The major concern of the present study, as it was stated in Chapter 1, was to analyse language, ideology and power in Mistry’s novels and to illustrate how stylistic analysis could be usefully employed to study ideology and power relations represented in fictional/literary texts. The attempt was thus analytic as well as illustrative. This last Chapter summarizes the whole thesis and gives the “Conclusion” of the study by comparing and compiling the results of the various linguistic analyses of the three novels made in the previous chapters.

The key concepts related to the study such as power and ideology and their relationship with language, the purpose and the aims and objectives, and the significance of this study were explained and discussed in detail in Chapter 1. The chapter attempted an understanding of the role that language plays in the workings of power and ideology in social relations and in literature. The writer Rohinton Mistry and his works in the context of Parsi Literature and also in the context of contemporary Indian writings in English were also discussed in “Introduction”. While going through Mistry’s works and the available critical material on them, it was found that most of the critics and scholars, as mentioned in Chapter 1 (1.4), have dealt in some detail with the major themes and concerns of the novels. Of course, they do comment upon the aspects of language and style here and there but that is quite cursory and general in tone.

As it was discussed in Chapter 1, Mistry’s works have been placed under the category of “realism”, “neo-realism”, “psychological realism”, “tragic realism” and so on, and his style has been commented upon as “realistic”, “matter-of-fact”, “neutral”, “falsely neutral” and even “objective” (1.4). But as linguists, stylisticians and discourse analysts have shown, there is no such thing as a completely realistic piece of fiction. Whenever a writer uses language, he seized on some features of “reality” which are crucial to his purpose and disregards others. Language plays vital role in “the social construction of reality” (chapter 1, section 1.3). Language is itself not only a part of experience, but “intimately involved in the manner in which we construct and organize experience”. As such, “it is never neutral, but deeply implicated in building meaning” (Halliday and Hasan 1989, V).

Fowler’s “theory of fictionality (constructedness) of reality” and the role that language plays in “constructing this fictional commonsense” was also discussed in Chapter 1. In his opinion “the most natural definition of fiction is a theory of reality constructed through
a particular use of language” (1981, 34). Real entities and Physical objects do exist. But with language, we create “representations of reality that are not mere reflections of a pre-existing reality but contribute to constructing reality” (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 8-9).

This study thus began by contesting “realism” as it was applied to Mistry’s works. As the analysis has attempted to show, though the novels are written in the realistic mode, the language in which the events, the incidents and the characters are presented is not neutral. The selection and organization of language that the writer, the narrator, and the characters make reveals their ideological beliefs, interests and purposes, and power struggles. The point of view of a character, narrator or an author is shaped by his ideology – that is, the beliefs, assumptions or the world view of the class to which he belongs. And this point of view or stance determines his representation of reality. Ideology in fact plays both constitutive and constituted roles (1.2.3 and 1.2.4).

This stylistic study of Mistry’s novels was thus planned to see how the writer manages to create the impression of “reality” and of “falsely neutral style”, at the same time “denouncing wrongs”, as some literary critics have claimed (1.4). As it was explained in Chapter 1, the proposed thesis meant to investigate some of the problems/questions which are pertinent to stylistics with reference to the three novels of Rohinton Mistry (1.5). And in view of these aims and objectives, Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) model, as it was explained in Chapter 2, was found suitable for this analysis. The present study was an attempt “to make explicit the ideological positions encoded” in literary texts, “how language is not just representing but actively constructing our view of the world” (Eggins, 11). The study aimed to see how an analysis of the language used by a character, narrator or a writer could help us relate to his/her ideology or world view. Thus the major focus of the study was on

(1) the representation of reality (ideation), and

(2) the positioning of the character, narrator or the author towards that reality (the language of evaluation, judgement and stance; the interpersonal distance and proximity involved).

The different theories of language and style, particularly Halliday’s SFL on which the present study is based, and the checklist of features to be analysed were discussed in chapter 2. The following features were found essential for analysis:

(i.) the grammatical analysis: the principal functional clause constituents which realize the Mood, Transitivity, Logico-semantic and Theme structures of the clause, and
(ii.) the cohesive analysis: patterns of conjunctive relations, reference, and lexical relations.

