

Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1968

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 progress."

Published quarterly
Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter.
Subscription \$3.00 a year.
Winter, 1968.

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

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

Table of Contents

1. **Announcements. [Competition Results.](#)**
 2. **[The Slow Learner, Reading Ability, and English Spelling](#)**, by Abraham Tauber, Ph.D.
and June T. Golden, M.A.
 3. **[The Snob](#)**, by Frank T. Du Feu
 4. **[One of our Three R's is in Trouble – an Answer to What's Wrong with our Three R's](#)**,
by Newell W. Tune.
 5. **[Teaching English as a Second Language in Africa](#)**, by Prof. L. W. Lanham.
 6. **[Programmed Learning](#)**, by Waldo E. Sweet, Ph.D.
- Book Reviews:
7. **[Learning to Read: the Great Debate](#)**, by Jeanne Chall, reviewed by S. E. Davis.
 8. **[The Sound Patterns of English](#)**, by Noam Chomsky & Morris Hally, reviewed by Ivor Darreg.
 9. **[Phonics in Learning to Read](#)**, by Ellen C. Henderson, reviewed by Helen Bowyer.
 10. **[Appraising Reading Research](#)**, by Leo G. Davis.
 11. Advertisement. **[World language. Sistemizd English.](#)**
 12. Advertisement. **[Zonic Spelling Service.](#)**

1. Announcements

The Eighth Annual Reading Reform Foundation Conference will be held Aug. 1 and 2, 1969 in New York City. For more details write to Watson Washburn, Pres. at 36 West 44th St, New York, N.Y. 10036.

The Sixth International i.t.a. Conference will be held at Univ. of York, England, from Aug. 31 to Sept. 4, 1969. It will include an i.t.a. workshop for those who want to use or teach i.t.a.; papers to be presented on various aspects of teaching reading; and four separate symposia at which all teachers will be able to contribute their views on:

1. Infant and Junior work,
2. Special Education including remedial,
3. English as a Foreign Language,
4. Teacher Training.

Adequate accommodations are available, but please apply early, to the General Secretary, i.t.a. Foundation, London, Eng.

Bethlehem, Pa. schools find out how to reduce remedial reading students by 75%. Teach children how to read adequately in the first place and they won't need remedial reading later on. In a report to the Bd. of Education, Elizabeth Everett, Bethlehem reading adjustment teacher, told the story with figures. In 1963-64, 154 third graders, none of whom had been taught with i.t.a. in the beginning reading stages, were given remedial reading help. This year, 1968-9, with all third graders having been taught i.t.a. as first grade children, only 59 children at third grade level required

remedial help – a fourth as many. And some of these were transferees who had not had i.t.a. teaching.

Competition Results

Pressure on space prevented our printing the winning entries in COMPETITION 1. These are now given below:

1. *From Mr. John Haggis of Tewin Wood, Herts,*

Why not hie thee to Crichton and Mackay's and buy their Guide to Cairo and the Isle of Wight, comprising byeways in Hendaye and worm's-eye views of the Eiffel Tower and the Heights of Thermopylae?

2. *From Mr. P. H. Horner, Education Dept., Rolle College, Exmouth, Devon.*

3. *From Miss Helen Bowyer, Los Angeles, California, USA.*

HOW DOES THE REVEREND OUGH PRONOUNCE HIS NAME?

It must be rather rough
to be addressed as Reverend Ough.
Or do you politely cough
and say, 'No, I pronounce it Ough' ?
Yet if you lived in Slough
you'd be known as Reverend Ough.
While the priest by Irish lough
is addressed as Father Ough.
But I rather think it, though,
that you're simply known as Ough.
Still, I think I've said enough
Mr. Oh, Ow, Ock or Uff.

That Dear Ph.

Phaster, phaster pflecks the phoam,
Pharther, pharther phrom my home,
Phlying phishes, phirs agleam,
Over there ... to lephth ... to right,
A seacow with her calph in phlight,
While phull ahead phour dolphins play,
Phantastically phleet and gay.
And pharther ophph, is that a whale
Phlipping up his phearphul tail?
Oh, my phirst phoray o'er the sea,
How phabulous you pheel to me!
Phlashing up phrom the Gulph stream;

Each has been sent a cheque for one guinea. The solution published below is that sent by Mr. Ibbotson. We are doubtful about only one word in his list. We think that the "r" is sounded in "father" in some English dialects. Why not "atelier" instead? And for "v" what about "fivepence"?

A deaf B dumb C blancmange D handkerchief E yeoman F Stiffkey G malign H thyme I receive J marijuana K blackguard L almond M mnemonic N column O jeopardy P ptarmigan Q Colquhoun R father S island T mortgage U though V flivver W wrap X faux pas Y eyot Z pince nez.

It seems a pity to leave the possibilities of the alphabet alone until they are exhausted. So, having dealt successfully with a silent alphabet, we now ask you for COMPETITION 3 to explore the potential for an invisible one. You know the kind of thing – O as in "sew", Z as in "has" Y as in "wise" etc. There will, as usual, be three prizes of one guinea each for the best three entries. Please send entries to:

COMPETITION 3, i.t.a. Foundation, LONDON.

Reprinted from the i t.a journal, Dec., 1968

2. The Slow Learner, Reading Ability, and English Spelling, by Abraham Tauber, Ph.D. and Mrs June T. Golden, M.A.*

*A chapter in a forthcoming anthology, *The Slow Learner*.

*Abraham Tauber, Ph.D., Chairman, Dept. of Speech, at Yeshiva College, New York.

*Mrs. June Golden, Instructor in Speech, Stern College for Women, Yeshiva Univ., N.Y.

Proper Concern for Good Reading

Everyone is agreed that the ability to read well is basic and essential to substantial progress in education. Without that facility, subsequent intellectual growth will be stunted. A poor reader becomes what we characterize as a "slow learner." Poor reading leads to retardation, impeded school achievement, drop-out, unemployability, and their inexorable concomitants of personal frustration and tragic anti-social attitudes.

No wonder then, that parent and community concern over school policies and criteria have so often focused on reading success as a way to avoid these tragic consequences. Rudolf Flesch's *Why Johnny Can't Read* of a decade ago zeroed in on that problem and attempted to fix blame for failure on the "look-say" method of teaching reading. Jeanne Chall's 1967 *Learning to Read: the Great Debate* reviews in a comprehensive and scholarly study the various procedures, methods and research investigations and evaluations in the field of reading instruction.

Poor Reading and Consequences

Two headlines in a recent section of the *New York Times*, "A Storm Gathers Across the Land," and "Urban Crisis in Black and White," summarized the current situation: the problems of decentralization of schools and better achievement, reflecting the critical importance of extending and increasing educational opportunity. This means doing better with reading instruction.

Reading achievement has taken on political and sociological overtones, including the accusation of "educational genocide" leveled against teachers and administrators (the "Establishment") by outraged individuals and groups who contend that poor reading results from a "conspiracy" to keep minority groups, especially Negro and Puerto Rican children, from gaining their rightful share of the American heritage. Teachers and principals, in schools where black children do not achieve well in reading, are made the scapegoats of these allegations. The critics refuse to concede or acknowledge the deleterious effects of unfortunate living conditions that desperately need remedy, if educational progress is to be made. Social, cultural, and economic deprivations traceable to the home and neighborhood, as well as educational malpractice, obviously contribute to poor learning, including reading. "Head Start" was designed to overcome this and has been successful to some extent.

Source of Anger and Protest

The awareness that a poor reader is bound to become a "slow learner" arouses sensitivities and, sometimes, near paranoiac resentments, especially when intensified by demagogues with axes to grind. Instead of directing energies and attention to the needs of schools and staffs, i.e., to overcome the distressing and destructive social conditions that interfere with learning, including poverty, slum living, broken families and the like, rage and hostility are misdirected against the schools, teachers and supervisors, even when the educational "establishment" includes black professionals, and is doing a creditable job under the given circumstances.

Need for Remedy

It behooves responsible professional educators, nevertheless, to do all they can to improve the conditions of learning and the techniques of teaching, especially for deprived children. "Slow learner" must not be used as a term of reproach or contempt. Too long has it been considered a social stigma or deprecatory label. We must do whatever we can to counteract poor learning conditions, as well as to recognize and compensate for sources of educational difficulty.

A worthwhile contribution is to develop an awareness that can bring about a, more positive understanding and sympathy toward the "slow learner" or poor reader, which is the purpose of this essay. Hopefully, its outcome will be a clear statement of our contention that consciousness and sensitivity to one factor, now beyond the control of the child or teacher, and generally not recognized by either, might be militating against good reading instruction and, therefore, better learning. Recognition of this factor may help to improve reading instruction and certainly induce better understanding of the difficulty.

A Built-in Source of Difficulty

Learning to read in any language is quite a complicated process, whose complexity few grown-ups understand or remember, including well-educated adults who have forgotten their own experience. *A Primer for Parents: How Your Child Learns to Read* [1] tells and illustrates the intricate elements in the learning-solving of the code-puzzle of symbol-sound association involved in reading. By having the adult learn a totally new symbol "alphabet" of geometric forms that correspond to the Roman letters used in printing the English alphabet, one gets to appreciate the wonder of learning to read.

But the difficulty of turning the unfamiliar printed form of the language you speak into its oral form, which you have known previously, and use every day, would be something the normal, intelligent child could probably cope with easily, if there were regularity and consistent correspondence between sound and symbol. However, altho English is an "alphabetic" language, its sound to letter relationship – what the linguist calls the phoneme to grapheme correspondence – is irregular enough to be the basis of much of the difficulty in learning to read.

English – an Unphonetic Orthography

The irregularity is well described in *How We Spell – or English Heterography*. [2] The title itself suggesting the jumbled nature of English orthography or spelling. In this study, Dr. Godfrey Dewey has assembled, analyzed and organized examples and data to show that in our "traditional orthography," we spell 24 consonant sounds (phonemes) with 213 letter combinations (graphemes), averaging 8.8 spellings per individual sound; and we use 317 spellings (graphemes) for 17 vowel sounds (phonemes), averaging 18.7 variant graphemes per single phoneme. Dewey contrasts this situation with a "phonemic notation," in which the 41 sounds could be represented by 41 spellings, making a one spelling per sound perfect grapheme-phoneme correspondence. How much easier, comparatively, that would be to read; which is the reason that primers are written with simple, regularly spelled words at the outset.

This state of English heterography has tremendous significance for the problems of learning to read, in our language. It is well established, tho perhaps not widely known, that this same situation does not obtain in languages with a more phonemic orthography than English. For example, Dr. A. Bruce Gaarder, Chief of the Disadvantaged Youth Section, U.S. Office of Education, "makes the point that, English spelling being what it is, it is much easier for a child to learn to read an Indian language with a scientifically developed phonemic alphabet than to learn to read English. He would, in fact, have an advantage even over the native English speaker in learning to read English." [3]

The same observation was made by Dr. Mario A. Pei of Columbia Univ.: "When I first came to America as a boy of seven, one of the very few laughs I got out of my slightly unhappy situation as an immigrant schoolboy trying to learn the language of my adopted land was the way that language was handled in written form, and the antics both teachers and pupils had to go through to establish the necessary mental links between the spoken and the written thought-symbol. I had already learned to read and write my native Italian. There the process is simple." [\[4\]](#)

Further evidence that this lack of phonemic correspondence is uniquely bad, endemic to English, and a source of trouble was stated recently by a Japanese child psychiatrist, Dr. Kiyoshi Makita. He attributes the extreme rarity (less than 1%) of reading disability (dyslexia) among Japanese children to the fact that Japanese – tho it uses ideographs, like Chinese – uses a syllabic, phonemic script in addition to the ideographic symbol or character. Each symbol of the 48 letter phonemic script represents one sound, consistently. In his article in the July, 1968 *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Dr. Makita urges further investigation of the relationship between the incidence of reading disability and the phonemic nature of a language, suggesting that the 15% of American school children who suffer from dyslexia may result from "English heterography."

Problem Observed Thruout History

The idea that unpredictable English spelling was responsible for major educational problems of reading has been recognized for a long time. It has been apparent to critics of conventional spelling that a more regularized orthography for English could conserve years of school for the real business of education, if it turned out that "Readin's just talk wrote down."

But it isn't – as illustrated by the following verse, appropriately called "*Chaos*," and describing English spelling pronunciation inconsistency:

I will teach you, in my verse,
Words like corpse, corps, horse and worse.
For this phonetic labyrinth
Gives monkey, donkey, ninth and plinth;
Wounded, rounded; grieve and sieve;
Friend and fiend; alive and live;
Query does not rhyme with very,
Nor does fury sound like bury.

Dies and diet; lord and word;
Evil, devil, tomb, bomb, comb;
Doll, roll; dull, bull; some and home.
Finally – for I've surely said enough
Through, though, thorough, plough, cough, tough,
While hiccough has the sound of cup....
My advice is: Give it up!

