

Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1966

Dedicated to finding the causes of difficulties in learning reading and spelling,
"A closed mind gathers no knowledge; an open mind is the key to wisdom".

Publishes Quarterly.
Spring, Summer, Fall,
Winter. Subscription \$3.00 a
year. Volume VI, No. 2.
Summer, 1966.

Editor and General Manager,
Newell W. Tune,
5848 Alcove Ave,
No. Hollywood, Calif. 91607

Contributions Editor,
Helen Bowyer,
922 So. Lake St,
Los Angeles, Calif. 90006.

Table of Contents

1. [Young Prince Tackles 44-character Alphabet](#), and Late News.
2. [Basic Sight Vocabulary – a Help or a Hinderance?](#), by Raymond E. Laurita.
3. [Random Thoughts on Language Simplification](#), by Charles K. H. Chen.
4. [Operation New Start](#), by Margaret Bushnell and Patricia Prior.
5. [It Doesn't Look Right](#), by Louis Foley.
6. [Steps Toward a New English Alphabet](#), by Gertrude Hildreth, Ph.D.
7. [Braud English Spelling](#), by 'Chychse T. Psikhss'.
8. [Devising the Shaw-Script](#), by Kingsley Read.
9. [Must Shorthand Die Out?](#) by Ewald Lotzing
10. [Then ... Why?](#), by Helen Bowyer.
11. [The Urgency of Spelling Reform](#), by Clarence Hotson, Ph.D.
12. [Microminiaturization is a Word to Ponder](#), by Helen Bowyer.
13. [Parlez Vous Franlais?](#) by Herbert R. Lottman.
14. [Teaching English to African Natives](#), by L. W. Lantham, Ph.D.

Coming attractions

Teaching Disadvantaged Children to read.

A Means of Measuring the Phoneticness of English Spelling English as the World Language.

Why Johnny Can't Learn to Read.

What's Wrong with our ABC'S, by Barbara Smoker.

A Minimal Change System of Spelling Simplification.

Late News (and not so late).

1. Young Prince Tackles 44-Character Alphabet.

Last January, the *London Daily Express* had an article about Prince Andrew, who was to be six in February, and who has been learning to read by the Pitman Initial Teaching Alphabet. This 44-character alphabet, invented by Sir James Pitman, educational book publisher and former Member of Parliament, was especially designed to make the learning of reading in English much easier and quicker than it is in conventional spelling. After learning to read in six books printed in the i.t.a., the children easily transfer their facility and confidence to conventional spelling by reading through Book 7, which helps them gradually make the transition one step at a time.

Prince Philip, Andrew's father, introduced i.t.a. to the Royal Nursery after studying results of experiments conducted in schools in Britain and the United States.

The system was introduced into 20 schools in Britain in 1961. Now 100,000 children in over 1,000 schools in the United Kingdom are using it.

The Prince, younger brother of Prince Charles, takes lessons in the Buckingham Palace nursery class. Andrew's cousin, Viscount Linley, Princess Margaret's four-year-old son, comes across from Kensington Palace to join the class each morning. Other young friends attend.

In many ways, Prince Philip is unorthodox in regard to the education of the royal children. Prince Charles, now 17, attends his father's old school, Gordonstoun, where the German educator Kurt Hahn introduced his concept of developing leadership through adventure and service.

In February, Prince Charles flew by public plane to Timbertop, a public school near Melbourne, Australia, where he is spending three months in the "bush."

Princess Anne, 15 years old, is the first royal princess in the immediate Royal family to attend boarding school. She returned recently to Benenden, a public school (the equivalent of an American private school) for girls in Kent. Her dark fancy woolen stockings and short skirt led press photographers to style her the "with it" Princess. .

-o0o-

Recently, Sir James Pitman was invited to the White House by President Lyndon Johnson to discuss the i.t.a. Apparently the President was pleased by the progress of i.t.a. in spreading not only over 46 of these United States but also in most of the British Colonies and former British possessions. He was also shown the new English Teaching Alphabet, for teaching foreign students English as a second language. This new alphabet has built-in indicators for showing the student how to pronounce and accent a word. This is very necessary for students who are not familiar with spoken English. This alphabet was discussed and shown in our previous issue of the SPB.

-o0o-

From the Salisbury, Rhodesia *Herald*: A raw African working in a city building asked why the Europeans there who speak English need to use dictionaries. "I know my African language without using a dictionary," he said. He was very much surprised when told they were needed to be sure of the spelling as well as the pronunciation.

-o0o-

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1966 pp2-4 in the printed version]

2. Basic Sight Vocabulary – a Help or a Hindrance', by Raymond E. Laurita.

*Remedial heading Specialist. Schroon Lake Central School. Schroon Lake, New York.

Perhaps the most difficult task of the corrective-remedial teacher concerns the problem of basic sight vocabulary. The poor reader has a smattering of half-learned, often confused words he uses to support his pitiful attempts at reading. A variety of instructional techniques have been developed but the acquisition of a substantial number of basic or service words remains a continuing problem for both the moderate and severe reading disability.

A typical and comprehensive example of service words is the list developed by Dr. Edward Dolch. The Dolch Basic Sight Vocabulary list is widely used as the basis for the reading series written by Dolch and others for use specifically with retarded readers. The Dolch list, made up of 220 words, "constitutes about 65% of all words in the reading material of the primary grades and neatly 60% of those in the intermediate grades. [\[1\]](#)

The problem of the retarded reader is complex and frustrating for until he develops mastery of these necessary "clueing" words, he is unable to utilize context as a technique in deciphering unknown words. He stumbles through every passage read, making numerous errors until he is thoroughly defeated.

Children who suffer this type of disability, literally all the hard core cases, are doomed without specific diagnosis and rehabilitation. Unfortunately, the number of children receiving this kind of help is infinitesimally small and the number of people trained to dispense it even smaller.

It seems obvious then that the only way to eradicate or at least lessen the problem is to search for an answer to the question, "Why are so many children crippled because of their inability to cope with the problems imposed by the basic or sight vocabulary?"

Over the past several years, a number of answers to the question have become apparent as a result of practical research with hundreds of disabled children. First, the very nature of basic sight vocabulary is an immediate stumbling block to large numbers of children. It imposes severe handicaps on the culturally deprived, the visually or aurally immature, children suffering from visual or auditory perception or discrimination difficulty, those experiencing directional control problems and the child with speech difficulty.

Service words must be mastered if progress is to be made to the developmental reading programs used in the schools. Yet these words are for the most part unphonetic, abstract, and not liable to precise definition. Instructions accompanying the Dolch Sight Vocabulary cards state these are "Words -pronouns, adjectives, etc. – which cannot be learned from pictures, yet must be known if a child is to read with confidence." Understanding must then come through usage learned from the child's speech models, or during a relatively short exposure to these words in the school situation.

It is a fact that great numbers of children have not learned and are not learning these words either at sight or with confidence. The distinct possibility exists that perhaps basic words, learned at sight, are not the best way to initiate reading instruction in view of the failure of so many to develop reading skills by means of this technique.

A second possible answer to the question suggests itself. Every teacher has seen the havoc confused perceptual responses can cause. There are cases that can best be described as being massive in that

intelligent reading is impossible because of the profusion of confused, omitted and substituted words. A close look at the Dolch list offers a possible explanation for this phenomenon. The number of words of *similar configuration* is immediately apparent. Once a child experiences difficulty and has only configuration as a tool of attack, he becomes heir to all the error of generations of disabled readers.

Confusing words of similar configuration is a fault more or less common to reading disabilities. It is likewise apparent in many normally proficient readers and possibly acts as an inhibitory factor in reading comprehension. The possibilities for confused responses are infinite, especial when it is remembered that instruction in the alphabet and phonics as aids in word recognition are instituted after or at best simultaneous with the learning of words at sight. [2]

Once a confused perceptual pattern becomes established, it becomes the child's habitual response to language unless replaced with a different approach. Attempts at instruction in the basic sight words *without simultaneous instruction in word and letter recognition* are generally unsuccessful for remedial students. Table I indicates some of the possible configurational confusions in the Dolch list. Table II is a list of confused responses observed and recorded thru the years which it is believed flow directly from initial word and letter confusions.

A third possible answer to the question relates to, the problem of reversals. This is an area in which considerable research has been done but which continues to confound all teachers of reading. There is as yet no definitive understanding of the causes of reversals and of more concern to teachers, there is no pragmatic approach that guarantees correction. [3] Is it possible the research done has been oriented along the wrong lines and that the answer lies in another, less complex direction?

When a child is exposed to a word at sight, prior to alphabet training or instruction in phonics, he is of necessity responding to a configuration or shape. Thus when the word "in" is taught the child responds not to two separate symbols in a serial arrangement that have unique visual and auditory characteristics. The child's response is primarily directed towards an immediate perception of configuration. [in]

When he is exposed then to words of similar configuration, what assurance do we have that the child observed the subtle changes that have occurred within the configuration as in the word [on]? In fact, what assurance do we have that the word [no] will not elicit the same response? The child at this time is immature and does not possess well developed powers of discrimination either aurally or visually. His capacity for directional control is in the formative stages and will take months, even years, to stabilize into an unflinching left-right response pattern. [4]

The possibility exists that reversals are not of necessity caused in all cases by confused dominance. Rather it is eminently possible they are the result of confused visual response patterning caused by the introduction of whole words before the child is prepared to respond with a consistent, serial method of apprehension. The child who has not developed an understanding of the serial nature of language or who has not acquired a thorough recognition of the letters of the alphabet is liable to the evident confusions that result from the similarities inherent in the English language.

What is the difference between [was] [saw] [can] [sun], or [to] [as] [an] [on] [no] [me] [we] to the child who isn't cognizant of the nuances of the letters of language and is responding primarily to configuration? Table III contains a partial list of words on the Dolch list that lend themselves to reversal, stemming again from faulty visual patterning resulting from too early exposure to whole words.

Because of the primarily visual nature of initial instruction in sight words, the retarded reader uses visual clues as his initial means of attack. It follows that confusion about letters and words because of unreliable directional control would cripple the most intelligent and well-motivated students. Table IV contains a partial list of observed reversals which it has been concluded are a natural outgrowth of the condition described.

There has been and will continue to be a controversy over the whole word method as opposed to the phonetic approach to reading instruction. It isn't intended here to the fires of controversy but rather to offer new direction in the search for answers.

There are a great many questions which need to be answered. Does initial exposure to whole words establish a habitual response pattern that makes later instruction in the alphabet and phonics almost futile? How permanent and pervasive is the damage resulting from early discrimination and directional difficulties? Should the alphabet be taught prior to formal reading instruction as an aid to the child in word recognition? Should words of a concrete and phonetic nature be taught initially to develop a more sound understanding of the structure and serial nature of language? Are letter confusions the result of prior experiences with words of similar configuration which have elicited faulty visual and auditory responses? Do children from deprived backgrounds need a period of pre-school instruction prior to exposure to language? Do we have adequate programs for the early detection and remediation of potential reading disabilities?

Most significantly, do the theories of D. O. Hebb which indicate that perception is the result of serial apprehension, cast doubt on the almost universal acceptance of the whole word method as an initial teaching technique. [5] Dr. Hebb, of McGill Univ. has developed a theory of perception opposed to the idea of "gestalt" on which the whole word method is based. [6] Hebb states that "the course of perceptual learning in man is gradual, proceeding from a dominance of color, through a period of separate attention to each part of the figure, to a gradually arrived identification of the whole as a whole, an apparently simultaneous instead of a serial apprehension." [7]

Thus a child either unfamiliar with, or confused about, the letters of the alphabet would be liable to a condition that would completely debilitate him. It is the opinion of this writer that this confusion is present in sufficient numbers of pupils to warrant further investigation.

Many of the questions posed here lend themselves to investigation by classroom teachers interested in doing valuable and rewarding research at the local level. In the long run it may be the teacher in the classroom who alone possesses the information requisite for any really constructive and basic changes.

TABLE I

This table contains words selected from the Dolch Basic Sight Vocabulary list which have configurational similarity and result in a visual response patterning that is unreliable and confused.

is-in-on-no-or	his-him-had-has-have
at-to-it-if-of-off	but-put-pull live-like
of-off-from-for-far	full-fall-fell
we-me-my-may-many	come-came-can
be-by-buy-big	give-gave-get
he-her-here-where-were	not-no-on-now
were-went-want-when-then	do-does-goes-go
in-an-are-any-many	or-are
call-cold-could-would	is-as-am-an-any
you-your-our-or	there-where-were
new-now-how-who-own-no	then-when
well-will-with-which-wish	what-that
be-he-the-we	up-us-use
they-then-them-there-their	so-soon
these-those-this-that	

TABLE II

This table contains some errors observed over a period of years and which appear to be the direct result of early visual configurational confusions.

about-above	evening-eleventh	made-marry
aim-am-I'm	ever-never-very-even	main-mountain
aimed-named	eyes-yes	memorial-memories
alike-alice	face-force	other-older
away-always	fast-first	parrot-pattern
barn-burn	feeding-feeling	plant-paint
beak-back	five-fire-fine-find	quiet-quite-quick
beat-bird-bail	fly-flew	raised-risen
bees-hears	fluttering-floating	robbing-rubbing
beneath-beneficial	for-your	sad-said
brood-barn	forest-fasten	sharpen-sandpiper
build-built	forty-thirty	shot-short
burn-brown	friends-fellows	sight-straight
calf-clip	funny-furry	sincerity-insect
chance-change	grain-green	sleeping-speeding
circus-circle	greater-getting	some thing-sometimes
clawing-climbing	guard-ground	stuck-stick
clear-clean	had-hid	stung-struck
cloth-clothes	having-waving	sweet-soft
cooked-cooled	head-heard	tall-tell
creatures-cutters	heart-head-hard-hand	told-took-talk
cuffs-covers	helmet-metal	took-tool
damaged-danger	home-horse-house	thought-threw
darting-darkening	horny-hungry	tried-tied
decided-destroyed	hurt-hunt	troops-trappers
drink-duck	inked-alike	trot-trip
drive-dive	into-until	warring-worrying
drop-drip	lay-laid	was-weed
eagle-age	lead-learn	went-wait
even-eleven	lives-leaves	whip-wipe
		winter-water

TABLE III.

