

# Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1967

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".

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## 1. Coming attractions

Remedial Reading. Program for Basic Adult Education in the Penitentiary,  
by William H. Pahrman.

Errors Children Make in Reading, by Raymond E. Laurita.

English spellings – a dilemma, by William J. Reed.

Using i.t.a. to teach the Deaf.

### **Late news.**

The Second International i.t.a. Workshop and Conference will be held Aug. 16 to 20th at Lehigh Univ. For details and price, write to: International i/t/a Conference, Bursar's Office, Lehigh Univ, Bethlehem, Pa.

Schools for the Future, New York City, will hold six one-week Workshops starting July 5 and ending Aug. 11. Alternate weeks will have Reading and Mathematics – under the direction of Dr. Caleb Gattegno, well-known author of *Words in Color* and books and articles on mathematics.

The Sixth Annual Reading Reform Foundation Conference will be held on Aug. 3, in the Waldorf-Astoria Ballroom, New York. Topics are: Illiteracy and Crime, by Hon. Austin MacCormick; Looking Ahead to Literacy at Home and Abroad, by Hon. Henry J. Taylor; The Hazards of Being a Grandmother, by Ws. Wm. H. Hasebroock; Changing Reading Instruction in Oregon, by Dr. Walter S. Blake, Jr.; A. Demonstration with disadvantaged pupils and a Panel discussion by leading reading consultants will end with question and answer period.

The Western States i.t.a. Conference and Workshop conducted by Robert Bainbridge (of San Jose State Col.) will be held on July 18-19 at Lowell High School, San Francisco, Calif. Featured speaker will be Sir James Pitman, K.B.E. Topics will cover: research, spelling, transition, bilingual, disadvantaged, i.t.a. graduates. For further information, write Reading Conference Secretary, Los Gatos, Calif.

Dr. John Downing will be teaching a summer school course for 12 weeks in Phonetics and i.t.a. practices at University of Calif. at Berkeley, Calif.

We note with interest that several of the national magazines, especially technical Journals are using tho, thru, thoro, as spellings. One is the journal of Paint Technology; another is the Engineers and Architects Bulletin.

[*Spelling Reform Anthology §1.2 pp2,3,12 in the printed version*]  
[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1967 pp2,3 in the printed version*]

## 2. A 20th Century look at the "New English" of 1066, by William Barkley\*

\*Reprinted by permission from the London Sunday Express of Oct. 2, 1966.

William Barkley is now retired after 40 years as Parliamentary reporter for this paper and Lord Beaverbrook. He resides in Dorking, Surrey, England.

The structure of the English language was created entirely by the illiterate, unschooled English working man of 800 to 900 years ago.

For 100 years after that battle fought at Hastings on Oct. 14, 1066, nothing is recorded as written in the English language and very little for another 150 years.

English is the only major language in the world which for centuries escaped the clutches of the dons, the pundits, the pedagogues, the grammarians, the literary gents and the writers. English was then a tongue, a speech, used exclusively in the fields and in the primitive forges and timber yards of that day.

It is for this reason, because it was fashioned by the plain, practical handymen of England, that English in its grammar attained a massive simplicity unmatched anywhere else, unimaginable, miraculous and awesome.

Alone among languages, the English-speakers have escaped the toils of grammar which enslave all other Europeans. A splendid writer on languages, Sir Douglas Busk, estimates that a foreigner can learn the whole of English grammar in the same time that he masters the four regular French words, which are merely the first step in the appalling complexity of French grammar.

Considered three of these vast simplicities:

1. The English adjective never changes. A book, a boy or ten women are either 'good' or they are not. What is the French for good? It is one of four words with six pronunciations – *bon, bonne, bons,* and *bonnes*, of which the s's in *bons* and *bonnes* are sometimes silent and sometimes pronounced. Pre-Hastings English had ten forms of *good*.

2. The past tense of the English verb never changes since we dropped "thou." *I came, you came, he came, they came, we came.* Try it out. The only exception is the verb "to be" with *was* in the singular and *were* in the plural. And this is a more or lesser modern grammarians' rule because the phrases *you was* and *they was* up to 200 years ago were considered classic English.

3. Alone of all European languages, English has abandoned gender. This by itself gives English a claim to be the only logical language in the Western world. It is what distinguishes the British from the rest of the Europeans.

The old Pre-Hastings English of the Confessor's Court was fiendishly complicated. Every noun had its fixed gender, masculine, feminine or neuter, based as in German today, on no principle that the mind can grasp. The sun was feminine; the moon was masculine; just the reverse of the Latin languages. The word "*the*" had 12 different forms to accommodate itself to the gender or case or number (singular or plural) of the noun – *se, seo, thaet*, being the old English equivalent of the German *der, die, das* – all plain *the* to us.

## VANISHED

Almost overnight 900 years ago French became not only the language of the royal Court but of the law courts, the administration and the Church, along with Latin. The aristocrats and landed gentry, if they did not beat it for freedom to Scotland, learned French mighty quick and had French taught to their children. There is evidence that English was not taught in England's schools for 280 years.

The Old English rapidly vanished. The working man, remote from all these toff activities, invented the New English in the fields, the workshops, the barnyard. He found that he got on very well by speaking only the root syllables of words, dropping all these finicky endings which distinguished for example the gender of nouns and adjectives. And thus he shot the pants off Old English grammar. Hooray for progress!

What miracle then was it which overcame the Norman Conquest and restored English as the language of England? The language which was driven from cultivated use by conquest and massacre was resurrected by disease, by the plague, by the Black Death!

Writing was a monopoly of the church in those days before printing. It is significant that *clerk* and *cleric* are two forms of the same Latin word. The monasteries were, so to speak, the printing and publishing houses of the 14th century. The French-speaking monks were the scribes who copied manuscripts.

The plague was carried by rats and fleas. I conclude that cleanliness was not in those days next to godliness and that the close-packed monasteries were, in short, flea-ridden; and that this terrible Black Death of 1349 which killed half the population of England totally exterminated the French-speaking monks.

## SURVIVAL

Nobody can tell exactly what happened in a convulsion as disastrous to life as the most sombre forecasts made today for all-out nuclear war. Certainly within a generation of the Black Death, English was again the language taught in the schools and was used in law courts and in Parliament for the first time since Parliament was instituted.

Such were the slim chances by which our language survived, no one knowing that it was to become the most important in the world. (Recently a Belgian advised his fellow-countrymen to cease their feud between French and Flemish because the language of Europe would soon be English).

But oh! alas and alack! The gods were jealous. When English became official, it was taken over by the clerks, the scholars, and later the printers. No model existed for it. Chaos ruled. Caxton, our first printer, for example, consistently spelled "Englissche" and "Frennsche," which have since been cleaned up a bit. Where the workingmen had made difficult things simple in speech, the scholars, the pundits, made simple things complicated in writing.

Yet in the early centuries you find a striking amount of simplicity which are since been lost. Here are some spellings used by Caxton in his *Morte d'Arthur* roughly 500 years ago:-  
*Hors, horsbak, heven, redy, frend, wil, shal, wel, peny, gard, els, ar, clok, blak, rok, sak, Temse (Thames), deth.* The very title-page shows "The *Lyfe* and *Deth* of King Arthur."

Spenser and many other fine writers wrote: *tung, yung, neibor, fesant, licoris, forein*; Shakespeare has *hart-ake* in Hamlet; Marlow and Milton wrote *num* and *lim*; Donne wrote "no man is an *iland* unto himself", Milton wrote *soveran*.

A Pelican book of Elizabethan prose at a random glance shows: *scyth* (now scythe), *fel*, *shreeke*, *ment*, *minsing*, *brist*, *peercing*, *neece*, *witnes*, *orfan*, *mistres*, *darknes*; and from Robert Greene in 1859 "having *supt il* last night."

Any working man's child entering school this autumn would learn *supt il* much quicker than "supped ill."

Who desimplified these simplicities? Who spread chaos and error in our books and newspapers? I blame the class-conscious scholars of the Age of Ornament, to whom (as in hats and dress) anything simple was crude and barbarous. And I blame their successors in Oxford today who have discarded their ancestors' hats but who perpetuate their folly in print.

I have a feeling that the Oxford don has never forgiven the working man for robbing him of an empire in grammar and is quite happy to see him floundering when he comes to read and write. If the working man understood the fraud that is perpetrated on him we should soon see a change.

I give him one example. *Beleeve* is historic and correct. *Believe* is a 17th century blunder. Every Oxford don knows this fact. Stand by while I show you why.

The original Authorised Bible of 1611 spells *beleeve*, *beleeveth*, *unbeleefe*, *beleever*, *unbeleever*. Today's copy, printed by the Oxford University Press, spells *believe*, *believeth*, *unbelief*, *believer*, *unbeliever*. Now this magnificent press prints another immortal book, the Oxford English dictionary. Look up *believe* in this dictionary and you will read "the spelling is erroneous."

### IRONY

So here are the directors, or, as they call themselves, the delegates of the Oxford University Press, who tell us in one of their publications that *believe* is a blunder and in another of their publications, the Bible itself, carefully insert this blunder a thousand times over.

What is worse, a child might easily lose a mark in the 11-plus exam for writing *beleeve* instead of the blunder *believe*. And, final irony, the examiner who awards the bad mark might be an Oxford don or a delegate of the Oxford University Press!

I wrote to one of these delegates, a brilliant scholar, and enquired: "How can you sleep at night when you are in part responsible for teaching errors to children?" For I could fill pages of the Sunday Express with an account of the plain blunders of our compulsory spelling. The reply was "I can quite believe(!) that there is a great case for the change of English spelling, but somehow I do not find myself engaged by the matter."

Money, I predict, will ensure that this matter engages us pretty soon. We spend over £1,500 million a year on education, of which the primary schools take 26%, or say £400 million a year, three times the cost of ten years ago with the rates and taxes mounting everlastingly to pay it. How much do we spend on instructing the young in the blatant falsehood of our spelling? If a quarter of a primary school child's time is absorbed in reading and writing it would mean £100 million a year.

It is proposed to raise the school-leaving age to 16 in 1970. The project would cost hundreds of millions. Everybody knows that we won't have the money to spend and whom we also won't have to teachers to spend it on.

## WILDFIRE

If our scholars and printers would combine to correct our spelling, we would turn out a race of children far better educated at 15 than they will ever be at 16 or 17 while we maintain the present chaos. It would be a labour of love for our glorious tongue which would then go round the world like wildfire. It has gone far already because of its simple grammar.

Spelling reform need not cost the taxpayer one penny, on one condition – that we employ only the existing Roman alphabet. No alteration would then need to be made to our vast printing equipment or to our millions of typewriters. It would not cost any more to print a book or a newspaper on the lines of *beleeve* instead of *believe*. Anyone who has mastered the present chaos could read the new with little difficulty because each unfamiliar word could be easily sounded out with a reliable phonetic spelling. Anyone who had learned only the new would have trouble with some words in the old unreliable spelling, but context would help and he would learn the anomalies if he needed to read the old books. He would merely become biliterate!

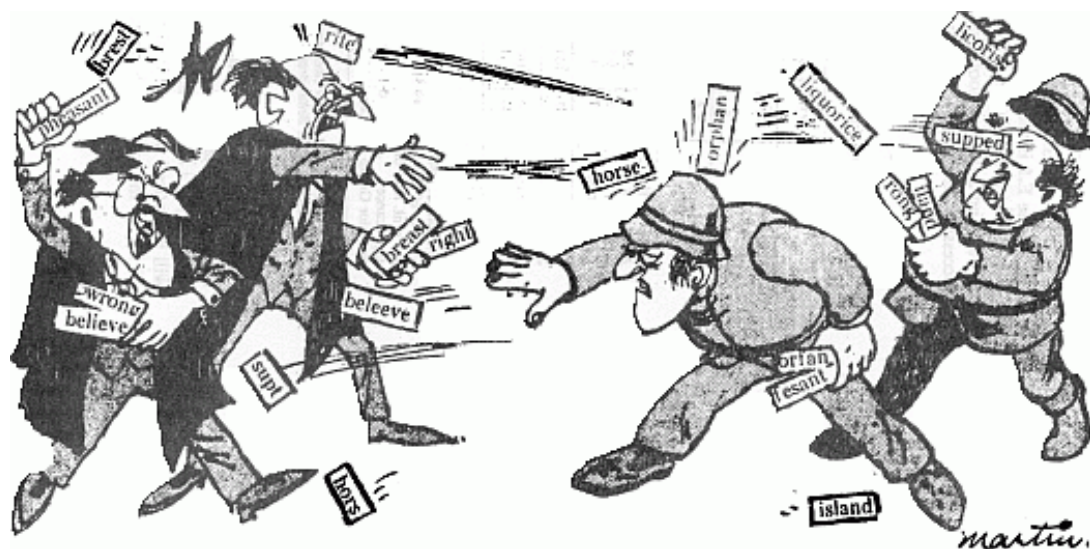
All that is needed is study by an official committee of experts and a decision as to the best spelling. All the materials are at hand in the Oxford Unabridged English Dictionary which took 45 years to compile and which was conceived not in Oxford but in London – and was conceived, as few people realise, with an eye to spelling simplification. That is why it gives every recorded spelling for every word – 70 spellings of the word *cushion*!

19 years work was done by the Philological Society on this great dictionary, and two tons of material for it were collected in London and in the garden of James Murray's house Mill Hill School where he taught, before Oxford was associated at all with the project, and then mainly as the printers.

James Murray, at the outset of his 35 years' editorship, protested in 1880! -

*"Amended spelling has become a practical matter in connection with education and the waste of national resources incurred in the attempt to make child after child commit to memory the 20,000 contradictory facts of our present spelling."* And 86 years ago Murray and his colleagues published a first list of 500 spelling corrections, of which not one has been adopted here to this day. Altho in America, a half-dozen or so are in general use.

In these highly competitive times it would be a tremendous aid to commerce to have an easily learned spelling. Give our workmanlike speech the workmanlike printed form and we shall be the best educated race which the world ever saw and we'll educate the rest of the world too!



### 3. An Appreciation of *The i.t.a. Symposium*\* by Sir James Pitman K.B.E.

\*London, Eng.

*The i.t.a. Symposium*. J.A. Downing. National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales. Slough, England. February 1967)

The information from the Symposium which is most relevant and most apt for study, in order to assess the benefits which can flow from the supersession of T.O. by i.t.a., is in:

1. Table E.1 on p.56.
2. Graph 25 on p.85.
3. Graph 34 on p.89.

1. **Table E.1** is the only source of information which reports the results of i.t.a. in assisting learning by a simpler medium over a span of two-and-a-third school years, and furthermore covering four successive shorter periods of that length of use of the new medium.

