

Spelling Reform Anthology edited by Newell W. Tune

§10. The Teaching of Spelling

There seems to be no unanimity of methodology in teaching spelling, so we present here some ideas on that subject.

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[Spelling Reform Anthology §10.1 p152 in the printed version]

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1976 p20 in the printed version]

1. How to Teach Spelling by Newell W. Tune.

No doubt many of you teachers have asked "How should I teach spelling?" In the past teachers were offered lists of "spelling demons" and told that these are the words most pupils miss in writing. So the teacher gives her pupils a list of 10 irregular words to be spelt on the next spelling bee a week later. Ten anomalies totally unrelated to each other present too much of a learning job for young pupils. To learn the irregular spelling of one does not help in learning the other nine words. How much more efficient it is to learn the spelling of one word family or group of words with the same rhyming ending? For example, if the word the pupil needs to learn is "sight", prepare a list of all such rhyming words: go thru the alphabet: first is "fight," then "light, might, night, right, sight, tight, wright." But we omitted the exceptions - and they should be taught concurrently with the more frequent "ight" spellings. The first would be: "bite," next might be "cite," but I would not present it now because this would not be in the pupil's speaking and reading vocabulary. Then: height, knight, mite, rite, site, write. Naturally the teacher should explain the meaning of all these words and tell why they are written differently from the first group.

When presented in this manner, it is much easier for a child to learn two dozen words than the ten spelling demons that are unrelated to each other. By the time that the teacher has covered the school year, she will have taught the largest part of the word families and given the pupil a sound basis for using analogy, as well as the exceptional spelling - of each rhyming sound. And, more important, she will have done it in a way that makes the learning of spelling irregularities a much easier task.

We would like to hear from teachers who have used this method and also other methods, with their opinions of the amount of success obtained.

[Spelling Reform Anthology §10.2 p152 in the printed version]
[Spelling Progress Bulletin, Spring 1976 p1 in the printed version]

2. Can a Child be Taught to Spell? by C. E. Lutkin*

* The following Viewpoint was written on spelling by Mr. C. E. Lutkin, coordinator of library services for Prince Albert public school district No. 3. He said he may also write articles criticizing the teaching of grammar, social studies, report cards, gnomes in the department of education, etc. if he is not forced into exile before spring.

Can we really teach a child how to spell? If we can teach a pupil how to read, does it logically follow that we can teach him how to spell? Does the child's memorization of a list of words and written work related to them (prepared for us by some publishing company) have anything to do with learning or is it just a pedagogical opiate which makes us feel that we are really teaching?

Most of us know adults who have a Grade 10 education and are better spellers than some university graduates. President Kennedy's secretary had to carefully check all of his letters and memos to correct spelling mistakes. Level of education and intelligence seem to be only secondary factors in determining why an individual is a good speller.

Part of the problem stems from the language we speak. One study has shown that North American-English spelling consists of 41 sounds represented by 26 symbols. Yet over 500 different spellings of these 41 sounds exist. If anyone could reduce that information to a few simple rules, he could make a fortune.

There are a number of spelling generalizations mistakenly referred to as rules. One example: "When two vowels go walking, the first generally does the talking." Such a generalization is hardly worth teaching when we discover that, after feeding thousands of words through a computer in the United States, this generalization proved to be correct only 45% of the time.

Inaccurate spelling can result from the application of generalizations. The child who spells *bizzy* (for *busy*) or *honer* (for *honor* or is it *honour*?) may be trying to apply one of the old generalizations.

The number of times that people refer to a dictionary as the ultimate authority is unwarranted. Contemporary dictionary publishers now view their function as *describing* what people actually do with the language rather than trying to tell users what they *ought* to do.

The editor of Webster's Third New International Dictionary stated: "[The Dictionary] does not attempt to dictate what usage should be... [It is] the record of this language as it is spoken and

written."

Our language has options regarding the spelling of many words and even the dictionaries do not agree on the number and spelling of many of acceptable variant forms. Is it pygmy or pigmy; brier or briar; theatre or theater; plow or plough; colloquiums or colloquia; focused or focussed? One authority has stated: 'The spelling lesson is not an occasion for indulging one's linguistic prejudices.'

Traditionally, students in a spelling class would all turn to the same page in the text and take a pretest on Mondays. The pretest would indicate what words the students already know. They all did the same exercise questions and all took the same test on Friday.

