UNIVERSIDAD DE ALMERÍA

GRADO EN ESTUDIOS INGLESES

GEORGE ORWELL'S *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR*: THE USE OF LANGUAGE AS A VEHICLE FOR MIND-CONTROL

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Curso Académico: 2020/2021

Convocatoria (mayo/julio/noviembre/enero): mayo

ABSTRACT

George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) discusses the possible consequences of a totalitarian government in a dystopian future. It has been the departure of several investigations and research papers on the influence of language on society.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to determine whether language might be used as a vehicle for mind-control. First, Newspeak will be compared to several controlled natural languages and experimental languages to understand its objective. Second, it will be examined through different linguistic theories. Finally, an answer will be offered to the question of whether thought influences language or whether, on the contrary, language influences thought.

Keywords: George Orwell, *1984*, Newspeak, mind-control, linguistic relativity, determinism, structuralism, deconstruction.

RESUMEN

En su obra *1984* (1949), George Orwell profundiza en las posibles consecuencias de un gobierno totalitario en un futuro distópico. Esta novela ha sido el punto de partida de distintos trabajos de investigación sobre la influencia del lenguaje en la sociedad.

De esta manera, el propósito de este trabajo es determinar si el lenguaje puede ser usado como una herramienta de manipulación psicológica. Primero, se comparará la Neolengua con distintas lenguas controladas y lenguas experimentales para comprender el objetivo de estas. Segundo, se examinará a través de diferentes teorías lingüísticas. Por último, se responderá a la pregunta de si el pensamiento influye en el lenguaje o si, por el contrario, el lenguaje influye en el pensamiento.

Palabras clave: George Orwell, *1984*, Neolengua, manipulación, relatividad lingüística, determinismo, estructuralismo, deconstrucción.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION

"In a time of universal deceit telling the truth is a revolutionary act." (Orwell)

In no way had any other twentieth-century author contributed to contemporary political language as much as George Orwell did. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) was a landmark in the history of dystopian literature without a shadow of a doubt. The novel has been the catalyst for poems, novels, plays, songs, and television shows, among others. Since its publication, the English language has been imbued with such words and concepts as 'Orwellian', 'the Big Brother', 'the Party', 'Room 101', 'doublethink', or 'doublespeak'.

Following Orwell's death, a great deal of academic research has been done not only on this novel but on his whole literary production, including poems, essays, letters, and journalism. Sonia Brownell (Orwell's second wife) and Ian Angus (Orwell's first biographer) edited *The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell* in 1968, and soon became the main academic publication of reference. Besides, several biographies lacking Sonia Brownell's support were published, including *The Unknown Orwell* (1972) by Peter Stansky and William Abrahams. In the wake of Sonia Brownell's death, biographies such as Bernard Crick's *George Orwell: A Life* (1980) were published.

In 1982, Peter Davison, a British famous scholar, was commissioned to coordinate and edit a commemorative edition of all the published works of Orwell. Two years later, several works were edited to pay homage to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* among which are Audrey Coppard and Bernard Crick's *Orwell Remembered* (1984) and Stephen Wadhams' *Remembering Orwell* (1984). In 1996, Davison published a volume concerned with Orwell's experiences and literary influences called *George Orwell: A Literary Life*, and two years later he published *The Complete Work of George Orwell.* Ian Angus and Sheila Davison assisted him in editing this collection, being a total game-changer for scholars and researchers on George Orwell. Some of the first biographers and critics to take advantage of this publication were Jeffrey Meyers, author of *Orwell: Wintry Conscience of a Generation* (2001), and Christopher Hitchens, author of *Why Orwell Matters* (2002). Additionally, the centenary of his birth resulted in the publication of such important biographies as D. J. Taylor's *Orwell: The Life* (2003) or Gordon Bowker's *George Orwell* (2003). Jeffrey Meyers' *Orwell, Life and Art* (2010) is another biography worth mentioning.

Notwithstanding, the allegorical novella *Animal Farm* (1945) and the dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) have attracted more academic research than any other of Orwell's works. Literary critics such as John Rodden or Harold Bloom also published companions and guides to George Orwell's literary production, especially *Nineteen Eighty-Four*[1]. It has also been the focus of psychological and political studies[2] since it is one of the most important political dystopias concerned about the perils of totalitarian governments and how they establish and maintain power through manipulation and violence. The fictional language created by Orwell is one of the main aspects which have been widely researched and debated. The renowned British linguist Roger Fowler based his research on the discipline of critical linguistics and the relationship between language and ideology. Bob Hodge, Gunther Kress, and Tony Trew assisted Fowler in the publication of *Language and Control* (1979), which included a section on the so-called 'Orwellian linguistics'. In 1995, he published *The Language of George Orwell*, exploring Orwell's views on language and its use in his literary works. Andrei Reznikov's *George Orwell's Theory of Language* (2001) also shed light on the predecessors of Newspeak, its principles and functions, and its influence on society.

Nineteen Eighty-Four has become much more important and has had a major impact on the perception of totalitarianism in modern times. The totalitarian governments of the twentieth century which inspired the novel no longer exist, albeit history tends to repeat itself and the contemporary reader is well-aware. The recent rise of fascism in Europe or America has alarmed the population during the last decade, language being the main focus of the hazard. Interestingly enough, language is used by politicians not only to persuade voters but also to manipulate information and offer the so-called 'fake news' or 'alternative facts'[3]. It is the contemporaneity of both the language and the novel what led me to choose *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and this author as the topic of this paper.

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[1] Cf. Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations. *George Orwell's 1984*. Edited and with an introduction by Harold Bloom. Philadephia: Chelsea House, 2007; Rodden, John. *The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

[2] Cf. Plank, Robert. *George Orwell's Guide Through Hell, A Psychological Study of Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Doylestown: Borgo Press, 1994; Newsinger, John. *Orwell's Politics*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1999.

[3] The term 'alternative facts' became popular after the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States of America in 2016. It was used by Kellyane Conway, Trump's counselor, during an interview on 22nd January 2017. Journalist Chuck Todd asked her to explain Sean Spicer's false statement about the number of attendees to Trump's inauguration. She said that he gave alternative facts, to which Todd stated that alternative facts are not facts but falsehoods. The term was described as Orwellian and compared to the used of 'doublethink'; it is even considered to be the reason why *Nineteen Eighty-Four* became a best seller in 2017.

2. METHODOLOGY

The present research paper will be divided into three sections to properly address and approach the topic: an introduction to George Orwell, an introduction to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and a detailed study of Newspeak.

In the first section, a brief biographical account will be offered since his literary production can only be understood within the historical and political context in which it takes place. The information provided in this section will be summarized and organized to ensure understanding of the context and the author in relation to the topic of this paper. The main biographies and chronologies used for this purpose are those published by Harold Bloom, J. R. Hammond, and J. I. Gómez López, although some biographies on the web and *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* will also be used.

In the second section, the influences, plot, structure, themes, and core elements of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* will be outlined and explained before dealing with the language of the novel. The edition of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* published by Collins Classics in 2021 and *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell* edited by Ian Angus and Sonia Brownell will be the publications of reference for this brief introduction.