This table contains words taken from the Dolch Basic Sight Vocabulary list which are particularly susceptible to reversal because of their structure.

are-red	he-the	ma-am	was-saw
at-to	help-play	my-am	wash-shall
as-so	him-me	never-every	we-me
big-go	his-so	no-on	were-write
both-those	if-for	not-to	where-here
don't-not	in-no	now-who	with-that
eat-ate	it-at	of-for	you-they
far-ran	its-so	one-no	
for-from	just-start	own-now	
got-to	let-tell	to-into	

TABLE IV.

This table contains a number of errors observed which are felt to result from early directional confusion and resultant unreliable visual response patterning. These errors are extremely subtle and do not always appear to be reversals. Most of the errors observed over the years can be traced to faulty visual or auditory clues. The errors are classed as horizontal reversals, vertical reversals, and a broad grouping involving the letters r, h, n, u, v, m.

Vertical	Horizontal		r,h,u,n,v,w,m
bad-pad	aimed-named	eagle-age	behind-beneath
beed-beep	beater-baited	ever-very	diver-driven
but-pet	ben-den	eyes-yes	even-ever
but-put	brood-barn	forest-fasten	find-five
dad-pad	brown-drown	flat-calf	fire-five
den-pen	calf-clip	guard-ground	five-fine
do-go	could-cloud	helmet-metal	funny-furry
does-goes	deep-beep	inked-alike	gun-gum
drag-drop	drag-gray	line-outline	met-net
got-but	never-serve	stairs-straight	hand-hard
me-we	no-want	stern-snert	no-more
pan-band	raised-risen	sun-us	not-you
	sight-straight	trap-tar	often-after
	size-inside	whip-wipe	

REFERENCES.

1. Bond, G. and Tinker, M. *Reading difficulties and their Diagnosis and Correction*. New York: Appleton, Century, Crofts, 1957. p. 247.
2. Heilman, A. *Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading*. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, 1961. p. 103.
3. Harris, A. *How to Increase Reading Ability*. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1956. pp. 370-372.
4. Bond, G. and Tinker, M. *Reading Difficulties – their Diagnosis and Correction*. New York: Appleton, Century, Crofts. 1957. pp. 306-7.
5. Harris, A. *How to Increase Reading Ability* New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1956. p.83.
6. Harris, A. *Readings in Reading Instruction*. A collection of essays on various aspects of reading, edited by A. Harris. New York: David Mc Kay. 1963 Ch. 10 p.50.
7. Hebb, D.O. *The Organization of Behavior*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. 1949. p. 32.

3. Random Thoughts on Language Simplification, by Charles K. H. Chen*

*Oriental Society, Amherst, Mass.

Why simplify a language? It is man's universal tool of communication. As such it should be designed, as any physical instrument, for efficiency in performance. If it is blunt or dull, it must be honed or sharpened just as a chef maintains a cutting edge on his knives. Consider the result of his slicing with that of the average father, who, not realizing the dullness of his carver, will hack away at the bird of the feast from a sense of duty. Like the box, which a little girl can open in seconds, language should be "child's play." The sooner a child can learn his native tongue because it is simple and logical, the richer his life can be in the physical, mental and spiritual sphere.

If the principle of simplicity in language is true, it can be illustrated even in the philosophers. An American high school graduate to further his education on his own began to read in English the works of Kant, Hegel and Spinoza. The result was complete failure; he does not now recall a single bit of wisdom offered because of the difficult language. A few years later he intended to tackle the philosophy of Albert Schweitzer. To his surprise the task turned out to be a joy; the style of the Alsatian humanitarian was uncomplicated and the young man absorbed the bulk of his teachings. Language to him meant a difference as great as that between light and darkness.

This problem, the simplification of language, is almost as old as mankind. Before some European languages came into existence, Chinese scholars undertook the labor of making Chinese an easier method of communication for the people. It was taken up in dynasty after dynasty. Even today the present government on the mainland is concentrating on it from selfish rather than the selfless motives of the ancient sages. Under existing circumstances it can force through language reforms that otherwise might have taken decades or centuries to evolve.

There are current attempts to improve the English language. Its system of spelling is a veritable mystery. One wonders how much time and energy is wasted in the lives of British and American children, some of whom never master the speller. To a foreign observer; it seems also an enigma that here inventiveness has decimated so much drudgery except in a most vital area, where spirit and action must meet.

English is spoken on every continent in the world. Because of the language? No, rather in spite of it. It is the spirit of the English-speaking peoples, which brought about its acceptance around the globe. How many more would learn and use it, if, as for German, no spelling book was a requisite? Had it been simpler, it might be much further along the road to becoming the universal language.

The simplification of Chinese, some observers feel, poses a threat to the free world. The idea behind the fear is the possibility that thus its Red government could develop untold latent resources in the most populous country, and make it a super power bent on and successful in destroying the ideals of freedom. But is that a necessary consequence? Is language really so important a factor? Isn't fear the

first thing to defeat, thus set into motion forces capable of weakening any human being or organization from within. The Bamboo Curtain represents a challenge to free men; it is, after all, only a problem.

How can the free man face this issue? By reexamining the whole body of concepts which underlies his existence. He must think out his responsibilities and assume them. There are a hundred questions he must answer in the process. Ought he, in this age of specialization, catalogue his knowledge like books in a library, or ought he to assemble them as he would a jig-saw puzzle? Upon what wisdom should he call for help in seeking the proper approach to a solution-just that of the West and forget the age-old truths of the East? He must keep on with his elemental questioning until he can arrive at basic answers.

What seems to be the task of him, who would simplify the English language? It is this: that he accept it freely as a labor of love with faith in the ultimate outcome. The spirit, in which he labors, will determine the extent of his success. If he dedicates his whole heart, his own efforts and those he inspires will bring English to the point of adoption as the universal language.

If the language expert will look deeper, he can see his work as a key to world peace. The wisdom and culture of China is to a large degree still locked in its literature. When men will employ only one language, the accumulated wealth of Chinese thought will become the common property of every man as will the spiritual treasures of all other peoples. Doesn't such a condition characterize the oneness of mind which with the oneness of heart, which form the essentials of a true and lasting peace?

These random thoughts pretend to be nothing more than that. What they hope to convey to any and all who deal with the written or spoken word is a larger picture to be detailed by him. In this age of specialization there is a tendency to overemphasize one's particular sphere of activity and to lose sight of its relationship with the rest. Their aim is also to strike a responsive chord in the reader, who will redouble his efforts not only in his own field of endeavor but also in such others as he can, thus rendering priceless service to his own nation as well as humanity for all time.

Spelling is learning all the inconsistencies
you wouldn't have to learn
if English was written phonemically.

4. Operation New Start, by Margaret Bushnell and Patricia Prior

*i/t/a Publications, New York, N.Y.

We think teachers should be interested in Project New Start. An introductory statement outlining the aims, suggested procedures and available materials follows.

In the process of preparation is a teacher's guide for the language stimulation phase of the program. This guide will provide a day-by-day two hour program designed to strengthen the learner's visual, auditory and kinesthetic perceptions as well as his perceptions about himself and others. This is expected to be ready in the fall of 1966.

Sample pages of the first sequence of readers from the *i/t/a Early to Read Series* and a copy of *The Future of the Teaching of Reading*, prepared by Sir James Pitman, is available on request.

Introducing

i/t/a Operation New Start.

Before the middle of the first grade year, skilled teachers can identify children who are failing to learn with satisfaction or success. Having identified those who are not making satisfactory progress in the language arts, teachers can place them in the Operation New Start program by midyear.

Altho the Initial Teaching Alphabet was designed as a teaching medium for the typical child in typical first grade language development programs, research has demonstrated its potential in compensatory situations.

An i/t/a Operation New Start program*

*moves the failing first grader into a language arts program designed to bring him to grade level or higher by June.

*creates, for a minimum of four weeks, an environment enriched in language stimuli.

*begins i/t/a instruction in a context of language experience programs.

How to establish i/t/a Operation New Start About 30% of the children in the typical first grade qualify for i/t/a Operation New Start help. There are several ways in which such a program can be set up:

*The i/t/a children from several first grade classes leave their assigned classrooms and meet together with one teacher for a period each day to work on language arts. That teacher's non-i/t/a pupils go to the other first grades for their regular reading instruction.

*or the first grades are regrouped at midyear to put all i/t/a pupils into one class.

*or the teacher puts her i/t/a pupils into a separate reading group and teaches them in the regular classroom as one of several groups.

*or the remedial reading teacher takes the i/t/a first graders out of their classes for special help several times each week, with work by the regular classroom teacher supplementing this instruction.

Orientation and Teacher Training.

For teachers who are not acquainted with the i/t/a programs and methods of instruction, i/t/a teacher, training workshops are held from time to time in various parts of the country. In addition, i/t/a educational consultants work with schools in setting up i/t/a programs.

Suggested 4-week Program Introducing Language Arts with i/t/a.

1. Language stimulation: The first two weeks are spent on a variety of language stimulation experiences designed to promote auditory, visual, and kinesthetic perceptions. These activities should include discussions of familiar aspects, acting out simple directions, listening to and describing sounds, becoming aware of opposites and comparatives. A useful collection of such

activities is available in a Teacher's Manual to PLDK, published by George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee.

2. Language Experience: During the second two weeks, actual language arts lessons are introduced for the first time. Language stimulation sessions are dovetailed with the learning of the i. t. a. characters; a meaningful transition from the oral to the printed word is thus affected.

3. Language Development: Having entered the i/t/a program, the pupil proceeds with the i/t/a Early-to-Read books which stress reading, writing, listening, speaking and thinking.

Materials Needed

Early-to-Read Program by Mazurkiewicz and Tanyzer: 8 readers, 7 workbooks and complete teacher's manuals provide a comprehensive language arts program.

Vocabulary.

As one authority puts it, "the nature of the relationship between the spelling of the word and the sound of the word constitutes the major difficulty in learning to read and to spell." The conventional way of meeting this problem has been to restrict vocabulary. Thus, children who have a speaking vocabulary of 10,000 to 20,00 words by the time they enter school are limited to a reading vocabulary of only 300 to 400 words in conventional reading programs.

A better way of eliminating this difficulty is the *initial teaching alphabet* used in a way that truly capitalizes on Pitman's logical and consistent "code." The Early-to-Read Program by Mazurkiewicz and Tanyzer does just this: the readers provide almost 2000 words in context. There are more different words in Book 5 (449) than most children have dribbled out to them in the entire year. And adding the words in *Dinosaur Ben* and *Houses* brings the total to over 2000. The important point is that the Early-to-Read Program of texts, workbooks, and library books enables children to read and write virtually any word in their speaking vocabulary.

When vocabulary is restricted and reading difficult, children must depend upon picture clues to help them guess the words they can't read. This is why conventional first-grade readers have such literal illustrations. Children taught with the i/t/a Early-to-Read Program no longer must depend on picture clues; they can *read all the words*. In the Early-to-Read books therefore, the pictures are there primarily to expand the imagination.

Content.

The content for most conventional first-grade readers was set a generation ago. It reflected the need for simple words and simple happenings, focused on kitchens and backyards of a long passed simpler era.

The i/t/a Early-to-Read Program takes children to many worlds, from beneath the sea to outer space, worlds that extend far beyond their neighborhoods, without neglecting urban, suburban, or rural settings for everyday activities.

But the most important benefit of all...

The self-confidence and independence generated by the i/t/a Early-to-Read Program provides incentives for further learning-for faster progress-for further growing.

Supplementary Reading: 40 titles of a new series have just been published. They are coordinated with the Early-to-Read series. Also available are 100 titles from England.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1966 pp6–8 in the printed version]

5. It Doesn't Look Right, by Louis Foley*

*Babson Inst. of Business Administration, Babson Park, Mass.

*Reprinted from *Reading Horizons*, Western Michigan Univ., Spring, 1966.

Sometimes a little acquaintance with a very different language can give us a new or deeper insight into the nature of our own.

