

CUT SPELNG

PART III

DICTIONRY
OF
TRADITIONL
&
CUT SPELNGS

PART III

Introduction to th CUT SPELNG DICTIONRY

1 Aknolejmnt

Th words in this Dictionry hav been selectd from th frequency listng of th Birmingham Corpus, th body of text wich undrpins th COBUILD Project and is held at th University of Birmingham. Th frequency listing was extractd by th Universitys Research and Development Unit for English Studies. It is hoped that, with this data as its sorce, th Dictionry has succeedd in combining compactness with systmatic covraj of th cor vocablry of th english languaj.

2 Selection of words

Th Dictionry aims to list al comnly ocurng english words wich ar ritn with fewr or difrnt leters in Cut Spelng (CS). Uncut words apear only if users myt be temtd to cut them and ther unchanjed form therfor needs to be stated explicitly (eg, *comma**). In total som 10,000 hedwords ar included, many with two or mor inflections, and over 21,000 of th 57,000 most comnly ocurng alfabetic forms in th Birmingham Corpus word list ar covrd, eithr explicitly by being listd, or implicitly by remainng unchanjed. We may therfor estimate that CS simplifys over one english word-typ in thre — wich dos not of corse mean that this proportion of words in any one text wil be cut.

Th foloing categris of word ar jenrly excluded from th Dictionry:

- 1 words ocurng undr 5 times in th Birmingham Corpus of over 19 milion word-tokens.
- 2 words hos traditionl spelng is unchanjed in CS.
- 3 forms difrng only by an invariant afix from words that ar included (se foloing paje for 4 patrn of exampls).
- 4 most hyfnated forms.
- 5 many names of peple and places.

3 How to use th Cut Spelng Dictionry

Th CS form of a word may be found by lookng up its TO form in th left-hand of th two colums in th Dictionry. If th word is cut in CS, th simplifyd form wil be givn against it in th ryt-hand colum; for instnce, against *the* we find th CS form *th*. If a word dos not apear in its own ryt, and no related word dos eithr, it can be asumed to be unchanjed in CS; for instnce, *of* and *but* do not apear, as neithr is cut in CS.

Very often the base-form of a word is given, but, to save space, not all its derivatives. For instance, *abandon+ed,+ing, abandonment* appear with CS equivalents *abandn+d,+ng, abandnmnt*; but TO *abandons* is not listed, as CS simply adds the standard suffix -S to its base form *abandn*, exactly as in TO, giving CS *abandn + s*. Similarly, an entry such as TO *hopp+ed,+ing*, CS *hop+d,+ng* indicates that, although TO *hopped, hopping* are cut to CS *hopd, hopng*, the forms *hop, hops* are uncut.

Other derivatives that are commonly omitted include:

- 1 nouns ending in -NCE, -NCY when a related adjective ending in -NT is given. Thus *abhorrence, clemency* are not listed, as their CS forms (*abhorence, clemncy*) are derived from the CS forms of the related adjectives (*abhorent, clemnt*).
- 2 adverbs, if they are formed as in TO. So for instance *hugely, abominably* are not listed, since they are formed by adding just -LY, -Y respectively to the CS forms of the adjectives *hujе, abomnbl*.
- 3 nouns ending in -BILITY, since these are formed predictably from adjectives ending in -BL. So *possibility* is not listed, as its CS form *posbility*, is derived from the CS form of the adjective *posbl*.
- 4 nouns ending in -ATION which have an equivalent verb ending in -ATE or -IZE taking the same cuts. So *accommodation/organisation* are not listed, as the CS forms *acomodation/orgnization* can be derived from CS *acomodate/orgnize*.

Many entries are divided by brackets, plus-syns, commas and/or diagonal slashes. The entry *armo(u)r+er,+y*, CS *armr+r,+y* first shows by the bracketed (*u*) the British/American TO variants *armour/armor*, which align as CS *armr*; second, plus-syns link base-words to suffixes, *+er* indicating the TO derivative *armo(u)rer*, which is reduced to CS *armrr* (the CS ending indicated by *+r*), while the comma followed by *+y* shows the alternative derivative *armo(u)ry*, which is reduced to CS *armry*. Slashes are used to show alternative TO endings as in *organise/ize* which have the single CS form *orgnize*.