**TABLE E1**  
**PROGRESS IN READING BASIC READER SERIES**  
 Percentage frequency distribution of reading primer reached

READING PRIMER REACHED	AFTER 1 YR		AFTER 1½ YRS.		AFTER 2 YRS.		AFTER 2½ YRS.	
	Exp. (i.t.a.) %	Cont. (t.o.) %	Exp. (i.t.a.) %	Cont. (t.o.) %	Exp. (i.t.a.) %	Cont. (t.o.) %	Exp. (i.t.a.) %	Cont. (t.o.) %
Non-starters	6-6	5.2	2.2	0.3	2-1	0.3	0.7	0
At Books Intro., I or II	55.0	7.9	28.8	54.5	15-6	35.4	9.4	25.9
At Book III	17.8	15.7	12.8	17.2	7-8	17.1	5.0	19.1
At Book IV	10.9	2.8	14.5	13.3	5-1	12.0	4.3	11.2
At Book V	4-0	0.5	8.1	7.2	3-0	4.5	2.5	6.1
Beyond Book V	5-7	0	33.6	7.4	66-4	30.6	78.1	37.8
N	651	651	580	580	333	333	278	278
Median Primer Position	Intro., I, II	Intro., I, II	IV	Intro., I, II	Beyond V	III	Beyond V	IV
Kolmogorov-Smirnov [1] (one-tailed) test								
X [2] (2 d. of f.)	49.51		92.71		85.02		90.21	
Per cent. level of significance	0.1		0.1		0.1		0.1	
Superior Group	Exp. (i.t.a.)		Exp. (i.t.a.)		Exp. (i.t.a.)		Exp. (i.t.a.)	

[1] Kolmogorov-Smimov two-sample test. In SIEGEL, S. (1956). *Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences*. New York and London: McGraw-Hill, pp. 127-136.

The figures below the line separating Book III from Book IV for the period "after 1-1/3 yrs." are relevant for indicating the greater simplicity of i.t.a. as a learning medium for the *more able* children. It will be noticed that 56.2% of the whole i.t.a. population, as against 27.9% of the whole T.O. population, have reached this standard of effective reading in that short time:- a differential of 28.3%. Later, at the end of 2-1/3 years, 78.1% of the i.t.a. population are reported "Beyond Book V", as against 37.8 %:- a differential of 40.3%. (See pillar graph.)

The figures above the line are relevant for indicating its simplicity for the *least able children*. At the end of 2-1/3 years 15.1% of the i.t.a. population had not reached the standard of effective reading, as against 45.0% of the T.O. population: a differential in favour of i.t.a. of 29.9%.

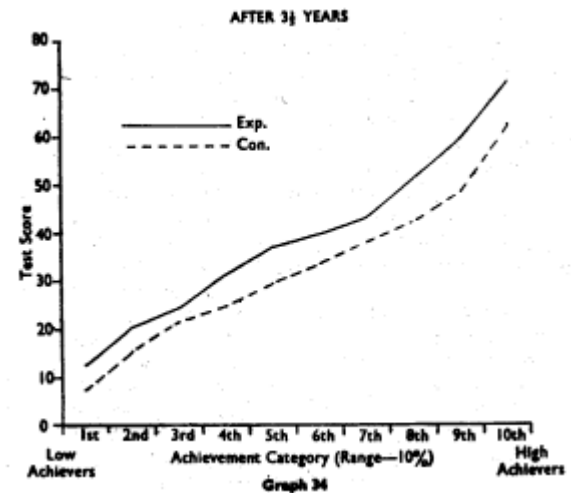
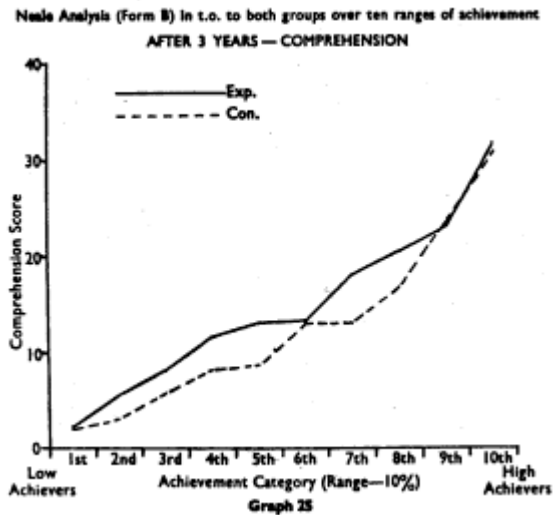
2. **Graph 25** reports the results of the most relevant and exacting of the reading tests (given in T.O.) after the longest period of schooling.

Neale Analysis (Form B) in t.o. to both groups over ten ranges of achievement  
AFTER 3 YEARS – COMPREHENSION

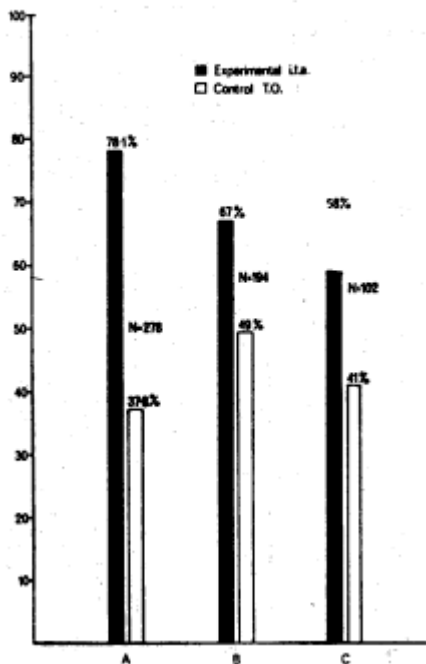
A score of 11 is equivalent to a reading age of 8.2. (The population had been recruited as four- and five-year olds 2 years and 10 months earlier.) It will be noticed that for these *more able* children the lines cross the horizontal line of a score of 11 at about 67% for the i.t.a. population, as against about 49% for the T.O. population:- a differential of 18 %.

3. Graph 34 is the source of information about spelling in T.O. after the longest period – 3½ years.

A score of 35 may be taken as equivalent to a spelling age of 8.5. It will be noticed that the lines for these *more able* children cross the horizontal line of a score of 35 at about 58% for the i.t.a. population and 41% for the T.O.:- a differential of 17%.



The pillars below convey graphically – and thus more comprehensively and interestingly – the most relevant extracts from the statistics in *The i.t.a. Symposium*. Each graph shows the relative improvement of the *more able* children.



C .)



<p>A. <i>Progress in reading Basic Reader Series.</i> Proportions completed the Series and advanced beyond. After 2½ years at school.</p> <p>B. <i>Comprehension in reading in T.O.</i> (Neale Analysis Test) Proportions having a comprehension-age equal to and higher than their chronological age. After 3 years at school.</p> <p>C: <i>Spelling in T.O.</i> Proportions having a spelling-age equal to and higher than their chronological age. After 3½ years at school.</p>
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The following observations may be pertinent in considering the above:

(i) All the differentials are highly significant and in favour of i.t.a.

(ii) All three levels chosen are objective, being the level of effective reading for Table E.1 and of achievement – age equal to chronological-age in the other two cases.

(iii) All the percentages are proportions of the populations of the whole groups, which are equal in every comparison. None of the percentages have been related to the T.O. performances. For example the percentage differential for the i.t.a. children of 28.3% in Table E.1 (after 1-1/3 years) has not been related to the corresponding figure of 27.9% and shown as the improvement over the T.O. performance of over 100 % which in fact it is.

The absolute figure of young children (6 million) starting every year to read is so great that the differential percentages on total populations produce numbers so great in absolute terms that even such high relative comparisons between media lose their meaning.

(iv) The following are the approximate *annual* school intakes per age group. These are relevant in considering the degree of importance of the above facts to the young children of the present and future.

United Kingdom	800,000
United States of America	4,000,000
Rest of White English-speaking World	<u>1,200,000</u>

6 million per annum

(v) In terms of benefit to the *more able* children in easier progress after as little as 1-1/3 years at school (in which the differential is 27.9%) there needs to be considered the effect upon them in higher motivation not only in the task of reading, but in all the other activities at school and in life generally.

It is conceivable that at least some, if very few, of the more able children included in this 27.9% differential will have been children of high I.Q. and of high linguistic ability who would otherwise have become backward readers because of over-slow progress in the early period of 1-1 /3 years which sapped away their persistence – they could have become "browned off". This is relevant to consideration of the closely parallel results for the 15% highest achievers to the right of Graph 25.

So far as is known, there is no prognosis which will indicate which of those children superior in intelligence and in linguistic ability will be those who will succumb to early frustration; nor has the point been established at which persistence is killed.

In terms of the *least able* children, there needs to be considered the effect of reducing very long periods of frustration and failure in a tempo of progress which allows the little book *Here We Go* (with only 27 words in its total vocabulary), together with only at best two other small books, with no more than another 174 words between them, to have been completed by 25.9% of the population in as long as 2-1/3 years of schooling.

(vi) Linguistic adequacy is all-important to learning to read seems that in its' form of oral ability it is far from universal, even after two years at school.

Those children in the population, whose language achievement thus low, have depressed the differentials between the "means" the "medians" in the Report: also the percentage differentials.

### 11,000 SEVEN-YEAR OLDS\*

**Table 10. Teachers' Ratings of Oral Ability**

Description of ratings	Boys		Girls		Total	
	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	Per cent
In conversation expresses himself well	572	10.3	665	12.6	1237	11.4
In conversation, or oral lessons, has good vocabulary and variety of phrases in relation to his age	749	13.5	805	15.2	1554	14.4
Average oral ability for his age	2810	50.8	2910	54.9	5720	52.8
Below average oral ability, tends to use simple word groupings	1153	20.9	796	15.0	1949	18.0
Markedly poor oral ability	247	4.5	120	2.3	367	3.4
Total rated	5531	100	5296	100	10827	100
No data	5		1		6	
GRAND TOTAL	5536		5297		10833	

Chi-squared (Trend) a 79.8;  $p < 0.001$

Chi-squared (Departure) = 35.2 (3 d.f.);  $p < 0.001$

\*M. L. Kellmer Pringle, N. R. Butler, R. Davie. Longmans. London. April 1966 (National Child Development Study).

The scores of the worst of those children were so low that groups (i.t.a. and T.O.) were thus equal at virtually no score.

It has been only the inclusion of these poorest students all which has prevented the generalization that *all* the i.t.a. children were superior to their T.O. counterparts.

(vii) One benefit flowing from the use of i.t.a. has been the means of separating into two classes those who would fail when taught with T.O.:- those who are linguistically inadequate and cannot be taught until their inadequacy has been made good, and those few, mentioned in (v) above, who though adequate linguistically seem unable to master, or unwilling to persist in mastering, the difficulties of the traditional orthography.

It would seem that teaching, directed to the teaching of language rather than of reading, will come to be recognized as the need of the non-linguistic children. Children of the second class can be helped by i.t.a. even more than the most able or most persisting of their peers.

(viii) The consideration that there may later be found the possibility of still greater differentials in favour of a new, and as yet not projected, simpler learning medium is no reason for delay in the abandonment of the traditional teaching medium, which has now been proved to be so inimical to early progress and to later success. There is no conflict. While the interests of young children not yet born may make desirable an early examination of the possibility of improving i.t.a., the interests of those who are now living – and of those who have tried and failed – *demand* that the benefits now shown to be available shall be applied to all at the earliest possible date.

#### **4. Our Double-Track Language, by Lewis H. Boyle**

\* Calipatria, Calif.

I am proud to be named after a teacher, a physics professor, and surely do not wish to offend any teachers. But I am a farmer and accustomed to facing facts; and since I am on the 'shady side' of 80, I am usually allowed to state them frankly.

In the 19th century much of college education was taken from books only, and was of little practical application or value, so that a professor was often the butt of jokes because of his supposed ineptitude. Some cynics then said: "Those who can, do, and those who can't, teach."

On the other hand, the farmer's work was then largely unskilled, so that he was called a "hick, a clodhopper" etc., it being assumed that he needed a "strong back and a weak brain." He was something of a "Man with the hoe," "And on his back the burden of the world." He later acquired labor-saving devices and competence to operate them, so that he no longer bore that burden on his strong hack, nor suffered those reproaches.

The professors and scientists have since gone into shops, barnyards and homes, acquiring practical competence, and saving many millions of people from grinding toil and poverty; they are no longer ridiculed. In both areas there has been a marriage of theory and practice resulting in a vast increase of both knowledge and goods.

The physicist and associates have brought into homes TV, radio, etc., with the voices of many people, some of them learned. One result is that today the average child entering kindergarten has been found to be familiar with 10,000 words; and he seems to us to use better grammar since he has for the most part heard fairly good grammar at home and on the radio.

It has been found that with the modern explosion of knowledge, 5,000 new words a year are added to the half million we now have in our wonderful language. High school and college students should know very many of those words, but too many do not and drop out before finishing their education.

Our great and extraordinarily expensive schools do not seem to teach the spelling of 5,000 words altogether in elementary school, and those offered in readers are mostly those that students in good homes know already. And when the youngsters read words a few times outside of spelling class they should be able to spell most of them.

In a MacMillan eighth grade speller authored by prominent educators, the last weekly lesson has this list of commonplace words: jerk, trial, fancy, tackle, fashion, yolk, fleet, scurvy, sashes, platform, mess, pitch, deeds, benefit, sticks. Nearly all of the text is taken up with the alphabet and its use; with the meaning of those words, which the average eighth graders have known and used for years, if not a decade; and the spelling, but not the pronunciation, of the plurals. All of that was primary room work in the old "horse and buggy" days.

We have many "loan" words from French, Spanish, and other modern tongues, but their spelling and pronunciation are based upon the practices of those languages; they are not typical of English, and cause 'a lot of trouble, but for the objectives of this article we may ignore them.

The bulk of our established words are derived either from the North Sea area and called Germanic, or from the Mediterranean, which we call "classic." The majority of words in large English dictionaries, including most of those peculiar to the sciences and other learned subjects, are from the classics, that is, from Greek, Latin, or thru Old French from Latin. Our connective and commonplace or "cotton-pickin'" words are mostly Anglo-Saxon or Germanic, and are more commonly used in speech than in writing.

We strongly believe that the combination of Germanic and classic words makes our language the greatest achievement of mankind. There could be little or no conversation without the former, and little education without the latter. With both, our varied needs are served admirably.

Some scholars feel that English is a written rather than a spoken "tongue," altho people now listen to it spoken more than they look at it written. Since the grammar of written English should be meticulous, grammarians have written large tomes "chuck full" of long grammatical terms and their definitions. Yet in the teaching of spelling, which is supposed to represent sounds, there is hardly ever a name given to any speech sounds or classes of them. Could you name those in the word *jerk*? or tell how many there are in that little word? or in *word* itself?

In *Why Johnny Can't Read*, by Rudolph Flesch, there is a list of 90 words with the vowel sound as in *jerk* and *girl*. If arranged according to the spelling of the vowel, that should help a child to learn far more words and with less effect than could be done with the usual "scatterbrained" lists in spellers; but the words are all monosyllables.

The Pitman i/t/a uses a special r when that vowel-like r is used, but that also is designed for beginners.

Most first grade pupils know and can use in speech the common words like the numerals *ought*, *one*, *two*, and *eight*. But they cannot read or write them because the letters do not indicate the speech sounds, they being exactly like those in *ought*, *won*, *to* or *too*, and *eight*. They quickly learn to read the numbers 0, 1, 2, and 8, and soon learn 12, 28, etc. If *one* were spelt *wun*, any child knowing 'the alphabet should be able to learn to read it right away., Many persons more capable than myself are working on the reform of our spelling and our inadequate alphabet and on consequent teaching methods. And as it is most children learn to read our short familiar words by sight when in the third grade.