As it was noted in Chapter 2, anyone of the ideational, interpersonal or textual metafunctions may be foregrounded in a given text, or part of a text. But it is the intersection of these patterns that gives a text its characteristic flavor. The recognition of cohesion and consistency in preference is important: “without it, one would scarcely acknowledge a style” (2.6). What the analyst is interested in looking at, therefore, is “the metafunctional profile, or progression across a discourse”. Thus, having separated the different lexicogrammatical and cohesive features for analysis and interpretation, we have to put them together to see their cumulative effect, to trace certain patterns that run through the text as a whole and make explicit “what positions, biases and interpretations are encoded”.

Chapter 3, 4 and 5 were fully devoted to the detailed analysis and interpretation of the style and language in Mistry’s three novels. The novel being a long narrative, it becomes quite difficult to analyse each and every word in detail. Thus, to trace the patterns of implication in the whole text, the method of selection and sampling becomes essential. Three passages from each novel were, therefore, selected for analysis on the basis already explained in Chapter 2 (2.6). The passages were analysed according to the method of analysis explained and discussed in Chapter 2 (2.5), and finally the integrated metafunctional profile that emerged from the detailed lexicogrammatical and cohesive analyses was given at the end of each passage in the respective chapter. The attempt was made to link the analysis of linguistic features with the thematic concerns and ideological dimensions encoded in the texts. The results that emerged from the analysis in the previous chapters are briefly summarized here in this chapter.

Chapter 3 was devoted to the analysis of three passages from Mistry’s first published novel *Such a Long Journey*. The pre-existent reality with which the novel deals is different. But the way the reality is construed and packaged indicates similarity of patterning, as was seen from the integrated metafunctional profiles of the passages. Passage 1 was selected from the first chapter of the novel. As it was mentioned in Section 3.1.3, the passage is a third person narrative text concerned mainly with constructing an ideational picture of the activities of the people and the politicians during the 1962 Indo-China war. The Chinese and the politicians are represented as powerful, active, controlling participants while the people are represented as powerless or less powerful, “most acted upon”, “controlled” participants. The latter are “unequally positioned” in terms of power hierarchies. The analysis indicates
how the politicians mix up motives to confuse, deceive and exploit, making the people act in the name of nationalist ideologies while themselves benefitting from their actions.

The clause complex analysis, the topical Themes and the conjunctive cohesion also show how the passage is textually organized to extend: to give more information, and to clarify. However, the use of explicit concessive conjunction (counter expectancy) “but” at the beginning of the third paragraph marks a division and serves to realize conflicting ideological positions and world-views: the real danger to the country may be the politicians and not the Chinese, the text is suggesting. The text thus deconstructs one type of reality—the treacherous nature of the yellow race which is presented as taken for granted, and constructs another in its place—the treachery of the politicians.

The Mood choices, however, realize authority and distance. The dominance of declaratives in much of the passage, the low level of modality, the high proportion of positive polarity and a large number of adjuncts, with circumstantial Adjuncts dominating, create the cumulative effect of an authoritative stance. It is an ideationally-oriented text concerned mainly with the giving of information about the events and happenings. The narrator is maintaining distance from the events, and avoids personal comments and evaluations, as is indicated by the absence of comment adjuncts and interpersonal Themes. And the presence of a large number of verbal processes and projections indicate how the narrator is sourcing comments to others and is “not committing” himself to what they say and claim. Whatever ideological orientation there is for the reader is given through other means, the use of elliptical and exclamatory clauses in the beginning and towards the end, speech-introducing expressions and the lexical items expressing interpersonal, attitudinal and evaluative meanings, for instance, and not by direct comment and evaluation (Section 3.1.3).

This process of analysis and interpretation was replicated in Passage II and III in order to trace the stylistic patterns in the other parts of the novel. The Passage II was selected from Chapter 13 of the novel. Ideationally, the passage is concerned with news report about Bilimoria’s arrest and the reactions of the different participants to it. The passage has been divided and organized into different parts to construct different versions of reality and to position and give ideological orientation to the reader. The official version and the reporter’s views presented as Footnote have been framed between Gustad’s verbal and physical reactions at the beginning and towards the end which help in positioning the reader towards the reality that the police version is trying to construct. As the lexicogrammatical and the cohesive analyses show, the official position is being critically questioned in Footnote. The
passage deconstructs the official version of reality and challenges it by constructing a new version of reality.

