

SPEAKING THE UNDENIABLE: A SPEECH ACT THEORY ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE AND POWER IN GEORGE ORWELL'S *1984*

Diana Alexandra Avram (Șandru)* 
1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia, Romania

Abstract

This research paper aims to analyse George Orwell's *1984* through linguistic lenses, specifically through the dual frameworks of *Speech Act Theory* and Gricean Pragmatics. Starting from the hypothesis that the novel portrays a totalitarian regime that exerts control not only through surveillance and oppression but through the systematic manipulation of language itself, this paper analyses selected utterances from the novel in order to explore how Orwellian language delivers speech acts, such as assertives, declaratives, and directives, as either tools of resistance or instruments of ideological domination. Based on the work of J.L. Austin and John Searle, the article demonstrates how illocutionary acts in *1984* often fail their felicity conditions under oppressive conditions, while others operate as coercive performatives backed by institutional power. In parallel, Grice's *Cooperative Principle* is used to convey how the Party's discourse repeatedly violates conversational maxims, particularly those of Quality and Relation, in order to destabilise truth and create cognitive dissonance among citizens. Through detailed close readings of selected representative passages, the article reasons that Orwell's dystopia reveals the fragility of meaningful communication in a world where both speaking and understanding are subject to political control. The study ultimately highlights how language, in *1984*, became not only a means of expression but also a contested terrain of power.

Keywords: George Orwell; *1984*; Speech Act Theory; Cooperative Principle; Language and Power.

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1 Introduction

Language lies at the heart of George Orwell's *1984*, serving as both a vehicle for thought and a psychological battleground where truth, power, and identity are contested.

*Corresponding author.

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Orwell's dystopian world is characterised by practices of manipulation, from Newspeak's constructed language to the Party's paradoxical slogans. The lack of speech freedom became the rule, and more than that, speech became both the target and the instrument of totalitarian control. Furthermore, in an Orwellian society, words no longer accurately depict reality as it is; instead, they are used as a means of deception. The use of language is intended to contribute to maintaining the appearance of a typical society, even though it is used only to reshape it and ultimately erase its individuality. Hence, *1984* invites both political and philosophical interpretations, as well as rigorous linguistic analysis.

This article proposes an interpretative framework that draws upon two interrelated traditional theories in the philosophy of language: Speech Act Theory, developed by J.L. Austin (1962) and John R. Searle (1969), and Gricean Pragmatics, grounded in H.P. Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle and conversational maxims.

Furthermore, these theories facilitate a close analysis of how Orwell's fictional world weaponises and undermines communicative acts. While Speech Act Theory provides the instruments to examine what is accomplished through language, whether by asserting, declaring, or commanding, Gricean pragmatics focuses on how language is interpreted and whether communication adheres to or violates shared conversational norms.

The main argument of this analysis is that *1984* systematically portrays the erosion of genuine and meaningful communication through the subversion of both illocutionary acts (what speakers intend to convey with their words) and conversational expectations (how listeners interpret what is said). From almost imperceptible utterances, such as Winston Smith's furtive diary entries, to O'Brien's enforced contradictions, Orwell depicts a society where the freedom to speak truthfully or freely is not only restricted; it is linguistically almost inconceivable. To this extent, the article draws an analysis of a selection of slogans from the *1984* novel, focusing on emblematic speech events. Each sample is examined through the dual lens of Speech Act Theory and Gricean Pragmatics, allowing for a nuanced interpretation of how the regime controls what can be said (specifically, *what is allowed to be said*) and what can be heard, meant, and understood. The outcome presents a dual perspective on language, built on different pillars, both as a site of subjugation and a fragile instrument of resistance.

2 Literature Review

Over the years, the novel has been the subject of extensive scholarly attention, particularly concerning its treatment of language as an instrument of political control. Critics across various fields analysed Orwell's dystopia from a linguistic perspective, often through the lenses of structuralism, political theory, critical discourse analysis (CDA), semiotics, and others. This paper aims to emphasise that the manipulation of language in *1984* is both ideological and foundational to the

Party's totalitarian power. Moreover, language should be perceived as the principal mechanism of ideological control rather than a means of communication.

