CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0.0 The aim of the present study is to explore the relationship between Language, Power and Ideology by making a discourse analysis of a news item published in five Indian English newspapers. This kind of endeavour would come under the field of study called 'Critical Linguistics'. There is some terminological variation involved here, however. Fowler et al. (1979) call this field "Critical Linguistics", Fairclough (1989) "Critical Language Study", "Critical Discourse Analysis", and Hodge and Kress (1988) "Social Semiotics". For Dijk (1988a, 1988b) who has worked extensively in the area of news discourse, the field is open-ended. Using the insights of studies in artificial intelligence, he makes interesting observations about the ways in which readers consume news items. The present study involves a particular kind of discourse analysis of the news reports (which may be called "Critical News Analysis" and which is closer to the analysis provided by Fowler and Fairclough) with the aim of bringing out their ideological implications. The model comes from Systemic Linguistics as enunciated by M.A.K. Halliday. The study is informed by the socio-theoretic insights of scholars
like Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Jurgen Habermas in an implicit way.

The relationship between Language and the media has been the object of exciting research by linguists, sociologists, and media specialists. The concerns of their studies have ranged from the particularities of style and register to the generalities of bias. There have also been attempts to tease out the ideological and political forces at work in the media texts. In all these studies there seems to be a common assumption that the structures of language used in the media have a particular form that makes it possible to characterize the language as a distinct variety. This seems to be a well motivated assumption since if language varies in its formal aspects according to particular settings, then institutional contexts of the media and media organs should give rise to specific and identifiable characteristics of the language used in those spheres. However, while certain jargons and catchy phrases of the media are easily identifiable, the overall discourse structure is quite another matter. The media use more or less the same syntactic structures as are found elsewhere. There may be certain statistically significant clusterings of properties - the preponderence of impersonal sentences, for example. However, the essential characteristics of media discourse are not always as simple as that.
In this introductory chapter, I would like to elucidate the inherent relationship between Language, Power and Ideology and make a case for the analysis of discourse from a critical perspective. Further the terminological problems regarding the analysis of discourse from a 'critical perspective' is also considered in the context of my particular interest in the newspaper text.

So, to start with, what is Power and what is Ideology and how they are related to Language are the questions that are to be considered.

1.1.0 POWER

The term 'Power' has been used by sociologists and linguists in a wide variety of ways. Wrong (1979) feels that power is the capacity of some persons to produce intended and foreseen effects on others. According to him, there is a difference between "unintentional" and "intentional" powers. Intentional power is exerted through authority (for example judiciary), manipulation (the media), persuasion (education) and force (physical, psychic). Notice all these powers, except physical, are exerted through Language. Miller (1976) and Rich (1976) consider power as an autonomous action based on one's own beliefs and abilities not necessarily entailing domination of others. Others like Lips (1981) and Gilligan (1982) think that acts of nurturance of
interpersonal and interdependent relationships can be understood as acts of strength and power. They feel that there is nothing like fixed amount of power. Kress (1989) says:

Power is about relations of difference, whether it is the relationship between the weightlifter and 250 Kg. of steelbar, the relationship between muscleman and the 9-stone weakling with sand in his eyes, or the relations of power which are effects of difference in social structures. (p.52)

Any statement on power cannot be complete without coming to terms with Foucault's very original analysis. Power, according to Foucault, is not a limitation of freedom, not a possession, not a control that can be stored or a system of domination exercised by an individual or a group over another individual or group. Rather, power comes from below as well as above in a shifting relationship of force and resistance. The questions that bothered Foucault were: how is power exercised and what are the means of exercise of power? Though he never tried to answer these questions directly, he seems to be of the conviction that power is nothing other than a strategy. People learn to exercise power not by physical force, but by manoeuvring. The power is effected by subjects as an investment. It is simultaneously 'intentional yet nonsubjective'. Wherever there is power,
obviously, there is resistance and struggle. In fact power depends for its existence on the resistance. These resistances always occur at multiple points. However, the plurality of resistances cannot be reduced to a particular act of defence. Pierre Bourdieu feels that "Power can be loosely conceptualized as the capacity of an agent or agents to secure specific outcomes through their intervention (or non-intervention) in the course of events" (cited in Thompson 1984, p. 68).