So what was the point of the pretest? Those students who were naturally good spellers only had a few words to learn and were not challenged. The poor spellers had perhaps 12 or more words to learn. A person did not need to have a great deal of insight to predict with a reasonable degree of accuracy who would be getting the highest grades.

Having completed exercise after exercise in the spelling textbooks year after year, even the most enthusiastic students were becoming mentally truant during spelling lessons in Grades 6, 7 and 8.

Simple logic should dictate that the words a child should learn to spell should be drawn from the words he misspells in his written work. Students, burn your spelling textbooks!

Reprinted from, *Saskatchewan Bulletin*, Feb. 14, 1975.

"Rather than having hundreds of remedial teachers concentrating on children's individual weaknesses, we should be emphasizing classroom teaching that concentrates on using children's strengths --particularly the intelligence that so often somehow we often seem to stifle. This of course, includes the need for spelling reform, so that children can be like those in other countries, using their intelligence and reasoning to code and decode, instead of having to burden their memories and submit to adult inconsistency." Valerie Yule, Faculty, Monash Univ. Vic. Aust.

[Spelling Reform Anthology §10.3 p153 in the printed version]
[Spelling Progress Bulletin Spring 1970 pp2,3 in the printed version]

3. Teaching Rover to Read, by Brenna Lorenz

Reading Newsreport reprinted (Feb. 1970) in its entirety the following humorous essay and accompanying letter showing one teen-ager's reaction to reading's most abused term - dyslexia.

"I am enclosing a copy of an article written by my daughter, Brenna (a high school student) which was inspired by two factors: we lived in a town where local educators, parents, and the like were labeling any child who was doing poorly in school as "dyslexic," and where even her high school Latin teacher felt inspired to devote an entire period to a lecture on the subject; and secondly, by my dissertation (just completed) on basal reader content."

If your dog is ambitious and you want him to be a success in life, then surely you can see the importance of teaching him to read.

Don't be alarmed. It is not nearly so difficult as it may appear. There are even special books designed for the purpose.

But before you can start the actual instructional process, you must first determine if your dog is disadvantaged, for you may have to modify your program.

For example, your dog might be dyslexic. One test for dyslexia is to have him run across the room. Is his gait even? If not, he might encounter reading problems. Another test is to have him follow a ham bone with his eyes. If he has trouble following it, with eyes or otherwise, he may be very dyslexic.

Does he wag his tail from right to left or from left to right? Dyslexic dogs usually wag from right to left, and if you notice this trait in your Rover, you may need to change the pattern; reading is done from left to right. Perhaps he has mixed dominance. This is a form of dyslexia in which the dog is neither completely left-pawed nor right-pawed, but uses both interchangeably. This trait often leads to reading problems.

One way to test for mixed dominance is to have your dog sit, then respond to the command "Shake." Is he consistent with his use of the right paw or left paw? Or does he offer first one then the other?

Watch Rover when he awakens from a nap. Which paw does he extend first? Is he consistent? If still in doubt, there are other tests (for male dogs) which the author will be happy to send on request. Please include zip code.

Let us assume however, that your dog is non-dyslexic.

You want to begin reading instruction and you wonder which series of books would be best for him. This problem is quickly solved by the publishers of Series X, which has published a special primer for dogs. It features a dainty female dog named Tip, with whom your dog can romp through reading, and at the same time will learn about middle-class values, good citizenship, and the methods with which to cope with life's daily problems. Your dog will be entertained and amused by the antics of Tip's three human playmates, and will identify readily with Tip in the realistic settings and situations portrayed by the author and artist. While Tip's speech pattern is admittedly stilted due to vocabulary limitations at the early instructional level, the illustrations clearly convey the plot. To be realistic, you can understand the story without really having to learn to read. So why bother?

Because male dogs often have more difficulty in learning to read than the female, another series has come out which is geared more to the interests of the male. It plays down the female role and features a very masculine dog named Pepper, with whom the male dog may more easily identify. This series uses the "see-and-bark" approach to learning to read, which many dogs find easier than the phonetic approach used in Series X.

You need not worry about the quality of these books. They are so effective that in some schools they are even used to teach human children.

But, of course, we still have not settled the question of what is dyslexia - and to separate it from some of the basic causes of difficulties in learning to read, such as our inconsistent, often contradictory spelling.

