move as a social observer and privileges critical language.

Thereby, it destroys the social good of the HoR dissolution and questions its relevance.

Gee posits that “[w]e use language to render certain things connected or relevant (or not) to other things, that is, to build connections or relevance” (*Introduction to DA* 19). The language user connects or disconnects things and makes them relevant to each other or not through the manipulation of words and images. While representing the news on the HoR dissolution on the front pages, *The Rising Nepal* fabricates the texts and visuals to generate two related motifs namely connection and disconnection. Such motifs run through the entire practice of representation and give it an overall coherence and texture. Both motifs have to do with how the state-owned broadsheet sees things as connected or disconnected, especially the former.

On the very first day of representing the issue, *The Rising Nepal* sets up a connection between the PM’s move and national unity. The juxtaposed news story under the banner head and the box-out story serve this purpose. By recurrently correlating the HoR dissolution with either the PM’s claims regarding it, or the development and prosperity of the nation, or the supportive mass meetings, the state-owned broadsheet renders a close connection between the PM’s December 20 move and social good. In this way, the broadsheet builds the relevance of the PM’s move setting the following connections: the PM’s move dissolving the HoR → his much-touted slogan of prosperity (“Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali”) → social good. Similarly, the broadsheet daily renders the dissentients’ voices and reactions as not as closely connected or relevant to the government’s move by marginalizing them. The motif of disconnection is prevailed in the news coverage of voices against the HoR

dissolution, protest rallies, hearing on the writs filed in the Supreme Court, etc., as they are always emplaced in the subservient or marginal spaces.

Likewise, the state-owned broadsheet builds relevance of the PM's move through the subtle meanings of photography on the front pages. The images related to the developmental activities, annual progress report, or PM Oli's inspecting work progress, laying foundation stone, addressing mass meetings, etc. are often privileged on the front pages during the entire practice of representation. Gee argues that "[s]ometimes connections are not made explicit because the speaker assumes the listener will make them" (*How to do DA* 126). Though Gee talks about the spoken discourse, it equally applies in the written one, too, as he writes: "The approach to discourse analysis in this book applies to both speech and writing" (x). *The Rising Nepal* manipulates the images to control their connections that the viewers make in their minds. It produces the images to connect them with the PM's December 20 move and to build its relevance.

However, the lead story on the last day of the discourse is evidentiary to make visible how arbitrarily the things are made connected and relevant to each other in the state-owned English broadsheet. *The Rising Nepal*, during the entire period of the discourse, has practiced to build the relevance of the PM's move through the manipulation of headlines and sub-heads, images, page layout as well as news coverage. However, on February 24, 2021, when the news concerning the reinstatement of the HoR was published, the politics of the state-owned media became conspicuous. It has the banner head as "SC reinstates House of Representatives" on top of the front page followed by "Mandamus issued to summon House session within 13 days" as the sub-head (Feb. 24, 2021). Below the sub-head, an imitated image of

the SC building attached with the headshot images of five-member Constitutional Bench, which passed the unanimous verdict, is published.

## instates House of Representatives us issued to summon House session within 13 day



Fig. 8. (*The Rising Nepal*, Feb. 24, 2021)

The image of the SC building is not a real photograph. The simulated image, on its symbolic level, gives surrealistic color to the verdict of the ultimate arbiter SC. The place of the headshot images of the Bench members (just under the simulated image) implies as if the SC is not helmed by competent justices.

It is clear from the foregoing how *The Rising Nepal* renders the PM's December 20 HoR dissolution move a social good with its motifs of connection and disconnection. In this regard, Gee opines that “[t]hings are not always inherently connected or relevant to each other. Often, we have to make such connections” (*Introduction to DA* 19).

On the contrary, *The Kathmandu Post* treats the PM's House dissolution move as unconstitutional and calls it a political perversion. From the outset, it questions the constitutionality of the PM's move, challenges its relevance and disconnects it from social good. However, as the verdict of the Supreme Court declared the PM's move unconstitutional, the private broadsheet writes "*HOUSE REINSTATED*" as the banner on top of the front page and just below it, places the sub-head: "Constitution has prevailed, parties and analysts say" (Feb. 24, 2021). Underneath the sub-head, images depicting five-member Constitutional Bench and below them, the top part of the SC building with low camera position are published.

