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**A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF POWER IN GEORGE
ORWELL'S NOVEL 1984**

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Abstract

This paper presents a comprehensive Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of George Orwell's dystopian novel 1984 with a particular emphasis on the ruling totalitarian regime (the Party). Builds, regulates, and implements absolute socio-political control by means of language. This study is completely based on Norman Fairclough's three dimensional model, examines the process of power at three different levels: text description, discursive interpretation and sociocultural explanation. At the micro-level, the paper analyzes the vocabulary and syntactic structures which eradicate humanity agency. It examines historical discourse the institutional production and systematic forgery. At a macro-level it delineates the sociopolitical role of ideologies. The slogans and the way of doublethink. Finally, this study shows that how language becomes a form of architecture and how language is more than just censorship. Lastly, language as a reconstruction of cognitive reality..

Introduction

The exercise of totalitarian control in George Orwell's dystopian masterwork 1984 takes several forms, including complete monitoring, psychological torment, and physical assault. Rather, the Party's complete control over language is its most powerful tool. The Party is aware of a basic sociolinguistics principle: in order to permanently control human behaviour, the cognitive processes that permit autonomous thought must be destroyed. This is achieved by using Newspeak, a drastically simplified language designed to take the place of Standard English (Oldspeak). This study makes use of Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) paradigm to methodically reveal the hidden authority mechanisms present in the novel's text. The foundation of CDA is the idea that language is a social practice that reproduces, reflects, and challenges power dynamics

In contrast to formalist linguistics, which sees language as a separate set of rules, Fairclough's approach looks at how discourse both actively shapes and is shaped by society hegemonies. This paper provides a thorough analysis of how textual changes, institutional distribution, and sociocultural conditioning combine to eradicate the potential of political dissent by using this model to analyse 1984.

The idea behind the Party's language engineering is that a concept cannot be developed if it cannot be named. The goal of the regime's methodical language reduction is to make unconventional ideas—or "thoughtcrime"—literally impossible since there won't be any more words to convey them. This extreme version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis—the linguistic relativity notion that structure impacts thought—is a violent reconstruction of cognitive reality rather than just a vocabulary reduction exercise. Language becomes a weapon for human containment rather as a means of human expression in the world of 1984.

Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional framework offers a perfect analytical lens to examine this linguistic confinement. According to Fairclough, power is discreetly created through "ideological power"—the ability to portray one's actions as universal and common sense—rather than necessarily being used through overt physical force. This common sense is brutally manufactured in Oceania. Fairclough enables us to understand how a single altered sentence in the Ministry of Truth is structurally linked to the larger geopolitical hegemony of Big Brother by dividing discourse into three separate but intersecting spheres: the textual (micro), the discursive (meso), and the social (macro).

The textual analysis will break down the Party's lexical and grammatical techniques at the micro level. This includes the deletion of antonyms (e.g., replacing "bad" with "ungood"), the strong dependence on nominalization to erase human agency, and the use of passive syntactic patterns that mask responsibility for state violence. The discursive activity investigates the production, consumption, and manipulation of Oceania's literature at the meso-level. The Ministry of Truth (Minitrue), an organization devoted to the methodical falsification of historical documents, comes into focus here. The citizens are deprived of any objective chronological anchor as a result of this process, which guarantees that the past is continuously fluid and retrospectively modified to fit the Party's current geopolitical alignments and economic projections.

Lastly, the analysis examines how these institutional and linguistic practices support authoritarian social

structures at the macro-level of sociocultural explanation. The Party's core slogans—War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength—as well as the psychological process of doublethink, which compels people to concurrently hold and accept two opposing viewpoints, are criticised. By using this macro-lens, we can see how language completely changes: it becomes an architectural structure of psychological dominance rather than a means of communication.

1.1) Statement of the problem

The linguistic component of 1984, *Newspeak*, is often treated in traditional literary evaluations as either a straightforward satire of totalitarian propaganda or a static plot device. This leaves a crucial gap because it ignores the exact structural mechanics by which language actively generates and maintains absolute dominance. The precise language mechanisms by which the Party erases human agency, rewrites history, and imposes cognitive conformity remain unmapped in the absence of a methodical framework such as Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In order to solve this issue, this study shows how language is used as a weapon to eradicate the structural possibility of dissent.

1.2) Research Objectives

- To examine the Party's use of syntactic changes and lexical reduction as micro-level textual tactics to undermine human agency.
- To look into the Ministry of Truth's meso-level discursive practices concerning the creation, fabrication, and consumption of historical texts.
- To assess how state slogans and doublethink contribute to absolute ideological hegemony at the macro-level of society.
- To illustrate how Fairclough's three-dimensional model might be used to analyse power structures in political fiction.