This unfortunate condition of English spelling is what turned many thoughtful and concerned educators, linguists, and philologists in the past to the support of a spelling reform in English. [\[5\]](#) In actuality, the goals and purposes of spelling reformers had to do with making it easier to learn to read and use English well and were of little concern with spelling correctly, in the spelling bee sense. This was the same motivation that brought about spelling reforms at one time or another in such languages as Portuguese, German, Russian, Spanish, and Dutch – all now more phonemic and hence easier to learn to read and write for their children than English is for ours. It should be noted, too, that every innovator of an international auxilliary language – from Esperanto to Interlingua – makes certain to couch it in phonemic consistency, to ease the burden of learning.

Up-To-Date-Efforts

In modern times, the implications of the foregoing have been caught and most widely applied by the work of Sir James Pitman and his Initial Teaching Alphabet, known as i.t.a. Sir James came by his interest in the English language naturally enough as the grandson of Sir Isaac Pitman, deviser of a shorthand system and a notable spelling reformer of the 19th century. Sir James, a long time friend of George Bernard Shaw, and for many years head of the publishing firm of Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, carried on during this century the tradition of spelling reform in English thru his association

with the Simplified Spelling Society of Great Britain, as a means of easing the burden of learning English.

But Sir James Pitman's greatest contribution to the goal of easing the path of learning to read, and hence use English, lies in his founding and development of i.t.a. [6] This system uses a modified Roman alphabet, especially designed to help children to learn to read in it, with 24 conventional, lower case Roman characters, and 20 newly devised ones quite similar to our present symbols, to complete a complement of 44 symbols for the 40 or 41 sounds of English. The 3 or 4 extra characters are included to facilitate transition from i.t.a. to traditional orthography. Words are "spelled" in the new alphabet so that they are reasonably phonemically consistent, and yet compatible enough with conventional spelling that after a period varying from six months to three years, children can make the transition to traditional orthography with little effort or loss of time. However, the research to date shows excellent progress and gains in ability to learn to read English, an altogether predictable outcome, and to hold the early gains made, in continued good reading ability.

In *As Difficult as ABC: The case against the traditional orthography (is a learning medium*, Sir James Pitman points out that in reality, the confusion of learning to read with sounds and spellings that vary greatly, as in English, is compounded by the fact that there are 66 characters to be recognized in the traditional Roman alphabet, not only 26, as most of us believe, when we include, as we must, upper and lower cases, and the cursive script letters that vary.

Another attempt to ease the learning of reading English, in the same genre and using the experience of i.t.a., was originally devised in an agreement between the Simplified Spelling Society of Great Britain and the Simpler Spelling Association of the United States World English spelling, or WES, is a phonemic notation that uses only the characters of the Roman alphabet, in lower case, producing the necessary additional graphemes by means of digraphs, i.e., *ch, sh, th*, etc. Using all these graphemes consistently, as does i.t.a., Dr. Godfrey Dewey and his associates are preparing materials to be used in carefully controlled experiments and research to determine whether the use of WES can duplicate or exceed the results of i.t.a. in improved reading instruction in English, and carry over to better reading of conventional, traditional orthography.

Implications

What we have said in the foregoing can be briefly restated as follows:

1. A poor reader, a calamity in the modern world to himself and society, is synonymous with "slow learner."
2. The social and educational conditions which produce poor readers must be improved, while we do all we can to improve instruction.
3. Educators, sympathetic and responsible professionals, should be supported by the community- and urged to experiment and innovate, to seek improved techniques.
4. A built-in problem, that needs to be better understood and overcome, is our irregular English spelling – unphonemic, unpredictable, and a source of difficulty for learners that persists in later years.
5. New Techniques that use phonemic consistency, i.t.a. and WES, may make giant steps toward better reading.
6. A knowledge of the linguistic facts of life should make teachers and parents alike better able to participate in the education of children, and understand and help the "slow learner."

Bibliography of Footnotes

1. Mc Kee, Paul. *A Primer for Parents: How Your Child Learns to Read*. New York, Houghton Mifflin Co. 1957
2. Dewey, Godfrey. *English Heterograpy, or How We Spell!* Lake Placid Club, N.Y. 12946. Lake Placid Club Educ. Foundation, n.d. (1965)
3. Gaarder, A. Bruce. Statement before the Special Subcommittee on Bilingual Education of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, U.S. Senate, May 18, 1967. (Quoted in Bauer, Evelyn, "Teaching English to North American Indians in BIA Schools." *The Linguistic Reporter*, vol. X, no. 4, Aug. 1968.
4. Pei, Mario A. *Preface* (to a forthcoming book by Abraham Tauber, *Better English thru Simplified Spelling: a History of Spelling Reform*. New York, Philosophical Library, 1969) in *Spelling Progress Bulletin*, Spring, 1968.
5. Tauber, Abraham and Beck, H. Park, "Phonetic Spelling for Better Reading?" *The Reading Teacher*, April, 1958.
6. Initial Teaching Alphabet Publications, Inc. 20 E. 46th St., New York, N.Y. 10017
7. Pitman, Sir James. *As Difficult as ABC*. London, Haycock, Printers, Ltd., 1966
8. Simpler Spelling Association. *World English Spelling (WES) For Better Reading*. Lake Placid Club, N.Y. 12946

Annotated Recommended Bibliography: Books,

- Hanna, Paul R, et alli. *Phoneme-grapheme correspondence as cues to spelling improvement*. Washington, D.C, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1966. (Doc. 0E-32008) Detailed study of phonemic facts about the English language, with startling implications for reading and learning.
- Laubach, Frank C. *English the New Way*. New Reader's Press, Box 131, Syracuse, N.Y. 13210. Workbooks that apply phonemic methods to teaching English, especially as a second language, a field in which the author has pioneered as the "missionary of literacy."
- Ripman, Walter, and Archer, William. *New Spelling*. 6th ed. London, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1948. Classic, scholarly formulation of a spelling reform within present alphabetic limits, used as a basis for i.t.a. and W.E.S. initial teaching media in reading instruction.
- Williams, Ralph M. *Phonetic Spelling for College Students*. New York, Oxford Univ. Press, 1960. Reviewed in *Spelling Progress Bulletin*, Spring, 1968, as an example of "the fact that we are still teaching English spelling to students at the college level." Q.E.D – English spelling interfere with real education and rapid learning, and must be taught phonemically.

Reports and Articles

- Margolis, Richard J. *The Losers: a Report on Puerto Ricans and the Public Schools*. Commissioned by Aspira, Inc., 1968. Details need for good sense, sensitivity and sympathetic understanding, stressing language deficiency problems, and bi-lingual work effectiveness in reading.
- Pitman, Sir James. "The Treatment of Language Sounds and Spelling in the Design of an Initial Teaching Alphabet," *Spelling Progress Bulletin*, Spring, 1968. Treats perceptively the important distinctions between the work of the phonetician and that of the reading expert. The latter uses only practical and necessary phonemic distinctions.

3. The Snob, by Frank T. du Feu (In Revised Spelling)

Nou I suppose I'll hav too drive
From ten too twelv and three too five
On Tuesday, Wensday, Friday, say.
I felt that aul was not O. K.
About that forin-luoking cove
Hoo indefatigably strove
Too sell too Dad, the wurce for wine,
Sum hoeldings in a copper mine;
And nou the ore has petered out,
Thare's not a shadow ov dout
Dad's incum is reduced bie haaf,
So I'm oblijed to join his staff.
I wunder if I'll stand the strain
Or coart disorder ov the brain.
John Wesley wurked far longer ours
When in the heyday ov his pouers
And kept astonishingly well.
Amazing chappi! nonparel!
Wrote hymns and preached, wun Waterloo,
Cuod never fiend enuf too doo!
And but the uther day, Mackye!
Those swagger lodjings in the Hie
Wer definitely let too me.
Hou disappointing life can be!
Poor Monica, that pritty minx
I met at Ascot, clearly thinks
I'll be at Oxford during Eits,
Prepared too show her faemous pates,
The Parks, the Medows, aencient touers,
The Collej quods adornd with flouers.

But then I'm shure she'll understand
And not condem me out ov hand,
Since I must say guod-bye too Merton.
Cuod I be absolutely certin
Thare wuodn't be a maejor wor,
We'll say for twenty years or more,
Then, dash it aul, I'd join the army.
But nou I'm not exactly barmy,
With aul thiss international tension,
I might not liv too get mie pension.
The Civil Service isn't bad,
But still, I thhink I'll wurk for Dad.
For he maintained last time we dined,
His employees ar moest refined.
I'd be alloud a breik, Mackye,
From erly June too mid Julye,
And wer I reeally out ov sorts,
Thare'd be a munthh for Winter sports
At Murren, say, or Neuchatel,
And possibly a modest spell
Too join mie cusin from the Houce
Hoo'll be in Scotland shooting grouce.
He thhinks ov nuthhing else but plesure;
Admittedly, I'm fond ov lesure,
But then I'm not the man too shirk
Mie share ov solid, onest wurk,
Puot oever stuff devoid ov punch.
Ten minits and it's time for lunch.
Shall I be shatterd bie thiss blow?
I say emfatically, no!

What a commocean

A young lady crossing the ocean
Grew ill from the ship's dizzy mocean,
She said with a sigh
And a tear in her eigh,
'To life I have no more devocean.'

From Rimes without Reason.

4. One of our Three R's is in Trouble, by Newell W. Tune An answer to "What is Wrong with our Three R's?"

While there has been considerable criticism of the teaching of our three R's, most of it has been directed at reading. Is it deservedly so? Many of our educators and publishers of educational books are of the opinion that we are doing a satisfactory job of teaching reading to our young people. There are others who have written scathing criticism in the form of sensational books about the ineffectiveness of our reading instruction. Is the criticism in these books justified? Are their criticisms valid? Do we know the causes of reading retardation? And even more important, can we do anything practically to improve greatly the effectiveness of our reading instruction? Let us consider these questions in their order.

The complaints from employers, college entrance officials, and parents, according to Ruth Strang, have roundly condemned the quality of the reading abilities of our high school graduates. If our present reading instruction methods are satisfactory, large scale qualitative tests should confirm this. Yet what data we have from tests indicates a shocking ineffectiveness of the teaching and an unawareness of the seriousness of the situation among public officials.

The New York Public School Administrator, in an article in the Kansas City Times on June 3, 1955 reported the results of an investigation has shown that there were 20,000 New York children in from the fourth to the sixth grades who were retarded two years or more in reading. As a result of this finding, the New York City Board of Education ordered that pupils who do not meet the standards in reading be kept to repeat the same grade. Such a serious action by itself will not solve the problem, unless these retarded readers are also given remedial reading instruction. The New York World Telegram, in its issue of Dec. 13, 1955, reported that tests administered in more than 50 high schools had disclosed that over half of the students entering high school the preceding September were reading below their normal grade level. Specifically, 52.5% of 18,711 pupils who entered from elementary schools were shown to be under the norm; and of the 25,587 who entered from the junior High Schools, 56.6% were reading below norm. The students deficiencies ranged from just below normal to a shocking six years below par. Nor were the deficiencies confined to students of poor ability. Bernard E. Donovan, Administrative Director of the High School Division, who analyzed the test scores, was quoted as saying: "Retardation in reading, in terms of potential ability, is not confined to the lower ability groups. Its presence among students of superior mental ability is as prevalent." Dr. Elizabeth A. Simpson Director of the Reading Service, Illinois Institute of Technology says that the Trexler Silent Reading Test, when given to 7,380 eighth grade graduates of St. Louis public schools revealed that 30% were reading at sixth grade level or below, a shocking three years below par or more.

In Illinois, an earlier survey of a small city showed that a large portion of the pupils in the upper two grades of tire elementary schools and the first year of high school had not attained *sixth grade* reading ability. Tests made by the Monroe Standardized Reading Tests for comprehension showed that of pupils in the seventh and eighth grades, nearly half or to be exact, 44.6% had not attained the norm in reading comprehension. The results were even worse in *rate* of reading; 55% of the seventh graders, 50% of the eighth graders, and 47% of the ninth graders were reading below the norm. In a tabulation of a school with 214 pupils, 52% of the seventh grade pupils were reading below their grade level, some as much as four years below. Of the eighth grade pupils, 74% were reading below their grade level, more than 1/3 of which were three years or below grade level. Of the ninth grade, 64% were reading below grade level, 13% of which were four years or more below grade level, and

another 21% were three years below grade level. It is no encouragement to know that in these same classes one pupil in each class was reading six to seven years above his grade level.

Jacobson and Van Dusen found that of 150 high school freshmen who were tested with the Iowa High School Silent Reading Test, 122 pupils or 81% were below ninth grade reading standards. The median grade of this group was only 7.1 grade, so what must be the extent of the level of the lower half of the classes?