## *HOUSE REINSTATED* Constitution has prevailed, parties and analysts say



Fig. 9. (*The Kathmandu Post*, Feb. 24, 2021)

The headshot images of the Bench members are put inside the circles. The circles function as aura of glory around the judges as they showed "moral integrity to stand up to the executive's blatant attack on the constitution and democratic principles." Unlike in *The Rising Nepal*, the real image of the SC building is published in the *Post*. The deified SC building implies that the SC, amid the

constitutional turmoil, is able to “rise to the occasion” (editorial, *The Kathmandu Post*, Dec. 22, 2020).

Moreover, the *Post* has published the following image at the foot of the lead story leaning towards the left wing to evince people’s celebration of the SC verdict:



Fig. 10. (*The Kathmandu Post*, Feb. 24, 2021)

The caption of the image reads: “In the streets of Kathmandu, people celebrate the Supreme Court’s decision to reinstate the House of Representatives.” The coverage of the news this way explicitly conveys that the privately run newspaper views the SC verdict as a victory of the constitution and the people themselves.

The visuals in media discourse these days have become as prominent form of communication as text. They have become an integral part of communication to construct and disperse ideas and beliefs in the media discourse. Kress et al. maintain that “[i]t has become impossible to read texts reliably by paying attention to written language alone” (Kress et al. 257). The images, therefore, are the gimmicks on the news contents that the newspapers can resort to. The print media themselves are

making more deliberate use of a range of modes which are efficacious and can co-occur within the same news story. The images in the newspaper do not only supply proofs that events really happened, they let the viewers witness the related settings as well with their own eyes. “Visual mode of communication is more forceful and effective than the verbal mode since the viewer can easily and instantly receive, however partially, the visual meaning of an image” (Paudel 124). The textual message of a text requires “more effort” and consumes “more time,” for the reader, to get the message across. Unlike in visual mode of communication, very little could be achieved from the verbal medium at a quick glimpse (124).

Margaret Bourke-White, an American photographer working on social documentary in the 1930s, argued that “with a camera the shutter opens and closes and the only rays that come in to be registered come directly from the object in front” (qtd. in Hamilton 86). She made a binary opposition (photography=objectivity: writing=bias) as she labeled writing as less objective: “whatever facts a person writes have to be coloured by his prejudice and bias” (qtd. in Hamilton 86).

However, the central issue is: Does visual language reflect a truth about the world which is already there or does it produce meanings about the world through representing it?

The way people feel and experience about themselves and the world is “in part at least, a by-product of particular ideological/discursive regime” (Paudel 134).

According to Barthian visual semiotics, an image represents a certain participant (human or not) and that participant may have a range of meaning associations. These images may have meaning associations in a continuum starting from the most literal or transparent meaning (“denotative”) to the most symbolic or opaque meaning (“connotative,” what Barthes calls “myths”). The first meaning is already established

one, however, the connotative, the superimposed one, is ideological meaning serving to legitimate the status-quo and the interests of those whose power is invested to it (Paudel 127-28). Photographs are good vehicles for such ideological meanings because they naturalize such ideologies. They can be thought of as just “finding” such meanings on the street, as it were, rather than constructing them (van Leeuwen 97).

The dominant visual language is now controlled by the global cultural/ technological empires of the mass media through the spread of image banks and computer-imaging technology, which, through the visual representation, exert a “normalizing” rather than explicitly “normative” influence on visual communication (Kress and van Leeuwen 5). Gee also argues that “[i]mages, just like communication in language, do not just ‘say’ things (carry ‘messages’), but seek to do things as well” (*Introduction to DA* 195). This entails that images do not necessarily communicate truth with the viewers. They indeed actively participate in world building—constructing areas of reality—and legitimate the ideology of the image producers. Thus, they play crucial role in the representation.

Most often, newspaper news, at least lead story, coexists with visual content. In such a case, the texts and the visuals complement one another. Moreover, the verbal and visual modes together form the holistic picture of the media discourse. Similarly, the dominant images also function as an independent means of representation. The repeated motifs or clusters of ideas represented through the dominant images privilege certain discourse over others. Such visual contents do not simply depict the world but narrate visual narratives as well. These images also include captions, which provide information on what is depicted and can emphasize the newspaper’s editorial stance. The visual representation practiced by *The Rising*

*Nepal* can be analyzed in two levels: i) the representation of the political actors, and ii) visual discourse of dominant images.