From then on thruout life modern Americans encounter very many long and strange words and also numbers, and our schools cannot possibly teach them all one by one. The numbers are properly divided by printers so that students can conquer them at sight, but nothing like that is done about the "four-dollar" words in reading.

Likewise, students must learn to add large numbers, and are given full instructions so that they can add any of them. They must also add prefixes -and suffixes to words and the results are often very perplexing, for different sorts of suffixes change the stems in different ways. We will give some pretty good rules for that.

Educators seem to feel that when Johnny masters the common Germanic words he has reading practically licked, but he then gets into deeper water, altho he may not appear to be so troubled. He becomes involved with words. from different kinds of languages, and there are widely different practices and principles to be met in spelling, pronunciation, accentuation, word-building, semantics, and even the speech sounds and letters are not all on the same basis.

The child is taught all that in the same way that he was taught to swim in the "gay nineties" -he was tossed into deep water and told to swim or sink.

Today, as in that time, most children learn to read most Germanic words very glibly, but are stumped by strange classic ones like unification, which is not spelt badly. The modern child seems to have more trouble with words that he has not "had presented to him" than we did, for he seems to learn by repetition – by look and say – and may be less familiar with the sounds of the letters of the alphabet.

Now in Germanic words some vowel sounds may be spelled by means of 25 or more different combinations of letters, and some of those groups may be read in ten or more different ways. While in classic words the right letter is usually used for an accented vowel sound, and few silent letters are added, except the final e. But in other syllables little is done to show the sound of the vowel, for that depends upon its position in the syllable.

**In both Germanic and classic words, accented short vowels are always, in closed syllables; in classic words, long vowels usually are either in open syllables or are followed by one consonant and silent e.**

While the writing of Germanic words is rather like that of the Roman numeration, with more characters tacked on, as in VIII and eight, that of classic words is positional like our decimal system. In large numbers, the same digit has different values in different positions and they would be hard to read unless marks are used to indicate those positions. Even the printers and typists are helpful enough to use such marks, as in 33,333.33  $\frac{1}{3}$ :

Ordinary printers and typists could be equally helpful with our long classic words, as in u"ni-fi-ca'tion and in "ter-rog'a-to"ry. If a very little instruction is given, the sounds of the vowels may be quickly determined, tho no diacritical marks or "curlicues" be used. Without those accent and syllable marks, few of the vowels could be determined so that the words would be understood when spoken; most of them are different in the companion words u-nite', u'ni-ty, u'ni-fi"a-ble and in-ter"ro-gate", in-ter"ro-ga'tion.

The important thing to know in pronouncing words of that sort is the accentuation, for the unaccented vowels, especially a, e and o, often are no more than grunts, with no resemblance to the accented vowels.

Our idea is that the syllable and accent marks be used for purposes of instruction when strange words are first presented, but not in the text after the words have become familiar; that should not be too much for Johnny to ask of his teachers.

In the justly famous McGuffey readers of a century ago, the hard words to appear in a lesson were first listed and defined, were syllabicated conventionally and the primary accent placed. That is also done in the lists of some modern spellers. But the purposes of that division are not explained, nor always accomplished. They sometimes end syllables after accented short *i*, as in their *op-po-si'tion*, also having *p*'s in two syllables, whereas the *p*-sound is there only in the accented syllable.

We would have *opp"o-siti'on*, with the first *i* short and in a closed syllable contrasting with unaccented one in *o-ppose'*.

Our system would not help much with a few words with old-fashioned spelling from Greek, as in *aes-thet'ic* and *a-moe'ba*; nor in some from French, like *com-plain'*, *perceive'* and *con-trol'*; nor with a *in alt*, in a few words from Latin, like *al'ti-tude"*, with short *a*, and *al'ternate','* where the first *a* has what we call a broad-*a* sound.

The broad and medium vowels give us a very hard time in Germanic words, but we can give pretty good rules for them in classic words.

There we find the medium *u*, as in *pull*, only in a few words, *pul'pit*, *pull'et*, *pull'ey*, *Pull'man*.

In classic words that have not been changed when coming thru Old French, the sound that we here call accented broad *u* is found only in the spellings *vowel r*, with no vowel following the *r* in the base word, as in *pre-fer'*, *vir'gen*, and *ur'gent*. That broad vowel sound would not be heard when a vowel follows the *r*, as in *fer'ry*, *vi'rile* and *fu'ry*. That controversial vowel sound may be spelt in 20 different ways. The unaccented form of that sound may be found in *ar* or *or* in classic words, as in *reg'u-lar* and *ed'i-tor*; but note: *reg"u-lar'i-ty* and *ed"i-to'ri-al*.

The New England medium-*a* is used in a few words that come from Latin through French, like *class*, but is lost when a suffix is added, as in *class'i-cal*.

The broad-*a* in most American usage occurs only in *ar* which is not followed by a vowel sound; but not after *qu*, as in *quar'to*. *Ah*, *fa'ther*, and *sa'ga* are Germanic words.

We do not seem to have the medium to broad-*o*, as in *dog*, in classic words. In them the broad-*o* is followed by *r* which is not followed by a vowel, or even silent *e*, as in *ex-plore'*, from Latin *explorare*. The *-port* words, with long-*o*, are really French. We have what we call the same broad-*o* sound in *au'to*, *quartz*, and *ex-alt'*. But we do not have in classic words such spellings as that in *talk*, *ought*, *warm*, and *law*.

The letter *w* is not used in classic words, nor is *y* as a consonant.

U, i, and maybe e are used for *w* or *y* as consonants, when followed by another vowel sound in the same syllable, as in un'guent, mill'ion, and possibly eu-gen'ic.

The Romans and Greeks used letters in enumeration and they tried to have the same character represent the same value always; their systems became very unwieldy. In writing words their vowels and some consonants represented different sounds in different positions, as do our digits in the decimal system. That system can work well only if properly planned and used consistently.

In words from Latin, the letters *k* and *j* are rare, the *c* and *g* being used for those and other sounds, as in ci-ca'da and gi-gan'tic. We do not recommend that practice, would welcome some changes in the spelling of our adopted words to correct that unfortunate situation.

Long, long ago the *c* and *g* were both "hard;" with the tongue being held high and far back to sound them; but when followed by *e* or *i*, for which the tongue is placed forward and low, that wiggly organ was lowered so that the sound of *s* or *j* resulted.

There are several of our consonants, notably *d*, *t*, hard *c*, soft *c* or *s*, *z* and *x*, which also change in sound when some classic suffixes with unaccented *u*-sounds are affixed to them. Thus *t* takes the *sh*-sound in *act*, *ac'tion*, before a sound that is like unaccented short-*u*; and like *ch* in *ac'tu-al*, before unaccented long-*u*.

Thus there are two classes of suffixes that cause changes in the sounds of the preceding consonants; they also may cause changes in the sound of the vowel which precedes that consonant, and often in the accents of all the syllables in the word, giving cadence and euphony.

There are two other classes of suffixes that do not so change the preceding consonants, but change vowels. The changing sounds in our long classic words may resemble twisted and knotted mountain ranges, with deep valleys between. Our unchanging Germanic are more like flat plains; viz: *mother*, *mother-ly*, *mother-li-ness*, with the only stress regularly on the first syllable of the root. Compare Latin *ma'tron*, *ma-ter'ni-ty*, *mat''ri-mo'ny*, *mat'rimo''ni-al*.

We list four classes of suffixes or endings which we call "explosive" and which cause the greatest changes, along with some common examples.

-ion, or -tion: -eous, -ia, -ian, -ient, -ious, -ium.

-i-al: -e-ar, -e-ous, -i-a, -i-an, -i-ent, -i-ous, -i-um.

-u-al or -u-lar: -u-ant, -u-ence, -u-lent, -u-lus.

-i-ty: -a-pher, -e-ty. -i-cal, -i-nous, -i-tive, -o-gy, -o-rous.

As we have seen, some consonants change before the -ion and the -u-al or -u-lar endings, but not usually before the others.

The changes in accents are the most baffling but are the easiest to explain: the strongest accent, called the primary, invariably is placed on the syllable preceding one of these endings. That is called the penult when preceding the -ion suffix with one syllable, but is the antepenult when before

the others which have two syllables. In longer words there is usually a weaker accent, called secondary, two or three syllables back, thus: de-fine', de-fin'i-tive, def'i-niti'on.

Note that even the prefix de- is changed in the noun. Also, our explosive suffixes are in nouns or adjectives,

Verbs usually have some accent on the last syllable or the penult, and do not change the rest of the words in the same way, if at all.

As to the preceding vowel sounds, in a library book on phonics it is stated that vowels are long before -tion and short before -sion. As a matter of fact, those endings are of the same class and have exactly the same effect upon the same vowel that precedes them.

The vowel i is short, and u is long, before one consonant and any of our explosive suffixes:

Short i: con'trite", con-trit'ion, line, lin'e-ar; ve'hi-cle ve-hic'u-lar; di-vine, di-vin'i-ty.

Long u: con-trib'ute, con"tri-bu'tion; cen'tu-ry, centu'ri-on; pus, pu'ru-lent; fu'ture, fu-tu'ri-ty.

A, e and o become long before -ion or -i-al endings: hab'i-tat"hab'-' i-ta'tion; U'ra-nus, u-ra'ni-um; con'crete" con"cre'tion; mys'ter-y, mys-te'ri-ous; a-troc'i-ty (s.0), a-tro'cious; fel'o-ny, fe-lo'ni-ous. Spec'ial and dis-cret' -ion, with short e, are exceptions.

A, e and o must be short before -i-ty and -u-al or -u-lar endings; sane, san'i-ty; ta'ble, tab'u-lar; serene', seren'i-ty; mol"e-cule'; mo-lec'u-lar; bi"ol'o-gy, bi"o-log' i-cal; inn'o-cent, i-nnoc'u-ous.

These explosive endings seem to change the length of preceding vowels only when one consonant comes between; otherwise the vowel lengths are what we would expect. Long when none come between: phar" i-sa'i-cal; spon"ta-ae'i-ty; so-bri'e-ty; sto'i-cal; for-tu'i-ty.

Broad vowel before r and a consonant, or au: par'tial; a-ccor'di-on; ex-haus'tion; su-bur'bi-a; in-er'tia.

Short vowel before two other consonants and the ending: fac'tion; en'ti-ty; ig'ne-ous; ob'vi-ous; unc'tion.

Changing consonant sounds before -ion endings: Formerly -ion, etc., had two syllables, like -i-al, etc., but when they followed certain consonants that changed to sh, zh or ch, the i or e merged with them and was "lost in the shuffle": (The *i* there is absolutely silent; it could not possibly take the y-sound after r sibilant as it does after the liquids *l* and *n*.)

Change to sh: act, ac'tion; music (k), mu-sici'an; vice, vicious; sus-pect, sus-pici'on; tech-nique', technici'an; tense, ten'sion.

To ch (tsh): quest, ques'tion (sh alone cannot follow s, or vice versa).



To zh (voiced): co-llide, co-llisi'on; per-suade', -sun' sive, -sua'sion; co-here', co-he'sion; con-fuse', con-fu' sion; tel'e-vise, -visi'on.

Note that sh in French a-bol'ish becomes t in ab"oliti'on.

The very common endings -tion and -sion are conventionally taken as suffixes, but actually, the t and s are usually integral parts of the stem and not parts of the affixes, as in: act, ac'tion; state, station. Thus they go into the last syllable when, they follow a consonant or r long vowel. But when they follow a short vowel, which must be in a closed syllable, they must go into the penult. -ual and -ular endings:

Before these d takes the j (dzh) sound: grade, grad'u-al; T takes the ch. (tsh) sound: chapter (Old French), ca-pit'u-tar (L); im'pe-tus, im-pet'u-ous.

S takes the- zh sound in: case, cas'u-al; and x becomes ksh in: sex, sex'u-al.

Some of our endings listed, like -i-ty, are true suffixes; some, like -i-cal, are composed of two short suffixes; some like -u-lar and -o-gy may be composed of a short suffix together with a part of the base.

There are many other endings, which may be proper suffixes, some of them with but one vowel, some much longer, which may have the same effects as those discussed above. The suffix -ic as an adjective often has the same effect as -i-ty or -i-cal, as in a-cad'e-my, ac"a-dem'ic, but not in base, ba'sic, with the long-a instead of short. The suffix -to"ry acts like -i-ty in some words, and so does -a-to"ry, but not so in many others; much time and space would be required to treat them fully. More time should be given to some that we have named.

Our great language is very diverse, and various subjects must be studied to master it, and it does not seem that they have been used together as a term or a fine machine; notably spelling and phonetics do not seem to be the bosom friends that they should be. Why can't we do something about this? If spelling were made reliable to indicate the spoken words, what a boon it would be to teachers. I have tried to make a start in an area which seems to be unknown to most scholars, and hope that others who are younger and more capable will continue with it.

It is true that many rules and lists are used and seem to be necessary, and some educators detest both. But many successful people use them, and even learn many rules and keep score in playing games, so they cannot be too much of an incubus. They are great labor savers and should enable students to dissect new words and so to learn thousands of words quickly. Our schools cannot possibly teach the many sophisticated words needed in higher education by their "Man with the Hoe" methods a weed chopped here and a clod there.

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## **5. Case Histories of Remedial Reading Instruction in the Penitentiary, by William H. Pahrman, B.S.\***

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Many of the inmates at the Oregon State Penitentiary assigned to our remedial classes are recalcitrant, embarrassed and indifferent toward education. Almost without exception they feel that education for them is not necessary. They had survived for many years, being able to read or write very little – and see no need to further their education. This problem confronts all penal institutions. How can we make the teaching of reading, writing and spelling, interesting and beneficial to those who have an attitude of indifference? i.t.a. helped to solve this problem for us.

This program was a two year study from June 1, 1964 to June 1, 1966. Some statistics about it may help to understand it better. Of our population 9.5% is negro. The % of negro illiterates in the program runs about 28%. This illustrates the premise that disadvantaged children are more likely to become illiterate, juvenile delinquents, and eventually prison inmates. When we commenced our program, 5.9% of the total population was illiterate, compared to 2.2% after completion of our study. This does not mean that we cannot expect to wipe out illiteracy by a proper teaching program but merely that it has not been extended long enough to encompass all newcomers.

All new commitments at OSP are administered the Metropolitan Achievement Tests at their appropriate levels during their first week in the institution. Those who score less than a fifth grade level, approximately four per month, are assigned to school as compulsory students unless excused because of infirmity, age, or lack of ability demonstrated during a prior incarceration.

Prior to our initiation of the i/t/a program in the Summer of 1964, we used various texts and methods of instructing our illiterates. We have in the past years used the *United States Armed Forces Institute* text for illiterates and semiliterates, the *Home and Family Life Series* published by Arthur C. Croft Pub., New London, Conn., and *Elementary Education* published by John C. Winston Company, Philadelphia, Penn. Altho these texts proved beneficial in many ways, the fact remains that the fallacies accompanying the traditional methods of teaching reading were present and the students had to spend much more time than we deemed necessary to learn to read and write.

We also have studied the *Systems for Success* by R. Lee Henney, Ph. D., Director of Adult and Literacy Education for the State of Indiana. Here again we found all the incongruities connected with methods of teaching reading, whether it be the "look-say" method or the phonics method or a combination of the two, as pointed out by the proponents of i.t.a.

