

LANGUAGE AS THE DEVICE FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL MANIPULATION IN GEORGE ORWELL'S NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR: A PSYCHOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT: *Language is the unique human talent that works amazingly in molding one's thoughts and deeds. If grown unrestricted, it can help people widen their notions about things and issues in and around them. On the other hand, if shrunk and chained, it hinders the flourishing of ideas and information. The blossoming as well as the limiting power of language has been very perspicuously illustrated by George Orwell in his dystopian novel, 1984. How linguistic constituents hold the absolute ability to do and undo human thoughts has been portrayed in the novel in the most striking manner. Orwell has shown how language can manipulate psychological functions supreme-handedly. To lead popular thought to a certain target, language has to be engineered in the required mechanism. It does so, and attains complete control over people's mind. This paper examines how language sets a demarcation line for human psychological processes. It attempts to dig deep into the linguistic treatment in 1984 and comes up with a vivid description of the dominance of language on people's mental procedure. It investigates the manipulations of the 'Newspeak' and strives to grasp a psycholinguistic analysis of the novel.*

KEYWORDS: Language, Psychology, manipulation, Nineteen Eighty Four, psycholinguistic

INTRODUCTION

In Oceania, the totalitarian state in the novel, there prevails the invented language, Newspeak that determines what people are to speak there. In the way what a language basically does, it defines what people think in reality. The 'Big Brother'-tailored language constrains people's thinking and lets them speak in accordance with the likings of the party in power. For dictating what people would talk and feel, they put into use a certain prescribed lexicon that shrinks the domain of popular thought. To retain people's thoughts and expressions under absolute control, the incumbent government in the novel gives a threatening shape to the language. In fact, language in George Orwell's *1984* is more for intimidation than for regular communication. Spoken, read, written and listened, all the versions of the language are mechanized in such a manner so as to coerce the users to be in an unconscious apprehension day in and day out. Wherever one goes, there is the 'enormous face gazing from the wall' (Orwell, 1954, p. 7) that has its caption beneath it "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU" (Orwell, 1954, p. 7). It's quite decipherable how this constantly awe-inspiring phenomenon holds people frightened. There is the omnipresent 'telescreen' (Orwell, 1954, p. 8) that 'receives and transmits simultaneously' (Orwell, 1954, p. 8). Any sound of talking or whispering above a certain low level is picked up by the telescreen and instantly transmitted to the headquarter. There remains the ubiquitous 'Thought Police' (Orwell, 1954, p. 8) that plugs a wire or something into anybody to monitor and read his/her physical as well as mental movement. One is 'overheard and scrutinized' (Orwell, 1954, p. 8) incessantly. One living in this State must earn these habits

as instincts that modify his internal and external thoughts in accordance with the 'BIG BROTHER'. Not only are there the language and the linguistic dealings that provoke apprehension in the total atmosphere of Oceania, but also the entire infrastructures of the buildings and things possess a threatening aura eternally. "The Ministry of Love was the really frightening one. There were no windows in it at all" (Orwell, 1954, p. 9). A gigantic place with no window, but with 'maze of barbed wire entanglements, steel doors and machine gun-nests' (Orwell, 1954, p 9) says it all. As for the State and the Government, their public dealings are all about superiority and seriousness. Even an alcoholic liquid is named 'VICTORY GIN' (Orwell, 1954, p. 10) and a cigarette packet is marked 'VICTORY CIGARETTES' (Orwell, 1954, p. 10).

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Language possesses the exclusive capability to shape the learning and behavior of its users (Hays, 2000). It programs the mind by dint of manipulating the senses and neurons of human psychology (Lupyan & Bergen, 2015). As a matter of fact, language performs straightly on the psychological set-ups of the speech community (Elman, 2009). Gary Lupyan and Benjamin Bergen (2015) emphasize that there are certain distinguished forms of diction that constitute the core of the language and act solely on programming human mind. They also empirically opine that the emergence of a language holds its major focus on molding the functions of human mind. In Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the aspect that deserves the optimum focus is nothing other than language since it forms and determines what and how people think and give vent to. The incumbent party in Oceania promotes itself to exercise the unwavering control on language as it is the only way to dissuade people from thinking of any sort of disobedience or mutiny for there will be no language so as to allow such terms. This designing receives its accomplishment by virtue of the 'Newspeak' which has been coined and is being curtailed deliberately in order to thwart any thought or notion that might stand in the way of the autocracy of the party. For the sake of taming everything as per the wishes of the 'Big Brother', history has been being tampered incessantly and reality is being kept under control. In the terms of 'Newspeak', this venture is called 'doublethink'. Orwell explains,

Double think means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them. The party intellectual knows in which direction his memories must be attended; he therefore knows that he is playing tricks with reality; but by the exercise of 'doublethink' he also satisfies himself that the reality is not violated. (Orwell, 1954, pp. 182-183)

What an absolute system of containing people's thought and imagination! The party treats people as though they were nothing but playthings at its hands. Yet, these citizens are to be made to understand that they are really benefitted and taken care of constantly by virtue of the innumerable noble activities of the government. Orwell demonstrates that language has the power in politics to mask the truth and mislead the public, and he wishes to increase the awareness of this power (Berkes, 2000). As such, language emerges to be mind control tool, with the ultimate goal being the destruction of will and imagination (Berkes, 2000). One of Orwell's most important messages in *1984* is that language is of central importance to human thought because it structures and limits the ideas that individuals are capable of formulating and expressing (Soriano, 2010). These beguiling phenomena of language on human mind can

be explained with the integrated issues between psychology and language, which means psycholinguistics in one word.