1.2.0 IDEOLOGY

Like the term "power", the term "ideology" has also been used by sociologists, anthropologists and political thinkers in a wide variety of ways. Taking a cue from Castoriadis (1984) and Lefort (1976), some argue that there are different kinds of ideologies like bourgeois ideology, totalitarian ideology, invisible ideology and we can say, in the Indian context, Congress ideology, BJP ideology and so on. The term takes its origin from the 'ideologues' of post-revolutionary France. In fact the term had a negative connotation to begin with since 'ideologues' were accused of propagating 'negative' ideas which were detrimental to the interests of the state. Napoleon was reported to have used the term in this sense. Marx and Engels retained this negative sense of the term in their explication of Die deutsche Ideologie. After this many left-oriented sociologists started using the term in the same sense. Despite the wide variety of senses in which the term is understood, the
usage of the term could be classified in two ways. One, the term 'ideology' is used as if it were a purely descriptive term -- some take it as a 'system of thought', some a 'system of beliefs', for some it is a set of 'symbolic practices' which pertain to social action or political projects. Major contributors to this kind of thinking are Alvin Gouldner and Martin Seliger. This kind of the use of the term could be called a neutral conception of ideology. The other sense of 'ideology' is found in the contemporary writings of leftist thinkers. For them, 'ideology' is produced by a process of sustaining asymmetrical relations of power -- that is, a process of maintaining domination. This kind of use of the term could be called critical conception of ideology. It retains the negative connotation which has been conveyed by the term ever since Napoleon. It also preserves the critical edge associated with the analysis of ideology. It is not out of place to mention here that in Williams (1976), the term 'ideology' has been interpreted in two different ways. One, it could be "any social policy which is in part or in whole derived from social theory in a conscious way" (p.155). The other definition is in the Marxist tradition: ideologies are "ideas which arise from a given set of material interests" (p.156) in the course of the struggle for power. Many like Thompson (1984) think that ideology is not a neutral term and to characterise a view as 'ideological' is already to criticize it. Ideology could be called the thought of the other,
the thought of someone other than oneself. Fairclough (1989) rightly points out that even the use of the word 'ideology' could be ideological. All the linguists who have been working in the area of 'critical linguistics' retain this critical edge to the analysis of the language.

1.3.0 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE, POWER AND IDEOLOGY

How are the two, power and ideology related to language? Fairclough (1989) offers two reasons to show that ideology is closely linked to power:— (i) the nature of ideological assumptions is embedded in conventions, and so the nature of the conventions themselves, depends on the power relations which underlie the conventions. (ii) ideological assumptions are a means of legitimising existing social relations and differences of power, simply through the recurrence of ordinary, familiar ways of behaving which take these relations and power difference for granted. Ideologies are also closely linked to language. Because using language is the commonest form of social behaviour, and the form of social behaviour where we rely most on assumptions, as Fairclough (1989) calls "common-sense" assumptions. So, theoretically speaking, ideology is a sort of rallying point where language and power meet. The exercise of power in modern society is increasingly achieved through ideology, and more particularly through ideological workings of language. As Thompson (1984) says, after all 'ideas' do not drift through social world like clouds in a summer sky,
occasionally revealing their contents with a clap of thunder and a flash of light. Rather, ideas circulate in the social world as utterances, as expressions, as words which are either spoken or written. So to study ideology is to study language in the social world. It is the study of language used in day to day situations. It is also to study the multifarious uses of language interacting with power, nourishing it, sustaining it, and even enacting it. There is a double advantage with this kind of study. While the theory of ideology is enriched and elaborated by a reflection of language, the perspectives on language are also enriched, because it accommodates certain dimensions of language which have been hitherto largely neglected by linguists and philosophers of language. If we want to understand the nature of the relationship between language, power and ideology, we may have to turn away from the analysis of "well-formed sentences or systems of signs". Instead, we may have to concentrate on "the ways in which expressions serve as a means of action and interaction, a medium through which history is produced and society reproduced" (Thompson 1984, p.2) It is here that the notion of 'discourse analysis' comes into the picture.