In the third and most extensive section, research on Newspeak will be conducted to determine to which extent language influences thought and whether it affects our perception of reality. It will be divided into three subsections:

In the first subsection, the appendix about Newspeak included in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* will serve as the basis for this research, as it illustrates the structure and purpose of the dystopian language. Orwell was interested in linguistics and wrote extensively about the English language and its function in society, so several of his essays will be referenced to understand Orwell's view of language. Thereupon, Newspeak will be compared to Controlled Natural Languages such as Charles Kay Ogden's Basic English. Political and corporate jargon will also be useful to understand the purpose of restricting the language and its consequences, and the relationship between language and social classes. Research publications on language and power by Roger Fowler, Norman Fairclough, and Pierre Bourdieu will be consulted for this section, along with the aforementioned guides and collections of Orwell essays and letters.

In the second subsection, Newspeak will be analyzed in the light of several linguistic theories. On the one hand, the hypotheses of linguistic relativity and linguistic determinism are concerned with the structure of languages and their influence on their speakers' perception of reality. They thus have been of great significance to the study of fictional languages such as Newspeak. Prestigious linguists such as Edward Sapir, Benjamin Lee Whorf, Franz Boas, Roger W. Brown, Eric Lenneberg, John A. Lucy, Steven Pinker, John J. Gumperz, or Stephen Levinson have widely discussed the hypothesis cited above; hence, the publications presented by these authors will be of particular interest to the present research. On the other hand, structuralist and deconstructive studies and methodologies will be applied to this research. The works of thinkers such as Ferdinand de Saussure, Jacques Derrida, Greg Smith, J. A. Cuddon, Jonathan Culler, Lois Tyson, Steven Blakemore, Jennifer Lidfors, or Barbara Johnson among others will be used to comprehend how language and reality are intertwined and interpreted by the brain.

3. GEORGE ORWELL, A VISIONARY AUTHOR[4]

Eric Arthur Blair, better known by his pseudonym George Orwell, was an English writer who was born on June 25th, 1903 in Motihari, India. He was the son of Richard Walmesley Blair, a British agent in the Opium Department of the Indian Civil Service, and Ida Mabel Limouzin, an Indian woman of French descent. He was barely one year old when the Blair family moved to Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, in the summer of 1904. In September 1908, Eric Blair enrolled as a pupil at an Anglican Convent school in Henley along with his elder sister.

In September 1911, he entered the St Cyprian's boarding school, a private preparatory school where he studied Latin, French, History, English, and Arithmetic. He already was a voracious reader, having read timeless classics such as *Gulliver's Travels* or *Tom Sawyer*. His father finally retired from the Indian Civil Service in January 1912, returning to England to spend time with his family and moving to Shiplake, Oxfordshire, in September. During his school years at St Cyprian's, Blair published his first poems in *Henley and South Oxfordshire Standard*, including 'Awake! Young Men of England!' (1914) or 'Kitchener' (1916)[5]. He was also awarded the school's English prize and entered the scholarship class to prepare himself for entry to Wellington College, where he spent one term in 1917. Blair was already well aware that language was an effective political device, and it is reflected in his poetry[6].

In May 1917, he entered Eton College, an independent boarding school for boys, as a King's Scholar. In September, his father was sent to Marseilles as a second lieutenant in the Army and his mother moved to Earls Court so she could take a clerical post. Blair kept writing poems, short stories and plays while studying at Eton, such as 'The Pagan' (1918), 'The Vernon Murders' (1918), or 'The Man and the Maid' (1918). He also published several contributions in the student journal *The Election Times*. In 1919 he

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[4] Several biographical references have been consulted for the realization of this theoretical framework: Bloom, Harold. *George Orwell's 1984*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004; Editors of Biography.com. "George Orwell Biography". Biography. www.biography.com/writer/george-orwell; Gómez López, Jesús Isaías. *George Orwell, El Último Hombre De Europa*. Madrid: Síntesis, 2018; Hammond, J. R. *A George Orwell Chronology*. Hampshire: Palgrave, 2000; Ramazani, Jahan. General Editor. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 10th ed. New York: Norton, 2018; The Orwell Foundation. "About George Orwell". The Orwell Foundation. www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/about/about-george-orwell/; Woodcock, George. "George Orwell". Encyclopædia Britannica. www.britannica.com/biography/George-Orwell.

[5] *George Orwell, the Complete Poetry*. Edited by Dione Venables. London: Finlay Publishers, 2015.

[6] Gómez López, Jesús Isaías. *George Orwell, El Último Hombre De Europa*. Madrid: Síntesis, 2018, p. 37.

became a General Division specialist and was elected a member of the College Debating Society two years later. In September 1921, he began his last year at Eton and became a member of the College wall game team. After having finished his studies in December 1921, he moved with his parents to Southwold, Suffolk.

Following his father's steps, he prepared himself to enroll in the Indian Imperial Police in January 1922, passed the examinations in July, and departed from Birkenhead on the S. S. *Herefordshire* to Mandalay, Birmania in October. On arrival, he enrolled in the Police Training School for a nine-month course before being posted to Myaungmya, Twante, Syriam, Insein, Moulmein, and Katha. It was in Katha where Blair contracted dengue fever and was entitled to a leave in England in July 1927. During these years, he worked as a sub-divisional police officer, assistant district superintendent, and headquarters assistant. In September, he permanently resigned from the Indian Imperial Police and decided to begin his career as a writer. In essays such as 'Shooting an Elephant' (1936), he justifies the hatred he developed towards imperialism and colonialism. He considered it to be "an evil thing", so he "was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British" (Orwell, 1936).

In April 1928, he moved to Paris, where he lived in harsh conditions in working-class districts. He continued to write short stories and poems, but he also began early drafts of *Down and Out in Paris and London* and *Burmese Days*. In October 1928, he published his first article as a professional writer, called 'La Censure en Anglaterre' in *Monde*. He also published articles in several journals such as *Progrès Civique, GK's Weekly,* and *Adelphi*. In February 1929, the literary agent L. I. Bailey contacted Blair, who submitted some short stories; however, Bailey rejected most of these stories. In October, he was employed as a dishwasher for three months at the Hôtel Lotti, where he worked 13 hours a day.

In December 1929, he returned to England to spend Christmas with his parents at Southwold, and then moved to his sister's house at Bramley, Yorkshire, to work on a draft of his first novel. The first version of this work was called 'A Scullion's Diary' [7] and only included the episodes in Paris. The revision of the novel was typed down and submitted to Cape in August 1931; however, Cape rejected it. Accordingly, Blair introduced himself to Leonard Moore and delivered samples of his writing. In April 1932, Moore became his

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[7] Orwell, George. *Down and Out in Paris and London*. 1933. London: Penguin Classics, 2001.

literary agent and offered him to publish his book under the title *Down and Out in Paris and London*, which is a full-length novel exposing the poverty conditions of the working class in those cities. It was published on 9th January 1933 by Victor Gollancz under the pseudonym George Orwell. During those years, he held several jobs, including tutor-companion for three children, porter at Billingsgate fish market, or teacher at The Hawthorns School. Moreover, he began to write his next novel, *Burmese Days*, in autumn 1931, and submitted it to Moore in December 1933, when he was admitted to Uxbridge Cottage Hospital due to pneumonia. He stayed there until mid-January and then moved to Southwold along with his parents until October to work on *A Clergyman's Daughter*.