Previous studies have primarily examined the novel through semantic, structuralist, or ideological lenses, with considerable attention paid to the Party's manipulation of language through devices such as Newspeak, euphemisms, contradictions, and the strategic reduction of vocabulary.

A prevalent framework in previous research is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (1956), which states that language shapes thought according to the structural differences that appear between natural languages. Scholars such as Fowler (1979, 1995) and Hodge (1979) have linked Newspeak to Whorfian determinism, suggesting that Orwell's linguistic invention aims to prevent dissent by eliminating the conceptual resources necessary to formulate resistance. Alternatively, as Orwell (1946, para. 16) said in his essay *Politics and the English Language*, "But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought. A bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation, even among people who should and do know better." Furthermore, Orwell (1946) has guided interpretations of the novel's political-linguistic critique. In this essay, Orwell also identifies euphemism, abstraction, and imprecision as the tools of political deception.

The control of the Party is manifested through the implementation of an authoritarian regime, not only over individuals' actions but also over how they think and perceive the inner and outer world. Its power lies in reshaping reality itself, compelling individuals to accept falsehoods as truth, even when those falsehoods directly contradict their own experiences, or to accept just their version of truth, without questioning anything. This dynamic can also be observed in the concept of "manufactured consent." Initially introduced by Walter Lippmann (1922) in his work, *Public Opinion*, and later developed by Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman (1988, 2002), the concept suggests that in contemporary democracies, public approval for policies is not organically developed. Instead, it is carefully engineered by powerful institutions, such as governments, media, and corporate interests, through strategic control of information and persuasive messaging. In both cases, the manipulation of perception becomes a tool of domination.

On the same note, Mikhail Bakhtin stated the argument that "language" indicates an ideology or system of belief, considering that languages are "specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualising the world in words, specific world views." (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 291–292). Therefore, language is the most efficient code to de-programme or to programme the individual to act regarding the *new rule*, or better said, to behave.

However, despite the richness of studies on Orwellian language from different angles, not many studies have applied pragmatic frameworks, such as Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) or Gricean Pragmatics (Grice, 1975), to Orwell's 1984 text.

The concept of speech acts was first introduced by Austin (1962) in his seminal work *How to Do Things with Words*, where he argued that language is not only used to convey information but also to perform actions. Building on Austin's

foundational ideas, Searle (1969) expanded the theory by categorising speech acts into distinct types based on their communicative function. According to this framework, an utterance is not intended to serve only as a vehicle for expressing thoughts. However, it can actually constitute an action in itself, whether by the speaker or by eliciting a response from the listener.

The main principle of speech act theory is that every utterance carries an intended function, which may be explicit or implied. For instance, when a person says, “The lights are still on in the conference room,” the surface meaning appears to be a simple observation. Nevertheless, depending on the context, the underlying intention may be to ask someone to turn them off, to signal that a meeting is still ongoing, or to subtly criticise someone’s negligence, such as leaving the lights on when one has left. Moreover, Searle (1979) identifies five major categories of speech acts: *representatives* (statements that convey belief or describe reality), *directives* (attempts to get the listener to do something), *commissives* (commitments to future actions), *expressives* (expressions of psychological states), and *declaratives* (utterances that bring about a change in the external world through speech itself).

Popescu (2008, p. 705) states that speech acts with an emotional dimension, particularly *expressives* and *assertives*, can serve as powerful instruments for signalling political allegiance, ideological stance, or affective proximity to a political figure or group. Therefore, in the context of 1984, where a single party dominates, the result of such acts is that they perform a communicative function, exclusively providing mechanisms of alignment or submission to Party authority.

While speech act theory focuses on the intentional function of utterances, Grice (1975) extended the study of meaning in interaction by introducing the Cooperative Principle and the concept of conversational implicature. Grice (1975, pp. 44–46) postulated that effective communication depends on a set of shared conversational norms, which he outlined in four maxims: *Quantity* (be as informative as necessary), *Quality* (be truthful), *Relation* (be relevant), and *Manner* (be clear and orderly).