One of the main motifs of *The Rising Nepal* in the visual representation is to privilege PM Oli over the opposition political actors. For this purpose, the broadsheet recurrently incorporates the photo(s) of the PM on the front pages. From December 21, 2020 to February 23, 2021, the broadsheet daily on its 50 out of 65 issues incorporates minimum one photo of PM Oli. While talking about the pictures relating to news articles within, the broadsheet daily integrates the PM Oli's images on its 31 issues, of which all but 3 images exist within lead stories on the uppermost part of the front pages and are almost always printed in large size. However, during the same period, the broadsheet incorporates the opponent leaders' photos merely on its 9 issues, each one with a notable interval and almost without repeating the same political actor. The photos are merely headshots that cut off the subjects approximately at the chest and are emplaced on the subservient or marginal spaces in their miniature forms.

Similarly, the state-owned broadsheet also manipulates the seasonal images to accomplish this motif. Generally, the newspapers practice a variety use of images on the front pages to represent the world which do not accompany the news headlines. *The Rising Nepal*, however, exploits the seasonal images as a tool to fill in the absence of the PM's photos from the (lead) news stories on its 6 issues. In this way, there are only 15 issues of *The Rising Nepal* on which the front pages do not incorporate the photos of the PM Oli during the entire period of the discourse. On the contrary, *The Kathmandu Post* does not privilege PM Oli through the visual representation as the state-owned media.

The picture editor and/or the layout artist of the newspaper must choose which image to include and how much space to devote to each and at which part of the front page the image has to be placed. It is true that the visual communication is based on the selection of some images in preference to others. However, such inevitable practice of selection, too, reflects the ideological standpoint of such media professionals. Similarly, the practices of selection and omission “are thought to influence the reader/viewer’s attitude” (Paudel 58). *The Rising Nepal*, privileging the PM over other political actors this way, equally engages in building the social good of his December 20 move as well as influencing the viewers’ attitudes.

The dominant images emplaced under the masthead of *The Rising Nepal* produce visual discourse on the favor of the PM’s December 20 move. During the entire period of representation, the broadsheet has published PM Oli’s photos as dominant images on its 18 issues out of 40. Paudel and Pandey write:

The presence and absence of the image; placement of image (foregrounding, middle grounding, and back grounding), the choice of the subject matter of the image, the angle distance, modality and color, and the position of the image is dependent on the political position of the newspaper. (68)

Generally, the subject matters of these images are PM Oli’s inaugurating or inspecting developmental activities, addressing mass gatherings, or attending political or ritual functions. They are often taken from close distance, foregrounded and are printed in bright color. Depicting the PM this way in the dominant images, the broadsheet daily constructs visual narratives of development, prosperity and democracy, which, indeed, props up the government’s interest. The representative dominant images published in *The Rising Nepal* are as follows:



Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli submitting the annual progress report of the fiscal year 2019/20 of the government to President Bidya Devi Bhandari at the President Office, Sheetal Niwas in Kathmandu on Thursday.

*(Photo Courtesy: President's Office)*

Fig. 11. (*The Rising Nepal*, Jan. 8, 2021)



Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli addressing a mass gathering of his party in Bharatpur, Chitwan on Saturday.

*(Photo: TRN)*

Fig. 12. (*The Rising Nepal*, Jan. 31, 2021)



Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli inspecting work progress in Dharahara reconstruction in Kathmandu on Thursday.

(Photo Courtesy: PM office)

Fig. 13. (*The Rising Nepal*, Feb. 12, 2021)



Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli addressing the Democracy Day celebration function organised at the Nepali Army Pavilion, Tundikhel in Kathmandu on Friday. President Bidya Devi Bhandari, Vice President Nanda Bahadur Pun, Chief Justice Cholendra SJB Rana, Speaker Agni Prasad Sapkota and Chief of Army Staff General Purna Chandra Thapa attended the event.

(Photo: Sujan Gurung/TRN)

Fig. 14. (*The Rising Nepal*, Feb. 20, 2021)



Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli laying foundation stone of Industrial Zone in Chhela of Bedkot Municipality in Kanchanpur on Monday.