For us of the western world, no kind of writing could seem more "foreign" than the complicated characters of Chinese. These are largely used also in Japanese and Korean with similar meaning though the *words* they suggest may be quite different. These ideograms represent a conception of written communication which those of us who have not grown up with it can probably never completely understand.

We recognize, of course, that Chinese writing is truly a form of art, and we may enjoy the "atmosphere" created by its use as decoration though we are utterly unable to decipher it. What we do not appreciate is the relationship of this artistic quality to the *meaning* as it is intended and understood. "Any cultivated Oriental reader," says a knowledgeable commentator, "appraises writing for its effect on the eye as well as the ear." [\[1\]](#)

The reviewer from whom we have just quoted was reporting an interview with the distinguished Japanese author, Yukio Mishima. In the course of the conversation, Mr. Mishima explained the several ways of writing which are used in Japanese.

"When there is a double way of reading Kanji [the Chinese character] – that is, when the character has two different meanings – we explain the meaning intended by an entry in the margin, in a script called Furi-kana. We also use Hira-gana, which is a phonetic script, and Katakana, which is always used for foreign words." As he talked, he wrote "New York Times" in Kata-kana.

Mr. Mishima was asked what naturally seems to us an obvious question. Why could not Hira-gana, which fairly accurately reflects the pronunciation, be used for foreign words, instead of complicating things with a third script? His answer disposed of the matter with finality: "It doesn't look right."

Even more categorically he ruled out Romaji, or the writing of Japanese in our Roman alphabet. This is taught in the schools, and is used in telegrams, but it is often confusing because the context may not show which of many possible meanings a mere phonetic spelling of a sound is intended to represent. "Romaji is awful," said Mr. Mishima. "The visual effect of a Chinese character is very important."

So we begin to see something of the sophistication of Oriental writing as compared to ours. Losing nothing of what is communicated by actual speech, it leads on into realms from which we could "translate" only crudely and clumsily. It is the product of an ancient civilization which long ago learned to combine intelligence with aesthetic sensitivity and achieved a high degree of finesse in human relationship. The complete acceptance of visual values in writing, which transcend the "meaning" of the mere sounds of spoken words, surely represents an advanced stage of culture, whether one considers it justifiably profitable or not. In reality, however, we ourselves have unconsciously moved a certain distance in the same direction. To be sure, we give little thought to making our handwriting artistic; the beautiful calligraphy which was cultivated a few generations ago has become literally a dead letter if there ever was one.

It is understandable that handwriting should come to seem to us less important than it used to be. Nowadays, a far greater proportion of all that people read is printed or at least typewritten as a matter of course. And anyone who has had any connection with publishing knows that much careful attention is given to the appearance of a printed page. New styles of type, for instance, are being continually invented, and changes of format designed, not so much to make the reading easier to understand as to make its physical form more pleasing to the eye. What seems to be not sufficiently realized, however, is the importance of the pictures produced by the way words are spelled. Though we do not face the fact so frankly as do the Orientals, in our language also a word needs to "look right."

Perhaps too much reliance on the "look-and-say" method of teaching reading has sometimes formed habits of noticing only the rough general contour of words rather than seeing them in sharp focus. On the other hand, a purely "phonetic" approach has its limitations. While of course our system of spelling was originally designed to portray the sounds of actual speech, as we have become more visual-minded often the written word has come to have a life of its own.

The way our attitude toward language has evolved into visual-mindedness is demonstrated, in a small way but unmistakably, by our care for alliteration. Since as far back as there was anything that could be called English, the language has had a peculiar passion for joining or keeping close together words having the same initial sound. More and more, however, this has seemed to be thought of as a matter of spelling; the very term "alliteration"-very modern by comparison with the phenomenon itself – puts the emphasis upon *letters*. Merely to bring together words that begin with the same letter, we see words strained in meaning, or changed in spelling, or used though the all-important initial letter happens to be silent. Slogans and trade-names are continually furnishing new examples.

For a reader who is really literate in English, misspelled words are distracting because they do not look right. Commonly they show a lack of feeling for our well-established system. "Necessary" and "sucess," for instance, reveal unawareness that before *e* or *i* the letter *c* necessarily has its "soft" sound, and that with a double *c* (or *g*) in such position the first is "hard." In another kind of situation, "ocured" or "omited" betrays ignorance of the way doubling or not doubling the consonant, in an accented syllable, marks the quality of the preceding vowel.

Spelling does not have to be "unphonetic" in order to look wrong. "Mispelled" or "roomate" or "bookeeper" represents the real pronunciation well enough, but distorts the components which we need to see clearly for the appearance to be satisfactory. The fact that complete pronunciation of both elements is impossible is irrelevant, as it is in so common an example as *bus stop* or the *man's socks* or *foreignness*. Various trade-names, coined in order to have proprietary rights in them, may represent perfectly the sounds of the words as spoken. Such is the case with *servicenter*, *realemon*, *scenicruiser*, or *handipt* (candles). Yet they would surely be puzzling at first if pictures or physical surroundings were not there to illustrate them.

The term *bus* shows how irresponsible slang clipping of a word can get us into permanent trouble. There is no way to spell its plural that can look right. Words ending in *s* are regularly pluralized by adding *-es*, but "buses," with its single *s* between two vowels, naturally looks as if it would rime with *refuses*. To be sure, when employed as nouns as *bus* is, some words can keep the "s" sound with only one *s*, as do *uses* and *abuses*, but the *u* keeps its "you" sound, and "buses" suggests the same pattern. Finally, to represent the intended sound by writing "busses" would be to employ the very different word *buss*, an old-fashioned name for a kiss. So there is no really satisfactory solution. Whereas the original word *omnibus*, pluralized as *omnibuses*, caused no trouble at all; *bus* was not the accented syllable, and its *u* hardly existed as a real vowel.

The quaint form "monies" as a plural for *money* has had widespread currency, but it is displeasing because it violates a principle that goes all the way through our spelling. When a final *y* is preceded by a *vowel*, we simply add *s* as in *donkeys*, *monkeys*, *honeys*, or any number of other examples. Only when it follows a consonant does the *y* change to *i* and add *-es*. So deeply is this a part of our orthography that it applies independently of grammar, whether we have to do with noun plurals or with verb forms; it appears in *tries*, *carries*, *worries*, or *empties* as naturally as in *flies*, *bodies*, *enemies*, *opportunities*, *canaries*, *companies*, or *subsidies*. Conversely, not only *e* but any preceding vowel keeps the *y*: *buoys*, *Sundays*, *destroys*, *delays*, and so on.

There is sad evidence that even people professionally connected with education may have only the vaguest notions of how words ought to look. This word-blindness was demonstrated when great numbers of Texas schoolteachers followed the urging of their association and bombarded the state capitol with letters concerning a proposed across-the-board increase in wages. Besides grammatical atrocities, many of the letters displayed such unbelievable misspellings as: *apprecate*, *appreicate*, *capioil*, *eleminate*, *particlar*, *equitable*, *ensifficent*, *proposial*, *purposal*. [2] with such deep and many-sided ignorance of language on the part of *teachers*, there must be great numbers of schoolchildren who have small chance of attaining literacy.

Several years ago at one of the larger universities, two doctors, whose duty it was to review the medical histories which engineering students had to write about themselves, kept account of the distortions of spelling which they came upon continually. From the long list which they compiled, a few samples will suffice to show the generally illiterate quality. While many students described their health as "exellent," some merely claimed to be in good "phisicul" and "mentle" condition. The many misspelled maladies included "bronicle namonia," "rumatic feavor," "asma," "accuse apendisidus," "heart mummers," "stummach truble," "toncilitas," "goider," "hemrodes," and other "atacts." Among the causes of deaths in their families were "harding of the artarees," "cansur," "appleplexly," "serebral hemrige," "sorosis of the liver," "hartatacts," "tuberculosis" and a few cases of "susidide." Medical terminology was no more roughly handled, however, than common everyday vocabulary. Thus a student reported his "accedent" on an insurance-claim blank: "Riding a 'hoarse' when the saddle 'sliped' and I hit my 'anle' on another riders 'sturip.'" On this the doctor could not forbear commenting: "How lucky! He might have been 'throne' from the 'hoarse,' and 'exrayse' might have shown that he sustained a broken 'elbo' or 'nee' injury."

As remarkable as anything else was the inability of many students to write the name of their religious persuasion. Every known faith got misspelled to some extent, but the widest possibilities of variation appeared in 7 ways for writing Catholic, 8 for Baptist and Episcopal, 9 for Lutheran 20 for Presbyterian, 23 for Methodist, and no less than 53 ways of spelling Protestant. [3]

Yet such displays of illiteracy may seem somewhat less discouraging if we view them in perspective. When we examine old books in their original texts, not modernized as they are reprinted now, we begin to see English spelling in a somewhat different light. A good example in point is Governor William Bradford's *History of Plimoth Plantation* (down to 1647). The forms of countless words as Bradford wrote them seem ridiculously misshapen; without their context many could hardly be recognized at all. For a few of the more striking specimens we may notice *shuck* (such), *peeces*, *muskeeto*, *bewtie*, *gunes* and *bulits*, *captan*, *katle* (cattle), *particulers*, *peirst* (pierced), *hott climats*, *devisson*, *spetiall*, *pretious*, *brethern*, *ploted*, *hops* (hopes). Moreover, words shift from one spelling to another as we find them in different places. Every rule or principle of spelling in our system as we know it is violated in every conceivable way. Yet the author was by no means an uneducated man. Whenever he quotes Latin in legal discussion, or uses Biblical names, his spelling is quite orthodox.

The simple fact is that at that time people did not feel that the spelling of English particularly mattered. Not until more than a century later was there a real dictionary of our language, and "correct" forms were not yet established as such. Words did not *need* to "look right" at all. With respect to concern for its appearance, English writing was many centuries behind languages which through long tradition gave importance to the way a word looks on paper.' So in spite of the corruptions which still take place, it is only realistic to recognize that we have come a long way.

While newspapers are often guilty of poor sentence-structure or misuse of words, they are generally remarkably accurate in spelling as we ordinarily think of it. Frequently, however, they go astray in the compounding of words, and produce forms which cannot "look right" to anyone sensitive to the nature of our language. When teen-ager (not a very apt coinage from any point of view) is written solidly as "teenager," that form logically suggests a mispronunciation and a false relationship with words like *manager*, *tanager*, or *dowager*; a basic part of the word is made to look like a mere grammatical ending.

When a phrase which would naturally come *after* a noun is placed in front of it, we make the relationship immediately clear by hyphenating the phrase. So "the view over all" becomes "the over-all view." Writing the prepositional phrase "overall" as if it were a compound, distorts it into the sound and suggestion of an *overgarment*, like an *overcoat*, a quite different construction. Similarly *under way* is a prepositional phrase, with the accent falling naturally on the object *way*. Spelled "under way" it seems to fall into the pattern of *underwear*, *undershirt*, and the like, where the "under" is an adjective and never was a preposition.

Recently there has come into wide use the term *drop-out* for a student who leaves school before finishing. When this is written as one word "dropout," it goes counter to one of the clearest principles in our system of spelling. Here the *o* would sound as in *hope*; to retain the intended value the *p* would need to be doubled as in *hopping*. In all these examples it is easy to see definite reasons why the distorted form does not "look right."

In the representation of compound words, both run-of-the-mine "usage" and the "authorities" of dictionaries and handbooks are utterly inconsistent. There are involved, however, some clear-cut principles which are not difficult to demonstrate. The question whether a given compound should be hyphenated or may be written solidly can be decided by how the result *looks*.

Many common compounds are written solidly with no objectionable effect whatever, as *baseball*, *football*, *churchman*, *salesman*, or *businessman*. No such happy visual impression can be produced by writing "cutthroat" for *cut-throat*, "flattop" for *flat-top*, or "filmmakers" for *film-makers*, as some newspapers have tried to do. A striking example of such indiscriminating unification was a reference to a woman journalist as "the top *newshen* in Washington. [4] In a modern novel, described on the cover as "an American masterpiece," this abuse of form is carried to such lengths that it becomes continually noticeable as a quaint mannerism. [5] While *waterline*, *guncrew*, *goodlooking*, or *palmtree*, for instance, may pass without offense, when we come to such items as *paperlittered*, *rawmaterial*, *sunsetpink*, *bananabunches*, *machinegunfire*, or *tobaccocolored*, this style pointlessly attracts attention. Some queer sort of other word is suggested by *gasstove*, *brasshats*, or *tomatocan*, and one might well be momentarily puzzled as to the meaning of such specimens as *hangerson*, *teathings*, *riversmell*, or *redrimmed* (eyes). There can be no doubt that hyphenation would have made all of these easier for anyone to read.

The various would-be reformers of our spelling who attain publicity from time to time appear to hold a conception of language which is too narrow and pedantic. In their zeal to have everything spelled "phonetically," according to their notions of what that means, they seem not to have a very realistic idea of what the process of reading actually involves. For one thing, it is quite arbitrary to

assume that being "phonetic" should always limit us to only *one* way of representing a given phoneme. Like other languages, English can very well represent the same sound in different ways. Instead of being a fault, this is a great advantage.