Moreover, Grice admitted that speakers often flout these maxims, not with the intentional purpose to confuse the interlocutors, but to convey implied meanings. This concept, already well-known as implicature, occurs whenever the literal meaning of an utterance differs from what is actually intended, and the listener is expected to infer the intended meaning based on the context. For example, if someone remarks, “That’s a wonderful idea” in a sarcastic tone during a failed proposal meeting, they are obviously flouting the maxim of Quality to signal criticism rather than praise.

In political and persuasive discourse, including slogans, implicature plays an essential role. Slogans convey the impression of saying fewer and simpler things, often conveying less than they mean and relying heavily on shared social and ideological assumptions to communicate more than is explicitly stated. Thus, Grice’s theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how language functions indirectly or implicitly, yet effectively, in real-world communication. Therefore, the present study addresses that research gap by applying a dual framework of Speech

Act Theory and Grice's Cooperative Principle, arguing that Orwell's novel dramatises ideological speech and the collapse of the conditions that make language meaningful.

3 Research Methodology

This paper adopts a qualitative, interpretive methodology grounded in the fields of pragmatics and the philosophy of language. It applies Speech Act Theory, as developed by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), alongside Grice's Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975), in order to analyse how utterances in 1984 express not only the content of the message but also convey the ideological principles of the message. The research methodology focuses on close textual analysis of a selection of the most well-known slogans used in the novel, viewed through the lenses of their illocutionary force, felicity conditions, and pragmatic structure.

The current research started from the hypothesis that Orwellian language acts not simply as a vehicle for expressing control, but as a performative mechanism through which obedience is enacted, truth is destabilised, and dissent is thought to be (un)impossible. This hypothesis is explored by analysing how slogans used in various conditions/contexts in the novel adhere to or violate the conditions required for successful communication, especially concerning Searle's classification of speech acts and Grice's four maxims (Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner).

On one hand, six excerpts have been selected for detailed analysis in this study, each carefully chosen to reflect the pragmatic, thematic, and structural concerns paramount to Orwell's 1984. The selection prioritises a range of speech act types, drawing on Searle's taxonomy, including assertives, expressives, directives, and declaratives, to ensure that the analysis engages with multiple illocutionary functions. For example, the Party slogans "War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength" (Orwell, 2000, p. 7) and "Big Brother is watching you." (Orwell, 2000, p. 5) function as institutional declaratives or coercive assertives, while Winston's ways of expressing an idea, such as "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four." (Orwell 2000, p. 74), is a private assertive and expressive that challenge dominant ideological discourse.

On the other hand, the selected utterances illustrate varied patterns of Gricean (non)cooperation. Some slogans flagrantly violate conversational maxims, particularly those of Quality, Relation, and Manner, in ways that foreground the Party's strategic manipulation of truth and meaning. Meanwhile, examples such as Winston's internal reflection on truth appear to maintain the cooperative principle, though often ironically or retrospectively. This range enables the study to examine not only successful communication, but also pragmatic dysfunction, failed felicity, and perlocutionary coercion under authoritarian constraints.

The selected texts are also thematically centred to Orwell's broader critique of linguistic control, *doublethink*, and ideological enforcement. From early expressions of cognitive independence ("Freedom is the freedom to say...") to final moments of capitulation ("He loved Big Brother"), each utterance is embedded in

the novel's evolving power dynamics. The corpus deliberately includes both public and private discourse, encompassing Party slogans and dissent manifestations, as well as inner thoughts and diary entries, to explore how speech acts operate differently depending on their audience, performative authority, and contextual constraints.

Finally, the slogans are distributed across the narrative arc, allowing the analysis to trace Winston Smith's shifting communicative agency from early acts of resistance to final submission. This (*un*)consciously progressive change from thinking to *doublethinking* illustrates both the ideological pressures imposed upon language users, and the erosion of communicative autonomy and sincerity over time. In selecting and analysing these texts, the study aims to foreground how Orwell's novel dramatizes the disintegration of meaningful language and how the performative violence is embedded in politically constrained discourse.