(Photo: Prakash Bikram Shah TRN)

Fig. 15. (*The Rising Nepal*, Feb. 23, 2021)

The visual narrative blurs the lines between objective representation and persuasive discourse. It has become political in that the visual depiction can be used for vested interest and persuasive purpose. Thus, the visual depiction and their captions do not produce the images of reality in all contexts. What information and values are being left unsaid or effaced in a text is the concern of critical discourse analysis, however. This is an applied linguistic issue in which critical discourse analysis has a particularly important role to play (Cook 65-66). Taking the same line, Paudel also writes: “Obfuscation is another issue which critical discourse analysis has to address” (58). Similarly, Rogers notes that critical analysis of discourse “is an analysis not only of what is said, but what is left out; not only what is present in the text, but what is absent” (“Critical Approaches” 15). Such intended obfuscation in the representation should be the focal point of critical discourse analysis.

Representation is such a complex system that it works not only through the textual and visual depiction but also through what is effaced and obfuscated. Hall clarifies the nature of representation as he draws on Foucault and argues:

“Representation works as much through what is *not* shown, as through what is” (“Work of Representation” 59, *emphasis* in original). The meaning is produced through the complex inter-play between presence (the visible) and absence (what has been displaced within the frame).

*The Rising Nepal*, while narrating a visual story through dominant images, must have selected the images of its interest in preference to others. The broadsheet has omitted the images on other subject matters, for instance protest images, which counter its own practice of discourse. It persistently sidesteps the images depicting protest against the Oli Cabinet’s House disbanding decision. By so doing, the state-owned broadsheet repudiates the disgruntled voices resonating on the streets protesting the HoR dissolution and produces a discourse as per the government’s interest. The practice of discourse becomes more pronounced when compared with the dominant images incorporated on the front pages of the privately owned newspaper *The Kathmandu Post*.

*The Kathmandu Post* remarkably represents the protest photos as dominant images, which *The Rising Nepal* has shown zero concern to. There are 11 issues of the *Post* on which the images on the subject of protesting the HoR dissolution are represented as dominant images. Such dominant images depict the wide-ranging discontentment and protest from political parties, human rights activists, civil society members, and various walks of life like writers, poets, artists, intellectuals, women, youths and citizens themselves. Remaining silent about this fact, *The Rising Nepal* seems to privilege the discourse it had been practicing. By foregrounding the PM in

the dominant images, placing them right below the masthead, and deliberately excluding the unfavorable elements from the picture frames, the state-owned broadsheet reproduces the images of reality and sustains the visual discourse in the line of the government's interest.

In the above dominant images, the position of PM Oli has been fronted. Such fronting has as one of its functions that the information exchanged through the images is thematized, that is, the information is treated as thematically important in such visual narratives. Thus, such pictorial structure suggests a construal of visual narratives which effaces the dissonant worldviews.

On the contrary, the representative dominant images published in *The Kathmandu Post* are as follows:



Fig. 16. (*The Kathmandu Post*, Dec. 22, 2020)



Nepal Communist Party leaders Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Madhav Kumar Nepal scroll their phones as their faction of the Nepal Communist Party stages a protest at Maitighar, Kathmandu on Friday against the dissolution of the House of Representatives. They later marched to the Election Commission at Kantipath where their faction claimed its legitimacy as the registered party with signatures of the majority of its Central Committee members. POST PHOTO: ANGAO DHAKAL

Fig. 17. (*The Kathmandu Post*, Dec. 26, 2020)



Writers, poets, artists, intellectuals and citizens protest against the Oli government's decision to dissolve the House of Representatives, at Maitighar in Kathmandu on Saturday. POST PHOTO: HEMANTA SHRESTHA

Fig. 18. (*The Kathmandu Post*, Dec. 27, 2020)



Janata Samajbadi Party supporters protest in Kathmandu on Sunday against Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's move to dissolve the House of Representatives. The rally passed through Putalisadak, Bhadrakali and Sundhara before ending at Shantivatika, Ratnapark, where it had started. POST PHOTO: KESHAV THAPA

Fig. 19. (*The Kathmandu Post*, Dec. 28, 2020)



Nepali Congress cadres at a protest rally at Thimi, Bhaktapur on Monday against the dissolution of the House of Representatives by the KP Sharma Oli government. POST PHOTO: DEEPAK KC

Fig. 20. (*The Kathmandu Post*, Dec. 29, 2020)



Fig. 21. (*The Kathmandu Post*, Jan. 13, 2021)



Fig. 22. (*The Kathmandu Post*, Jan. 26, 2021)



POST PHOTO: HEMANTA SHRESTHA  
 Youths demonstrate in front of the Parliament building at New Baneshwor, Kathmandu on Friday against the dissolution of the House of Representatives. Coincidentally on the Martyrs' Day, the message printed on the t-shirt reads 'We are ready to be martyred but won't surrender'.