Basically, of course, writing represents speech, and should always carry with it as much as possible of the living quality of spoken words. It has, however, a different job to do. It has to make up for the absence of all manner of physical aids which we may not think of as "context" or even consciously recognize at all, but which are continually operating to make oral expression intelligible. Thus for instance, the differentiation in spelling of our so-called homonyms puts the literate reader instantly in the proper ambiance, which may be worlds away from what would be suggested by another way of representing the same sound. It would be making a senseless fetish of "phonetics" to spell as if they were "the same word" such coincidences of pronunciation as *seen* and *scene*, *fare* and *fair*, *sail* and *sale*, *cymbal* and *symbol*, *right*, *write*, *wright*, and *rite*, or *sight*, *site*, and *cite*. The simplified spelling enthusiasts seem to have completely ignored the great help to the silent reader which is afforded by this flexibility in our spelling.

So, within much narrower limits, and almost apologetically instead of wholeheartedly and understandingly, we have been relying upon devices somewhat like those that Oriental languages have depended upon traditionally. Chinese and Japanese are full of examples of words of similar sound – but different meaning – which are represented by entirely different written characters. Thus their writing is characteristically more unmistakably clear than the spoken tongue. With English rather the reverse is too often the case.

By carelessness, inconsistency, simple ignorance, or stubborn refusal to recognize the orderly *system* which our written language has effectively worked out, the reader is often obliged to understand what he reads in spite of its graphic form rather than by any aid it gives him. We could gain much immediate clarity in our writing if we realized more fully that "the way a word looks" is important.

References.

1. Robert Trumbull, "How to Write in Japanese." New York Times Book Review. Sept. 19, 1965.
2. *Newsweek*, March 8, 1965; quoted in C.B.E. Bulletin, May, 1965
3. Ohio State University Monthly, March, 1958, p. 3.
4. Time, April 21, 1952. p. 57.
5. Nineteen-Nineteen, by John Dos Passos, 1937.

-o0o-

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1966 p8*]

Comments by Newell W. Tune

While it may seem presumptuous for us to disagree with Mr. Foley, we think our readers would like to see both sides of the coin.

While it is true that it is in some ways an advantage to be able to write a word in two or more ways in order to distinguish between words that sound the same (homophones), this is really unnecessary. Let me quote Benjamin Franklin on this subject, (from his letter to Mary Stevenson), "your second inconvenience is, 'the distinction between words of different meaning and similar sound would be destroyed.' That distinction is already destroyed in pronouncing them; we rely on the sense alone (context) of the sentence to ascertain which of the several words, similar in sound, we intend. If this is sufficient in the rapidity of (spoken) discourse, it will be more so in written sentences, which may

be read leisurely, and can be attended to more particularly in case of difficulty, than we can attend to in a past sentence, while the speaker is hurrying us along with new ones."

Additionally, while it is true that most systems of phonetic (or more properly, phonemic) spelling will make the reading of homophones less easy, possibly causing confusion in some cases, this is largely made up by clarifying the confusion now present in homographs. In the article on *Homophones, Homographs, Heterographs – the Deceitful Words of English*, [1] both classes of these words were listed. There were found to be about 570 sets of homophones and 300 true homographs and 250 of the accent variety homographs. Hence the advantages of a phonemic spelling in eliminating homographs are nearly equal to the disadvantages of the same spellings for homophones.

But the advantages of eliminating homographs are very real while the disadvantages of the same spelling for homophones is largely fanciful. It is a great help to know which of the possible meanings is intended without having to read entirely through a sentence to find this out from the context. Words such as: bass, bow, do, does, gill, lather, lead, live, mow, primer, put, read, refuse, row, rower, sewer, sow, tear, use, wind, wound, are continually plaguing us with their double meanings and pronunciations. A phonemic spelling would make this class of words much easier to read.

But there is more to it than that. Did you ever stop to think that hundreds – even thousands-of English words have multiple meanings altho they are not considered to be homophones? Bay has 20 (including 5 homophones), fall 42, head 45, light 65, lay 43, play 55, point 70, press 44, quarter 40, right 44, ring 47, rise 50, roll 59, round 83, run 104, slip 48, spring 40, sound 49, touch 56, to name just a few (ref. ACD). Probably a thousand words in English have more than 10 meanings each, yet we do not need more than one spelling for each of these. When the word *spring* (with 40 different meanings) is used in a sentence, do you find it necessary to spell it in a variety of ways to distinguish the various meanings? If I should say, "his wife gave birth to a son in the spring" would you envision water bubbling out of the ground, a coil of metal, or a jump through the air? or any other of the 40 possible meanings than the proper one? And even spelled phonemically, there should be no confusion between son and sun, *birth* and *berth*. Writers learn to avoid uses of words in a manner that possibly might be confusing, because they have had practice with *fall*, *spring*, *run*, *play*, *point*, *round*, etc. Bay is another word with greatly differing meanings – hence you would not write a sentence in the following manner: "Let me take the bay down to the bay while you watch from the bay over the sweet bay for the hounds to bay." In order to make the meanings clear and to distinguish these homophones, one would sensibly write, "Let me take the bay horse down to the bay (the most frequent use) while you watch over the bay window over the sweet bay tree for the hounds to bay (telling that the hunters are coming home.)"

A trend should be noted: the most necessary and useful of a set of homophones becomes the most used word and the lesser important word gradually becomes less used until it is nearly obsolete. You seldom hear now or see the word: *son*. Usually a father will say, "That's my boy," even tho there should be no possible confusion – its just a case of wanting to avoid a misunderstanding. This trend has been going on for years, and if we have a reform of our spelling, it will immediately be accelerated in order to prevent possible confusion. But this would be only a minor inconvenience – much less of an obstacle than anticipated and certainly less of an obstacle than switching over to the Metric System of weights and measures – which seems likely to be accomplished, viz. Australia's change to the decimal system and talks in the House of Commons and our Congress on switching to the Metric System.

[1] *Spelling Progress Bulletin*, [March, 1962](#).

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1966 pp9,10 in the printed version*]

6. Steps Toward a New English Alphabet, by Gertrude Hildreth, Ph.D.*

*Visiting Professor of Education, American Univ. of Beirut, Lebanon.

The rapid expansion of children's literature printed in i.t.a. suggests that sooner or later the Pitman Augmented Roman Alphabet will be recommended as the permanent medium for encoding World English. Altho Sir James has insisted that he devised his new scheme only as a temporary measure for facilitating learning in the beginning stages of reading, a growing number of children's classics and other books for teens and preteens are now available in the new type and orthography. Certainly the children must already have felt a need for a dictionary containing the enlarged vocabulary they meet in these books and for words needed in free writing. Printing presses with i.t.a. type are probably already in production for linotyping this material at top speed. As soon as enough reading matter is at hand there will be little need to guide the youngsters in converting from i.t.a. to conventional English-in-print.

Almost 5 years of experimentation in England have amply demonstrated the advantages of teaching beginning reading with the new medium. The chief concern now is whether i.t.a. in its present form is the best system that could be devised for encoding the English language either as a transition medium or for a permanent reform.

Several criteria have been proposed that serve as a guide for evaluating the efficiency of a graphic symbol system for the English tongue. These are as follows:

1. One-to-one correspondence between the set of phonemes and the series of graphemes or printed characters contrived to represent them.
2. An adequate number of separate symbols to represent all the basic sounds of English speech, but no more than are essential for this purpose in view of practical considerations of learning and usage.
3. Maximum legibility of the separate printed characters with clear-cut distinction in forms.
4. In orthography, no silent letters as in *debt* or *aisle*, and no redundant double letters as in *better*, *manners*, *dolls*, or *well*.
5. Letter forms constructed so as to be suitable for printing presses, for the typewriter, and for simple forms of handwriting with slight modifications, such as italic slant or joinings.
6. Maximum compatibility with the traditional Roman style print for easy transition from new to old styles of print until such time as the inadequate Roman alphabet may be abandoned altogether.

In rating the present form of i.t.a. according to these criteria, the fact that several modifications have been made in Pitman's original version of the new alphabet since 1961 must be borne in mind.

These changes are as follows: Two characters have been added to the original 43, a new *r* and a new *a* as spoken in the British *ask*, a sound halfway between the *a* in *and* and the *a* in *father*. Double letters are now used in all cases where they occur in traditional orthography in the interest of ease of transition between i.t.a. and T.O. The *i* is now omitted in all words containing the *ion* ending in traditionally spelled words, e.g. *nation*.

We are now ready to consider the question, "How does i.t.a. measure up to the criteria listed above?"

The 45 distinct characters to represent 45 phonemes of English satisfy the first criterion but still not perfectly because 8 of the i.t.a. symbols are redundant. Duplications are: *c* and *k* for the hard sound of *k* (*cat* and *kite* are still spelled with *c* and *k*), *z* and a mirror image *z* for the *s* with the *z*-sound in *was*, *a* and *o* for the same sounds in *father* and *bother*, and *au* is part of the diphthong *oi*, as these characters are employed in the new orthography. Furthermore, there are nine 2-letter combinations, *ie*, *ue*, *wh*, *ck*, *th* (2 styles), *sh*, *au*, *ou*, and *oi*. Even the characters representing the long vowel sounds plus the ending *ng* are actually ligatures composed of two letters used separately for other sounds in the new alphabet. Altho current experiments prove that children respond well in employing i.t.a. for written expression, these new long vowel ligatures seem unnecessarily complicated for young hands to inscribe.

Pitman has eliminated upper case letters as distinct from lower case in the interest of simplicity. Capitals are merely larger, bolder letters. This trend was introduced some time ago in new style advertising matter and has gained in popularity right along. School beginners are first taught to write i.t.a. in print form with vertical strokes and letters unjoined, following the trend toward manuscript writing (the nearest analogy is standard typewriter forms) in the primary grades, and frequently continued without changeover to cursive script in the upper grades.

Since i.t.a. departs in a number of instances from the golden phonetic rule of one grapheme to one phoneme exclusively, it is not always trustworthy for spelling by *articulation* even tho the new system represents a tremendous improvement over our traditional spelling in this respect.

In a new system of spelling, the avoidance of mirrored image letters, e.g. *b-d*, *p-q*, is desirable because of the confusion young children experience in recognizing and writing these letter twins. Altho *q* is gone from i.t.a., a new problem has been introduced with the backward facing *z* in addition to the regular form of *z*. Since some new symbols must be invented anyway, why not avoid these reversed pairs?

Another question that arises is whether as many as 45 different characters are needed for representing all the basic phonemes of the English language. Pitman himself has expressed the view that even 43 are too many, that an alphabet of from 35 to 40 different characters should suffice for all practical purposes. However, the author of the i.t.a. in constructing the new medium was not trying to keep the alphabet down to the irreducible minimum, but rather to achieve both phoneme matching and maximum compatibility with traditional English orthography.

What is the minimum number of characters that are required to represent all the basic sounds in the modern English vocabulary? What is the maximum number that is still within practical limits of learning time and printing efficiency? Obviously fewer than 35 symbols are inadequate to represent all the basic consonant and vowel sounds without having to double-up or employ some 2-letter combinations. An alphabet of 50 symbols would produce more accurate results than 45 or 40, but such an alphabet would be unnecessarily refined and run beyond the bounds of practical efficiency for young learners, for typewriter keyboards and for proofreaders. An alphabet of about 40 symbols is adequate for spelling by articulation according to agreed-upon standards of English pronunciation. A standard dictionary would serve as a guide to any remaining uncertainties in spelling and to word pronunciation.

An objection may be raised that fewer than 45 symbols is inadequate for speech training of school beginners who are five or six years of age. Children at this age are still uncertain of some sounds, particularly the more difficult consonants. The answer to this objection is that the alphabet is not intended as a device for early speech training even tho this is often the first use teachers make of the ABC's in kindergarten and the first grade before teaching reading. The function of the alphabet is to give clues to meaning as the reader's eyes move along the lines of print. Here the chief requirement is an alphabet that enables the reader to discriminate accurately among similar sounding words, as *laugh, lamp, lamb, land,* and *tot* from *taught, not-naught,* etc. The mature reader is primarily a silent reader who is guided in interpreting print by the consecutive clues he perceives without having to vocalize each of the individual sounds of the words. As for writing words by articulation (phonetic spelling), a reasonable level of accuracy in recording the graphemes assigned to the different sounds is all that can be expected.

An alphabet of between 35 and 38 letters might suffice for English, but 40 would be better. Two of the world's best phonetic systems that conform to the one-to-one principle, the Russian and modern Armenian, employ 33 and 38 letter characters respectively. Turkish gets along pretty well with 28 letters, and Arabic with 28 different characters plus an additional set of "vowel points" to make up for the missing vowel letters. Alphabets ranging from 33 to 38 letters offer no special learning problems for six or seven year-olds, even for bright fives.

Suggestions for an English alphabet of about 40 letters.

In an effort to arrive at the minimum number of graphemes to be included in a phonetic one-to-one English alphabet, the first question to decide is what sounds need to be represented. Table 1 gives a list of 41 generally accepted sounds of English speech, each of which is illustrated with a word in traditional spelling. The next question to consider is what to keep from the traditional Roman alphabet, what to discard, and what new forms are needed. A scheme I devised some time ago included these recommendations:

Omit *c, q,* and *x,* as these are superflous.