1.4.0 Discourse Analysis and Critical Linguistics

The language that occurs in naturally occurring instances, be it in the form of everyday conversation or in the forms of written texts such as novels or newspapers, is the locus of ideology. And that is also a definition of discourse. Though
there are many definitions of 'discourse' and the 'analysis of discourse', there seems to be a common agreement about the corpus of discourse: language actually used by someone in a spatio-temporal and socio-cultural context. The term 'discourse' is not only used in linguistics but also in sociology. Within the field of linguistics, 'text' and 'discourse' are either differentiated or taken as one and the same. European thinkers like Michel Foucault define discourse in an entirely different way. So the area of discourse/text analysis is in a way 'anarchic'. However, this 'anarchic' nature of the field has yielded quite a lot of insights for the study of language in socio-political and cultural contexts.

What are the different properties of discourse in which discourse analysts are interested?

(1) Most forms of discourse analysis are concerned with naturally occurring instances of expression, be it everyday conversation recorded and transcribed or forms of written texts such as novels and newspaper reportage.

(2) Most forms of discourse analysis are preoccupied with linguistic units that exceed the limits of a single sentence. This "suprasentential" concern of discourse analysis makes it different from the other perspectives on linguistics such as phonology and syntactic structure which focus on 'nuts and bolts'.
Most forms of discourse analysis are interested in one way or the other in the relations between linguistic and 'non-linguistic activity'. In recent years discourse analysts have paid increasing attention to the ways in which language is used in specific social contexts as a medium of power and control. It is this sociological turn which has rendered discourse analysis relevant to some of the principal tasks in the study of ideology. If we consider that the locus of ideology is in the language of day-to-day life, then it is important to examine methods which have been elaborated for the analysis of ordinary discourse.

Besides this linguists like Beaugrande de and Dressler (1981) and Dijk (1972) also talk about text linguistics and text analysis. What is a text and how is it different from discourse? "Texts are seen as language units which have definable communicative function, characterised by such principles as COHESION, COHERENCE and informativeness, which can be used to provide FORMAL definition of what constitutes their identifying textuality and texture" (Crystal 1985, p.307). Sometimes the definitions get overlapped. Enkvist (1975) thinks that "to say that text linguistics is to do with text is a tautology which urges us to specify what we mean by 'text'" (p.1). But texts can be defined in different ways depending on the point of view and angle of approach. The texts are defined in three perspectives:

(i) A syntactically oriented text definition would regard a text...
as a sequence of sentences whose coreferences and cross references are signalled by certain overt mechanisms accessible to syntactic description like references, substitution, ellipsis, etc. (ii) A semantically oriented text definition would regard text as a chain of semantically linked sentences. (iii) A pragmatically oriented text definition would regard text as an utterance which takes into consideration features like context and cotext. The term 'text' is usually taken to refer to both spoken and written language.

There are linguists who would like to maintain a distinction between 'text' in the sense of the linguistic form of a string of sentences, and 'discourse' in the sense of a text used as a message with a communicative function. In terms of such a distinction, 'discourse analysis' becomes pragmatically oriented text linguistics. The area remaining for text linguistics proper would then cover the linguistic description of the form and meaning of sentences, whereas discourse analysis would be committed to observing a pragmatic dimension by working with the use of texts spoken or written in specific communicative situations. It appears that the distinction between 'text' and 'discourse analysis' is similar to the distinction that we make between 'Critical Linguistics' and 'Critical Discourse Analysis'. We will return to this by and by.
Sociologically, the term 'discourse' has been defined as follows:-

This is a domain of language use, structured as a unity by common assumptions. There may be competing discourses, and discourses will change over time. For example, M. Foucault... describes the existence of discourses of madness -- ways of thinking about madness -- which have changed over the centuries. He also suggests that there may well be similarities between discourses at any time. The discourse of political economy in the eighteenth centuries, for instance, takes the same form as that of natural history. Attention has concentrated on the social function of discourses, most importantly on their ability to close off possibilities; within a discourse there are literally some things that cannot be said and thought.

-Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (1984, p.70)

Going into the historicity of the Discourse/Text Analysis would bear little fruit for our main argument here. However for my present purposes, the entire gamut of studies of discourse analysis has to be visualised briefly in order to place the present study in a proper perspective. Hence, I am taking the
help of McHoul's (1990) categorization of different discourse studies. He identifies three major approaches to discourse analysis: formal, empirical, and critical. (He places text analysis within discourse analysis and that is the stand of a majority of discourse analysts.) This categorization helps to an extent towards some orderliness into the description of the "vicissitudes and diversities which the term 'discourse' has been either prone to or fortunate enough to benefit from - depending on one's stance" (McHoul, 1990, p.7).

The 'formal approach' to discourse 'tends to construe discourse as text'. It includes the studies of Harris (1952) and Halliday (1973) on the one hand, and Dijk (1972), Beaugrande de (1980, 1984) and others on the other. McHoul (1990) incorporates all the studies which have adopted a purely formal linguistic method in this category. The category consists of intonational studies, (Brazil (1981), Ward and Hirschberg (1985), Johns-Lewis (1986), conversational analysis, (Grice (1975), morphological studies, Dressler (1985), Kuno (1973) ), studies on discursive cohesion, (Halliday and Hasan (1976), Petofi, 1985 ) , studies on discursive semantics, (Dijk and Kintsch (1983)) and even critical linguistics of Fowler et al.(1979). All the studies that are included in this category have a purely linguistic approach to the analysis of discourse. However, McHoul accepts that there could be overlapping between the approaches, formal, empirical
and critical. He cites the example of critical linguistics which is formal, empirical and even critical also.

Sociological forms of analysis have taken the term 'discourse' to mean human conversation. These are categorised in the empirical approach. Major contributors to this kind of analyses are Garfinkel (1974), Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977), and Sacks (1975). The studies include mostly conversational analyses based on ethnomethodology.

The third category of discourse analysis namely the critical approach tend(s) to use the term 'discourse' to refer to relatively well-bounded areas of knowledge such that, at any given historical conjecture, it is only possible to write, speak, or think about a specific social object (madness for example) in specific ways and not others. Whatever it is that constrains us, and that also enables us, to write, speak and think within such specific historical limits, is referred to as 'a discourse'. Thus while a discourse can be thought as linguistic in one sense, it also has to be thought of in terms conditions of possibility of knowledge of a special social object.

McHoul (1990, p.20)
Thompson (1984) and McHoul and Luke (1989) suggest that for a fruitful analysis of discourse, 'the analytical precision' and 'textual responsiveness' of formal and empirical methods are to be clubbed with the critical compulsions of the discourse. While this is not an impossible endeavour, this new approach would be able to bring out the social meanings at the macro levels of the discourse in the micro level linguistic details and vice versa. This is the answer for one of the criticisms levelled against 'Critical Linguists', that Critical Linguistics concentrates too much on the micro details.

