

## Literature Review on Politics and the English Language (1946) by George Orwell

Reviewed by Akshita Kalra

In George Orwell's essay, he talks about the complex relationship between the English language and politics. He speaks about the importance of using simple language to enable communication between political leaders and the public.

Orwell's essay begins by talking about how the English language has gotten into a poor state, implying that arguing against it can be sentimental. He proposes that language shouldn't be treated as an instrument but as a plant that can grow. The decline of a language isn't solely the responsibility of individual writers; rather, it is due to political and economic factors. In this situation, the effect can convert into a cause, aggravating the initial issue. This is like a person starts drinking due to their failures, which, in turn, increases their failures. Similarly, the English language becomes unpleasant and inaccurate with our stupid thoughts, which easily makes people have foolish thoughts. He points out that this whole process can be reversed by getting rid of their bad language habits, they would be able to have a clearer communication. This is the first step towards improving politics and society.

George Orwell presents five passages that portray this issue. These passages do not imply that they are exceptionally bad, but they reflect common problems. The first passage is a hard time to understand due to complex language. The second passage uses misuses of idioms and employs complicated words. The third passage loses authenticity, and it is more conforming to the accepted way of writing within a society. There should be more importance in using language to reflect one's genuine thoughts rather than following the crowd. The fourth passage explains how language can craft messages that influence public thoughts and feelings through tactics like spreading false information. A language is a powerful tool that, when used in the right ways can create a better society. Finally, the last passage talks about the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) use of more genuine and straightforward language.

Orwell's political writing has featured issues such as overused phrases and expressions that have lost their impact, which made it unclear. Some writers create sentences which use long and complicated phrases to make them longer, which creates confusion, while others try to use fancy, old-fashioned or foreign words to make things impressive. Orwell argues that there are certain words which have multiple meanings that can create confusion such as freedom, and democracy. He decorates the decay in the aspect of the English language with an example from the book of Ecclesiastes which compares the original to the modern version. The original passage delivers a direct message, about the uncertainty in life, while the modern has complex language, which makes it complicated.

He points out that most of this modern writing is plagued by phrases and unnecessarily complex language. Writers use these tactics to save time or sound important. Some writers were good at expressing their own opinions outside party constraints. He believes that the quality of the language can be improved by removing unnecessary words and foreign phrases. Good writing does not mean creating a standard format for writing; instead, he wanted to get rid of the phrases and words which are not required. Good Writing isn't solely about correcting grammar or sounding casual, but about focusing on a concept, visualising it and finding the correct words. Orwell suggested six rules for good writing which are basic but can change the attitude of the current writing style. He concludes by suggesting the decline of language relates to political chaos, urging individuals to change their writing habits to fight against the misuse of language in politics.