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**ORWELLIAN EUPHEMISMS (“1984” BY G. ORWELL) IN
POLITICAL RHETORIC: BRITISH AND AMERICAN ON-
LINE MEDIA**

Bachelor’s thesis

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PREFACE

With many political events happening, present-day English media has a need to emphasize them, sometimes in a way that would not be found offensive or unpleasant. This task can be accomplished by using euphemisms, which make their contribution to political rhetoric and they are used to refer to sensitive topics in a polite way, so that no one would be upset or be insulted. Euphemisms can contribute to political rhetoric in different ways to obscure, misrepresent or disguise the meaning of words. Xiaonan and Jingping (2010) describe euphemisms as powerful tool for political leaders to manipulate information, allowing them to glorify or conceal dishonourable actions and intentions to avoid public criticism.

“Orwellian” euphemisms are present in contemporary mass media, but their meaning and purpose might have changed from the ones intended by Orwell in his novel “1984”. The present thesis addresses this research problem and aims to analyse the concept of ‘euphemism’ and its role in influencing readers’ minds in mass media; to define what political rhetoric is and how euphemisms and other stylistic devices are used to achieve authors’ intentions; to overview the studies of Orwell’s “1984” to reveal language means used by the author to brainwash the society of the novel; to analyse how often Orwell’s “1984” euphemisms are used in contemporary mass media and what purposes they serve; to define new meanings and contexts that make the novel “1984” modern for contemporary on-line mass media when it presents political news and events today

The present Bachelor’s thesis consists of an introduction, two main chapters and a conclusion. The introduction presents the concept of euphemisms and political rhetoric, and it discusses how it might be possible to influence readers’ minds using euphemisms. Chapter I “Euphemisms as a Tool to Achieve Author’s Intentions” shows how euphemisms help authors to reach their aims. It also presents an overview of the studies about Orwell’s “1984” and reveals language means that were used by Orwell for brainwashing the society of the novel. Chapter II “Orwellian Euphemisms in Contemporary Mass Media” analyses the use of Orwellian euphemisms in contemporary mass media and defines what makes „1984“ modern for on-line mass media when it presents political news. The conclusion summarises the research results.

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INTRODUCTION

In contemporary life full of new discoveries and events happening every single day receiving information is the only way to be aware of what events are happening, and for receiving information people nowadays mainly use on-line sources and newspapers. Using those sources is one of several ways to reveal what has recently happened in the world or in a local area, although this method has its downsides. Some forms of media, such as newspapers and magazines, TV, radio or the Internet tend to focus on topical events and news, therefore some of those highlighted events might look opinionated. The resulting incomplete image of current events happening in the world is not an intent of people who work in this industry, because it is difficult to follow everything and highlight every event to produce comprehensive image of life. However, occasionally news channels or newspapers would cover events from countries which tend to be mentioned very rarely, and some people think that the news industry is hiding the truth from them, by not mentioning some happenings or their backstory. Lutz (1989) explains that it is important to highlight three additional ways that the demands of TV journalism encourage “worldthink”(p.102). News, like other television content, needs to be entertaining and habit-forming to maintain high ratings and revenue. News producers, much like other show creators, achieve this partly by focusing on reliably popular topics. Events in other countries usually do not fall into this category. Regular updates on places like Brazil or India do not generally attract large audiences, so news organizations limit international coverage to a minimal level—unless global events are seen by U.S. leaders as directly affecting world stability.

The way some news channels tackle the task of creating their news programmes can make it look like they ignore other countries or pretend that they do not exist, making them appear in the news only when something interesting or shocking happens. Lutz (1989, p 103) writes, that due to limited staff and air time, networks are unable to cover the gradual social developments occurring in other regions of the world. As a result, groups like Iranians, Palestinians, and Filipinos primarily appear on TV screens only when they engage in unrest, pose a perceived threat to "collective security," or act in ways that authorities find undesirable. Once these disruptions subside, these groups disappear from the broadcast.

Modern media is shaped by audience-driven priorities and limitations that influence which global events receive attention. Due to resource constraints and a need to captivate

audiences, news networks focus primarily on high impact, attention-grabbing stories rather than providing consistent and balanced updates on worldwide events. This selective approach often leaves some regions and groups absent from the news until their actions are deemed sensational or threatening.

Euphemisms play an important role in this context, as they allow media to frame the news in ways that either soften the portrayal of certain groups or obscure underlying problems. By using euphemisms, media outlets can avoid conflicts, mitigate controversial actions, or mask issues of social or political importance, shaping public perception in ways that align with institutional narratives or audience preferences. Such use of euphemisms in the reporting of international events influences which stories are told and how they are understood.

The Concept of Euphemisms

Historically, society has avoided offensive language, recognizing its potential to offend or show disrespect. This avoidance has fostered the development of euphemisms, words with neutral or positive tones that replace taboo words or unpleasant terms. Cambridge Dictionary (2024) states that our ancestors used offensive language, also known as profanity. Even in the medieval times profanity was avoided and nowadays the use of profanity is considered rude and shows the lack of respect towards something. Within any educated and cultural society it is important not to hurt feelings of anyone with words. Euphemism (Ancient Greek eu = good, pHEME = speech) is a word with neutral sense which is usually used in text or speech to replace taboo words. Guo Qi (2010) states that euphemisms “refer to the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend people or suggest something unpleasant” (p. 135). Euphemisms are also used to replace obscene language; sometimes jargon, slang and terms from common language are used as euphemisms as they possess less of a negative connotation. In some cases, euphemisms can erase the negative connotation of an obscene expression, but it will still be clear what word was replaced by a euphemism either by the euphemism itself or by context.

“Today in a globalized society, the need for word substitutions while speaking on sensitive topics has increased” (Fataliyeva, 2015, p 151). Fataliyeva (2015) explains that people search for words that can replace words that sound offensive or unpleasant, and these words are called euphemisms. At first sight, one might suppose that these expressions are too ordinary, but in fact, they possess a strong persuasive nature. Therefore, if one was to use

both political rhetoric with the correct methods applied and euphemisms, great success would be reached in the field of persuading someone. Usually, people try to avoid talking about displeasing or obnoxious matters so it might be hard to start talking over something that the other person would rather not hear about. Politicians and news reporters can freely talk and express certain opinions about topics that are taboo or unpleasant to the public with the use of euphemisms, which opens a large field of possibilities for persuasion.

Lutz (1989, p. 121) characterises euphemisms as words that soften reality by presenting it in a more favorable way, helping to make situations sound better than they truly are. Language itself leans toward euphemisms, and people naturally seek these softened expressions, driven by a desire to present themselves in a more flattering light. Few people like to acknowledge their flaws or shortcomings, even though everyone experiences them at some point. Essentially, people turn to euphemisms to show themselves in the best possible way.

Synthesizing these perspectives, a euphemism can be defined as a word or phrase intentionally chosen to replace a harsher or more direct expression with a softer, more palatable alternative. Euphemisms allow speakers to navigate delicate topics and present ideas in a way that resonates with empathy and social sensitivity, often influencing perception by framing reality in more agreeable terms.

The Concept of Political Rhetoric

Rhetoric is a science about the impact on the human with the help of a word. Hugh (1974) states that rhetoric addresses topics where uncertainty and disagreement exist. It focuses on what is likely rather than what is certain and deals with complex decisions, such as resolving real life dilemmas, that lack straightforward solutions. The main but not the only category of this impact is a category of persuasion with the others being manipulation, deceit and command. In the case of command, it is a compulsory verbal pressure which is carried out directly, in case of manipulation and deceit involuntariness of the obedience is hidden from the listener. The latter methods are the only ones that are used in modern political rhetoric because of the fact that using force in politics is rather barbaric and ineffective. Instead of using less common and effective methods such as deceit and command, politicians can rely onto the main branch of rhetoric - persuasion in order to advance in the area of politics. The key to effectively persuade someone is to possess great speech qualities, such as clarity,

correctness and attractiveness of speech. These components are essential for understanding the concept of rhetoric as they all provide cogency when applied.

Clarity of speech consists of correct spelling and punctuation, this is a preparatory level of speech proficiency, which precedes rhetoric. Correctness of speech is the conformity of speech in a certain situation. It provides recommendations about speech building in different types of communication. Attractiveness of speech is defined by its beauty, because one is more likely to want to hear a certain speech once more and a person whose speech is attractive is a welcome companion. Hugh (1974) states that speech allows for the emphasis or softening of a word through adjustments in stress, pitch, or tonal qualities. Numerous techniques are employed to manipulate words, the fundamental elements of verbal language, either to amplify their impact or to diminish it. Everything said about rhetoric as a science also applies to political rhetoric with the only exception that within the political rhetoric people use either persuasion, manipulation, deceit or command to advance in the field of politics, where in the usual rhetoric, people use said methods on others for the achievement of their own intentions and goals.

Influencing Readers Using Euphemisms

Fataliyeva (2015) observes that political leaders use euphemisms strategically to control the information they present, subtly shaping public perceptions of social issues by exploiting euphemisms' ability to mislead. While rude or blunt language has increasingly become common in everyday speech and media, euphemisms in mass media often serve more to obscure information than to maintain politeness. Their primary role is to mask harsh realities, allowing for a more palatable narrative in a complex communicative environment.

Lutz (1989) writes that one should pay close attention to how euphemisms are used in political language, as their inherent inaccuracy can have mixed consequences. While some euphemisms lead to more compassionate actions, others can result in harmful outcomes. For instance, renaming "garbage collectors" as "sanitation engineers" might seem like unusual wording but has no harmful ideological impact. However, not all euphemisms are as harmless. For example, the term "war" can obscure the brutality of certain actions, as illustrated by euphemisms used during the Vietnam War, where American Air Force personnel referred to bombing areas as "suburbia" in Vietnam—a term that masked the violence involved.

