

# **LANGUAGE PLANNING AS A CASE OF LINGUISTIC OPPRESSION IN GEORGE ORWELL'S *NINETY EIGHTY-FOUR*.**

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## **Résumé**

En 1949, l'écrivain Anglais George Orwell a publié son roman *Nineteen Eighty-four* pour montrer ce que notre monde sera à l'an 1984. Il y décrit un monde fictionnel de domination et de totalitarisme en pleine révolution. Mais il s'avère que la langue est l'un des piliers essentiels de cette révolution. En fait, Newspeak, la langue de la révolution est soumise à un processus d'aménagement linguistique dont l'objectif final est l'oppression linguistique de la population en vue de son assujettissement. Selon les membres du parti, lorsque vous contrôlez la langue, cela vous donne la possibilité de contrôler la société dans son ensemble car les deux sont intimement liées. C'est pourquoi la fin de la révolution sera déclarée à l'issue de la fin de l'aménagement linguistique tel que conduit par le Parti.

## **Mots-Clés**

Aménagement linguistique ; oppression linguistique ; idéologie ; révolution, domination.

## **Abstract**

In 1949, George Orwell published *Nineteen Eighty-four* to show what will happen to our world in the year 1984. He described in his novel a fictional world of domination and totalitarianism in revolution. But one of the pillars of the revolution is the language. In fact, Newspeak, the language of the revolution is submitted to a language planning process which final goal is the linguistic oppression of the population. According to the Party, when you control the language you control the society as a whole since both are closely interrelated. So, the Revolution will be complete only when the language is perfect according to the Party's views.

## **Key Words**

Language Planning; Linguistic oppression; Ideology; Revolution; Domination.

## **Introduction**

Languages normally function in a social matrix and societies also depend on language as a medium or a symbol of interactions. So, one should expect that their observable manifestation, that is to say, language behavior and social behavior will be appreciably related in many lawful ways. It is the study of the interactions between language and society that has given birth to social linguistics or sociolinguistics as a discipline of linguistics. Sociolinguistics therefore deals with many topics among which language planning.

When we consider language as a societal resource, language planning appears as a decision-making process aiming at solving language problems. Language planning is more often directed at the written language rather than the spoken form. This is surely why language planning is more successful when directed at monitored language use that is when people pay a lot attention, not only to what they are saying, but also how they are saying it. It

is a process by means of which speakers can exert a certain control over the language they use since language is constantly in dynamic flux.

In fact, we expect language planning to have some consequences since it aims at solving some problems in society. Our implicit concern is to know whether the language planning policy in the novel can be considered as a case of linguistic oppression, in other words, does the language planning project in *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1984) bear the stigmas of ideological domination? To answer this question, we will use sociolinguistics evidence and our work will be built around three axes. The first point will focus on the importance of language in Orwell's literary work. The second will be about the analysis of the language policy in 1984 as a case of language planning. In the last one, we will address the sociolinguistic consequences of language planning in 1984.

## 1- Importance of Language in George Orwell's Work

While at work on 1984, Orwell said that his aim as a political writer has been to make political writing an art. For him, his duty is to "attack the Right but not to flatter the Left" (Orwell 1970: 28). His political views or positions were shaped by his experiences of Socialism, Totalitarianism and Imperialism all over the world. He therefore confessed: "every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly against Totalitarianism and for Democratic Socialism as I understand it" (idem).

Orwell somehow made the precision that his writing almost always began with a sense of injustice, of there being something wrong, either in society or in human nature that needed to be put right. Writing was, for him, the means of exposing the wrong, of showing it to be humanly unacceptable. It will be clear that Orwell handled the writer as someone who should give more value to and even protect human freedom. And it is up to him to expose anyone or anything that would infringe that freedom. That is surely what he did by showing his better disappointment in *Looking Back on the Spanish War*:

"I saw in fact, history being written not in terms of what happened but of what ought to have happened. This kind of thing is frightening to me because it gives the feeling that the very concept of objective truth is fading out of the world. If a leader says of such-and-such an event that it never happened well, it never happened. If he says that two and two are five-well two and two are five" (Orwell 1970: 295).

So, Orwell's motives when writing *Homenaje a Cataluña* (1938) seemed to be to simply tell the truth about the events in Spain. However, this "truth" that Orwell was so desperate to write about was focused on the treachery of the communists in Spain. His experience in Spain made Orwell learn that history, as well as the language that is used to tell it, fluctuates according to political interests. So, *Homenaje a Cataluña* (1938) could be seen as the most characteristic of a quest for truth and objectivity in the narration of real facts. But his most famous political novel was *Animal Farm* (1945).

He wrote it as an allegory of the Russian Revolution disguised as an animal fable. With his experiences of Spain and also having what happened in Russia in mind, Orwell tried to warn that societies are at risk. The major theme in this novel is the betrayal of the Russian Revolution and how good will or intentions can fall prey to ambition, selfishness and hypocrisy. Gradually as the pigs (characters of the novel) gain more and more power, they find it harder to resist temptation. Soon, their revolution falters and they adopt its vices they

decided to avoid. They move into houses, drink alcohol and engage in trade with the other farms even if they were urged to avoid doing so.

Orwell's message is that any society which has leaders with absolute power is ultimately doomed to failure due to the inevitability of leaders manipulating power for their own personal benefit. And one of their weapons seems to be language that they use to remain in power. So, a powerful propaganda machinery appears to them as an indispensable feature of dictatorship. It must be capable of turning lies into truths as Squealer is capable of doing: "The others said of Squealer that he could turn black into white" (Orwell 1945: 9). Squealer therefore seems to be the symbol of deceit and falsehood often associated with a dictatorship. So in the novel, he appears as Napoleon's image-maker. In fact, Napoleon is the leader after the Revolution and he was behaving like a real King.