In an effort to improve our remedial program, we instituted the i/t/a program in June, 1964. A total of 65 inmates have participated in this program since its inception at OSP. Figure 4 illustrates the success we have enjoyed since we have used i/t/a. The average grade level of the 65 men assigned to the i/t/a program at the time of commitment was 1.45 as determined by the Metropolitan

Achievement Test, Elementary Battery. Their Mean IQ was 73.5 with the IQ's ranging from 50 to 90 as determined by the Kent Emergency Scale, Goodenough Intelligence Test, or Otis Self Administering Test, Form A. This compares with the 158 illiterates who attended classes at OSP since January, 1961, with a Metropolitan Achievement Test score Mean of 3.49 and an IQ Mean of 78.4. These statistics illustrate that those inmates assigned as students to the i/t/a program are of lower mental ability and have achieved less than those of the general population. A Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale would probably provide a more valid score, but the testing time required makes its use impractical at this institution.

**Fig. 4, a comparison of two programs**

	i.t.a.	T.O.
Number of cases	65	158
IQ's	73.5	78.4
Years Public School (mean)	4.2	5.6
Orientation Grade Level	1.45	3.49
Months in OSP School	4.34	6.81
Number Achieving 5th Grade	50	95
Percentage Achieving 5th Grade	76.9	60.1
Months to Achieve 5th Grade	4.32	6.55
Mean Grade Level Gain	3.16	1.68

After using the i/t/a program for 2 years, we have obtained the following results: The average advancement was 3.16 grades as determined by the Stanford Achievement Test, Elementary Battery, Forms J, K, and L. Different forms were administered at the end of each quarter. The average time spent in the program was 4.35 months and 50 of the 65 inmates participating in the i/t/a program attained the 5th Grade level or 76.9%.

Over a period dating back to January, 1961, with a sampling of 158 illiterates who have attended the institution school and used traditional orthography (T.O.), the average IQ was 78.4 but the average grade advancement was only 1.68 grades. The average time spent in the institution school was 6.81 months. 95 students of the 158 achieved the 5th grade level or 60.1%. It took 6.55 months for those using the traditional orthography to reach 5th grade level, as compared with 4.3 months for those using i/t/a.

The following cases sum up the success we have enjoyed in using i/t/a. The first three cases were started in a traditional orthography program using the USAFI text for illiterates and semi-illiterates. They made very little progress using this program and it was not until they were assigned to the i/t/a program that they showed appreciable gain.

**Case 1:** A 29 year old, white male, serving a ten year sentence for burglary, attended part of the ninth grade at Franklin High School, Portland, Oregon. He had an IQ of 73, tested 0.6 grade level on the Metropolitan Achievement Test and was assigned to school as a compulsory student on Oct. 30, 1963. His progress was negligible prior to assignment to the i/t/a program, but after six months in the program, he tested 5.1 grade level on the Stanford Achievement Test, Elementary Battery.

**Case 2:** A 39 year old, white male, serving a 20 year sentence as a habitual criminal, completed the 3rd grade at Payette, Idaho. He had an IQ of 70 and tested 0.6 on the Metropolitan Achievement Test, Elementary Battery at the time of commitment and was assigned to compulsory school on Oct. 30, 1963. He attended the institution school on two prior convictions with no improvement noted. He made very little, progress under the traditional orthography, but after completing six months in the i/t/a program tested 5.1 grade level on the Stanford Achievement Test.

**Case 3:** A 40 year old, white male, serving a 4 year sentence on as assault to rape charge, completed the 1st grade at Walker Grade School, Walker, Oregon. He had an IQ of 82, tested 0.6 grade level at the time of commitment, and was assigned to the institution school Feb. 26, 1964. After six months in the i/t/a program his grade level was raised to 5.3 level.

**Case 4:** A 23 year old, negro male, serving a five year sentence for assault with intent to rob, attended the 9th grade at David Douglas High School, Portland, Oregon. He had an IQ of 50 as determined by the Kent Emergency Scale, tested first grade level at the time of commitment and was assigned to school June 17, 1964. After eight months in the i/t/a program, he tested 5.5 grade level on the Stanford Achievement Test, Elementary Battery. This man has since been discharged from the institution and had recently returned on a new charge. It was feared that perhaps he had forgotten the skills which he had attained while attending the institution school. However, upon retesting he tested 5.2 on the Metropolitan Achievement Test, Elementary Battery.

**Case 5:** A 45 year old, Russian immigrant, serving a 2 year sentence on a perjury charge, completed the equivalent of the 6th grade in Moscow, Russia. His main difficulty was the language barrier. He had an IQ of 78 and he tested 2.9 at the time of commitment. He was assigned to school Aug. 26, 1964, and after 8 months in the i/t/a program he tested 6.4 grade level.

**Case 6:** A 39 year old Mexican harvest hand, serving a six year sentence on an assault with deadly weapon charge, completed the 7th grade at Gavion Barreras, Torreon, Chihuahua, Mexico. He was unable to read or write any English at the time of commitment but was able to complete the arithmetic section. He was assigned to school March 17, 1965 and 2½ months later tested 7.1.

**Case 7:** A 19 year old, white male, serving a 2 year sentence for burglary not in a dwelling, attended various grade schools in Tennessee, California, and Oregon. He had an IQ of 80. The family background was poor. A recalcitrant who bragged about his inability to learn at MacLaren School for Boys, Woodburn, Oregon; Oregon State Correctional Institute, Salem, Oregon, tested 2.7 on the Metropolitan Achievement Test at the time of commitment and was assigned to school Jan. 4, 1965. After 2½ months in our i/t/a program, he tested 5.1 on the Stanford Achievement Test, Elementary Battery.

**Case 8:** A 24 year old, white male, serving a 10 year sentence for rape and sodomy, attended the 9th grade at Lake Oswego High School, Lake Oswego, Oregon. He was declared a non-learner by the faculty and was dropped from the school rolls. He was unable to read the Metropolitan Achievement Test but did complete part of the math section. He had an IQ of 90 as tested on the

Goodenough Intelligence Test. After 4 months in the i/t/a program he tested 6.8 grade level on the Stanford Achievement Test, Elementary Battery.

**Case 9:** A 22 year old, negro male, serving a 3 year sentence for receiving and concealing stolen property, attended part of the 9th grade at Jefferson High School, Portland, Oregon. He had an IQ of 70 and tested 4.0 upon commitment. He was assigned to school on Sept. 16, '1964, and after 3 months in our regular TO classes failed to make any appreciable progress. During this period he displayed a reluctance to learn but after being placed in the i/t/a program and spending two months in it, he raised his grade level from 4.0 to 7.4.

**Case 10:** A 35 year old, white male, serving a 20 year sentence for rape, had an IQ of 82 (EGY), attended part of the 1st grade at Oneonta Grade School, Oneonta, Alabama. He tested 1.2 grade level on the Metropolitan Achievement Test at the time of commitment. He was assigned to school Feb. 16, 1965, and 3½ months later, after being in the i/t/a program, scored 6.3 level on the Stanford Achievement Test.

**Case 11:** A 28 year old, white male, serving a 4 year sentence for burglary, attended the 9th grade in Springfield, Oregon. He had an IQ of 82 (EGY) and tested 1.7 upon commitment. This man failed to make any progress in OSP academic program during two previous incarcerations. In spite of his recalcitrance, after 15 months he achieved the fifth grade level using i/t/a. His greatest gain was the last six months he was assigned to the school program when his grade level jumped from 2.1 to 5.1.

**Case 12:** A 52 year old, negro male, was serving a 5 year sentence for armed robbery. He tested 1.4 on the Metropolitan Achievement Test upon commitment, with an IQ of 75 (EGY). He attended the 2nd grade in Birmingham, Alabama. This was his sixth commitment since 1939. He is a former professional boxer with evidence of brain-damage ("punch-drunk"). He lacked ability to retain academic material, but after 15 months in i/t/a he achieved the 5th grade level.

We have used these cases to point out that the i/t/a program can be used successfully to teach non-English-speaking illiterates. In the two years we have been using i/t/a we have had only one student who failed to make any progress. This was due to his complete recalcitrance toward any educational program and cannot be attributed to the program.

The success we have enjoyed with i/t/a should not be entirely attributed to methods or materials. We do not believe we could achieve the satisfactory results with these adamant adults if the instructors, both inmate and civilian, had not received adequate training, and were not genuinely enthused and interested in the program.

We have been fortunate in finding enthusiastic and competent instructors, employing three professionally certified part-time teachers from local school districts. The three civilian instructors have earned Master's Degrees and one is an elementary principal. The two inmate instructors are college graduates, one holding a Master's Degree in Education and six years experience teaching mentally retarded children.

We attempt to keep our remedial classes in groups of 2 to 4. We have found that the men are better able to work at their own speed and level. This gives the individual attention to the needs of the student.

Each new student in the i/t/a program begins by learning the 44 symbols. After he learns the symbols and some of their sounds, he starts in Book 1 and goes thru the *Early-to-Read* i/t/a teaching series, with the accompanying workbooks. We also have purchased many supplementary books in i/t/a to augment the interest of the student.

In the fifth level i/t/a reader and workbook the student begins to make the transition to the traditional alphabet. This comes quite naturally to them. By the time they have completed the seventh level, they have made a complete transition to T.O. and are ready to go into our regular curriculum. However, we have found by experience it is wise to retain a student in the i/t/a program, reading books in traditional orthography for a period of about one month to further orient them to traditional orthography.

It is the consensus of the certified instructors who have worked with remedial groups since Sept. 1961, that the i/t/a program is the most successful remedial program we have attempted, and the results presently indicate this. We have concluded from our studies that the inmates find i/t/a easier to learn because it is more consistent than T.O. The men, once indoctrinated to the program, receive it more enthusiastically than T.O. because it has a wider interest range and is less juvenile in its approach.

We were concerned when we launched the i/t/a program as to how these men would adjust to the transition to T.O. We found that the men have responded readily not only to reading but to spelling, language, and writing as well. Of course, 80% of the words spelled in i/t/a are spelled as they are in T.O., so there is not too much difference in this area. We also discovered that these men become more interested and aware of the things around them: Suddenly new avenues are opened to them and they begin to write letters, sentences, and interviews in i/t/a. We have had cases where we have had to go to the various departments in the institution and decode the i/t/a interview requests since the men began to write them in i/t/a.

We further noted that the men who had been indoctrinated and gone through the i/t/a program respond more readily to our regular grade school curriculum than those who have not had the benefits of i/t/a.

To those who have not tried this method, we highly recommend it. There is no doubt in our minds as to the value of i/t/a as a successful method in the teaching of adult illiterates. So successful has been our adult program that we have received inquiries from all parts of the world; as far West as Australia, and as far East as Cambridge University, London, England. No matter what *method* is now being used, we believe teachers will find greater and more lasting results through an i/t/a program; and remember that the initial teaching *alphabet* can be used with any *method* of teaching reading.

[*Spelling Reform Anthology §2.1 p4 in the printed version*]

## Section 2

### Arguments for and against Spelling Reform

These are general arguments that do not fit in any of the other specialised categories listed later in this book. For a comprehensive listing of references up to 1929, see Kennedy, Arthur.: *A Bibliography of Writings in English*, 1929.

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1967 p12 in the printed version*]

#### 6. English Has More Rime Than Reason, by James L. Julian, Ph. D.\*

\* reprinted from *the Catalyst*, vol 1, no. 2, June, 1959.

\* Chairman, Dept. of Journalism, San Diego State College.

The verbal spit-balls being tossed at those allegedly guilty for our horrible spelling skills are largely misdirected.

Frequently pelted are such innocents as grade schools, parents, high schools, television, colleges, comic books, educationists, and even opticians. The real culprit, and a monstrous one it is, is the language itself.

Let's face it. English is an illogical, irrational hodgepodge in which most letters stand for different sounds in different words. Note some absurdities: *know* rimes (also spelled r-h-y-m-e-s) with *no*, but not with *now*. *Vain*, *vein* and *vane* all rime, but: *comb*, *bomb*, and *tomb* do not. *Climb* doesn't rime with *limb*, which does with *him* and *hymn*.

You'll find nothing to rime in *blood*, *mood*, and *hood*, but you do in *isle*, *I'll*, *eye'll* and *aisle*. *Sow* (to plant) doesn't rime with *sow* (female swine), but it does with *sew*, *hoe*, *go*, and *dough*. And what's logical about *lead* (the metal) riming with *said*, *led*, and *dread*, but not with *lead* (the verb)?

Our language is illogical because years ago orthographers, the people who established "correct" spellings in the dictionaries, goofed on how to select the right spellings. They had the illogical idea that spelling should be based upon common usage. But the printers, who established these spellings, were mostly imported foreigners. Frenchmen spelled French words as they did at home; Germans, Dutch also – which did not correspond with the Anglo-Saxon ideas of how to represent speech sounds. There are only 45 phonemes, or basic speech sounds in English, yet there are varied ways of spelling each of these sounds. Examples are *holy*, *wholly*, and *holey*. All together there are over 500 ways of spelling these 45 basic speech sounds – a veritable chaos.

English is difficult to spell because it is not phonetic. That is, any given letter or group of letters can represent different sounds in different words. Note the sounds represented by o-u-g-h in *tough*, *through*, *cough*, *thorough*, *ought*, *drought*, *bough*, *hough*, and *dough*.

Imagine the confusion if our arithmetic were as imprecise as our spelling. In math it's necessary for a number to have a constant value. Thus, 7 always is exactly one unit larger than 6 and one unit smaller than 8. Not so in spelling. The letter *a* represents 9 different sounds in English; the letter *e*, 7; *o*, 8; and *u*, 8. Equally illogical and confusing are silent letters found in such words as *gnat*, *knee*, *know*, *answer*, *two*, and *would*.

English orthography is as confusing as a poker game in which all cards are wild, yet may have different values or even no value under certain conditions. Once a wag named Turner spelled his name Phthologyrrh. He justified the bizarre orthography this way: *phth* is pronounced *t* as in *phthisic*; *olo* is pronounced *ur*, as in *colonel*; *gn* is pronounced *n*, as in *gnat*; and *yrrh* is pronounced *er* as in *myrrh*.

Better spelling skills are not achieved automatically by youngsters who master phonetics in school. English is such an odd language that the spelling of each word has to be memorised. This isn't easy considering such oddities as the *er* sound, which is spelled differently in *germ*, *firm*, *worm*, *turn*, and *journey*. Conversely, the same letters made different words, as o-u-r in *sour*, *source*, and *courage*. Isn't it expecting too much for our children to master these vagaries of English spelling?

The words *psychology* can be spelled in at least 6,480 ways without changing its pronunciation. You have to use some odd letter combinations, but in English the pronunciation of *psy* is the same for *si*, *ci*, *sih*, *seye*, *sie*, and at least six other combinations.

Spellings are tied to custom and historical roots of words rather than the function of the letters used in individual words. The villains in this plot have been lexicographers the compilers of dictionaries, who have stubbornly resisted much-needed changes. Centuries ago, they could easily have made such changes when our spelling was in a state of uncertainty. Indeed, Noah Webster tried to shorten the spelling of a few dozen words. Today, the American spellings: *color*, *program*, *tire*, and similarly spelled words contrast strangely with the British: *colour*, *programme*, *tyre*. But many of his other innovations have been dropped.