The selection of only full declarative Mood, the low level of modality, the dominance of positive polarity and the absence of interpersonal Themes show that the information given in the official version is positive and authoritative. However, the “Footnote” from the reporter creates doubts by means of modal expressions, negative polarity, and the interrogatives intended to question the police claims. Most of the participants have third person pronominal reference or reference by means of definite article “the”. However, the first-person plural pronominal references in Footnote indicate how the reporter is trying to reduce distance between himself and the reader in order to construct a community of readers sharing a Weltanschauung.

However, the absence of verbal modality in a separate clause, whether subjective or objective, indicates the narrator’s refusal to give explicit evaluation and judgement. The passage is in a third-person distanced style and whatever judgements there are have been expressed implicitly through lexical items which express attitudinal and evaluative meanings. But as it was noted in Chapter 3, the cumulative effect of the different positions encoded in the text is to realize the narrator’s critical stance towards the official version of reality (Section 3.2.3).

If Passage I and II were about state/national politics and political corruption, Passage III was about the question of Parsi identity. The Passage was taken from Chapter 21 of the novel. As it was noted in Section 3.3.3, the passage constructs an ideational picture of debate, controversy and argument between the Orthodox and the Reformists over the vulture controversy and the disposal of dead bodies. The passage is narrated mainly in the third person. And as in passage I and II, the dominance of declaratives, the low level of modality, the high proportion of positive polarity in much of the passage and a large number of adjuncts create the cumulative effect of the narrator’s authority and distance. The focus is on the giving of information. But the presence of imperative and interrogative Mood types in the beginning and modulated interrogatives towards the end coming from the high-rise tenants not only place them in position of power vis-a-vis the clerk but also serve to question and interrogate the orthodox ideology and belief in the traditional method of disposal of dead bodies, thus realizing debate and controversy. The abundant use of verbal and mental processes and projections (locution) further indicate the thematic focus on debate and controversy, while the hypotactic projections with reporting verbs indicate the narrator’s intervention. But as the Mood choices and Theme analysis indicate, the narrator’s own
intervention is only implicit and indirect. Interpersonally, the narrator keeps distance from the events and refuses to make his position explicit.

A comparative study of the stylistic features in all the three passages reveals how the passages construct different versions of reality, one version trying to deconstruct the other. The texts encode conflicting ideological positions and world-views indicating ideational pictures of debate, controversy and argument. While the patterns of mood and modality, the use of projections, and the absence of interpersonal themes indicate authority and distance, the evaluative lexis, the speech-introducing verbs and the conjunctive cohesion indicate the indirect and implicit evaluations and judgement.

Chapter 4 was devoted to the study of Mistry’s second novel A Fine Balance. Again, three passages were selected and analysed and interpreted replicating the method applied to the first novel in Chapter 3. Passage I was taken from chapter III of the novel. As the integrated metafunctional profile in Section 4.1.3 revealed, the passage deals with the brutal torture and killing of Narayan and his family. But in general it constructs an ideational picture of quarrel, controversy and conflict between the old caste system represented by Thakur Dharamsi and his goondas, and the new order represented by Dukhi, Narayan and their family and, the other lower caste people. The analysis shows how the passage focuses on powerful-powerless divide between the upper and the lower castes and represents different conflicting ideologies, beliefs, positions and biases. The Mood and Theme selection, however, realize authority and distance, with the narrator refusing to evaluate or temper the events and give his explicit comments and judgements. Whatever comments or interventions there are, have been expressed indirectly and implicitly through lexical items which express interpersonal and attitudinal meanings and through reporting verbs in hypotatic projections.

Passage II was taken from Chapter V of the novel, “Mountains”. As it was seen in Section 4.2.3, the major thematic focus of the passage is on the disgusting life in the hostel and the political scene on the college campus. The passage constructs an ideational picture of the Emergency and its excesses—“bullying, toadying and submission”, in the name of MISA and “law and order”, as seen by Manek and reported by the narrator in the third person. Passage III which was taken from the last part of the novel entitled “Epilogue: 1984” is again a third person narrative and is centrally focused on constructing an ideational picture of the political climate during and after the Emergency in the country, particularly its abuses and excesses and the suffering and powerlessness of the poor ordinary citizens like Avinash, his sisters and his parents, with Manek and the newspaper reports providing framework and
orientation to the text. The passages were analysed in Chapter 4 and their integrated metafunctional profiles were given in Sections 4.2.3 and 4.3.3 respectively.