In the pursuit of his goals, Squealer employs all sorts of dirty tricks including misinformation, disinformation and distortion of facts and outright lying to keep the rest of the animals of the farm in the dark. Falsehood is then given the appearance of truth. The measure of Squealer's success is how he eventually turns Snowball (Napoleon's opposing figure) into the "enemy" by destroying his reputation and reversing all his achievements in *Animal Farm* (1945). He even manages in changing the commandments that were at the origin of the Revolution by providing them with amendments which are the manifestations of the violations of the Revolution itself. So, the original commandments have been replaced by only one stating that even if all animals are equal, some are more equal than others.

In *1984* written in 1949, under our study, Orwell draws the picture of a totalitarian regime that makes use of some principles. These are "The sacred principles of Ingsoc: Newspeak, doublethink, the mutability of the past" (Orwell 1990: 28). They help the rulers better establish their reign. In the country in which the story takes place, "in Oceania the prevailing philosophy is called Ingsoc" (Orwell 1990: 205) and "ultimately it is by means of doublethink that the Party has been able to arrest the course of history" (Orwell 1990: 223). In fact, doublethink is a kind of manipulation of the mind that makes people accept contradictions. It is indeed the capacity of holding two contradictory beliefs, simultaneously. It is the fact of knowing that something is true and by also holding that the first knowledge is not true, that is the idea does not exist at all!

Doublethink makes people believe that only the Party is able to distinguish between the right and the wrong. This manipulation is mainly done by the Minitrue (Ministry of truth) where Winston Smith works at the Records Department. When a person that is well grounded in doublethink recognizes a contradiction or a lie of the Party then, he thinks that he is remembering a false fact. In fact, the use of the word doublethink involves itself doublethink.

As for the mutability of the past, it ensures the permanence of the Party. "By far the most important reason for the readjustment of the past is the need to safeguard the infallibility of the Party" (Orwell 1990: 221). It consists in rewriting the past in order to match it with the present. In mutability of the past, it is always the latest document that is true and this is done permanently. Newspeak, the new language also seeks to help establish the power of the dictator. And it aims at cutting the original word that does not make the promotion of the rulers. In fact, "The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested in power...only power, pure power" (Orwell 1990: 275). It is clearly stated in the spirit of the Party that "who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past" (idem).

Newspeak, one of the fundamental principles of Ingsoc, is declared the official language. It has been devised to meet the ideological needs of the Revolution that it helps establish. And the importance of this language in the novel is very clear since it represents the

heart of the system itself. The motto is that “The Revolution will be complete when the language is perfect. Newspeak is Ingsoc and Ingsoc is Newspeak” (Orwell 1990: 55).

The idea is that only after the good planning of Newspeak, the political system itself will be well established. Both are interrelated and we could say that the system is permanently kept because Newspeak exists. And we should pay attention to this idea since whatever is undertaken for the revolution it will be, in fact, for the best establishment of the language. All the decisions in Oceania will be taken to guarantee the success of the language planning.

Orwell wrote *Ninety Eighty-Four* (1984) to try to show how political systems can suppress individual freedom. It is a real warning for the future, of what society could become, should totalitarianism be allowed to achieve dominance anywhere in the world. And one of the tools at the disposal of totalitarians to impose their will upon the society is language and the way it is planned.

## **2- Language Policy in *Ninety Eighty-Four* as a Case of Language Planning**

George Orwell’s *Ninety Eighty-Four* (1984) is a case of language planning with all the aspects of real and ordinary actions called forth in a language planning scheme. In fact, it started with the advent of the single Party, Ingsoc on power in Oceania. The rulers then intended to make a Revolution and language appears to them as a fundamental tool for the success of their objective. So, they decided to plan it. And their language planning scheme respects the characteristics of any language planning policy. But here, the underlying decision is that the new language, Newspeak, will shape the Revolution by achieving oppression.

The planning deals with the forms and the functions of the language, that is, a corpus planning and a status planning. The reality is that Newspeak is being created out of an already existing language in Oceania that is Oldspeak, the name given to the English language in the novel. So, the rulers have developed the language by equipping it with a suitable vocabulary and grammar shaping the idea of the Revolution. After, they have decided to promote it as the official one. Then comes the concrete implementation of Newspeak in Oceania which implies who will carry the project on and how it is going to be settled. Of course, some teams were in charge of this aspect of the planning process that is going to be analyzed in details. Let us see all these aspects in details in this section.

### **2-1- The Motives**

The world of 1984 by Orwell is a world in which the authorities have decided to make some reforms in the different areas of the nation. Their aim is to “make Revolution in order to establish dictatorship” (Orwell 1990: 276). Thus, language that appears to them as one of the important areas in the life of a nation has not escaped their attention. It is, in fact, pointed out in the novel that “the Revolution will be complete when the language is perfect. Newspeak is Ingsoc and Ingsoc is Newspeak” (Orwell 1990: 55).

It becomes very clear that language is put at the center of Ingsoc or English Socialism, the spirit of the Revolution. They have therefore decided to devise a language planning policy that could easily help them reach their goal since the success of the Revolution depends on the success of the language policy. What are the orientations of the planning process in 1984?

## **2-2- Objects of Planning: Corpus and Status**

Language planning in the novel is the combination of both status planning and corpus planning. In fact, language planners have decided to act on the forms as well as the functions of the language in Oceania, the society in *1984*.

### **2-2-1- Corpus Planning**

This type of planning is an activity concerned mainly with the internal aspects of language and consists in “preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogeneous speech community” (Haugen 1968: 673). Therefore, for this aspect of their planning scheme, the authorities have devised a certain vocabulary and grammar to develop the language according to the spirit of the Revolution. Language development is normally modulated around three parts: graphization, modernization and standardization. But in *1984*, we are only concerned with the last two aspects which are modernization and standardization. In fact, Oceania is a speech community endowed with the writing system so rulers felt no need to consider the first aspect.