Fig. 23. (*The Kathmandu Post*, Jan. 30, 2021)

This entails that the visual language, just like in linguistic action, does not just carry information, but seeks to do the things and involves in world building—constructing areas of reality—and legitimizes the ideology of the image producer. The visual language does not necessarily communicate truth. It is controlled by the cultural/technological empires of the mass media.

“Visual structures do not simply reproduce the structures of ‘reality.’ On the contrary, they produce images of reality which are bound up with the interests of the social institutions within which the images are produced, circulated and read. They are ideological” (Kress and van Leeuwen 47). Thus, pictorial structures are never merely formal. They should be treated as creating meaningful propositions by means of visual syntax which have a deeply important semantic dimension. To sum, the visual composition has been exploited as a tool of persuasive discourse in the state-owned English broadsheet.

“[N]ewspapers can contribute to shaping and articulating public opinion,” Wahl-Jorgensen argues, “[t]hrough the features of opinion journalism” including editorials as one of them (67). Editorials in newspapers are articles written from specific perspectives to express the opinions of the newspapers (editors or publishers also) regarding certain subjects. They generally tackle recent events and issues, and attempt to formulate viewpoints on them. However, such viewpoints are not objective and ideologically neutral since they are influenced by specific perspectives of the editorial board. They rather turn to be manipulative devices to guide and shape public opinion on those events and issues. Thus, the editorial of a particular newspaper, indeed, defines the identity and values which the newspaper represents and serves as a mouthpiece of the institution under which it exists. In this regard, Paudel and Pandey also write:

Even though written by a single editor (and seldom signed), editorials express the opinion of the newspaper, magazine, or (again rarely) broadcaster. Whatever specific opinions are being formulated, they tend to be derived from social interaction with management, rather than from personal experience or opinion of the editorial writer. As such, editorials offer a prominent function in the construction and expression of the public opinion and an important addition to daily or weekly news publications. (30)

Singh and Singh characterize a good editorial as “an opinion maker,” “reconciliatory” and “balanced” (14-17). They are of the view that “[a] good editorial should express an opinion without being opinionated.” However, Weintraut argues that “an editorial is an opinionated news story” (“Writing an Editorial”). He further maintains: “Much in the same manner of a lawyer, editorial writers build on an

argument and try to persuade readers to think the same way they do.” According to Wahl-Jorgensen, the editorial pages “are central to a newspaper’s identity” because there the “journalists are authorised to express opinion, often guided by the political leanings of the newspaper” (67). In this way, newspaper editorials as opinion journalism allow media the “power to set dominant political agenda. . . . In this capacity the institutions of the press take the lead in establishing the dominant interpretative frameworks within which ongoing events are made sense of” (McNair 30).

*The Rising Nepal*, throughout its editorials during the period of discourse, interprets the dissolution of the HoR as an inevitable consequence of the ruling party’s “non-cooperative and unwillingness to own up the government’s works and achievements” and intra-party rivals’ “irrational inclination for power” (editorial, Dec. 23, 2020). The overall editorial argument of the broadsheet is that PM Oli had been “constantly denied to work in line with the electoral promise” and the then “composition in the dissolved HoR proved to be a stumbling block to his sweeping development agenda;” consequently he dissolved the House for fresh mandate (editorials, Dec. 21, 2020; Feb. 22, 2021). In this way, the broadsheet daily sets up a cause and effect like version of the connections among the ruling party’s anti-Oli faction’s “seeking a short-cut to power,” its serious impediment on implementation of Oli government’s “ideal motto of nation-building that is Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali” and the HoR dissolution (editorials, Jan. 6, 2021; Dec. 20, 2020). Thusly, the state-owned broadsheet construes the PM’s move disbanding the HoR as a compulsive move, however equally natural and democratic as well.

