ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between Language, Power and Ideology by making a Critical Discourse Analysis of a news item published in five Indian English newspapers. The study is informed by socio-theoretic insights of scholars like Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Jurgen Habermas in an implicit way and the analytical model comes from Systemic Linguistics as enunciated by M.A.K.Halliday.

In the first chapter, a case is made out for a critical analysis of language. The contemporary methods of analysing language critically like 'Critical Linguistics', 'Critical Language Study', 'Critical Discourse Analysis' and 'Social Semiotics' are examined. A case for the analysis of newspaper reportage from a critical perspective is made. It is argued how relevant and important it is to 'read' the newspaper discourse in its socio-political contexts. A critical discourse analysis of news reportage is justified as a way of exposing the covert ideological agendas of the newspapers.

In the second chapter, there is an attempt to look at the structure of the newspaper from a semiotic perspective which reveals that there are many criteria for the analysis of the newspaper. Since the present study intends to maintain the
centrality of language in critical analysis, the non-linguistic criteria are not emphasized, though it is agreed that the non-linguistic factors also contribute in an important way to the ideological content of the newspaper.

In the third chapter, the methodology adopted for selection, description, interpretation and explanation of the data is discussed. After examining four of the already existing models of analysis, an eclectic model is proposed, incorporating their several features. It is felt that the model is helpful in mapping the ideological bearings of the discourse.

The actual description of the selection and analysis of the data starts in the third chapter. Five Indian English newspapers of 9 March 1992 published from the four metropolitan cities of India are collected. Out of the five papers, only one news item published in all the five papers is selected for analysis. The item has to do with the amendment motions moved by the opposition to the government's budget proposals of 1991.

The 'contextual configuration' of the news item is drawn in the same chapter. The intertextual, contextual, cotextual and other necessary details which are most important for the understanding of the texts are given under the heading (iii)
'contextual configuration'. The term 'contextual configuration' is used more as a descriptive term than conceptual.

Chapters four to eight individually describe and interpret the five newspaper texts at different levels. Most significant words in each of the sentences are also taken up for examination. Both the words and the sentences are examined by making use of the basic tenets of the Hallidayan Systemic grammar. The suprasentential (discoursal) levels are also examined.

The ninth and concluding chapter brings together the various findings of the preceding analyses in a comparative way. The ideological significance of each text is highlighted in terms of the analysis undertaken. The study is presented here not as the only way of reading these texts but as a possible one - one that is necessary in an age of ideological contention. That in doing so the present discourse is open to criticism is a risk from which it cannot escape. That is neither a defense nor an apology but a truism of critical linguistics.