4 Results and Interpretation

According to *Cambridge Dictionary*, a slogan is “a short easily remembered phrase, especially one used to advertise an idea or a product”. Due to these characteristics, slogans are effectively used in public or political discourse. Although they may appear more commonly in commercial contexts, slogans are also typical in political rhetoric. From a Critical Discourse Analysis point of view, slogans are used as discursive tools in order to (*re*)shape the individuals' ways of thinking, propagate the ideology and maintain the balance of power in favour of institutional authority by supressing the masses' will and free thought.

Another definition of a slogan is the Safire's one: “rallying cry; catch phrase (...); a brief message that crystallises an idea, defines an issue, the best of which thrill, exhort, and inspire.” (Safire, 1978, p. 654) Moreover, a well-built slogan should have “rhyme, rhythm, or alliteration to make them memorable”. Although the real influence over people would be made even if the slogans is not written on successful writing techniques, but if they manage to “touch a chord of memory, release pent-up hatreds, or stir men's better natures.”, (Safire, 1978, p. 654) then they will truly push the buttons and mastermind the individuals will and decision. Moreover, as Newsome stated, slogans “become concise expressions of consent for a political action. By adopting a slogan, the user is offering his or her approval of the action that it defines” (Newsome, 2002, p. 22).

In other words, slogans are used as a condenser, an apparatus that condenses complex ideas into simple catchphrases loaded with ambiguous and imprecise expressions, in order to conceal factual intentions.

The current study proposes that each slogan be the subject of a dual-layered analysis. First, the illocutionary act is identified and assessed according to the contextual felicity conditions outlined by Austin and Searle. Second, each utterance is analysed for its compliance or disruption of Grice's conversational norms, with particular focus to implications, inferencing, and pragmatic failure. This combined

approach enables the study to examine how language functions or fails under constant ideological pressure, revealing both the structure and vulnerability of communication in Orwell's dystopia.

4.1 Big Brother is watching you

The most well-known Party slogan, "Big Brother is watching you", (Orwell, 2000, p. 5) functions as a concise yet ideologically loaded utterance that performs multiple speech acts simultaneously. Considering the Speech Act Theory, it can be understood primarily as an assertive statement, stating a proposition about surveillance that appears factual. However, its illocutionary force extends beyond the assertion: it also carries the weight of an implicit directive, as a constant warning for the hearer to conform, self-regulate, and avoid dissent in any way. The slogan operates with the performative authority of the state, thereby approaching the level of a declaration in Searle's terms since the utterance itself helps to construct the social reality it claims to describe. However, the slogan is not used just for informative purposes, to let citizens understand they are being watched; it institutionalises surveillance as a lived norm, thus becoming part of the control mechanism.

From a Gricean perspective, the utterance's rhetorical power emanates partly from its strategic violation of conversational maxims. It violates the Maxim of Quantity, as it offers insufficient information, failing to specify when, where, how, or by whom the surveillance occurs. This vagueness induces psychological unease or a constant state of anxiety and invites the hearer to fill in the blanks with the most threatening interpretation. Likewise, the Maxim of Manner is violated through deliberate ambiguity, whereas "watching" might mean observation, judgement, or impending punishment, with no clarification offered. The utterance maintains apparent truthfulness (Maxim of Quality), but its generalisation renders it functionally unverifiable, and therefore ideologically potent. The cumulative effect is a perlocutionary consequence, from the internalisation of surveillance to the anticipative idea of punishment, even in the *clear* absence of an observable watcher. In this manner, the goal behind the use of the slogan is fulfilled because it manages to manipulate both the *mechanics* of speech (Inner Party members) and the Outer Party members by preventing the psychological interpretations to enforce obedience, not through explicit threat, but through the implicature of omnipresent control.

4.2 WAR IS PEACE

The slogan "War is Peace" (Orwell 2000, p. 7) exemplifies Orwell's concept of doublethink, where contradictory ideas are simultaneously and forcibly accepted as being *the truth*. From the perspective of Speech Act Theory, this utterance functions both as an assertive and a declarative. As an assertive, it implies stating a factual relationship between two opposing concepts. However, it promotes an untrue fact, or more accurately, it represents the institutional imposition of a *truth* that, by standard logic, is clearly false or illogical. The Party, through this declarative act,

not only asserts a fact but performs a speech act that redefines the meaning of *peace* by associating it with war, thus manipulating reality itself within the regime.