'Critical Linguistics' ('Critical Discourse Analysis', 'Critical Language Study', 'Critical News Analysis' or even 'Social Semiotics') belongs to all the three categories that McHoul differentiates above. Thus it "promises a unique amalgam of a firm linguistic base (Hallidayan Systemic Functionalism) with an interest in actual rather than invented texts and an attempt to 'read' those texts as socially classed, gendered and historically located" (McHoul 1990, p.8). After the work of Fowler et al. (1979), there have been many valuable studies in the field. There have been studies relating to gender relations (West and Zimmerman, 1985; Threadgold, 1988), interpersonal conflicts (Bavelas, Rogers, Millar, 1985), racism (Dijk, 1987), crosscultural communication (Tannen, 1985), and so on. Of late, Koller (1991) has done a study on the ideological readings of
influence must have come from German Sociologists like Habermas. The word 'Critical Linguistics' is borrowed from 'Critical Sociology'. Critical Linguistics (hereafter CL) is an attempt to advance a critical theory of language. This approach is one of, in the words of Pateman (1981), "Objective Partisanship". This partisan positioning of analysis is just like 'unbiased', 'uncritical', 'neutral' analysis. But the approach is explicit about its commitment. It formulates its sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and sociocultural goals, norms and points of view, and does not deny, ignore or dissimulate them. Besides, CL is oriented towards societal issues or problems, and not exactly towards academic paradigms. CL makes, in fact, academic research functional within the goals of a wider social, political and cultural framework. CL is also concerned with the problems as experienced and defined by dominated groups rather than on the problems of the powerful, the elite and the dominating sections of the society. CL is functional through solidarity (Cf.Brown and Gillman, 1960). CL examines the socio-political, historical and cultural mechanisms which underlie the reproduction of power. Hence CL pays particular attention to the analysis of ideologies that sustain, reproduce or legitimate power. CL is both theoretical and interdisciplinary. It does not reduce social, political and cultural phenomena, let alone serious problems to a single or simple theoretical model. CL is not only principled, but also practical and effective and even flexible. It is not
only directed at theoretical understanding but also provides suggestions, solutions and alternatives and thus works towards formulating anti-ideologies and stimulating resistance. Indeed, it wants to change the world, not merely describe it. These major issues of CL are relevant in the analysis of language and of other social practices that exhibit social contradictions, dominance and resistance through social formations and institutions of different kinds (Dijk, 1989; Kress, 1999, Threadgold, 1988; Thibault, 1986).


CL has been criticised on many counts. Some are quite valid which have to be examined a little carefully and some are rather trivial. According to Thompson (1984), the analyses enunciated by Fowler et al. and Kress and Hodge assume a specific account of relations between, say, different classes, races and sexes, but do not provide any specific discussion of these relations.
Secondly, the approach to meaning is negotiated through sentences. They restrict their analysis even at the syntactic level though they advocate a functional approach to language incorporating context and cotext. Hence, the analysis suffers from the weaknesses that we find in any "bottom-up" approach to discourse analysis. Thirdly, inspite of their slant towards the ideological implications of discourse, in fact no other linguists have been so pronounced about their ideological slant as Fowler et al., their concept of ideology itself is vague. Once they define ideology as a systematic body of ideas organised from a particular point of view. They define the same term in another place as sets of ideas involved in the ordering of experience, making sense of the world. Ideology is thus defined in very general and vague terms. This leads to several problems in interpretation. Different groups have different ideologies: which group sounds relevant and important to you, how are they to be defined, how do we classify different kinds of ideologies? Murray (1981) and Grimshaw (1981) think that far fetched interpretations are adduced without criteria for checking their viability -- not withstanding the explicitness of the linguistic component, imagination still plays a major role. Durking (1981) says that exegeses often go against the principle that there is one-to-one correlation between linguistic form and its contextual function by assuming rather than researching the cognitive effects of a particular formal element or a set of elements.
Richardson (1987) says, "In common with most attempts to discuss the cultural meanings of texts, they ask us to believe in the reality of meanings/significance which 'ordinary readers' cannot be expected to conform to explicitly, or even to 'realise' at all. But this is a challenge -- to make explicit how it can be possible and valid to go beyond a text's 'official' meaning in interpreting" (p.47).

