

most here?

# Language is changing

by Angel Stokes  
Battalion staff

As 1984 draws near, it may be noted that most of George Orwell's predictions in his book "1984" haven't come true — yet.

Newspeak, the official language of Oceania — the country where the story took place, was a language created through the destruction of words. Newspeak's purpose was to narrow the range of thought and enable communication of ideas with one word.

Today, many specialized words have been created and many words have been twisted to mean something different. Verbs sometimes are used as nouns, nouns as verbs.

"The English language is changing in enormous and creative ways," says Garland Cannon, an English professor at Texas A&M.

Large numbers of abbreviations and acronyms are being accepted as nouns and verbs, he says. For example, SST and SSTs (acronyms for Supersonic Transports) are used as nouns and RSVP is used as a verb (i.e. he RSVPed me). Although these constructions look odd, Cannon says they are correct.

Functional shifts in the language — using a noun as a verb, verbs as nouns, adjectives as nouns — have been around for years. Commonly used as a verb, the noun "research" is an example of a functional shift. For example: the research was completed (noun); the problem was researched by two experts (verb).

In Newspeak, an almost complete interchangeability among different parts of speech existed. Any word in the language could be used as a noun, verb, adjective or adverb.

Unlike the shrinking language Newspeak, the English language is expanding. People have bigger vocabularies because of the increase in new words, Cannon says. This expansion may cause people to use the dictionary more than people did 200 years ago.

A large number of new compounds are used to form words, he says, and it's not uncommon for five words to be put together as one word.

Compound words were used

in Newspeak, but were used as a limitation on the vocabulary and not as an expansion. The word ungood was used instead of bad and plusgood meant better than good. By adding prefixes to the words, definitions become more limited, and independent thought becomes almost impossible.

Scientific words were also part of the Newspeak vocabulary, but only in the most rigid form. Like all words in Newspeak, the definition was precise and was used for only one discipline. Scientists and technicians had a list with words used in their work and rarely knew the meanings of any other specialized words.

Today, hundreds of thousands of technical words exist as truly technical terms, Cannon says, but some of the terms are coming into everyday usage. Computer terminology is creeping into daily usage as computer use is becoming more common.

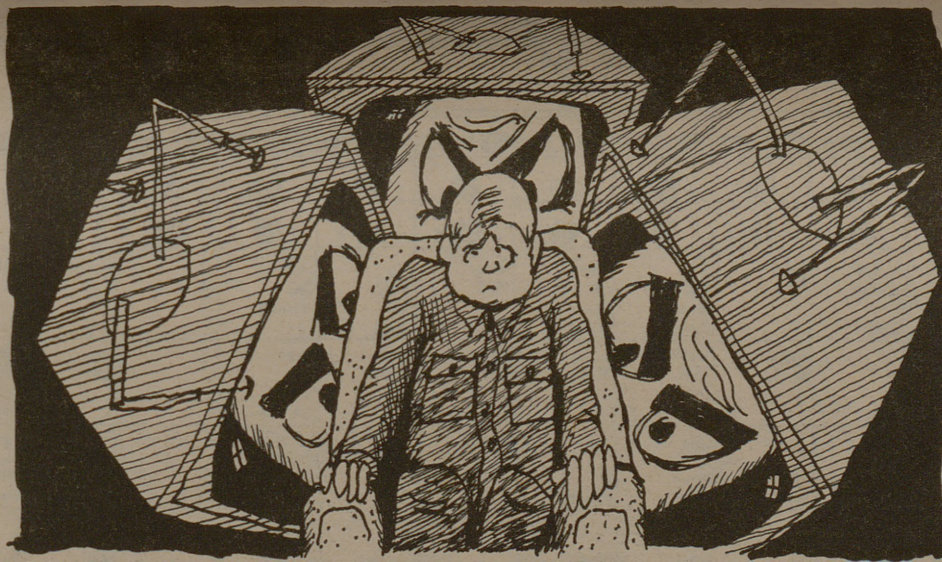
Another occurrence in the English language is the development of specialized words. Susan Evans, a graduate student in Education Curriculum and Instruction, is doing a study of words created during the Vietnam War.

