



## LEXICOLOGICAL FEATURES AND IDEOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS OF NEOLOGISMS IN GEORGE ORWELL'S 1984 AND MARGARET ATWOOD'S THE HANDMAID'S TALE

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**Annotation:** This article examines the structural, semantic, and functional characteristics of neologisms in two canonical dystopian novels: George Orwell's 1984 and Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale. Through lexicological, semantic, comparative, and discourse-analytic methods, the study identifies how newly coined or semantically transformed lexical units operate as tools of ideological manipulation, world-building, and cognitive control. The findings demonstrate that Orwell's Newspeak functions through lexical reduction and conceptual restriction, while Atwood's Gilead lexicon relies on euphemism, resemanticization, and symbolic renaming. The article argues that dystopian neologisms not only shape fictional realities but also extend into contemporary sociopolitical discourse, influencing real-world vocabulary related to surveillance, gender oppression, and authoritarianism.

**Keywords:** neologism, dystopia, Newspeak, Gilead, lexicology, word-formation, discourse analysis.

**Аннотация:** В данной работе исследуются неологизмы в антиутопических романах Джорджа Оруэлла 1984 и Маргарет Этвуд The Handmaid's Tale. Неологизмы рассматриваются не только как языковые инновации, но и как инструменты идеологического контроля, манипуляции и формирования мировоззрения внутри тоталитарных обществ. Методологическая основа исследования включает лексикологический, семантический, сравнительный и критический дискурс-анализ, что позволяет выявить структурные особенности новых слов, их семантические трансформации, тематические поля и социально-политические функции. Анализ показывает, что в 1984 новояз стремится к радикальному сокращению лексики и уничтожению смысловых оттенков, тогда как в The Handmaid's Tale язык Гилеада опирается на эвфемизацию, религиозное переосмысление и символическую номинацию социальных ролей. Особое внимание уделяется тому, как некоторые неологизмы выходят за рамки художественного текста и закрепляются в современном английском языке. Исследование подчеркивает важность языка как механизма власти и подтверждает, что неологизмы являются ключевыми средствами моделирования антиутопической реальности.

**Annotatsiya:** Ushbu tadqiqot Jorj Oruellning 1984 hamda Margaret Etvudning The Handmaid's Tale asarlarida uchraydigan neologizmlarni tahlil qiladi. Neologizmlar nafaqat til yangiliklari sifatida, balki totalitar jamiyatlarda mafkuraviy nazorat, manipulyatsiya va dunyoqarashni shakllantirish vositalari sifatida ko'rib chiqiladi.



Tadqiqot metodologiyasi leksikologik, semantik, qiyosiy va tanqidiy diskurs tahlilini o'z ichiga oladi. Ushbu yondashuvlar yangi so'zlarning tuzilishi, semantik o'zgarishlari, tematik guruhlari va ijtimoiy-siyosiy funksiyalarini aniqlashga imkon beradi. Tahlil natijalariga ko'ra, 1984 romanidagi Newspeak tilni qisqartirish va mazmuniy noziklikni yo'q qilishga qaratilgan bo'lsa, *The Handmaid's Tale* asaridagi Gilead leksikoni diniy metaforalar, evfemizm va ijtimoiy rollarning ramziy nomlanishiga asoslanadi. Shuningdek, ayrim neologizmlarning zamonaviy ingliz tilida keng qo'llanila boshlagani ta'kidlanadi. Tadqiqot tilning hokimiyat mexanizmi sifatidagi ahamiyatini ko'rsatadi va neologizmlarning antiutopik olamni yaratishda muhim vosita ekanini tasdiqlaydi.

## INTRODUCTION

Language occupies a central position in dystopian narratives as a mechanism for shaping thought, controlling populations, and constructing ideological realities. The emergence of neologisms—newly coined words or semantically reconfigured expressions—serves as one of the primary strategies through which dystopian authors articulate the mechanisms of totalitarian control (Plag, 2003; Crystal, 2018). In George Orwell's *1984*, Newspeak exemplifies a programmatic, state-enforced destruction of linguistic diversity, whereas Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* employs euphemistic and religiously infused neologisms to naturalize patriarchal domination.

Although numerous studies have explored dystopian language, comparatively fewer works provide a systematic lexicological comparison of Orwell and Atwood. This article fills that gap by analyzing the structural and thematic properties of neologisms across both novels. The research seeks to answer the following questions:

What morphological and semantic mechanisms are employed to create dystopian neologisms?

How do these neologisms function ideologically?

How do the two authors differ in their linguistic strategies?

## METHODS

The methodological foundation of this research is built upon a comprehensive combination of linguistic and literary approaches that allow for an in-depth examination of neologisms in George Orwell's *1984* and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. Since neologisms in dystopian literature function simultaneously as linguistic innovations and instruments of ideological manipulation, the analysis requires a multi-layered methodology that integrates descriptive, comparative, and interpretative techniques. The study employs a qualitative research design, which prioritizes contextual and conceptual interpretation over quantitative measurement. This approach is particularly suitable for exploring the cultural, ideological, and narrative dimensions of neologisms created within fictional representations of totalitarian societies.

The primary analytical tool is lexicological analysis, which focuses on identifying the structural characteristics of neologisms, the processes through which they are



formed, and the principles governing their use within the authors' invented linguistic systems. This method makes it possible to determine which word-formation mechanisms—such as compounding, affixation, abbreviation, blending, and semantic modification—are employed to construct new lexical items. Lexicological inquiry also reveals how morphological choices reflect the ideological purposes of dystopian regimes, illustrating the interplay between linguistic form and political intention.