Use *k* invariably for the hard sound of *c.*

Use *s* always for the soft sound of *c.*

Use an *n* with a tail (η) for the *ng* phoneme.

Reassign *c* for the *ch* sound, or use ζ cedilla for *ch* as in Turkish.

Use ξ sedilla for the *sh* sound as in Turkish.

Construct a new letter for the "awe" sound in *awful.*

Construct 3 new letters for the *ou* in *house* and *oo* as in *took* and in *moon.*

Use the present *u* only for the short sound of *u* as in *up.*

Combine *th* into a joined ligature for *th* in *this,* and a slight variation of it for *th* in *thin.*

Construct a new symbol for *wh,* perhaps a *x* with an extra stroke.

Use *z* cedilla for the *z* sound as in *measure, azure.*

Use just one symbol for the sounds of *er, ir, ur, as* in *her, stir, fur,* perhaps the capital R of our Italic Roman alphabet.

One final suggestion is to include a symbol for the muttered "schwa" sounds in such words as:
certain (pronounced *sertun*), *button, hunted,* etc.

With these changes and additions, a high degree of compatibility with the present English alphabet is still retained.

Table 1

A list of phonemes for the Modernized English Alphabet.

Vowel sounds:

1. *a* as in *ate*.
2. *ah* as in *bah, father*.
3. *a* as in *and*.
4. *aw* as in *awful*.
5. *e* as in *meet, seat, eve*.
6. *e* as in *met*.
7. *i* as in *idol*.
8. *i* as in *bit*.
9. *o* as in *no* and *owe*.
10. *o* as in *odd*.
11. *oo* as in *moon*.
12. *oo* as in *book*.
13. *u* as in *up*.
14. *er, ir, ur*, as in *her, stir, fir*.

Consonant sounds:

15. *b* as in *bib, bat*.
16. *ch* as in *church, child*.
17. *d* as in *did, dig*.
18. *f* as in *fluff, fan*.
19. *g* as in *gig, go*.
20. *h* as in *hand, huh*.
21. *j* as in *judge, jump*.
22. *k* as in *kick, c* in *cadillac*.
23. *l* as in *lull, lamp*.
24. *m* as in *mom, man*.
25. *n* as in *nun, noon*.
26. *ng* as in *ring, think*.
27. *p* as in *pop, pig*.
28. *r* as in *roar, red*.

29. *s* as in *sis, seal*.
 30. *sh* as in *shush, ship*.
 31. *t* as in *tent, tot*.
 32. *th* as in *this, then*.
 33. *th* as in *thistle, thin*.
 34. *v* as in *verve, van*.
 35. *w* as in *wet, wine*.
 36. *wh* as in *whet, whine*.
 37. *y* as in *yes, yak*.
 38. *z* and *s* as in *zoos, zip, busy*.
 39. *z* as in *azure, measure*.
- The diphthongs – compound vowels in *oil, our, fuel*, should be spelled with two letters.

i.t.a. has led the way in proving the advantages of a more efficient system for representing English sounds in print. It is high time for the English-speaking world to discard its archaic alphabet and spelling, and to devise a new model for permanent adoption.

-o0o-

7. Braud English Speling, by 'Chychse T. Psikhss' ('66')

We enclose as a free supplement with this issue an 8-page pamphlet with the above title.

Corrections to be made are as follows:

pg. 1, fourth line below author's name, for 'other' spell *uther*.

pg. 2, first line, for 'SHELV' read 'SHELVZ.'

pg. 3, last line before tables, for 'beloe' read 'belo'. last line of bottom table, for 'ie y ie' read 'ie y iy iey.'

pg. 4, third column of table, for 'y, iy' read 'y, iy, iey.' fourth column of table, after '(right)' add 'rieyt (wright)'.

pg. 8, 5th line next-to-last paragraph, for 'liebaris' read 'liebrariz.'

Braud English Speling was designed along the lines of practical historical reform achievements in Germany, Norway, etc. because evolution is more likely to be implemented than revolution. Thus *BIS*:

(1) commits no-one 'to change any existing letter, type font, typewriter, law, nor to eliminate any homonym difference whether using traditional, new or mixed spellings, so it requires no general or local legislation before it can come into use anywhere at any time;

(2) preserves the slowly-universalizing pronunciation conventions of World English Spelling, the joint proposal of the most widely accepted and long-established spelling reform movements in the two most representative English-speaking regions, (UK and USA);

(3) keeps each letter a function or functions already common in traditional spelling, so that there is a minimum of likelihood of delaying more sweeping reforms, most of which are invited to accept *BIS* as a step toward their ideals. (In fact, acceptance and proof of advantages of *BIS* would set a precedent for wider reforms aimed more at space-economy and greater consistency of digraphs with their components, both of which aims are of secondary importance to those learning to read and write in English).

-o0o-

8. Devising the Shaw-Script, by Kingsley Read.

Dear Mr. Tune

You ask "the reasons for devising the Shaw-script in the style that it is;" a fundamental question.

It was conceived and designed, fundamentally, for ECONOMY: economy in a writing, typing, printing suited to *general communication* on paper. If no value is put on writing with less effort, or on reducing a 300-page book to 200 pages, we are ignoring the advantages of convenience and cheapness. So far, educationists and the public have given these factors scant consideration. The short term view still is that methods of learning to read in an archaic alphabet meant for Latin, are more important than a consistent spelling with a new alphabet saving penwork, type, paper and monetary costs.

A new generation, accustomed by i.t.a. to regard Orthodox spelling frankly as a wasteful, if necessary, anachronism, may grow up to question its necessity in any but the most formal of handwriting, even while preserving it in print. Writing has always differed in symbols and style from printing; why should it not differ to some economic advantage; with a modern and simple alphabet cutting penwork by half?

Until a more economical alphabet produces a generation of trained readers in it, there is no hope of tackling its use in printing; for that involves an initial outlay which is certainly deterrent tho widely exaggerated. In handwriting, on the contrary, involves no outlay; it is inevitably the sphere in which saving is greatest, and most likely to be adopted. Its subsequent and far distant extension to printed matter is another question, not yet worth pressing.

With the spread of i.t.a., we may see a generation of youngsters trained early to a phonemic alphabet and a consistent spelling. It is contrary to the function of i.t.a. itself to serve economically or ideally in penwork; but its phonemes have only to be matched in the simplest symbols adapted for writing in order to transliterate its spellings. Obviously, the printed and the written words would differ in symbols. They have always done so. Where is the correspondence of symbols between ALPHABET (capitals) and alphabet (lower case) and cursive script? Yet we loosely speak of them as the "same" letters, when we mean only that their uses are the same.

Such a "Quick-script Alphabet" has in fact been evolved from Shaw-script and is under trial in adult correspondence. I shall be glad to give details to competent investigating bodies. Designed specifically for legible and speedy handwriting (rather than printing), it differs widely from the Shaw alphabet.

You rightly say that Shaw-script is not a shorthand system; nor is Quick-script. Both are designed for general communication, not as aids to recollection of what is half written. All shorthand systems are over simplified, with symbols too slightly distinguished from one another, for fast and certain reading in communications. The writer's gain turns out to be the reader's loss. Their joint economy is not the objective of such systems. They are not all-purpose writing.

How legible is Shaw-script, you ask? It is of course, too new yet for its readers to have that instinctive word-recognition acquired in reading Orthodox daily from childhood upwards. But Arabic and Hebrew are read as fast as Orthodox English with sufficient experience, and it is often said that the style of Shaw-script is similar. Inherently, it seems to be quite as legible as Orthodox

when both are equally practised. Only prolonged and "controlled" school trials, in which both alphabets are equally unfamiliar and equally used, can supply the necessary evidence of advantages.

Shaw's preference for a completely non-Roman set of letter-symbols arose from his intention that the new alphabet and the old should be used concurrently and competitively until one or the other survived as the fittest. Meanwhile, he insisted that the old spelling should lose none of its familiarity, and that the new system should have no traditional obstacles compromising its entire efficiency. It was to be a frank struggle between the traditional and the ideal, without makeshift concessions by either system of writing.

Obviously, the new alphabet had to spell English without digraphs and therefore no fewer than 40 letters. And obviously each new letter should be written with the fewest penstrokes capable of distinguishing it safely from any other letter. No ideal alphabet would require CAPITAL letters, often differing from the lower-case letters in shape as well as size. The general nature of the Shaw alphabet was dictated by his essential purpose-to write far more ECONOMICALLY.

Kingsley Read, Abbots Morton, Worcester, England.

-o0o-

9. Must Shorthand Die Out? by E. Lotzing*

In a circular published in English, there is the prediction: "The day of any shorthand is over. The next shorthand will be in electric lights." Does this mean the computer, dictation machine, and sound scribe (voice-operated typewriter?) are making it unnecessary?

And a teacher at a German business school writes us: "Our pupils are of the opinion that shorthand is an outdated branch of study." The Dutch "Groote-Schrijver" has recently introduced general language and written instruction into its curriculum – but we have been doing that for years. We older people had not thought that shorthand would become a specifically taught subject. In our day, stenography was mostly a private undertaking, or one connected with one's business office. I had no teacher, either for school shorthand or for taking notes at lectures. Yet I got the ambition to become the best stenographer among hundreds.... If shorthand should get left out of the curriculum, it still can be pursued by individuals – indeed, with all the more incentive. It is helpful to one's study of grammar and phonetics.

*Karpfenteich, Germany.

-o0o-

10. Then... Why? by Helen Bowyer

See here, *gh*, d'you understand
There's not a speech sound in this land,
Or this whole English world of ours
Which needs that fake digraph of yours.

Other digraphs one can say -
Chin and *shin* and *thin* and *they*
But what do you articulate
In *height* and *might* and *freight* and *weight*

And when you oust the *f* from *rough*
Laugh and *cough* and *slough* and *tough*,
What do you do but worsen more,
Spellings bad enough before?

Then, tacking yourself on to *though*,
Through and *thorough*, *bough* and *dough*,
You waste not only space and ink,
You train our Johnnies *not to think*,
Than which there is no greater wrong,
Can be inflicted on our young.

-o0o-

[*Spelling Reform Anthology §2.2 pp5,6 in the printed version*]
[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1966 pp12,13 in the printed version*]

11. The Urgency of Spelling Reform, by Clarence Hotson, Ph.D.

Recently an education authority declared that by 1970 there will be only one poorly paid job available for every five boys who have failed to graduate from high school. The demand for unskilled labor has been constantly shrinking in the face of increased automation, and functional illiterates find it impossible to get and hold jobs. A special weakness of our schools is the evident failure to teach reading and writing to a large proportion of schoolchildren. This is a crucial failure, as reading ability is the key to education.

Meanwhile we must face the evident fact that the children of Soviet Russia are far ahead of our own in mastery of reading vocabulary and academic subjects at the same ages. While our pupils are struggling with babyish primers, the Russians are handling materials of the kind that ours do not reach and years later. [1] A three-year study by Ruth Strickland, professor of education, Indiana University, shows that our children speak maturely, but their school textbooks are giving them baby-talk. The oral language of children, she concludes, is far more advanced than that of our elementary school books. [2]

It seems clear that our schools have some special problem in the teaching of reading that does not trouble the Russians. Why does it take our children so long to learn reading? What causes this difference? Why are Russian children far ahead of our own in academic subjects at the same ages? The obvious reason has been ignored. It is just that the Russians learn to read and write with ease, because Russian is spelled phonetically and consistently, whereas our spelling is so far from either phonetic or consistent as to be something between a joke and a crime. We have some 500 symbols to express the 40 sounds of English. [3] Since these symbols are the 26 letters of our Roman alphabet, and combinations of these, the resulting confusion is terrible. Reason and logic are handicaps rather than helps in learning our spelling. We must rely mainly on sheer "brute memory."

Altho many efforts have been made in the past to reform English spelling, they have never sufficed to overcome the massive inertia that resists all change. Now, however, the evident fact that the young of Russia are being much more efficiently educated than our own should be just what we need to force this reform. The whip of dire necessity may compel what rational argument alone could never achieve. For if we want to catch up with the Russian performance in "space technology" and the education of engineers, the first thing we must do is reform our uniquely eccentric spelling. It is not pleasant to think what will happen if we don't.

George Bernard Shaw performed a great service in calling public attention to the need for spelling reform. He pointed out the great advantage that Russia has over English in having a rational orthography. Unfortunately, as I think, he insisted on an entirely new alphabet for English, and accordingly his play, *Androcles and the Lion* has now been published in double form, Shavian on one side and conventionally spelled English on the other.

A most significant educational experiment has more recently been carried on in England with primers printed in an augmented Roman alphabet of 42 letters. Hundreds of elementary schoolchildren have learned to read with ease and eagerness by the use of such primers instead of the conventional kind, and their zest for reading is such as to alarm their teachers. Their performance far surpasses that of children who start with ordinary textbooks, and they have an

advantage of at least a year over such children when both sets of children must later use conventional textbooks.