#### **a- Modernization**

Language modernization in the novel is about preparing a normative vocabulary for the guidance of language users in Oceania. “Newspeak, indeed, differs from almost all other languages in that its vocabulary grew smaller instead of larger every year. Each reduction was a gain since the smaller the era of thought, the smaller the temptation to take thought” (Orwell 1990: 322). And this exceptional kind of vocabulary is made out of three categories and each category has its characteristics.

##### **(i)- The Vocabulary**

In the A-Vocabulary we find words that are almost entirely Oldspeak or from Standard English words. But, they are limited in number so as to allow the Party to check them easily. There is a systematic deletion of semantically ambiguous English words. In this category, planners intend to avoid interpretation but also confusion. There are words like “hit, run, tree, sugar, house, fields” but their meaning is very rigid. “So far as it could be achieved, a Newspeak word of this class was simply a staccato sound expressing one clearly understood concept” (Orwell 1990: 314).

In the B-Vocabulary, we find compound words and they consist of two or more words or portions of words, merged together in an easy pronounceable form. So, they are not constructed on any etymological aspect. The words of which they are made up can be placed in any order, mutilated in any way which makes them easy to pronounce, while giving an indication of their derivation. In the word “crimethink” (*thoughtcrime*). “Think” comes secondly, unlike in “thinkpol” which displays some irregular formations commoner in the B-Vocabulary than in the A-Vocabulary. Many of the B-words- like “goodthink, Minipax, Recdep, bellyfeel, thinkpol, sexcrime...”- are formed of two or three syllables with the stress put equally on the first and the last syllable. In reality, “the use of them encouraged a gabbling style of speech, at one staccato and monotonous. And this was exactly what was aimed at” (Orwell 1990: 321).

As for the C-Vocabulary, it is conceived to supplement both A and B vocabularies and it follows the same rule. And only a few words are common to all lists. It is however important to make the precision that the words of this category “resembled the scientific terms in use today, and were constructed from the same roots but a usual care was taken to define them rigidly and strip them from undesirable meanings” (Orwell 1990: 322). After their

creation, words combine into meaningful entities. The grammatical notions also undergo some modifications.

## (ii)- The Grammar

The grammar of Newspeak has two important characteristics. The first is that the words inside a sentence are interchangeable in the different parts of speech. And “any word in the language (in principle this applied to very abstract word such as “if” or “when”) could be used as a verb, noun, adjective or adverb” (Orwell 1990: 314). It is even difficult to make a distinction between a verb and its noun-verb since “when they were of the same root, there was never any variation” (idem).

This is frightening because it involves the destruction of many forms that they judge archaic, according to the Party’s propaganda. And planners are free to choose which of the original verb or noun is better for them and should be conserved according to the Party’s objectives. So, the word “thought” no longer exist in the new language that is Newspeak, in which “think”, that serves as a verb and as a noun, has replaced it.

The second characteristic of the grammar of Newspeak is its regularity. In fact, the Party is against any contradicting idea so everything should be regular and normal (?) for the Party. So, all the inflections occurring in the language almost follow the same rules. The preterit and the past participle of all the verbs are the same and end in “-ed”. So, “stealed” and “thinked” are the forms of “steal” and “think” which have become regular. The remark is that all irregular forms are automatically suppressed. The plurals are formed simply by adding -s or -es according to the case so that ‘mans, oxes, lifes’ are the plurals of “man, ox and life”.

As for adjectives of comparison, they are made by adding -er, -est (for example good, gooder, goodest). And there is no such irregular forms as ‘the more’ or ‘most’ in the final edition of Newspeak under construction. But only pronouns, relatives, demonstratives, adjectives and auxiliary verbs are allowed to keep their irregular forms existing in Standard English but under the strict control of the Party. “Shall” and “Should” have disappeared and are replaced by “Will” and “Would” that cover their meanings. In fact, with “shall” and “should”, we can see the strong involvement of the speaker and this is no more allowed! But, it is possible to have some irregularities mainly in word-formations with the intention of making speech rapid and easy. As we can guess, one of the objectives of Newspeak is to avoid difficulties. So, a word is judged bad when it is difficult to utter or if it can incorrectly be heard by listeners.

Adjectives are formed by adding the expression ‘-ful’ to the noun-verb (like in “Minitruthful” and “Minipeaceful”), and adverbs are constructed by adding -wise. So, “speedful” means ‘rapid’ while “Speedwise” means quickly. For the construction of the new language only Oldspeak’s adverbs ending in -wise are still in use. The word “goodwise” for example will replace the adverb “well”. In Newspeak, the negation is made by adding the prefix “un-” to a word while an idea will be strengthened with the affix ‘plus’ or for greater emphasis ‘doubleplus’. For example ‘uncold’ means ‘warm’ but ‘plus-cold’ and ‘doubleplus-cold’ respectively mean ‘very good’ and ‘extremely or superlatively cold’. There are in addition some prepositional affixes such as ‘ante-, post-, up-, down-,... that can be used to modify the meanings of different words under the control of the Party.

To make a brief summary concerning the inflections in grammar, let us take the example of the word ‘goodthink’. It means ‘orthodoxy’ or if one chooses to regard it as a verb, to think an orthodox manner. Its inflections are as follows: Noun-verb = *goodthink*; Past tense and Past participle = *goodthinked*; Present participle = *goodthinking*; Adjective = *goodthinkful*; Adverb = *goodthinkwise*; Verbal noun = *goodthinker*. After the modernization, let us now move to the step of the standardization.