Mistry’s last novel Family Matters formed the subject of analysis and interpretation in Chapter 5. Again three passages were selected from the different parts of the novel. The major focus of analysis in this chapter, however, was on the themes related to Parsi families, community and the question of individual happiness. Passage I was selected from the first chapter of the novel. As the integrated profile in Section 5.1.3 revealed, the passage is a third-person narrative text ideationally concerned with the issue of inter-community marriages between the Parsis and non-Parsis illustrated through the story of failed love between Nariman and his Christian girlfriend Lucy. The analysis clearly brings out the conflict of ideologies and world-views—between the rigid parental authority and its resistance by the children. The parents and their friends are represented as powerful affecting Agents whereas Lucy and Nariman are represented as helpless, weak and powerless affected Medium-Target, unable to oppose the authority and power of their families and community. Mood choices, however, indicate authority and distance. The narrator does not make any explicit evaluations and judgements. But the analysis indicates implicit comments and ideological position encoded in the text.

Similarly, two more passages from the novel were selected for detailed analysis and interpretation. Passage II which was taken from Chapter 6 of Family Matters forms a part of Nariman’s memories, given in the italics throughout the novel. The passage is a third-person narrative and is centrally focused on the conflict, “debate”, “feud” and “controversy” between the Conservative and the Reformist factions among the Parsis on the issue of inter-community marriages between Parsis and non-Parsis, with the participants attacking each other in the battle. The text encodes different ideological positions taken by the participants over the issue. But it is Nariman’s father who plays the most prominent role in the controversy and is represented as the most powerful, active and controlling agent in the passage. As it was mentioned in Section 5.2.3, the narrator here again refuses to give explicit evaluations of the events reported, projecting and attributing comments and evaluations most of the time to other characters. The text makes it difficult to exactly know the narrator’s position, except by a cumulative effect and by implication.

Passage III, which was taken from the last part of the novel entitled “Epilogue: Five Years Later”, records the change and transformation in Yezad from once a liberal young man and a “jovial” father, who used to laugh at “the silliness of slavishly following conventions and traditions”, to a religious “bigot”. This transformation, however, is viewed and evaluated
differently by different characters. The passage focuses on this conflict of opinion and different ideological positions taken by the participants on the question of following Parsi conventions, traditions and beliefs. Most of the participants have third-person pronominal references. The narrator Jehangir, however, refers to himself, the family and his father in the first person, indicating that the passage is his first-person narrative experience. This passage was analysed and discussed in Chapter 5 and its integrated metafunctional profile was given in Section 5.3.3. As compared to the other passages, this passage contains a large number of expressions of Modality indicating evaluation and judgement of participants and their actions. Most of the evaluations and judgements, however, have been sourced to the characters, including the first-person narrator Jehangir who evaluates not only his father but others also, while the author himself maintains distance from the events and evaluations. The passage, however, foregrounds Jehangir’s point of view by referring to his feelings, perceptions, thoughts and mental processes at various places in the text. The passage, in fact the entire epigraph, is narrated by him in the first person.

As the analysis of all the passages from the three novels has shown, the results are quite similar. On the basis of a comparative study of the metafunctional profiles of the passages that emerged from the detailed analyses, we can now trace certain common patterns which give us an overall view of style and ideology in the three novels. The analysis of the passages indicates how the lexicogrammatical and the cohesive resources combine to realize cumulatively the ideological content, the positions the texts are encoding and the interpersonal distance and proximity involved. The preexisting referential reality is different in all the passages. But the way that reality is construed, constructed and packaged indicates a similarity of patterning. Ideationally speaking, all the passages represent conflicting pictures of reality. The verbal and the mental processes and the projections indicate how the author allows the characters to create different versions of reality whereby one version of reality deconstructs the other, thus realizing debate, controversy and conflict.