1.3) Research Questions

RQ1: What particular lexical and syntactic decisions are incorporated into *Newspeak* to deprive people of agency and limit their ability to think?

RQ2: How do the Ministry of Truth's institutional processes for text production and revision influence societal reality by manipulating discursive continuity?

RQ3: How is absolute sociocultural hegemony established by the Party's contradictory rhetoric and doublethink?

RQ4: To what extent does Fairclough's approach reveal the mutually beneficial relationship between language and cognitive control in Orwell's story?

2) Literature Review

One important multidisciplinary method for analysing the connection between language, ideology, and power is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The foundation of CDA is the notion that discourse is a social activity that both reflects and reproduces power relations within society, rather than only a language framework (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). CDA offers a methodological framework for identifying the ways in which institutional procedures and language choices are infused with ideological meanings in literary and political texts.

One of the most important frameworks in CDA is still Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1992, 1995). Discourse analysis is conceptualised at three interrelated levels: sociocultural activity (macro-level), discursive practice (meso-level), and textual analysis (micro-level). Language is a location of ideological conflict since discourse both shapes and is shaped by social systems, according to Fairclough (2001). This paradigm has been frequently used to analyse literary writings, media discourse, and political speeches where language is used to wield power (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). A linguistic and intellectual construct that exemplifies the extremes of totalitarian discourse, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1984) has been analysed in great detail.

According to academics like Chilton (2004), authoritarian governments use language engineering to stifle competing ideologies and control cognition. In a similar vein, Fowler (1991) emphasises that language in political circumstances is never neutral since grammatical and lexical choices reflect power structures and ideological stances. This idea is best shown by the creation of *Newspeak* in 1984, which systematically restricts words to limit conceptual thought and resistance.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, often known as linguistic relativity, has also been used to analyse the connection between language and cognition. According to Whorf (1956) and Sapir (1929), linguistic structures affect

how people think and see the world. Although there is much disagreement over strong determinism, modern linguists like Lucy (1997) and Gumperz & Levinson (1996) contend that language does affect ingrained mental patterns. This validates Orwell's fictitious depiction of linguistic control, in which the goal of vocabulary reduction is to eradicate opposing ideas.

Discourse is a key mechanism by which elite groups reproduce ideological supremacy, according to Van Dijk's (2008, 2011) socio-cognitive approach to CDA. He contends that control over shared social knowledge and mental models, in addition to institutional control, is how power is preserved. This process of cognitive control, in which truth itself is discursively formed and constantly rewritten, is reflected in the Party's 1984 manipulation of historical records through the Ministry of Truth.

CDA interpretations of Orwell's work are further strengthened by Foucault's theory of discourse and power. According to Foucault (1977, 1980), discourses that generate knowledge, control behaviour, and normalise particular types of truth are how power functions. The disciplinary methods of 1984, such as psychological control (doublethink) and monitoring (Big Brother), show how authority functions constructively rather than just repressively. This is consistent with the theory that people absorb ideological influence through language.

Fowler et al. (1979) have also examined linguistic manipulation in authoritarian discourse, arguing that vocabulary and grammatical choices in political language frequently normalise ideological presumptions. The Party's 1984 slogans, "War is Peace," "Freedom is Slavery," and "Ignorance is Strength," are examples of what Fowler refers to as "syntactic contradictions" that normalise ideological paradoxes.

In a similar vein, Bernstein's (1971) idea of restricted and elaborated codes sheds light on how social control is impacted by language limitation. Similar to the verbal limitations imposed by Newspeak, restricted codes restrict expressive potential and uphold social hierarchy. Language reduction thus turns into a tool for ideological control and social stratification.

CDA-based interpretations of Orwell's writings are also supported by research on dystopian literature. Dystopian fiction, according to Booker (1994) and Moylan (2000), is a critique of governmental systems that stifle uniqueness through linguistic and intellectual repression. Orwell's 1984, which shows how language can be used as a weapon to alter reality and crush opposition, is still regarded as a key work in this genre.

2.1) Research gap

There is still a glaring research gap in the application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, despite the book receiving a great deal of scholarly attention. Without methodically integrating these components through a cohesive analytical framework, the majority of current research tends to either study Newspeak as a stand-alone language construct or concentrate widely on issues of propaganda, surveillance, and totalitarian ideology. Despite being widely referenced in CDA literature, Fairclough's three-dimensional model is frequently applied in a fragmented way, with analyses focusing either on macro-level ideological interpretations or micro-level lexical and grammatical features while ignoring the dynamic relationship between textual practices, institutional discourse production, and sociocultural power structures.