By controlling language, the authorities can shape what people think is possible or permissible. This idea underscores the way euphemisms can become tools for political propaganda, shaping the narrative to align with those in power and preventing the public from confronting uncomfortable truths.

Defining Orwellian Euphemisms

Orwellian euphemisms are a category of language crafted to obscure reality under the guise of politeness, while subtly influencing perceptions and attitudes. The term “Orwellian” draws from George Orwell's “1984”, a novel that demonstrates how language can be manipulated by authorities to limit freedom, manipulate truth, and suppress dissent. Orwellian euphemisms serve as linguistic tools that, while appearing harmless or neutral, mask uncomfortable truths and alter how people think and feel about critical issues.

Orwellian euphemisms are grounded in the concept of Newspeak, the fictional language in the novel “1984” designed to eliminate words that could foster independent thought. In Orwell’s (1949) vision, Newspeak simplifies language to the point that certain ideas are literally “unthinkable,” as no words exist to express them. Orwell (1949) gives an example of this using the word "free," which in Newspeak only exists in phrases like "free from lice" or "free from weeds," with no capacity for use in terms of intellectual or political freedom. The language restricts meaning and the potential for individual thought, preventing citizens from questioning or imagining alternatives to the system.

Orwell (1949) explains that the principle of an Orwellian euphemism is to strip a word of its’ broader meanings or replace direct language with misleadingly positive or neutral terms. Orwellian euphemisms lessen the seriousness of the actions they describe, creating a buffer that distances the public from the unpleasantness of reality, their use influences public perception, making ethically questionable practices seem more acceptable.

The intentions behind Orwellian euphemisms can vary. Political leaders and media organizations employ them to frame narratives in their favour, reduce backlash, and maintain power. Orwell (1949) uses terms like "Ministry of Love" and "Ministry of Truth", which serve as prime examples of Orwellian euphemisms; The Ministry of Love enforces state surveillance and torture, while the Ministry of Truth manipulates history to serve the party's narrative. The names imply benevolence and honesty but mask their true functions, creating a perception that contrasts with reality. Orwell (1949) declares that the language choices

embedded in Orwellian euphemisms achieve a goal of eliminating all ambiguities and nuances of meaning from words, reducing each word to a single sound that is conveying one clear concept. Orwell (1949) adds that Orwellian euphemisms represent a strategic form of language manipulation that was deliberately crafted for political purposes. Each word carried a specific political implication and was designed to instil a preferred mindset in the speaker, and without fully grasping the concepts of Orwellian euphemisms it is difficult to use them correctly.

In contemporary settings, Orwellian euphemisms can be found in media and politics. Terms like "revenue enhancement" for tax increases, "friendly fire" for accidental attacks on one's own troops, and "restructuring" for employee layoffs illustrate how language can be used to soften or disguise policies that may otherwise spark public outrage. Hence, the hypothesis of the present research is that "Orwellian" euphemisms are present in the contemporary mass media to some extent, and they serve the purpose to directly affect people's minds and to make people accept negative events as positive. The research attempts to answer the following research questions: How often do British and American on-line media use Orwellian euphemisms in political rhetoric? What is the meaning of these euphemisms in comparison with the original Orwell's meaning?

CHAPTER I EUPHEMISMS AS A TOOL TO ACHIEVE AUTHOR'S INTENTIONS

1.1 The Definition of Doublespeak and the Role of Euphemisms in it

Term "Doublespeak" was constructed by the Committee on Public Doublespeak in 1972. Hugh (1974) explains that the committee selected the term "Doublespeak" as a blend of Orwell's concepts "doublethink" and "newspeak," aiming to capture the deceitful and uncompassionate uses of language. Since its inception, the term "doublespeak" has been recognized as a fitting description of the linguistic landscape. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1973) defines doublespeak as "inflated, involved, and often deliberately ambiguous language." Doublespeak is a form of language that prioritizes ambiguity over clarity intentionally concealing the true nature of the speaker's intent. William Lutz defines doublespeak as a "language which pretends to communicate but does not" (Lutz, 1989, p 6). Unlike miscommunication or errors in expression, doublespeak is purposeful.

Coined in the mid-20th century, the term builds on George Orwell's concept of "Newspeak" in his novel "1984", where language is restructured to eliminate dissent and enforce ideological conformity. While Orwell's construct was fictional, doublespeak finds real-world application in political discourse, corporate communication, and social contexts, serving as a tool for rhetorical manipulation. Within this framework, euphemisms play a critical role, functioning as a subset of doublespeak designed to reduce the emotional or psychological discomfort associated with specific terms or ideas.

Lutz (1989) identifies euphemisms as one of the four kinds of doublespeak, with other three being jargon, bureaucratese and inflated language, all of which serve to reshape how messages are perceived without altering their substantive meaning. Each of these forms contributes to the manipulation of language, from maintaining public order to masking unethical actions. Euphemisms are central to the operation of doublespeak functioning as a linguistic "safety net" that cushion the delivery of uncomfortable truths or controversial ideas.

Hugh (1974) has addressed himself to a specific aspect of the Doublespeak phenomenon: euphemism. He highlights the growing tendency among powerful societal leaders to manipulate public perception by assigning carefully crafted names to unpleasant or unjust

actions. These names are designed to make unacceptable situations appear acceptable. For example, terms like “disadvantaged” avoid directly addressing issues of race, poverty, or ignorance, while “inoperative” sidesteps harsher truths like lies or mistakes.

While euphemisms are not inherently deceptive, their integration into doublespeak often involves a deliberate intention to manipulate perceptions. Political language provides ground for the application of euphemistic doublespeak. Governments frequently rely on euphemisms to frame contentious issues in a more favorable or less alarming manner. Hugh (1974) provides examples of Doublespeak where words are intentionally misused to obscure reality. For instance, government agencies have been directed to replace the word poverty in official documents with the less alarming term low income. Similarly, the harsh realities of slums have been softened by referring to them as the inner city. Even prisons are now rebranded as correctional facilities.

The power of euphemisms in doublespeak lies in their ability to shape perception and influence thought. Euphemisms are not inherently deceptive, but their role in doublespeak is often shaped by underlying ideological motives. In Orwell’s “1984”, the Party uses euphemistic slogans such as “War is Peace” and “Ignorance is Strength” to enforce ideological orthodoxy. Similarly, contemporary political rhetoric employs euphemisms to align public opinion with specific agendas, blurring the line between linguistic moderation and outright manipulation.

Doublespeak exploits the flexibility of language to obscure, distort, and manipulate meaning. Euphemisms, a key component of doublespeak, illustrate how softened or sanitized language can be employed to both mitigate discomfort and obscure reality. Lutz (1989) mentions that while euphemisms have uses in encouraging politeness and addressing sensitive topics, their role within doublespeak is generally harmful because even when euphemisms appear to serve a good purpose, doublespeak is inherently assumed to be harmful unless fully justified due to its deceptive nature.

Doublespeak, with euphemisms as a central component, exemplifies the complex interplay between language, perception, and power. While euphemisms can serve legitimate purposes in fostering politeness and reducing discomfort, their deployment within doublespeak underscores the potential for language to obscure truth and manipulate public discourse.

Understanding the mechanisms and implications of euphemistic doublespeak is essential for fostering transparency and critical engagement in societal communication.

1.2 The Use of Euphemisms in ‘Doublespeak’

The modern world is filled with ongoing events that are widely discussed through various media platforms, including newspapers, television, radio, social media, and the Internet. Although individuals may engage in conversations about these occurrences, it is crucial to recognize that certain media outlets, such as television, may not always present information accurately. This may involve either misrepresenting the details of events or omitting contextual information. Lutz (1989) writes that because TV news markets itself as ‘up-to-the-minute’, it focuses on immediate events, aiming to captivate viewers with short, dramatic snippets. As a result, it nearly eliminates history, which is reduced to quickly prepared background for the latest controversy.

It is not uncommon to encounter such misleading language in the present-day mass media, it might be so typical for the authors to use it so it is possible to encounter it every single day. While it might be common in media, sometimes it requires analysis to recognise it. Volkova and Yea (2018) report that the URLs provided in disinformation summaries were gathered to trace the original news pages. Misleading and falsification labels from these summaries were subsequently applied to annotate the corresponding news pages. Their analysis concentrated specifically on English-language webpages. Overall, half of the English news pages were categorized as either falsification or misleading. Additionally, 17,872 propaganda pages and 5,297 hoax news pages were collected to compare disinformation with other forms of deceptive content.

Such deceitful language is named ‘doublespeak’, which combines meanings of Newspeak and doublethink. In the world of politics, doublespeak is often used to remove unpleasant word connotations in order to mislead readers. “Indeed, most doublespeak is the product of clear thinking and is the language carefully designed and constructed to appear to communicate when in fact it does not. It is the language designed not to lead but mislead. It is the language designed to distort reality and corrupt the mind” (Lutz, 1989, p 23).

The term ‘doublespeak’ was invented by William Lutz and while this term did not make its appearance in the novel “1984” the modern use of euphemisms to obscure the meaning of

words and deceive people is related to the happenings in in the novel. “It is the language which makes the bad seem good, something negative appear positive, something unpleasant appear attractive, or at least tolerable” It is language that avoids or shifts responsibility; language that is at variance with its real and its purported meaning; language that conceals or presents thought” (Lutz, 1989, p 77).