The importance of this experiment, the Pitman Initial Teaching Alphabet, cannot be exaggerated. It proves that children learning English, if given the advantage of starting with a system of rational spelling, are quite capable of doing as well in school work as Russian or any other children. For such good results, the child must at the outset find English words spelled in a consistent way that does not violate logic. The problem of illiteracy can be solved at the source; indeed, with a rational spelling there will be no problem. The waste of years of time in education can be avoided. The frustration, despair and juvenile delinquency resulting from the extreme difficulty of learning to read and write by traditional methods will be much reduced. A new age of progress and prosperity will begin.

The Simpler Spelling Association, at Lake Placid Club, New York, urges all would-be spelling reformers to make the best of our present Roman alphabet. It would take too long a time to supplant our old-time alphabet by either an entirely new alphabet like Shaw's, or an augmented Roman alphabet like that of the Pitman Initial Teaching Alphabet. The common-sense solution of our root problem, I submit, is to find the best way we now have of representing any particular sound in English speech, and to make that the rule, excluding so far as practical all other representation. At present we use 500 symbols for 40 sounds, so that English is 8% phonetic. A well-devised system of simplified spelling should be almost 100% phonetic.

There are indications now of increased interest in spelling reform but much more is needed. Within the past decade the British Parliament came within three votes of setting up a royal commission to reform English spelling. The argument most effective in defeating the bill even by this narrow margin was that no reform is possible without the co-operation of the United States of America. Nothing will be done, we may be sure, until our government sets up a Spelling Reform Commission, for no reform of any language's spelling was ever achieved except by government action; and this has always been effective.

About 80 years ago, the leading scholars and teachers of English strongly favored spelling reform, and tried vainly to get Congress to act. Recently, Congressman Harlan Hagen, of California, introduced in Congress "A Bill to establish the National Spelling Commission to reform the spelling of English words, to publish the United States Official Dictionary, and for other purposes." This he did January 12, 1959. It has been re-introduced in every session since. The bill, now H.R. 6930, is to be considered by the Office of Education of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare as part of the office-wide program, Project English. Public hearings are promised on the bill when the public shows enough interest to demand some action.

It is highly significant that Hon. Harlan Hagen is from California, for this state is well ahead of the rest of the country in realizing the need for spelling reform. Homer W. Wood, a lawyer and former newspaper publisher of Porterville, California, has been most active in the cause. On May 6, 1961, he secured an important resolution from the California Newspaper Publishers Association, with a membership of more than 400 newspapers. On May 23, 1961 under the leadership of Senator J. Howard Williams, the California State Senator passed a resolution for a National Spelling Commission and a United States Official Dictionary.

The Hagen Bill affords a great opportunity finally to rid the English-speaking world of an enormous handicap. It is to be hoped, of course, that full opportunity to consult with Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand will be given, and that perhaps four possible solutions of the problem of

spelling reform for English may eventually be submitted by the Commission for the final choice of Congress and the representatives of the other English-speaking lands. The Hagen Bill is at least a motion before the House with which to get started. The necessary government action must be prepared for and accompanied by the peculiarly American way of handling a political problem, namely, by the initiative of the people themselves. As many as possible of us should become vitally concerned with the problem of spelling reform. Let each one, or as many as can do so, develop his own system, and then compare notes. Let the best ideas be found by such experimentation and comparison of notes.

The merits of all suggestions for reform must, of course, be carefully reviewed and evaluated by the eminent scholars to be appointed to the spelling reform commission when Congress passes the Hagen bill or some similar measure and one is accordingly established. In reply to an open letter to President Kennedy by Upton Sinclair, the noted author, in behalf of spelling reform, the President's office recently suggested the formation of the committee of scholars and specialists to canvass the entire question and make concrete recommendations.

The urgency of spelling reform also appears from the fact that despite its atrocious orthography, English, by reason of the special merits: its vast vocabulary, relatively simple grammar and syntax, freedom from inflections, essential brevity, and the immense empire of literature and learning which it offers the adept, is already the most important medium of international communication, and is increasingly studied by educated persons the world over. It is noteworthy that a phonetic system of spelling called World English has been employed since 1930 to help students in secondary schools of Scandinavian countries to correlate sounds of English words with their conventional spelling. This phonetic system enables the pupil to pronounce the word correctly in spite of its present-day spelling.

Of course, foreign students learning English cannot expect for some time to come to escape the need to read English as it is now spelled. Any phonetic system they use is a means of glossing the conventionally spelled text to enable them to pronounce what they read with reference to a phonetically consistent key. But in the measure that English becomes the world medium of communication, the pressure for a phonetic or rational spelling is bound to increase. The more the world's people make English their own language, the less they will be willing to tolerate such nonsense as the spelling we have passively inherited. If we fail to reform the spelling of standard English, however, what will surely conquer the world will be a wretched "Pidgin English," a deliberate insult to the standard tongue. So far as it is ever recorded, it will be phonetically spelled. But it will outrage the very souls of all who cherish our noble speech.

It is time for a great effort to reform our spelling and to free teacher and pupil alike from the slavery imposed by an anomalously eccentric orthography, thus leaving far more time for teaching and acquiring real knowledge. Instead of repressing and suppressing the child's nascent rationality by a spelling that insults and penalizes reason and overemphasizes brute memory, we can cultivate his mental powers by a sensible system such as I propose. The damage to the minds of children from our present spelling is incalculable.

For those who need to be shown just how extremely bad our conventional spelling is, I highly recommend *English Heterography, or How We Spell* by Dr Godfrey Dewey, an 80-page booklet published and distributed by the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation, Lake Placid Club, New York. The Foundation welcomes financial contributions in support of its good work.

This contribution of mine to spelling reform is an attempt to expiate the sins of a fairly long life. For after getting a Ph.D. at Harvard in English Philology, I inculcated our unique orthography as a college teacher of English for a number of years, and then for another period of years enforced it as the proof-reader for a great publishing house. With that background, and my recent study of spelling reform, I feel reasonably sure that I know what I'm talking about.

In view of the efficiency of Russian education as the result of nothing except phonetic spelling, a drastic rationalizing of English spelling is imperative for the welfare of the free world and perhaps even for its survival. If there was ever a time when we of the English-speaking world could afford to handicap ourselves by our present ghastly spelling, that time is now surely past. The great merits of English have made it the leading medium of world communication despite this handicap, but now that our entire free way of life is in danger, this disadvantage of being hampered by the world's worst spelling must also be overcome. Our freedom itself may well depend on our success in achieving a rational spelling. This must be done within ten years at most, if our luck or the mercy of Providence allows even that much time. Where do you stand, reader? Will you pitch in and help the cause?

Footnotes:

1. *What Ivan Knows that Johnny Doesn't*, by Arther S. Trace, Jr., Random House, N.Y. \$3.95.
2. *National Observer*, July 30, 1962. This study was financed by the United States Office of Education.
3. *English Heterography, or How We Spell*, by Godfrey Dewey, Ed. D. Lake Placid Club Education Foundation, Lake Placid Club, N.Y.

Clarence Hotson Ph.D., Romulus, N.Y.

Editor's comments: I think one thing was reported all out of proportion to its actual importance. I doubt if the argument most effective in defeating the bill in Parliament was that reform was not possible without the co-operation of the U.S.A. and other English-speaking countries. This was only a red herring that could easily have been disposed of if they had wanted to do so. It is very simple to amend the bill to read "the Commission is empowered to seek agreement with other English-speaking countries as to the form of spelling simplification to be adopted." The real reason was that Mont Follick, MP who introduced the bill, showed as an example of the reform his blasted alphabet which was probably one of the worst. As I have long contended these skeletons should be kept in the spelling reformer's closets where they can frighten no legislators, or we will continually further the day when legislators will seriously consider any spelling reform bill. The important step is to get Congress to establish a commission with authority to select a system of simplification by agreement with other English-speaking countries. There will be plenty of opportunities to show the Spelling Reform Commission the hundreds of schemes devised by reformers since before the time of Columbus. Reform has not been delayed by a lack of examples, but rather *because of some of them*.

Reform *has* been delayed because of the lack of interest by parents and teachers in the ease with which their children learn to read – and the many other advantages of simplification. Getting quantities of convincing arguments to our legislators is the problem we must solve first. Let's put the horse before the cart – not the reverse order!

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1966 pp14,15 in the printed version*]

12. Microminiaturization is a Word to Ponder, by Helen Bowyer.

So Dr. Robert M. Hutchins ends his column in the Los Angeles *Times* for May 9, 1966. To most of us, I expect, it is first of all, a word to *pronounce*. But if one splits it into its three main components: *micro*, *miniatur(e)*, *ization*, the tongue can handle it. As for the mind, these nine syllables, wrote Dr. Hutchins, refer to the process of making and using very small and very cheap electronic circuits that, for all practical purpose *will last forever*.

Dr. Hutchins, as most of our readers probably know, is President of the *Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions*. High among its efforts to preserve these institutions is its publicizing of the *Triple Revolution*, a Memorandum which the *Ad Hoc Committee* sent to President Johnson in March of 1964. The three component and interacting revolutions of the *Triplex* are: (a) the accelerating on-sweep of cybernation, (b) the new forms of weaponry which cannot win wars but can obliterate civilization and (c) the world-wide movement towards the establishment of social and political regimes in which every individual will feel valued and none will feel rejected on account of his race. Without in any way minimizing the heart stopping threat of the new weaponry and what a major uprising of the darker skinned humanity might do, the Memorandum devotes itself primarily to cybernation. Primarily, that is to say, to the computer and the automatic machine.

Naturally, so primordial is war and the ever more deadly development of its weapons; so age-old the sporadic uprising of the conquered, the enslaved, the inferiorated, that the Committee could take for granted *some inkling* of the soaring immensity of these problems on the part of at least a fairish minority of their fellow Americans. But never in all the history of homo sapiens, over any large section of the earth, or thru many springtimes and harvests was there a time when "he toiled not, neither did he spin" and yet there was food, clothes, shelter, warmth, transportation, health care, education, recreation and every other good thing every man, woman and child of him could reasonably desire. And that, said the *Ad Hoc Committee*, was just what cybernation promised us, if... If we could just adjust to the idea in time – that is to say now – before even more diabolic weaponry, more racial violence, wipes out the near promise of this, and, in the Committee's own words, throws this nation into "unprecedented social and economic disaster."

The President, who had already announced his *War on Poverty*, received the document graciously, but most of the press hooted in its usual way, and most of the public likewise in its usual way – never heard of it at all. The unemployed continued their vain search for jobs, the school drop-outs kept the statisticians even busier, J.D. and crime continued their upward climb, the slums took in more and more of the inner city, smog, car exhaust, dumpage continued to desecrate our roads and rivers, just as if 32 of the nations foremost intellectuals had not sent their fore-warning to the President of the nation most capable of giving it quick and saving heed.

But among that tiny minority who too the *Ad Hoc Committee* seriously were Irving Kaplan and Herman Englander who work in scientific activities of the Navy in San Diego, Calif. They spent much of their time thinking about automation and eventually went to the *Center* with news of the new technological revolution inherent in micro-miniaturization. Their position was that "whatever could be systematized could be automated. Since almost every kind of work can be systematized, almost every kind of work can, in theory, be automated." (quoting verbatim from the *L. A. Times*, "What has prevented the translation of theory into practice has been the cost. If the cost of production, installation and maintenance of automatic equipment becomes relatively insignificant, nothing can stop the substitution of machines for men in the whole realm of work.

The dramatic drop in the price of these components is apparent in Kaplan's statement that one that cost \$500 a few years ago is down to less than a dollar today.

As the cost has declined, the capacity of the computers using microminiaturization has multiplied. Kaplan referred to a central computer that is now being designed that would be able to do all by itself one-fifth of the work being done by all the computers in existence.

The technology is in such a state that the shift to microminiaturization could be made in about seven years. That does not mean it will be. Kaplan and Englander referred to what they called the "finagle factor." By this uncomplimentary term they meant the reluctance of those engaged in making and maintaining existing equipment to scrap it before it was amortized.

Powerful tho the finagle factor may be, it cannot withstand indefinitely the pressure of domestic and foreign competition. The Defense Department is unlikely to permit its suppliers to luxuriate indefinitely in high prices resulting from obsolescent machinery.

The transition to microminiaturization will, therefore, come early rather than late. It is urgent to start thinking now about the consequences. They can be nothing less than an economic, social, educational and cultural revolution. They will include, if not a political revolution, drastic political changes. We shall at last be up against the question, what are we going to do with ourselves." (end of quote).

We must not, of course, wait till that "at last" before figuring out an answer. As far, that is, as our look into the immediate future permits. And our present knowledge of human nature. For we must not forget that our knowledge of that is based upon milleniums of scarcity, of war, of racial arrogance, of ill health, early death, ignorance, superstition, fear. But certainly, here in the United States the first thing to do is to weigh thoughtfully the *Proposals for Action* of the Ad Hoc Memorandum. "As a first step it is essential to recognize that the traditional link between jobs and income is being broken. The economy of abundance can sustain all citizens in comfort and economic security whether or not they engage in what is commonly recognized as work for pay. Wealth produced by machines rather than by men is still wealth. We urge, therefore, that society through its appropriate legal and governmental institutions, undertake an unqualified commitment to provide every individual and every family with an adequate income as a matter of right. This undertaking we consider to be essential to the emerging economic, social and political order in this country. We regard it as the only policy by which the quarter of the nation now dispossessed or soon-to-be dispossessed by lack of employment can be brought within the abundant society. The unqualified right to an income would take the place of the patchwork of welfare measures – from unemployment measures to relief-designed to insure that no citizen or resident of the United States actually starves."