Furthermore, despite their crucial role in maintaining ideological control, the meso-level processes—in particular, the Ministry of Truth's ongoing production and revision of discourse—are frequently overlooked. Furthermore, although Orwell's language manipulation has been linked to linguistic relativity, few research have experimentally linked these theoretical assertions to particular textual techniques like lexical reduction and syntactic simplification in the book. In order to close this gap, this study provides a more comprehensive application of Fairclough's CDA model to show how language in 1984 systematically functions at all three levels to create and preserve total ideological rule.

2.2) Theoretical Framework

The primary theoretical framework for analysing how language creates and maintains authority and ideology in George Orwell's 1984 is provided by Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model, which is the foundation of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). According to CDA, language is a social practice that simultaneously reproduces and reflects societal power dynamics (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Textual analysis (micro level), discursive practice (meso level), and sociocultural practice (macro level) are the three interrelated levels at which Fairclough's paradigm examines discourse. The framework is applied at the micro level to analyse the novel's lexical and syntactic choices, especially Newspeak, which limits thought and agency by reducing vocabulary and grammatical complexity.

It focuses on the creation and manipulation of institutional discourse at the meso level, particularly the Ministry

of Truth's role in controlling and rewriting historical narratives. At the macro level, it examines more general ideological frameworks that normalise dominance and mould societal consciousness, such as surveillance, authoritarian control, and doublethink. The framework is also well suited for examining language as an instrument of ideological control in Orwell's dystopian world because it is supported by Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach, which explains how discourse influences mental models, and Foucault's theory of power and knowledge, which emphasises how truth is constructed through institutional systems.

3) Research Methodology

3.1) Research Design

A qualitative, descriptive, and interpretative research design based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is used in this study. In particular, it makes use of Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model (1992, 1995), which views language as a social practice.

3.2) Sample and Data Selection

The dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) by George Orwell serves as the study's population. Purposive sampling is used to choose particular textual passages that clearly illustrate language manipulation, cognitive control, and state power because a complete textual analysis of the book would be unnecessary.

3.3) Data Collection Procedure

A thorough, multi-phase thorough reading of the book structured methodically around Fairclough's analytical categories was used to gather data. Lexical reduction, the removal of descriptive adjectives, and agency-erasing syntactic structures like nominalisation and passive voice were among the linguistic shifts that were highlighted and catalogued during the first pass of the text in order to collect micro-level data. The second pass focused on meso-level discursive data and extracted narrative passages that describe Winston Smith's institutional work at the Ministry of Truth, with particular attention to the systematic recycling of state discourse, the fabrication of historical texts, and the destruction of original records. Lastly, a third pass was carried out to collect macro-level data by separating the Party's contradictory slogans, conversations that demonstrated cognitive confinement, and passages that described the psychological execution.

4) Findings and Analysis

4.1) The Textual Analysis

The literal linguistic architecture of Newspeak functions at the micro level of Fairclough's paradigm through an aggressive policy of lexical reduction and vocabulary attrition. By preserving a vast network of synonyms, antonyms, and stylistic subtleties, traditional English (Oldspeak) enables sophisticated emotional, intellectual, and ideological expression. The Party methodically breaks up this network by substituting a highly standardised, mechanical system of prefixes and suffixes for autonomous lexical elements. For instance, the autonomous semantic value of the term "bad" is completely removed from the language and reduced to a simple alteration of its binary opposite, ungood. Superlatives and intensifiers go through a similar mathematical standardisation process in which uniform tokens like plusgood, doubleplusgood, and doubleplusungood permanently replace emotive adjectives like "*splendid*," "*terrible*," or "*excellent*."

From the standpoint of Critical Discourse Analysis, this lexical depletion accomplishes a deliberate ideological goal. The state purposefully restricts the human mind's capacity for cognition by reducing language. The underlying psychological ability to conceptualise or communicate dissent becomes structurally impossible if terms like "*freedom*," "*liberty*," or "*rebellion*" are stripped of their descriptive signifiers and removed from the lexicon.

In addition to reducing vocabulary, the Party's language's micro-level architecture mainly uses nominalisation and grammatical transitivity manipulation to eliminate human agency. In CDA, transitivity assesses the structural framing of acts, events, and states, with a particular focus on whether power is attributed to an active subject (the actor) or concealed behind a passive element (the patient). The institutional phrase "*Winston Smith was vaporised*" is an example of how the narrative discourse mainly relies on agentless passive constructions when the state uses political violence or erases citizens from existence throughout the text. By purposefully leaving out the active agent (e.g., "*The Thought Police vaporised Winston*"), the grammar presents state-sponsored murder as an inevitable, unseen, and natural occurrence rather than an intentional, punitive human action.