Lutz (1989) specialised in the use of plain language which is very economic and useful in public speeches. He wanted to avoid doublespeak by describing its social dangers. One of the several social dangers of doublespeak lies within the inaccuracy of doublespeak which talks about war. The American Air Force personnel has doublespeak for Vietnam war. “Dropping huge supplies of bombs was called a carpet raid, a pilot could lawn-mower an area using cluster-bombs” (Gibson, 1974, p 20). “Daisy cutters were bombs used to destroy rice paddies; killing civilians in open areas came to be known as rabbit shooting” (Slater, 1976, p 43).

Doublespeak about Vietnam War not only helped a privileged group of people to control the soldiers of lower ranks but it also made the soldiers think that they were not making war but instead doing garden chores. Lutz (1989, p 138) specifies that euphemisms always possess one of such characteristics as speaking about unpleasant things in a pleasant manner or talking about sensitive topics in an indirect way, and it is possible to avoid using euphemisms by following a simple set of rules, such as avoiding clichés and abstract terms, using active voice and shorter sentences.

1.3 Orwell’s Newspeak and Contemporary Mass Media Language

Newspeak is a fictional language from George Orwell’s novel “1984”. Newspeak is the official language of Oceania in the novel and it serves the regime of the totalitarian party Ingsoc. In the Newspeak language words lose their original meaning. Orwell (1949) explains that Newspeak is derived from the English language by shortening its’ vocabulary and simplifying grammar. Newspeak was designed to make the oppositional way of thinking or speaking (thought-crime) impossible by excluding words which describe the concepts of freedom, free will, personal identity and revolution. Ingsoc emerged from the socialist party but it is impossible to establish its’ origins because Ingsoc always rewrites history. In the novel “1984“ Newspeak is described as the only language which vocabulary is becoming narrower over time. Petersen et al (2012) points out that in contemporary times, the language

used in English and American mass media faces the issue of becoming narrower and, in some ways, more restricted. Older words can fall out of use and eventually disappear when cultural or technological changes reduce their relevance, much like environmental factors can affect a species' ability to survive and reproduce.

Petersen et al (2012) highlights that in the digital age, word extinction occurs due to a tendency to shorten and replace certain words with others. While it may appear that the English language is expanding, given the frequent emergence of new words in social and mass media, a closer examination reveals a more complex phenomenon. Even as new words are introduced, older ones gradually become archaic or outdated. The modern print era highlights this trend, with an increased rate of word disappearance, often affecting words deemed to have low utility, misspellings, or those rendered obsolete by technological advancements.

Petersen et al (2012) points out that there are several reasons why contemporary English shares similarities with Newspeak. One significant factor is the faster rate at which words become archaic compared to the creation of new ones. Although new words are introduced daily, many fail to gain a permanent place in the language, increasing the concern about English becoming more restricted. The competition between words, reflected in the rates of word creation and obsolescence reveals shifts in language use that impact the adoption of new words and the longevity of existing ones.

Petersen et al (2012) reports that the replacement of older words by newer ones is a natural linguistic process, however, concerns about a shrinking vocabulary arise when a single new word replaces several previously distinct terms. While these older terms may have been synonymous, each carried unique nuances and usage. One example of word extinction highlights three once prominent terms: radiogram, roentgenogram, and X-ray. These terms competed for dominance as nouns referring to what is now called an "X-ray". Despite being the most used terms for much of the 20th century, radiogram and roentgenogram eventually became obsolete. Two key factors likely contributed to the success of the term X-ray by 1980: a linguistic preference for shorter, more efficient terms in communication and the dominance of English as the global language of science.

Words do not disappear from or enter a language spontaneously; their inclusion or exclusion depends on patterns of use. Petersen et al (2012) report that for a word to leave a language,

it must cease to be used in both spoken and written communication, even though it may persist in older texts. Conversely, a word enters a language only after it has been in use for a certain period. In today's digital age, the creation of new words is often driven by the need to describe emerging technologies and innovations. Over the past 20 to 30 years, there has been a significant increase in the relative usage of newly coined terms, particularly technical vocabulary essential for speaking about modern technological concepts and ideas.

As it was previously said, the creators of Newspeak in the novel "1984" made it so that words lose their initial meaning and the meaning is replaced by the one that is devised by the creators of a language to fulfil their intentions. The concept of Newspeak, as depicted in Orwell's "1984", and its simplification of language finds parallels in contemporary mass media. While new words emerge in the digital age, older terms disappear, reducing expressive depth.

1.4 Use of Orwell's Language to Brainwash the Society of the Novel

The main principles of Newspeak were defined by Orwell in the appendix to his novel "1984". He divided the language vocabulary into three smaller vocabularies: A Vocabulary, B Vocabulary and C Vocabulary. The A Vocabulary only included words that are applicable for everyday use. The reason why the words from A Vocabulary belonged to this category is because they were carefully arranged for a certain purpose.

The A vocabulary consisted of the words needed for the use in everyday life - for such things as eating, drinking, working, putting on one's clothes, going up and down stairs, riding in vehicles, gardening, cooking, and the like. "It was composed almost entirely of words that we already possess words like HIT, RUN, DOG, TREE, SUGAR, HOUSE, FIELD—but in comparison with the present-day English vocabulary their number was extremely small, while their meanings were far more rigidly defined" (Orwell, 1949, p 378).

Words from this vocabulary were made as short as possible to minimize their usage. The A Vocabulary was deficient with quality and was only applicable for everyday needs because the words from the vocabulary only allowed expressing thoughts about certain object and actions. Users of the Newspeak were only able to talk about certain types of object and actions which were convenient for the Ingsoc, which promoted thought control. The A Vocabulary was unsuitable for philosophical reflections on abstract topics due to its' lacking nature. While the whole Newspeak language, including the A Vocabulary, was cleared of

ambiguity, the privileged society still depended upon doublethink to control the civilians in the novel.

The whole vocabulary of Newspeak was small and limited, which aided Orwell to represent the way in which the novel's society was brainwashed. First of all, the concept of a limited language vocabulary which only shrank over time not only helped to make people speak mostly about trivial matters, it was impossible to use the A Vocabulary to speak about politics or philosophy because the language was so meager. These two characteristics of both limited vocabulary and plain quality of words subtly established thought control into the society.

It was no longer required for the Ingsoc to censor someone's opinions, ban or restrict the use of certain words or worry about people speaking of something while implying some harmful opposing thought because with the vocabulary like the A Vocabulary people could not talk about anything else but trivial everyday matters and they could not imply something because each and every word had only one strict meaning. Meanwhile, Ingsoc were able to talk about politics and philosophy because they understood the principles of Newspeak, knew what doublethink is and how to create subtle implications. "Doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them" (Orwell, 1949, p 270).

Words from the A Vocabulary were so limited that they mainly consisted of nouns which could be used as any other part of speech with the possibility of adding suffixes, affixes and prefixes to change the meaning or put emphasis on an already existing one. "It was intended only to express simple, purposive thoughts, usually involving concrete objects or physical actions" (Orwell, 1949, p 378). The whole Newspeak language was filled with contradictions meant to confuse, embarrass, disorient and demoralize the society of the novel.

One of examples of this can be found in the book when Winston Smith, the protagonist, was arrested and shown the photograph of one-time Party members who were executed but not guilty. Then the photograph was burnt by O'Brien and although both Winston and O'Brien knew the photograph existed, O'Brien denied its existence, which was an example of doublethink. While O'Brien was lying about the fact that the photograph never existed his lie was not a lie because it was possible that he had forgotten about it.

The B Vocabulary consisted primarily of words specifically constructed to express political concepts and perceptions. Orwell's intention was to reflect these concepts and perceptions with utmost accuracy by applying a new meaning to already existing words. As manifested by the Newspeak rules, when a word's meaning is being replaced, the old meaning is erased so every word only expresses one idea. Orwell has prioritized this idea of introducing words that by their own nature impose a desired position on the word's user.

The B words were a sort of verbal shorthand, of-ten packing whole ranges of ideas into a few syllables, and at the same time more accurate and forcible than ordinary language. The B words always were compound words. They consisted of two or more words, or portions of words, welded together in an easily pronounceable form. The resulting amalgam was always a noun-verb, and inflected according to the ordinary rules. To take a single example: the word GOODTHINK, meaning, very roughly, 'orthodoxy', or, if one chose to regard it as a verb, 'to think in an orthodox manner' (Orwell, 1949, p 382).

While it was impossible to talk about politics or philosophy using the A Vocabulary, the B Vocabulary was created specifically for this purpose. These were the words that had one and only meaning but they possessed a political implication. These words were hard to use for a novel's civilian society because if one is to use words from the B Vocabulary they are required to understand Ingsoc's principles. "The B vocabulary consisted of words which had been deliberately constructed for political purposes: words, that is to say, which not only had in every case a political implication, but were intended to impose a desirable mental attitude upon the person using them" (Orwell, 1949, p 381). While the A Vocabulary's idea was to add suffixes, affixes and prefixes to the nouns, adjectives or verbs, each and every B Vocabulary word was a compound word. The resulting words were made up of already existing vocabulary so they did not add anything original to the Newspeak, instead those compound words introduced new meanings in a basic and a somewhat primitive way.

C Vocabulary was supplementary to the others and consisted out of scientific and technical terms. These resembled the scientific terms in use today, and were constructed from the same roots, but the usual care was taken to define them rigidly and strip them of undesirable meanings. They followed the same grammatical rules as the words in the other two vocabularies. Very few of the C words had any currency either in everyday speech or in political speech (Orwell, 1949, p 389).

The C Vocabulary words were cleared of ambiguity and unwanted meanings. Words from the C Vocabulary seem like words that could only be used by a few groups of people with each group utilizing their own category of terms that belongs to their jobs. While words from the C Vocabulary are certainly useful in a conversation between workers whose aim is to accomplish a specific task, those words could be used in everyday speech.