Nuf sed

The Ambitious Penalized

After reading the article (June 16) on the merits of the "pass-fail" system of scholastic grading, our daughter observed, "The student wouldn't know where he stood in relation to the rest of the class, and it would also encourage laziness" - this from a twelve-year-old!

It would seem that "learned educators" might also see the obvious pitfalls of such a system. But it appears that the psychologists are still in command of education - the ones that want to avoid giving an inferiority complex to the already admitted failures in school.

Alas - it is another graphic illustration of the skyrocketing cry in America today.
Penalize the ambitious... reward the mediocre!

Mrs. Vern C. Pfanku, Orange, Calif. *L.A. Times*, Jul. 68.

[Spelling Reform Anthology §10.4 pp153-154 in the printed version]

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1975 pp18,16 in the printed version]

4. Book Review by Newell W. Tune

Emery, Donald W., *Variant Spellings in Modern American Dictionaries*. National Council of Teachers of English, 1973, pp. 130. \$2.95.

This book is essentially a compilation of the various ways in which certain words are spelled in English. Some of these variants are due to regional differences in spelling like "Americanisms," "Yankeeisms," etc.

Every teacher of English is faced with the problem of deciding what criteria to use in determining the appropriateness or "correctness" of a language form as is found in the several American dictionaries, which are not always in agreement. In many instances, logic, analogy, or tradition favors one while wide-spread usage favors another. Sometimes a spelling is regional or national, as British spellings are often different from American. Why should we bring in British spellings when this book is all about American spellings? Because New England is still allied somewhat closely with the British and represents the most conservative part of the U.S.A.

This material should have implications for two groups of teachers of English, particularly at the high school and college levels, and authors of spelling lists, spelling books and other materials for teaching spelling. The teacher of English certainly wishes to keep himself as well informed as possible about spellings sanctioned by current and reputable dictionaries. In addition he must determine his own attitude toward the use of variants so that his teaching of spelling will reflect current usage. Some teachers are not aware of many variant spellings. Others may not let their students use some commonly found variants because of personal preference, because of excessive reliance upon the application of spelling "rules" or because of a well-intentioned effort to preserve what they as teachers feel to be the "purity of language."

The teacher who wishes to warn against the use of a variant is not always on safe ground when he relies upon that old standby "preferred spelling" for reasons other than the obvious one that a disputatious student might protest that the secondary spelling is the one *he* happens to prefer. For one thing, the fact that a spelling is placed first is no guarantee that it is preferred; if two spellings are equally acceptable, the dictionary makers have to place one before the other. Also, as indicated in numerous points in this book, dictionaries are not always in agreement upon which variants should be included and which of two or more forms should be placed in first position.

Similarly, the problem of variant spellings cannot be disregarded by those who prepare materials to be used in the teaching of spelling. Rules for spelling are frequently disregarded in common usage. The material assembled in this book will not, of course, provide satisfactory answers to all the questions about rules. Some teachers may not want to give too much information about variant spellings recognizing that for some of them this knowledge might serve only to make spelling seem even more troublesome and chaotic.

The original edition of this book was published in 1958. The justification for a completely revised edition lies in the fact that the dictionaries which supplied the data for the earlier edition must now be considered out of date and unusable for a serious study of current practice. Two of the dictionaries used in the new edition were not in existence in 1958, and the other three have been revised since. The dictionaries used in this study are: *The American Heritage*, 1973, 2. *Webster's New Collegiate*, 8th ed. 1973, 3. *Webster's New World*, 2nd College ed, 1970, 4. *Random House College*, 1972, *F & W Standard College Text*, 1968.

In the 102 pages of listings there are 2500 words with variant spellings. And we have been told that English spellings are fixed and regular!

[Spelling Reform Anthology §10.5 pp154-157 in the printed version]

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Spring 1972 pp5-8 in the printed version]

5. How to Learn to Spell by E. D. Smelt*

*Victoria, Australia.

Herein is presented a new approach to the learning of spelling which has been developed out of research and experiment over some years. But before discussing this work, I would like to make some observations on the present attitudes towards the teaching and learning of this subject.