### **b- Standardization**

After the construction of words, people should normally use them. There lies the work or the action of Outer and Inner Party members. So, they are in charge of the effective or concrete use of Newspeak in communicative situation. In fact, the operation of Standardization basically consists of two steps, “first the creation of a model for imitation, and second, promotion of this model over rival models” (Ray 1968: 760).

In 1984, the model language is Newspeak and the rival ones are Oldspeak and Proles’ language. In fact, the rulers have decided to make of Newspeak the official language in Oceania. People should therefore use it for their nationalist tasks of day-to-day interactions (Fishman, quoted by Fasold 1993a). Newspeak should represent the symbol of unity among Party members while its use is considered as an adhesion to the principles of the Revolution.

But in reality, it is pointed out in the novel that at the beginning of the Revolution in the year 1984 (the year in the novel) nobody really uses Newspeak either in speech or writing. Only some articles were written in it and the process of planning was still going on. Even in the novel, Newspeak is not the language of the narration. The narrator uses Standard English but it is only in the appendix, at the end of the novel, that he explains the nature and the functioning of Newspeak. Next step is about the status planning.

#### **2-2-1- Status Planning**

It is about the new functions of the language. In fact, Newspeak is built around three different categories of words or vocabularies which are A, B and C. Words of the different categories of vocabulary play different roles in the society.

The A-Vocabulary consists of words needed for business and everyday life. It is about things like drinking, working, eating, dressing, cooking, gardening and the like. In fact, the A-Vocabulary “was intended only to express simple, purposive thoughts usually involving concrete objects or physical” (Orwell 1990: 314).

The B-Vocabulary consists of words deliberately constructed for political purpose. It is very difficult to use and understand these words correctly without a full understanding of the principles of Ingloc. In fact, their use implies an adhesion to the spirit of the Revolution. They are “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 1990: 316). It becomes obvious that in the B-Vocabulary, no word was ideological neutral since all of them carry the content of the Revolution.

In the C-Vocabulary, we find words for technical and scientific terms but they have a rigid meaning so as to avoid undesirable interpretations. “Any scientific worker or technician could find all the words he needed in the list devoted to his own speciality, but he seldom had more than a smattering of the words occurring in other lists.” (Orwell 1990: 323).

In this section, we have elaborated the idea that language planning orientations in 1984 are about corpus and status. The step that follows is its concrete implementation in Oceania.

### **2-3- The Implementation of the Language**

Implementation deals with who will carry the project of planning on and how planners will concretely manage for the use of the language in real life.

#### **2-3-1- Language Planners**

The functions of ideology are “to simplify ideas, to establish a claim to truth, and to demand a commitment to action” (Bell 1962: 400). “Language can act as ideology in this sense in two possible ways: (i) as a major source and embodiment of a group’s worldview,

sanctioning certain forms of behavior and interpretation; and (ii) as a symbol of group unity, virtually commanding group action" (Svensson 1974: 61). To build up a new language that will easily promote their ideologies, the rulers of Oceania have devoted the task to specialists of language or philologists. In fact, they have made some studies in the field of the evolution of language from the point of view of history. And these philologists constitute an "enormous team of experts now engaged in compiling the Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak Dictionary" (Orwell 1990: 51).

Their task mainly consists in inventing new words but chiefly by eliminating words that are judged undesirable for the Revolution. Through the narration, we notice that the philologists are now working on the Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak Dictionary. And this edition is going to give the language its final shape. Syme, one of these philologists, explains to Winston that Newspeak is like a tool at the disposal of the rulers. It will help them achieve their goal which consists in controlling people's mind. Syme points out that "in the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words to express it" (Orwell 1990: 55). In fact, he is aware of the fact that language and thought are linked.

Syme lets know that in reality, the philologists working on Newspeak, far from adding new words to the language, destroy hundreds of them every day. That is what he celebrates and calls the "beauty of the destruction of words" (Orwell 1990: 54) since they want to cut the language down. Their intention is to get rid of many meanings in the old language, or Oldspeak as they call it. This is in reality, the work of many philologists who reduce the number of vocabulary and grammatical units everyday for the Party and the Revolution's sake. Now, we will see the ways in which they make the implementation.

### **2-3-2-How is the Language Implemented?**

This section is about the different steps in the implementation and it is built around three dimensions.

#### **a- The Speech Community**

This dimension is about the background information necessary to language planners. It concerns the society in which they plan the language. In fact, the language planning policy takes place in one of the three Superstates – Oceania, Eurasia and Eastasia- which were competing for the leading of the world in 1984. The planning process develops in Oceania (composed of the North America, the British Isles, Australia and South Africa) but it is mainly in London that everything is done. The population of Oceania was heterogeneous. And in fact, even in London there was a leading group on top of which we have the Inner Party that represents about 2% (two percent) of the population. This minority is strongly determined to stay on power using any kind of tricks or taking any measure, if necessary.

The intermediary group which was the Outer Party represents about 10% (ten percent) of the population and works in 'collaboration' with the Inner Party members. The last group, the Proles, represents about 85% (eighty-five percent) of the population. They were given a great freedom unlike party members. It was because "the Proles are not human beings" (Orwell 1990: 56). So, they were given less importance in life and were even not concerned with the planning policy.

It is therefore important to mention that only Party members, about 12% (twelve percent) of the total population, were concerned with the policy. The running motto was that "Proles and animals are free" (Orwell 1990: 75) which was not a real freedom since they were smashed by the Party. So, the great majority, 85% (eighty-five) percent of the population, is let out of this policy. What are the goals of such a planning policy?