Burmese Days, however, was not published until the next year (1934) in the United States by Harpers after having been rejected in the United Kingdom several times due to its content. The novel is a chronicle of Orwell's days as part of the Indian Imperial Police in Burma, and it was considered to be defamatory of Katha and the colonial British society. The author defended himself and explained that "it's unfair in some ways and inaccurate in some details, but much of it is simply reporting what I have seen" (qtd. in Orwell, 2001). The English version of *Burmese Days*, which included some alterations, was published in 1935 and received positive and favorable critiques.

In March, he moved to Hampstead and met Eileen O'Shaughnessy for the first time, who would eventually become his wife in June 1936. *A Clergyman's Daughter* was published by Gollancz later in that month, and Orwell continued working on his next novel called *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, which he wanted to publish in February 1936. In summer, he began reviewing fictional works for the *New English Weekly*, a post he held until 1940. In 1936 he was commissioned to write a book on the living conditions of the working class in the north of England. Orwell traveled to Wigan, Barnsley, and Sheffield for this purpose, and then returned to London before April. Once his novel *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* was published by Gollancz upon his return, he was ready to begin his next book. This novel, called *The Road to Wigan Pier*, was finished in November and delivered to Moore in December.

The Spanish Civil War between Republican and Nationalist forces broke out in July 1936, and Blair decided to travel to Spain to join the militia of the POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista) and fight against the Nationalists. In the period between January and June 1937, he served as a militiaman in the battlefront in Aragon. In March, Gollancz published *The Road to Wigan Pier*, including an introduction written by himself.

Fatally injured by a shot in the throat by a Nationalist sniper, Orwell was taken to hospital at Monflorite and was then moved to another two hospitals and a sanatorium. In June, he decided to return to London due to the purges carried out against the POUM. Thereupon, he decided to write about his experiences in the Spanish Civil War and began working on *Homage to Catalonia*, which would be published by Secker & Warburg in April 1938.

In March, he fell ill with tuberculosis and was admitted to Preston Hall Sanatorium in Kent, where he spent six months and began writing a domestic diary. Once he had left the sanatorium, he visited his mother at Southwold before traveling to Morocco with his wife in September. There, he started his next novel, *Coming Out for Air*, the draft of which was finished in January 1939. In March he sailed to Britain and typed the manuscript for the novel during the journey to deliver it to Gollancz upon his arrival, and it was published in June. It was in June when he traveled to Southwold to stay with his father, who was terminally ill and died four days after he had arrived. Orwell kept writing for several journals such as *Adelphi*, *New English Weekly,* or *Left Forum* and planned to write a long novel which would have to be published in three parts. Nevertheless, the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 prevented him from writing for some years, although he still wrote some reviews, articles, and essays such as *Inside the Whale* (1940) or *The Lion and the Unicorn* (1941). He also moved to London joined the British Broadcasting Corporation as a talk assistant and producer in the Indian Section of the Eastern Service.

In March 1943, his mother passed away in New End Hospital, Hampstead, and Orwell spent her last days with her. He then resigned from BBC to take a post as literary editor of *Tribune* in London. It was in November when he resumed his interest in writing a novel and began one of the most famous political satires of the century: *Animal Farm*. It was the first time he "tried, with full consciousness of what [he] was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole" (Orwell, 1946). Despite finishing the novel in February 1944, it was not published until August 1945 by Secker & Warburg after being rejected by Gollancz, Cape, and Faber and Faber.

In March 1945, his wife Eileen O'Shaughnessy had to undergo a hysterectomy operation but died while she was under anesthesia. Orwell immediately moved to London, and then traveled to France, Germany, and Austria from April to May as a war correspondent for the journal *Observer*. He also published articles and reviews of other literary works in *Manchester Evening News*, *Leader Magazine*, *Partisan Review*, or

Evening Standard. It was not until August 1946, when he gave up journalism, that he began writing his pinnacle work under the title *The Last Man in Europe*. He published some important essays right before concentrating on the novel, such as 'Politics and the English Language' (1946) or 'Why I Write' (1946). In 1947, he requested Victor Gollancz to terminate his contract, and then signed a further contract with Secker & Warburg.

Orwell became increasingly ill with lung problems during September and October but managed to finish the first draft of his novel in November. In December, he was finally admitted to Hairmyres Hospital, Glasgow, where he was finally diagnosed with tuberculosis. In May 1948, he began the second draft of the novel, which was finished in November after he had left the hospital. In a letter to his publisher Warburg, Orwell explained that he hesitated between the titles *The Last Man in Europe* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*[8], and Warburg recommended him to choose the latter. The manuscript of the novel was posted and typed in December.

In January 1949, he was admitted to Cotswold Sanatorium, Gloucester, due to his deteriorating health, and stayed there until September. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was finally published in June, being a complete success and receiving favorable reviews. In September, he was transferred to University College Hospital, London, where he married his second wife Sonia Brownell. He was planning to travel to a Swiss sanatorium in January 1950 but died of pulmonary tuberculosis. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was his last published work, but it had and still has a great impact and influence not just in contemporary literature but in present-day society.

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[8] Letter to his publisher, Frederic Warburg, on 22nd October 1948 (cf. *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*. Volume IV. Edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus. London: Secker & Warburg, 1968, p.448). It should be considered that in the last part of the novel, O'Brien says "if you are a man, Winston, you are the last man" (Orwell, 2021: 286), clearly showing Orwell's original idea for the title.

4. *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR*, THE POLITICAL DYSTOPIA *PAR EXCELLENCE* OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is an exceptionally ambitious literary work. The Tehran Conference[9] in 1944 inspired the author to discuss the result of dividing the world into "zones of influence"[10]. This novel is a political dystopia which criticizes totalitarianism and explores the devastating consequences of a totalitarian government for society:

> My starting point is always a feeling of partisanship, a sense of injustice. When I sit down to write a book, I do not say to myself, 'I am going to produce a work of art'. I write it because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention, and my initial concern is to get a hearing. (Orwell, 1946)

George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*[11] are considered to be the dystopian masterpieces of the twentieth century, offering a warning about the dangers of an all-powerful government. It was not Orwell's intention, however, to predict or anticipate the future:

> The society I depict in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* will not necessarily come about. But allowing for the fact that the book is a satire, meaning that it's an exaggeration to make a point, something quite like [the society it depicts] could come about. I set the story in Britain to show that English-speaking countries are not above happenings of this kind: that totalitarianism, if not fought against, can triumph anywhere. It's a warning, not a prophecy. (qtd. in Palmer)[12]

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[9] The Tehran Conference was a meeting between Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill during the Second World War. The opening of a second front against Germany was discussed and finally approved (cf. Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Tehran Conference". Encyclopædia Britannica).

[10] Letter to Roger Senhouse, on 26th December 1948 (cf. *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*. Volume IV. Edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus. London: Secker & Warburg, 1968, p.460).

[11] Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. 1932. Introduction by Margaret Atwood and David Bradshaw. London: Vintage Classics, 1994; Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World Revisited*. 1958. Introduction by David Bradshaw. London: Vintage Classics, 2004.

[12] George Orwell was interviewed by Scott Palmer for Business Software Review after the publication of his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The information given in this interview was already discussed by Orwell himself in a letter to Francis A. Henson on 16th June (The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell. Volume IV. Edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus. London: Secker & Warburg, 1968, p.460).

It is set in the city of London in 1984 and narrates the story of Winston Smith, a revolutionary worker who revolted against the Party and its leader, the Big Brother. His prohibited relationship with Julia, his coworker, and his ideas against the Party led them to a tragic ending dominated by the loss of individual freedom and humanity.