For far too long too much emphasis has been placed on learning the spelling of English words, and not enough attention has been given, as in foreign-language countries, to teaching children to know and understand their language so that they will *know how* to speak, write (spell) and read. This type of instruction is essential if children are to be adequately equipped to become confident and competent in using their language in all communication situations throughout life. Generally speaking, children of foreign-language countries do not have to learn the spelling of a limited number of selected words: instead, they are taught so that they *know how* to spell all the words of their language, and at the same time they are learning *how* to speak and *how* to read.

The present attitudes towards the teaching of spelling have come about largely because of our habit of regarding English as an irregular language.

However, the comprehensive program of research into the language which was completed during the 1960's by Prof. Paul Hanna, of Stanford Univ., California, and his fellow workers [1] has shown that, contrary to the popular opinion that English spelling is irregular, there is a considerable amount of orderliness and regularity in the language. **Hanna's findings have shown that a radical change in the attitude towards the teaching and learning of the English language, including spelling, is now possible and should be made:** English, like other languages, can now be taught and learnt by a continuing study of the orderly relationship between sounds and letters in English words, as the first step towards mastery of the language.

Hanna has also stated that the teaching should proceed from the spoken to the written word. This is how foreign children begin to learn their own particular languages, with much more ease than English-speaking children. That this is the natural approach for the teaching and learning of all languages, including English, is obvious when one stops to think of the language ability which a child has when he arrives at school: he demonstrates that he can speak a complex language. The teaching, therefore, should lead him from this demonstrated ability towards the acquisition of new abilities, such as writing (spelling), and reading - he should be led to link the spoken to the written word, and not the reverse as is so commonly taught.

While a child may be expected to move naturally from speaking to writing, many beginner children find it impossibly difficult to learn spelling through traditional methods which require them to look at words and then to reproduce them (spell them) either by copying or remembering, without making use of their ability to speak. So they begin to fail, and probably will continue to fail.

In passing it should be remembered that a child's ability to speak will only be as good as the language environment from which he comes: he needs to be taught *how to speak*, and he should receive this teaching at the same time as he is being taught *how to write* (spell) and *how to read*. In fact, he needs to establish a foundation of *knowledge and understanding of his language*, and this can only come about through a complete instruction which links hearing, speaking, writing and reading.

Because the under-achievement of children in language work is most commonly related to their spelling and reading, a very important consideration is often overlooked, namely: while it is very easy to observe that under-achievers are poor spellers and readers, it is not always recognized that spelling and reading are only the outward and visible manifestations of a child's ability, or inability, to cope with the language; and many under-achievers cannot even think or comprehend efficiently. They are slow doers and thinkers in all fields of endeavour where words are used. They simply haven't got a grip on their language; and so they sit at the bottom of the class in most subjects, often unable to comprehend the language in which they are being instructed. Probably one-third to one-half of students (and adults) are disabled and inefficient to a large or small extent because of this problem.

When we look at the top of the class, we can generally observe good spellers and readers, and their results in other subjects demonstrate that, in contrast with the poor language achievers, they have the ability to cope with the thinking and comprehending that is required to achieve in all studies: they have a grip on their language.

Outline of a new approach to learning "How to Spell."

I have been enquiring for some years into this most serious handicap of under-achievement in language work under which so many children and adults labour. Out of extensive research, reading and experimental work with under-achievers, I have developed a new approach to the learning of the language, an approach which is interesting and simple, and through which all students are able to achieve success. Instead of learning spelling and reading as separate studies, children are led from the beginning of school days through a study which links hearing, speaking, writing (spelling) and reading; and thus they come to *know how* to hear, speak, write and read all words. The missing link in most instruction is "speaking," despite the fact that speech is the original form of language from which the other forms developed, and is the natural link in learning between hearing and writing (spelling).

The research and findings on which the new approach is based are along lines similar to, but not the same as, those followed by Hanna and his fellow-workers. The approach begins, therefore, from an acceptance of the considerable amount of orderliness in the relationship between sounds and symbols in English words, and goes on to establish a small number of generalisations, based on this orderly relationship, to cover most words in the language, in a general way.

I set out hereunder a bare outline of the approach, which is a whole, complete study, embracing all words, and is entitled:

How to hear, speak, write (spell) and read words:

An introduction to the English language.

First of all, words are divided into three groups:

1. Early English words which are regular and orderly in their spelling.
2. "Invasion" words which are irregular.
3. Latin-and Greek-derived words which are regular and orderly.

"Invasion" words are words which have invaded the English language from time to time during history; for, example, Old Norman words.