### **b- The Goals**

This part is about the prediction of the planning process. In fact, Newspeak will only be used by the year 2050. The philologists have made the prediction that Newspeak will supersede Oldspeak and as mentioned, the Revolution will end equally with the planning process at that time. It seems to be a very long process and The Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak Dictionary will also end in 2050 since it is in it that the words are compiled. “The Eleventh Edition won’t contain a single word that will become obsolete before the year 2050” (Orwell 1990: 53). This quotation is from Syme, one of the philologists, who ascertains that the planning will stop in year 2050. Now, what are concretely the organs in charge of the implementation?

### **c- The Monitoring organs**

In this novel, language planning seems to be a case that is very rigid. In fact, people are forced to use the language. So, there are some special tools used to check if everything is done for the real implementation of the language policy in progress.

#### **(i)- The Telescreen**

It is a system combining both a telephone and a television or a screen. The telescreen is a very modern means of telecommunication that enables the Party to control everything that happens in the country. It helps give orders but it is also used to spy on the inhabitants and since the invention of the telescreen all private life has come to an end: “the instrument (the telescreen, as it was called) could be diminished, but there was no way of shutting it off completely” (Orwell 1990: 4). “Your worst enemy, he reflected was your own nervous system...the most deadly danger of all was talking in your sleep” (Orwell 1991: 67). “You could not control the beating of your heart, and the telescreen was quite delicate enough to pick it up” (Orwell 1990: 82).

Here are above some of the aspects on the sophistication of the telescreen. Whatever you do, wherever you are, daily or by night, you are spied on. So, the telescreen appears as an efficient mean for the language planning process. It allows the Party to check what everyone is doing for or against the planning process. It makes people use only Newspeak instead of Oldspeak. Its efficiency seems to be undoubtable but where the telescreen does not fit, there is something to supply it.

#### **(ii)- The Microphones**

The Party does its best in order to control everything, including language use, in Oceania. But where it fails to use telescreens, it resorts to microphones mainly in the country. “In general you could not assume that you were much safer in the country than in London. There were no telescreens, of course but there were always the danger of concealed microphones by which your voice might be picked up and recognized.” (Orwell 1990: 123).

It becomes clear that the Party has very long arms and does not neglect even the slightest details since everything is done so as to make the system be unbreakable. It possesses some means of control whose functioning is unbreakable. This could be very useful for the language planning.

#### **(iii)- The Monitoring Police**

In *1984*, there is a terrorist police which efficiency relies on some elements like the telescreens, the microphones and the spy league (to be dealt with in next section). In fact, its operations are directed against the Outer and Inner Party members who are arbitrarily chosen inside the society instead of identifiable enemies. As a matter of fact, some special kinds of

crimes exist. They help have a better control on people and mainly their mind (people should say what the Party expects them to say): the thoughtcrime and the facecrime both of which can lead to death.

The Thought Police, as its name suggests, is against any suspect thought that does not fit the Party's goals. It is an important tool in the language planning process since it prevents people from uttering any undesirable word. And it can also help force them to use Newspeak's words. "A Party member lives from birth to death under the eye of the Thought Police. Even when he is alone he can never be sure that he is alone" (Orwell 1990: 219).

The Party is everywhere and it seems that none can escape and there is a kind of fatality in it! "Thoughtcrime was not a thing that could be concealed for ever. You might dodge successfully for a while, even for years, but sooner or later there were bound to get you" (Orwell 1990: 21).

In reality, the Party organizes life and monitors everything. It is very powerful and it is pitiless when it catches someone doing strange things or uttering forbidden words, which are words that do not make the promotion of the new language. The rulers can go so far as killing people for the language's sake! "When once you had succumbed to thoughtcrime, it was certain that by a given date you would be dead" (Orwell 1990: 107). And to make sure that nobody could escape or pass over the nets of the Monitoring Police, the rulers have even created a special team. In fact, it extends their actions until in the family of the Party members. This is a real proof that the language planning policy should normally but succeed.

#### (iv)- The Spy League

For its regeneration, the Party has decided to associate children to its actions. Their involvement is a good device because they can easily learn and accept what adults tell them since children need adults for their socialization. It is very important to make children learn the new language till their childhood so that they will grow with the principles of the Party contained in the language. "The children, on the other hand, were systematically turned against their parents and taught to spy on them and report their deviations. The family had become in effect an extension of the Thought Police. It was a device by means of which everyone is surrounded night and day by informers who knew him intimately" (Orwell 1990: 140).

People should but use the new language: it seems that they have no choice otherwise they will be denounced by their children. And those of the children who succeed in achieving their mission are seen as models for the society. They are a sort of pride for their parents who think to have given a good education to them. And this is true even when their own children denounce them! "Child hero was the phrase generally used- had overheard some compromising remark and denounced his parents to the Thought Police" (Orwell 1990: 277).

In the society of *1984*, the notion of family does not really matter and the Party is above all. People feel concerned more about the party's regeneration than their parents' safety. They accept it even if it must cost their life. That is the reason why Mr Parsons who has been denounced by his little daughter is not angry at her but he rather said without regret that "she listened at the keyhole ... In fact, I'm proud of her" (Orwell 1990: 245). It is also important to mention that "Newspeak was founded on the English language as we now know it, though many Newspeak sentences, even when not containing newly created words, would be barely intelligible to an English speaker of our own day" (Orwell 1990: 313). Now, what are the outcomes of this language planning policy.

### **3- Consequences of Language Planning in 1984**

We can group the consequences of language planning in 1984 into two main parts: the linguistic consequences and the social ones.

#### **3-1- The Linguistic Consequences**

Language is considered as a “societal resource” and language planning a “decision making” issue to solve “language problems” (Jernudd & Das Gupta quoted by Daoust 1999: 439) but it appears that in solving these linguistic problems some consequences arise on the language in 1984.