The world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is divided into three superstates: Eurasia, Eastasia, and Oceania[13]. It is in London, the capital city of Airstrip One in the superstate of Oceania, where the story takes place. Its government consists of a sole party called Ingsoc (abbreviation for English Socialism), whose leader is the Big Brother. Emmanuel Goldstein, also called 'the enemy of the people', is said to have been a member of the Party but finally betrayed them and escaped. He is said to be the leader of the Brotherhood, a secret organization against Ingsoc, but is, in fact, a propaganda tool used to keep the country united and prevent revolution. Furthermore, the Party is supported by four ministries: the Ministry of Peace (Minipax), the Ministry of Plenty (Miniplenty), the Ministry of Truth (Minitrue), and the Ministry of Love (Miniluv)[14]. The purpose of the ministries is to perpetuate war, manage the economy, rewrite history to control society, and promote the doctrines of the Party. The official slogans of the Party, which are inscribed on the building of the Ministry of Truth, reflect the ideology of Ingsoc: "war is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength" (Orwell, 2021: 6; pt. I, ch. 1)[15].

The telescreen, a device which captures both audio and image, is used to control every single citizen and keep them from revolting against the Party. The Big Brother is always watching[16]:

> The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by the telescreen […]. There was, of course, no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. (Orwell, 2021: 4-5; pt. I, ch. 1)

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[13] Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. 1949. Introduction by Fran Fabriczki. London: Collins Classics, 2021, pt. II, ch. 9.

[14] Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. 1949. Introduction by Fran Fabriczki. London: Collins Classics, 2021, pt. I, ch. 1.

[15] The paradoxical and contradictory slogans of the Party are parodies of the morality of modern politicians.

[16] The main slogan of the Party was 'Big Brother is watching you'. It first appears in pt. I, ch. 1, and it is repeated several times throughout the novel.

Citizens who commit *crimethink* are prosecuted by the Thought Police and are later taken to Room 101, the torture chamber used by members of the Party to force *crimethinkers* to confess their crimes. Although it is mentioned several times throughout the novel, it is only described once by O'Brien:

> 'You asked me once,' said O'Brien, 'what was in Room 101. I told you that you knew the answer already. Everyone knows it. The thing that is in Room 101 is the worst thing in the world.' (Orwell, 2021: 300; pt. III, ch. 5)

The Orwellian society presented in this novel is therefore based on two main principles, which are the veto of individualism and the manipulation of society. One of the most interesting aspects is the use of language, which constitutes a subtle but effective way "to exert another level of control over their citizens (Orwell, 2021: IX).

5. NEWSPEAK, THE DYSTOPIAN LANGUAGE

5.1. Introduction to the issue

Newspeak is described by Orwell in the appendix called *The Principles of Newspeak*[17]. It is the official language of Oceania and provides the followers of Ingsoc with a means of expression for the new vision of the world.

The main characteristics of Newspeak are the interchangeability between different parts of speech and the regularity of its grammar[18]. Any word could be used either as a noun or a verb; adjectives were formed by adding *-full*, and adverbs were formed by adding '-wise'. Plurals were made by adding *-s* or *-es*, and irregular plurals were suppressed. Comparative and superlative adjectives were simplified, as the forms 'more… than' and 'the most…' were also suppressed, remaining the regular forms *-er* and *-est*. Derivational affixes such as *un-* for the negation, or *plus-* and *doubleplus-* for emphasis are quite common in Newspeak and can be added to any word. Inflectional affixes for the past simple and the past participle were simplified, adding *-ed* to form both. Nevertheless, there were some classes of words which remained irregular in their inflection: pronouns, relatives, adjectives, and auxiliary verbs.

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[17] Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* 1949. Introduction by Fran Fabriczki. London: Collins Classics, 2021, pp.317-330.
[18] See Appendix I for a concise compilation of Newspeak affixes.

Another relevant aspect of Newspeak is described in the novel by Syme, a philologist who is working on the Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak Dictionary:

'You think, I dare say, that our chief job is inventing new words. But not a bit of it! We're destroying words—scores of them, hundreds of them, every day. We're cutting the language down to the bone. […] It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words.' (Orwell, 2021: 54; pt. I, ch. 5)

The restriction of grammar and vocabulary of Newspeak is actually drawn from the idea of Controlled Natural Languages (CNLs), which are based on natural languages but are simplified to reduce ambiguity and complexity[19]. The particular model followed by Orwell when constructing the principles of his fictional dystopian language was the system of Basic English. Basic (British American Scientific International Commercial) English is a minimal language designed by English linguist Charles Kay Ogden in the 1930s not only to facilitate English learning but also to be used as an international auxiliary language. Basic English is based on the reduction of the lexicon and the elimination of syntactical and morphological irregularities[20]. Besides, there are quite few verbs in Basic English, and the lexicon refers chiefly to visible objects of physical reality to "prevent lying and promote clarity of expression" (Škaroupka, 2018: 39). According to Ogden, only 850 core words for everyday life are needed in Basic English, although an additional 150-word list for everyday work and a 250-word list for a general field such as science would be useful[21]. By the same token, the number of verbs in Newspeak is limited, and its vocabulary is divided into three different classes[22]:

The A vocabulary describes specific objects, simple thoughts, and physical and functional concepts. Although these words are present in modern English, their number was greatly reduced, so it was impossible to use this vocabulary for literary purposes or intellectual discussions.

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[19] Davis, Brian. *Controlled Natural Languages*. *5th International Workshop, CNL 2016*, *Aberdeen, UK, July 25-27, 2016, Proceedings.* Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2016.

[20] Courtine, Jean Jacques, et al. 'A Brave New Language: Orwell's Invention of "Newspeak" in 1984'. SubStance, Vol. 15, No. 2, Issue 50, 1986, pp.69-74. www.jstor.org/stable/3684756

[21] Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations. *George Orwell's 1984*. Edited and with an introduction by Harold Bloom. Philadephia: Chelsea House, 2007; pp.101-102.

[22] Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* 1949. Introduction by Fran Fabriczki. London: Collins Classics, 2021; pp.318-327.

The B vocabulary includes compound words, which are formed by a noun and a verb, with political purposes[23]. This group covers words such as *goodthink*, *crimethink*, or *prolefeed*. The formation of these words is related to the tendency to use abbreviations in totalitarian governments, obscuring their actual meaning; for instance, "nazi" ('national-socialist'), or "Comintern" ('communist international'). The largest part of these words are euphemisms; the *Minipax* is actually the Ministry of War, and *joycamp* was a forced-labor camp. It should be mentioned that some words associated with Oldspeak such as "free", "justice" or "morality" were retained, although they were disposed of their heretical meanings.

The C vocabulary includes supplementary words related to scientific and technical terms. These words are not part of daily or political speeches and were disposed of undesirable meanings.