Is it American methods of teaching reading that is responsible for these poor results? Is the reading problem being solved better in England? In the ministry of Education pamphlet # 18, published in 1957, entitled "Standards of Reading, 1948-1956," on page 3, Table 1 shows that of the Seniors (pupils aged 15) as tested by the Watts Vernon Test for Reading Ability, 57.2% were reading below grade level, which includes almost 6% of these who were illiterate or nearly illiterate, being six years below their grade in reading level, and another 24.4% who were from two to four years below par. Table II shows a slight improvement for Juniors (pupils aged 11), giving 48.4% who were reading below grade level, which includes 3.8% illiterate or almost illiterate, besides 17.7% who were three to four years below grade level. These tests were made to discover the national norms for England and Wales for two age groups and to compare them with the pre-war norms, so far as evidence about the latter was available. The results indicate that these reading age levels for Seniors have dropped 1-3/4 years since the war, and for the Juniors, one year below pre-war grade level. Hence, England, cannot be considered to be in much better condition so far as the effectiveness of their teaching of reading than that of the methods used in the United States.

The next question, as to the causes of reading retardation, would require a book to answer completely and adequately. The physical causes should not be overlooked, but these can be identified by optometrists and physicians.

Phyllis Blanchard said, "Despite the existence of a considerable amount of literature on the subject of reading disabilities, these often remain unrecognized by teachers and parents, being confused with mental retardation or deficiency." Physical condition can account for only a small part of the cases of reading retardation.

The vast majority of these cases are also not dullards but among the normal or bright pupils. Donald Durrell more frequently found retarded readers among children with normal and superior intelligence than among dull children. Of the retarded readers, 25% were found to have Intelligence Quotients above 110, while only 9% of those with I.Q.'s below 90 were retarded. In other words, about 80% of the pupils who were retarded in reading had either normal or superior intelligence. He even found one pupil with an I.Q. of 166 who was considerably retarded. The cause was found to be psychological. Grace Fernald, in table 12 of her book, gave the following distribution of the I. Q.'s of 132 pupils with reading disabilities:

| | | | | | |
|----------|----------|-------|-------|---------|---------|
| I.Q. | below 80 | 80-89 | 90-99 | 100-109 | 110-119 |
| # pupils | 7 | 27 | 56 | 32 | 10 |

These pupils were regularly enrolled in classrooms A1 to B7 as follows:

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| A1 | B2 | A2 | B3 | A3 | B4 | A4 | B5 | A5 | B6 | A6 | B7 |
| 3 | 15 | 23 | 38 | 42 | 36 | 36 | 22 | 26 | 11 | 10 | 3 |

Scientific research is gradually clarifying our problems.

No longer can the teacher and school administrator account for all learning disabilities because of low intelligence. Since this has been proved, other reasons must be found for the cause of reading retardation.

The methods of teaching reading have been attacked by many readers as being the cause of the trouble. Emmett A. Betts said, "Educators are becoming increasingly aware of the need for preventive procedures; a large percentage of disabled readers are now believed to be man-made. *Poor teaching*, in a larger sense is the chief cause of retardation in reading." When one method of teaching reading has been used to the extent that most other methods are neglected or untried, the result has been unfavorable. Children vary so much in their responses to the different senses of sight, sound, and physical motor effort and reaction, that most investigators insist that each of the several methods have some advantages but should be used after learning their advantages as well as their disadvantages. For example, Donald Durrell found that "intrinsic" phonics used in a large measure created many pupils with careless reading habits who were prone to guess, without thinking, at most words. The flash cards tended to create the same problem, but when used only as a method of improving speed of reading, after a basic training in direct phonics, removed much of the slowness created by sounding out every letter. Glenn McCracken found that visual education by means of film projectors combined with phonics is an effective means of teaching reading, partly because its novelty holds the attention of the pupils but more because the material is prepared more effectively in a logical manner.

The newer modern methods of teaching reading will undoubtedly bring improved reading results when used on incoming pupils, but what can they do for the children already in our schools who are retarded in reading? The damage has already been done to these pupils and they require remedial reading instruction or they will become future drop-outs before completing school training. Even those retarded pupils that complete grade school are so handicapped that they cannot go on to college, and even if only slightly retarded in reading, cannot keep up with their faster competitors in the race for adequate grades to keep themselves in college. Hence, it is desirable that all retarded readers be given remedial reading instruction. But such instruction requires considerable time and individual instruction. Such teaching is comparable to the difference between retail selling and wholesale selling. Teachers cannot teach in a retail manner the number of such pupils requiring special help. They must be helped in a wholesale manner. Emmett A. Betts said that grouping within a class may require from five to ten groups to place properly the children in each reading level. That means that while the teacher is tutoring one small group, 80% to 90% of the members in the class will have to be working, studying or learning by his own efforts. How can anyone expect a third grader to teach himself anything? The time required to teach effectively each of these small groups may be so long that some groups get no teacher instruction on some days.

This is almost like the retail method of teaching, and like retail selling, is expensive of time and effort. The wholesale method of grouping would be to separate a class, such as the second grade, into two parts in a horizontal manner by ability, rather than as is now being done in a vertical manner by chronological age. For example, the entire second grade would be separated into groups of advanced (including normal), and retarded readers. They need not be called by these names, as it is felt that the stigma might be too much for children of such tender years. They should be separated so that $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ of the pupils are in the advanced group, called 2-A; and $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$, or the balance of the class, needing special remedial teaching instruction, would be grouped in 2-B. The remedial classes should be limited to 15 pupils, or less if found necessary for satisfactory instruction and progress. Teachers who are well qualified for remedial reading and spelling instruction should be chosen. To overcome the scarcity of such teachers and the need of such teachers for special training and experience, a premium pay of 5% should be offered. Not only do they deserve it but will earn it by returning to our teen-age population readers who will not be problem children due to this

kind of a handicap. Each group would receive a year's instruction before promotion to the next year grade. However, at any time after an examination in which a pupil was found to need remedial reading, he could be promoted (?) into the B-group of that or the next year class. A 2-A who was overlooked and then found to be needing remedial instruction could be promoted to 3-B or back to 2-B, according to which level he was classified as being capable. In this manner, remedial teachers will have in their classes children of approximately the same reading level and therefore can teach them in a wholesale manner. Each remedial reading group will get remedial instruction constantly instead of intermittently, and because he is studying with students of the same level of abilities, he will not have an inferiority complex, which often results from some bright pupils showing off before the slower pupils. Since they are grouped together by mental level instead of chronological age, they will be studying at their same capabilities and hence will be able to advance in a manner more likely to be synchronized than with our present methods. However, provision should be made for advancement of a student when he mentally outgrows his group. Then he is ready for promotion to the next higher specialized group or into the advanced classes, according to his needs. When he finally joins the advanced groups, he should not usually have to be returned to the B-groups. This form of concentrated remedial teaching should gradually eliminate the handicapped pupils. It would also eliminate the out-of-step mid-semester student. Children would leave Kindergarten when they were judged mentally ready, from 5 years 6½ months of age to 6 years 5½ months of age.

However, all this does not disturb the basic causes of reading difficulties. Aside from physical defects, which can be detected by a physician or oculist or optometrist, none of the more prominently used methods of teaching reading tries to remove the chief basic cause of difficulties, which many writers from Ben Franklin to Lord Lytton have said is the irregular, inconsistent, illogical nature of our English spelling. Donald Durrell says, "Since the English language contains a great number of non-phonetic words, the child must be taught to rely finally upon visual memory of words rather than upon sounds. He should not be led to expect that sounding the word will be an adequate method of solving his reading and spelling difficulties. Teaching spelling through rules is of little value. Spelling errors of individuals often result from the improper use of the rules, due to the many exceptions to the rules. Since many English words are nonphonetic (or partly nonphonetic), mere thinking does not reveal the spelling of the words. Frequently, thinking in a phonetic manner causes errors in spelling." Durrell went on to tell about the kinds of errors found in spelling. He found that the largest single factor in causing errors was due to trying to spell phonetically such words as are exceptions to the phonetic rules. "The presence of many misspellings that are correct phonetic representations usually indicates over-attention to sounds or an attempt to reason out a word's spelling, rather than using an automatic (photographic) memory response to the word." Now, just use your own reasoning and decide which is the most sensible and desirable – to teach the child to depend upon his memory for the spelling of almost all words (in the Chinese style of learning the appearance and meaning of each character, with no relation to its sound), or to teach the child to think and to analyze the spelling by sounds and logical reasoning? The only drawback to this latter is the amount of inconsistencies and irregularities in English spelling. John Downing said (in his book *Evaluating the Initial Teaching Alphabet*), "The evidence from these experiments is quite conclusive that, in comparison with the simplified and regularized system i.t.a., the traditional orthography of English is a serious cause of difficulty in the early stages of learning to read and write."

James A. Fitzgerald says, "The memorization of a long list of words, the principle approach to the learning of spelling in the past, has failed to develop efficient and reliable spellers." Leta S. Hollingsworth said, "We believe that the unphonetic character of English spelling renders impossible the use of a scale for the measurement of Spelling Ability in just the same sense that a scale for the measurement of Arithmetic Ability can be used. In such scales as the Woody

Arithmetic Scales, the increase in ability to perform arithmetic processes correctly, is measurable because such ability does not depend upon the formation of hundreds of specific bonds of memory, but on the formation of a comparatively few fundamental bonds, which operate consistently. In spelling, however, the situation is psychologically different. To learn to spell "collar" does not help much in learning how to spell "column" or "color." To learn to spell "clear" does not help to spell "here." An attempt to transfer what knowledge has been learned on one word may be harmful when attacking another word similarly sounded. A child is marked wrong if a single element in the tested word is erroneous. English spelling must be learned by the formation of *hundreds of specific bonds of memory*, and cannot be learned by the formation of a few bonds or rules as in most other subjects studied in schools."

Ernest Horn said, in the *Elementary School Journal* for May, 1957, "When the evidence, on both the consistency and the irregularities of English spelling, is critically and realistically assessed, little justification is found for the claim that pupils can arrive deductively at the spelling of most words they can pronounce. There seems no escape from the direct teaching of the large number of common words which do not conform in their spelling to any phonetic or orthographic rule. One must be exceedingly credulous to believe that authorities, with the most complete knowledge of the English language (philologists, phoneticians, and lexicographers), have been in error in pointing out the serious lack of conformity between spoken words and their printed symbols, and have been unaware of such orthographic and phonetic regularities as exist in the language, **or would not have strongly urged that English spelling be simplified** if its difficulties could be removed *or largely alleviated by the teaching of phonetic and other orthographic aids*. (Ed. note: let the back-to-phonics advocate take this last paragraph to heart.)

The only permanent solution to the problem of spelling and reading difficulties is to remove the basic cause of these difficulties. If our spelling were reformed so that it would consistently follow a basic set of rules, to which there would be no exceptions, and all consonants were made phonetic, so that each consonant letter would represent only one sound, then whenever that sound was used, the child would be taught that he could depend upon knowing exactly what letters to use to spell the word. Any new word he encountered, he could analyze by sounding and could be sure that he would pronounce it correctly the first time. All he would need to know would be the correct letters to use to represent the 42 sounds of English speech and the correct pronunciation of the word he is trying to spell. Of course, this would mean that considerable more care would be needed to learn the correct pronunciation of all words, but is this not a fundamentally correct procedure?

In this regard, Romalda B. Spalding said (in her book, *The Writing Road to Reading*) "It is logical and understandable to a pupil, if from the first he is taught to write down the letters which express the sounds he speaks – that is, if he *spells the words by writing their sounds*. Then reading these words follows almost automatically." A simple way is to spell the word using the names of the letters, then respell the word using the sounds of the letters. When these sounds are blended together more rapidly it produces the sound of the word automatically. If all words were spelled phonetically they would be as easy to spell as they are to pronounce, because pronouncing them slowly would amount to respelling them by the sounds of the letters. No one could go wrong if he could pronounce the word properly and knew the symbol for each sound.

Even China, which has a system of writing depending entirely upon memory for the appearance of every word, is now changing to a system of phonetics. Wm. S. Gray says, quoting from Wie Chueh: *The Problem of Reforming the Chinese Written Language*, in *Peoples' China*, 1954, No.10 page 18-26, "To stamp out illiteracy in China, use has been made of a so-called 'quick method' of teaching the characters in three steps. The first step is to teach the 37 National Phonetic Symbols, which are presented in picture charts. Each symbol is associated with a picture of a familiar object, the name

of which has a familiar sound. It is reported that *all 37 symbols can be learned in six hours*. After this goal has been achieved, the students are taught to spell spoken words thru the use of symbols. As the words are spelt, the corresponding symbols are pronounced aloud several times. It is not expected that the student will always pronounce correctly at first, but they will improve with practice. This step takes 30 hours.