A first step in the implementation of this proposal has now been taken. The President's Commission on Technology, Automation and Economic Progress has recommended a guaranteed annual income of \$3000 for every American family. This it has done unanimously and with the sang froid to observe, "Today's more advanced ideas will be commonplace tomorrow." Prominent among the Commission members thus endorsing the *Ad Hoc* proposal were the Board Chairman of IBM and the President of the United Auto Workers' Union. Vietnam will doubtless bold back its actualization, but if these two men are representative of even an enlightened minority of Big Business and Big Labor, this guaranteed annual income may well be on its way.

On its way for what proportion of our population? If in even years, or in fourteen, or even in as many as twenty one, microminiaturization has taken over practically all work which can be systematized, how many paying jobs will be left for the human mind and muscles? As far as one can now conjecture, there will be a closely integrated network of genius-scientific, technologic, economic, sociologic-to manage the production of goods and services, and the rest of us – probably 90% of the adults of the nation – will have 24 hours of the day to *live*. To live for ourselves and for one another – for our families and our friends, for our community, for our country and for all humanity, as no 90%, of Americans have ever lived before. At the moment it is appalling how many of even one's intelligent friends and acquaintances are themselves appalled at the prospect of a jobless life – of an endless succession of Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, with nothing more demanding to do than the voluntary time-fillers of the weekend. Their best course would be to join one of those *Forces of Change* groups which the *Center* maintains here and abroad. At the moment there are some 2000 of them and at the end of the year may see a tenfold growth. The address of the handiest one may be obtained from the *Center*, Santa Barbara, Calif. As also may be a sample copy of its mind-wakening, courage-giving monthly *Change*.

But what of that great majority of the population less intelligent than these friends of mine? Or better said, perhaps, who *manifest* less intelligence. For after all, what do we know of basic Human intelligence? – we who have known it only in an era of scarcity and economic insecurity – of war and preoccupation with war, and insensitivity to the rights of the non-whites of the earth we share with them.

In any case, an immense extension of adult education would seem to be the simplest way of conditioning the grown-ups and older adolescents for the life ahead of them -and who knows how soon ahead? As for the children, what they need is a revolution in the schoolroom, the most fundamental revolution the English-speaking world has ever known. A revolution, that is to say, in the spelling of the printed word through which most of their schooling comes to them. It is not only that we can no longer afford to have them waste time and attention on the like of *whole, bowl, coal, soul, roll, knoll, mole-could, wood, put, but...* We dare no longer distort and starve their inborn rationality with such monstrous inconsistency. And it is at our peril that we lessen their inherent eagerness to learn and their joy in self-achievement by making them dependent on a teacher for the decoding of words which, given a wun-sien-wun-sound alphabet, would be as easy for them as *pat, net, nit, not, nut* are now. And at our peril that we let the inadequacy of a reading vocabulary retard their acquisition of the sciences, the humanities, the arts, and of the development of the higher human emotions. Today's first graders may be the first generation to reach voting age in a fully miniaturized America, and who knows but they may need to be very highly equipped to deal with it. Who knows but that Jefferson's warning that "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance" may be even more poignantly applicable then than now. Isn't it at least conceivable that, taking for granted their guaranteed right to an adequate income, a disastrously large proportion of our citizens may also take for granted their liberty within the society which guarantees it?

Liberty cannot be taken for granted. No constitution in 15 the world can guarantee it except as that constitution is consciously and continuously activated by at least a large minority of the voters. If that is true now, with government so widely – distributed through Federal, State and local authorities, what will it be when the production of all the means of life is in the hands of a small elite?

In any case, let's start to weigh this matter now. This elite must be the honored servant of the nation, not its master. There must be a fairish minority of the citizens near enough to the supreme ability of its members to keep tab on them. And there must be a larger minority capable of understanding the

reports of the smaller one, and so on down the pyramid till a sufficiently large majority of the voters have some trustworthy information on what vitally concerns them.

How are we going to get that majority? and get it, let us say, in step with the on-sweep of miniaturization? As far as we know now, adult education is the answer. But education, all of whose weight is on the side of rationality and not against it. Education in which that very word is itself spelled *ed-yoo-kai-shun* or encoded in other symbols true to its spoken form. Let's end the preposterousness of a situation in which a professor or reading specialist can say with a straight face, 'the purpose of education is to teach the pupil to think,' when the spelling of every word but one in this solemn dictum is out of kilter with the sound which leaves his lips.

Editor's note: The opinions and ideas expressed in the above are those of the authors and do not necessarily agree with those of the editor.

-o0o-

Duplicate Books for Sale, subject to first call, first sold. Newell W. Tune, North Hollywood, Calif.

Thomas R. Lounsbury: *English Spelling & Spelling Reform* 1909, 357 pg. \$2.25.

I. A. Richards: *Basic English & Its Uses*, 1943, 127 pg. .75.

Noah Webster: *Elementary Spelling Book*, 1860, 1880, 1908, (like new), 2.00.

Clement Wood: *Complete Rhyming Dictionary*, 1937, 607 p. 2.00.

Robert Bridges: *A Tract on the Present State of English Pronunciation*, 1913, 78 pg. (parts printed in his phonetic alphabet) 2.00.

Walter Ripman: *New Spelling*, 1948, 130 pg. (now World English) 1.50.

Walter Gassner: *Rational Spelling*, 1955, 61 pg. new 2.25.

Frank C. Laubach: *Streamlined English*, 1951, 111 pg. 1.00.

Geo. Watson: *The Universe of Language*, 1878 (rare book), (Univ. Microfilm Xerox reprint of pgs 78-118, 242-301end), cost \$3.50, special 2.00.

Reg. Deans: *Universal Language & Simplified Spelling*, 1955, 124 pg. *Free with any other book.*

-o0o-

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1966 p15 in the printed version*]

From Rimes Without Reason

What a commocean

A young lady crossing the ocean

Grew ill from the ship's dizzy mocean.

She said with a sigh,

And a tear in her eigh,

'To life I have no more devocean.'

Thru courtesy of the *Lake Placid Club Foundation*, Lake Placid Club, N.Y.

-o0o-

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1966 pp16–19 in the printed version]

13. I'VE BEEN READING

An attack *terrible* on *les Anglo-Saxons*. *Parlez vous Français?*

Reviewed by HERBERT R. LOTTMAN

Herbert R. Lottman, who holds the Master's degree from Columbia University, contributes frequently to a number of journals, including the FORUM. His "Silence in Sicily" appeared in the Winter 1964 issue.

REPRINTED FROM COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY FORUM SPRING 1964

The French don't care what they do, actually, as long as they pronounce it properly.

– Professor Henry Higgins.

Parlez-vous français? The most talked about literary event in France this past season was not a novel at all, but a 376-page tract by René Etiemble, a professor at the Sorbonne, who deplores the rapid intrusion of English words into the French language and the spawning of an Atlantic *sabir* (*sabir*: a pidgin language heard in international ports). The book has given impetus to the current crusade against the Anglo-Saxons – and that it should have been brought out by Gallimard, the foremost literary publisher in France, is not insignificant commentary on the state of French opinion in the Year VI of the Fifth Republic.

Parlez-vous français? achieved prompt effects. On March 1 *Le Figaro* and *Le Figaro Littéraire* began to print all English words in italics or in boldface type and gave their readers three choices: to adopt certain words into French, by removing their italicized segregation; to translate them into French; or to use alternative French expressions (such as *fin de semaine* for "le week-end"). The daily sports newspaper *L'Equipe* published an editorial that concluded, "We sports enthusiasts, readily accused – without proof – of massacring our language, must instead serve as the good example [of correct usage]." And almost overnight the book became a fashionable topic at dinner tables. A work that inspired such immediate, urgent response must be a serious work, the nonreader thinks; surely it is dispassionate, scientific, disinterested. Yet it is quite apparent that many of those who chronicle and talk about it have not read it thoroughly. Clever, fresh, pertinent, and iconoclastic, it is also unfair, written with malice, tainted by strong political bias, and marred by small errors. Only a careful reading will bring out the full implications of M. Etiemble's book and the campaign of which it is a part.

Parlez-vous français? opens with a display of Professor Etiemble at his wittiest, least offensive, and probably most effective: a short story of an ineffectual young man's seduction of an airline hostess, told in *français*. Hundreds of words, often trademarks or journalese in English but now found in French oral communication and advertising, are effectively strung together in this "Unfunny Tale." M. Etiemble goes on to document hundreds of other uses of the new language in every phase of French life, including the military and the government. Most enlightening is his systematized grammar of the new language, in which he gives its construction and rules and offers practical exercises for the willing student.

If he has made one useful point in his encumbered book it is that French is coming to be spoken *as if* it were English. The French used to say *sur l'invitation*; now, in imitation of the English "at ----'s

invitation," they say *à l'invitation*. They used to say *sur mesures*; now they say, with us, *à vos mesures*. Good French words are now being used as the English words they resemble, in violation of their true French meaning. *Controler* properly means to "verify"; it is now being used in our sense, to mean "supervise" or "direct." *Eduqué*, of good manners, is being used to mean "school-trained." *Réaliser*, to carry out or render real, is being misused for "understand." Some of these distinctions are worth listening to, for many Americans speaking French are likely to make these errors: *Actuellement* signifies "now," not "in reality" as we use "actually"; *pratiquement* "in a practical way," not our "almost"; *admettre* means "allow to enter," not "confess."

M. Etiemble's rules would be tedious were they not constantly relieved by his wit:

When the noun "sandwich" forms its plural in *-s*, the sandwich will not sell for more than 2,50 francs (50¢) : with the plural in *-es*, the sandwiches can go up to 5 or 6 francs (\$1 or \$1.20). *Lunchs* cost 15 francs (\$3); but one must pay out 25 to 30 francs (\$5 to \$6) to have the right to *lunches*. Undoubtedly M. Etiemble is correct.

In another part of the book he reviews the history of French borrowings of English words (*club*, for example, entered French as far back as the 18th century). When an English word must be taken, he favors that it be translated, or Frenchified as it was in the past; "bowling green" became *boulingrin*, "riding coat" *redingote*, "packet boat" *paquebot*. He would replace "stock" with *stoque*, and he seems to favor *Nouillorque*.

Over the years, the French have kidnaped stray words from across channel or ocean, and mutilated them so their parents no longer recognize them at all. Thus they call our dance hall *un dancing* and walking *le footing*; the words seem to be English, but must we claim them as our own? Both are carried as acceptable nouns in Larousse. But what are *le karting*, *un peeling*, *un smoking*, *le baby-pipe*? Perhaps the most insidious infiltration of American English is in the world of sports, where "paddock" has replaced *pesage* and "lad" *gargon*. Much *franglais* never was English and deserves to be extirpated – *smasher* (to smash, tennis), *tennisman*, and *knock downes*.

Almost as heavily infiltrated are the professions and trades. "In no domain, it is known," says M. Etiemble, "does France do anything worthwhile . . . our engineers and our scientists are . . . tributaries of the United States." The Frenchman is indeed a captive: "He can't cough, or shave, or dress, or eat, or make love [without] American words and the stupidest Yankeeisms."

According to an investigation by one of his students, some 1,300 Anglo-Saxon words are used in French advertising, a considerable percentage of the total vocabulary of the elementary school graduate. M. Etiemble even finds *sabir* in the most literary of all French magazines, the old *Nouvelle Revue Française*. And the French Communist party daily newspaper, *Humanité*, "poor in Slavisms, abounds in Americanisms." Word order is likewise eroding. Good French is *les cent derniers mètres*; in English we say "the last hundred yards." and *sabir* takes off from this with *les derniers cent mètres*. But M. Etiemble asks us also to believe that the Anglo-Saxon invasion has affected the quality of food. "One doesn't dish out hamburgers, cheeseburgers, eggburgers, and other disgusting things with impunity."

No doubt about it, *franglais* is ugly. One tends to sympathize with a crusader of M. Etiemble's drive. But throughout the book he manifests the bluster and impatience of the pamphleteer, with all

the pamphleteer's usual faults – the tendency to exaggerate, the need to repeat himself, the tolerance of small error. We are not reading the work of, a detached scholar. The puns he employs cannot be repeated here; after several examples of scatological language, we are amused to find M. Etiemble accusing Americans of having dirty minds, with the implication that the French do not.

There is more. *Parlez-vous franglais?* is a most brutal anti-American piece of writing. Although the author tells us that he likes the English language in England and American in the States, he seriously believes that the use of pithy English-language phrases will lead to "decadence and servitude," preparing young Frenchmen to serve the American way of life and "*la politique du State Department.*" Using American terms, France becomes a dominion of the United States. Selling toys with American names to French children, France is preparing her sons to serve in NATO, or as "perfect FBI cops (French section)." Americans have flabby muscles and run-down bodies. Their mental age "has progressed regularly since the beginning of the 20th century; it now oscillates around age 13."