It should be pointed out that, even though Newspeak was meant to be a parody, Orwell was not a detractor of this language and even considered it useful to correct the prefabricated and ambiguous language of politicians:

> One argument for Basic English is that by existing side by side with Standard English it can act as a sort of corrective to the oratory of statesmen and publicists. High-sounding phrases, when translated into Basic, are often deflated in a surprising way. […] In Basic, I am told, you cannot make a meaningless statement without its being apparent that it is meaningless—which is quite enough to explain why so many schoolmasters, editors, politicians and literary critics object to it. (Orwell, 1944)

As previously mentioned, Newspeak is replete with euphemisms, which are "indirect or evasive expressions used to avoid direct mention of unpleasant or taboo ideas" (McGregor, 2009: 98), and abbreviations. It should come as no surprise considering that the use of these word formation processes is quite common in the political domain, where language plays a major role especially from the twentieth century onwards[24]. Expressions

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[23] See Appendix II for a concise compilation of Newspeak vocabulary.
[24] In his essay 'Politics and the English Language' (1946), Orwell acknowledges that "in our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible. […] political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness" (14) as it "is designed to make lies sound truthful" (Orwell, 2013: 18).

such as "Comintern" can be uttered without thinking, while its original meaning ('communist international') involves an almost unavoidable ideological stance. Likewise, the names of the ministries as well as other words such as *joycamp* or *prolefeed* are illustrative examples of this practice. Accordingly, Newspeak "is itself a kind of euphemism" (Orwell, 2013: 15) and a prefabricated language which may be unintelligible for citizens who are not acquainted with it:

> It was almost impossible to distinguish a single word. […] Whatever it was, you could be certain that every word of it was pure orthodoxy, pure Ingsoc. […] Winston had a curious feeling that this was not a real human being but some kind of dummy. It was not the man's brain that was speaking, it was his larynx... it was a noise uttered in unconsciousness, like the quacking of a duck[25]. (Orwell, 2021: 57; pt. I, ch. 5)

Regarding prefabrication, Newspeak could also be seen as the hybrid jargon of the Party, since it consists of "words [which are] known in advance of utterance" (Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations, 2007: 98). It is also related to power and privilege, as the members of Ingsoc are the only people who fully understand the language, while the proletariat uses Newspeak words without actually comprehending them.

The main purpose of Newspeak is, therefore, to diminish the range of thought and automatize the thinking process through language itself and the use of propaganda, a recurrent and powerful tool for this purpose:

> 'Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. […] Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller. […] The Revolution will be complete when the language is perfect. Newspeak is Ingsoc and Ingsoc is Newspeak.' (Orwell, 2021: 55; pt. I, ch. 5)

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[25] Orwell, George. *Politics and The English Language*. 1946. London: Penguin Books, 2013; pp.13-14.

5.2.1. Linguistic relativity and linguistic determinism

American linguists Benjamin Lee Whorf and Edward Sapir were the main advocates of the theories of linguistic relativity and linguistic determinism, which provide an in-depth examination of the relationship between language and thought.

On the one hand, linguistic determinism is the strong version of the frequently called "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis", and it argues that language determines thought, limiting and restricting knowledge and perception of reality. However, almost no linguist has ever supported the strong theory, but it did motivate research since it seemed obvious that there was at least some influence from language to the perception and cognition of reality. According to Steven Pinker, "the idea that thought is the same thing as language is an example of what can be called a conventional absurdity" (1994: 57).

On the other hand, linguistic relativity is the weak version of the aforementioned hypothesis. The data gathered by Whorf during several studies of American Indian languages led him and Sapir to defend that particular structures and languages could influence thought:

> It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. (qtd. in Whorf, 1956: 134)

> We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds-and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way-an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. (Whorf, 1956: 213)

In accordance with this hypothesis, "each language embodies and perpetuates a particular world view" (Brown et al., 1954: 454), so speakers of different languages are considered to experience and classify the world each in their own manner. The lack of accurate translations from a particular language to another or even the absence of an equivalent word supports this idea. An illustrative example is found in the Eskimo lexicon, which distinguishes at least three varieties of snow which do not have a direct translation into English. English speakers are able to differentiate these three kinds of snow if explained in their mother tongue, but a longer string of words would be needed to refer to and describe them. Leonard W. Doob suggested that the length of words denoted the frequency of such words in speech; the shorter a word is, the more frequent it will be. Besides, its frequency determines the importance of that element in culture and the availability for its speakers[26]. The semantic structure of a language is directly related to the perceptual structure of its speakers and may influence thought. Consequently, a close relationship between linguistic categories and conceptual categories is established, and it led to the idea that linguistics could affect mental processes unconsciously.

The first principle of this hypothesis is the presumption that the structural categories of a language are symbolic, so differences in language structure may affect the perception of these categories. After much research, Whorf found that, although structural categories in Indo-European languages have no conspicuous differences, in the Hopi language, for instance, the concepts of time and space are altered:

> The Hopi language is seen to contain no words, grammatical forms, constructions or expressions that refer directly to what we call "time" or to past, present, or future, or to enduring or lasting, or to motion as kinematic rather than dynamic (i.e. as a continuous translation in space and time rather than as an exhibition of dynamic effort in a certain process), or that even refer to space in such a way as to exclude that element of extension or existence that we call "time" […] Hence, the Hopi language contains no reference to "time", either explicit or implicit. (Whorf, 1956: 57)

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[26] Brown, Roger H, et al. 'A study in language and cognition'. The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, no 49, 1954, pp. 454-462. commons.trincoll.edu/wmace/files/2016/04/Brown_Lenneberg.pdf

The second principle is the presumption that a particular language may give rise to a specific cognitive structure. As words have symbolic properties and refer to the environment of the speaker, "language can cause a cognitive structure" (Brown et al., 1954: 457). The influence of language on thought may be explained through the existence of lexical and symbolic differences, and the concept of 'codability' may clarify the relationship between these differences and the cognitive structure of the speaker: "this difference of codability will be manifest in only one way—environmental distinctions expressed lexically in one language are expressed with word combinations in another language" (Brown et al., 1954: 458).

Linguist and academic Franz Boas was concerned with language as a reflection of culture and the relationship between language and thought. Boas acknowledged that languages classify experience for the sake of communication, and "different languages classify experience differently" (Lucy, 1992: 12). It has been demonstrated that the same experience is not represented in the same manner in different languages, which supports this hypothesis. It should be considered that "linguistic phenomena are unconscious in character, apparently because of their highly automatic production" (Lucy, 1992: 13). The main implication of this statement is that, even though both linguistic and cultural phenomena are unconscious in origin, linguistic classifications do not "give rise to secondary reasoning and to re-interpretations" (qtd. in Lucy, 1992: 13).

Furthermore, linguist and anthropologist Edward Sapir also examined the relationship between language and thought. Although language is an inherent characteristic of human nature and could be considered the product of human instinct, its development could lead to complex thoughts. Therefore, Sapir concluded that language could in fact influence thought, as a highly complex thought process requires a highly developed linguistic system:

> We may assume that language arose pre-rationally—just how and on what precise level of mental activity we do not know—but we must not imagine that a highly developed system of speech symbols worked itself out before the genesis of distinct concepts and of thinking, the handling of concepts. We must rather imagine that thought processes set in, as a kind of psychic overflow, almost at the beginning of linguistic expression; further, that the concept, once defined, necessarily reacted on the life of its linguistic symbol, encouraging further linguistic growth. We see this complex process of the interaction of language and

thought actually taking place under our eyes. The instrument makes possible the product, the product refines the instrument. The birth of a new concept is invariably foreshadowed by a more or less strained or extended use of old linguistic material; the concept does not attain to individual and independent life until it has found a distinctive linguistic embodiment. (Sapir, 1921: 6)

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, "Orwell puts into the minds of the regime an extreme version of the theory which is known in modern linguistics as linguistic determinism" (Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations, 2007: 99). The influence of this theory and its weak version is seen in the structure of Newspeak and its purpose, which is to diminish the range of thought and automatize the thinking process, as stated before.