The second stage begins with reading and an explanation of the Chinese characters with phonetic symbols printed beside them. As soon as the characters are known by sight, they are presented without the phonetic symbols. An experimental class began by learning 30 characters daily in a two hour session. The number increased rapidly, according to the manual. This second stage usually takes about 100 hours, during which 1500 to 2000 words are learned. The final step consists of teaching the students to read textbooks and other materials, so that they become familiar with the practical use of individual characters in phrases and sentences. This step requires about 150 hours, but the students are then able to read newspapers and write simple letters or short notes with a minimum stock of characters. All in all, the three steps requires about 300 hours, or 5 months of half-day sessions.

You will notice that Chinese students are expected to learn thoroly the entire 37 phonetic symbols and their corresponding sounds in six hours. Surely our students can do as well with our 42 sounds and phonetic symbols, if our spelling were entirely regular and phonetic. From then on they should be able to tale and analyze the sound of any printed word or write the symbols corresponding to any spoken word. Instead of years learning to spell, the fundamentals could be learned in a few days. Practice of a few weeks would bring confidence and efficiency that we do not now have in years of trying to force our children to learn by memory the almost unpredictable letter arrangement, which we call spelling, of the thousands of words in a child's spoken vocabulary, all of which he must eventually learn and remember how to spell.

It is true that reading is something else again. Here the printed form of the word must be stored in a person's memory, so that in rapid reading it is recalled and recognized as an old friend, and quickly turned into the correct spoken word. For whether reading is silent or audible, the printed word must be turned into the spoken word and its meaning deciphered before it is comprehended by the mind. With our erratic spelling, logic sometimes works against our memory; causing confusion when applied to words that are illogically spelt. In a phonetic system of spelling, logic aids in determining, and gives a reliable tool to analyze new words. Everything follows a regular pattern and is so much simpler that everyone can read (pronounce) words that are beyond their comprehension. They read more rapidly because logic is the tie that connects the printed word with the spoken word. Hence comprehension is aided by the rapidity of reading, since the trend of thought is not so easily lost in long sentences. Confidence is built up instead of destroyed. All in all, reading in a phonetic spelling system is so much easier to teach that it can be accomplished in a small fraction of the time it now takes.

Many famous persons have seen the wisdom of reforming our spelling. The Rt. Hon. William E. Gladstone said, "I honestly can say I cannot conceive how it is that a foreigner learns how to pronounce English, when you recollect the total absence of rule, method, system and all the auxilliaries which people generally get when they have to acquire something that is difficult of attainment.... There is much that might be done with advantage in the reform of the spelling of the English language." The Rt. Hon. Arthur J. Balfour concurred with, "I have come across men who would make excellent soldiers, who from some defect of eye – for it was a question of eye very much – did not acuire the strange art of spelling the English language. There was nothing more calculated to disgust pupils and to degrade the whole subject of examinations than the habit of attaching undue importance to the arbitrary symbols of unusual words." Even stronger is the

sentiment of Dr. Alfred Thirwall, Bishop of St. Davids, London: "I look upon the established system of spelling as a mass of anomalies, the growth of ignorance and chance, equally repugnant to good taste and common sense. But I am aware that the public cling to these anomalies with a tenacity proportioned to their absurdity, and are jealous of all encroachment on ground consecrated by prescription to the free play of blind caprice." And the worthy sage, Dr. Thomas E. Lounsbury, "I have yet to learn that there is among the most savage tribes any fetish more senseless and more stupid than that which – with educated men among us – treats as worthy of respect or reverence the present orthography of the English tongue."

Certainly we should listen with respect to the words of Dr. Benjamin Franklin, "The difficulty of learning to spell in the old way is so great that few attain it; thousands and thousands writing on to old age without being able to acquire it. 'Tis, besides, a difficulty continually increasing, as the sound gradually varies more and more from the spelling... Etymologies are at present very uncertain but such as they are, the old bodes would preserve then and etymologists would there find them. All of these objections (to simplifying our spelling) appear to me of very inconsiderable weight, when opposed to the great, substantial and permanent advantages to be derived from a regular, national orthography. In short, whatever the difficulties and inconveniences now are, they will be more easily surmounted now, than hereafter, and sometime or other it must be done, or our writing will become the same as with the Chinese as to the difficulty of learning and using it." But more forceful and dramatic is the pronouncement of Lord Edward Robert Bulwer-Lytton: "A more lying, round-about, puzzle-headed delusion than that by which we confuse the clear instincts of truth in our accursed spelling was never concocted by the father of falsehood... How can a system of education flourish that begins by so monstrous a falsehood as *see, ay, tea, CAT*, which the sense of hearing suffices to contradict?" I would like to up-date this by saying: "English spelling is the father of falsehood, the mother of deceit, and the child of confusion. A more misleading mixture of malphonetic spellings could not be concocted by the devil himself if the avowed purpose was to torture our children and alienate foreigners."

Many teachers have given up hope that our spelling will ever be simplified, because it has been tried so many times before. However, all it needs is a vociferous minority working together for a good cause. There is a Bill now pending in Congress, introduced by Hon. Bob Mathias, which goes about it in a more sensible way than attempts in the past. Most previous attempts decided upon the system of spelling first and tried to get Congress to adopt it for everyone. The present Bill wisely asks the President to appoint a National Spelling Commission, which will have the power to select the most practical system of reformed or simplified spelling. This system will then be used by Government employees in all official government publications and correspondence, thereby setting a precedent, which it is hoped the newspapers, educators and the public will follow. Congressman Bob Mathias, the author of the Bill, and Congressman John Brandemas, Chairman of the Special Education Sub-committee, would like to hear from teachers as to their viewpoints on this Bill. Even more important, they would like to know that teachers have confidence in, and will support this Bill. Spelling reform is not impossible – it is only unlikely if it lacks the support of teachers. When the educators of this country come to realize that this Bill will solve many of their problems, and enthusiastically show their support for this Bill, then the Congressmen will be glad to push this Bill to passage. It all depends upon you – each one of you!

5. Teaching English as a Second Language in Africa, by Prof. L. W. Lanham*

* From the Conference on Teaching English as a Second Language April 1967, Ranche House College, Rotten Row, Salisbury, Rhodesia. Prof. Lanham was visiting Prof. at U.C.L.A. spring, 1968. Now at Univ. of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, So. Africa.

Much has been made of problems connected with the inclusion of science and mathematics as subjects in mass education in Africa. In fact, the achievement of acceptable levels in spoken and written English for the purposes intended, and on the scale now envisaged, poses inherently greater problems. One of the greatest difficulties is, paradoxically, the fact that the teaching of English has an established tradition in Africa. For half a century or more teaching methods, materials and syllabuses – which even at the outset were inappropriate – have been entrenched and are held today as a vested interest by many teachers and the senior inspectorate. With few exceptions, the recent revolution in language teaching has been ignored by African education departments. In West and East Africa, textbooks designed for Scottish and English schools were still being prescribed for African schools in 1962. Whereas emphasis should have been placed on the spoken word and, in writing, on skill in the use of expository, descriptive English, the prestige of *literary* studies has been effectively transferred from British education to African, and the *language* has been severely neglected as a basic means of communication. It is not uncommon for young Africans to be obliged to wrest the sense from Shakespeare before they are capable of writing meaningful, grammatically correct sentences in English.

Related to this first disadvantage of an established English-teaching tradition is a second which derives from the very nature of second-language learning. In learning a language, there is a considerably greater quantity of information to be assimilated in an organized way and stored in the mind than is necessary when learning mathematics. Much of what is learnt must be so thoroly absorbed that it is committed to the level of habit, e.g. sentence patterns, pronunciation, orthographic conventions; a good deal needs a thoro intellectual grasp, e.g. the referential and connotative meaning of words. The major obstacle to accurate learning is, however, the fact that the acquisition of a vast range of new components and the intricate conventions of their ordering and arrangement, proceed alongside the established model of the mother tongue which, in its workings and the overall frame of its organization, matches what is being learnt. Equivalents, usually false, can readily be found at points where the learner has either not learnt, or has forgotten, the required components. By contrast, the teaching of arithmetic or mathematics starts with a clean slate. There are no false transfers to be made from a previously learnt system; decimal numbering, the processes of multiplication, division, and so on, have international currency.

In every major linguistic area in the world where English is learnt as a second language or foreign language, there is a characteristic set of deviations from authentic English, each of which is a point of easy transfer from the mother tongue into English. With the passage of time, these deviations become institutionalized and give a specific stamp to Indian English, African English in its various forms, Spanish English, and so on. In an area where one generation supplies the English teachers to the next, mother-tongue interference can be cumulative so that, with time, English in that area may deviate more and more from accepted norms. The pronunciation system always suffers greater disruption than grammar or vocabulary: authentic *written* English is available anywhere in the world, and because the units of grammar and vocabulary are adequately differentiated in written symbol, such threats as the loss of the pronouns *she* and *her* in African English have, at least for the present, been kept at bay. [\[1\]](#) The learner, already initiated in the phonetic orthography of, for

example, a Bantu language, can find little logic in the written symbolization of English units of pronunciation. At points of major disparity—for example, the 21 vowels and diphthongs of South African English, compared with but five equivalents in Zulu—there is nothing to curb gross mother-tongue interference. As a result, African English has only 12 distinctions in vowel and diphthong and, in a dictation test given to a class of African matriculates, there is an even chance that *bark* will be written down as *buck*, or *heat* as *hit*.

It is wasteful and impractical to attack mother-tongue interference at every point. There is no objection to *African dialects* of English, provided that, like all other dialects of English, they share the same basic standard English design: such as underlie American, Australian and South African English, for instance. The vocabulary must consist of words that have, substantially, English rather than African meanings. The interference of the mother-tongue has already gone too far in all varieties of African English and as the dilution of the main stream of effective English teaching continues, greater inroads are imminent.

The extent to which each major linguistic area in Africa has produced its own particular form of aberrant English is not generally realized. If the present trend continues, *spoken English in various territories in Africa may well be reduced to little more than a local patois*. In South Africa, well-educated African teachers already find great difficulty in following a tape-recorded discussion on mathematics by a Liberian colleague. The social and political implications of unchecked mother-tongue interference can be serious. In 1959, the following statement was made at a conference called by the British Council: "And so, it's no exaggeration to say that the vast majority of those responsible for teaching the English language in East Pakistan are themselves incapable of understanding a single sentence spoken by a native speaker, or of producing – orally or on paper – a single correct sentence, however simple." A recent report from Canadian universities states that Indian students with university passes in English cannot cope with post-graduate courses because their English is inadequate.

No lesser objective can be set for the African schoolchild who studies English for several years in a primary school than that he understands simple, standard English, and is understood when talking to English speakers from other areas in Africa. Reading and writing skills advance rapidly and effectively if based on an adequate mastery of the *spoken* language. It follows that teachers must be equipped to identify and counter the aberrancies of African English that derive from mother-tongue interference. Applied linguistics now has the task of specifying major points of interference in each main variety of African English.

At this stage, let me adjust the focus on African English generally, and bring in details of how it is learnt, taught and used in South Africa at present. In broad outline, the pattern is similar to that in all former British territories in Africa: here, as elsewhere, English teaching rests firmly in the hands of Africans; and Africans will continue to teach other Africans English.

There are two basically different ways of acquiring a second language that are not necessarily mutually exclusive; they may be effectively combined. The first is by "natural assimilation" from a new social environment, and matches in many ways the learning of the mother-tongue. The second is by being taught by a teacher using particular methods and materials. In the first, objectives are identifiable, rewards obvious, and motivation high (the most important prerequisite for successful second-language learning); in the second, rewards and objectives are less obvious, and motivation often low, particularly in young people whose language learning forms a part of enforced education.

The first situation requires, for accurate learning, an organized assimilation of randomly selected linguistic material which is fed into the mind, and the human brain is best able to cope with this task up to the age of puberty; thereafter the ability to learn a language in this way usually diminishes fairly rapidly. It is no mean feat to learn a language: and learning it by natural assimilation requires intense, if largely subconscious, mental activity, sustained for long periods. The environment in which it is learnt is stimulating and the conditions of real life exert a powerful discipline.

The second language-learning situation is usually, however, artificial, discontinuous and far less stimulating. It allows for a *deductive* as well as an *inductive* approach: that is to say, an approach that relies both on data supplied by the teacher and data that the learner obtains for himself. Because of mental attitudes and restrictions on time, this approach requires an effective organizing of the linguistic material *before* it is presented to the learner. The fact that generations of English school-children, after five or more years of French, are able to conjugate irregular verbs, but lack even an elementary ability to communicate orally with a Frenchman, testifies not only to the ease with which false objectives can be set, but also to the need for expertise in preparing the teacher and his materials.

Until the Second World War, the African schoolchild learning English in South Africa had considerable advantages over his counterparts farther north, because of the opportunities afforded him to learn by natural assimilation. These advantages derived from contact with the largest concentration of mother-tongue speakers of English on the continent and, more effectively, from the presence of English-speaking teachers in the classrooms. Altho teaching methods and materials were as inappropriate as anywhere else in Africa, there was a fair chance, in post-primary education, that there would be an English-speaking teacher to provide a continuous flow of authentic English for eager young ears to absorb. This situation produced several generations of Africans who had the excellent command of English so often commented on by English-speaking visitors who have travelled through Africa.