The editorial entitled “Fresh Polls End Chaos” published on the very next day after the incident, chiefly represents the editorial stance of *The Rising Nepal* on the

PM's House disbanding move: "compulsive" move, "natural step" and "democratic process" (Dec. 21, 2020). The editor argues that "the PM had no option but to seek fresh mandate by dissolving the Parliament" because "spoilers went to clip the wings of PM" and "were reportedly hell-bent on ousting him through the no-confidence motion." In the same fashion, the editorials published on December 27, 2020, and January 10, 2021, also re-express the similar argument to validate the PM's move. In this way, the editorials in the state-owned broadsheet sustain the close relationship with the government, enacting a differential relationship with the rival faction.

To naturalize the PM's move, the editor comments as "[u]nder the parliamentary system, the PM who has the prerogative to dissolve the House on the plausible ground," and argues: "When he dissolved the House, he had been the Prime Minister having the majority support in the House. Therefore, he had the right to dissolve the House" (editorials, Dec. 21, 2020; Jan. 10, 2021). Similarly, defending the PM's move from the charge of being regressive, the editorial published on January 11, 2021, expresses that "[h]is commitment to holding the polls within stipulated date contradicts the claim that HoR dissolution smacks the elements of regression." Moreover, the editorial published on December 23, 2020, views the PM's House disbanding move as "the very step that all democrats tend to follow." In this way, the editorials in *The Rising Nepal* attribute an identity to the PM as a democrat, whereas they depict the opponents as not democrat. In turn, the editorials, sustaining their hierarchical relationship, enact their own identity as pro-government tools.

The editorials in *The Rising Nepal* do not only validate and defend the PM's House disbanding decision, but also make the emotional appeals to the readers to "see the present politics in this perspectives" and "extend support" to the government (editorials, Dec. 21, 2020; Jan. 3, 2021). Arguing in favor of the PM's move, the

editorial rationales in the state-owned English broadsheet privilege the promotional language and make the claim of knowledge. They thereby build the social good of the government's move and evoke positive feelings among the readers. It follows from this to argue that the broadsheet develops in its editorial rationales a specific politics of social good since "constructing privilege for a sign system or way of knowing the world is to create and offer social good" (Gee, "DA: What Makes it Critical?" 33).

The editorial stance of the privately run broadsheet *The Kathmandu Post*, however, is discordant with that of the state-controlled English newspaper. The *Post* denounces the PM's move as "a political coup" and a "grave injustice to the people of Nepal" in the editorial entitled "Democracy's undoing," published on the very next day after the House dissolution that is December 21, 2020. The sub-title of the editorial reads as "Prime Minister Oli and President Bhandari have ticked all boxes of Machiavellian treachery in Nepali Politics." Generally, the editorial in the *Post* falls on page four. But on this date the *Post* allocates the front page and juxtaposes the editorial with the lead story, which expresses: "With one fell swoop, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli pushed the country to yet another quagmire of instability and political crisis when on Sunday, December 20, he orchestrated a political coup as his Cabinet recommended the dissolution of the lower house of Parliament." The *Post* does not view the PM's move as "question of legality or constitutionality," rather claims it to be "unconstitutional" and defines the developed political scenario as "the constitutional crisis" (editorials, Dec. 21, Dec. 22, 2020). Similarly, it expresses that the House disbanding "has undone years of efforts towards strengthening democracy and political culture in Nepal" (editorial, Jan. 1, 2021). In this way, the *Post* does not adhere to the HoR dissolution as the state-owned English daily does, rather it destroys the social goods and questions its relevance.

Nevertheless, when the Supreme Court's verdict observed the Oli-Cabinet's move unconstitutional and reinstated the House on February 23, 2021, the state-owned English broadsheet's politics became conspicuous. On February 24, 2021, *The Kathmandu Post*, in the editorial entitled "The constitution wins," expresses: "Immediately after Oli's House dissolution move, this paper in this very space had argued that the prime minister had taken an unconstitutional step, and hoped that judiciary would rise to the occasion and rectify the mistake committed by the executive," whereas *The Rising Nepal* sidesteps the issue publishing editorial on a different subject. It has by now become apparent that the state-owned English broadsheet has played the constructive role in sustaining the discourse in the line of the government's interest while representing the HoR dissolution, 2020.