First and foremost, according to the 'Sapir-Whorf hypothesis' "each language embodies and perpetuates a particular world view" (Brown et al., 1954: 454). Following up on this idea, Newspeak was meant to replace Oldspeak (or Standard English) and "provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc" (Orwell, 2021: 317). The society proposed by Orwell was quite different from that of actual England, so a new wide variety of concepts was needed. Subsequently, the citizens and followers of Ingsoc would only have Newspeak words available to classify and codify nature and their environment. Moreover, the categories of Newspeak are different from those of Oldspeak. Language is arbitrary and symbolic and so are its structural categories, so any variation in one of them may affect the other and alter the perception of reality.

Second, the dissociation of language from thought and its automatization has a clear negative impact on the knowledge of reality. Thought and language are considered to be intertwined, and thus cannot be isolated; however, several linguists have already discussed the possibility of detaching one from the other:

Thought and language form so close a union that we must think of them as being identical, in spite of the fact that we can separate them artificially. Owing to this identity, access to one of the two will open nearly equal access to the other. (qtd. in Gumperz, 1996: 21)

The simplification of Newspeak facilitates the development of an unconscious use of language, which hinders the thinking process. Other modes of thought were made impossible since there were no words available to express concepts not gathered in Newspeak:

> They dissociate thought and language, turning the speaker into an unconscious machine that is not expressing thought, and indeed, through the deadness and the purely symbolic character of his language, is prevented from thinking. (Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations, 2007: 99)

The main purpose of Ingsoc was to "consciously induce unconsciousness" (Orwell, 2021: 37; pt. I, ch. 5) and impose the orthodoxy of the Party with as little resistance as possible. Orthodoxy is described as a set of principles or practices that are believed to be right and most people should agree with. The followers of Ingsoc assumed that its ideology was acceptable and faithful. It was indeed impossible to question the ideology of the Party due to the unconscious use of language and the lack of words or concepts to express different beliefs. Regarding language, Orwell himself declared that "orthodoxy, of whatever colour, seems to demand a lifeless, imitative style" (2013: 13). The connection between unconsciousness and orthodoxy is mentioned by Syme in the first part of the novel: "the whole climate of thought will be different. In fact there will *be* no thought, as we understand it now. Orthodoxy means not thinking—not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness" (Orwell, 2021: 56; pt. I, ch. 5).

Ut supra diximus, linguistic production is highly automatic; people speak and listen to English on a daily basis, so it is reasonable to assume that at least some of the underlying processes are carried out unconsciously. The classification of this prefabricated language and the restricted meanings ascribed to words do not stimulate further thinking about the ideology of the party or the language itself. Interestingly enough, speakers should need a sophisticated linguistic system to develop a highly complex mental activity. Ultimately, Newspeak will prevent psychological development and affect the perception of the world by limiting and restricting the capacity to communicate and classify reality.

5.2.2. Structuralism and deconstruction

"Everything is opposition." (Saussure, 1959: 121)

Structuralism is a theoretical movement developed in Europe since the early 20th century which influenced other fields of knowledge such as philosophy, history, sociology, or literary criticism. It is concerned with language, signification, and the structure of reality. According to structuralism, everything is "the product of a system of signification" (Cuddon, 2014: 685) and is "defined by [their] place in the structure of the system" (Culler, 2002: 6). Therefore, the study of the relationship between the elements of a system should result in the understanding of the signification of the signs or codes.

In his most important work *Course in General Linguistics* (1916), Saussure postulated the study of semiology as a science concerning the linguistic sign as the basis to study "the system of rules underlying speech" (Culler, 2002: 6), so the parallelism with structuralism is quite evident. Structural linguistics is based on binary oppositions, which are a "system of language and/or thought by which two theoretical opposites are strictly defined and set off against one another but simultaneously arranged, somewhat paradoxically, in pairs" (Smith, 1996: 383-384). The idea of binary oppositions begins with the definition of the linguistic sign as a psychological and arbitrary[27] association of "a concept and a sound-image" (66) which should be better identified as "signified [*signifié*] and signifier [*signifiant*]" (Saussure, 1959: 67). The French word Saussure also distinguishes between *langue* and *parole*; *langue* refers to the actual system of language, whereas *parole* refers to both the written and spoken use of language.

The opposite concepts complement each other and provide information about the meaning of these concepts in both theory and reality. Language is therefore based on the concept of *différance*[28]:

> Difference simply means that our ability to identify an entity (such as an object, a concept, or a sound) is based on the difference we perceive between it and all other entities. For example, if we believed that all objects were the same color, we wouldn't need the word red (or blue or green) at all. Red is red only because we perceive it to be different from blue and green. According to structuralism, the

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[27] The relationship between the signified and the signifier is arbitrary, as there is no natural relationship between them.

[28] According to the concept of *différance*, linguistic signs derive meaning from the contrast with other signs.

human mind perceives difference most readily in terms of opposites, which structuralists call binary oppositions: two ideas, directly opposed, each of which we understand by means of its opposition to the other. For example, we understand up as the opposite of down, female as the opposite of male, good as the opposite of evil, black as the opposite of white, and so on" (Tyson, 2006: 213)

The binary opposition between meaning and value is directly related to the concept of *différance*. The relationship established between the signified and the signifier is usually referred to as the meaning of the sign. The value of a sign, on the contrary, "results solely from the simultaneous presence of the others" (Saussure, 1959: 114) and allows speakers to distinguish between one sign and another. Thus, the meaning of several words which are synonyms may be similar, but the value of each one of those words is quite different. Besides, "the value of a term may be modified without either its meaning or its sound being affected, solely because a neighboring term has been modified" (Saussure, 1959: 120); in other words, the alteration of a term in the structure of language may result in the modification of other adjacent terms.

Following the idea of binary oppositions, Greg Smith declares that there is always a term or concept identified as the original, and a second term "seen as the opposite of the first" (384). The second term of a binary opposition is assigned a negative connotation "simply because it isn't the first term, but it's 'other'" (384). Accordingly, "an unconscious hierarchy is set up" (Smith, 1996: 384) in which all first terms are favored and all second terms are understood as negative. *Exempli gratia*, the speaker tends to value "good" over "bad" because "good" is the primordial concept.

Structuralism is crucial when it comes to understanding the structure of Newspeak. As aforementioned, Newspeak "had been devised to meet the ideological needs of Ingsoc" (Orwell, 2021: 317), eliminating and changing words whose meaning is considered to be unnecessary or unorthodox, "cutting the language down to the bone" (Orwell, 2021: 54; pt. I, ch. 5). Orwell was probably aware of the importance of structuralist theories in linguistics since the influence of the concepts of structure, binary opposition, signification, and value can be transposed to his fictional language. A two-pronged approach will be carried out to demonstrate the influence of the structure of society in language and the influence of language in the perception of reality.

On the one hand, thought and the perception of reality are altered passively through the change in the structure of society. Structuralists acknowledge that the signification and value of linguistic signs are derived from their place in the structure of language and society. It stands to reason, then, that the change of the structure results in the displacement of the elements of the system, and in turn, the alteration of the meaning of such elements. The society depicted in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is quite different: there is a single dominant political party, Ingsoc, whose ideology must not be called into question. Intellectual and political freedom no longer existed in the structure of society and such words or concepts as "free", despite having been retained, they had been deprived of their original and old sense. The word "free" could be used in utterances such as "I am free from COVID-19" or "her face is free from imperfections", but its use was not accepted in utterances such as "everyone has the right to freedom of thought and expression". The place of the word "free" in the structure of society has been changed and so has its meaning and value for speakers. The same process could be applied to the word "equal", since the use of this word in utterances such as "all men are equal" would not be related to "politically equal" but to "having similar characteristics".