Today, however, such opportunities for learning are little better in South Africa than they are farther north. Social and political trends have served to isolate children at the best age for learning a language. In addition, of the teachers – whose numbers have increased three- or fourfold to match the enormous increase in school-going population-probably less than 20% are now English-speaking.

Recent research indicates that almost all children have their first real contact with English when they enter a primary school-including children in large English-speaking cities such as Johannesburg. From the beginning, therefore, they learn English by being taught, and for a year and a half are subjected to aural-oral learning, and have no contact with written English. This is the age of high receptivity for language and the die of African English is cast during the first two to three years of schooling. The English they acquire derives from the African primary school teacher and the materials and methods at her disposal. It is now necessary to examine each of these.

Only a very small percentage of older primary-school teachers, located mainly in the English-speaking cities, belongs to a generation that commands the best African English on the Continent. The majority are young women produced by one of the many training institutions in this country. A measure of the deterioration of English is obtained from a comparison of the two generations. A specially devised test of proficiency in Spoken English [2] applied to teacher trainees in six institutions in all parts of the country, yielded results such as the following: of 178 trainees, 153 could not name correctly the hands of the clock (altho telling the time is normally taught in primary schools). Their answers revealed such gross points of mother-tongue interferences as the "horns," or

"wings," or "sticks," of a clock. In a test devised to ascertain their grasp of the meaning of *carry*, in contrast with that of *hold*, 62 failed to use the word correctly. The examiner, carrying a box from one end of the classroom to the other in a deliberate fashion, was said to be "sending," "putting," "walking," the box. More than half insisted on a difference in pronunciation in such pairs of words as *their* and *there*, *too* and *two*, which they effected either by resorting to sounds of their mother-tongue, or, in the first pair of words, pronouncing *r* in one and not in the other. Teacher trainees do not lack keenness or interest, but the English of more than 70 % [3] of them is totally inadequate for an oral-aural approach in the primary-school classroom. With a number of the trainees tested, the simple enquiry: "Where did you go to school?" had to be recast and repeated several times before it was understood. This tallies with the report presented by the recent Transkei Commission of Inquiry which said:

"The Commission found many pupils in both Standard VI and Form I (the desired level of education for the primary-school teacher) unable to express themselves coherently in the simplest English. The writing of English is on the whole very poor... In Form 1, teachers who have to use English as a medium of instruction (in subjects other than English) are forced to use the greater part of the year to teach the language..."

Well-designed teaching materials combined with suitable techniques and methods of presentation could, of course, compensate to a considerable extent for the teacher's inadequate English. In oral-aural learning at the primary school level, the design and content of this type of material are of prime importance.

Foreign language materials used in American primary schools are the products of several years of work by groups of experts, including linguists and mother-tongue speakers of the language. Items to be taught are carefully selected, graded and integrated in a comprehensive teaching plan. Learning is almost entirely inductive and the first objectives are the mastery of the basic patterns of pronunciation and grammar. These require automatic control combined with an ability to grasp the generalizing principle of the patterns. Thus to *a friend*, *in the bank*, *at the butcher's* must be seen as exponents of the same pattern and, by analogy, it is possible to create in speech other preposition phrases which have never been heard before. (Learning vocabulary is, by comparison, an easier task and can be left to a later stage.) To achieve such ends, teaching materials are comprehensive to the extent that every class-room drill is planned, every language game, story and conversation piece set out. Grammatical patterns can only be induced from a variety of suitably ordered expositions of the same pattern. Mere repetition of the same phrase or sentence leads to a use of language based on the recall of whole sentences previously learnt, without any real creative ability in the language. Ideally, the materials must counter established points of mother-tongue interference, particularly where the linguistic disparity is great, as it is between English and the languages of Southern Africa. Specifically designed materials, naturally, require special techniques and methods in the classroom and the proper training of teachers is important for success. Without materials, however, teacher training is ineffective.

Emerging from training school, the primary school teacher brings very little with her to the highly specialized task of oral-aural language teaching. For materials, she has the English syllabus for primary schools, but this is a mere listing, in less than two pages, of the type of item to be taught: it is not intended as a teaching plan. (The teacher is even left to devise her own vocabulary of 100 words in the first year, and 150 words in the second.) Teaching institutions concentrate, perforce, on bolstering the inadequate English of the trainees, and provide very little that is likely to be effective for aural-oral language teaching. Once in her own classroom, the average teacher quickly resorts to such time-worn practices in African education as the endless repetition (in her own aberrant

pronunciation) of the same word or sentence, and speech and action games in which such activities as lighting a fire are described in a fixed set of memorized sentences. Both these techniques are of minimal effectiveness. Mere repetition of the same item, and the mouthing of memorized sentences, contribute nothing at this stage to the main objective, namely to inculcate the structural patterns of the language. This kind of teaching sets a deviate pattern of linguistic behavior which is carried beyond the primary school stage into the speech of many adult Africans. If situations are completely stereotyped, it is possible to communicate by having available for recall a limited, fixed set of sentences, combined with a restricted ability to substitute a few nouns as subjects or objects.

Situations that are at all unique, and call for creative linguistic ability, bring about a more or less complete break-down in communication. Early evidence of this parrot-like linguistic behaviour has been found in recent tests carried out in first-year primary school classes in Johannesburg. In response to the question: "What is this/ that?" (the examiner pointing to some object) the answer is frequently, "My name is nose/shirt/table." The child recalling the response, "My name is John/Sipho/Mary" to "What is your name?," simply substitutes the new phrase for the one meaningful piece of English it has memorized effectively. For many children, this is the sum total of their English learning after one and a half years at school.

This completely non-creative use of language may, when combined with the African flair for mimicry, give a superficial impression of competence that has been known to deceive even senior managers in industry who have denied that their working force finds difficulty in communicating. It is my belief that many Africans in unskilled and semiskilled occupations in industry who have had a primary school education, use English in this way. Tests conducted in industry in Johannesburg have revealed severely limited vocabularies, virtually no command of important sections of English grammatical structure (such as the verb conjugation), and frequent misunderstanding of what is said.

Observations up to now have been directed at the aural-oral learning stage in the early years of primary school. (Of the total number of children entering primary school, 57% leave school by the beginning of the fifth year). Contact with written English, which begins in earnest in the third year, undoubtedly enriches the learning experience of the child; but it also places further obstacles in the way of effective mastery of the spoken language. The havoc wrought on English pronunciation by mother-tongue interference is aggravated by the natural habit of pronouncing written English words as they are spelt. This is because reading and writing in the mother-tongue have already been taught *in its phonetic orthography*. English pronunciation, not being indicated by its spelling, is not taught systematically; sound is not identifiable from symbol, and the African teacher has no frame of reference to apply in coping with aberrancies which creep in from the two main sources of interference. *The irregularities of English spelling place a heavy burden of learning on the child, and that may be the reason why general progress usually falls off at this stage* The average teacher, whose own meager resources of spoken English have been exhausted, now begins to seek her teaching materials in the written words. "Grammar" (of a minimally instructive sort) and "composition" (a particularly futile exercise in early stages of language learning) chiefly occupy her attention. "Conversation" (i.e. what remains of the aural-oral approach) is very often based on the reading book, and this establishes the practice of using literary English in the child's speech. African English is permanently marked with this feature at an early stage.

The primary-school teacher is clearly the keystone in the structure of English education in Africa. Nothing I have written here should be taken as a condemnation of her; many are good teachers, but they lack the resources with which to teach. More than anything, the present situation demands materials; comprehensive, thoroly programed courses that provide every item for every pattern drill,

language game, and so forth, presented in a rigid framework. In recent years, English courses designed for use in African primary schools have become available, usually in the form of sets of books for pupils, matched by a set of teacher's manuals. The use of these courses certainly would improve the present position, but visits to African schools soon show that the *availability* of courses and their effective *implementation* are two very different things. If course materials do exist in a school, the headmistress usually takes some time to locate the books in a dusty corner of some cupboard.

The teacher's reliance on her own resources is the consequence of her training. Frequently there is a haphazard, inadequately formulated approach to "teaching method," which is based on theoretical notions that have little practical efficacy. Training institutions would do better if they trained teachers to teach a specific course that they had learned to know thoroly, and to rely on the techniques and teaching aids prescribed for it.

Currently available courses fail to meet one or more essential requirements of the aural-oral approach to English teaching in Africa. Only the skeleton of pattern drills is generally given and much of the total substance of classroom lessons has to be provided by the teacher. Mother-tongue interference, as the major disruptive force in the learning of English in Africa, is barely recognized in most courses. Any course which provides instructions such as: "The pupil... must frequently hear the correct sound or pattern before he can say it correctly; and the teacher must repeat any new word or pattern several times ...," fails to take into account the realities of English teaching in Africa. Not one percent of African teachers has a sufficient grasp of English pronunciation to meet this requirement, even if there happens to be an authority such as a dictionary close at hand. They lack completely a descriptive frame for even discussing English pronunciation, and the great disparity in systems between English and the Bantu languages makes any rough set of equivalents unacceptable for adequate communication. To meet the need for authentic models of pronunciation (and another less obvious classroom problem mentioned later), it seems that a tape recorder or similar sound-producing instrument that provides pre-recorded lesson material, is the most powerful teaching aid that can be placed in the hands of the primary-school teacher.

Experiments conducted over the past two years in 10 primary schools have shown that teachers accept this aid with enthusiasm and that most can use it effectively. A second practical difficulty that recorded lessons help to overcome is this: the overworked teacher, faced with large classes and double (morning and afternoon) sessions, is disinclined to memorize drill material which, to be effective, requires that many items be presented in the correct order. The reading of drills from a book during a lesson has been found to distract the teacher from her main task of making the materials live and meaningful. All necessary requirements can, however, be met by well-recorded materials properly used in the classroom.

To say that the development of materials is the main objective for English education in Africa does not imply the relegation of the teacher. The best possible materials can be rendered ineffective by bad presentation. The reeducation of teachers is certainly necessary, but their time in training college would be more profitably spent learning to *implement* expertly devised teaching materials, to use modern teaching aids, and to understand the rudiments of inductive learning.

This is an accessible objective for the education of teachers in Africa; to strive for self-sufficient teachers of English is to set an impossible target. The pursuit of excellence in the teacher is a feature of British education that is now being carried over to the teaching of English overseas. Many African territories rightly look to Britain for guidance in their rapidly expanding English-teaching programs, but a general impression gained from contact with 4 of the 10 English

universities involved in the teaching of English overseas, is that there is sometimes a disturbing disregard for the practical essentials of the moment. To aim at turning out the complete teacher may, in normal circumstances, be good educational practice, but in Africa today, it is a counsel of perfection without the remotest hope of realization. [4] Concentration on materials and the means of presenting them may, in the long run, even prove to be the best way of achieving the desired improvement in the teachers: experimental tape lessons, used for teaching English pronunciation in Bantu primary schools in Johannesburg, are often more successful in improving the teacher's English than the children's.

The most serious consequences of ineffective English teaching in primary schools become evident in the last years of secondary school education. The failure rate in South Africa of African high school pupils entering for the matriculation examination was approximately 40% of just over 1,000 entrants in 1964. (In 1961 it was nearly 75%). Only 29% gained a university entrance pass. *Inadequate English is probably the main cause of failure*; most matriculation candidates simply have not enough English to cope with subjects such as history, which must be written in English, quite apart from English itself, with its heavy emphasis on literature and essay writing. At high-school level, English is taught as if it were the mother-tongue rather than a second language. Abstruse literary passages are often as puzzling to the teacher as to the pupil, and high school teachers of English acknowledge their own inadequacy for the task which is set them.

Apart from a re-assessment of objectives in English examinations at this level written by Africans, the need of the moment is materials to place in the hands of the teacher. These materials should aim at the development of skill in simple descriptive English. First requirements are a planned expansion of vocabulary and idiom, a ready command of more complicated sentence structures, and a knowledge of the conventions of good written English. Programed instruction, with or without teaching machines, is well suited to this aspect of English teaching, and programs which may be suitable are becoming available. It is certainly worth experimenting with them. Here, too, the teacher needs thoro training in order to use programed material adequately.

[1] The use of *he* and *his* in reference to both male and female is a feature of spoken African English at quite high levels. This aberrancy arises from the absence of sex distinction in pronouns in Bantu languages.

[2] Established examinations are poor tests of the adequacy of the teachers' spoken English. Concentration is on the written word and major points of mother-tongue interference (the acid test of second-language achievement) are largely ignored.

[3] This figure is based in part on achievement in the test referred to above.