##### **3-1-1- The Characteristics of Language**

One of the secret aims of the rulers in Oceania is to make language as independent as possible from the consciousness and this was a way of hijacking the language. In fact, this brought about the loss of some of its characteristics. Words of the B-Vocabulary play a very important role for that purpose: “The use of them encouraged a gabbling style of speech, and once staccato and monotonous. And this was exactly what was aimed at. The intention was to make speech on any subject not ideologically neutral, as nearly as possible independent of consciousness” (Orwell 1990: 321). So, the secret objective is to deprive language off clearness and consciousness. But, it is because human languages are conscious that they differ from animal means of communication. Nonetheless, the language planners have decided to get rid of this aspect of language while devising their scheme.

Talking about consciousness again in human languages, which are not prompted by external factors but are voluntary, here is another situation. In fact, Syme does not look like a real human being when he is using language. “It was not the man’s brain that was speaking, it was his larynx. The stuff that was coming out of him consisted of words, but it was not speech in the true sense: it was a noise uttered in unconsciousness like the quacking of a duck” (Orwell 1990: 57). As we can see, language and thought are tightly interrelated and the fact of taking actions to separate language and thought will lead to the destruction of the very foundation of language.

##### **3-1-2- The Vocabulary**

The new language being created has some fundamental characteristics. In fact, “Newspeak was designed not to extend but to diminish the range of thought, and this purpose was indirectly assisted by cutting the choice of words down to a minimum” (Orwell 1990: 313). As we can see, the language planning has brought about various negative consequences on the vocabulary. It makes move from polystylistic to monostylistic, affecting the style. When in the language some words no longer exist to favor the expression of some aspects of language like in Newspeak, we should worry about the situation!

In fact, planners are destroying the language since they are destroying words: “we’re destroying word-scores of them, hundreds of them, every day” (Orwell 1990: 53). At the same time, the language is very difficult to catch since “some of the B-words had highly subtilised meanings barely intelligible to anyone who had not mastered the language as a whole” (Orwell 1990: 317). The following quotation is a real Newspeak sentence and its equivalence in Standard English: “Oldthinkers unbellyfeel Ingsoc. The shortest rendering that one could make of this in Oldspeak would be: Those whose ideas were formed before the Revolution cannot have a fully emotional understanding of the principles of English Socialism” (Orwell 1990: 317). How can one guess this corresponding equivalence in English? There is really a great danger for the language!

### **3-1-3- The Grammar**

The uniformity of language is not only in the meaning of words but also in the form, in the structuring; in Newspeak “between the verb and the noun, when they were of the same root, there was never any variation, this rule of itself involving the destruction of many archaic forms” (Orwell 1990: 314). What they call “archaic forms” in the language are in reality archaic for the spirit of the Revolution. In fact, it is mainly the forms that make people preserve some of their faculties of judgment. That is why for the Revolution’s sake, grammar has become standardized. That is true for many grammatical units such as adjectives, plurals, inflections, etc. We should normally consider grammatical simplification as something positive since it could help language learners fasten their process. But in *1984*, cutting down or reducing the complexity of grammatical notions is not just a matter of utility. In fact, it helps reduce the range of thought through the reduction of words and the destruction of the language. The final goal is to make the Revolution be deep-rooted.

The real aim of language planners is to make many grammatical devices disappear. That is why they have created the terms archaic forms. And they make Newspeak function in a constant fusion and confusion of grammatical items. For example, the fact that “knife” is at the same time a noun and a verb aims not at simplifying the grammar but it creates confusion in the mind of people. But, the grammatical simplification is not totally bad since it follows the natural tendency of language simplification. In language reforms, grammar is an area submitted to simplification and speakers in normal language tend to simplify language (eg. Helped → helped).

### **3-1-4- The Dictionary**

There are also negative consequences deriving from the compilation of the Dictionary of Newspeak. That is surely why the work seems somehow difficult for the philologists, the compilers of the Dictionary. “The greatest difficulty facing the compilers of the Newspeak Dictionary was not to invent them, to make sure what they meant: to make sure, that is to say, what ranges of words they cancelled” (Orwell 1990: 318).

So, one of the fundamental negative consequences of that language is the loss of the originality of words. That is surely why planners strive to give a much reduced meaning to words if not the contrary. When we consider language as a fundamental means of socialization, we are afraid of what is happening in this case of language planning. But, we should keep on analyzing the possible consequences of the planning on the language itself; and in next section we are going to analyze Newspeak in consideration of Jakobson’s six functions of language.

### **3-1-5- Analysis of Newspeak with Jakobson’s Six Functions of Language**

We will use the six functions of language defined by Jakobson in order to have an insight into the essence of Newspeak and know some of the consequences of the language planning. At first sight, we notice that the establishment and maintenance of communication for social cohesion are non-existent. It is the telescreen that keeps the citizens institutionally and permanently in contact with the rulers by invading the citizens’ intimacy. In fact, “the telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously” (Orwell 1990: 2) so that there is no phatic function in Newspeak. However, it is the function by means of which we establish and interrupt, or even put an end to a communication between speakers.

In Oceania, the citizens are only restricted to the expression of Ingsoc’s ideological principles. So, neither the expressive nor the connotative function exists within Newspeak.

The citizens are, in fact, like automatons who receive orders either from the telescreen or from some remote planning committee. The vocabulary and the lexical reforms have brought about a lack of stylistic variation which is an inherent characteristic of ordinary languages.

There is also neither the denotative nor the poetic function within Newspeak. That is why some forms are judged as being archaic and are deleted in the language; there is rather a radical reference substitution in order to reshape words according to the Party's principles and to avoid secondary meanings of words. This entails the destruction of the poetic function and denotative function as well. No shift in meaning and no figurative use of language is admitted in Newspeak.

The subsequent death of the artistic dimension of Newspeak is illustrated by Ampleforth's failure to find a rhyming word for "rod". In fact, he is the Party's poet who was writing a poem but he realized that Poetry in Newspeak is not easy, not even possible at all without the use of Oldspeak's words.