When two people speak to one another in the same language but one of the speakers uses words from a specific vocabulary that other person does not know, those words are

considered jargon. If jargon is used in everyday speech it then involves redundancy, abstractions and ambiguity in order to distort the meaning of words, to deceive and mislead someone and this was exactly the way it was used by Orwell in his novel. Jargon in the novel “1984” is both precise and abstract, while jargon is cleared from the ambiguity and is operated in definite terms, when one person says something that others cannot understand then one person can hide anything in their words and others will agree because they understood the matter in their own, perhaps more innocent way.

The examples of jargon from various professions, occupations, and disciplines could go on forever. The essential question is, why do speakers and writers use jargon? Some writers use jargon to obscure the truth. Others use it to sound impressive, to give the user status. Still others use it to conceal a lack of ideas or to give weak ideas authority (Lutz, 1989, p 135).

This information is important for the analysis of the mass media sources presented in chapter II as it will be used to identify types of euphemisms based on A, B and C vocabularies. The amount of words based on A vocabulary supposedly will be small because words from A vocabulary are limited and grammatically incorrect, as a result they can be used as any part of speech by adding suffixes, prefixes and affixes. The amount of words based on B and C vocabularies presumably will be larger because B vocabulary mainly consisted of words that were constructed to express political concepts and perceptions by applying new meanings to already existing words and C vocabulary can only be used by specific groups of people and mainly consists of scientific or technical terms that are useful for communication between people who understand it to accomplish a specific task.

Orwell's grouping of words in Newspeak, such as those systematically designed to eliminate concepts like freedom, revolution, and individuality serves as a framework for analyzing Orwellian euphemisms in contemporary mass media. In “1984”, these three vocabularies were created with intent to reduce thoughtcrime and align language with ideological control, eliminating dissent or alternative perspectives. This is relevant in contemporary mass media, where euphemisms are often employed to obscure meaning, soften harsh realities, or align public perception with political agendas. Three vocabularies created by Orwell can be used to analyze how modern media replaces nuanced and critical language with sanitized or ambiguous terms. These euphemisms, like Newspeak, reduce clarity, suppress emotional resonance, and constrain one’s ability to critically assess the implications of certain actions or policies. Orwell’s approach to word elimination and redefinition offers an opportunity to explore how contemporary mass media controls narratives, reflecting an Orwellian tendency to shape thought through language.

CHAPTER II ORWELLIAN EUPHEMISMS IN CONTEMPORARY

MASS MEDIA

2.1 Analysis of Orwellian Euphemisms in the British On-Line Media

In the context of the present research, modern platforms and channels of communication that deliver information and entertainment to the public will be considered contemporary mass media. The concept includes both traditional media, such as television, radio, magazines and digital media, such as online news websites, social media platforms, podcasts, and streaming services. It also includes digital and print newspapers, which are characterized by their focus on popular culture, scandals, and political rhetoric.

British and American contemporary mass media will encompass tabloid and broadsheet newspapers, both in print and digital formats, that serve as major sources of news and information in these regions. Tabloid newspapers are known for their sensationalism and simplified narratives, while broadsheet newspapers focus on more in-depth, analytical reporting. These newspapers represent a spectrum of linguistic approaches, offering a comprehensive view of how Orwellian euphemisms are used in British and American political rhetoric.

Four newspapers were chosen for this study, two British and two American. The selection of newspapers was based on the type of the newspapers, their popularity and accessibility. The chosen newspapers were compared because all of them have both print editions and online versions, which makes them more accessible to readers. The online versions are also used to assess the popularity of the corresponding newspapers among readers. The information about popularity of both British and American newspapers are based on a 4imn website (2022), which provides web ranking of top 200 newspapers. The ranking is updated on a monthly basis and is based on an algorithm that collects data extracted from three different search engines. The website presents popularity of worldwide newspapers based upon the popularity of their websites.

The British newspapers are the Daily Mail, which is ranked 4th in top 200, and the Financial Times, which is ranked 17th in top 200. For both British and American newspapers there is one broadsheet and one tabloid newspaper to compare how Orwellian euphemisms are used in both higher-quality journalism and tabloid journalism, which makes its emphasis on crime

stories, celebrity gossip and television. The chosen articles can be compared with each other as both broadsheet and tabloid newspapers feature politics and also mention Orwellian euphemisms, some articles even feature words from the novel 1984.

The analysed articles were chosen because of several features. The primary focus for article selection was presence of euphemisms and relevance to Orwellian themes, all chosen articles include deliberate ambiguity or distortion of language. Another criteria for choosing articles for analysis were specific themes with prevalence of euphemistic language, such as politics, economy, war and defence, crime and justice. The article selection was conducted with the aspect of quantity in mind, choosing articles that contain a significant amount of euphemisms was important for a comprehensive analysis. Length of an article is also important, both longer and shorter articles were included in the analysis, as longer articles may provide deeper insights, while shorter articles may better illustrate Orwellian wordplay. An approach for selecting articles was created by combining mentioned criteria to effectively demonstrate the use of Orwellian euphemisms in contemporary mass media.

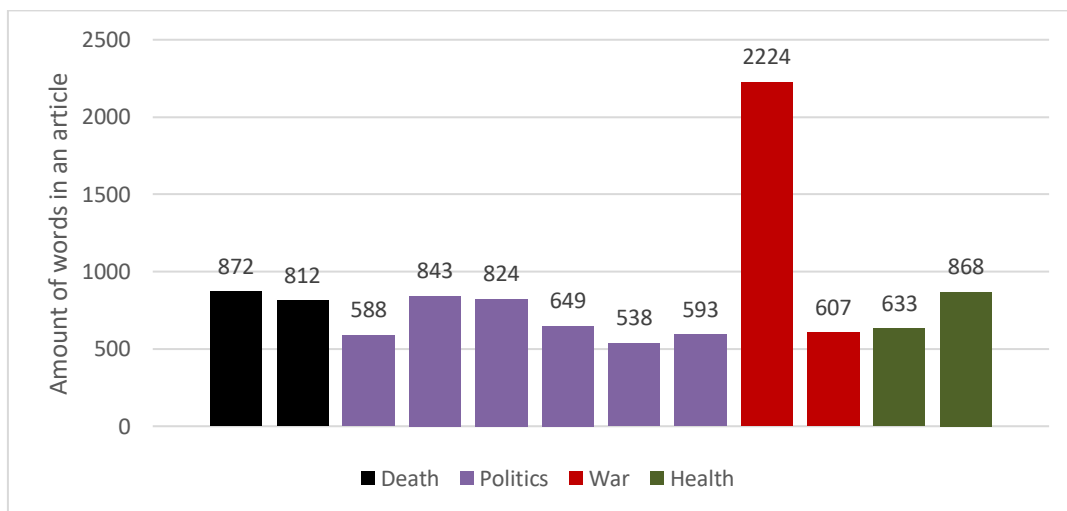


Table 1. Criteria for article selection based on the length of the articles and relevance to Orwellian themes

The first newspaper is Daily Mail, which is a British tabloid newspaper, published in London. The first article from the Daily Mail newspaper titled “New right to die bill sparks row as peers condemn 'Orwellian spin' and say it would not 'pass public safety test'” presents reports of a new attempt at persuasion of British parliament members to pass a right-to-die law, which was accused of using euphemisms, verbal evasion and “Orwellian spin” in his pursuit to differentiate “assisted suicide” and “assisted dying”, when people say these terms

are the same. Supporters of that law believe that helping people who are terminally ill to end their lives is not assisting suicide because they are expected to die. “Assisted suicide” and “assisted dying” are two different terms, the first means to assist a person to kill themselves and the latter means to end a person’s life to relieve suffering. In law it is considered suicide if a person takes their own life regardless of their health, so the attempt to legalize “assisted dying” which in reality is “assisted suicide” is an attempt to use verbal evasion to get advantage. People who are not terminally ill but want a doctor to give them a lethal injection say that assisted suicide laws break Article Eight of the European human rights charter, which protects the right to privacy and family life. (Doughty, 2013)

The article presents words that fit the category of B vocabulary of Orwells’ 1984 appendix. The word that became an Orwellian euphemism in this article is “assisted dying”. In this article Orwells’ techniques are used as the euphemism is constructed to express a political concept by applying a new meaning to an already existing word. In this example the parliament members were trying to soften the meaning of “assisted suicide” by replacing the word ‘suicide’ with ‘dying’ to make it sound different and to replace its meaning.

The second article named “Learning the lingo of Whitehall mandarins” goes into details about British political euphemisms and euphemistic expressions which are used by politicians, specifically parliament members to politely respond to other parliament members while reversing or softening the meaning of their answers. When a politician uses an expression “I hear what you say” what he really means is “I do not wish to discuss it further”, “I will bear that in mind” is a way of saying “I have forgotten it already”, “I was a bit disappointed” means “I am incandescent with fury” and “very interesting” means “what arrant nonsense”. Robert Rogers, the Clerk of the Commons and the author of the book *Who Goes Home?*, which lists British political euphemisms says that the problem with them is that the European summit interpreters are not likely to understand some of those euphemisms and it could lead to misunderstandings or confusion. (Letts, 2012)

The phrases from this article fit the B vocabulary as they are often used in a political context. The phrases that fit the category of an Orwellian euphemism are “I hear what you say”, “I will bear that in mind”, “I was a bit disappointed” and “very interesting”. These phrases look like they were specifically created to talk about politics as they possess an opposite meaning. This follows Orwells’ idea of introducing words that impose a desired position on the word’s

user as using those phrases allows one to express their opinion in a very polite and diplomatic manner even though the meanings of those phrases are completely opposite.

