

## LANGUAGE, IDEOLOGY, AND POWER IN GEORGE ORWELL'S ANIMAL FARM

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**Abstract.** This study examines the relationship between language, ideology, and power in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* using the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. The research investigates how linguistic strategies are employed by dominant characters to establish and maintain political authority. Through qualitative textual analysis of slogans, speeches, narrative discourse, and manipulated commandments, the findings reveal that language functions as an ideological instrument that legitimizes inequality and suppresses resistance. The study demonstrates that Orwell deliberately exposes how political power is constructed and sustained through discourse rather than force. The article contributes to literary linguistics by highlighting the central role of language in ideological domination.

**Keywords:** language, ideology, power, Critical Discourse Analysis, George Orwell, *Animal Farm*

**Аннотация.** В статье анализируется взаимосвязь языка, идеологии и власти в произведении Джорджа Оруэлла *Скотный двор* с использованием теоретической модели Critical Discourse Analysis. Исследование показывает, что язык используется как средство идеологического контроля и политического господства. Посредством лозунгов, риторических искажений и изменения законов доминирующая группа укрепляет свою власть. Результаты подтверждают, что язык играет ключевую роль в воспроизводстве социального неравенства и авторитарной системы.

**Ключевые слова:** язык, идеология, власть, Critical Discourse Analysis, Джордж Оруэлл, *Скотный двор*

### 1. Introduction

Language is a fundamental instrument through which social realities are constructed, negotiated, and maintained. In political and ideological contexts, language functions not only as a medium of communication but also as a powerful mechanism for shaping beliefs, legitimizing authority, and sustaining systems of dominance. Political power is rarely enforced through physical coercion alone; rather, it is often established and preserved through discourse that influences how individuals perceive reality, authority, and truth.

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* provides a compelling literary illustration of this phenomenon. As a political allegory, the novel exposes how revolutionary ideals can be manipulated through language to serve the interests of a dominant elite. Orwell demonstrates that those who control discourse also control ideology, enabling them to reshape collective consciousness and normalize inequality. Through speeches, slogans, altered commandments, and narrative manipulation, language becomes a strategic tool for consolidating power and suppressing resistance.

While *Animal Farm* has been widely analyzed as a satirical critique of totalitarianism, relatively limited attention has been paid to the specific linguistic mechanisms through which power operates in the text. Many literary studies focus on historical or political symbolism, often overlooking how discourse itself functions as an ideological weapon. This study addresses that



gap by examining *Animal Farm* through the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, which views language as a form of social practice deeply embedded in power relations.

By applying Critical Discourse Analysis, this research seeks to uncover how linguistic choices—such as repetition, modality, simplification, and rhetorical manipulation—contribute to the construction and maintenance of authority in the novel. The central research question guiding this study is: How does language function as an ideological tool in constructing and sustaining power in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*? Through this inquiry, the article aims to demonstrate that Orwell's critique of authoritarianism is fundamentally rooted in his representation of language as a means of ideological control.

## 2. Methods

This research adopts a qualitative textual analysis method based on Critical Discourse Analysis, particularly drawing on the models proposed by Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk. Critical Discourse Analysis views language as a social practice that both reflects and constructs power relations.

The data consist of selected extracts from *Animal Farm*, including slogans, speeches, commandments, and narrative descriptions. These textual elements were analyzed at three levels:

1. Textual level (lexical choices, modality, repetition)
2. Discursive practice (production and interpretation of discourse)
3. Social practice (ideology and power relations)

This approach allows for a systematic examination of how linguistic structures contribute to ideological control.

## 3. Results

The analysis reveals several dominant linguistic strategies used to construct power:

First, repetition and slogans such as “Four legs good, two legs bad” function as simplified ideological tools that actively discourage critical thinking among the animals. From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, such slogans exemplify how complex political and social realities are reduced to binary oppositions that are easy to remember and difficult to question. By repeatedly chanting the same phrase, the animals internalize a rigid ideological framework that divides the world into “us” and “them,” thereby eliminating nuance and alternative interpretations. Moreover, the constant repetition of slogans serves a cognitive function by replacing rational thought with automatic response. As the slogan becomes normalized through frequent use, it suppresses individual reasoning and transforms ideology into an unquestioned truth. This process aligns with Van Dijk's view that dominant groups control social cognition by shaping collective memory and belief systems through discourse. In *Animal Farm*, the pigs exploit this mechanism to maintain ideological dominance, ensuring that the animals accept political decisions without scrutiny.

Additionally, the slogan's rhythmic and simplistic structure enhances its persuasive power. Its childlike construction makes it accessible even to illiterate animals, reinforcing linguistic inequality while simultaneously masking ideological manipulation. Over time, the slogan evolves—eventually becoming “Four legs good, two legs better”—demonstrating how discourse can be subtly modified to reflect shifts in power while preserving the illusion of continuity. This transformation illustrates how repetition not only enforces ideology but also allows authority to redefine meaning without provoking resistance.