Nevertheless, within the novel's totalitarian context, the utterance operates performatively, enacting the Party's redefinition of truth. As a declarative act, then, the slogan (re)shapes social and cognitive reality, not because it describes what is, but because the Party has the institutional authority to declare what it is. The illocutionary force is thus antithetical: it asserts a truth claim while simultaneously altering the meaning of the concepts involved. The statement does not accurately reflect reality but instead manufactures it, a hallmark of Orwellian linguistic power.

Gricean analysis reveals the extent to which the slogan violates the Cooperative Principle. It flagrantly flouts the Maxim of Quality, introducing an affirmation that is contradictory to common sense. Moreover, this slogan flouts the Maxim of Relation, because the conjunction of *war* and *peace* collapses logical distinctions necessary for a rational discourse. However, these violations are not accidental or communicative failures; instead, they are strategic manipulations developed to redesign how meaning operates. Therefore, the slogan is not meant to inform or persuade through evidence, but to train acceptance through repetition, even when, or better said, especially when the content is absurd. This pragmatic dysfunction becomes a means of control, as the hearer is forced either to embrace cognitive dissonance or face the threat of punishment by committing a *thoughtcrime*. The perlocutionary effect, then, is submission because the slogan normalises contradiction and eliminates the expectation that language must align with empirical reality.

4.3 FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

"Freedom is Slavery" is the second slogan from the tripartite core slogans of the Party's ideology. This utterance initially appears to be an assertive act, despite the failed attempt to establish a synonymic relationship between *freedom* and *slavery*, which are inherently opposite concepts. Nonetheless, considering Oceania's ideology, the slogan's illocutionary force operates in a bidirectional manner. Firstly, it redefined these main political concepts, so that the utterance is a declaration in Searle's acceptance. However, the Party formulates this paradox as an institutional truth, which, through the power of repetition and coercive practices, transforms the semantic meaning of *freedom* so that it may be merged with the concept of *slavery*. Secondly, regarding the perlocutionary force, Oceania's citizens succumbed to institutional power discourse by accepting any contradiction imposed daily through the Two Minutes Hate brainwash. As a result, the slogan achieves full felicity because of the Party's daily monopolising of citizens' communication and reactions.

An analysis from the Grice point of view reveals that the slogan follows a constant and strategic violation of the Maxim of Quality, because it claims a contradiction which cannot be perceived as either an acknowledgeable fact or a logical *truth*. Furthermore, it flouts the Maxim of Relation by suppressing the interlocutor's acceptance of the Party's (re)definition of freedom according to the

imposed ideology. It also breaches the Maxim of Manner by its oxymoronic structure, which equalises opposite terms such as *freedom* and *slavery*, thereby maintaining cognitive dissonance and reminding the citizens of how freedom can be penalised with confinement or vaporisation.

4.4 IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

Following the same ideological principle of the previously analysed slogans (4.2 & 4.3), the slogan "Ignorance is strength" as an utterance, functions both as an assertive and as a declarative act from the perspective of Searle. Similarly to the mentioned slogans, it asserts the claim that the corresponding meaning of *ignorance* is *power*, discouraging the idea of free thought, critical thinking, or questioning institutional authority and power. Due to the slogan's brevity and lack of details, the Party ensures that it cannot be accused of discouraging education or the citizens' development. However, the utterance is logically indefensible; it is still performative, because the Party does not need to try to discourage but rather imposes the Party's *approved belief* and proclaims its authority through this slogan, emphasising who is the *leader* and who declares the power. The illocutionary force of the slogan is under the domino effect, conveying the idea that if they do not behave and embrace the *virtue* of ignorance, they will fall, not being worthy of the *strength*. The perlocutionary force results in the compliant behaviour of citizens, as the majority forget the basic actions of the primary mechanisms of thinking and expressing, such as addressing questions, expressing doubts, or curiosity. Regarding the felicity conditions, the slogan is a successful speech act considering the lack of dissent actions and how *empowered* the people are after the propaganda apparatus transmits all the hate speeches through Two Minutes Hate or Hate Week.