[4]. A set of instructional films, designed to reinforce the B.B.C.'s "English by Radio" series, shows a young English-speaking teacher demonstrating approved aural-oral techniques before a mixed class of Africans, Malaysians, etc. The identity of the teacher is the one completely incongruous feature. In how many classrooms in Africa and India is it possible to have an English speaker as a teacher?

6. Programmed Learning, by Waldo E. Sweet*

*School of Education, University of Michigan, Lansing, Mich.

It is only a little more than three years since B. F. Skinner, in an article entitled "Teaching Machines" laid the foundation for programmed learning. Important as this article is, the title is unfortunately misleading. We are interested in learning, not teaching, viz., the title of the magazine, *Language Learning*. It is a paradox that oftentimes the more the master teaches, the less the student learns. In the final analysis, if learning takes place at all, the student must learn by himself. Traditional classroom procedures have often obscured this fact. The student, in effect, often defies us to teach him anything. Programmed learning, on the other hand, makes it crystal clear to the student that he and he alone must do the task. It is the function of the program to make this task possible by breaking it into small tasks that may be accomplished by almost anyone. It reduces the teaching and increases the learning.

The term "machine" has proved to be a poor one for a reason which Skinner could not have foreseen. Experience has convinced many programmers that special mechanical equipment is not necessary. Many language programs today use only a textbook and a tape recorder.

Since the program may consist only of a textbook and a tape recorder, the question would naturally arise in what way the new programmed learning differs from the textbook integrated with the language laboratory. The latter materials, whether arranged systematically (i.e. structurally) into pattern practices or haphazardly into conversation-to-have-your-hair-cut-by, are echoic: the student repeats what he hears until he learns it. The generation of new utterances was left to the classroom or to written "homework." The first was inefficient, since the teacher can really work with only one student at a time; the second led to the constant reiteration of error.

Programmed learning, on the other hand, is essentially maieutic (of the Socratic mode of inquiry). The student is led by tiny steps to discover the facts for himself. Specifically in foreign language study, he is led to create new utterances by himself, apparently without assistance. 'ars est celare artem.' The student is blissfully unaware of how extensive this help is, and the good programmer, like the good teacher, gives the student only as much help as he needs. It is essential to withdraw this help by insensible degrees until finally the student stands alone, truly independent of both program and teacher.

Altho there are different types of programs, they all have these features in common:

1. The material is broken up into small steps, each step small enough to minimize the chance of error. Thus the student usually practices what is right than repeating his own errors.
2. The student knows at once, either by a mechanical contrivance like pulling a lever on a machine or by sliding a mask in a book, whether his answer was right or wrong. If the program is properly constructed, nine times out of ten his answer will be right. This immediate confirmation of his response to the stimulus increases the chances that he will produce the same response when exposed to the same stimulus another time; in other words, he will probably get the answer right the next time too.

If the student gives a wrong answer, the program has failed to teach properly this particular point. It has been said, only half in jest, that there are no wrong answers, only wrong questions. It is the function of the programmer to reduce the number of errors as far as seems practical. (The expression is purposely obscure; we do not know what the optimum error rate is.) Those who do not program are not aware of one of the most important effects of the program: the feedback to the man who wrote it. While the writer of a textbook has no real way of knowing where his book is weak, the programmer's own behaviour in composing the program is constantly modified by the behaviour of the students. He can observe the learning process, either by direct observation thru some kind of monitoring, or by tabulation of the errors in the responses. A problem that is missed by 20% of the students is, to a programmer, obviously faulty and is either rewritten or (more often) broken down into additional steps. The program is thus constantly refined in a way that a textbook can never be.

But suppose that a student does miss some particular point; what then? In this case, he is just where he would have been with a textbook; he must "concentrate," "study" the point that he has missed and "learn" it, all by some mysterious ability which some students possess and others do not.

Does, then, the program assist the student at every point except those where he truly needs help? Does it tell him then to sit erect, put his feet on the floor, and buckle down like a man? For those who can do it, this is a fine solution. But the programmer is not content with this. He knows that errors will occur. Therefore he builds into the program massive and constant review. The same problem will occur many times in different guises. The programmer who neglects to do this has written a poor program; the one who does it without monotony has written a brilliant one. 'Repetitio est mater studiorum,' but mother need not be dull.

At present almost 200 firms are engaged in producing either programs or mechanical equipment for the programs. Needless to say, these programs will differ greatly in quality. Some of them will be worthless because the author lacks technical ability in programming. Others will be worthless because of their content. One of the most popular programs to date is a programmed book on English grammar using the old discredited semantic basis for grammatical categories. Tests have shown that, altho the error rate on this program is low, students learn little. The structuralist might say that this is because it contains little for the student to learn.

Granted the soundness of the material and programming, the advantages of the program over the textbook stagger the imagination. Compare the conventional class, in which the student makes perhaps one recitation an hour, with a program in which a bright student makes 200 recitations per hour. At the least, I would expect that with programmed learning students would learn twice as much in half the time. But in spite of this enthusiasm I would like to offer a few caveats.

If the program is intended only to replace the usual homework and language laboratory work and utilizes existing equipment and facilities, then the task is not too great. One should look at the qualifications of the programmer. If the program is structurally orientated, then his name should be known to you or to other of your colleagues interested in linguistics. In examining the available programs, you can reject those based on a non-scientific view of language, in some cases at a glance. But as with a textbook, even if the orientation is sound, the material may not be good from other points of view. It is commonly said by teachers that the only way to evaluate a text is to teach

from it. In a different way perhaps, the only way to evaluate a program is to take it like a student, earphones and all. The correct choice is so important that it would be well worth the time to go through a substantial portion of any program before purchasing it.

Try to pick a program with some sparkle to it. It has been claimed that a program resembles a private tutor to an amazing degree. We would point out that some tutors are crashing bores, and this is true of some programs as well.

Finally, consider the testing. Be sure that the author has had the opportunity to profit by feedback from students. Some programs will appear on the market after extensive testing and rewriting; others will appear with no pretesting at all. You should satisfy yourself not only on the results of the test but how extensive it was and under what conditions the test was carried out.

Great caution must be exercised when the use of the program will require extensive new equipment. The purchase of such equipment may conceivably commit your school to the use of programs from only one company. If this is the case, you would need to examine not only all the other foreign language programs your school might use but those in other subjects as well.

If the program is expected to replace the conventional class, we must in all candor point out that the missionary zeal of the programmers is built largely on faith, altho they themselves might prefer to paraphrase my words to say "extrapolation of data". Preliminary tests on certain programs have been encouraging, very encouraging. But many of our conclusions are based upon minature programs which take perhaps half an hour for the average student to complete. To my knowledge, no one has programmed more than the first year of foreign language at the high school level. Will it be possible to construct a four-year sequence in a foreign language? I am betting a substantial portion of my life that it is, but in all honesty I must say that we don't really know.

But whether, as some believe, programming can do ALL the routine drill work which the teacher must now perform, leaving him free for real teaching, or whether it will supplant the textbook and the pattern practice tapes, this much is clear. A program for the teacher interested in the learning process is what the microscope is for the bacteriologist, what the X-ray machine is for the surgeon, and what the telescope is for the astronomer. For the first time in history, we can observe the learning process of academic subjects. This tool, aided by our linguistic science, will certainly revolutionize language learning and with it, language teaching.

Suggested reading material: *Teachers and Machines*, by W. Kenneth Richmond, published by Collins. This is a useful introduction to the theory and practice of programmed learning.

-o0o-

Each noble innovation for the improvement of mankind is at first considered an impossibility.
H. G. Wells.

-o0o-

Book reviews

7. Learning to Read: the Great Debate, by Jeanne Chall, reviewed by Stanley E. Davis*

Learning to Read: the Great Debate, by Jeanne Chall, McGraw-Hill. 1967. 372 pp. \$8.50.

*University Counseling Center, Ohio State Univ. Columbus, Ohio.

As noted in the program of the Eleventh Annual Workshop in Reading Research held in Detroit in April, the Committee on Diagnostic Reading Tests, Inc. for the first time, included a review and discussion of a book on a subject especially pertinent to the work of those who attend the workshop.

This review of the controversial book by Jeanne Chall was chaired by Dr. Stanley E. Davis. His summary of the review and discussion is presented here.

Learning to Read: the Great Debate is an uncommonly scholarly and readable book on the teaching of beginning reading. It is worthy of the many hours that an interested person may find himself spending in reading and rereading. The book is refreshing, too, even if some of one's own cherished views on the teaching of reading come under adversely critical scrutiny.

One doesn't get very far into the book before realizing that this is not just another in the recent series of polemical attacks on the work of the schools in teaching reading. Quite the contrary, one gets the early and firm impression that the author is unusually well-informed about theory and practice in the teaching of reading, that she has no personal ax to grind, and that she is an involved "insider" looking around at the condition of the field in which she works and sincerely trying to find ways to improve tire field.

In identifying the parameters of "the great debate," the crucial theoretical and practical issues in the teaching of beginning reading on which people differ, she lists eight principles on which most current textbooks for teachers agree. These principles are:

"1. ... reading should be defined broadly to include ... right from the start, not only word recognition, but also comprehension and interpretation, appreciation, and application...

"2. The child should start with 'meaningful reading' of whole words, sentences and stories as closely geared to his own experiences and interests as possible. Silent reading should be stressed from the beginning.

"3. After the child recognizes 'at sight' about 50 words ... he should begin to study, through analyzing words 'learned as wholes', the relationship between the sounds in spoken words... and the letters representing them.. i.e. phonics. However, even before instruction in phonics is begun, *and* after, the child should be encouraged to identify new words by picture and meaning clues. Structural analysis should begin about the same time as phonics and should be continued longer. (Word perception is the term commonly used to describe the different ways of identifying new words, phonics being only one of these ways. In fact, in many published programs the child is encouraged to use phonics only when the other ways fail.)

"4. Instruction in phonics and other means of identifying words should be spread over the six years of elementary school. Usually, instruction in phonics is started slowly in grade 1, gathering momentum in grades 2 and 3.

"5. Drill ... in phonics 'in isolation' ... should be avoided ... phonics should be 'integrated' with the 'meaningful' connected reading. In addition, the child should not isolate sounds and blend them to form words. Instead, he should identify unknown words through... visual analysis and substitution.

"6. The words in the pupils' readers for grades 1, 2 and 3 should be repeated often. They should be carefully controlled... they should be the words that appear most often in general reading matter and that are within the child's listening and speaking vocabulary.

"7. The child should have a slow and easy start in the first grade. All children should go through a readiness or preparatory period, and those judged not ready for form reading instruction should have a longer time.

"8. Children should be instructed in small groups (usually three in a class) selected on the basis of their achievement in reading."

Dr. Chall then examines the nature of the opposition to these eight tenets of "the conventional wisdom." From this examination she concludes that the issues revolving around the eight principles "may be boiled down to one big question... Do children learn better with a beginning method that stresses reading for meaning or with one that concentrates on teaching them how to break the code?"

*Many persons reading this review will quarrel with this statement. While it may be true that these eight principles boil down to "one big question," the answer will not define for teachers the way "children" will best learn. "Children" is an inclusive term. All children will not learn better with stress on either method. Recognizing that we are teaching individuals, individual differences are important: some children will learn best when one method is stressed; others need another method or a modification of several methods. Testing all children from the reading readiness stage and regularly thereafter allows a teacher to stress methods according to individual children's needs. She will examine the test scores of each child (usually on group tests supplemented by individual oral tests if needed) and the record of previous learning and careful observation of behavior patterns in the learning situation. She will then group the children according to the methods (not method) of teaching from which those children will profit. No certain number of groups is best nor should the groups be stable. As a child learns, his progress should be observed and he may be moved from one group to another or be included in more than one group if he will profit from such stress or pattern of teaching. (The *Diagnostic Reading Tests*, Kindergarten through College, were set up to help the teacher in this process of selecting methods of teaching, curricular content, and modifications according to the achievements of individuals.)

The author's attempt to find an answer to this question constitutes the burden of the book. In seeking for an answer, she aggressively examines and thoroly explores relevant published research, numerous widely-used basal readers, and actual classroom practice.

The reader of this review who feels somewhat uneasy about this resolution of the issues in teaching beginning reading into apparent dichotomous opposition (code emphasis vs. meaning emphasis), may take comfort. Dr. Chall stresses the point that the question does not call for an either-or answer, an allegiance to one and an eschewing of die other. Rather, the teacher's task is to seek a balance between the two emphases that is best for each child.

Very commendably, the author urges the reader not to accept any answer to the question that the author might give without looking carefully at the evidence she cites and her interpretations of that evidence.

Some conclusions that she draws are:

1. "... it would seem, at our present state of knowledge, that a code emphasis – one that combines control of words on spelling regularity, some direct teaching of letter-sound correspondences, as well as the use of writing, tracing, typing – produces *better* results with unselected groups of beginners than a meaning emphasis, the kind incorporated on most of the conventional basal-reading series used in schools in the late 1950s and early 1960s."
2. "A similar code emphasis... also helps children who are predisposed to reading and spelling difficulty."