The third article named 'This 'death list' could be a path to euthanasia' talks about the situation in the British national health service where it has to decide between the well-being of British senior citizens or their compulsory euthanasia due to potential bankruptcy. One of the British health ministers thinks there is a different way to solve this issue and that would be to make doctors create a list of patients, whom they anticipate to die within one year. While this health minister calls this an "end of life care register", others call it a "death list". The problem with this kind of approach is that national institutions hope that some of these patients can be helped to die comfortably and inexpensively at home and none of the patients will know if doctors have put their names on an "end of life care register" and they now will be less likely to be subject to treatments of "limited value", which is also something, that might be disputed by patients and their families. (Lefever, 2012) The article features phrases that fit the category of both B and C vocabulary. The examples of phrases that became Orwellian euphemisms are "end of life care register" and "limited value". "End of life care register" belongs to the B vocabulary because its meaning was replaced with a new one and the old meaning of unpleasant "death list" was erased, as manifested by the Newspeak rules. The "limited value" is a phrase from C vocabulary as it is a scientific term used in healthcare which stands for procedures that are not commissioned by public funds. The phrase fits the C vocabulary because it has little application in everyday speech.

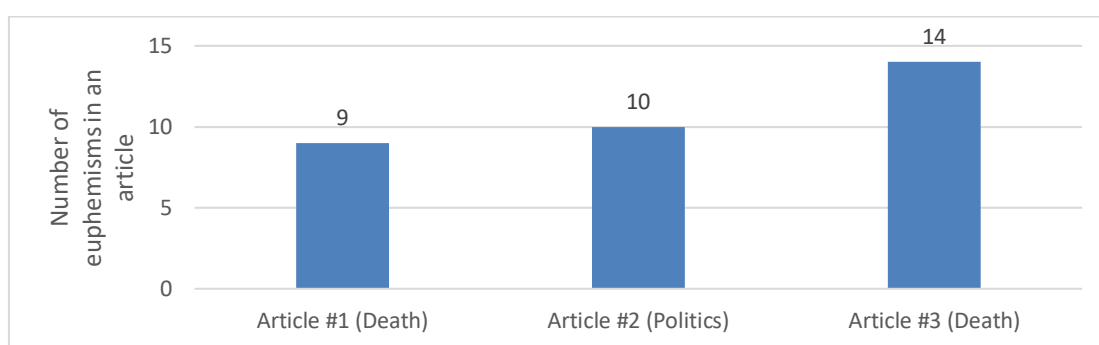


Table 2. The usage of Orwellian euphemisms in "Daily Mail"

The variation in the number of Orwellian euphemisms across the three Daily Mail articles can be attributed to several factors. Articles about death are likely to contain more euphemisms because of the inherent sensitivity and emotional charge surrounding the topic. Article #3 delves deeper into discussions about mortality, requiring more linguistic

cushioning compared to Article #1, which has 9 euphemisms. Articles about politics often rely on Orwellian euphemisms to obscure meaning. The lower number of euphemisms compared to Article #3 reflects less emotional sensitivity compared to discussions about death but still showcases a need for rhetorical framing.

The second newspaper is the Financial Times, which is a broadsheet newspaper that focuses on business and economic current affairs.

The first article from the newspaper Financial Times named “Why Donald Trump is proving George Orwell wrong” elaborates on Donald Trumps’ language and tells the readers how Donald Trump, intentionally or not, ignores the Orwells’ idea of his essay “Politics and the English Language” which says that clear speech enables clear thought along with preventing lies and shows that clear speech can enable lies. Orwell had a set of rules to help people avoid misleading euphemisms and doublespeak, such as avoiding cliches, jargon and foreign words, using short words and active voice and Trump follows all of those rules, except for the one about barbarisms. While other politicians were using foreign words and passive voice to say “opposition elements were liquidated” instead of “we have massacred people” Trump communicated with plain and cruel euphemisms for violence. He speaks in simple words and language and those serve their purpose to evoke single thought, this way Trump is able to paint things as unquestionably good or bad, saying that “Iran deal is a disaster”, “insane” and “terrible”. Simple language also makes lies more believable and convincing, because it is easier to comprehend than formal style speech or writing. (Kuper, 2020)

This article features words and phrases like “disaster”, “totally destroy”, “get Brexit done”, “build a wall” which fit into A vocabulary. These words and phrases suggest simple and concrete thoughts which are better for deceiving people Trump makes emphasis on simple thought and language, which sounds more persuasive as people are less suspicious to clear language.

The second article named War-talk in the 21st century discusses war euphemisms in our modern days and how different forms of conflict are changing those euphemisms. Wars are called anything but wars in the 21th century, they now are “interventions”, “proxy engagements”, “counter-insurgencies”, “peacekeeping missions”, “police actions” and “asymmetric engagements”. The closest to how politicians name wars is “military action”. In the article, wars are being compared to politics, with both becoming more ambiguous, tangled and further-reaching. The euphemisms that describe fighting missions are being

created around certain conflicts, to obscure their true nature and misinform the regular people. Euphemism “surgical strike” was popular in 1988, during the operation Praying Mantis. Another euphemisms “blue on blue”, which is a military slang for friendly fire was popular in 1993 during the Battle of Mogadishu. The concept of vulnerable human bodies is removed by using euphemisms like “degrade capacity” or “martyrdom operations” that describes suicide bombing. Another modern practice is to replace war talk with peace talk by using positive expressions such as “freedom fighters” or “resolute” when talking about the side of conflict which has to be depicted as good. (Leith, 2014)

This article demonstrates words from B and C vocabularies, such as “tragedy”, “military action”, “collateral damage”, “surgical strike”, “degrade capacity” and “martyrdom operations”. These words and phrases fit into the B vocabulary because they are made up of already existing vocabulary only the new meaning is introduced. These words and phrases also are constructed to talk about war in a way that is favorable for the speaker. These words and phrases also belong to C vocabulary because they are utilized by a specific and narrow group of people, in this case soldiers and politicians who talk about war.

The third article named Let’s put the meaning back in politics talks about common words, which started to be used by politicians and became euphemisms in the political vocabulary. These words have lost their initial meaning because they were overused and eventually started to mean anything politicians wanted them to mean. The euphemism “austerity” appeals to politicians because it evokes ascetics who shun worldly goods when in real life it means “belt-tightening” – taking money from the impoverished, elderly or sick people. “Developing countries” is a euphemism for poor countries, many of which are not developing. “Islamic fundamentalist” is applied to any Muslim politician with the purpose to initiate mistrust. “Security” is a euphemism for justification of any policy because being favouring insecurity over security seems unreasonable, this way politicians may influence or exploit other peoples’ decisions “for their own security”. (Kuper, 2011)

The words and phrases in this article correspond to the B vocabulary because they all had one meaning which was replaced in favor of another which is more useful for talking about politics which is similar to Orwells’ idea of using already existing words and introducing a new meaning. Words and phrases like “developing countries”, “islamic fundamentalist” and “security” are examples of Orwellian euphemisms which meaning was changed by

politicians because those words appealed to them as they could get them to mean anything they wanted them to mean.

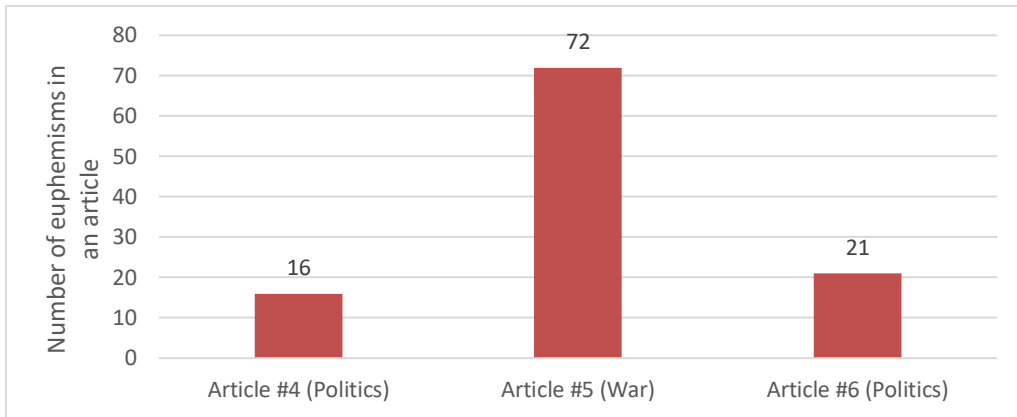


Table 3. The usage of Orwellian euphemisms in "Financial Times"

The disparity in the number of Orwellian euphemisms across the three articles from the Financial Times is influenced by several factors. Orwellian euphemisms are often employed to obscure the brutality and human cost of war, making it more digestible for readers. War demands more euphemisms to sanitize and depersonalize its harsh realities, while politics requires fewer euphemisms as it involves persuasion rather than emotional management. The big volume of Orwellian euphemisms in the article #5 shows an attempt to manage perceptions, mitigate controversy, and neutralize emotionally charged language. Political topics, on the other hand, involve less immediate human suffering. Orwellian euphemisms in articles #4 and #6 are used to frame policies and present controversial decisions in a palatable way.