## Chapter 5

### Constructive Role of the State-Owned English Broadsheet

This thesis has offered a comprehensive treatment of how images, language and discourse work as a system of representation in political discourse practiced by the print media, and how meanings are inevitably implicated in relations of power—especially who is practicing representation and who or what is being represented with what consequences.

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli-led Cabinet's move of dissolving the House of Representatives of the Federal Parliament (HoR) and President Bidhya Devi Bhandari's swift endorsement of the proposal on December 20, 2020, generated a critical and litigious media discourse and created a visible clash among the politicians, advocates, political analysts, and the citizens themselves. The debate was on the legitimacy of the government's December 20 move: whether it was constitutional and Prime Minister's prerogative in the Westminster model of parliamentary system, or a constitutional coup. The representation of the debate in opinion laden texts and visuals made the main coverage in all newspapers nationwide.

However, at the heart of the representation lie the discursive narratives that embody invisible ideologies. The ideologically motivated representation in *The Rising Nepal* becomes more pronounced when compared with the representation of the same issue in the privately run broadsheet *The Kathmandu Post*. Though both newspapers have covered the same news events, their works of representation exhibit a significant amount of variations. This opens the way for politics of representation—a struggle over meaning.

This thesis has analyzed the language and visual used for the representation of the HoR dissolution, 2020, in the state-owned English broadsheet, *The Rising Nepal*;

taking the equivalent elements from the privately run newspaper *The Kathmandu Post* as a foil. For this purpose, news stories, headlines, word choice, visual depiction and page layout on the front pages, and the editorial arguments concerning the discourse that were covered from December 21, 2020 to February 24, 2021, have been put under close scrutiny. The rationale behind the choice of such time period in the present study is that the SC verdict overturned PM Oli's December 20 decision to dissolve the HoR and reinstated it on February 23, 2021.

As the nature of the study, this thesis, for the textual analysis, mainly fell back upon Gee's concept on "seven building tasks of language" and the "Discourses" tool of inquiry that he proposes to uncover the construction process of "areas of reality" (*Introduction to DA* 17). The "seven building tasks of language" are significance, practices, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and sign systems and knowledge. Likewise, for the analysis of visual grammar, it has resorted to Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Social Semiotics, especially the tools related to the three layers of visual meanings: representational, interactive and compositional. Employing cultural theory of representation (constructionist approach), this study has dramatized the politics of representation—a struggle over meaning—of the political discourse in the print media and its effects and consequences.

The rationale behind selecting *The Rising Nepal* as the primary source of data and *The Kathmandu Post* as a foil is based on two reasons: 1) these newspapers (the former as state-owned and the latter published by big media house like Kantipur Publications) have, on the main, influence on the formation, circulation and reception of the discourses providing them with the representational legitimacy as per the ideology of the institution; 2) the area of study (representation of political discourse like the HoR dissolution, 2020) is quite relevant to them as they, from the outset,

actively participate in the discursive representation and struggle over meaning through their news contents and editorial arguments.

The study has found that the state-owned English broadsheet has generated discourses through language plus other “stuff” like world stuff, significance stuff, mitigator stuff, persuasion stuff, emotional stuff, visual narrative stuff, logic stuff, non-language symbol system stuff, etc.; and played a constructive role in ideological construction by working in positive or productive ways to sustain and perpetuate discursive regime of representation and providing it with a representational legitimacy to serve the government’s ideology; which reflects on multifarious forms.

First and foremost, *The Rising Nepal* has employed language and visual for symbolic function—signification—to sustain what Michel Foucault calls “general politics” of truth (131). Its use of words and images are embedded in and constitutive of ideologically motivated practices. Its work of representation and the discourse that generated are synonymous to the government’s ideology. The ideologically motivated representation and discourse became more pronounced when analyzed through the “seven building tasks” of language, and tools related to visual composition. To sustain the regime of truth, the broadsheet made strenuous effort to validate the PM’s move of dissolving the HoR: designed headlines in consonant with the government’s decision, assiduously gave prominent spaces to the PM’s voice and activities, made the unfavorable news subservient, executed the binary oppositions of the space on the front pages, and deployed the rhetoric of visual depiction. The state-owned broadsheet’s regime of truth sustained until the Supreme Court verdict ruled that the PM’s move of dissolving the HoR was unconstitutional, and therefore, the study contends it discursive representation of the HoR dissolution.