Some of these criticisms may be indeed valid. Here I do not try to answer the methodological problems raised by the critics since the third chapter is exclusively meant for that. Let me just give a quick answer to the problem of the relationship between language and ideology. It is indeed true that the theory of ideology and study of language are two concerns which bear a close connection. As Thompson (1984) himself says, it is also true that the "the analysis of ideology is, in a fundamental respect, the study of language in social world, since it is primarily within language that the meaning is mobilised in the interests of particular individuals and groups"(p.72). But the study of language and the study of ideology are still two distinct disciplines which have their own methodology of study. While bringing the two disciplines together, some amount of fuzziness is what is least expected. In fact, Fowler et al., make this point clear.
A final caution: there is no predictable one-to-one association between any one linguistic form and any specific social meaning. Speakers make systematic selections to construct new discourse, on the basis of systems of ideas -- ideologies -- and complex purposes of all kinds. To isolate specific forms, to focus on one structure, to select one process, in fact to lift components of discourse out of their context and consider them in isolation would be the very anti-thesis of our approach. Different features and processes must be related to one another. (p.198, emphasis mine)

Regarding the issue of ideology there is no one point of view. For instance, Seliger (1976), Gouldner (1976), Hirst (1979), to mention a few, widely differ in their definitions of ideology. Fowler et al. are influenced by Althusser (1971) who thinks that ideology is not a distorted representation of real relations but rather a real relation itself, namely the relation through which human beings live in the world. Ideological relations make up a specific instance of the social totality which, in a provocative essay, Althusser analyses under the label of 'Ideological state apparatuses'. So the criticism of Thompson (1984) (mentioned above) has to be weighed with some caution.
The most important feature of CL which deserves our attention is that it has taken the linguistic text as the basic unit for the analysis both at the theoretical and analytical levels. Even the sentence and below-the-sentence-features of the text are analysed making use of certain already available techniques of linguistic analysis like transformations, transitivity, modality, embedding, subordination and coordination. Various devices used in the structuring of the text like cohesion are also analysed. Thus for all practical purposes the CL approach is formal, empirical and critical simultaneously. The textual analyses range from the discourse of swimming club rules, middle management, registers of birth, to the radio, TV and newspaper discourses. When Fowler et al. and Kress and Hodge started this pioneering work, they were satisfied with the analysis of language, though of late they have become conscious of the various other features that contribute to the production of a discourse (Cf. Fowler 1991, Kress 1990, Hodge and Kress, 1988). Hence the endeavour could be more appropriately termed as "Critical Discourse Analysis" or "Social Semiotics". Fairclough (1989) prefers to call it "Critical Language Study" if only to keep the centrality of the linguistic analysis intact.

1.5.0 DISCOURSE, SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND HIDDEN AGENDAS

It has been noted that there is an inherent relationship between discourse and social structures. Discourse is a social
construct. Since discourse is a social practice too, as argued out coherently by Fairclough (1989), social structures do affect the discourse. At the same time discourse also affects the social structure bringing about social changes. So social structures and discourse are in dialectical relationship with each other. While legitimizing social practices in the discourse, the discourse 'reproduces' already existing social structures through 'social actors'. The 're-production' is not a mechanical activity. The social actors are also called subjects. They are participants in the discourse in the sense that they are the recipients of the 'actions'. Unlike the 'grammatical subjects' who do the 'actions', social actors are passive recipients of action. The social actors draw upon the resources of various social practices and discourse to be creative. Thus the whole process of 're-production' seems to be circular.

The social actors imbibe their roles through institutions which are also socially determined. The institutions legitimize the role of the actors through 'agendas', a set of 'objectives'. But the 'agendas' are not overtly stated. These hidden agendas refer to a set of unwritten objectives which would mediate and re-produce the existing social structures and values. Social structures tend to reproduce - but explicit reproduction brings resistance with it. So to undermine this, the ideology is presented implicitly. Take for instance the newspaper discourse. In journalism there is no overt 'agenda setting' in terms of what
is to be highlighted. It is true that certain 'ethical' and 'moral' values are set by each newspapers. But there is no 'agenda' as far as the various social, political and cultural stands that each newspaper should take in their reportage. But it is possible to unearth these 'agendas' through a close scrutiny. The main object of our present study is to unravel the hidden agendas (or in other words the tacit ideological assumptions) of newspapers by an intensive examination of a news item.