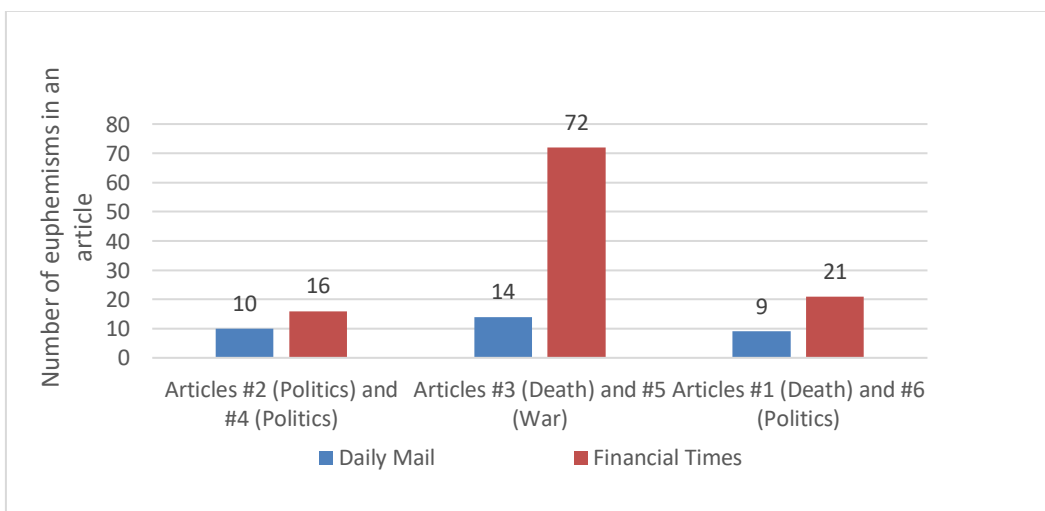


Table 4. Comparison of usage of Orwellian euphemisms between "Daily Mail" and "Financial Times"

The analysis reveals that the number of Orwellian euphemisms in the Daily Mail and the Financial Times varies depending on the emotional weight, complexity, and rhetorical purpose of the articles. The number of Orwellian euphemisms in the newspapers is almost the same with an exception of article #5, which has the highest euphemism count, likely due to the need to obscure the brutal realities of conflict. The exceptionally high count of Orwellian euphemisms in this article reflects the need to manage the emotional and ethical impact of discussing war-related atrocities, combined with discussions on politics, and diplomacy. Political articles show a moderate increase as their contentiousness rises. Politicians and media use Orwellian euphemisms to present policies in a favourable light and these euphemisms help mitigate backlash against contentious decisions or events. Death articles have fewer euphemisms overall, as their aim is to respect cultural norms of sensitivity rather than framing or obfuscation.

2.2 Analysis of Orwellian Euphemisms in the American On-Line Media

This subchapter presents the analysis of Orwellian euphemisms in the American on-line media. The American newspapers are New York Post, which is ranked 15th in top 200, and the Chicago Tribune, which is ranked 35th in the top 200.

The first newspaper is the New York Post, which is a daily tabloid newspaper published in New York City.

The first article from the New York Post newspaper named Saga of Teen Vogue editor reminds us all: Stop tweeting! a word "unperson" is used to describe how the article heroines' career was at a risk because of three anti-asian tweets. Those old Tweets are brought forward for a singular purpose: To turn the person who used them that way into an "unperson," to borrow the euphemism for the destruction of a politically or socially problematic citizen of the totalitarian society in George Orwell's "1984." The unperson is a person, whose existence is denied and ignored, who is erased from the society and is not recognized or considered anymore. (Podhoretz, 2021)

This article has the word “unperson” which fits the B vocabulary because it was created by adding a prefix to the word “person”. The word used in this article is taken directly from the novel “1984” and is an Orwellian euphemism which means a person who was removed from consideration for political reasons. The meaning of the word “unperson” in this article is similar and can be compared with modern word “cancel” which means to exclude someone out of social or professional society. It is different from the word “unperson”, because “canceling” usually happens to celebrities who have done something unacceptable, while “unpersons” usually were regular civilians.

The second article named Where NYC schools lead the world describes education in New York City’s public schools, specifically, sex education and how some of the schools look as if they are better at giving out contraceptives than they are at educating kids. The article talks about the latest unintentionally Orwellian-named pedagogical innovation program “Connecting Adolescents to Comprehensive health” where “comprehensive health” is sometimes interchanged with “reproductive health”, the two of those being the euphemisms for sexual health. The schools that accepted this program do not only provide condoms, they also give out “morning-after pills” – Plan B without notifying the childrens’ parents. If this situation with giving out potentially abortifacient contraceptives would have happened a decade ago it would have seemed as a dystopian social-conservative fantasy. Not only the parents are not asked, but they have to choose to manually withdraw from the program. Some people think that it is a sign of a strategy of least resistance to promote the provision of abortion in those schools. (Lowry, 2012)

Words and phrases from this article correspond to B and C vocabularies. “Morning-after pills” is an Orwellian euphemism and an acceptable way of talk about Plan B – abortifacient contraceptives. This phrase fits the B vocabulary as it is used to talk about giving children potentially harmful contraceptives in a favorable and in the same time honest manner for the person using that euphemism. “Comprehensive health” and “reproductive health” fit the C vocabulary as they are scientific terms that are used in healthcare, therefore it is not easy for regular people to communicate and understand ideas as not many people know the meaning of those terms and using them may involve unnecessary complications and ambiguity.

The third article titled Facebook warns users of extremism as conservatives slam ‘Orwellian thought police’ discusses the new Facebook test feature which aims to help people who

might have been exposed to extremist content and to combat violent and dangerous organizations. However, all of this is done by redirecting hostility and cruelty related search terms towards crisis intervention resources, education and outreach groups, which made some people distressed if this new feature could be suppressing free speech. One of the members of the Virginia House of Delegates said that he is concerned that some people might be creating an Orwellian environment where people are immediately silenced or banned for saying something that the ‘thought police’ doesn’t like. Thought police are secret police from the George Orwells’ “1984”, who identify and punish thoughts that are unapproved by the political system. Another person, vice president at Media Research Center has also expressed his thoughts about this situation, asking his audience this rhetorical question: Do you want to snitch on your friends, family, and neighbors for wrongthink?. (Feuer, 2021)

This article features two words “thought police” and “wrongthink” that fit the B vocabulary and are Orwellian euphemisms. Wrongthink is a term from the Orwell’s vocabulary of Newspeak, which means a word or a phrase that is contrary to the common opinion. “Wrongthink” belongs to this vocabulary because it is a compound word, which consists of two words, that are merged together. The word is composed following Orwells’ rules and is exactly the same word that was used in the novel. “Thought police” is a phrase that was used in the novel 1984 and meant a secret police whose job was to find and punish wrongthink. In the modern usage it means a requirement to obey a certain ideological orthodoxy.

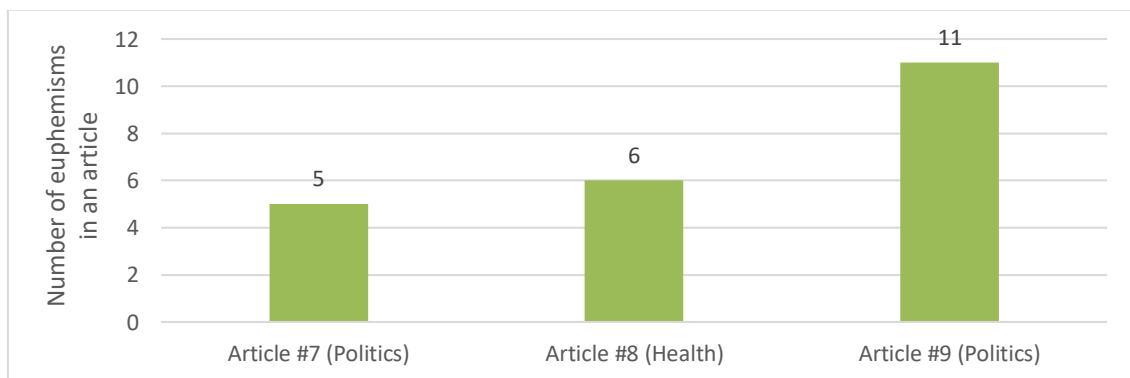


Table 5. The usage of Orwellian euphemisms in "New York Post"

The variation in the number of Orwellian euphemisms across the three New York Post articles stems from the topic sensitivity, purpose of the article, and complexity of the issues discussed, with articles #7 and #8 having almost identical amounts of Orwellian

euphemisms, what indicates that the articles addressed less contentious political topics, reducing the need for euphemistic language. Article #9, which talks about Orwellian thought police in the modern media, covers a controversial political issue and involves strategic framing, requiring more language to obscure and soften the events.

The second newspaper is the Chicago Tribune, which is a daily newspaper in a broadsheet format.

The first article from the Chicago Tribune newspaper titled “They’ve lost their minds in San Francisco” features a set of euphemisms and their intent is to keep people from being forever labeled for the worst things that they have done. Such euphemisms like “a returning resident”, “a formerly incarcerated person”, “a justice involved person” have taken place of words like criminal, convicted felon and offender accordingly. The given article elaborates on euphemisms on common sense, where “illegal immigrants” became “undocumented workers”, homeless became “previously housed individuals”, babies in the womb became “fetuses” and “wardrobe malfunction” stands for what once was considered as “private body parts”. (Cal, 2019)

This article introduces several words and phrases that belong to B vocabulary. “Returning resident”, “a formerly incarcerated person”, “a justice involved person” are Orwellian euphemisms that introduce new meaning to already existing words to make them sound more appealing instead of saying “criminal”, “convicted felon”, or “offender”.