Furthermore, the slogans of the Party and the name of the ministries have an important role in the alteration of binary oppositions, since "Oldspeak's positive and pejorative words are inverted and changed into their newspeak antitheses" (Blakemore, 1984: 353). In the slogans "war is peace", "freedom is slavery", and "ignorance is strength", both terms in each slogan are assimilated in an attempt to refer to the same concept. According to the Party, war against a common enemy is needed to preserve peace, humanity is doomed to failure if they are free, and the only way to preserve strength is accepting and blindly believing the ideology of the Party. The name of the ministries operates similarly since they are identified through the opposite concept to what they refer to. The Miniluv (Ministry of Love) is in charge of promoting the doctrines of the Party and hate towards Goldstein, the Minipax (Ministry of Peace) is in charge of perpetuating war, the Miniplenty (Ministry of Plenty) is in charge of managing economic scarcity, and the Minitrue (Ministry of Truth) is in charge of concealing the truth and manipulating history to control society. Although the binary oppositions seem to be maintained, the signification and value of these concepts are altered through the idea of doublethink.

On the other hand, the Party actively modified the language spoken by society, and Newspeak vocabulary was seriously restricted through the removal of synonyms and the simplification of antonyms:

> 'Of course the great wastage is in the verbs and adjectives, but there are hundreds of nouns that can be got rid of as well. It isn't only the synonyms; there are also the antonyms. After all, what justification is there for a word which is simply the opposite of some other word? A word contains its opposite in itself.' (Orwell, 2021: 54; pt. I, ch. 5)

The purpose of removing words whose only objective is to be the antonym of another word is to remove and destroy the value we attribute to them. Synonyms may have the same meaning or signification, but the psychological perception of each word is completely different; for instance, although "happy" and "cheerful" are understood as synonyms, they are not perceived as having the same pragmatic meaning and are used in different contexts and situations. Antonyms function in the same way; even though "not happy" and "sad" are technically the antonyms of "happy", "not happy" is perceived as closer to "happy" than "sad", which is the direct opposite. A great example is also found in Newspeak: "Take 'good', for instance. If you have a word like 'good', what need is there for a word like 'bad'? 'Ungood' will do just as well" (Orwell, 2021: 54; pt. I, ch. 5). It should be analyzed the extent to which a prefix that means 'not' covers the difference between "good" and "bad". The word "ungood" is not perceived as a direct opposite of "good", being somewhat less positive than "good" but slightly more positive than "bad".

The sentence "The Big Brother is bad" cannot be uttered in Newspeak, as "bad" does not exist as a word itself and the Orwellian society would consider such an utterance as inadequate. Although the sentence "The Big Brother is ungood" could be uttered, it conveyed an evident lie and "could not have been sustained by reasoned argument, because the necessary words were not available" (Orwell, 2021: 327). Newspeak is not based on the Saussurean concept of *différance* upon which language is said to be constructed, resulting in the corruption of the meaning and value of the linguistic signs. The value of "ungood" is not quite the same as "bad", and the psychological perception and the pragmatic meaning of both words are different. Additionally, there is no favored term between "good" and "ungood" since the underlying structure of these words is not

a binary opposition, so "ungood" is not perceived as a negative second term. Therefore, it would be "near implausible to understand what 'ungood' actually implies or what its true meaning is" (Lidfors, 2020: 15) if the linguistic sign and binary opposition "bad" is eliminated.

Deconstruction is a critical movement developed in Europe since the middle of the 20th century as a response to structuralism, outlining a particular mode of analysis and criticism of texts. In her work *The Critical Difference* (1981), Barbara Johnson explained the meaning and principles of deconstructive studies:

> Deconstruction is not synonymous with destruction, however. It is in fact much closer to the original meaning of the word analysis, which etymologically means "to undo"— a virtual synonym for "to de-construct." The de-construction of a text does not proceed by random doubt or arbitrary subversion, but by the careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text itself. If anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading, it is not the text, but the claim to unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over another. A deconstructive reading is a reading that analyzes the specificity of a text's critical difference from itself. (Johnson, 2014: 5)

Following Saussure's ideas of structuralism, binary oppositions, and *différance*, the renowned philosopher Jacques Derrida developed the principles of deconstruction in his works *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences* (1966) and *Of Grammatology* (1967).

The notion of structure has assumed the existence of a center which gives meaning to the elements and ensures "that the organizing principle of the structure would limit […] the play of the structure [that] constituted on the basis of a fundamental immobility and a reassuring certitude, which itself is beyond the reach of play" (Derrida, 1978: 278-279). The implication that everything is based on a center is called logocentrism, and it has been a chief characteristic of Western society[29], to whom the idea "of a structure lacking any center represents the unthinkable itself" (Derrida, 1978: 279). Interestingly enough,

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[29] Cuddon, J. A. The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory. Revised by M. A. R. Habib. 1977. 5th ed. London: Penguin Books, 2014; p.408.

the center, despite "governing the structure, escapes structurality" (279), which is "contradictorily coherent" (Derrida, 1978: 279).

Derrida takes logocentrism even further and defines phonocentrism as the belief that speech is independent of and superior to writing since writing has no presence[30] and might lead to misunderstandings. Language is perceived as "the signifier of the signifier" (Derrida, 1997: 7) whereas writing is described as a "supplement to the spoken word" (qtd. in Derrida, 1997: 7). These pairs of concepts in which one term is the opposite of the other function through the privilege of presence over absence; "good" manifests the presence of a virtue whereas "bad" is the opposite and represents the absence of such virtue.

The violent hierarchy established by the opposition between presence and absence repeats itself through the symbolic structure of both language and reality, and the concept of the sign has been shaped with this opposition. Nevertheless, "we cannot do without the concept of the sign" (281) and isolate the positive terms without erasing the concept of *différance* upon which language is constructed, since "the opposition is systematic with the reduction" (Derrida, 1978: 281). The privilege of first terms and the supplementarity of second terms in binary oppositions are deconstructed rather than deleted by Derrida to prove that both terms are dependent on each other, and *différance* shall be necessary for the structure.

The deconstructive process thus required the existence of binary oppositions and the *différance* upon which they are based. Furthermore, "it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no center […], that it was not a fixed focus but a function" (Derrida, 1978: 280) to deconstruct the structure and reconstruct the concepts and the psychological perception of the linguistic signs.