Each group is studied in turn, according to four basic principles. These have been set down as the basis on which can be built *a new attitude and habit* towards the study of the language (spelling and reading, if you wish).

Basic Principles of the whole study.

1. Words are made of sounds, and sounds are written (spelt) with letters.
2. Hear, say, write, read, each word.

3. Write one letter for each sound, unless a reason is known for writing an extra letter. (The reasons are studied).
4. Big words grow from little words. The whole of a little word must be in the big word when the big word has the same meaning as the little word.

Because these principles are basic to the whole study, I append a few notes on each.

Principle 1. Words are made of sounds, and sounds are written (spelt) with letters.

"Spelling" is simply writing letters for sounds, and "reading" is simply reading sounds for letters; and children need to be told these simple facts! Too many of them are far too busy "learning spelling" and "reading" to be aware of the simple truth underlying the whole of language study. They need to be taught to know which letters to write for the different sounds they hear and say, and which sounds to say for the letters they see. Then they will begin to *know how* to write (spell) and read.

Through working with and observing some hundreds of under-achievers, I have defined the basic cause of under-achievement as:

A lack of knowledge and *understanding* of the elements - the sounds and symbols of words - and of the orderly relationship that usually exists between sounds and symbols.

Therefore, it is essential that children be examined to discover whether they are failing primarily because they do not know and understand these elements. Unfamiliar words, such as: **pun, apt, hob, beg, pip, grist, flan, slit, strut, fret**, etc., will show up weaknesses. The commonest weakness is an inability to discriminate between short vowel sounds; but other surprising weaknesses will also show up as the child hears, says, writes and reads simple but unfamiliar words. He may even be unable to put his pen to paper to write some of these simple words.

Weaknesses disclosed through this type of examination must be attended to before proceeding, because throughout the whole study the child will be guided to write letters for sounds and to read sounds for letters-because words are made of sounds, and sounds are written with letters'.

Principle 2: Hear-say-write-read each word.

We do not know which is the strongest, or the weakest, of the senses that an individual will use in learning a language. And even if some senses are more efficient than others, the use of all the senses reinforces the image received by each. Therefore a multisensory approach, such as that being outlined herein, might be expected to give everyone, whatever his sensory strengths or weaknesses, an opportunity of achieving. Jean Piaget's work on this aspect of learning is well-known, and important in the context of this study.

In the early stages, therefore, there needs to be an insistence on *hear-say-write-read* each word that is under study. A child can gradually begin to understand that he can write what he hears and says, and that he can read what he writes or sees written: - *he knows how* to do so.

Principle 3. Write one letter for each sound, unless a reason is known for writing an extra letter.

After leading a child, with regularly-spelt 3- or 4-letter words, to develop the habit of writing one letter for each sound, the reasons why some extra letters appear in some words are examined.

These extra letters fit into two patterns of letters for sounds which are established; and a knowledge *and understanding* of the patterns guides children - *to know how* to speak, write, and read the Early English words. The patterns also influence the writing of the Latin- and Greek-derived words, and to a certain extent the "invasion" words, all of which will be studied later. The letter patterns are:

Long Vowel Pattern: Vowel-Consonant-Vowel (VCV) Hope Hoping Hopeful. Silent e is put into a word only when there is no vowel sound to complete the Long Vowel Pattern, as in *Hope Hopeful*; it is not needed in *Hoping* where the pattern is completed by "writing one letter for each sound." (We don't "drop silent e," or "change y to i"; we write letters for sounds at all times.)

Short Vowel Pattern: Vowel-Consonant-Consonant-Vowel (VCCV) Hopping Hunting. It stands to reason, if one consonant indicates the Long Vowel Sound, more than one consonant is needed to indicate the different sound, the Short Vowel Sound. Therefore, when there is only one consonant *sound* after a short vowel sound, that consonant must be written doubled before a following vowel. (And that is the only circumstance in which a consonant is doubled - i.e., an extra letter is put in.)

The inclusion of Silent e and the doubling of a consonant are the only "extra letters" that are included in thousands of regular words; and the reasons for their inclusion (stated above) should be known *and understood* by all students.

The work beyond the establishment of the two patterns is mainly concerned with "sorting out jumbles of sounds" into letters which form words, in accordance with the patterns.