Only later in the book-near the halfway mark-does the author's political intention become absolutely clear. "Atlantic *sabir*," he says (all in capital letters, as it happens), "is the language of the camp of liberty, that of Franco, of Salazar, of Chiang Kai-shek." More: "Two wars in 30 years, in which we were allies of the Anglo-Saxons, precipitated our bondage."

His irrelevance waxes as he writes. On page 234 he tells us that near Chicago he was thrown out of a restaurant because he was escorting an attractive but obviously Jewish woman. He was almost evicted from his Chicago apartment because he insisted on receiving the visit of a French professor of West Indian origin. (Later we learn that our peripatetic professor was almost prosecuted for sitting next to Negroes on a New Orleans bus.) He refuses to drink Coca-Cola or Pepsi-Cola, or to hate "niggers," Jews, Indians; he detests civilizations built on money. "To serve properly the schemes of SHAPE, must the French begin by swallowing, language included, the *cocalcoolique* civilization?"

"The truth," says M. Etiemble, for the truth does come out in the end, "is that they make us talk American in order to lead us to the slaughterhouse blindfolded." Then he jumps to a discourse on the hypocritical word "deterrent." Next we are treated to figures proving American domination of the French economy and the exhortation: "Add up the American investments in France since our 'liberation'; you'll see that it cost us dearly, our *liberation.*" By this time M. Etiemble has exceeded even the venom of the local Communist press.

President de Gaulle receives a passing bow when M. Etiemble speaks of the "hatred of Washington for the only European statesman who, since the 'liberation,' dares resist the pretensions of the dollar." Note how far his simplistic reasoning carries him: "If they tortured and massacred Resistance fighters, the Nazis took the trouble to write their atrocious rolls of honor in real French." (Even in this defense of the Nazis he is careless; at least one Nazi decree in 1942 banned Jews from *music-halls* [sic] and *campings* [sic] in France.) The Frenchman's use of English will result in delivering the French, brainwashed, "to the managers of General Motors, the marines of United Fruit." The Americans wish to colonize France, and the pre-Gaullist Fourth Republic let them do it.

At Professor Etiemble's lectern we relearn our history. The "leonine" Yalta agreements kept the poor Russians out of Paris, he regrets, despite the decisive role of the Soviet Union in the liberation of Paris and all France. The invading Yankees had "imperial" designs. The French were gullible, despite what M. Etiemble describes as his vain (but unspecified) efforts to put them on guard concerning the hypocrisy of the State Department and the Pentagon. Now he sees us as a paper tiger: If France and Germany demanded payment of debts in gold, we would collapse. Americans love lynching. Corrupt bureaucrats run our two major political parties. If the French continue to speak *sabir*, *l'antisémitisme larvé*, *le racisme virulent*, *la tartuferie sexuelle*, *la dévotion au dollar* ... will become their daily bread.... (This is followed by an unprintable curse on the American "dogs.")

Rene Etiemble lived in the United States from 1937 till 1943, and even went so far as to take out first citizenship papers, but when he got to know us better and saw how we had colonized Mexico, he decided to return to France. He taught in the States for four years, poor but proud. At the time of the French surrender to Nazi Germany, he found that Americans rejoiced in the death of the French language. His proof, with nine-tenths of the notes he accumulated in a five-year period, disappeared in a valise in Algiers in 1943, a suspicious circumstance (in this we agree with M. Etiemble). He spent a year learning journalism in the Office of War Information and wrote for the Chicago *Sun* and other newspapers, but almost never published a text that was not mutilated, expurgated, adapted to "free enterprise." M. Etiemble's next work will be an attempt to interpret China – a country he apparently admires.

Henri Peyre, in describing M. Etiemble's first novel, wrote in 1955 of the "note of venomous revenge against his mother ... and against his education and society," concluding that "polemics and combative criticism may be the author's most felicitous bent." Indeed it may. In *Parlez-vous français?* M. Etiemble has succeeded in writing a defense of the French language without a trace of French measure. He is an inconsistent polemicist; the *sabir* he criticizes is awful Madison Avenue jargon, but he is also attacking words and expressions that are proper usage. Often, indeed, he is really talking about a habit of universal advertising language, not the English language. A recent issue of *Vogue*, for example, carried the phrase "The shape terrific" on the cover – the sort of foreign word order M. Etiemble despises – and an ad in *The New York Times* addressed itself to "experts du sport."

The world knows that the American language has more than its share of barbarisms, reflecting a frontier way of life often lacking the refinements of French civilization; we'll be another century catching up. But no one has asked the French to borrow the *worst* from us. (They might have taken over our ability to supply people with proper toilets and telephones, or learned from our new critics how to write interestingly about modern literature. They could copy the gay colors of our womenfolk.) It is obvious that M. Etiemble wishes to close his mind to the possibility- of enriching a language through borrowings. "That the English, that the Yankees, ruin their language by accepting French words as such, is their business and not mine." A writer in *Le Monde* has replied: "In world competition the strength of a language is not in its past, but in its aptitude to renew itself, aptitude to create and to integrate new words and types of liaisons that express the continual contributions of an evolving civilization." The critic concluded: "If we [French] had invented the bulldozer, the corn-picker, the mixer, the take-over-bid ... these things would bear French names."

Why was the book written? I asked a knowing French literary friend over cocktails recently. "*Pour faire plaisir à de Gaulle*," came the reply, following which he turned around quickly to see whether anyone in the bar had overheard him. The French have always seen language as an instrument of *Weltpolitik*. What is the Alliance Française, and who pays for all those French teachers? There are 31,750 French instructors outside of France, 10 per cent of the entire national teaching body – and in France itself there is a teacher shortage.

The French concern for their language, as Professor Henry Higgins observed, is a constant concern. During the Nazi occupation, the Vichy government asked the French not to use English words, suggesting *chandail* for "le pull-over." Many newspapers have regular columns on correct usage, as most people most of the time (including writers and radio commentators) seem to make grave errors worthy of newspaper space. The Academie Française meets weekly to accept or refuse or revise words and meanings. A *Fédération internationale pour la sauvegarde et l'unité de la langue française* was founded this year in Paris to establish a glossary, arbitrate uncertain cases, hold congresses. Several recent articles and books bear witness to the same interest.

Of course it is true that the American language is cheapened from below, by commerce and comics. Yet it would also seem that the adult Frenchman is as willing a collaborator – in the cheapening of his own language as is his American cousin. The old *bistros* are being replaced by "snack-bars," self-service restaurants with ugly façades and interiors – not for tourists, but for the hurried, harried Parisians. Naturally the restaurant owner is not a linguist, and if his cafeteria becomes known as "le self" it is not the fault of Uncle Sam. "Those who use words or phrases belonging to languages with which they have little or no acquaintance do so at their peril," said H. W. Fowler.

Purity is to be commended, but is chauvinism a guide to purity? *Parlez-vous français?* has given encouragement to other xenophobic tendencies in French life and art, and these are seldom satisfactory substitutes for creative renewal. Contemporary French drama being barren, Paris producers have turned to the more virile drama of the Americans and other outlanders to sell seats. The reaction of the vested interests has been typical: the enactment of laws to limit the showing of plays by foreign authors, just as foreign films are admitted by quota. M. Etiemble, too, calls for government action, and in the same spirit he is undertaking his monument and life work. He is now compiling a *Dictionnaire philosophique et critique du sabir atlantique*, which will include all the words cited in *Parlez-vous français?* He has thousands of "Yankee words and expressions" on "tens of thousands of cards."

One is reminded of the dialogue in a recent sketch by France's clever *chansonniers* Poiret and Serrault (the only clever *chansonniers* I know):

Poiret: France is the cradle of civilization.

Serrault: No, Greece is.

Poiret: Greece is the cradle of foreign civilization, but the cradle of French civilization is France.

Book Review

14. Teaching English to African Natives, by L. W. Lantham, Ph.D.* Edited by E. E. Arctier

*Condensed from OPTIMA, a quarterly review published in Johannesburg, by the Anglo American Corp. of So. Africa.

The great nations spend approximately half of their annual budgets on defence; the new nations of Africa spend a like proportion on education. In them, illiteracy and scientific and technological backwardness are the main enemies, and their newly mobilized resources are directed largely at science, mathematics and a major western language. Six new African nations have chosen English as their official language, and in several others it shares that status with the most important native tongue.

Much has been made of the problems connected with science and math as subjects of mass education in Africa, but the achieving of acceptable levels of spoken and written English on the scale now envisaged poses inherently greater problems. One of the greatest, paradoxically enuf, is that the teaching of English in the native schools stretches back for -note than half a century and the materials, methods, syllabuses used these last several decades have become entrenched and are now a vested interest of education authorities and publishers. In West and East Africa, text books designed for Scottish and English schools were still being used in African schools in 1962. It is not uncommon for young natives to have to wrest the sense from Shakespeare before they are capable of writing meaningful, grammatically correct sentences in English.

Equally serious is "mother tongue interference." In most of the former British possessions, the first two years of native education were carried on in the regional tongue, with no experience with English except in the class time assigned to it. Where (as in Zulu) the native tongue had only five vowels into which to transliterate the 19 vowels and diphthongs of Standard African English, what wonder if *buck* emerged as *bark* and *heat* as *hit*.

And since it was from these very children that the teachers of the next generation were to come, English in this and that and the other linguistic area came to differ not only from accepted norm, but from that of one another. If present trends continue, spoken English in various parts of the continent may well be reduced to little more than a local patois. In South Africa, well educated African teachers already find great difficulty following a tape-recorded discussion of mathematics by a Liberian colleague.

The majority of present day teachers in the native schools are young women produced by one of the many training institutions of the continent. A specially devised test of proficiency in spoken English applied to teacher trainees in six such institutions yielded results such as the following: Of 178 trainees, 153 could not accurately name the hands of the clock (altho telling the time is normally taught in primary school). Their answers revealed such gross mother-tongue interference as the "horns" or "wings" or "sticks" of a clock. 62 failed in a test on the meaning of *carry* in contrast to that of *hold*. The examiner, carrying a box from one end of the room to the other in a deliberate manner, was said to be *sending*, *putting* or *walking* the box. With a number of trainees, the simple question, "Where did you go to school?" had to be repeated and recast several times before it was understood.

These trainees do not lack keenness or interest, but the English of 70% of them is totally inadequate for the oral-aural approach in the primary school classroom. Emerging from training school, the new teacher brings very little with her to the highly specialized task of oral-aural teaching. She is even left to devise her own vocabulary of 100 words for the first year and 150 in the second. She soon resorts to such time worn practices as the endless repetition (in her own aberrant pronunciation) of the same word or sentence, and to speech and action games in which such activities as lighting a fire are described in a fixed set of memorized sentences. How parrot-like such learning may be was revealed in recent tests carried out in first year classes in Johannesburg. In response to the question, "What is this". (the examiner pointing to some familiar object), the answer was frequently, "My name is Table (or Nose, or Pencil)." The child, recalling the response "My name is John" to "What is your name?", simply substitutes for the new phrase the one meaningful piece of English it has memorized effectively. For many children this is the sum total of their English learning after one and a half years at school.

Contact with written English begins in the third year and places further obstacles in the way of the spoken word. The havoc wrought on English pronunciation by mother tongue interference is aggravated by the habit of pronouncing English words as they are spelt. Naturally so, for the child has already learned to read in his own native language whose phonetic spelling brings it about that all written words *are so* pronounced. English pronunciation is never taught systematically; sound is not separated from symbol, and the African teacher has no frame of reference to apply in coping with aberrancies which creep in from the two main sources of interference. The irregularities of English spelling place a heavy burden of learning on the child, and that may well be the reason why general progress often falls off at this stage. (Of the total number of children entering primary school, 57% leave school by the beginning of the fifth year). But no lesser objective can be set for the native school child who studies English for several years in primary school, than that he understands simple standard English and is understood when talking to English speakers from overseas or from other parts of Africa.

It follows that the primary teacher must be put in a position to bring this about. To meet the need for authentic pronunciation, Dr. Lanham advocates the tape recorder or similar sound producing instrument which provides prerecorded lesson material as the most powerful teaching aid that can be placed in her hands. Experiments conducted over the last two years in 10 primary schools have shown that teachers accept this aid with enthusiasm, and that most of them use it effectively. Indeed, experimental tape lessons in Bantu primary schools in Johannesburg are often even more successful in improving the teachers English than that of the children.

Reviewer's Comments.

The need of the tape recorder or other device for teaching English pronunciation to native children is so obvious one wonders why it was not installed years ago. But equally one wonders why every African state where English is the official language is not bringing pressure on Great Britain and the United States to phonemicize English spelling to the level of Bantu and most of the other native tongues. Do we want English to become the *lingua franca* of Africa? *Then don't let us take it for granted that it will.* China now has a phonemic Roman alphabet ready for use and hopes that in 20 years – more or less – all her by then much more than 700,000,000 nationals will be well versed in it. Since the structure of Chinese is so much simpler than that of English ... well, wouldn't we be wiser not to wait those 20 years – or even 10 of them – but get that long proposed National Spelling Commission of ours established *now*?