Lexicographers have lacked the courage to allocate only one sound to a letter, eliminating such variances as the *y* in *sky*, *you*, *key*, *duty*, *nymph* and *myrrh*. They've authorised such homonyms as *one* and *won*, *would* and *wood*, and *metal*, *mettle*, and *medal*, *meddle*. They've befuddled us with the homographs *wind*, *live*, *lead*, *bow*, and *read* – words with two meanings, two pronunciations, but one spelling. What a senseless handicap to learning!

What will be done to make English spelling more logical? Probably nothing. Habit is the most tyrannical of masters, and custom is a despot. Orthographers who advocate sensible, simplified spelling always get clobbered by traditionalists who oppose any change in the *status quo*. They are afraid the books they have written will suddenly become obsolete.

Litul relef iz in site for us pore spelors.



## 7. The Key to Better Education, by Brenda M. Johns\*

\*Sacred Heart Girl's School, Gulu, Uganda, or (Summer) Cambridge, England, U.K.

### The Aim

To make the written and spoken forms of this important tool of communication, the English language, more accessible to:

- (1) the 25% to 30% of our population classed as *backward readers*,
- (2) the 500,000,000 or so *hungry people* of the world who may really need it to gain the assistance needed to develop their countries,
- (3) the 500,000,000 or so *extra people* who are expected to swell the world population in the next 35 years,
- (4) the other peoples of *Europe* with whom we must develop closer ties, Common Market or no,
- (5) to save 1½ to 2 years in the education of all children, (6) to give a *better foundation* for all subsequent learning.

It will probably be desirable for our brighter children to use some of the time saved for learning foreign languages, including Russian, German, French and perhaps even Mandarin. Many will need to use these in the course of their work and travel. For the others, even a mere smattering of a foreign language could be a valuable, stirring, and subtle adjunct to the influences of geography, history, current affairs, sociology, religion, etc., giving a more intimate insight into the lives of other people.

The Advantages which we may confidentially expect:

- (1) A child or foreign student knowing the sounds of the alphabet will be able to write any word he can properly pronounce and will be able to read (pronounce) any word he sees written.
- (2) His reading and writing will reach the standard of his speech vocabulary in a minimum of time.
- (3) He will then be able to read independently getting a good idea of pronunciation of new words which he has never heard.
- (4) The quantity and fluency of his reading will enable him to better appreciate sentence patterns. As one cannot do this when listening to the spoken word, he will be able to look back over difficult sentences and ponder over the grammatical links which embody the links in meaning. Later, with much experience reading the works of many authors, he will begin to appreciate the innuendoes and the interplay of the words and phrases with the subtle emotional implications which cannot be obtained from a dictionary or learnt by grammatical study.
- (5) He will have access to all the knowledge he wants and needs and not be dependent on the whims of a syllabus designed by someone who, however well-meaning, cannot possibly have insight into his unique inheritance of bents and foibles, or the play that his experiences have on these, or the multitudinous variety of interrelated personality-circumstance situations through which he may live in the future. Not only will he be able to look for the knowledge or entertainment that he wants; an unexpected, unlooked-for phrase may jump from the page and occupy his thoughts for an entire

day, cause an inspiration, or even influence the whole course of his emotional, philosophical, or practical life.

The advanced student, wishing to study the Traditional Orthography (pre-spelling-reform) books, will be able to do so with very little extra effort and help. His experience of sentence pattern, vocabulary, and idiom, and his knowledge of the letters, seasoned with a pinch of logic, will see him through as with a following wind if he is just tipped off about the changes that have been made.

### **The Situation Now, in**

#### (1) The World

UNESCO is favoring Esperanto as a first international language as opposed to English, owing solely to the difficulties of English spelling. This in spite of the already wide-spread use and understanding of English, and the availability of *more teachers of English* than of any other language. (However, many teachers in foreign countries do not have good pronunciation of English, consequently their teaching is faulty and the results deplorable. A stabilized alphabet with proper pronunciation assigned to each letter and rules for their use will greatly help teachers to know at least their local English dialect).

This deplorable retrogressive step will take time to implement but could be reversed if the English people themselves would modernize their ideas and fling off-the chains with which they are strangling themselves..... 'Themselves,' yes, for there is no authority, no law which attempts to enslave us to our present spelling. The prefaces to dictionaries by their compilers are openly critical of our present spelling. They admit freely to differences of opinion as to what is the best or the most popular spelling. They recognize also that they are partly out of date before they are even published. It is laughable for anyone to say "This word is being used wrongly nowadays. It should mean so-and-so; because it says so in the dictionary." (date of publication 19?) Dictionaries soon get out of date. Their compilers do not 'attempt to pretend that a word necessarily means what it meant a few years ago, or what it meant to a Greek in the good old, old, old days. Indeed, they seem to delight in the fact that the language is alive – and changing.

Nor do they give, in most dictionaries, the spellings of Greek sources in the Greek alphabet! And even 'Alphabet' was more like (tho not actually, of course!!) more like 'Alephbeth' in the days of the Phoenicians.

Another mistaken notion that acts as a chain is that we normally read Shakespeare and Chaucer in the original spellings. Normally we do not. But if you are genuinely interested in this sort of thing, why not go back to the Anglo-Saxon? You'll find books in your County Research Library which will enable you to do this, even if we take one more big step sensibly forward in the right direction to make English a better "medium of exchange and bond of union," as H. W. Fowler called it in his Acknowledgements in the preface to Complete Oxford Dictionary.

#### (2) England

Most small children come to school eager to learn. They are very suggestible and work very diligently. But the task of learning to read and spell, the very necessary means of access to knowledge, is probably *more difficult to master* than any other they will have to learn up to the age of fifteen. How important it is! How frustrating to those who fail! Many people are barred from knowledge that they want, not from any inability to understand it, simply because they have no access to it because they cannot read adequately, i. e. master the anomalies of English spelling.

Nowadays, it is not claimed that even intelligence tests such as those of the 11+ exams eliminate cultural background and attainment-this, again, largely means reading ability and reading experience.

Very early in their school lives, a largely unnecessary divergence takes place between those children who quickly improve their reading up to the standard of their speech vocabulary and those who lag behind. Many never reach this standard.

This divergence is a frustrating experience. It is a prime and note-worthy cause of the educational rifts about which there is so much controversy.

I do not suggest that we could all, ever, have equal skills. But this reading skill depends as much on the simplicity of the system to be learnt as on the qualities of the learner, and it is a skill fundamentally essential to all one's educational advancement, one's contribution to the community, one's social prestige, and one's personality.

It is little wonder that the confidence of backward readers tends to deteriorate as they go on (progress?) through the school, in spite of the teacher's efforts to discover morale-building tasks they can do for the class, and their own efforts to be class-room window-openers or wags. Nor is it surprising that our prisons hold a rather higher proportion of backward readers than the average.

Frequently it is suggested that deterioration in morale sets in among senior pupils as a result of their 'failure' to pass the 11+exams. This may be so for a few children whose parents have misjudged their children's ability and have made too much of the need to pass. These are the 'borderline' children. On the whole, however, I think that this tendency to blame the 11+ is a very unfortunate red-herring. Even these brighter children are affected by the general attitude of their class. General despondency cannot be blamed on the 11+ failure as most of the children had not expected to pass, and indeed, had not hoped to, knowing that dedication to homework would be demanded of them. Much of the despondency is, I believe, due to illiteracy.

For the primary school stages, there is a plentiful supply of carefully graded reading material and of copiously illustrated general knowledge books. Only the most incompetent readers fail to glean some information from these. In the secondary stage, however, when the vocabulary should be expanding rapidly with so many subjects being studied, reading lessons are drastically fewer; any pupils still dependent on word-shapes (look-say), cannot even check that they have heard a word aright, never mind learn its spelling, on seeing it. Moreover, the language of some pupils is so undeveloped that they do not understand an eighth of what is said to them.

## The Transition to New Spelling

The Simplified Spelling Society was founded by 'a group of eminent British scholars,' to quote from its enrolment prospectus form, as long ago as 1908. I think its slow progress is due to the modesty of its suggestions.

To anyone not very interested in spelling, the new forms probably look rather like spelling mistakes, particularly if the writer has tried to introduce some of the less startling spellings into his writing gradually.

That will not do. A reform needs to be introduced far more dramatically and everyone must know what is taking place and why it is necessary.

To appreciate the easiness of the new spelling people must have the opportunity to use it as much as they do the old. How can they if they cannot read it in their newspapers and dare not write it to addresses where the new spelling may not be known. Again, it should be apparent the need is for widespread dramatic introduction so that even those who disapprove will at least know what the new spelling is like, and what is happening.

Consequently, the chief propagating agent must be the press-newspapers, magazines and books. Besides using the system they could print educational sections to tide schools over the period of shortage of books in the new spelling for the infants and juniors. Older children would continue to read their old books, tho writing the new spelling.

The greater demand for books, there being a larger reading public, both here and abroad, might absorb a few of our out-of-work citizens. The books would be paid for by those who read them.

In schools, the expense would not be very great. There is already a great turnover in school text-books, and modern methods of teaching would require modernized books. The older children who are already using the old books would go on using them, even using up those at present in the warehouses. They would continue to read both systems but would gradually develop more proficiency in writing only the new, unless their need for research in the old books showed a need for practice in the old spelling.

For young children, new books would be needed as soon as possible, but many infants' books are very thin and do not last long anyway. They should be thin and small so that a child can read a book in a short time and have a sense of accomplishment. The new books would give greater incentive to learn because they would be easier.

## Stages of the Introduction thru the Press

The change will never be accepted unless the vast majority of a significant population can write the system fairly confidently in about two weeks. They have other interests and cannot be expected to apply themselves wholeheartedly for any longer. They will fall back on the old familiar system unless it is swept aside swiftly by an overwhelming tide of change.

The introduction would need about six stages, for example: Stage 1: one or two major vowel changes; Stage II: several minor consonant or suffix changes; Stages III & IV: the other easy vowel and consonant changes; Stages V and VI: the remaining difficult changes.

Newspapers would publish (1) a summary of the new system; (2) an explanation of the need for change and the advantages of simpler spelling; (3) examples and other encouragements for readers to practice *writing* in the new spelling (This is vital); and (4) columns or articles in the various stages.

Each section should be headed with a key showing which changes occur in it. During the fortnight, the proportions using the earlier stages would be decreased and those using the later stages increased. Careful assessment would be made of the amount needed in each stage to give enough practice to make mastery easy and yet to give the minimum in the intermediate stages because of the importance of word shape and speed.

In publishing, articles should not be split into parts on separate pages with different stages of spelling.

#### Timing of the Introduction thru the Press

The time taken for the stages suggested would depend on reader's reactions and how many of the ideas the public would readily accept.

There is, however, *a minimum time* during which it would not be fair to judge the effectiveness of assimilation of the system. I suggest readers' letters should not be given too much credence during this time and that the public should be asked to hold their horses till they had had some practice and then send in cards with collected, signatures using separate squares for signatures for and against.

There is also a *maximum time* for the transition. In the early stages people will still rely on their old word image to help them get used to the changes so far. But in later stages some of the word shapes will be so different that the reader will have to learn to use phonetics to decipher new word shapes – until such time as they have become accustomed to seeing the new word shapes. For the new word shapes to be learnt quickly, they need to be settled as soon as possible, not staggered. A dictionary in the new spelling should be made available at the onset. And a book of instruction for teaching the new spelling should be available right from the start. People should be encouraged to see how easy the words are to read if tackled phonetically. The schools will soon find this out. Progress in learning to read in the new phonetic spelling system should be compared with rate of progress of pupils learning to read in our chaotic T.O. No doubt some of the University of London's experimental teaching of reading projects will give the evidence needed to prove the increased speed and accuracy of pupils reading in a phonetic system.

#### Some Points that may be Worrying You

(1) *People who speak differently will spell differently.* Will this really matter? It will not matter if the writing is in a dialect which, when spoken, is readily understood by the readers for whom the writing is intended.

Publishers would probably want to change unusual spellings to the more common ones – more common locally or more common internationally – as judgement indicates.

Deviations, both personal and local, will tend gradually to fade out. The mass media of radio and T-V are already having an effect on local dialects. With a closer relationship between sounds and spellings, people will become more aware of their deviations. It is a known fact that a child's first attempts to try to spell phonetically and to expect to find words written phonetically. Children and foreigners learning to read at the same time as they are extending their speech vocabularies, will be most likely to say words as the spellings indicate, rather than according to some local or family deviation.

(2) *Phonetic spelling will be difficult.* If you haven't yet tried this out on a large scale, you haven't found out that this fear is unjustified.

(3) *Phonetic deviations – slightly* different ways of making sounds within one phoneme family of sounds will not show at all in the spellings. Simplified spelling ought to be based upon broad phonemic grouping so as to keep to a minimum vowel symbols and sounds. In this respect, dialect will not affect spelling, nor spelling, dialect.

(4) *Spelling reform may cause distress.* But simplified spelling is intended to make spelling and reading simpler, not to cause distress. It is not intended to be precisely phonetic but it must be a good guide to pronunciation; nor is it intended to be permanently and universally fixed – changes may be made as experience shows possible weak points.

(5) *Homophones*, words spelt the same because pronounced the same, but of different meaning, will be more common than before. Will this matter? If words of this sort that we already have do not seem to cause much trouble in our speech, then they should cause no trouble in print where the reader can go back and review the context to be sure of the meaning. As we must already try to avoid such ambiguity in our speech, however, it will be a good thing to have spelling which will help to make us aware of these dangers. We have more time to think, when we are writing, and this gives us two opportunities: the first, to avoid trouble there and then: the second, to store up a mental note to avoid the same trouble in our speech – e.g. the words 'accept' and 'except' could easily be confused over the telephone or at a booking-office. *How about the present homographs; minut, minute, bo, bau?* These will be spelt differently because pronounced differently. Clearer enunciation and better phrasing will be aided and abetted by the new spelling.

(6) *A word may be spelt differently in different contexts*, e.g. 'and' or 'nd', 'thi', 'the', 'thee'. It will not matter if someone prefers to keep always to the same form; but the different forms may well be found to be useful in indicating the emphasis in the sentence. When the first of the new dictionaries

(truly dealing with diction) begin to be compiled, it will probably have become clear whether different forms should be encouraged or discouraged.

(7) *Dictionary compilers will have a tremendous task!* However, machines to scan for a particular spelling and count the number of times it occurs and then do similarly for a 'rival' spelling, will probably be available. In any case, dictionaries will probably not need to be consulted so often, for they will be required mainly for meanings rather than for spellings, which is probably not so at present. The new dictionaries will have both the phonetic spelling and meaning of words. Probably some will be available arranged like foreign language dictionaries, so one can find the old spelling knowing only the pronunciation of English words.

(8) *The new spelling obscures some word associations* in which the words were formerly spelt similarly but pronounced differently, e.g.:

machine	masheen	know	no
mechanism	mekanik	knew	nu
mechanic	mekanizm	knowledge	nolij

But, from my observations of children's spelling, I do not think these associations are of much use to us-except perhaps in helping older and brighter students to spell these difficult words! We know the meanings and uses of these words long before we ever learn to spell them. The meanings and derivations help us with the spellings; the spellings do not help us with the meanings.