The analysis of these passages indicates that Mistry in all the novels does not foreground the interpersonal and evaluative meanings at the clause level. The patterns of mood and modality, the use of projections, and the absence of interpersonal themes indicate authority and distance, the narrator’s refusal to make his evaluations, comments and judgements explicit. But the presence of evaluative lexis, speech-introducing expressions in hypotactic projections and conjunctive cohesion express indirect and implicit evaluations and judgement, and indicate that the texts are attitudinally and interpersonally loaded. And the textual organization of the message—the way the text develops and unfolds—also gives
orientation to the reader and controls and influences his perceptions of the reality represented in the passages. It is by means of such resources that the writer or the narrator controls, positions and influences the reader.

The analysis of language which has been used thus reveals how Mistry’s narratives are ideologically positioned. The novels do not simply reflect reality objectively, but they show an attempt at understanding, interpreting, evaluating and judging experience. The analysis supports the linguistic assumption that though a text may be “realistic”, that does not mean that the language is “neutral”. It may be loaded with evaluation and judgement. The analysis illustrates how the variant components of language help not only in conveying and “reflecting” but also in creating and “constructing” the ideological world of a character, narrator, or even of an author. All the lexicogrammatical and the cohesive resources thus have an important role to play in communicating and consolidating the ideological content and positions that are encoded in the texts.

As already mentioned in Chapter 1 and 2, the language in this study was analysed not in isolation but in its relationship to the particular thematic and ideological aspects. The overall purpose as initially set for the present study has been kept in mind throughout. The parts of the whole were taken out not with a purpose to isolate these instances (Passages) but in order to analyse their language in detail for which this selection and sampling was extremely essential. The thesis has attempted to illustrate how the detailed stylistic analysis of a fictional text can lead to an understanding of its ideological content and the positions, biases and prejudices encoded. As the analysis has shown, the detailed analysis of the textual passages in terms of the various lexicogrammatical and cohesive features which realize different metafunctions of language enable us to understand not only (1) the information provided by the artist (ideational content) but also (2) the slanting of the speaker’s, narrator’s, or the author’s attitude towards that information (stance, judgement and evaluation). And the two combine to give cumulatively the world-views, the versions of reality or the ideological positions encoded.

However, it is by no means to suggest that the present study is complete in all aspects of detailed stylistic analysis. The possibilities for analysis can certainly be extended further. In fact, as it was mentioned in Chapter 2 (Section 2.1), it is part of natural development of modern Stylistics constantly “to enrich and update its methods of analysis” (Simpson 2004, 38). During the 1980s, under the influence of pragmatics and discourse analysis, ideas about dialogue, discourse and social interaction found their way into stylistics. And in the last decade of the 20th Century, the focus shifted “away from models of text and
composition towards models that make explicit the links between human mind and the process of reading” (2.1).

Thus, in the context of this “cognitive turn” in stylistics that has added a new “readerly” dimension to stylistic methods, and in the context of post-structuralist and post-colonial studies, it would be worthwhile to account for “the stores of knowledge which readers bring into play when they read” and “how these knowledge stores are modified or enriched as reading progresses” (Simpson 2004, 39). It was pointed out in Section 2.1, for instance, how Cook (1994) has assimilated “schema theory” with Formalist and Structuralist concepts like deviation and foregrounding. Literary texts, Cook opines, “affect our schemata in special ways and on a number of levels”. The traditional stylistic concepts like foregrounding and defamiliarization, therefore, “are better located in a framework of cognition than in a framework of language” (2.1).

But as it also was explained in Chapter 2, this thesis has followed Systemicists in studying the question of language, ideology and power in Mistry’s novels. And as Halliday (1992) says, in stylistic studies we may be treating of choices that are very delicate indeed. But we also have to make choices of our own, especially that “between depth and breadth”; and in the absence of obvious foregrounding of any one grammatical system it seems preferable to aim for breadth (226). Secondly, following Halliday (1994a and 1992), the focus of this thesis has been on “wordings: on patterns of selection at the lexicogrammatical level” (1994a, 254), on attempting to show “the grammar at work creating meaning in the form of written text” (1992, 226).

The present thesis has attempted to illustrate how stylistics, especially SFL model, can be used as a tool to understanding the ideological dimensions and power hierarchies operating in our class / caste divided societies, and the use of language in the construction of reality in Mistry’s novels in particular and, by implication, in literary texts in general. This study, therefore, can form the basis of various useful and significant further explorations in stylistics and language studies.