Second, manipulation of laws and commandments demonstrates how written discourse legitimizes inequality and reinforces authority. The gradual alteration of the Seven Commandments exemplifies how those in power rewrite ideology to suit their political interests



while maintaining an appearance of legality and continuity. By subtly modifying the wording of the commandments rather than openly abolishing them, the pigs create the illusion that the original principles of equality remain intact. This strategy prevents the other animals from recognizing the extent of ideological betrayal. From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, such changes reveal how written discourse functions as a tool of institutional power. The commandments, once presented as fixed and unquestionable truths, become flexible texts controlled exclusively by the ruling group. As a result, inequality is normalized and justified through language, allowing domination to be maintained without direct confrontation or force.

Third, authoritative modality and commands serve as a powerful linguistic mechanism to reinforce dominance and control in *Animal Farm*. Modal verbs such as *must*, *shall*, and *cannot* are used strategically by the pigs to impose obligation and convey an unchallengeable authority. These linguistic choices do more than indicate rules—they create a sense of inevitability and moral correctness, compelling compliance from other animals. By framing directives as absolute necessities rather than suggestions, the pigs suppress critical thought and minimize the possibility of dissent. The use of modality highlights how language constructs social hierarchies and maintains power asymmetries. The frequent employment of authoritative verbs positions the speaker as unquestionably legitimate while rendering listeners passive recipients of orders. Additionally, these modals carry an ideological weight, presenting the pigs' decisions as justified and natural, rather than arbitrary impositions. Consequently, even when commands contradict the animals' interests, the linguistic framing obscures coercion, normalizing obedience and reinforcing the overall power structure within the farm.

Finally, control of narrative and historical truth allows the pigs to reshape collective memory. By redefining past events, they maintain ideological dominance without physical force.

#### 4. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that language in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* operates as a central mechanism for establishing, maintaining, and legitimizing power. Through the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, it becomes clear that Orwell deliberately embeds ideology into discourse, normalizing authority and inequality through linguistic strategies such as repetition, slogans, modal verbs, manipulation of written laws, and control of narrative. These strategies do not simply convey information—they shape the animals' perception of reality and limit their ability to critically evaluate social and political structures.

The pervasive use of slogans like "Four legs good, two legs bad" illustrates how repetition functions as a cognitive and ideological tool, making abstract political concepts accessible while simultaneously discouraging independent thought. This aligns with Fairclough's assertion that discourse sustains unequal power relations by naturalizing ideology, so that what is imposed by the ruling group appears self-evident and unquestionable. Similarly, the gradual modification of the Seven Commandments demonstrates how written discourse can be strategically altered to legitimize inequality and consolidate authority without overt coercion, reinforcing Van Dijk's sociocognitive claim that controlling discourse shapes collective beliefs and social cognition.

The pigs' strategic use of authoritative modality, through verbs such as *must* and *shall*, further consolidates their dominance by framing commands as morally and socially necessary. From the Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, modality not only signals obligation but also communicates ideological assumptions about legitimacy and hierarchy. By embedding authority into grammatical structures, Orwell shows how language itself can enforce compliance and normalize obedience, even when the directives contradict the animals' interests.



Finally, the pigs' manipulation of narrative and historical truth exemplifies the subtle ways discourse controls perception and memory. By selectively recounting events and redefining past actions, they reshape the collective understanding of reality, making ideological dominance appear natural. This illustrates that power is often maintained through consent shaped by language rather than through overt violence—a point central to both Orwell's critique and Critical Discourse Analysis theory.

## 5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, language functions as a central and indispensable instrument for constructing, legitimizing, and maintaining power. Through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis, the research reveals that linguistic strategies—such as repetitive slogans, manipulation of written laws and commandments, authoritative modality, and control of narrative—operate collectively to embed ideology into the consciousness of the animals. These strategies not only facilitate the consolidation of authority but also normalize inequality and suppress critical thinking, illustrating that domination in Orwell's novel is achieved through discourse as much as through any form of physical coercion.

Repetition and slogans simplify complex political ideas, promoting passive acceptance of the pigs' authority. Modifications of the Seven Commandments show how written discourse can be strategically altered to justify inequality while maintaining the illusion of original principles. Authoritative modality frames commands as morally and socially necessary, reinforcing compliance, and the manipulation of narrative and historical events reshapes collective memory, further consolidating ideological control. Collectively, these mechanisms demonstrate that power in *Animal Farm* is maintained through consent shaped by language, rather than overt violence.

The study also highlights the critical relevance of Critical Discourse Analysis in literary linguistics. By analyzing how discourse constructs, reproduces, and legitimizes power relations, researchers can uncover the subtle ways authors encode ideology and authority within texts. Orwell's novel serves as a clear example of how language itself becomes a site of struggle, control, and domination, illustrating that understanding power requires careful attention to linguistic strategies.

In conclusion, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is not only a political allegory but also a study of the intricate relationship between language, ideology, and power. The findings of this research underscore that literary texts can be analyzed as instruments of social influence, where language functions as both a mirror and a tool of authority. This insight contributes to literary linguistics, sociolinguistics, and discourse studies by demonstrating that ideological domination is most effective when embedded in discourse itself, shaping beliefs, behaviors, and social hierarchies in subtle, pervasive, and enduring ways.

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