By applying Grice's grid of analysis, the slogan proved to be flouting all four maxims. It flagrantly contradicts the obvious truth and flouts the Maxim of Quality, considering that power belongs only to Big Brother and the Party; the only ones privileged to access information and power through their omnipresent *watching*. Furthermore, the slogan breaches the Maxim of Quantity, considering the lack of offered information and how it redefines the semantic relationship between the terms *ignorance* and *strength*, flouting therefore the Maxims of Relation and Manner also. Consequently, by perpetual repetition of this slogan and encouraging the destabilisation of individual manifestation, the meaning of the concept is undermined. Hence, the violation of the maxims and meaning is clearly instrumental, not unintentional, guiding the people to accept the *new* logic and imposed politics. As a result, these implicatures are internalised by the citizens and contribute to the Party's plan to dismantle the contexts in which the truth may be revealed, either consciously or unconsciously, since constant oppression erodes the language and renders it meaningless.

4.5 “Two and two make five/might make five”

The utterance “two and two make five” (Orwell, 2000, p. 74) may seem innocent or just a simple thought possible for Winston as an exception from the other citizens who indulge in everything the Party affirms. Although it defies the most common mathematical logic, the utterance may be perceived as an assertive speech act, a statement that presents a mathematical fact. Nevertheless, its illocutionary force shows less an attempt to communicate a fact and more as an obliged performative act, especially when Winston Smith succumbs to accepting the utterance as being true (Orwell, 2000, p. 250) when he put it in black and white. Considering Searle’s taxonomy and the internal inquiries that follow up on this moment, the utterance fails felicity conditions, specifically the sincerity and preparatory conditions. Initially, Winston Smith does not believe it, and his body betrays him, showing the genuine reactions of him as an oppressed and tortured subject because the difficulty in accepting such an imposed *truth* is obvious. Therefore, this utterance reflects a perverted speech act, an act that demonstrates the ability of institutional power representatives (O’Brien) not only to suppress the power of speech but also to manufacture the facts.

Regarding the Gricean perspective, the utterance constitutes an extreme violation of the Maxim of Quality, which obliges the citizens not to express their knowledge and to use their instinctual and intellectual mechanisms to distinguish if a statement is true or false. It also breaches the Maxim of Relation because there is no rational discourse where the claim $2+2=5$ would be considered as coherent or logical. Winston’s clarity of logic and his will to abolish the system are observed when he noted in his diary, “Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows” (Orwell, 2000, p. 74), a proof that he is not gullible. However, even Winston, by being constrained to accept a falsehood through torture and repeated assertions, turned to be a victim of the Party, which collapses the distinction between *what is true* and *what should be true*, erasing the line between certitude (meaning) and institutional/societal tradition (imposed belief). Therefore, the perlocutionary effect is damaging because Winston is no longer Winston Smith the dissenter; he is the *loving* Big Brother Winston. This moment marks the capitulation of Winston, leaving his rationality behind due to the pressure that forced him to accept the Party’s falsehoods and to acknowledge that “God is Power” (Orwell, 2000, p. 75). As a result, the utterance proves not just to sustain an absurd statement, but to have a powerful effect on the subject, that powerful that remodels the thought in order to accept the ideological *truths*. This moment confirms that in Orwell’s dystopia, language serves as the most efficient code and apparatus for *installing* propaganda in citizens’ minds and for proliferating and maintaining it, as it also proves to be an instrument of psychological control.

4.6 If there is hope, (...), it lies in the proles. But “Proles and animals are free”

The Party's slogan “Proles and animals are free” (Orwell 2000, p. 66) appears in Winston's thoughts when he evaluates the chances of riots to overthrow the system. This moment of reflection leads Winston Smith to acknowledge that the hope lies in the proles because, analysing the state of the proletariat (85% of Oceania's population), he realised that the Party's strategy was to neglect them in all aspects, and dissenting ideas may arise from discontentment. Consequently, “If there is hope, (...), it lies in the proles.” (Orwell 2000, p. 66) is a seed of an anti-slogan mentioned again, in a later moment in Winston's diary (Orwell 2000, p. 75), when he continued to analyse the state of the proles and their possibility to organise riots. However, I consider that even this may be perceived as a false anti-slogan because it remains stated only in Winston's private moments and only in his mind or diary; it still represents a threat to the Party due to the existence of a citizen who is *aware*.