Students of all ages have reported, and adults have recollected, that much of what they have heard in class often "sounds like jumbles of sounds," instead of words imparting meaning and knowledge; and what they have seen in print often "looks like jumbles of letters."

This part of the work has been developed out of an awareness of what students need to know *and understand* about sounds and symbols.

Principle 4. Big words grow from little words. The whole of a little word is in a big word, when the big word has the same meaning as the little word.

This principle can be applied to the spelling and reading of all words, provided the two patterns (referred to above) are taken into account.

However, it is especially useful in studying the irregular words, which represent only a small percentage of the words in an average dictionary - at the most, about 10%.

Take the word grow, for example.

<i>Groing</i> does not spell <i>growing</i>)	The whole of the little
<i>Groth</i> does not spell <i>growth</i>)	word grow must be in these
<i>Groes</i> does not spell <i>grows</i>)	big words which have the meaning of <i>grow</i> .

The scope for work under this principle is almost infinite. Children are provided with "little words" and with a number of simple endings, and they are asked to make big words. They explore and discover, and widen their language experience considerably, because they will also *say* and *read* the words after they have written them. The teacher may discover that this rather simple task is not an easy one for some children. Why this is so needs to be examined in relation to each child.

A typical lesson.

The bare outline of a typical lesson is set out below. It assumes a knowledge *and understanding* of the basic principles, and of relationships between sounds and symbols which have been studied in earlier lessons.

The teacher begins by saying:

The commonest way of writing the K-sound is with the letter C, as in cat, cot, cut, clap. (73% frequency - Hanna's figure.)

The child is exercised (Principle 2) with a variety of words in which the K-sound is written with letter C. He is then invited to discover words (in books or newspapers) to support the teacher's statement. (Thus he explores and discovers the words of the language.)

In the course of this activity, he will probably find words such as *key kind smoky*; and gradually, by his own exploration and discovery, helped when necessary by the teacher, he will establish his own strategy for coping with the writing of the K-sound. Lessons which preceded this one will have provided him with useful information; if he does not make the observation himself, the teacher will lead him to understand that the K-sound should not be written with the letter C in front of *e, i* and *y* because, as he will have learnt, the letter C has the S-sound in front of *e, i* and *y* (as in *city cent icy*).

So the K-sound is written *k* when it will be followed by *e, i* or *y*; and *ck* is the doubled form of *K* which is written after a short vowel sound to conform to the Short Vowel Pattern: so *thinking, thicken; baking*.

(As stated, this is only a bare outline of one segment of the study. Most of the questions that might spring to the mind of the reader of this outline are answered, I believe, in the full text of the segment.)

Latin- and Greek-derived words.

Up to two-thirds of an average vocabulary may be Latin- and Greek-derived words, and the spelling of all of them is regular and orderly, being simply:

Prefix	+	root	+	suffix
re		port		
re		port		er
ex		port		
sup		port		
de		port		ed

However, there is a problem in writing (spelling) these words, and it is related to the manner in which the words are said. One syllable only (commonly, but not always, the root syllable) is stressed in these words, and each sound in the stressed syllable is (or should be) said and heard distinctly; and, again generally, we write one letter for each sound. The sounds in the unstressed syllable, especially the vowel sound, are not heard clearly and distinctly, and often there is doubt as to which letters to write for the indistinctly heard sounds in unstressed syllables, which are usually prefixes and suffixes.

A knowledge and understanding of the spelling and pronunciation of prefixes and suffixes is therefore essential; and a knowledge of the meanings of these affixes is desirable. Generalizations are established to guide students to *know how* to write and read affixes correctly.

Conclusion

The foregoing sets out, in barest outline, *how* to lead English-speaking children to explore and discover the regularity that exists in words of their language so that they will *know how* to hear, speak, write (spell), read, think and comprehend, confidently and competently, throughout school and in the adult world in general. Foreign students of English find this an easy road to follow, because it is so like the one they followed to learn their own particular languages. All can achieve success when they study by this approach because, as many students have said, "It makes sense of the English language;" "often for the first time" is sometimes added to the previous statement by

adult and foreign students. The approach has shown them how to establish a foundation of knowledge and understanding of the relationship between sounds and symbols, on which students themselves can build up confidence and competence in using English in all communication situations throughout life.