The article called “Politicians aiming to cut Social Security and Medicare” uses weasel words to hide their plans. Let's call them on it headlines how politicians use the Orwellian manipulation of language in order to say the opposite of what they mean. The politicians who want to cut down social insurance programs, which are so valuable to their beneficiaries, use words with different or opposite meanings in order to obscure their plans about these social insurance programs. The politicians rarely use the word “cut” when they speak, instead they use words like “reform”, “overhaul”, “change”, “revamp” and “fix”, which are all euphemisms for the word “cut” in the context of removing social insurance programs. A different approach in an attempt to conceal the truth about a national health insurance program was attempted by politicians, they replaced “benefit-cutting” with “reform” and confirmed that a “replacement of a traditional health insurance program” is a “premium support” for that program. (Hiltzik, 2017)

This article features Orwellian euphemisms created and used by politicians. Word “cut” has been replaced by “change”, “overhaul” and “fix” which are all euphemisms and are used by politicians to remove the distasteful meaning from “cutting the social insurance programs” because that would upset the program recipients who value and depend on it. These euphemisms fit into the B vocabulary as their meaning is changed by the politicians to serve their purpose of presenting information in a less distressful way. Another example of Orwellian euphemisms in this article are words “reform” and “premium support” which in reality have a complete opposite meaning of “benefit-cutting” and “replacement of a traditional health insurance program”, correspondingly. These euphemisms were created with a political implication and to talk about politics using them. It is challenging for regular people to use or understand them because one needs to understand the principles of such euphemisms.

Another article by the Chicago Tribune named PENTAGON WINS WORD WAR, ER, EFFORT, talks about Seattle's U.S. Defence Department using Orwellian euphemisms to speak about gulf war and being so successful at its' dishonesty and trickery that it received an annual Doublespeak award from the English teachers of the U.S. The award was made after a U.S air attache in Cambodia exploded to reporters “You always write it's bombing, bombing, bombing. It's not bombing! It's air support!” The article talks about euphemisms used to describe the fighting missions, people, environment and opponents at a gulf war. The U.S. Defence Department used euphemisms such as “an armed situation” instead of war, “efforts” instead of bombing attacks and “weapon systems” instead of warplanes. Bombs “degraded, neutralized, attrited, suppressed, eliminated, cleansed, sanitized, impacted, decapitated or took out” instead of killing. The term “soft” was used instead of word people, buildings became “hard targets” and female soldiers were called “males with female features”. The article also mentions William Lutz, an American linguist who wrote an essay and a book about Orwellian euphemisms and doublespeak. He pointed out how the communication around the gulf war was plentiful of euphemisms, how doublespeak is everywhere and is being used by a big amount of people. (Ridder, 1991)

This article presents several words and phrases that belong to the B vocabulary and are Orwellian euphemisms. The words “air support”, “armed situation”, “efforts” and “weapon systems” are all euphemisms created and used by politicians to talk about war. They created more than a dozen euphemisms to avoid the grim and unfavorable word “killing”. Most of these euphemisms like “degrade”, “neutralize” or “cleanse” do not sound innocent either,

but they are created using Orwells' techniques and ideas of making a person using them sound more convincing and trustworthy.

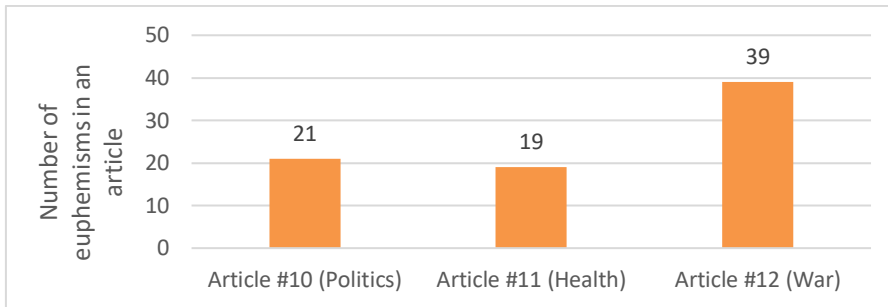


Table 6. The usage of Orwellian euphemisms in "Chicago Tribune"

The differences in the number of euphemisms across the three Chicago Tribune articles are influenced by the differences in topics and deliberate language manipulation. Health-related discussions in article #11 employ euphemisms to disguise controversial political agendas, such as cutting insurance programmes. While emotionally charged, this topic involves less suffering or violence, leading to a slightly lower euphemism count than Article #10. Article #10 uses euphemisms to deflect accountability and reframe individuals' worst actions. Euphemisms are essential to protect reputations and manipulate public opinion, but the scope is narrower compared to war, resulting in fewer euphemisms. Article #12 has the most euphemisms because war discussions aim to obscure the brutality and human cost of war. Euphemisms like "collateral damage" or "surgical strikes" are used to sanitize violent realities and make them appear more palatable. The Gulf War discussion, involving strategic and diplomatic framing, necessitates heavy euphemistic language to manage public perception.

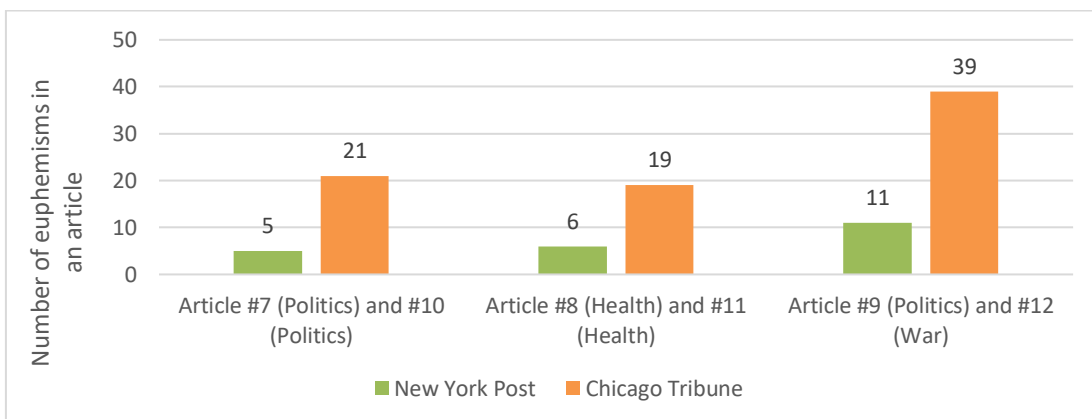


Table 7. Comparison of usage of Orwellian euphemisms in "New York Post" and "Chicago Tribune"

The number of euphemisms varies across the six articles from the American newspapers New York Post and Chicago Tribune based on their emotional weight, and rhetorical goals. Both newspapers discussed nearly identical Orwellian themes in the articles, however, Chicago Tribune utilizes far more euphemistic language than New York Post. It might be related to a focus on language manipulation, which is favourable when discussing such topics, as sex education in schools or politician's efforts to cut insurance programs and using Orwellian euphemisms to disguise their intentions.

2.3 Results of analysis of Orwellian euphemisms in the British and American on-line media

The study analyzed two British newspapers, the Daily Mail and the Financial Times and two American newspapers, the New York Post and the Chicago Tribune to examine the frequency of Orwellian euphemisms. The results revealed significant differences in counts of euphemistic language, influenced by the newspapers' focus on controversial and sensitive topics, editorial approach, cultural and regional differences.

The British newspaper Daily Mail had a total of 33 Orwellian euphemisms, which is almost the lowest number of euphemisms among the four newspapers. As a tabloid with a broad audience, its articles are more direct and emotionally engaging rather than reliant on abstract or sanitized language. While euphemisms are used, particularly in sensitive topics like death or politics, the Daily Mail's focus on sensationalism and clarity reduces the overall need for Orwellian linguistic manipulation.

The British newspaper Financial Times had 109 Orwellian euphemisms, which is the highest count among the four newspapers, reflecting its focus on complex topics such as politics and war. Financial Times has the most Orwellian euphemisms among all newspapers due to the need to sanitize violence and talk about politics, which show increased usage of Orwellian euphemisms, based on the issue's complexity and deliberate political framing. Euphemisms are used to maintain neutrality, diplomacy and technical precision. For example, phrases like "quantitative easing" (printing money) or "collateral damage" (civilian casualties) serve to frame contentious issues in a more palatable and detached manner.

The American newspaper New York Post had the lowest count of Orwellian euphemisms compared to other newspapers, with only 22 euphemisms. Known for its populist tone and direct reporting, the New York Post favors bold and provocative language over euphemistic

phrasing. Its Orwellian euphemisms mainly appear in discussions about politically or culturally sensitive topics, such as social media policies or topics related to healthcare, but they are less pervasive overall.

The American newspaper Chicago Tribune had a high euphemism count of 89, second only to the British Financial Times. As a more traditional and serious newspaper, it frequently employs euphemisms to discuss controversial topics such as war, politics, and healthcare. Its editorial tone aims to balance informing readers with maintaining professionalism, which often necessitates using euphemisms to avoid inflammatory or overly blunt language. Chicago Tribune prioritizes maintaining objectivity, which leads to heavy use of euphemistic language to manage reader perceptions.

The disparities in usage of Orwellian euphemisms across the four newspapers reflect differences in editorial approach, cultural and regional diversity and thematic focus. The Financial Times and Chicago Tribune stand out for their high Orwellian euphemism counts, driven by their focus on serious, multifaceted topics frequently covering complex issues like international politics, war, and healthcare, which involve more euphemistic language to obscure uncomfortable truths or frame contentious debates. Meanwhile, the Daily Mail and New York Post demonstrate lower euphemism counts due to their more direct, populist reporting styles. In addition, Daily Mail and New York Post are more likely to focus on sensational stories and cultural controversies that require fewer euphemisms.