Most of the words or phrases are military terms or words used by soldiers, she says. Body count — defined as a count made of people killed in battle — is one of the words. Other examples are "in country," which means being in Vietnam, "wiped out," which means someone has been obliterated and "New Hamlets," which refer to concentration camps.

Evans says new meanings for old words also were coined during Vietnam. These include "ballgame," meaning an operation or a contact, and "band-aid," meaning a medic. U.S. soldiers called the Viet Cong soldiers "Charlie" and later shortened it to "Chuck" or "Chaz."

Cannon, who has just finished writing a book on historical change in the English language, says linguists find it important to note the changes in the language.

But, according to Orwell, the final adoption of Newspeak isn't set to take place until the year 2050.



## Eavesdropping — a sophisticated art

by Bonnie Langford  
Battalion Staff

Mention "1984" and visions of ever-watchful TV screens may come to mind. The fear of being watched or being caught by the Thought Police haunted Winston and other characters in George Orwell's "1984."

Orwell was correct in his prediction of future electronic surveillance. It does exist, but not quite the way Orwell predicted. Most surveillance is done by criminals who are more interested in corporate secrets than in thought-crimes.

Electronic eavesdropping has become so sophisticated that the Texas A&M Law Enforcement and Security Training Center offers a course in "countermeasures." So much money and so many ideas are lost daily from the illegal electronic eavesdropping and surveillance that the majority of large companies have developed security methods to protect their ideas.

Charles L. Taylor, president of Data Loss Prevention Inc., is one of the instructors for the electronic eavesdropping course. He trains security representatives who come from all over, including large corporations and law enforcement agencies.

"Industrial espionage is big business," he says. "Anyone can buy an eavesdropping device at Radio Shack and they're in business."

The Electronic Eavesdropping Countermeasures classes are offered six times a year. Each participant must pay a \$650 fee, but this is a small amount compared to the millions of dollars lost as a result of eavesdropping.

"Criminals are using it against even law enforcement

agencies," he says. "They can use it to keep track of what the police departments are doing and find out about things like drug raids. In one police raid they found \$9,000 worth of bugging devices that the criminals were using on the police."

The majority of electronic surveying is aimed against businesses.

"A company may have an idea that suddenly appears with another company," Taylor says. "It could be a coincidence or it could be spying, but the only way you can prove that is by the countermeasures."

One student in the course, who asked not to be identified, works for a large corporation in New York. He says that there is no way to tell how much money his company loses each year because a lot of the cases are undocumented.

"The only time we know about a bug is when we find it," he says. "But there could be more out there that we're not good enough to find."

He says that he does about 300 "sweeps" a year. A sweep is an electronic search for surveillance devices. But the technology is so advanced, he says, that he came to the school to find out how to better carry out the searches.

Taylor says it is common for out-of-state people to come to the school because it is the only one of its kind in the nation.

"Manufacturers offer short courses, but these are mostly to sell equipment," he says. "I start by trying to teach the fundamental electronics so they will know what is being done. Then I start teaching them some of the eavesdropping techniques."

These electronic surveillance techniques are illegal, except when a judge in the U.S.

District Court or U.S. Court of Appeals issues an order for surveillance to study criminal activities.

The idea of teaching illegal techniques is a controversial addition to the course, but Taylor says that in order to prevent eavesdropping, one must first know how it's done.

"You have to teach a policeman how to shoot a gun before he can fight crime," he says. "You have to know how to eavesdrop to be able to stop it. We don't let just anyone into this course, because they might use what they learn to eavesdrop. Everyone is with law enforcement or corporate security, or is licensed security."

Telephone tapping is the most popular method of eavesdropping used because it is easy to do and hard to detect, Taylor says.

"There aren't any accurate statistics, but I would estimate that 80 percent of all eavesdropping is done by phone taps," he says. "This method allows the criminal to get the information he wants and also a quality audio. There's nothing worse than having a lot of tape with noise covering the important things."

The expansion of the computer age also makes telephone taps popular, he says, because computers are easily accessible through telephone lines. Companies lose large amounts of software this way, he says.

Domestic spying also crops up, Taylor says.

"I've gotten calls from wives and husbands asking me to spy on their spouses," he says. "I have to tell them that it's illegal, but they want it done anyway. There's a big market for this illegal electronic surveillance."