

Introduction to do everything to protect the democracy



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Introduction

Orwell is an individual who was concerned about the correct usage of English language in politics and other areas of life. He notes with a lot of concern some very common mistakes that are made by politicians, professors and other people who use English in public. He particularly notes that most of the times, the politicians use sub standard English because they want to conceal something and therefore end up using vague language.

In an attempt to reduce and eventually eradicate the incorrect usage of English grammar in both spoken and written works, Orwell suggests some set of rules that one could use. He however states that, even with the rules, it is still possible that one can make some mistakes but the mistakes would not be very bad compared to those that were made by some people in the texts that he uses as the sample of incorrect use of English language.

Orwell's standards

In the first rule, Orwell says that one should avoid the use of common phrases for example metaphors which have been overused and other cliches. Phrases that have been used in various written works for a long time are especially discouraged. He also warns people to refrain from using long words and instead, try to look for shorter words which can serve the same purpose. The long words make the text unnecessarily complicated when it can be simplified by use of other words with the same meaning. Another rule is that one should choose their words carefully and use only the necessary words. If a word can be left out, then one should not include it in their writings or speech.

By doing so, one is able to avoid being unclear because of including such words. The other common mistake that people make in language use is overuse of foreign or scientific terms when one can get other simpler words of the same meaning in English. Orwell says that such words should only be used when there is no other option, otherwise they should be omitted in any good specimen of English. Orwell also warns against the operators or verbal false limbs. He explains this as the unnecessary conversion of a single verb or even a conjunction to a phrase consisting of several words.

It can also be used to describe the tendency to follow a certain pre-existing ending format of a sentence instead of one being creative and coming up with their original endings.

Many people make this mistake when they are writing or speaking

In his last rule, he gives people the discretion to break any of his rules other than say something that will not make sense. Orwell says that if people would adhere to these rules, cases of bad language usage would reduce significantly and eventually be eradicated.

Conformity of John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Speech of 1960 to Orwell's standards

This is one of the speeches that have been praised by many people in history. It is particularly applauded because of its impact on the listeners and also the various artistic structures employed (Humes 207).

It has bold declarations made by John F. Kennedy during his inauguration as president. For example, he promises to do everything to protect the

democracy of the country and also speaks several statements directed to the enemies of his country. He also calls upon the citizens to be occupied with what they can do for the country instead of just waiting for the country to do things for them. In this paper, the conformance of the speech to various rules set by Orwell meant to gauge a good piece of English text will be evaluated.

Dying metaphors

The speech is characterized by the use of metaphors to create mental pictures to the listeners of what is being said.

Metaphors can be categorized into different groups for example; there are metaphors which have been overused such that they no longer play the role that a metaphor should play when used and are considered as dead metaphors. There are others considered as dying metaphors which have been overused but still have not lost their impact and finally there are those considered as living which are able to cause one to have a clear mental picture because they are fresh and probably have been used for the first time by the particular writer or speaker. According to Orwell, dead metaphors are to be avoided if the purpose for which that metaphor is being used is to be served. Dead metaphors lack the important quality of creating a mental image in the listener's mind. Kennedy, in his speech tries to adhere to this rule because most of the metaphors he uses are not in the category of dead ones.

For example, he talks of 'iron tyranny' (Bartleby. com 1). Although this is not exactly in the category of a dead metaphor, it is still a common metaphor

that is overused by many people in spoken and written works. The metaphor however is still able to produce the mental picture intended in the listener's mind.

There are other metaphors too that he used effectively in conveying his message during his inauguration. In reference to the people who find themselves in danger that they could have avoided if they were wise enough, he uses the metaphor 'riding the back of the tiger and ending up inside' (Bartleby. com 1). He also talks of exploring the stars conquering the deserts metaphorically to pass the message to the people concerning their intention as a country to going for great things and overcoming all obstacles. These two metaphors still are able to create images in the mind of the listeners although they are not very new and also cause them to react in certain way because of the influence of the words that have been used. By using them, Kennedy is still on the safe side when it comes to application of Orwell's standards because the two are not wholly in the category of dead metaphors. He also talks of assisting the people who are still 'struggling to break the bonds of mass misery' (Bartleby. com 1).