Nominalization—the linguistic process of turning active verbs into static, abstract nouns—further reinforces

this erasure of agency. The singular corporate word *joycamp* collapses violent, dynamic governmental activities, such as putting citizens in slave labour camps. The physical reality of torture and forced labour is successfully concealed by this linguistic change, which turns dynamic political tyranny into an unchangeable, accepted aspect of society.

4.2) The Discursive Interpretation

The institutional processes of discourse generation, dissemination, and consumption take precedence over the linguistic product at the meso-level of Fairclough's framework. This component is fully institutionalised and spatialised inside the Ministry of Truth (Minitrue) in 1984. A clear case study of a closed-loop discursive system can be found in Winston Smith's daily bureaucratic work. Instead of writing fresh language, Winston's entire career is devoted to capturing pre-existing historical documents, altering them to reflect the state's current geopolitical and economic changes, and then totally erasing the original source material.

The entire historical database is methodically manipulated to mimic absolute infallibility when the state suddenly shifts its military alliances from Eurasia to Eastasia or modifies its economic forecasts. In "*memory holes*," speeches, newspapers, books, and photos are gathered, sent through pneumatic tubes, and burnt while freshly printed, fake representations of the past are distributed. There are no alternative, independent, or competing texts since the Party retains complete control over all production and distribution methods. The populace is compelled to engage in passive consumption, consuming only the discourse produced by the government.

Intertextuality—the sociocognitive process by which contemporary texts cite, expand upon, or contrast past documents to prove validity and continuity—is a crucial component of meso-level research. Text preserves provable ties to an independent repository of historical records, which helps it maintain credibility in a robust democratic society. However, the Party continuously modifies all recorded history in retrospect, purposefully severing intertextuality. Winston creates *Comrade Ogilvy*, a wholly made-up character, to take the place of the executed citizen's name when he removes them from the archive.

The Party deprives the audience of any objective chronological reference points by replacing real historical evolution with a succession of artificial, self-contained presents. The public loses the vital ability to contrast the facts of the past with the realities of the present in the absence of independent intertextual confirmation. The consumer of official discourse is left utterly susceptible in the absence of an empirical anchor, compelled to accept whatever arbitrary narrative the ruling elite creates at any given time.

4.3) The Sociocultural Explanation

Fairclough's paradigm aims to explain how absolute socio-political supremacy and ideological hegemony are consolidated through micro-level textual choices and meso-level institutional workflows at the macro-level of sociocultural explanation. The primary mantras that are prominently exhibited throughout Oceania—

WAR IS

PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, and IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH—

illustrate this macro-structural mastery. From a CDA perspective, these claims are skilfully constructed ideological oxymorons intended to carry out complete semantic inversion. They destroy the fundamental logical limits necessary for critical analysis by forcing the human brain to reconcile concepts that are diametrically opposite.

The state's four pyramidal ministries' names reflect this semantic inversion. The *Ministry of Truth* (Minitrue) is the center for historical forgery; the *Ministry of Peace* (Minipax) is the apparatus for perpetual warfare; the *Ministry of Love* (Miniluv) is the site of systematic torture; and the *Ministry of Plenty* (Miniplenty) is the manager of artificial economic scarcity. The state effectively breaks the language link between word and sensory experience by giving labels that are in direct opposition to physical reality. Once this link is severed, the ruling class gains the authority to define reality at will, making it impossible for the populace to spot deceit. The normalisation of doublethink and duckspeak as hegemonic compliance strategies is the ultimate sociocultural result of this widespread linguistic engineering. The psychological ability to simultaneously hold two diametrically opposed thoughts in one's head and accept them as absolute reality is known as doublethink. It marks the transition from exterior physical coercion to interior cognitive mastery under state rule. Duckspeak, a phonetic phenomena in which a speaker reflexively articulates orthodox state doctrine without using higher cognitive skills, is the language climax of this process. It is essentially "quacking like a duck."

At this stage of development, language ceases to be a medium for human thought or expression and instead becomes an unconscious, involuntary reflex. When a population's cognitive faculties are fragmented by doublethink and automated by duckspeak, the structural possibility of political dissent is eliminated. Hegemony achieves its pure, absolute state: the oppressed do not merely tolerate their exploitation; they lose the actual cognitive machinery required to perceive it as oppression, thereby naturalizing and rendering eternal the rule of the Party.