In the light of this theoretical movement, Newspeak deconstructs the English language to achieve its purpose. This process is accomplished through the elimination of binary oppositions and *différance* along with the corruption of the psychological perception of these concepts, thus displacing the center of the structure of the language. As aforementioned, language and thought are highly related, and "access to one of the two will open nearly equal access to the other" (qtd. in Gumperz, 1996: 21), so this

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[30] According to logocentrism, people tend to value speech over writing, and presence over absence, among others.

deconstruction would result in the impossibility of Newspeak speakers to accurately perceive and discuss reality:

> We can have no direct contact, and therefore, no firsthand knowledge of the outside world. What we know is the reflection of the outside reality in our consciousness which ultimately takes the form of a linguistic sign. Thus, cognition is nothing but a linguistic phenomenon. (Shadi, 2018: 181)

6. CONCLUSIONS

"If thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought." (Orwell, 1968: 137)

George Orwell's dystopian masterpiece *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a stern warning on the hazards of totalitarian governments that manipulate society through several strategies. As aforementioned, it has been the departure point of this research paper on Newspeak and the possibility of corrupting thought by restricting language. Linguistic hypotheses and theories such as linguistic determinism, linguistic relativism, structuralism, and deconstruction have been taken into consideration *ad hoc*.

On the one hand, according to the hypothesis of linguistic relativism, not only the structure of a language does cause specific cognitive structures in its speakers, but it also reflects and perpetuates a particular viewpoint of the world. It stands to reason, then, that the alteration of the structure of a language should affect the perception of reality, since "the limits of [a] language mean the limits of [the] world" (Wittgenstein, 2002: 68). Moreover, the automatic use of language resulted in its automatization, which led to a significant simplification of the mental processes required in linguistic production. The relationship between language and thought is evident, so "access to one of the two will open nearly equal access to the other" (qtd. in Gumperz, 1996: 21), and Orwell was well aware of it when he conceived the principles of Newspeak: the alteration of language would result in the change of the perception of reality of its speakers.

On the other hand, the linguistic theories of structuralism and deconstruction provide a thorough basis for the analysis and comprehension of Newspeak. Language is considered to be based on binary oppositions which complement one another and provide a center for the linguistic structure. By the same token, binary oppositions and reality are based on the concept of *différance* (*Course in General Linguistics*, 1916) since human beings are able to understand their surroundings through the constant opposition between

ideas or concepts. These binary oppositions establish a violent hierarchy in which first terms are perceived positively whereas second terms are considered to be negative. Newspeak displaces the center of the structure of language by the corruption of binary oppositions; synonyms and antonyms are removed or simplified, thus resulting in the loss of the value and signification of words and language along with the dismantling of its hierarchy. The signification of words whose meaning could be considered unorthodox was altered owing to the change in the organization of society. Besides, the displacement of the center of the structure of the language may be directly related to the displacement of the center of the structure of thought.

The importance of Newspeak has often gone unnoticed by researchers and academics in the past years, but it has been gaining great popularity in modern times. The use and purpose of language within a totalitarian government in the novel should not be overlooked or downplayed, considering that Orwell proposes an interesting approach to the research question hereof. Philosophers such as George Steiner have stated that anything which has no name in a language does not exist[31] – at least for the speaker –, so it stands to reason that Newspeak eliminates words and concepts to influence society. The unconscious use of language is another important aspect that should be considered given that not only does it automatize the linguistic production but the thinking process as well.

Therefore, it can be concluded that although language may not determine thought by all means, it cannot be questioned that it may at least have an influence. Language and thought are then connected and intertwined; however, attention should be drawn to a third factor which is equally important: the structure of society. Value and signification are not removed just by eliminating words; language is a very effective and powerful tool available to those holding political power, but other tools and strategies are required to manipulate society and maintain power.

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[31] Steiner, George. *George Steiner en diálogo con Ramin Jahanbegloo*. Madrid: Anaya y Mario Muchnik, 1994.

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9. APPENDIX I: NEWSPEAK AFFIXES[32]

Newspeak prefix	Meaning
ante-	Before
doubleplus-	Greater emphasis
down-	Down
plus-	Emphasis
post-	After
un-	Negative
up-	Up

Newspeak suffix	Meaning
-ed	Past simple / past participle
-er	Comparative adjective
-est	Superlative adjective
-ful	Adjective
-s / -es	Plural
-wise	Adverb

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[32] Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* 1949. Introduction by Fran Fabriczki. London: Collins Classics, 2021, pp.317-330.

10. APPENDIX II: NEWSPEAK VOCABULARY[33]

Newspeak word	Meaning
artsem	Artificial Insemination
bb	Big Brother
bellyfeel	A blind, enthusiastic acceptance
blackwhite	The ability to believe and know that black is white, and more, to know that black is white, and to forget that one has ever believed the contrary
crimestop	The faculty of stopping short, as though by instinct, at the threshold of any dangerous thought
crimethink	To question the sacred principles of Ingsoc
dayorder	Order of the day
dep	Department
doublethink	The mutability of the past, and the denial of objective reality
duckspeak	To quack like a duck or to make articulate speech issue from the larynx without involving the higher brain centres at all
facecrime	To wear an improper expression on your face
Ficdep	Fiction Department
goodsex	Chastity
goodthink	To be naturally orthodox and incapable of thinking a bad thought
Ingsoc	English Socialism

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[33] Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* 1949. Introduction by Fran Fabriczki. London: Collins Classics, 2021.

joycamp	Forced-labour camp
Miniluv	Ministry of Love
Minipax	Ministry of Peace
Miniplenty	Ministry of Plenty
Minitrue	Ministry of Truth
newspeak	The official language of Oceania
oldspeak	Standard English
ownlife	Individualism and eccentricity
Pornosec	The sub-section of the Fiction Department which turned out cheap pornography for distribution among the proles
prolefeed	The rubbishy entertainment and spurious news which the Party handed out to the masses
Recdep	Records Department
ref	Refer
sec	Section
sexcrime	Sexual immorality
speakwrite	A machine used to write as one speaks
Teledep	Teleprogrammes Department
telescreen	A device which received and transmitted simultaneously
Thinkpol	The Thought Police
unperson	A dead and abolished person or the result of being vaporized
upsub	To submit to higher authority
vaporized	To be removed from the registers or the act of becoming an unperson

11. APPENDIX III: NEWSPEAK FRAGMENTS[34] AND TRANSLATIONS[35]

Fragment 1

> times 17.3.84 bb speech malreported africa rectify
>
> times 19.12.83 forecasts 3 yp 4th quarter 83 misprints verify current issue
>
> times 14.2.84 miniplenty malquoted chocolate rectify
>
> times 3.12.83 reporting bb dayorder doubleplusungood refs unpersons rewrite fullwise upsub antefiling (Orwell, 2021: 41; pt. I, ch. 4)

Big Brother's speech about Africa in *The Times* of 17th March 1984 is incorrectly written. It should be rectified.

In the forecasts in *The Times* of 19th December 1983, there are 83 errors about the Fourth Third-Year Plan. It should be corroborated.

The reporting of the Ministry of Plenty about chocolate rations in *The Times* of 14th February 1984 is incorrectly written. It should be rectified.

The reporting of Big Brother's order of the day in *The Times* of 3rd December 1983 is extremely bad because it refers to non-existent people. Rewrite it in full and submit it to higher authorities before filing it.

Fragment 2

> Items one comma five comma seven approved fullwise stop suggestion contained item six doubleplus ridiculous verging crimethink cancel stop unproceed constructionwise antegetting plusfull estimates machinery overheads stop end message. (Orwell, 2021: 181; pt. II, ch. 8)

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[34] Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* 1949. Introduction by Fran Fabriczki. London: Collins Classics, 2021.

[35] The translations of these fragments are personal translations.

The items one, five, and seven were fully approved. The suggestion contained in item six is extremely ridiculous and on the verge of thoughtcrime. Cancel it. Do not proceed with the construction before getting full estimation of overheads.