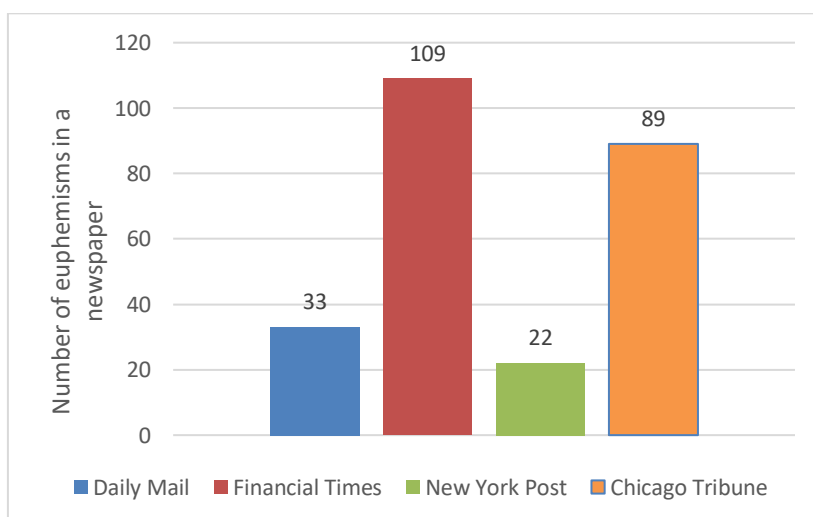


Table 8. Comparison of usage of Orwellian euphemisms across all chosen newspapers

The analysis of Orwellian euphemisms across four themes - death, politics, war, and health reveals significant differences in euphemism usage. The number of euphemisms varied based on the emotional weight, complexity, and sensitivity of each topic, reflecting how language is strategically employed to shape perceptions and obscure uncomfortable realities.

Discussions about death typically use euphemisms like "passed away" or "laid to rest" to soften the emotional impact of the subject. Topic related to death had the lowest count of Orwellian euphemisms, which reflects societal norms of treating death with sensitivity and respect, avoiding blunt or distressing language. However, because death is often a personal or cultural topic, it requires fewer euphemisms compared to broader societal issues like politics or war.

Politics featured a significantly higher number of euphemisms of 84, as it often involves framing controversial decisions and policies, or presenting actions in a more favorable light. Euphemisms in this domain are used to obscure accountability or manipulate perceptions. The high count of Orwellian euphemisms reflects the contentious nature of political discourse and the need for strategic language to appeal to diverse audiences and avoid backlash.

The topic of war had the highest count of euphemisms among all other topics, emphasizing the strategic need to sanitize discussions of violence and human suffering. Terms like "peacekeeping mission" (military intervention) or "martyrdom operation" (suicide bombing) are employed to downplay brutality and frame military actions as necessary. The extensive use of euphemistic language highlights the complexity and moral sensitivity of war, requiring extensive linguistic manipulation to manage public perceptions and justify human suffering.

Topic of health uses euphemisms to address sensitive topics like illness, insurance, and reproductive health in a way that minimizes discomfort and controversy. Examples include "end-of-life care" (hospice) or "revenue enhancement" (cuts to healthcare programs). Although health topics involve societal concerns, the lower count reflects a lesser reliance on euphemisms compared to politics and war, as health discussions prioritize clarity, empathy and politeness

The analysis shows that Orwellian euphemism usage is directly tied to the contentiousness, emotional weight, and purpose of each topic. War articles, requiring the most rhetorical framing, exhibit the highest count of Orwellian euphemisms, followed by politics. Death and

health involve fewer, almost the same amount of Orwellian euphemisms, reflecting a focus on sensitivity and clarity rather than manipulation. This demonstrates how euphemisms are strategically tailored to the needs of different themes to influence perception and mitigate emotional or moral discomfort.

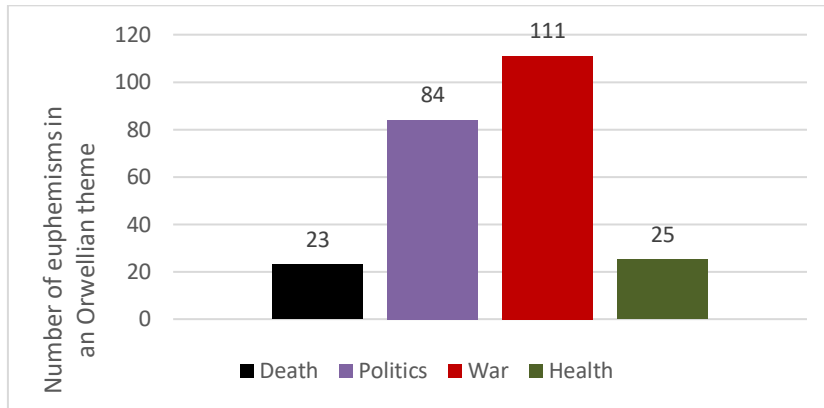


Table 9. Comparison of usage of Orwellian euphemisms based on the themes of articles

CONCLUSION

The present research is focused on the analysis of the use of Orwellian euphemisms in British and American on-line media in political rhetoric and the analysis of meaning of these euphemisms in comparison with the original Orwell's meaning.

To summarise the theoretical outcomes of the research it can be concluded that euphemisms are words with neutral sense that are used to replace obscene language or taboo words, to soften the reality by presenting it in such a way that it will still be clear what word was replaced by a euphemism. By controlling language, the authorities can shape what people think is possible or permissible. This underscores the way euphemisms can become tools for political propaganda, shaping the narrative to align with those in power and preventing the public from confronting uncomfortable truths. Orwellian euphemisms are a category of language crafted to obscure reality under the guise of politeness and are grounded in the concept of Newspeak, the fictional language in the novel "1984" designed to eliminate words that could foster independent thought. In his novel "1984", The principle of an Orwellian euphemism is to strip a word of its' broader meanings or replace direct language with misleadingly positive or neutral terms. In contemporary settings, Orwellian euphemisms can be found in media and politics where they are often employed to obscure meaning, soften harsh realities, or align public perception with political agendas. Orwellian euphemisms are used in contemporary mass media to reduce clarity, suppress emotional resonance, and constrain one's ability to critically assess the implications of certain actions or policies.

The practical part of the present research is focused on analysing the use of Orwellian euphemisms in British and American contemporary mass media and defining the meaning of these euphemisms in comparison with the original Orwell's meaning. The practical part confirms that Orwellian euphemisms are present in contemporary mass media, but their meaning has changed from the one intended by Orwell in his novel "1984". Orwell's concept of euphemistic manipulation remains relevant in modern political discourse, the use of Orwellian euphemisms varies between British and American online media due to emotional weight, and rhetorical goals of news articles. Orwellian euphemisms in on-line political rhetoric are used to manage dissent by reframing contentious issues, topics like politics and war use significantly more euphemistic language to justify human suffering and frame contentious debates. The practical part reveals differences in the use of euphemisms between British and American on-line media and confirms that Orwellian euphemisms are

systematically used to hinder the public's ability to critically engage with political issues by normalizing misleading terms and advance specific political ideologies in British and American on-line media.

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Bakalaureusetöö teema on „ORWELLIAN EFEEMISMID (G. ORWELLI TEOS „1984“) POLIITILISES RETOORIKAS: BRITI JA AMEERIKA ONLINE-MEEDIA“. Käesoleva töö eesmärk on analüüsida, kui sageli kasutatakse Orwelli „1984“ efemeisme kaasaegses massimeedias ja milliseid eesmärke need täidavad. Bakalaureusetöö koosneb sissejuhatusest ja kahest osast.

Sissejuhatuses tutvustatakse efemeismide ja poliitilise retoorika mõistet ning seda, kuidas efemeisme kasutades on võimalik lugejate mõtteid mõjutada. Esimene osa on teoreetiline osa, kus näidatakse, kuidas efemeismid aitavad autoritel oma eesmärke saavutada. Samuti antakse ülevaade uuringutest Orwelli teose „1984“ kohta ning analüüsitakse keelelisi vahendeid, mida Orwell kasutas, et kujutada ühiskonna manipuleerimist romaanis.

Teine osa on praktiline osa, mis sisaldab analüüsi Orwelli efemeismide kasutamise kohta kaasaegses massimeedias ning selgitab, mis muudab „1984“ kaasaegseks online-massimeedia kontekstis, kui esitatakse poliitilisi uudiseid. Ajalehtede valik põhines nende tüübile, populaarsusele ja kättesaadavusele. Valitud ajalehti võrreldi, kuna kõigil neil on nii trüki- kui ka veebiversioonid, mis muudavad need lugejatele kättesaadavamaks.

Analüüsiks valiti 12 artiklit mitmete omaduste tõttu. Artiklite valiku peamine kriteerium oli efemeismide esinemine ja nende seos Orwelli teemadega - kõik valitud artiklid sisaldavad tahtlikku keelelist ebaselgust või moonutamist. Teised kriteeriumid hõlmasid konkreetseid teemasid, kus efemeistlik keel on ülekaalus. Arvesse võeti ka artikli pikkust, sest pikemad artiklid võivad pakkuda sügavamalt ülevaadet, samas kui lühemad artiklid võivad paremini illustreerida Orwelli keelekasutust. Artiklite valimiseks loodi lähenemine, mis ühendas nimetatud kriteeriumid, et tõhusalt demonstreerida Orwelli efemeismide kasutamist kaasaegses massimeedias.

Bakalaureusetöö tulemuses selgub, et nii Briti kui ka Ameerika online-meedias kasutatakse sarnasel määral efemeistlikku keelt. Ajaleheartiklid, mis on seotud Orwelli teemadega, sisaldavad peaaegu alati Orwelli efemeisme või efemeistlikku keelt. Efemeismide hulk kvaliteetajakirjanduses on oluliselt suurem kui tabloidides. Poliitika ja sõja teemad kasutavad oluliselt rohkem Orwelli efemeisme võrreldes surma ja tervise teemadega. Uuring kinnitab, et Orwelli efemeisme kasutatakse süstemaatiliselt avalikkuse võime pärssimiseks

poliitiliste küsimuste kriitiliseks hindamiseks, normaliseerides eksitavaid termineid ja edendades konkreetseid poliitilisi ideoloogiaid Briti ja Ameerika online-meedias.

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