(9) *Derivations will be lost.* These are not going to be lost, as there will be even more space than at present available for them in dictionaries, owing to the fact that the words themselves and their explanations will take up less space in the new spelling, and it will not be necessary to show the pronunciation, except to mark the stressed syllable. Even now, derivations are not readily discernable in the spelling of a majority of words. So what is to be lost? Some derivations will however, be obscured, e.g. 'ante' and 'anti' will be spelt the same because we do not distinguish them in our speech.

Altho many of us find the history of the language and derivations very interesting, I submit that the usefulness of them is much over-rated. I believe that almost invariably we learn words from their contexts and only rarely does a dictionary definition and still less a derivation really help us. Biology? Yes, probably. Geography? Yes, perhaps. Topics? – Hardly. Topography? – Hm! Well I doubt it. "'Over' is a comparative form of the root in the second syllable of 'above'." Well, now! So it is! But one can get along very well without knowing that fact. Nevertheless, let me repeat, derivations will still be available for those who wish to search thru the dictionary. Moreover, we are providing those who are genuinely interested in the history of the language with even more history to study! So why should they complain?

(10) *The value of words will be destroyed.* This is a misleading accusation. It was partially discussed under homonyms. The meanings of spoken words cannot be destroyed -and the simplification of spelling cannot adversely affect ordinary words other than homophones.

Our language is reputed to be very rich in useful words. Indeed, it is so; but more than that, it is cluttered. The dictionaries are cluttered with words which have been put there because some famous writers used them once each in some famous writings. I think we are overzealous in preserving these slender nooses with the past. Clinging to links with what should be dead, we are partly dead to the *present*. Surely our lives are short enuf! It is an insult to the people and wonderful things around us NOW, to be preoccupied by the useless relics of the past. Studying the mistakes of the past is only of value to us in the future so far as they help us to live better in the present.

Our daily language also is cluttered with clichés. We all disinterment the Dodo occasionally. This one which I thought had died a lingering death in my vocabulary, was resurrected and laid a golden egg: I teasingly accused a Chinese Malayan friend of 'shooting a line', for he had told me that he had been Junior Badminton Champion of Malaya. He understood exactly: "I'm sorry, in a way, if you don't believe me; but, in a way, I'm flattered too, because you would not accuse me of "shooting a lion(!) if you did not think it was something worth bragging about." – which just goes to show, doesn't it? In speech and spelling as in other matters, what you lose on the swings you may more than compensate for in the roundabouts. There are limitless permutations of words available to us and if some few of the familiar combinations are rendered ambiguous or otherwise useless by modern spellings, man's inventiveness and ingenuity will rise to the occasion with a freshness which will be welcome.

The more direct relation between spelling and speech will make us better acquainted with words and they will seem more personal and less formal, which in itself will stimulate us to more vigorous, more honest writing. We shall write more nearly as we speak and not cloak our words in formalities. We shall speak more nearly as we write, always practising the same language, though allowing; as we would in speech, for the style used for different purposes, e.g. conversation, lecture, worship, and for the register used between people appropriate to their social relationship. We should use different forms not just because we are writing; only to suit the subject matter and the readers whom we expect our words to reach.

We shall have more time in schools for foreign languages and shall enrich our speech by borrowing from them.

Four Rules or Attitudes.

1. Spell each word as you would normally say it in careful deliberate speech, unless you know your pronunciation needs correcting and intend to make an effort to correct it. Your accent will be consistent throughout your work and people will soon adjust to it. If necessary, put an identification description at the head, e.g. "Mid-Western American." This must identify your speech dialect, not your place of birth or present home.

Chaos will come if people (during the transition years particularly) begin to spell words according to other people's speech instead of their own, as they will fail to learn the right sound-symbol matching. If they pick up some words from one author and others from another and then concoct yet more words of their own, their words will be a mixture of several accents and perhaps unreadable.



Those who must learn their words from other people must learn all of them from the same dialect. They should choose the most widely accepted speech of the people with whom they associate – one which is easily understood by most English speakers.

2. Spelling should not be regarded as fixed and holy. It should be allowed to evolve according to universal changes in pronunciation.

3. Don't be pedantic; tolerate the writer's spelling just as you do his speech.

4. Give yourself sufficient time to be accustomed to the new spelling. Practice makes perfection.' You will find it easier than you expect.

***Editor's comments:*** While the editor thinks the above article is an excellent idea or plan for the utilization of spelling reform (and one of the very few proposed by spelling reformers – most of whom are only interested in self-aggrandizement), it is incomplete in at least three respects: motivation, authority, and enforcement.

While it touches on motivation to a slight degree, we have had these arguments presented to us for nearly a century – to no avail. Authority is the subject really overlooked. No one of the public has the authority nor wants to start such a project without the backing of the governments of the English-speaking peoples involved. The Chicago Tribune tried for 30 years to introduce and actually used some 30 words in simplified spelling. Colonel McCormick finally gave up and went back to the old spellings when the schools would not follow him.

Enforcement of a system of spelling would be distasteful to most of the English-speaking, public. But if the English-speaking governments empowered representatives to an international commission to seek agreements on a means of simplifying our spelling and putting it into use, it could be done. At first, the governments would publish a dictionary in the new spelling, and then after a waiting period of one year for publicity and learning it, if they started using it in all government reports, news releases, Post Office materials, the newspapers would have to quickly follow. So would the schools, because there would be motivation. There would be a great demand for stenographers trained in the new spelling, and this would make obsolete those who did not know the new spelling. By this time it would be well on its way to acceptance at home and then shortly afterward abroad.

*[Spelling Reform Anthology §20.4 p274 in the printed version]*  
*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1967 p16 in the printed version]*

## **8. Quo Warranto (By What Authority).**

The cadaver of Socrates  
In his sepulcher at ease,  
Might perform a quick rotation,  
Could he hear the sick quotation,  
"Grammar is on logic founded,  
In the syllogism grounded."

There are no grammar books which state  
An axiom or postulate.  
To conceal a dark confusion,  
They reveal a stark conclusion.

Some grammars lamely make excuses;  
Claim a base in writer's uses.  
Chaucer, Shakespeare, Kipling, Burns,  
All wrote in ways our grammar spurns.  
So, their logic is not inductive,  
And their project is not constructive.

Now, let us look some other place  
And try to find some other base.  
Can grammars find just any source  
To give their fiats any force?

May we our rules and models seek  
In ways two hundred million speak?  
No! Grammars have no truck or trade  
With language "We the People" made;  
It has no other use to them  
Than simply something to condemn.

Many a grammar book I've stood,  
Tho they never did me any good.  
Truth, at last, I'm forced to land on:  
Grammars have no leg to stand on -  
Not even one of wood.

James C. McGhee, San Francisco, Calif.

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1967 pp17,18 in the printed version*]

[r should have an approach stroke. Letter pairs marked in green, e.g. ee should be joined.]

## **9. Teaching English in Bantu Primary Schools, by Prof. L. W. Lanham Reviewed by Helen Bonnema, Ed. D.\***

\*Dr. Helen Bonnema is Professor of Education at Temple Buell College, formerly Colorado Womans College, Denver, Colo.

From a report on Research in Reading, Univ. of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

"My name is table," says a Bantu schoolchild. Another calls out, "My name is chair" in answer to the teacher's question, "What is this?"

With a nod of assent or approving smile, the teacher rewards the child for his answer. The teacher herself may not realize that *My name is* does not mean *This is a*. She is attempting to reproduce a South African dialect which is an approximation of the speech of business people in Johannesburg, and quite far removed from British or American English. This brand of English which the teacher tries to pass on to her pupils has been influenced by the sounds in her own Bantu tongue. Even if she were to speak English in exactly the manner of cultured people in the city, it would be a dialect which has resulted from the colonial environment of the British speakers and the generations of Hollanders who have used it to supplement their Afrikaans.

Educators in South Africa feel that a worth-while purpose will be achieved if the Bantu child can learn to speak and read the English dialect which is used on that continent. If, later on, he can also learn standard English, well and good; but if he never achieves this level, no matter. He will at least be literate. He can take his place more effectively in the modern community which is growing up around him.

It is with this aim of literacy for indigenous people that researchers from the Univ. of the Witwatersrand have been devising a reading system to suit their needs.

In the past, the schools had used standard British books, but children, and even their teachers, were not acquiring enough fluency in speech or writing to express themselves in the simplest manner. To the Bantu pupil, any form of English is a "foreign" tongue as difficult to learn as is a modern European language for the American school child. The Bantu has the added burden however. He must learn English thru written symbols which do not represent the sounds of the dialect he is to learn, nor of standard African English, nor for that matter of British English which he eventually may be expected to use. Even in England, traditional spelling makes the reading task of the school child extremely difficult. Imagine what a barrier it sets up for the youngster who must use it to learn a tongue which is foreign to him.

To alleviate the difficulties, the research team sponsored by the Univ. of Witwatersrand has devised a system called "Pronunciation Spelling" for beginners.

A 61-page legal-size typewritten report, *Teaching English in Bantu Primary Schools* explains the project. It is written by the director of the experiments, Prof. L. W. Lanham of the Department of

Phonetics and Linguistics Univ. of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. His explanation of the history of the project starting with the preparation of materials in 1963, indicates the amount of enthusiastic effort which has been expended by many people, and the conscientious seeking for sound decisions.

Considering the amount of scholarly cooperation involved in the development of the project, it would be presumptuous for someone far removed from the scene to criticize. I shall, therefore, refrain from raising doubts about the decisions made and try to indicate the considerations which led to their development.

The schoolchild is first taught to read and write in his own mother tongue Bantu. The representation of its sounds with our Roman a,b,c's is so consistent that he can learn to read within a year. Then he faces the task of learning African English. In the adult community, defective pronunciation is the most pervasive factor in the breakdown of communication. Even with a dictionary at hand, not 1% of African teachers has sufficient grasp of English to pronounce correctly a new word for the children. This is because of interference from the mother tongue.

Vowel length in Bantu languages is dependent upon the word's position in a sentence. There are no central vowels which have a schwa effect. Unstressed /ə/ is almost absent, and every word receives primary stress. This disrupts English rhythm.

There are only five vowel sounds, and these have few correspondences with any of the 21 or more English vowel sounds. The tendency is to reduce the number of sounds. For example, Bantu speakers have difficulty in distinguishing *back*, *buck*, and *bark* either in listening or speaking (the r is dropped in British speech). When reading, they struggle against the inconsistencies of English spelling in a vain effort to match the few sounds that are similar in the two systems. In doing so, they naturally try to pronounce words as spelled because their language is phonetic. Teachers as well as pupils have this difficulty. They lack visual images of pronunciation.

Therefore, it was concluded by the researchers that a phonemic spelling is essential during the early years of learning. The questions to be answered were: shall it be one which uses Standard British pronunciation as a basis for regularity and leads easily into the transition to t.o. as does Pitman's initial teaching alphabet? Or shall it be one which encourages effective communication in South African English thru a pronunciation sufficiently accurate to maintain grammatical clarity?

The contrast in purposes is shown by the fact that i.t.a., as an introduction to t.o. is not entirely phonemic, and has several inconsistencies in its spelling. A primary consideration in its design is the eventual transfer to traditional orthography with facility in doing so.

The Witwatersrand researchers decided that it would be more advantageous for the child to learn to pronounce correctly African English, to apprehend its meaning, and use it fluently. After the child has learned to think and speak African English, he may learn to read traditionally spelled English. They believe that too early an introduction to the arbitrary form of t.o. will have harmful effects upon his mastery of any form of English.

As will be observed, Pronunciation Spelling (p.s.) uses a number of digraphs composed of *h* and another letter:

ah klahs (class)	əh wəhk (work)
eh weahring (wearing)	sh sheep
oh wohl (wall)	th then

Why did the authors choose not to use *ch*? Surely it is no less phonemic than any of these?

Wouldn't their system have been improved by using some of i.t.a.'s joined ligatures such as: æ, ie, ch, th?

One cannot help wondering whether Dr. Lanham might not have found the use of i.t.a. more expedient for the following reasons: i.t.a. is attaining such wide-spread use in the English-speaking world, makes available such a wealth of supplementary material, and offers a specially devised form for teaching English as a second language.

The latter is called "nue næshon" or "world i.t.a."

However, Dr. Lanham was aware of these advantages, and gives his arguments for rejecting them:

1. There are too many phonemic inconsistencies in i.t.a. because the *primary* consideration of its design is the eventual transfer to t.o.
2. Chief (and most bothersome) of the i.t.a. inconsistencies is the retention of t.o. spellings in weakly stressed syllables. All five vowels, *a, e, i, o, u*, are used instead of the single ə. Before *r*, three vowels are retained, as in *fern, dirt*, and *burn*.
3. i.t.a. does not reflect the "system of South African English pronunciation." Direct teaching of the system contributes to economy in the selection of points of concentration.

The table [to the right] compares traditional orthography with the initial teaching alphabet and with pronunciation spelling.

In the new learning which later will be involved in a transfer to t.o., Dr. Lanham expects to rely on the greater maturity of the children for surmounting the difficulties.

Besides relying upon the regularity of the phonemic representation of speech sounds, the teachers have the aid of tape recordings. They use these for their own self-instruction, and also directly for class work with the children. Not only for accurate pronunciation are these taped models needed, but also for adequate grammatical construction.

<u>t.o</u>	<u>i.t.a</u>	<u>p.s.</u>
<u>Long vowels</u>		
game	gæm	gəim
each	æʃ	eetsh
grind	griend	graind
home	hœm	həum
new	nœ	nyoo
<u>Short vowels</u>		
can	can	kahn
eggs	eggz	egz
hill	hill	hil
mill	mill	məl
miller	miller	məle
hut	hut	hʌt
<u>Other vowels, vowel &amp; consonant digraphs</u>		
caught	cawt	koht
want	want	wont
about	abut	əbaut
aeroplane	æroplæn	əhrepləin
things	ʰiŋz	ʰingz
then	ʰen	then
cook	cwk	kuk
broom	brum	broom

The p.s. textbooks for pupils are very attractively illustrated with black and white realistic drawings. Happy, smiling children are shown engaged in ordinary daily activities of washing their faces, feeding the chickens, carrying things home from the store, and going to school.

Thru numerous repetitions of common expressions presented by tape and text, the authors hope to develop the teachers' skill in using the language while the children are in turn being taught. The monotonously recurring phrases help fix in the pupil's minds the sound and structure of the new expressions:

shee iz baiing shugə	fathə iz big.	hee iz lətl.
shee iz baiing tee.	hee iz big.	beni iz lətl.
shee iz baiing shugə and tee.	beni iznt big.	

When one realizes that in the mother tongue there is no differentiation between masculine and feminine pronouns, the need for repetition of *hee* and *shee* becomes evident.

Most programs for learning a foreign language rely on this echoing of familiar expressions until linguistic habits are formed.

The investigations starting in 1962 were at first concerned with the development of materials. In 1964, with the help of tape recordings, the teachers began the work with children. The following two years controlled experimentation in matched sets of schools were carried on. Results showed:

1. The teachers' English was no longer the dominant model. The pronunciation of some children was now better than that of their teachers.
2. The experimental children showed marked superiority over the control groups in perceiving the phonemic contrasts of English.