Table 1: Power and Cognitive Linguistic Manipulation in 1984

Text / Newspeak Token	Linguistic Process	Critical Discourse Interpretation (CDA Function)
WAR IS PEACE FREEDOM IS SLAVERY IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH	Simplification via Ideological Slogans	Communicates timeless continuity; normalizes semantic contradictions as unassailable law of nature.
BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU	Simplification via Surveillance Capitalism	Signals immediate, uninterrupted state tracking forcing constant psychological submission.
Joycamp	Euphemism via Connotative Shift	Executes mollification; replaces the brutal reality of a <i>forced labor camp</i> with a positive signifier.
Vaporize	Euphemism via Lexical Hiding	Masks state murder as an un-authored, natural phenomenon to eliminate institutional guilt.
Ungood	Morphologicalization via Prefixation	Destroys the pure antonym (<i>bad</i>), shrinking semantic range of emotion to a controlled binary choice.
Goed, Foughted, Drinkeed	Morphologicalization via Overregularization	Strips language of historical variation, reducing intellectual depth and active cognitive processing.
Text / Newspeak Token	Linguistic Process	Critical Discourse Interpretation (CDA Function)
Childs, Mans	Morphologicalization via Overregularization	Replaces complex morphological patterns with automatic, mechanical, low-effort speech tokens.
Gooder, Goodest	Morphologicalization via Regularization	Excises irregular semantic grading (<i>better/best</i>) to simplify comparative human thought.
Speedful, Speedwise	Morphologicalization via Suffixation	Collapses flexible parts of speech into rigid blocks, suffocating expressive and creative writing.
<i>Justice, Liberty, Democracy, Science</i>	Reduction via Lexical Omission	Eradicates political, philosophical, and critical signifiers so the underlying concepts cannot be conceptualized.

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5) Discussion

The results of this study support the main ideas of Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by showing that the use of absolute power in George Orwell's 1984 is essentially a linguistic endeavour. This analysis shows how the Party transcends conventional, oppressive modes of physical coercion to construct an interiorised, cognitive hegemony by tracking the methodical use of language throughout the micro, meso, and macro domains. In Oceania, language is no more an open system for communicating a variety of human experiences; rather, it is constructed into a tight, architectural cage intended to limit intellectual potential and remove the structural possibility of political opposition.

At the descriptive, micro-linguistic level, the findings demonstrate that using Newspeak is more than just a vocabulary reduction exercise; rather, it is a severe assault on human cognition. The aggressive use of universal prefixation (ungood) and morphological regularisation (goed, child, etc.) deprives the language engine of analytical nuance, emotional resonance, and historical depth. This structural depletion supports the text's strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which holds that the state actively limits the semantic bounds of thought by reducing the vocabulary.

Moreover, state accountability is deliberately eliminated by the intentional manipulation of transitivity through agentless passive voice constructs (such as "Winston Smith was vaporised"). The dictatorship normalises state-sponsored violence by eliminating the active subject and portraying political execution as an unplanned, unavoidable occurrence.

The institutional operations within the Ministry of Truth (Minitru) exhibit a fully closed-loop system of discourse generation, dissemination, and consumption at the interpretive, meso-level. Winston Smith's bureaucratic work demonstrates how the state constantly breaks intertextual continuity in order to create a monopoly on truth. Verifiable connections to historical records give writings authority and credibility in an authentic social fabric. The Party obliterates the temporal anchor needed for comparative analysis by vigorously burning authentic historical records in "memory holes" and disseminating copies that have been retroactively altered. The people are completely dependent on the state apparatus's immediate discursive output because they are caught in a sequence of absolute, disjointed presents.

6) Conclusion

Using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, this study has offered a thorough Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of George Orwell's 1984, methodically revealing how the governing totalitarian dictatorship uses language to create total socio-political control. The analysis shows that the Party's linguistic engineering is a radical mechanism for the reconstruction of cognitive reality rather than just an external tool for disseminating state propaganda by looking at the text at the descriptive (micro), interpretive (meso), and explanatory (macro) levels.

In the end, this study emphasises the significant theoretical importance of applying CDA to political fiction, demonstrating that power in its most ultimate form functions constructively rather than only repressively. The ability to think critically is eroded when a dominating group is able to monopolise both the institutional production of language and its structural dimensions. In the universe of 1984, language is converted from a means of human expression into an architectural prison of psychological dominance, demonstrating that a dictatorship must first subjugate the very linguistic fabric through which reality is seen in order to permanently control human behaviour.

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