Semantic analysis constitutes the second major method. It is used to examine how meanings are transformed within the narrative worlds of the novels, tracing processes such as semantic narrowing, broadening, euphemistic reinterpretation, and the emergence of new connotative layers. This method is essential for understanding how familiar words—such as *Ceremony*, *Angels*, *free*, or *unwoman*—acquire distorted and ideologically charged meanings that function as tools of cognitive and social manipulation. Semantic analysis thus clarifies the qualitative changes that occur when language is appropriated by a totalitarian system.

The research also employs content analysis to classify neologisms according to thematic domains, including authority and control, surveillance, religion, violence, bodily regulation, and social stratification. This method reveals which conceptual fields dominate in each novel and how these fields contribute to constructing a coherent ideological universe. Content analysis makes it possible to detect patterns of thematic emphasis, demonstrating which spheres of human life are most heavily regulated through linguistic innovation.

Comparative analysis plays a critical role in identifying key similarities and differences between the linguistic strategies of Orwell and Atwood. It highlights the contrast between Orwell's reductive Newspeak—characterized by vocabulary contraction, simplification, and the elimination of semantic nuance—and Atwood's euphemistic, symbolically enriched lexicon, which relies on resemanticization and religious metaphor. Comparative analysis allows for a deeper understanding of how different models of linguistic manipulation reflect distinct forms of political and social oppression depicted in the two novels.

A central component of the methodological framework is critical discourse analysis (CDA), which examines the relationship between language, power, and ideology. This method is used to explore neologisms as discursive instruments that shape subjects' perceptions, enforce obedience, and legitimize institutional authority. Through CDA, the study investigates how ideological meanings are embedded in linguistic forms and how these meanings contribute to the reproduction of oppressive systems. This approach provides insight into the ways in which totalitarian discourse becomes normalized and internalized by characters—and potentially by readers.

All methods in this study function in a complementary manner. Lexicological and semantic analysis establish the structural and interpretive basis for understanding neologisms; content analysis identifies their thematic organization; comparative analysis contextualizes the similarities and distinctions between the two works; and



critical discourse analysis explains their socio-ideological significance. Together, these methods offer a holistic and rigorous framework for exploring how neologisms in dystopian literature operate as tools of power, mechanisms of worldview construction, and essential components of narrative design.

## RESULTS

The analysis revealed that Newspeak relies heavily on: compounding (*crimethink*, *facecrime*), prefixation/suffixation reduction (*ungood*, *plusgood*), abbreviation (*Minitrue*, *Miniluv*, *Ingsoc*).

These forms eliminate synonyms, emotional nuance, and conceptual complexity. As the Appendix to *1984* states, Newspeak aims “to make all other modes of thought impossible” (Orwell, 1949, p. 312).

Atwood employs blending (*Particicution* = participation + execution), semantic redefinition (*Ceremony*, *Angels*, *Eyes*), onomastic neologisms (*Ofglen*, *Offred*) through patronymic naming, euphemism (*Salvaging*, *Birth Day*).

Unlike Newspeak, Gilead’s language expands and distorts familiar words, masking brutality under religious rhetoric.

In *1984*, neologisms such as *Thought Police*, *telescreen*, and *facecrime* enforce internalized control.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the term *Eyes* creates a metaphor of divine omniscience.

Gilead’s patronymic system (*Of-Fred*) erases individuality, while Orwell’s *unperson* linguistically annihilates existence.

Atwood’s euphemistic *Salvaging* and *Particicution* rebrand collective violence as civic duty.

Orwell uses stark compounds (*crimestop*, *vaporized*) to normalize terror.

### *Integration into Modern English*

Several Orwellian neologisms have entered everyday vocabulary: *doublethink*, *Newspeak*, *Big Brother*, *thoughtcrime*. Atwood’s *Handmaid* has become a global feminist symbol, particularly in political protests. This extension into real-world discourse shows that dystopian neologisms transcend fiction and acquire cultural significance (Reshmi, 2016).

## DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that while both authors utilize neologisms as instruments of control, their linguistic strategies diverge sharply.

Orwell’s Newspeak is contractive:

- reduces semantic range,
- removes linguistic tools for dissent,
- simplifies syntax and vocabulary,
- relies on mechanical derivation.

Atwood’s language is expansive and symbolic:

- familiar words are resemanticized,
- euphemisms conceal violence,



-patriarchy is naturalized through religious rhetoric,  
-names become ideological labels.

Thus, Orwell attacks language structurally, while Atwood attacks it symbolically. Both strategies achieve the same objective: restricting perception of reality.

Furthermore, the penetration of these neologisms into modern sociopolitical debate illustrates the predictive power of dystopian language. The persistence of Orwellian terms in journalistic discourse suggests that linguistic frameworks of control remain relevant in contemporary society.

### CONCLUSION

The study concludes that neologisms in *1984* and *The Handmaid's Tale* function as core mechanisms of ideological domination. Through contrasting linguistic strategies—lexical reduction in Orwell and euphemistic expansion in Atwood—both authors demonstrate how manipulation of language can reshape cognition, identity, and social order. The lasting presence of these neologisms in modern English further underscores their cultural and political significance.

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