Language and Mind

Gross (2013) declares that the language people speak influences greatly their mind, behavior and even their economic achievements as well as decisions. Sedivy (2014) unearths inseparable affinity between psychology and language and suggests that the insights of the two fields influence each other profoundly. Language and theory of mind have co-evolved, given their close relation in development and their tight connection in social behavior and thereby have fuelled each others' evolution (Malle, 2002). Schooler, Ohlsson and Brooks (1993) explore that language helps mould and express insights; again insights contribute a lot in articulating language. Whorf (1952) concludes that language and the way people demonstrate their nature are inwardly akin. Boroditsky (2017) finds that people speaking in different languages demonstrate noticeable divergences in the ways they think and their grammatical choices and aesthetic likings reflect their mental variability to a great extent. People's linguistic manifestations and exposures having nonconformity in lexical uses and syntactic applications shed an ample amount of light on the multitudinous ways they see and experience the world (Boroditsky, 2017). Zlatev and Blomberg (2015) deem that language not only reflects one's psychological stature but also reveals a great deal about his social as well as cultural set-ups. Marin (2014) observes that language acts as the influential tool that inflicts dominance on human mind and restrains individual's autonomy in thoughts and deeds in George Orwell's *1984*. Marin (2014) also believes that Orwell could vividly understand that control over language is the most powerful ammunition any autocratic government can have in possession to limit the thought procedure of its people, which is why he has engineered 'Newspeak' to have such a dominant emanation.

Capitalization in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Robb (2014) explains that people use all-capital letters to make words look "louder". Quoting Professor Paul Luna who is the director of the department of typography and graphic communication at the University of Reading, UK, Robb (2014) also highlights that caps are used to convey 'grandeur', 'pomposity' and 'aesthetic seriousness' and this linguistic ritual has been in practice since the time of the Roman Emperors. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the purpose of all-capitalization is thereby easily clarified. The weight and majesty of the sentences written in caps say it all. There is the poster with the enormous face beneath which ran "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU" (Orwell, 1954, p. 7). Even if one does not have any literal idea of the linguistic manifestation of capitalized words, the splendor of the aforementioned sentence is provoking enough to frighten one to the maximum extent. Another intriguing message runs as the following,

"WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH" (Orwell, 1954, p. 9).

Robb (2014) consults history of the use of capital letters and comes up with the fact that Roman emperors would get their statues and memorials engraved with the chivalrous glories in all-capital letters. Robb (2014) also finds that writers have a tradition to write in all-capital letters to express anger and resentment.

Cognitive manipulation of language

Dijk (2006) defines manipulation, as the term signifies, occurs because of the intended targets of text and talk. Didier and Oswald (2011) state broadly that external contextual settings of the particular communicative event, that is, its broad social context, which includes the social relationship between speaker and audience, their respective roles and prerogatives, the status of their respective knowledge, the purpose of the event, and so on contribute to making a discourse manipulative. Krauss and Chiu (1998) suggest that language pervades social life and it is the principle vehicle for the transmission of cultural knowledge, and the primary means by which we gain access to the contexts of others' minds. Language is implicated in most of the phenomena that lie at the core of social psychology: attitude change, social perception, personal identity, social interaction, intergroup bias and stereotyping, attribution and so on (Krauss & Chiu, 1998). There permeates a frightening air in every texture and element of the State that monitors and scrutinizes every single phenomenon one can possibly do outwardly and think of doing inwardly. Orwell (1954, p. 8) says, "Every sound you made was overheard and every moment scrutinized". Moreover, even the structural arrangements of the buildings promulgate a kind of frightful ambience that makes Winston or anybody feel petrified inside. Orwell (1954, p. 9) describes, "Ministry of Love was the really frightening one. There were no windows in it all". The administration of the Ingsoc is terrorizing to such an extent that none is allowed to keep a diary or notebook, let alone writing something, and if caught or known, the act of scribbling anything against the omniscient 'Big Brother' gets penalized in the most horrific manner. Orwell shows his apprehension about Winston for the latter's going about writing something in the diary. "He was about to open a diary which once detected would get him punished by death" (Orwell, 1954, pg. 11). Most horrifying appears to be the gigantic poster of a colossal countenance glued here and there on the walls of the buildings, whose automatic expression of cold command of intimidation one can discern the moment one takes a look at it. Orwell (1954, p. 249) says, "The huge face gazed back at him, full of calm power". Moreover, at the hub of the 'English Socialism' is the dictation of 'Doublethink' that is engineered for the purpose of creating an artificial ambiguity in the language so as to let no citizen of the State have a clear expression of anything he can possibly think about. The novelist puts it straight,