Finally, only the metalinguistic function exists in Newspeak because it contains many features that give information about its inner functioning. The metalinguistic function is maintained in *1984* because it does not hinder the political object of the language planning here. So, only the exact knowledge of the Party's principles can ensure an accurate comprehension of the language of the Revolution which is more ideological than linguistic.

When we consider the total number of functions advocated by Jakobson (six functions), only one exists in Newspeak. This is the proof that the new language is really affected by the policy. And it is somehow alarming for the future of the language in *1984*. The review of the different linguistic features that we have analyzed shows that there are more negative consequences on the language than before the planning process. But, language exists in society and language planning can have some societal goals. So, in the following section, we are going to analyze the social consequences of the planning scheme in Orwell's *1984*.

### **3-2- The Social Consequences**

The actual aim of language planning is to solve some linguistic problems in a given society. But, in the interaction between language and society, the society undergoes some modifications. In the case of *1984*, we can view the social consequences of language planning around five dimensions.

#### **3-2-1- The Individuals**

Any individual is a part of the society in which he/she lives. So, whatever is undertaken inside the society can have an impact on him/her. In the novel, the rulers have decided to hijack the language for ideological purposes. And the individuals are those toward whom the rulers orientate their decisions. It is mainly at the psychological level that they feel this reality.

The language planning policy has indeed created a climate of uncertainty in the mind of everybody and things that they used to consider as obvious are now unreliable. People, for example, doubt of the period in which they live! "At this moment, for example in 1984 (if it was 1984)" (Orwell 1990: 36). It therefore appears that in the country, "even the date of the year had become uncertain" (Orwell 1990: 44).

We can, without exaggeration, assert that people even doubt of themselves, of their existence, of whatever we could consider as fundamental in the life of human beings. The language planning makes everything change since many things that could help people remind of the new language no longer exist. And "when there were no external records that you could refer to, even the outline of your own life lost its sharpness..." (Orwell 1990: 34).

There is indeed a relationship between language and thought and this implies that when we destroy language, it is a part of the thought that we are destroying. And the Party has revealed its intentions to erase everything that does not serve the purpose of the Revolution. So, when the planning scheme aims at destroying language, it is sure that it can have a negative impact on the language users.

We should also not forget that in *1984*, there is interdependence between the Revolution and the language and the final aim of the language planning is to guarantee the success of the Revolution. But, when the language is modified for the Revolution's sake, this does not happen without raising controversies. That is what we can perceive in this quotation: "Everything had been different then. Even the names of countries and their shapes on the map, had been different" (Orwell 1990: 34).

By means of Newspeak, the new language, the Party is able to control the thought. And only what the Party says is true (?) since no individual can afford to think. We have already shown that language can become an ideology and this is what has happened in the novel. In fact, the Party has managed to make language convey only ideological ideas. The analysis leads us to the conclusion that the planning process has many negative consequences on the individuals of Oceania and this can possibly be true for the whole society.

### **3-2-2- The Society**

In Oceania, many people have succumbed to the attack of the rulers in their activity of shaping the Revolution in order to remain on power. The community is divided into three different groups using three kinds of languages: Oldspeak or Standard English, Newspeak and the Proles' language. It is in this cosmopolitan speech community that the Party rulers vary the techniques to remain on Power and this is made easier by the language they modify according to their will.

The majority of the population does not accept the language policy but rulers divide and rule. Therefore, people live "in the absence of any real intercommunication between one part of Oceania and another" (Orwell 1990: 89). The Party surely fears the birth of any kind of solidarity between inhabitants that is why it promotes distance. So, there is no close relationship between language users. Since the rulers are aware of the fact that language fulfills some unifying and separatist functions, they have decided to devise a language - Newspeak - in addition to Oldspeak and the Proles' language.

One of the preventive measures of the Party is to avoid an uprising that could overthrow it. In the process of language planning, the rulers have advocated linguistic pluralism which is in this case a device to maintain social distance. It is not a new language that promotes the same and unique linguistic identity for the whole population of Oceania but, it reinforces its stratification: many languages, several social realities and various objectives. That is the picture of the Oceanic world just to avoid any attempt of unification perceived as a threat.

That is surely why the Proles are free to live as they want and they are allegorically assimilated to animals. But, for the language planning's sake as well as the ideological purposes, Outer and Inner Party members live from birth to death under the control of the Thought Police. This makes ensure that they use the newly-created language and do not utter forbidden Oldspeak words.

Because of language planning, a wife or a child can denounce her/his relatives. This leads to a situation of general suspicion and break the familial links. Freedom of thought but also of expression no longer exists. In fact, the Party considers some words that are uttered to complain against its ruling of the society as undesirable. In Oceania, "no one dares trust a wife or a child or a friend any longer" (Orwell 1990: 250). Children are "like the gamboling

of tiger cubs which will soon grow up into man-eaters" (Orwell 1990: 25). The Party only cares about its Revolution through the success in the implementation of Newspeak. And this is alarming for the future of the nation because "by means of such organization as the spies they [children] were systematically turned into ungovernable little savages" (Orwell 1990: 26).

In *1984*, there are two categories of people who judge the language differently. People of the first category like Syme – lesser numerous- see what is done to language as something marvelous. But, the majority of the population dislikes it. "Since the new language as a means of communication was a product of and was reflecting the 'real language of life' elsewhere, it could never as spoken or written properly reflect or imitate the real life of that community" (Ngugi 1986: 16). So, Winston Smith does not like the language mainly because he sees that there are more negative impacts than positive ones in Newspeak. In *1984* what are the impacts of the language policy on culture?