The conclusions were:

1. A fully structured, comprehensive English course which compels adherence and provides the content of day-to-day teaching *in toto* is required for at least the first three years of primary school.
2. A systematic approach to the teaching of English pronunciation in primary schools can halt the serious deterioration of the present time and restore norms which are socially acceptable and adequate for communication with African-English speakers.
3. The intellectual immaturity of many Sub A (7 year-old) children seriously handicaps the teaching of a second language which would probably be taught more effectively and quickly if postponed for one year.

As Dr. Lanham and his team of researchers continue the work which shows such steady progress, there is every likelihood that it will reach its goal of producing English-thinking and speaking Bantus. "What is this?" "*This is* a school."

## Book Reviews

### 10. the oeldham reederz, by Maurice Harrison, M.A.\* Reviewed by Helen Bowyer.

The author is the Director of Education (in American parlance, the Superintendent of Schools) in the County Borough of Oldham in northern England. He will go down in the history of Education as the most outstanding of that little group of directors who in September, 1961, opened one or more of their infant schools for that investigation into the alleged value of a wun-sien-wun-sound spelling which the Institute of Education of London Univ. was seeking to make. The phonetic spelling was to stem from the Initial Teaching Alphabet devised by Sir James Pitman, head of the world wide publishing house of Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons.

The Borough of Oldham had then a population of some 136,000 and was one of the world's greatest centers of cotton spinning. It had had the good fortune of having Mr. Harrison as its Director of Education since 1938. He had therefore seen 22 yearly intakes of four and five-year olds waste their unreturning time and violate the higher attributes of their defenseless little minds on the gross irrationality of our traditional orthography (hereinafter referred to as T.O.). For years he had been active in the campaign of the British Simpler Spelling Society to replace this jumbledom with a phonemic spelling, but it was not til the summer of 1960 that the Minister of Education withdrew its opposition to any such move. Whereupon the Institute issued that now famous pamphlet thru which it hoped to modify the prejudice in, and calm the fears which all past attempts at phonetic spelling in the schools had aroused. Not a dozen years had past since, in a letter to Prof. Daniel Jones, Bernard Shaw recalled this bit of evidence of the depth and extent of that prejudice and fear.

"As to teaching children, I urged a Minister of Education to encourage them to spell phonemically, just as they speak, thus enabling the teacher to detect their mispronunciations and correct them. He replied that the merest hint of such heresy would banish him from public life. It is safer, nowadays, to be anti-Christ than anti-Johnson."

Mr. Harrison was fortunate in that his own Borough was comparatively free of this prejudice and fear. His Education Authority (i.e. School Board) was not only willing but anxious to make a start on the project. The Oldham press, tho cautious, did agree that no one could reasonably object to an impartial investigation, provided "care was taken that no *child should suffer!!* But in general thruout the land, the press remained skeptical and the educational authorities held back. Only six others could be persuaded to offer one or more infant classes for a tryout of the Initial Teaching Alphabet (hereinafter abbreviated to i.t.a.). And that even this number could be persuaded, Mr. Harrison attributes to the; skill and tact of John Downing, Reading Research Officer of the Institute, to whom had been entrusted the overall management of the investigation.

This was to begin in September, 1961, and there was an enormous amount of advance preparation to be made. There was the goodwill, or at least the non-opposition, of parents to be won, and teachers to be trained both for the classes in i.t.a. and for the control classes in T.O. It was considered desirable, too, that the primers and readers of the two groups should be identical in

vocabulary and content, so *Janet and John*, the basic series most used in England had to be transliterated into i.t.a. much, of course, to the loss for its little readers. For, as the *Early to Read Series* was soon to be demonstrated on our side of the Pond, i.t.a. beginners can handle a vocabulary three or four times as large as that of their T.O. controls and a content on a much higher level. However, in that September 1961, the important thing was to equalize everything but the two alphabets-remove all other variables.

In Oldham it began with 150 four and five year-olds in the i.t.a. classes and 273 controls as nearly as practicable matched with them physically, mentally, and in the character of homes from which they came. Generally speaking, the children of both groups, had a working class background, and the parents little addicted to reading. In his engrossing book, *The Story of the Initial Teaching Alphabet*, published three years later, Mr. Harrison pays tribute to the five infant school teachers among whom the 150 small pioneers were distributed. "Their's was no easy task with so much to be done and so many things to be improvised in the early days. With their colleagues in other areas (only six other areas, be it noted again) they merit the gratitude of educationalists everywhere, for entering upon this experiment in the interest of educational research and in the face of much scepticism about the outcome."

He goes to the generous length of printing the names and schools of his Oldham five along with their headteachers whose support and cooperation, naturally, was a *siné qua non* of classroom achievement.

Among the first things to be done was to provide the i.t.a. classrooms with a library corner of free reading books in the new spelling, and in the early months of the experiment, so few of these were available that the teachers themselves had to take on the production of more. This they did by the transliteration into i.t.a. of young children's classics, and pasting the hand transliterated pages over the corresponding printed ones, taking care to leave the illustrations untouched. Fortunately, as the year wore on, more and more regularly printed i.t.a. books became available. By the summer of 1962, their number had reached 250.

Within two years of that historic September, the Pitman alphabet had spread so far over the United Kingdom, and had so unequivocally manifested its value as an initial teaching medium, there seemed no further need to tie its primers and readers down to mere transliterations of the current basic series. As early as 1963, John Downing had published his beautifully illustrated *downing reederz* which went their way unimpeded by the vocabulary limitations of *Janet and John* and the necessary thinness of content this imposed. Now in 1966 appeared the *Oeldham reederz* authored by the Director of Education of that now world-famous pioneer borough.

They consist of seven thin little books, so thin, indeed, that one must bear in mind they were written for children a year or more younger than the American first grader. But the *real* explanation of their mere 16 pages each, comes to light on page 7 of the accompanying Teacher's Manual. "The Oldham Readers," it there states, "are essentially a simple practical approach to reading, *designed to lead the children to the book corner as soon as possible*. For it is *in wide reading from the Library corner books that real skill in reading will develop*."



May one interpret this to mean that five years of experimentation with i.t.a. have demonstrated that the function of a basic i.t.a. series is primarily to teach the i.t.a. code? That for the rest, under the teacher's guidance, the Library Corner takes over. A Library Corner so well stocked and kept so well replenished that even the brightest child always finds something new and wonderful to bury himself in, and the slow one something to work his way thru with confidence and pleasure. And all the class, bright, average or slow, find reading that chimes in with their mental and emotional make-up, be it primarily literary, scientific, mechanical or what not, and gives them at least temporary entry into the world they would like theirs to be.

This Manual for the teacher is even thinner than the readers it helps her to teach it is contained in 8½ pages of ordinary print. One can easily see why this should be sufficient. By 1966, i.t.a. had become, as it were, second nature in the infant schools of Oldham – all but 2 of its 38 were then using it. Using it happily, free from the misgivings that most of their teachers had harbored back in 1961 and even in 1962. Time had shown how baseless were their pre-judgements – particularly as regards the child's coming transfer to T.O. Term after term had demonstrated that once he was reading fluently the books . of his i.t.a. Library Corner, he switched almost automatically to orthodox print. So matter of course could this now be expected, that, so the Manual informs us, many teachers. had ceased giving their small charges any special training for the impending change. However, for those who still thought this. helpful, there were Transfer Books I and II.

One of the happiest revelations of those pioneer days of the experiment in Oldham was the way its four and five year-olds plunged into free writing. Unfettered by the uncertainties of T.O. (been, tin, seen, mean – you, too, grew, shoe, true, through) all sorts of factual, imaginative, wishful little compositions flowed from their pencils, even to tender little things like this from a boy of five years, three months:

"a littl bird woz dieing, ie sau it lieing thaer hed doun see ie took it to the doctorz and hee stroekt its littl hed."

So invaluable does Mr. Harrison consider this early self-expression, his Manual advises teachers to tolerate a variety of spellings in the children's spontaneous, writings, as long as their meaning is unambiguous. For instance, in his classroom reader, the child will find *pictuer* and *adventuer*, but if in the grip of his muse, he writes them *pikcher* and *advencher*, accept them, says Mr. Harrison – they are just as phonemic.

As already mentioned, in his *Story of the Initial Teaching Alphabet*, Mr. Harrison published the names of the 5 teachers who pioneered with i.t.a. in the infant schools of his Borough. For my part, I hope a record has also been kept of the 150 four and five year-olds who, however unwarily, pioneered along with them. Some day, and I hope it will be before these 150 are full grown – we shall *at last*, finally have liberated all the children of our English speaking world from the unfair and wholly needless burden of their spelling. In which case, these 150 may come in for the public interest their part in the liberation deserves. Meanwhile, my congratulations that it was such an eager, happy, self-expressing part.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1967 pp20,21 in the printed version]

### 11. Three Books by Marshall McLuhan, reviewed by Ivor Darreg

\* Los Angeles, Calif.

*The Gutenberg Galaxy*, pub. by Univ. of Toronto Press, 1962, 2nd Ed. 1966. \$2.25. 294pp.  
*Understanding Media*, pub. by McGraw-Hill, N.Y. 1966 \$1.95 364 pp. Other editions available.  
*The Medium is the Massage*, Marshal McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, Bantam Books, N.Y. 1967.  
\$1.45 No pg #, about 160p.

In a general magazine, these three books would have to be reviewed separately, and each at considerable length. Indeed, this has been done, and from many viewpoints. In this *Bulletin*, dedicated to problems of reading, our interest will be mainly with one theme which runs thru all three works.

Briefly, one of McLuhan's principal ideas is this: Gutenberg brought not only printing to Europe, but also the technology of mass production, which thus is considerably older than the Industrial Revolution of the 19th Century. This sudden abundance of identical copies of books. profoundly affected society, and caused an undue emphasis on the visual, as opposed to the audile and tactile methods of acquiring knowledge. It also produced the custom of *silent reading*, as opposed to reading out loud, culminating in the contemporary "speed-reading" courses, which endeavor to suppress all voice accompaniment to the printed word.

At the present time, this process is being reversed: the audile and tactile aspects of communication are reasserting themselves, and the monopoly of the printed word is being broken. Again society is being profoundly changed, and most people are not aware of just what is going on. Paradoxically, television is de-emphasizing the visual! (Try turning off the sound on your TV set, and *see* if you can still follow the story!) Children today, brought up from infancy on TV programs, will have a radically different attitude toward school and textbooks and reading, than the previous generations did.

Let us quote from the *Gutenberg Galaxy*:

Page 47: "*Current concern with reading and spelling reform steers away from visula to auditory stress.*"

"It is interesting that today there is a growing unrest about our alphabetic dissociation of the senses. On page 49 there is a sample of a recent attempt at a new alphabet that would restore more phonic character to our script.

(A sample from a story in Pitman's i.t.a. is quoted.) The most notable thing about the sample is that it has the highly textural and tactile quality of an ancient manuscript page. In our desire to restore some unity of interplay among our senses, we grope towards ancient manuscript forms which must be read aloud to be read at all. Side by side with this extreme development is that of the new institutes for speed-up reading. There they are taught how to use the eye on the page so as to avoid all verbalization and all incipient movements of the throat which accompany our cinematic chase from left to right, in order to create the mental sound movie which we call reading."

These headlines in *Gutenberg Galaxy* are painfully relevant to the teaching of reading in our schools.

Page 135: "*Until more than two centuries after printing nobody discovered how to maintain a single tone or attitude throughout a prose composition.*"

Page 231: "*Print altered not only the spelling and the grammar but the accentuation and inflection of languages, and made 'bad grammar' possible,*"

Page 233: "*The leveling of inflexion and of wordplay became part of the program of applied knowledge in the 17th Century.*"

That is, the uniformity of the letters in a printed book contributed to a habit of reading in a monotone, without the melodious inflections of the voice in conversation and declaimed speech.

The mass production of printed books in quantity also reduced the need for memorizing, which latter plays a most important part in preliterate cultures.

*Understanding Media* focuses attention on the drastic transformations we are going through because of instant electronic communications. Here is an almost mystical passage on page 80:

"Our new electric technology that extends our senses and nerves in a global embrace has large implications for the future of language. Electric technology does not need words any more than the digital computer needs numbers. Electricity points the way to an extension of the process of consciousness itself, on a world scale, and without any verbalization whatever. Such a state of collective awareness may have been the preverbal condition of men. Language as the technology of human extension, whose powers of division and separation we know so well, may have been the 'Tower of Babel' by which men sought to scale the highest heavens. Today computers hold out the promise of instant translation of any code or language into any other code or language."

An extremely important point raised by McLuhan's books is that the present electronics-and-cybernation is totally different from the mechanization of the 19th century Industrial Revolution. This is NOT "more of the same." Computers do not have gears and wheels and pulleys and belts and pistons; the electric impulses inside them are silent and invisible; and in this new world, *information* is more important than *energy*. People do not want to be told that this new revolution is different in kind rather than degree; McLuhan has to use all manner of shock techniques to wake us up. It's not a question of what's going to happen in some science-fiction Utopia; it's a matter of what *has already happened to us*.

*The Medium is the Massage* is a title that puns on an oft-quoted dictum of McLuhan's own messages. By "The medium is the message," McLuhan seems to mean that the electronic age has created a whole new *environment*. And "massage" refers to the new emphasis on tactile experiences and communication, as the exclusively-visual era draws to a close. *The Medium is the Massage* may be described as a picture-book for adults. It uses photographic devices borrowed from advertising and television, with a minimum of text, and what text there is, bears a striking resemblance to the new "programmed instruction" textbooks. Obviously, this calls for a different technique of reading-and TV viewers are learning it day and night. We may well conclude with two quotes:

"In the name of 'progress' our official culture is striving to force the new media to do the work of the old."

"Ours is a brand-new world of allatonce. 'Time' has ceased, 'space' has vanished. We now live in a *global village*... a simultaneous happening. We are back in acoustic space. We have begun again to structure the primordial feeling, the tribal emotions from which a few centuries of literacy divorced us.

*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1967 p21 in the printed version]*

**12. A Dictionary of Simplified Spelling, by Frank H. Vizetelly, Litt. D., L.L.D.  
reviewed by Newell Tune**

Pub. by Funk & Wagnalls, New York & London, 1915.

A little over a half-century ago – just at the beginning of the First World War, two great American societies were united in their efforts to promote simplified spelling. They both had abandoned the idea of a new phonetic alphabet and were concentrating their efforts on a much more modest reform.

These two great societies, the American Philological Assoc., founded in 1869, and the Simplified Spelling Board, organized in 1906, were composed of the most scholarly professors of that day. In the A.P.A. as President, there was Prof. Edward Capps of Princeton Univ., Vice Presidents, Prof. Carl D. Buck, Univ. of Chicago, and Prof. Edward P. Morris of Yale Univ., Sec-Treasurer, Prof. Frank G. Moore of Columbia Univ. It had a total membership of 690. Its objective, "the advancement and diffusion of philological knowledge."