Doublethink lies at the very heart of Ingsoc, since the essential act of the party is to use conscious deception while retaining the firmness of purpose that goes with complete honesty. To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just so long as it is needed, to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take fake account of the reality which one denies- all this is indispensably necessary. Even in using the word 'Doublethink' it is necessary to exercise 'doublethink'. (Orwell, 1954, pp. 182-183)

Lexis and Clout in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Lexis unfurls a great deal of sinew in George Orwell's political novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The novel's specific language pattern wields a monstrous hold on mind control. It promulgates, "War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength" (Orwell, 1954, p. 9) and very arrogantly displays the unyielding stance of going against the usual current of conviction. The unquestionable dictation of the "Big Brother" clasps the unwavering prowess to 'unperson' the people who are unlucky enough to fall in its bad book. Orwell portrays how the government contains the media and all the other sources of information and thus exercises language to unhesitatingly handle the psychological aspects of people. The authoritative lingo therapy of

the 'Big Brother' supremely continues succeeding in tricking people believing in the untrue things. Language is mechanized to be a mind controlling apparatus that charismatically comes with flying color in regard to demolishing the longing and imaginativeness of the citizens. The 'Newspeak' of the political monopoly eases schemes and machinations through which they go a long way ahead to refrain people from realizing the germane universe. By dint of managing people's speech, the government targets the thought process. It ventures vehemently to often charge people with 'thought crime'. And surprisingly enough, the seemingly omniscient engineers of 'Newspeak' have the robust plan to 'make thought crime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it'. George Orwell includes an appendix regarding the purposeful lexis of the 'Newspeak' with a view to demonstrating the force of language to bend as well as straighten psycholinguistic atmosphere of the speech community. Orwell explains,

Newspeak was the official language of Oceania, and had been devised to meet the ideological needs of Ingsoc, or English Socialism. The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible. (Orwell, 1954, p. 257)

In 'The Principles of Newspeak', which is an appendix to the novel, Orwell articulates that the sole intention of Newspeak was to be established completely giving a death blow to the Oldspeak and let the latter be lost in oblivion so as to make it unimaginable for people to think other than the motto of Ingsoc, since thinking undoubtedly consists of lexical elements. The linguists of Oceania, on the command of the Party people, erased all other associated meanings and connotations of the words. They only preserve the sense that is required and prescribed by the decision makers of the Ingsoc. Orwell exemplifies,

The word 'free' still existed in Newspeak, but could only be used in such statement as 'The dog is free from lice' or 'This field is free from weeds'. It could not be used in its old sense of 'politically free' or 'intellectually free', since political and intellectual freedom no longer existed even as concepts. (Orwell, 1954, p. 258)

Propaganda in 1984

Propaganda is exceedingly used as a weapon to contain the thought of the people. It exists with its encompassing sinew in the total prevalence of communication. Lasswell (1927) provides that the control of opinions by significant symbols that involve tales, hearsays, gossip, data, drawings and other forms of communal linguistic interactions is broadly supported to be called propaganda. Ross (2002) opines that propaganda symbolizes a piece of logically flawed information with a view to provoking a great number of people of the society from the pedestal of a political manipulation, institutional mechanism or individual interest. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* possesses all sorts propaganda in its disposal. The incumbent party in the narrative takes to the device in its extreme level for the purpose of containing and encircling people's deeds, sayings, thoughts and convictions. The monitoring prowess of all the media, instruments and types of communication is effectuated and exercised to its uttermost magnitude. As a matter fact, each genre of communication is counted and measured for the purpose of spreading politically intended ideas. No transmission is obstructed, but no relief is there from the pervading reminding of consequential happenings.

CONCLUSION

Exploitation of language in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* sways reality in the demeanor prescribed by the government of the Ingsoc, whose principle intent is to push people to a cooked understanding that must seem original as well as unblemished in regard to the everyday happenings and activities dispatched by the State. This Machiavellian scheme and its execution get the upper hand in relation to containing human mind by dint of machinating the normal linguistic possession of the people characterized in the novel. The fact that language and mind are in fact reciprocal to each other helps Orwell to comprehend the exhibition of the operation between language and psyche as a sine qua non, on which the party in power in the described State holds an ironclad regulation with a view to doctoring on the people to be ruled. As such, the 'BIG BROTHER'-regulated administration retains an applied language (Newspeak) that unfolds to be immensely successful to take popular realization that the incumbent government is doing the best for its people, who are appreciatively convinced of this fact, and if not, they do not possess the bona fide language to provide expression to their unaffected thought. As a matter of fact, psychologically and linguistically the citizens in the Ingsoc are engineered so much so that they can in no way think other than what they are made to think.

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