This is a metaphor that helps the listeners create a clear mental image of what he is saying. The speech slightly deviates from the set standards because of the use of commonly used phrases like 'friend and foe alike' which is not recommended by Orwell (Bartleby. com 1). According to him, such overused phrases should be left out as they make one unable to be creative in speech and they can contribute to vagueness in the message that one intended to communicate

The use of active or passive voice

The speech is full of sentences in active voice as compared to passive voice. Most of the sentences have a subject as opposed to passive sentences which leaves out the doer of the action. However there is an instance where there is the use of passive, i.

e., when he wants to say that the responsibility has been given to someone else, he uses the passive sentence: ' the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans' (Bartleby. com 1). In the rest of his speech, he uses sentences in the active voice. He commits himself to doing things that are his responsibility by using the active voice and first person singular pronoun instead of evading commitment by using passive. He uses sentences in the active voice to show people the reality of the imminent long struggle that they are going to face as a nation despite the fact that they have just come out of a hard period characterized by cold war (Clarke 9).

He does not try to give the people false hope by using passive voice which is mostly used by people who are not straightforward in what they are saying. He also speaks to the enemies of the nation directly using the same sentence structures and points out the responsibility of both the state and the citizens directly instead of just assuming that each is aware of what is expected of them. Through the effective use of active speech, Schlesinger (165) notes that the young president, Kennedy, also commits himself to defend the country's democracy by all means.

Pretentious diction

The speech also passes the test of pretentious diction as a standard of good English specimen proposed by Orwell. This is because Kennedy uses simple everyday language as opposed to some political speeches which are full of exaggerated foreign words and other uncommon words for example scientific words. Most of the words that he uses can be understood by ordinary people without much struggle. He uses short clear words and also sentences whose structure is simple therefore making the speech captivating and easy to understand (O'Brien 75). This has made his speech to be praised by many people and especially because of its simplicity to everyone who can understand English. His choice of words is good as he chooses words which are able to produce certain reactions in the people. For example, he tells the people not to negotiate out of fear or fear to negotiate. Most of the text is written in simple words.

It is only in the sentence where the word 'belaboring' is used where he seems to have used a complex word although it is possible to substitute with a more common word like 'dwell on' or others which are simpler and more common.

Operators or verbal false limbs

Here, one tries to avoid the task of choosing appropriate parts of a speech for example the nouns of verbs and tries to simplify the task by several means e. g. transforming a lone verb to a phrase with several words. The use of conjunctions is also altered by introducing other words in addition to the conjunction to make it a phrase. Certain sentence endings are also

commonly used because one does not want to think of a different way that <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-to-do-everything-to-protect-the-democracy/>

the sentence can end and therefore opts for what is common. The speech in question lacks such operators or verbal false limbs. Most of the verbs and conjunctions are used correctly without adding extra words to make them phrases and the sentences endings are all unique and not just following a certain copied pattern.

He avoids most of the phrases, either with verbs or conjunctions as listed by Orwell, which should be avoided in a good specimen of English. He uses single verbs and conjunctions and conforms to this rule in almost the entire text.

Meaningless words

Again, Kennedy's speech avoids the use of meaningless words which at times crowd a piece of English text making it hard to understand and also unnecessarily long. The speech is relatively short and is devoid of such words which may not make any sense when used.

He chooses his words carefully and joins them together in a way that they cause the reader or listener then be persuaded that he means every word he says in the speech (Wills 62). Like many political writings, there are some areas in the speech where there is vagueness. He says, for example, that they are going to help those in poverty to get out of it. He does not say precisely what they are planning to do to help these people who he says live in abject poverty.

It is also not clear the specific people he is addressing because, globally there are many people who are struggling to break free from the chains of poverty. Also the words, 'to convert our good words into good deeds'
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(Bartleby. com 1), seem not to have a definite meaning because the word 'good' is relative and can mean different things. It becomes hard for anyone listening to such a speech to clearly understand what good words or good deeds the person is talking about.

Conclusion

Although John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Speech breaks a few of Orwell's rules, it is still a good specimen of English because it observes most of them as discussed in the paper. For example, the speech is devoid of foreign or scientific words which are misused in most written or spoken works. He tries to use simple, everyday language which can be understood by many people.

He puts forth his points clearly using only the relevant words and leaves out any unnecessary words. The speech also avoids the use of cliches and long words which can be replaced by shorter and more common words. It is so easy for anyone who reads this speech to understand it. It is written in ordinary English that does not need a lot of in depth understanding of vocabulary. The ideas in it flow well. According to Giglio (2), his speech seems to represent what he truly believes in because it lacks vagueness which is mostly used by politicians who do not want to be clear in what they are saying to the public. Such politicians use this tool to be dishonest and cause confusion among the people on what they actually intended to pass across. What he intends to do for the nation and also what is expected of the people is clearly stated.

He urges the people not to focus on what they want the country to do for them but on what they too can offer to the country.

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