One thing that may give the reader pause is the realization that few of the experimental studies cited provide evidence beyond the fourth or fifth grade. The cited studies, and probably existing research in total, provide virtually no information about the comparative long-range effects – the effects on the reading abilities and attitudes of adults to the various approaches to teaching beginning reading. One may also get a hint, based on very sparse evidence in tables on pages 111 and 128-29, that the initial apparent advantages of a heavy code emphasis over a lighter code emphasis in the earliest grades begins to disappear by grades five and six.

The author acknowledges this hint of doubt when she says: "Generally, aspects of reading comprehension such as 'reading to predict outcomes,' 'making inferences,' 'reading for appreciation,' and the like may not show substantial differences in later years when initial meaning and code programs are compared, since the reader's intelligence and general knowledge put a limit on performance in these areas. However; a code emphasis *should still maintain its advantage*, even in later years, in those aspects of literacy which depends less on language, intelligence and experience, and more on 'reading skill'." Despite this reassurance, the reader can still wonder how much difference a code emphasis vs. a meaning emphasis in beginning reading really makes in the attainment of mature adult reading ability. More precise definition of mature adult reading ability and research on these long-range influences of initial reading teaching are needed before this wondering can be stilled with any assurance. However, one would be hard put to deny that children who are "code emphasised" will probably be better word-pronouncers and spellers when they are adults.

One who is left uneasy by such wonderings as this can wholeheartedly concur in Dr. Chall's recommendation that research on the teaching of reading must be given more systematic and intelligent attention, in both the production and consumption phases, than has typified our recent past.

Throughout the book the author makes it abundantly clear that she is not advocating a wholesale, uncritical swing to any one approach to the teaching of beginning reading. While she concludes that most children would gain benefit from a heavier and earlier emphasis on learning how to "break the code" than has typified many basal readers published in the last several years, she does not think that the most desirable degree of emphasis is the same for all children.

The teacher still faces the problem of striving for the best balance and timing of code emphasis and meaning emphasis for each child. *Learning to Read: the Great Debate* is a "must" reading for all teachers who are trying to solve this reading problem.

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1968 pp15,16 in the printed version*]

8. The Sound Pattern of English, by Noam Chomsky & Morris Halle, reviewed by Darreg

The Sound Pattern of English, by Noam Chomsky & Morris Halle, (In the series: *Studies in Language*, Edited by Chomsky & Halle) pub. Harper & Row, New York & London. 1968, 470 pp. \$13.00

The preface of this volume describes it as "an interim report on work in progress" altho it is quite a heavy book, both literally and figuratively. At first glance, the work presents a formidable appearance of complication – "must a traditionally elementary subject such as learning to pronounce English words, which any normal 4-year-old can do well, be made to look so impossibly difficult?" was our initial reaction, as well as being the reaction of several of our acquaintances.

However, the very same reactions and objections could have been raised to the modern application of what mathematicians now call "Foundations" to the systematizing of elementary arithmetic. Everyone knows how fruitful the "New Math" approach in elementary schools is proving to be. Yet, before it could reach the practical level, it must have seemed absurd to describe and explain second-grade addition or third-grade multiplication as if they were an abstruse part of higher mathematics! And the comparison here is not irrelevant at all! Chomsky and Halle's book applies a mathematico-logical approach to phonology, phonemics, and phonetics as an extension of the work done on grammar and syntax within the last two decades by quasi-mathematical methods. That is, this book is in effect a continuation of that already accomplished in structural linguistics.

The mathematical attitude is an outgrowth of the attempt to create a *machine-compatible grammar and syntax* as well as an **automatic dictionary**, so that computer-like apparatus could accomplish language translation. Unexpected problems cropped up by the dozens, so that the achievement of this goal has been somewhat deferred, but the validity of this logico-mathematical approach to language has been amply vindicated. Some of the structural-linguistic doctrines are about to be tried out in elementary classrooms.

Any attentive reader of the *Spelling Progress Bulletin* will have noted that certain aspects of the spelling problem come up with great persistency: the Vowel Shift, meaning that the long vowels \bar{a} , \bar{e} , \bar{i} , have peculiar sounds in modern English that differ from the corresponding long vowels in almost any European language; the silent digraph *gh* which nevertheless makes words "look like English"; the many attempts to rebut the stock argument that Traditional Orthography retains the resemblance among related words, such as *telephone*, *telephony*, *telephonic*, or *real*, *reality*, whereas phonetic spelling would thoroly disguise these family resemblances; and other examples which easily come to mind.

Chomsky and Halle's book does not evade or ignore such problems as these – on the contrary, it faces them squarely, and tries a novel mode of attack. Instead of taking the 20th century status of English pronunciation (in this case, the General American dialect) quite for granted, *The Sound Pattern of English* delves into the historical sources of the present pronunciation, so far as these can be traced. For example, the discussions of the pronunciation at the times of John Hart (1551-1579), John Wallis (1653-1699), Christopher Cooper (1687), and T. Batchelor (1809) are utilized to evaluate the problems in historical perspective.

This added depth permits explanation of dozens of seeming inconsistencies—a seemingly capricious sound-change can often be analyzed into two or three separate changes, which occurred at different periods, and which occurred in a certain order. Definite patterns begin to emerge, where hitherto we seemed to find nothing but erratic chaos. Once the authors have disclosed such patterns, they set up

rules and formulas, usually thoroly diagrammed, to show how the networks of changes operate. For example, such variations as the /d/, /s/, and /zh/ sounds in *decide*, *decisive*, *decision* come about by rule rather than through whim. It also becomes more evident why certain sound-changes appear in the spelling, whereas others do not.

The various speech-sounds are submitted to a minute analysis into what are called *distinctive features*. That is, a phonetic symbol or a conventional spelling may serve as "reference label" for a given sound or sound-family (phoneme), but it is, after all, arbitrary and does not show the basic parameters that define such a sound and set it apart from the others in the language. Once an analysis has been made, then the phonemes of a language can be grouped into natural classes-groups of sounds which share one, two, or more of these "atomic factors" in common, such as highness, lowness, tenseness, laxness, liprounding, non-rounding, front and back quality, etc.

Such detailed analyses are rather like putting the building-blocks of the spoken language under a powerful microscope, so we must hasten to add that the authors do not keep up this gnat's-eye-view throughout the text. Far from it: they use "broad" or phonemic transcriptions where these are best, "narrow" or more careful phonetic symbols where these are needed, and conventional spelling where that is the wisest course. Indeed, their knowledge of just when to use which symbolism is admirable.

After the capriciousness of Traditional Orthography, it should be a relief to discover via this book that the spoken language which lies behind the spelling, contains an elaborate system, or rather, network of sound-systems, governed by rules and principles and patterns. Future editions of the book, and successors to it, will tidy up the system and make it clearer, but this is a most important pioneer effort and deserves attention from those in the field.

It is important to realize that despite the forbiddingly elaborate presentation of the English sound-pattern in this book, nevertheless this pattern is acquired subconsciously and entirely by ear, by quite young children. We should not underrate the intelligence or ability of young children as we so often do since anyone capable of mastering such an intricate system of systems surely deserves our respect. Educators should take this to heart: if children can acquire all the information in the English-sound pattern subconsciously and painlessly, then they can learn, just as easily, many other things that we put off teaching them until they are older. A great deal of time might be saved by applying new educational methods that might be suggested by examining this unconscious process.

While not directly alluded to in this book, this study of sound-patterning is necessary for any further progress in the development of reading-out-loud-machines, of speech-recognition machines, of phonetic, voice-controlled typewriters, or the like; and it is equally necessary for those who wish to develop improved writing-systems or orthographies for English. Without first analyzing the principles underlying the use of the sounds in our language, without doing so in the light of contemporary technological progress, we could not entertain much hope of improving their visual representation.

Ivor Darreg, Los Angles, Calif.

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1968 pp15,16 in the printed version*]

9. Phonics in Learning to Read, by Ellen C. Henderson, reviewed by Helen Bowyer

Phonics in Learning to Read, by Ellen C. Henderson, pub. 1967 by Exposition Press, \$3.00. 160 pp.

For the purpose of this review, the book falls into two parts – the first through page 117, the second, the remaining 53 pages. This second part the review will leave largely untouched, as it consists primarily of an attempt to implement the first part by a first and second grade teacher under the guidance of the author herself. Any general attempt at such an implementation would, of course be fundamentally affected not only by the pre-school life of the children themselves, but by the experience and the temperament of the teachers involved.

Miss Henderson's own conclusions to Part 1 of her book are more or less summed up in the lower part of page 107.

"Learning to read would be much simplified if changes were to be made in the spelling of some of the unphonetic words. The word *of* is the only one to use *f* when it does not represent its own sound. The *j* represents its own sound except in proper nouns such as *San Juan* and *San Jose*. The *p* would be phonetic if words which use *ph* were to be spelled with *f*. Then if silent letters were eliminated, four letters (*b, k, l, and w*, as in *thumb, know, talk, and answer*) would be perfectly coded in all words. If *t* were added at the end of words spelled with *ed* but pronounced with *t*, 13 of the alphabet letters would be completely phonetic. Instead of being faced with unphonetic words (*know, write, telephone, sleigh, laughed, should, through, shoulder, and so on*), learners would have more words to be recognized or remembered through the simple process of sounding."

But she has no hope that even this much regularizing of our present irrational spelling will be made in the foreseeable future. To be sure, advertizing has gone some way towards a wun-sound-wun-sien proclaiming of its wares. And the Pitman Initial reaching Alphabet has immensely simplified the process of "lurning too reed" for hundreds of thousands of beginners thruout the English-speaking world. But since, as soon as they become fluent in this new medium – at the end, that is to say, of the second or third semester – they must make the transition to orthodox spelling, she feels it wiser to "Find a way to succeed with the present alphabet."

And to this task she brings a wealth of knowledge of those 26 letters and of their perversion into the chaos in which they riot today, which makes this reviewer poignantly regret that she isn't in the forefront of that tiny minority of us who are asking for our young – for *all* our young, not just our beginners – such sane relationship of speech and print as not only the Spanish, Italian, Soviet, Finnish Turkish young are born into, but such as the 7 to 8 billion Chinese, old and young, will soon be blessed with.

In her decision to make-do with our present spelling, Miss Henderson is, to be sure, joined by the great majority of the proponents of "phonics." Most of them agree that a completely wun-sound-

wun-sien medium would revolutionize "lurning too reed" to the point where almost all six-year-olds, and a considerable proportion of the fives would find the process not only quick and easy, but delightful. What then, induces them to put off the reform for a generation or two – i.e. till the children, grandchildren and greatgrands of our present first graders start learning their consonants and vowels. And begin reading *for themselves* that "wuns upon a tiem, tthree lid pigz livd with thaer muther. and hwot hapend too jak haven bee kliemd th been stauk." If it is the opposition of the adult public they fear; they can evade that by confining the reform to the classroom. And introducing it there only year by year thru elementary school. By that time (six years, that is to say) some 32 million young Americans, aged five thru twelve or thirteen, would be reading as no comparable group of young Americans have ever read before. And for that very reason (reading being the basic tool of the classroom) they would be getting such a fine education as no elementary school ever attempts to impart today. And will have, quite probably, the finest minds which have ever entered Junior High. Because their higher mental attributes – their sense of consistency, of analogy, of cause and effect, of the logical relationship of things – would not have been systematically violated by the forced acceptance of such chaos as is found in our contradictory spelling.

But all this has been said again and again, and still school books run blissfully on ignorant of the advantages of an easily learned simplified spelling. And in the strikes of teachers all over for better pay and working conditions, there hasn't to this reviewer's knowledge, been a single one to send our present disastrous spelling to a museum, and give our Johnny an equal chance with Ivan (and Juan and Giovanni) to get the education demanded by this stupendous new world in which their adolescent^e maturity and adult age will be passed. And yet what could make a greater contribution to better education than an honest, reliable, spell-as-sounded print in all our textbooks?

Miss Henderson's book does show why consonants are useful in learning to read. She tells of the 8 letters (h, k, l, m, q, r, v, and w) that never represent any other sound than their own regular one (altho 4 may be silent in a few words). She notes that the 7 remaining; consonants (c, g, h, s, t, x and y) are used to represent and help 12 consonant sounds. 5 of these 12 sounds are spelled by single letters. The 7 others (ng, ch, sh, th, th, wh, zh) are spelt with 2 letters. Some of these are more reliable than others. Yet the exceptions are not too numerous but what they can be learnt by calling attention to the irregular function. She gives some rules for vowels but calls attention to the frequent exceptions to these rules. The test and try technique is explained, always accompanied by vocalized, then inner speech. This latter is a miraculous way in which all learners could use and all efficient readers do use the sounds of the seemingly unphonetic letters which can be rationalized into recognizable speech units. This sight-speech power is highly important. It is the tie between the spelling and the smooth flow of reading. It necessary to develop this for getting the context from the irregular words. Few treatments of the way to present phonics are as clean cut and interestingly presented as this book.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1968 pp17,18 in the printed version]

10. Appraising Reading Research, by Leo G. Davis

In her wonderful book "LEARNING TO READ, THE GREAT DEBATE" Dr Jeanne Chall laments that research reports are "shockingly incomplete", and that not one of the many educators she contacted mentioned any local adjustments based on research reports. – Perhaps most educators have noted most researchers are on the wrong track!