1.6.0 NEWS AND IDEOLOGY

Media specialists do not agree with the claim that the selection and presentation of news are objective processes in the sense that they are determined essentially by the nature of reality itself. On the contrary, they argue that it is not the attributes, but the nature of news production that determines whether something is newsworthy and how it is to be covered. As Altheide (1976) points out, "events become news when transformed by the news perspective and not because of their objective characteristics" (p. 173). News is subjective in the sense that it is structured in accordance with the needs of the organization producing it. Each organization, as mentioned above, has its own social and political commitments. It is often easy to attribute qualities to the newspapers like "biased" or "unbiased". If we agree that the perception of an individual cannot remain unaffected by the social, political and cultural
contexts in which s/he lives, or the institution or the organization in which s/he is working, it is inevitable that reports cannot be objective. For that matter no news report could be totally objective: in a way, every news is 'biased' always. Total objectivity is possible only in an utopian world. Besides, individual perceptions, which are products of individual differences, are also contributory factors to the 'biased' reports. But does that mean that news can no longer be regarded as a form of authentic knowledge for human consumption? The answer is 'yes'. If we consider knowledge as a social construction of reality whose form and content is influenced by subjective as well as objective factors, then news does not have to be excluded from the realm of knowledge. That knowledge should be seen in this manner is the basic assumption of the sociology of knowledge. All knowledge arises within, and is determined by, particular social, political and cultural contexts. It is produced by individuals and groups with objectives, 'biases', and general ways of thinking which are socially derived. That leads us to the conclusion that all knowledge is ideology and that the knowledge of the society as depicted in the newspaper is also ideological. There is always an unconscious desire to produce, mediate and reproduce the power of a particular group in the society -- it could be the working class or the bourgeois. The left critics criticize the right papers as 'biased' and vice versa. Then, could we just say that
news is not merely knowledge, but ideology? Does it construct a view, just a view of reality that helps a particular class interest? The answer again is 'yes'. Sometimes news is consciously created to serve the interests of the privileged class. Some media owners (can we say 'barons'? ) choose to exercise direct control over employees in order to manipulate the public opinion. Some others may not directly interfere in the production of news. But news reporters themselves are aware of the interests of the employers and exercise a form of self-censorship. Sometimes the editorial staff (right from the news reporter to the chief editor) might assume the role of a gatekeeper. They seem to think that it is their responsibility not to provoke, not to incite, not to damage the sensibility of the readers by what they are reporting. For instance, the news of Babri Masjid demolition by Hindu fundamentalists had to be reported carefully in the context of highly sensitive Indian readers. While this could be considered laudable, in the process of such kind of reporting, the truth of the event is largely affected. Further, the media serves as ideological agency for the maintenance (mediation) of domination by indirect and unconscious means. As it is going to be argued in the later pages of this study, the interests of the privileged are served by the hidden agendas that manipulate news reports.

Now that it is certain that every news has to be ideological and there is no escape from the influence of
newspapers either, a study of this sort becomes all the more relevant and important. Most literate people are exposed to newspapers in one way or the other. Some among them have almost become addicts to newspaper reading. In the absence of proper "education" to read newspapers, the reading public take the news as projected in the papers as truths. Studies of this sort can fairly sensitise the readers to the ideological 'harassment' inflicted by newspapers by the 'use' of language. The language of the newspaper, as it would be evident in later chapters, is rather 'mysterious'. It is often possible for an innocent reader to be carried away by words if s/he does not know how to 'read' critically.

In the next chapter, I wish to examine the structure of the newspaper from a semiotic perspective wherein the elements that contribute to the ideological dimension of the newspaper are highlighted. While my overall aim is to analyse the discourse of newspaper, keeping the centrality of language analysis, in the chapter that follows I would like to show that it is possible to read the newspaper as a semiotic system.