



اللغة الخشبية: مراجعة مقال

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الملخص

ينشر الكاتب و الصحفي البريطاني جورج اورويل مقالته عن اللغة الخشبية. يرى اورويل بأن هذه اللغة تضلل الكلام و تحوره أكثر من أن تكون وسيلة لا يصال الفكرة. يؤكد اورويل على مدى خطورة هذه اللغة و تأثيرها على تكوين الكلام الغامض بدلا من التواصل الفعال.

## Wooden Language: A Subject Review

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### Introductory Note

George Orwell a British author and Journalist publishes an essay where he evaluates the use of wooden language. Orwell states that readers are deceived or manipulated rather than being informed by this type of language. He argues the danger of using wooden language causing obscure meaning rather than conveying it. [4]

### Problem

Wooden language is identified by Orwell as an ongoing and significant problem in political and academic fields. Within the framework of discourse analysis, this vagueness of wooden language as Orwell critiques keeps its relevance in today's communication. However, its application; how it is used, e.g. political and academic fields, and its implication; what wooden language leads to, e.g. manipulation of public opinion, deceiving readers, etc. still needs more discussions. What is missed here in the modern linguistic world is the shift from persuasion to a dead presentation where language is changed from a way for active communication to a means for protecting authority.

### Aim and Process

In line with the above- mentioned problem, this essay aims to review the ongoing problem in academic field and to remind the reader of the application as well as implication of wooden language in addition to the suggestions for various ways to avoid it within the framework of discourse analysis.

The definition of wooden language and its characteristics, as well as its relevance to discourse analysis, and how to avoid it are mentioned in the present essay.



## Lexical Composition and the Origin

The lexical composition of “wooden language” is a noun+ preposition+ noun, where “wooden” meaning “dry”, devoid of sentiment, determines “language”. [2]

The term “wooden language” is originated from the French phrase “language de bois” translated according to the encyclopedia of political thoughts, “stereotyped, formulaic language used to conceal reality.” [3] Besides, Orwell [4] associates the term with a “mechanical and lifeless Language”.

## Characteristics

### - Syntactic Structures

Philipson syntactically characterizes wooden language with passive voice and nominalization. [5]

### - Lexical Choices

Orwell states the lexical choices for wooden language as “clichés, jargon and euphemisms”. [4]

### - Semantic Features

van Dijk mentions abstraction, unclearness and obscurity as semantic attributes of wooden language. [7]

### - Pragmatic Function

Barthes expresses ambiguous speeches/ texts that make truth vague therefore manipulate the perception of the listener/ reader. [1]

## The Relevance to Discourse Analysis

van Dijk explains the way language is abused to manipulate discourse. Therefore, dominant ideologies are perpetuated. [7] In addition, Orwell highlights how power inequality and hidden ideologies are unraveled through analyzing wooden language within discourse analysis framework. [4]

## How to Avoid It

In his Politics and the English Language, Orwell suggests to be accurate and to use real details instead of ambiguous phrases. [4]

Strunk and White in his Elements of Style, also suggests to avoid passive structures and to be more clear incorporating active voice. [6]

In his Mythologies, Barthes states another way to avoid wooden language by making jargon and clichés recede. [1]



Finally, van Dijk in his discourse and power, considers euphemistic expressions enhance the vagueness of language that should be avoided.

### AI Implications on Linguistic Field

- Linguistic simplification: simpler linguistic forms are obtained because of AI penetration
- Creative expressions: in spite of the fact that AI causes machine understanding not the human's, new world of expressions has been born.
- Linguistic homogenization: AI has been threatening language variety as well as wooden language by accelerating the distribution of current language.

### Author's View

My view on Orwell's essay suggests that today wooden language not only covers truth, but also damages the public ability to reveal it. While Orwell concentrated on the speaker's "mental anesthesia", I focus on the point that today's communication causes a kind of "mental anesthesia" even for the listener. Therefore, when political or academic discourse is built of pre-packaged expressions, language becomes no longer a mental bridge for conveying thoughts. My opinion declares that in modern communication the voice of power becomes much more important than the essence of the topic in communication.

### Conclusion

The article reviewed George Orwell's work on wooden language. Since its association with today's academic and political texts, its danger is still ongoing and needs more discussions. The origin of the expression 'wooden language', its characteristics, its relevance to discourse analysis and how to avoid it, is briefly discussed. Author's view is presented at the end of the essay.

### References

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