

sive lexibase consists of 80,000 records on lexical forms including semantic, phonetic and etymological info, together with historical citations plus synonyms, homonyms and derived words.

The navigation software, developed by Franco-Belgian CD-ROM specialist Bureau van Dijk, allows you to check the information in these records in many combinations, for instance grouping networks of associations between words on the screen.

You can call up the citations by multiple criteria, and you can access the dictionary for spellchecking direct from your word-processor – as well as dumping any lexicographical material you need from the dictionary into a working file.

Le Robert Electronique runs on CD-ROM drives linked to a PC XT or AT with 512 Kb of memory. Price: FF7,709 (US\$1000). *Dictionnaires Le Robert, 107 avenue Parmentier, 75011 Paris, France.*

(Taken from the *LIS Press Bulletin* No. 6, 1990: PO Box 5477, 1007 AL Amsterdam, The Netherlands.)

Books in a cold climate

Cold storage may be the answer to the problems of paper conservation. A Swedish monastery at Skoklosters Slott has demonstrated the advantages of freezing books in order to

preserve them – the library is housed in an unheated room with open grilles where winter temperatures can fall to well below -10°C . Books (though possibly not monks) have survived remarkably well for over 300 years. Storage at low temperatures slows the rate at which paper is attacked by acids, and also reduces damage to inks and bindings. Photographs and microfilm, which are even less durable, are found also to last longer in cold storage.

At the forefront of freezing techniques are the East German State Film Archive which keeps much of its material at -10°C , and the National Library of Australia in Canberra where a new facility has recently been completed to store over three kilometres of low-use material at 8°C . Most of the original material in the cold store has already been microfilmed, and the originals are therefore rarely required. Master copies of the microfilms are also held in cold storage, whilst a working film is kept at room temperature.

According to Marie Jackson of the National Preservation Office, no British library has as yet opted for cold storage. Problems only occur when stored material is required by a reader – there is a 24-hour delay whilst the item is acclimatised from 8°C to 16°C .

(From the *NIDS Newsletter*, Chadwyck-Healey Ltd, Cambridge CB2 1NR, UK.)

From the NCTE Committee on Public Doublespeak: a press release (reprinted verbatim)

To help the American public develop a critical ear for public statements, committee members and other language specialists have collaborated on a book probing the efforts at manipulation everyone faces daily in this information age. *Beyond Nineteen Eighty-Four: Doublespeak in a Post-Orwellian Age* is edited by Doublespeak Committee Chair William Lutz of Rutgers University, Camden, New Jersey, and published by NCTE.

The authors, most of whom teach English or linguistics in colleges and universities, probe the tactics of persuaders from many sectors of society. Lutz leads off by highlighting the methods they use. Euphemisms, specialized jargon, bureaucratese, and inflated language come in handy, he points

out, if you want to shape information to your advantage and divert attention from unpleasant implications of what you propose or advocate. The subliminal message, he says, tends to be 'Don't worry' – about a neutron bomb because it's just an 'enhanced radiation device', or about acid rain because it's only 'poorly buffered precipitation'.

This potential for harm to society, Lutz says, is why many teachers of English today think that 'there is more to using language, and to the teaching of English, than making subjects and verbs agree'. All language users, he insists, 'should be concerned whether statements and facts agree', and whether, in author George Orwell's words, language is being 'designed to make lies sound truthful'.

Among the eighteen contributors to *Beyond Nineteen Eighty-Four* are such well-known writers on language as Walker Gibson, Frank J. D'Angelo, Richard Ohmann, Don L. F. Nilsen, Edward M. White, and Charles Weingartner. Weingartner points out that because all language comes from people speaking or writing, it is never neutral. He inquires into how we know what we know about today's world and observes that under the guise of presenting information, today's message-makers also offer misinformation, disinformation, even anti-information or semi-information. Weingartner probes the limitations of TV as an information source and of trivia-fed viewers' ability to focus on complex issues. He points out that people tend to 'know the truth' through their emotions.

Other contributors explore the kinds and extent of doublespeak in use today. Donald Lazere analyzes disinformation. Ohmann reflects on the semantics of foreign policy discourse. Dan F. Hahn probes the techniques politicians use to say nothing, and D'Angelo examines jargon. Scott Buehler looks at ways doublespeak is used by promoters of technology.

Nilsen discusses the linguistic processes advertisers use to give an ad multiple meanings, while Roy Fox examines 'sensationspeak', the language of the grocery store tabloids. Julia Penelope discusses doublespeak in higher education, and Charles Suhor inquires into the language 'pop grammarians' use to establish themselves as arbiters of correctness.

Edward M. White highlights another danger, 'singlespeak': a literal-minded attitude on the part of some segments of the public today, who insist that 'reality is simple and knowable and that language should reflect that simplicity'. Believers in singlespeak, White says, 'appeal to the solid virtues of the Frontier' in rejecting complexity. They see no use for metaphor or irony, and blindly trust that all problems have simple solutions.

(Beyond Nineteen Eighty-Four: Doublespeak in a Post-Orwellian Age, edited by William Lutz. 224 pages, paperbound. Price: \$15.95; NCTE members, \$12.95. ISBN: 0-8141-0285-9. LC: 89-12707. Audience: general readers interested in language issues, teachers of English and writing at all levels. Available from NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801. Stock No. 02859-0015.) □