### **3-2-3- The Culture**

It is somehow fundamental to ask about the real existence of culture in *1984*. When we regard it as something specific to any society and carried on through language, we are a bit frightened. Our worry lies in the fact that language has been highjacked. So, will it continue to fulfill its basic functions as a potential carrier of cultural values? The answer seems to be desperately no when we realize for example that: "Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book has been re-written, every picture has been re-painted, every statue and street and building has been re-named, every date has been altered" (Orwell 1990: 162).

When we destroy a given language, as the quotation develops, the destruction brings about the death of its cultural values. What is indeed the future for the culture without a language? As we have analyzed, culture needs a permanent language to ensure its existence. Ngugi (1986:13) is of the same idea when he assumes that "language, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture". But, when there is a language planning policy which basic aims are to destroy the language itself, there is a real fear for the survival of the culture that has in reality ceased to exist in Oceania. But, what is about the history in *1984*?

### **3-2-4- The History**

History seems to be one of the worst enemy of the Party so some measures have been taken in this respect. And like the culture, the destruction of the history lies in the destruction of language which seems, in fact, to be the real motive of the language planning scheme. And the permanent desire to destroy history involves the consequent disappearance of language. History is being destroyed because the language is continuously shifting. "And that process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped" (Orwell 1990: 162).

In so doing, the Party seeks to erase all information relative to the period before the revolution in order to avoid any comparison with life under the party's rule. It seems to be a process ensuring the permanence of the party. It enables the rulers to hide their errors and lies since "everything faded into mist. The past was erased, the evidence was forgotten, the lie becomes truth" (Orwell 1990: 78).

This situation is really frightening since "the past was not only changed, but changed continuously" (Orwell 1990: 83). Like in any totalitarian regime, everything is in the hands of rulers "thus history is continuously rewritten... The past is whatever the Party chooses to make it" (Orwell 1990: 222). The past is mainly destroyed because the language which is supposed to ensure its existence is being destroyed through a planning scheme.

This situation puts Winston Smith in a real situation of despair that is why he said that “the past was dead, the future was unimaginable” (Orwell 1990: 28). This is true since the Party has erased all the external records, anything that could be considered as a kind of bridge between old days and present time. And what is worst of all is that the process is going on since the Party decides to put anything useful to its permanence in the new language.

As we have seen above, the social consequences of language planning in *1984* are numerous, all of which are negative. This is because the rulers want to remain on power. So, they take any measure even if they can lead to the whole destruction of language. In fact, their objective is to keep the language under their control and this is done throughout a planning process. That is what makes some people like Winston Smith ask if they still have an identity.

### **3-2-5- The Quest for Identity**

The first action that Winston Smith undertakes in his recovery of himself as an individual was to write “to the future or to the past, to a time when thought is free (...) from the age of uniformity” (Orwell 1990: 30). He was, in fact, committing thoughtcrime which entails death. Winston Smith wanted to assert himself as an individual who is entitled to write or to use language according to his desire and convenience. He is just making a protest (only the Party should do this). At that time, it was forbidden to write even the shortest word!

So, this is an act of consciousness but he does not know to whom he was writing or with whom he was going to communicate. What future for a language that does not serve as an efficient means of writing and speaking among its users? He writes to abstract humanity and what he writes goes beyond time and space since everything is imaginary. He feels the desire to escape from the world of *1984*, of Oceania. This is because Big Brother, the leading figure of the party and his system (including the language scheme) prevent him from being himself, a human being.

The restoration of humanity starts with the restoration of the individual. And he tries to restore the historical as well as the cultural past of his community since when you know your past, you know your existence. And language can help him face ignorance.

The quest for the past makes Winston undertake an inquiry that leads him into the area of the Proles and he starts asking questions. For him, the Proles live in an environment where some aspects of the past have been held (old houses, songs of the past) since the Proles were not concerned with the language policy. So, they have kept their linguistic behavior. And Winston mentions that “if there was hope, it lay in the Proles!” (Orwell 1990: 229).

But, the party is so powerful that it does not allow any resistance to take a very long time. Winston Smith was unpredictably caught by the Thought Police. He was the only one who tried to reinstate the past –including the linguistic past- of Oceania.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this research work, the main concern was to know whether language planning can be a source of oppression in a community. Very concretely, we wanted to know whether linguistic oppression could be a possible consequence of language planning. For this purpose, we have chosen a novel by George Orwell. In fact, this writer usually makes reference of language throughout most of his literary work.

We have started by showing the importance of language in Orwell’s work. And we discovered that he considers himself as a committed writer who should influence, positively, his society when the tendency is that rulers want to bamboozle the population and make them believe into erroneous facts. And since the dictators make use of language to distort real facts, Orwell also uses language to fight back all totalitarian systems.

Language is the best tool for socialization; it is something that enables a human being become a full member of his community. The importance of language therefore requires that we pay a particular attention to any decision taken for its management. That is the reason why we have decided to make an analysis of the language planning policy in progress in Orwell's *1984*. Language planning is a policy of language management which mostly develops in multilingual context and the study of language planning is the study of all the efforts used to find relevant solutions to the linguistic problems in society. In *1984*, the policy is a case of corpus and status planning with some coercive measures taken for its success.

The consequences of language planning in this novel are negative in general. We have found two kinds: the linguistic and the social consequences. In fact, after the analysis of Newspeak by the light of the characteristics of language but also of Jakobson's six functions of language, we come to the conclusion that most of the attributes of human languages no more exist. A meticulous look at Newspeak's vocabulary, grammar and dictionary let appear many negative impacts on the language.

A study of the social consequences also reveals that the planning scheme has many negative influences on the individuals, the society as a whole but also the history and the culture of Oceania. The planning scheme seems to do more harm to the language than it really serves it in the positive way. It is as if the real aim of the rulers and the language planners were the total destruction of the language for a real domination on the society.

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