Compound words with only one cut element are usually not listed as such, and should be checked under the separate elements. For instance, *football* is not listed (nor is *foot*), but CS *footbal* is implied under TO *ball*, CS *bal*.

4 Alternative and doubtful forms

When alternative spellings exist in TO, the Dictionary recommends whichever form best represents the pronunciation (hence CS *orgnize* rather than *orgnise*). In some cases the preferred TO form is given as the CS equivalent to the less phonographic TO form: thus the entry for *gaol* gives *jail* as the CS form, although TO *jail*, being

unchanged, is not separately listed. Preferred American spellings are indicated in the same way, *skeptic* for instance being given as the CS equivalent of *sceptic*. By including such entries, the Dictionary is implying that, whether or not writers use full CS, they should choose the more phonographic or alternative TO forms.

Some TO spellings, known as homographs or heterophones, have alternative pronunciations according to meaning (eg, *row* for both 'dispute' and 'alumnus', *graduate* as both a noun and a verb). The Dictionary distinguishes these where CS cuts only one of the words (eg, CS *row* for 'dispute', but *ro* for 'alumnus'; *graduat* as the noun, but *graduate* as the verb).

Prefix forms in general are often not listed, but a note in italics indicates that the base word should be looked up if the prefix form is not given. Thus for TO *uninteresting*, the user is referred to TO *interesting*, which gives CS *intrestng*. When a prefix entails a repeated consonant at the boundary with the base word (as NN in TO *unnecessary*), alternative forms are given, one with a single consonant, and the other with the two consonants hyphenated; so for TO *unnecessary*, *cleanness*, *penknife* we find CS *un(-n)ecesry*, *clean(-n)ess*, *pen(-n)ife*.

A few words retain some phonographically redundant letters which would normally be cut. CS makes exceptions in these cases in order to prevent confusing ambiguity with other, differently pronounced word forms; for instance, by the normal cutting rules TO *choral*, *corral* would both be cut to *coral*, a quite different word, and *comma* to *coma*; similarly, the normal rules would cut both *croquette/croquet* to *croquet*. To indicate that the CS rules have not been fully applied in those cases, the Dictionary gives their CS forms with a following asterisk as *choral**, *corral**, *comma**, *croquet**.

5 Foren words and propr nouns

It may be felt that the spelling of foreign words should not be cut, whether because we are not entitled to change the spelling of words from other languages, or because it is important to preserve internationally valid written forms. However, some other languages systematically adapt the spelling of borrowed words (Swedish writes *bureaucracy*, *restaurant* as *byråkrati*, *restorång* for instance), and since so many English words have at one stage or another been borrowed, it is not clear which words, if any, should be exempt from cutting on these grounds. The Dictionary gives cut forms for many common loan-words, mainly derived from French and Italian, chiefly by way of illustration, so that the implications may be considered. Writers should use their discretion whether or not to use such radically cut forms as CS *restran*, *baujlai* for TO *restaurant*, *Beaujolais*.

Similarly, even if CS were adopted for the spelling of ordinary words, it does not necessarily follow that it should or could be adopted for proper nouns, i.e. the names of

peple and places. As with th foren words, this Dictionry includes CS forms for a ranje of persnl and place names, to ilustrate th efect. Clearly, ther ar th same advantajs in aplyng th CS principls to th spelng and pronunciation of propr nouns as to othr words: considr for instnce both th econmy and improved sound-symbbl corespondnce of CS *Lestr*, *Chomly* compared with TO *Leicester*, *Cholmondely*. In practis, tho, it wud no dout hav to be left to th comunitis and individuls concernd to decide wethr to make such chanjes, just as in th past peple decided for themselvs wethr they wishd to spel ther names *Shakespeare* or *Shaxper*, *Browne* or *Brown*. Users of this Dictionry can howevr observ how th spelng of certn names wud chanje in CS.