Considering the moment of mentioning the slogan “Proles and animals are free” (only this time in the novel), the utterance is assertive, presenting a factual observation of Winston. Hence, the illocutionary force reveals different layers of internal acknowledgement because it emphasises Winston's *critic of power* in solitude, but under the veil of his *social mask* so that the telescreen would not observe his both *resignation* that any other citizen or member of the Party would not be able to think of fighting the Party and *failure* regarding the fact that even if the proles represents the majority they were reduced to *animals* condition. The state of Winston's disillusionment also qualifies this utterance as an expressive, showing how disappointed he is with the constant condition of hopelessness regarding the liberation of people's minds and lives. Moreover, this utterance seems to unveil the pattern of contradictory logic, in the same way as Orwell did in the Animal Farm's slogan “All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others”, showing that indeed the proles are free, but not as free as they could, reducing them to animals' crowds without free will or discernment. The perlocutionary effect of the slogan, even if it is limited to Winston's mind and diary, emphasises in an ironic manner the uselessness of the majority when the human bodies are reduced to bodies, empty containers, through the grinding process of oppression.

Analysing the slogan from Grice's standpoint reveals that it breaches the Cooperative principle more subtly than the core slogans of the Party (4.2, 4.3 & 4.4). Initially, the Maxim of Quality seems to be respected, since the proles are considered *free*, without being followed and not obligated to indulge the Party's doctrine day by day. However, it is distorted along with the Maxim of Relation, because the utterance puts an equal through different categories' *proles* and *animals*, but in a false manner, considering the fact that the proles, while technically free, lack the intellectual or social capacity to act upon that freedom. The Maxim of Manner is also breached because the utterance ambiguity invokes that the liberty that the proles have is a false freedom since the Party cannot *protect* them, whereas to be *visible* or *watched* is a privilege for the Party's members, who are protected under the Big Brother watchful eye. Therefore, the utterance encapsulates a key Orwellian irony: that in Oceania,

being free means being politically invisible, while being seen means being controlled. It does this by framing freedom as simultaneously present and irrelevant. Thus, the utterance serves two purposes: it reveals the proles' inability to contribute to redemption, and it reflects the protagonist's growing acquiescence that surviving without consciousness is a form of bondage rather than liberty.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

The analysis of speech acts in Orwellian slogans reveals the deeper ideological intentions of the Party, exposing how language is used to manipulate perception and enforce control. Hence, the slogans serve not only to obscure meaning but to render independent thought impossible, fulfilling the Party's greatest aim, *the conquest of the mind through the corruption of language*.

The analysis of these slogans, through the framework of speech act theory, uncovers both their explicit messages and the underlying illocutionary force, as well as their real intentions, providing a guidebook to their production and dissemination. The act of decoding the selected slogans is important in understanding how the Party builds and maintains both symbolic and institutional power through seemingly simple utterances. Therefore, it emphasises the fact that these slogans are used for both informing and persuading purposes, as they perform political acts that *(re)shape* reality, *restrict* thought, and *formalise* obedience through coercive actions. To conclude, speech act analysis is a required tool for exposing how the Party's language functions both as a mechanism of ideological control and as a tool of performative power within the totalitarian system.

While this study has offered a focused analysis of political slogans in 1984 through the dual lens of *Speech Act Theory* and *Grice's Cooperative Principle*, future research could extend this analytical model to other slogans or excerpts from the novel as well as a cross-analysis of other works of dystopian fiction, such as Huxley's *Brave New World*, Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, or Zamyatin's *We*, to explore how totalitarian or authoritarian systems encode control through pragmatic mechanisms. Comparative analyses may help identify cross-textual patterns in how language functions ideologically across different narrative and cultural contexts.

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