The Simplified Spelling Board had in 1915 as President Prof. Charles H. Grandgent, Harvard Univ., Chairman of Trustees, Prof. Brander Matthews, Treasurer, Gano Dunn, Sec. Henry Gallup Paine, Trustees: Prof. James W. Bright, Johns Hopkins Univ., Melvil Dewey, Library Economist, Gano Dunn, Pres. J. G. White Engineering Corp., Henry Holt, Publisher, Brander Matthews, Columbia Univ, Fred J. Miller, General Factory Manager, Remington Typewriter Co, Calvin Thomas, Editor., Funk & Wagnalls Dict., Wm. Hayes Ward, Contributing Editor, "The Independent". The S.S.B. was organized in March, 1906, for "the purpose of expediting this natural process (the simplification of English spelling) of change which has been going on for centuries, and so far as possible, of guiding it in the direction of simplicity and economy," and to "urge educated people everywhere to aid in the gradual simplification of English spelling, and to make the English language more and more easy to acquire and to use." The number of adherents to its principles exceeds 75,000, according to information in the preface.

Together these two organizations backed the author Frank H. Vizeielli in his efforts to prepare and publish this dictionary. As dictionaries go, it was not a very large book, being only 151 pages plus 15 in the preface.

It was based on the two sets of rules promulgated by the two societies. The APA first had 10 rules, then added 24 more. While some of these rules were general in their scope, 6 rules referred to only one word each. Another half-dozen referred to only a few words each. Hence, this entire study and recommended rules covered less than a couple of hundred irregularly spelt words – hardly a drop in the bucket – and hardly worth while learning almost three dozen rules to be able to respell an average of less than six words per rule. It failed to change most of the commoner stumbling blocks which glare at the neophyte in running text and are so puzzling to foreigners. No attempt was made to change any of the silent initial letters on the ground that it would then be more difficult for present day readers (oldsters?) to look up these words (which they long ago learned by rote memory). Most of the changes were made to eliminate unpronounced letters or letters which suggest the wrong pronunciation and could not be mistaken for any other word. Their purposes were laudable but it appeared to be a case of the mountain laboring and bringing forth a molehill. (Still on philological grounds, of course).

As for the S.S.B., it started with 31 rules, some of which duplicated those of the APA, and then in 1913 added 30 more. These were all general rules that referred to certain letters used in a specific manner. The chief aim was to condense the rules adopted piecemeal previously and consolidate and

combine with those of the APA. This was a much more scholarly approach to a modest simplification, but still it was based on T.O. spelling – not on phonetics. Usually letter combinations and suffixes were regularized and made somewhat more nearly phonetic, but still it was attacking the problem of spelling reform in a piecemeal – not a wholesale, phonetic manner. However, this plan did attempt to drop the silent initial letters, *g*, *k*, *p*, *w*, and to use *f* for *ph*, and both plans retained the silent terminal *e* only when it correctly indicated the previous vowel had the long sound. This plan also used *t* in place of *ed*, or *d* in place of *ed*, when so sounded. On the whole, it was a laudable attempt at regularizing our spelling, but far from a complete simplification. It did not do anything for the names of the numbers, *one*, *two*, *eight*, or the common anomalies, with which we could write an entire 20 word sentence using no phonetically spelt words: *as of this date, who said his has been was with new ones or how low these great are slow*. Nor did it do anything for the terminal *s* and *es* pronounced as *z*. These and many more spelling demons besprinkle every page and still glared defiantly as undeposable demons for future generations to tackle.

Just why wasn't this dictionary successful? To begin with, it was only half a dictionary. One had to know the new spelling before one could find a word. There was no cross-index to find the new spelling of an old T.O. word. This alone was enough to condemn it. Also there were no meanings – only the T.O. spellings for the newly spelt words. And since the new spellings were not in use, of what use was the book? If other dictionary publishers had been convinced of the advantages of listing these simplified spellings as alternates to conventional spellings, then it might have had a chance to grow on the public and by now would have had the test of time and experience. Too bad their energies were not directed toward this fundamentally sound move.

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[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1967 p22 in the printed version*]

### **13. Value of Nursery School Training, by Betty Hendrikz, M.A.\***

\*As told to staff reporter of the Rhodesia Herald. Reprinted from issue of Jan. 23, 1967.

#### **European and African children are tested in research project**

To nursery school or not to nursery school is the question that a pre-school child poses for his parents. A "no" answer is sometimes dictated by financial reasons, sometimes by the perfectly valid feeling that parents think whatever a child may get out of nursery school he can get in his own home.

But more thinking parents realize the tremendous importance which – it is now widely recognized – pre-school influences, from the earliest days of babyhood, can have on a child's future development. And they will want to give him the best possible opportunities .from the start.

A Salisbury, Rhodesia mother and educationalist, Mrs. Betty Hendrikz, was last year awarded an M.A. degree by London University for her research into the handicaps with which many Rhodesian children, by reason of their pre-school environment, are faced when they start their formal schooling.

In her research, Mrs. Hendrikz restricted herself to testing "number .readiness" – the real understanding of numbers as opposed to the ability to count mechanically – among 360 Salisbury five-year-olds.

She looked for the *influences* of a child's background on his ability to grasp the basics of number relationships, which is essential to a proper understanding of arithmetic.

Half of the children Mrs. Hendrikz tested were Europeans, half were Africans, and each racial group was again divided equally into children who had had a year's nursery schooling, and children who had not.

The tests she gave the children to discover their "conceptual ability" were essentially practical. For example, she showed each child two identical balls of plasticine.

When she had established that they were both the same size, she shaped one into a long, thin roll and again asked him which was the bigger.

Children with some real conceptual grasp of size and number relationships were able to tell her that they were both still the same size; those without usually said that the thin roll was the bigger.

As one means of testing their mechanical counting ability, she showed each child a small number of plastic discs, and asked him to tell her how many there were. She found that the child who could count them mechanically did not necessarily understand numbers.

### **The Results**

Her results from the two nursery school groups showed that many of the children could count, read numbers and do mechanical addition up to small numbers.

But while only about a third of the African children had any understanding of number concepts, nearly two-thirds of the European children had the "beginnings of this understanding."

The results in the two non-nursery school groups were similar on the mechanical tests, but there was an even larger gap between the African and the Europeans .on the "conceptual" or number understanding, tests.

The conclusions which Mrs. Hendrikz draws from her results are that, on the whole, the children best qualified to cope with formal schooling were those who had been to nursery school, but many of the European non-nursery school children were just as ready.

She concluded, too, that, as far as number development is concerned, African children generally begin school handicapped as compared with Europeans.

Mrs. Hendrikz stresses that all the children made the same mistakes, and had the same difficulties. No one is born with number understanding and there is no discernible "racial mentality."

The research went towards proving that what we have always suspected is, in fact, true – there is a substantial gap between African nursery school and non-nursery school children," she said.

"There is not the same difference between the two European groups because these children have, on the whole, a better home background."

"Pre-school enrichment ought" she says, "to be given in a child's home."

### **Filling Gaps**

Mrs. Hendrikz feels that there is a great need for further research into what she terms "cultural lacks," so that the schools can fill the gaps wherever possible.

A campaign is also needed, she considers, to make parents more aware of their pre-school child's "environmental needs." They are:

- *His need to be loved and secure within the family.*
- *To develop a rich and flexible language command.*
- *To have a good attitude towards reading by having books read to him in a home where books are a pleasure.*
- *To explore and experiment as widely as possible, and*
- *To play with a wide variety of materials.*
- meaning mental ability associated with racial characteristics.

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[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1967 p22 in the printed version*]

#### **14. Two Phonics Programs, reviewed by Newell W. Tune**

Now that phonics is no longer a dirty word with most educators, several of the large educational publishers have brought out complete phonics programs for teaching reading by a variety of methods, most of which may be called eclectic.

*Programmed Reading*, by Cynthia Dee Buchanan, Program Director of Sullivan Associates, published by McGraw-Hill Book Co. is noteworthy in that it is so thoroly programmed that a teacher can be successful by merely following all the steps as detailed in 5 large books, 8x11 with 108 to 132 pages each, including a pre-reading book for the teacher, a primer and 3 readers. Accompanying the books is a questionnaire for evaluating phonics programs, which asks if the program contains these seven approaches: visual, auditory, contextual, structural, speech (vocalizing), tactile-kinesthetic, multisensory. A phonics book should contain a proper balance of the 4 communication skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Thus phonics is introduced thru auditory-speech approaches and then transferred to the visual and writing skills, each one in turn reinforcing the learning by the other. A children's phonics book should not border on "busy work" such as follow-the-dots and coloring letters. It should be based on concepts appropriate to the grade level. One criticism: in the Teacher's Manual, the sentences accompanying the cartoon drawings of ideas are printed in tiny 7-paint type – too small for anyone to read easily. Yet it carries the reader thru a fan-tan-man story that belies the oft-repeated criticism that 'word family' teaching is monotonous and boring. Another feature of these books is that the child always reads from the page on his right. When it is finished, the book is turned upside down and read back to the front, with all the text on the right hand page. The cartoon drawings all help the context so a child can guess what is to be read – a truly multisensory approach.

*Time for Phonics*, by Louise Binder Scott and Virginia Sydnor Pavelko, published by Webster Pub. Co, St. Louis, is another eclectic program that is carefully prepared for the teacher. It consists of 4 large 8x11 books of 110 to 160 pages each. It also makes the work of the teacher easier by giving stories to tell utilizing and emphasizing the sounds being studied. A flannelboard with alphabetic figures is used to tie in with sounds. An interesting group of poems is used to put over the sounds of the letters and especially the consonant digraphs that show that two letters can make one sound. The pre-primer has a series of poems to introduce the sounds of initial letters of words. Riddles, flash-cards, soundie stories help auditory discrimination and speech training. Special efforts have been made to keep children's interest and create motivation. From reading the stories, one can see there's never a dull moment.

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## 15. Needed: Research in Spelling – not Reading, by Leo G. Davis

SPELLING is the only logical approach to reading;. Children, who learn to SPELL their words, before trying to read them, have no trouble recognizing them in context; thus no "reading" problem. But, due to our erratic orthograpy, all children have "spelling" troubles. Therefore, SIMPLIFIED SPELLING offers the solution to our so-called reading problem.

Classroom tests have shown, conclusively, that use of stable orthograpy in primary grades, shortens school attendance about two years, with like reduction in the cost of education. The elimination of useless silent letters would effect substantial savings in costs of typing and printing. And simplified spelling would expedite adoption of English as the de facto international language. Thus, it is time we streamlined our orthograpy, in keeping with our scientific progress in other fields.

However, past proposals for simplified spelling; have failed, because they were based on perfection, rather than on mere stability. Altho most people are in favor of BASIC reforms, they are averse to RADICAL change. Thus, the new orthograpy must be a compromise between the erratic and the ideal. The best we can expect, at this time, is STABLE, spellings for BASIC phonemes only.

Orthografik reform need not create the "chaos" that reactionaries predict. Inasmuch as traditional orthograpy has served for generations there is no need for sudden change. The transition should be made gradually, – by merely requiring that the next edition of academic texts be in the revised spellings. Altho coming generations should be taught to READ traditional literature, there would be no need for them to SPELL traditionally. Due to its simplicity, adults would soon learn to read the new orthograpy thru mere "exposure". Thus, we would have an orderly transition period of optional spelling, with oldsters clinging to the old, and youngsters to the new, and the old irregularities would become obsolete with the passing of current generations, without confusion. Our researchers should survey the potentials of orthografik reform.

It is to be noted that the conventional five-vowel alfabet is quite sufficient for basic stability. Just halting the erratic interchanging of letters, and deleting the useless silent letters would be a major improvement; while coordination of basic rules and compatible patterns would correct most of the minor inconsistencies. For example, if final silent E were used only to indicate a long vowel in the last syllable, there would be little need. for further identification of long vowels. However, using the distinctive symbols A, a, E, e, I, i, O, o, U, u, as independent vowels, would permit basically fonetik spelling; without violating the current alfabet or established usage, – and without silent letters, or the use of diacritics.

Educators have absolut control over orthograpy, but none whatever over the pupil's abilities or environment. Thus, they should endeavor to stabilize our symbols according to sound, – instead of trying to segregate students according to ability and/or environment. However most researchers try to pinch-hit for the psychiatrist, the doctor, and/or the social worker, – in spite of the fact that mentality, physical fitness, nor environment has any more bearing, on READING, than on any other academic subject. Nor does teaching the *teacher* how to cope with stupidity, disability or poverty teach the *child* how to cope with our erratic orthograpy. Likewise, altho games, puzzles, pictures, and/or the subject matter may hold the child's attention, they do not teach him the mechanics of interpreting symbols.

Let's have research in SPELLING, – rather than reading.

LEO G. DAVIS, Palm Springs, California.



**16. Carlton Press, Inc. BOOK PUBLISHERS. NEW YORK, N.Y.**

Dear Reader;

Research has proved, conclusively, that use of stable orthography, in primary grades only, enables the student to complete his education a year or more ahead of those struggling with the traditionally erratic from the beginning. It is no longer a matter of proving a theory, – but of implementing a proven innovation. Altho permanent reform is in order, it is not the issue at this time. However, if and when any special primary orthography does come into general use, the primary spellings will gradually become standard thru common usage. Thus educators should make comparative study of the various proposals for simplified spelling, looking toward the adoption of a standard primary orthography that would be most acceptable for everyday use. As "candidates" for such study, Leo G. Davis, – a former teacher, – offers a series of basically fonetic tests.

Stabilizing lower-case a, e, i, α, u, as the short vowels, and small capitals A, E, I, O, U, as the long, Mr. Davis offers a ten-vowel alfabet which, az yu kan SE, iz sufisient for basically fonetik speling,- no NU leterz, – no silent leterz, – no NU kαmbinashanz,- no unorthαdαx yus αv eny simbal, – no diakritiks. .yet the REVIZD orthαgrafy SEMZ TU hold every advantAJ over al uther revalushANARY notAshanz within the inglish alfabet, – in familyer paternz and old spelingz RETAND, – in truly fonetik spelingz, – in stability, – and in the simplisity αv brevity, – az wel az BEING QUIT sutabl for jeneral yUS.

The *Davis-McGuffey First Reader*, – a fonetic transliteration of the original McGuffey text, – adheres to the time-proven "spelling" approach to reading, in contrast to the prevailing, but illogical, "whole-word" approach; thus it is probably the best primary English text ever published. The *Davis-McGuffey Second Reader* gradually introduces traditional irregularities until, – upon finishing this book, – the pupil is ready for his conventional third reader, – well ahead of those using current "basal" readers. *K-a-t spelz cat* is an amusing fonetic reader for teaching a child to read a third-grade vocabulary fluently, – without the usual frustration. The *davis speller* is, more properly, an author's "guide" for transliterating conventional literature into either of two revolutionary notations, – a five-vowel stable, or the ten-vowel basically fonetic, – each of which seems to hold every advantage over all other proposals within the alfabet.

Obviously these innovating texts should be in the hands of all those interested in special primary orthography, – in permanent reform, – and/or in promoting English as the de facto international language. . . Get your copies today!

**Carlton Press, N.Y.**

Please send me;

....copies of the *davis speller* @ \$1.95 per copy.

....copies of *k-a-t spelz cat* @ \$1.95 per copy.

....copies of *Davis-McGuffey First Reader* @ \$2.50 per copy.

....copies of *Davis-McGuffey Second Reader* @ \$2.50 per copy.

My payment of....is enclosed.

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