Second, *The Rising Nepal*, as a state-controlled newspaper, has functioned as the vehicle of legitimizing the government's ideology. Evidently, *The Rising Nepal* and *The Kathmandu Post* have represented the debate in opinion laden texts and visuals according to their ideological stance. Unlike the latter, the former has fabricated the text and visual on the front pages, and has given intellectual underpinnings to the PM's move through the editorial rationales to foreground and legitimize the government's ideology.

Third, the state-owned broadsheet's prowess in setting agenda and its strenuous effort to fix positive meaning of the PM's move have implications for inherently political things like status, solidarity, the distribution of social goods, and power. Such world building built the social good of the HoR dissolution setting up its close connection to the PM's much-touted slogan of prosperity ("Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali"). Whereas, it destroyed the social good of the dissentients' stance by attributing it as not as closely connected and relevant to development and prosperity. Such endeavor of building or destroying social good functions politically in social interactions. Thereby it distributes the social goods of HoR dissolution at one level, and renders the government status, solidarity and power at another.

Fourth, the visual narrative of the dominant and/or seasonal images on the front pages of *The Rising Nepal* has the motif of privileging PM Oli over the dissentients. The information exchanged through the images and the visual narrative has been thematized, that is, the information is treated as the thematically important, and discourse has been generated on the favor of the PM's move. Such narrative has become political since the visual depiction is used for vested interest and persuasive purpose.

Fifth, together, the state-controlled newspaper and the government have produced the content to shape the views of the society by manipulating reality through the text and visual. The reporting of the broadsheet has conveyed emotions instead of being marked by objective analysis. Its close affinity with the government and lack of critical impetus in reporting have opened the way to abusing the media for manipulating public opinion. In addition, it further led to practice closure and exclusion by setting up a symbolic frontier between the PM's move and the dissenters' stance.

Overall, through the manipulation of the most complex symbolic system, the broadsheet has played role to convince, obscure, highlight, frame, and reframe social reality. The findings presented above have led to the conclusion that *The Rising Nepal*, the state-owned English broadsheet daily, has manipulated the capital—literal and symbolic—to discursively represent the dissolution of the House of Representatives, 2020, and played a constructive role in ideological construction by working in positive or productive ways to generate, sustain and perpetuate discursive regime of representation and providing it with a representational legitimacy to serve the government's ideology.

The study is based on the assumption that a critical analysis of language and visual would contribute to more responsible and emancipatory role that the critical discourse/visual analysis could play by taking issue of political discourse in media representation which otherwise seem to be normal and natural. It is expected to be significant to the newspaper readers to unmask the invisible ideology in the political news and discover power abuse and hegemony. Further, it can be a way of empowering readers/viewers so that they could de-automatize the seemingly automatic and deceptively natural messages of the texts, and excavate the tiers of

meanings in the visual composition. The study, finally, aims to create critical language awareness, to make the readers/viewers able to read between the lines and to see the “unseen,” to surface the underlying and to divulge the hidden while dealing with media discourse. This, I believe, would be a small step in this direction.

The study primarily relied on the data collected from *The Rising Nepal*, taking the equivalent elements from *The Kathmandu Post* as a foil. The data would be more representative and wider if extended primary sources like other newspapers were also included. Similarly, under textual and visual analysis, all analytical tools were not applied categorically to the concerned data, rather they were employed eclectically to the degree of their relevancy in the problematic in question. So the study would be more revealing and effective if a full-fledged application of the tools could be made.

Although, potentially, multiple lines could be drawn for further research, prospective researchers could work on the following lines. Influences of political changes and power shifts on newspapers could be one significant line of further research. Researchers can work on the data from a long period of time and scrutinize what and how discourses are generated, sustained and legitimized within the power relations and how the political power shifts affect the dynamics of meaning-production. Similarly, the researchers can work with employing more recent trends on relevant theories and analytical tools.

However, this work has revealed how critical analysis of discourse can divulge the politics of the state-owned English broadsheet in the representation of the HoR dissolution, 2020, within the discursive parameter; and its constructive role in the ideological construction.

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