Finally, I strongly recommend that readers who have found something of interest in this article should read also an article by Dr. George Steiner, entitled, "The Language Animal," which appeared in the publication "Encounter," for August, 1969. [2]

Dr. Steiner's article is not about spelling or reading - probably neither of these words appears in the article. It is an interesting and important thesis about language and man, which leads one to realize that our children must be taught to know and understand their language (instead of "learning spelling" and "reading") so that they will *know how* to use it efficiently always.

Summary:

In the light of recent research work on the words of the language, it is apparent that English, like other languages, can be taught and learnt from the simple understanding that foreign children have when they begin to learn their languages, namely:
words are made of sounds,
and sounds are written (spelt) with letters,
in an orderly fashion.

By following a step-by-step study of the orderly relationship between sounds and letters, children will **KNOW HOW** to hear, speak, write (spell) and read all words.

The way in which we say words guides us to **KNOW HOW** to *write* (spell) most words; we *write letters /or sounds*, in an orderly manner.

Words are *written* in such a way that we **KNOW HOW** to *read* them; we *read sounds for letters*.

The whole study is primarily one of exploration and discovery of the orderly arrangement between sounds and letters - finding out which letters to write for sounds that are heard and said.

Much more could be said on the subject - and will be - if our readers show their interest.

[1] Hanna, Paul R. et al: *Phoneme-Grapheme Correspondence as Cues to Spelling Improvement*. OE-32008. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare. 1966.

[2] "*Encounter*" is published monthly London, England. U.S. enquiries: British Publications Inc. New York.

Editorial comment:

We think the principles of your article could be more effective if used on Pitman's i.t.a. than on T.O. For example, how are you going to teach students to be able to recognize the sound differences between - mine, determine, marine? And how to know which letter combination to use in spelling: nation, occasion, occidental? The latter two have two different pronunciations of the cc and the following vowel, but how is the student to know? Then again, how to pronounce: have, behave, give, jive, energise, enunciate? Which en is a syllable and which not? Examples like these could be repeated by the dozens. Out of the 1000 commonest words, about 75% are non-phonetic and more than half are irregular. Yet these commonest words must be among those the student must learn to read early in his career.

6. The Holiday, by F. du Feu (in Eurospelling)

That I'm excited, dear, is plain.
A travel agent on the train
Has given me this super guide,
Enabling clients to decide
Where their next holiday should be.
As soon as we have finished tea,
I'll read my prize and you shall choose.
For there's no time at all to lose.

First, what about the Emerald Isle?
See pixies sitting on a stile;
Go fishing, kiss the Blarney Stone;
See Cork, Killarney Lakes, Athlone;
Spend three weeks mooring in Sark,
With lobster fishing after dark.

Try Butlin's where it never rains;
A visit to the friendly Danes,
And climb, without fatigue or fright,
A mountain eighty feet in height.
The cruises we arrange are gems.
Enjoy the beauty of the Thames;
See Windsor, Marlow, Oxford,; Dine
In stately Castles on the Rhine.

To Italy in sunny June,
For Florence and the Blue Lagoon,
Mount Etna's lava-covered slope,
The Vatican to meet the Pope,
Naples' sophisticated kids.

Then Egypt for the Pyramids,
Go on safari with the Coes;
See lions, tigers, leopards, moes, [1]
Giraffes, a crocodile, a snake,
With trekking till your muscles ache.

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With only £20 to spend,
I fancy it should be Southend.

Across the ocean in a jet
For sights not easy to forget:
New York, Grand Canyon, rapids, falls.

But now a soft-voiced Geisha calls,
And with a flourish of her fan,
Implores you not to miss Japan,
Her cherry orchards, temples, wears,
The pajama of the cup that cheers.

Just luck, fantastically cheap!
Took the Sahara in a jeep!
Adventure on a lavish scale!
Ten days in a Moroccan jail
As suspected trafficker in drugs,
While children, pensioners and mugs
Recline in deckchairs on the sands!

Do you prefer the colder lands?
Norwegian fiords would be such fun,
With dancing in the midnight sun.
So brush your ice-cap, leave your cares,
Snap reindeer, penguins, polar bears,
See mountains, glaciers, torrents, spray.

In Switzerland, and on your way,
At Dijon, where the mustard's made;
The hardy Jacquemarts at their trade.
Now tell me, Helen, just to please,
You must have chosen one of these.

[1] (The mo (according to Punch) is an animal from which we get *MOHAIR*)