Thus the purpose of this sheet is to show that *most research is well outside the reading fields* – that orthographic reform offers the only true solution to our so-called reading problem:- and that no other factor has any more bearing on reading (decoding symbols) than on any other phase of cultural development.

Obviously, – except for inexcusable premature promotions, *the irregularity of t-o* is the only academic factor contributing to reading features, – as well as the only contributing factor over which we have *direct control*. Educators have absolute control over the orthography they teach, – otherwise they couldnt, possibly, have perpetuated so much confusion in that field! Thus, if they are not progressive enough to stabilize the alfabet, there seems no point in any academic research. People holding more respect for traditional confusion than for potential stability, are not apt to heed research in any field.

IMPLEMENTING REFORM:- Although coming generations must learn to READ t-o there is no logical reason for them to SPELL traditionally. Thus, simplified spelling could be effected practically without notice, – by systematically introducing it in the primary grades and then letting "nature take her course". Thus we would merely establish a transition period of "optional" spellings, during which oldsters would cling to the old, and youngsters to the new. Naturally traditional inconsistencies would automatically become obsolete with the passing of current generations without the slightest confusion.

But, in appraising research we cannot ignore "conflict of interests". Primary teachers cannot be expected to be enthusiastic about "initial teaching media" by which a child learns to read in one year instead of the traditional three, – because that would force two-thirds of them into new assignments, – if not dismissal. Nor can the supervisor be expected to implement innovations that would reduce his personnel, – because that would jeopardise his prestige as an executive, – and even his salary. Likewise researchers are not apt to be in a hurry about solving Johnny's reading problem, – because that would terminate their employment in that field. Thus, in judging any given project, we should consider the following questions. Is it within the reading field? Is it outlined comprehensively? Could it be implemented uniformly? Would it really solve anything?

Not too long ago this writer attended a lecture, during which a team of local teacher-researchers explained how they could predict the birth of a "south-paw". By using some kind of a fluoroscope, they can invade the mother's womb to compile statistics on the relative frequency with which the fetus wiggles rightwise and/or leftwise while developing his initial motor skills. But, unlike most lecturers in the research field, they didnt have any commercial products to sell, – not even a left-handed pencil or tablet, – much less a left-handed primer to be studied and read from right to left. However the most pertinent comment of the evening was their unconditional statement that the inconsistencies of t-o is *the major stumbling-block in learning to read*. Thus, inasmuch as neither of them suggested that "handedness" has any academic significance, it seems obvious that they were

just "moonlighting" without any thought of solving Johnny's reading problems. No doubt there are others of their ilk!

GENERAL PRACTICES: – Few researchers seem to have clear-cut ideas about what they are investigating. Projects are outlined (?) in ambiguous generalities, and subsequent reports generally end with something like "This report should be interpreted with caution." Thus, not knowing just what to look for, field workers compile statistics on all visible factors, – race, sex, age, nationality, environment, health, mentality, etc, – with no apparent thought of what may be done with such information. However it is this critics deduction that the arbitrary factors and countless combinations of countless variables in nature preclude any systematic adjustments based on such information. Further, there is seldom any specific suggestion, – except some form of "Buy this researchers lesson materials", – which generally turn out to be nothing more than just "another" primary text or work kit, – with nothing to identify what is supposed to be the innovation. Altho most promoters do coin labels for their gimmicks, the terms used are mostly ambiguous generalities. But, inasmuch as we are supposed to be giving normal children the best we have, its ridiculous to suggest that the slow learner might do better under some other programs; its the same as saying that he might do better with something less than the best. At least it has been this writers observation that all any slow learner needs is just MORE of the standard instruction, – and that the most practical way of giving him the extra help is to merely defer his promotion(?), – until he does make a passing grade, – a proven policy as old as education itself. In short teachers, who shunt this years "dummies" along to make room for next years, should be fired, – along with the principals who tolerate such practices!

FUTILE RESEARCH:- Taking orphan children from all races and nationalities, and placing them in the same institution, researchers have found that average reaction to identical conditions is quite uniform, regardless of race or origin. Even tho the average girl may make better progress than the average boy, segregation of the sexes solves nothing, because each group is still made up of slow, average, and fast learners. Nor would it suggest different texts or methods for either such group. Likewise, altho I-Q tests indicate the child's potentials, they do not suggest any need for different texts or methods at the various I-Q levels. Ditto with segregation by age. Altho cultural environment does affect academic progress there is nothing that educators per se can do about it. Likewise with family income. Nor does the number of siblings lend itself to adjustment by the teacher; at least it is hardly probable that distributing "the Pill" will be added to curriculums very soon. – Thus, compiling statistics in these fields seems hopelessly futile.

DUBIOUS INNOVATIONS:- Some promoters offer "linguistic" materials which generally turn out to be nothing more than the authors personal choice of vocabulary and subject matter, – features that have always been debatable factors of all academic texts. Others use the root word "language", but with the same neutral results. Then there are the "structured" lessons, – despite the fact that it is impossible to have systematic instruction without structured material. However, that label does suggest that current materials may be of dubious structure, – such as those based on the "look-GUESS" (whole word) approach. Some claim to have "individualized" lessons tailored to personal needs, despite the fact that the countless combinations of countless variables in human nature and literature, preclude any probability of getting the proper factors together, – or recognizing the right combination if stumbled upon via the law of averages, – a million-to-one "long shot"! Altho the computer is frequently classed as a "teaching" medium, it seems to be used mostly for testing. However, even tho it may, – by recording wrong answers, – indicate what the child does NOT know, it cannot be reliable for determining what he DOES know, – because the number of correct answers is bound to be diluted with a lot of wild guesses. Nor have we noticed any claims that the

computer is any more reliable than old-fashioned written exams. Thus it may be difficult to convince the tax-payer that robots are "worth the money". And there are those who refer to "creative" writing as a medium for teaching reading. Ridiculous! At least this writer is unable to visualize anybody using a word in his composition that he doesn't already read. And there is some discussion of "motivation" contributing to reading skills. However, although motives do stimulate effort, they do not "teach" one HOW to decode symbols. Without the "know-how" all motives are neutralized. And "flash-cards" are frequently mentioned as initial teaching gimmicks. However, even though they are wonderful for expediting recognition, a child must be able to recognize the word before seeing it on the card, – otherwise he just doesn't have any "recognition" to expedite. Some authorities (?) use a "category" approach, – projecting a block of words with a common vowel, like "cat, mat, tan, pan, rat, etc", and then waiting for the child to "discover" the consonants that distinguish one word from another. Although a child may, eventually, learn to recognize most words in such a group, waiting for him to discover the consonants precludes any schedule for implementing a bona fide reading study. Sometimes "fill-ins" are referred to as methods of instruction, – contrary to logic. Although filling in blanks does indicate the vocabulary one has already acquired, it doesn't constitute "instruction" in any sense of the word, – because there may be several words that would make sense in the given context, but do not carry the intended meaning, like "horse, car, train, boat, plane" on which to ride. Conversely, there may be several that mean the same, but are not the desired word, like "hut, cabin, house, cottage, etc." in which to live. Furthermore, under dubious prevailing practices, the child cannot spell the word he may decide upon, – otherwise there would be no question about his being able to read it.... No wonder Dr Chall found research reports "shockingly" incomplete! *Such dubious, projects just do not get results!*

CAPITALS:- as demonstrated in this paragraph, beginning as well as ending each sentence with its punctuation mark, as in *spanish, and using the asterisk to identify proper nouns eliminates all need for capitals as such . . further, knowing the kind of sentence to follow tends toward more comprehensive understanding, and toward better enunciation when reading aloud. .eliminating capitals would leave room in upper case for symbols of greater value. .obviously the all-capital telegram is our slowest orthography, because the uniformity in size and position of capitals retards recognition, – not only of the whole word, – but also of the letters themselves. .conversely, with their "raised heads" and "hanging tails" the lower-case consonants are not only more distinctive themselves, but also give whole words individuality. .thus all-capital orthography should never be used in initial studies. .capitals, if any, should mere enlargements – eliminating only the non-conforming capitals A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, L, M, N, Q, R, T, U, Y, would effect a 32% reduction in the number of symbols to be memorized, and free the distinctive symbols A, E, I, U, to serve as independent vowels in a *closer approach to fonetik spelling*.

INITIAL APPROACH:- Very few researchers, who do confine their efforts to the reading field, seem to have any clearcut idea of just what constitutes the initial approach to literacy. Most studies deal with literature and the pupil's reaction to subject matter, – rather than his reaction to the idiotic *inconsistencies of the orthography* in which it is projected. They look for subject matter to stimulate the pupil's interest in reading, – instead of looking for the *stumbling-blocks* which precludes such interest. Thus, just *being in t-o* automatically disqualifies most material as an elixer.

WHOLE WORD APPROACH:- Unquestionably the "w-w"(whole-word) experiment has turned out to be the most deplorable blunder in academic history. It not only produced countless youngsters who can't read, but also saddled us with a crew of teachers, *few of whom have any practical knowledge of the fundamentals of alphabetical orthography*. Expecting a 5-yr-old to develop a lasting mental picture of a whole word is basically identical to the "turkey-trak" approach to

literacy that has been a millstone around the Oriental's neck for eons. But worse yet, under current practices the child is expected to "figure out" words to which he has never been exposed, – and without any knowledge of what phonics we do have. Idiotic! With that kind of thinking (?) going into our school programs *its a wonder that any child ever learns to read!* As a natural result of the "look-GUESS" fiasco, current researchers are looking for "guessing" aids (clues) by which children may guess strange words. They havent done enough research to discover that there were no guessing aids prior to the w-w debacle, because children were taught to SPELL the words before trying to read them.

PHONICS APPROACH;- Inasmuch as most of our letters do play the same roles most of the time, most of our words (that is more than 50%) follow rather fonetik patterns. Thus t-o is basically fonetik, – even the inconsistencies do keep some 66% of the words from being 100% fonetik. But even at that the phonics approach is far better than the look-guess or "category" approaches. But as yet the proponents of phonic approaches havent made it very clear just HOW they implement what phonics we do have, – whether to pronounce words in context, or to spell them in isolation. Altho current phonics do give the writer a fair start toward spelling the desired word, they dont do much for the reader, – because there is no reliable method for determining what sound, if any, a given letter may be playing in a given word. Thus, *the phonics approach can never be very reliable until we stabilize the alfabet* and provide arbitrary rules covering exceptions.

SPELLING APPROACH:- Prior to the w-w fiasco ther were no "reading" failures per se, – because all up-coming, new words were listed as SPELLING exercises ahead of the narratives introducing them, and vocabularies of other texts were controled to minimize the chances of children encountering strange words,- until they had learned to use the dictionary , after which there was no instruction in reading (decoding). In the old-fashioned spelling class children were taught meticulous pronunciation, spelling, encoding, meaning, word recognition, self-expression (in defining words), all in one course. The initial "attack" on words was made in the SPELLING class, – rather than in literature. Altho we frequently forgot exactly how to spell a given word, we seldom failed to recognize it where it was already spelled. Thus there were NO "reading" failures, *just SPELLING failures, due to the idiotic inconsistencies of t-o*. Current researchers seem to look upon spelling as the result of reading, – rather than as the traditional approach there-to. They seem to expect children to "catch" spelling thru exposure, – like they do the measles.

INITIAL TEACHING ALFABETS:- As a matter of record, using reasonably *stable* orthograpy, in primary grades only, enables the normal child to complete his education one or more years ahead of those struggling with t-o from the beginning. According to this observers deduction, the major reasons for such astounding results are that the traditional *confusion* is postponed until the child has learned to read well enough to appreciate the potentials of literature and, being older, is mentally more *capable* of coping with inconsistency. Then, finding that about one-third of the traditional spellings (narrative count) are the same as he has been using, and many others are redily recognized, he experiences no frustration in reading t-o. Thus, it is no longer a question of proving a theory, – but of determining *which* revolutionary notation would be most acceptable to the most people, – public support being more important than academic perfection.

E-DIGRAF SYSTEMS:- The Simpler Spelling Assn. of America, and Simplified Spelling Society of England, have been sponsoring comparable systems, using a silent-E after each long vowel for several decades, – but *with no apparent success*. It is understood that the E-digraphs were used in the British experiment 1916 thru 1924. Inasmuch as the program was discontinued, – despite its 8 years of astounding success, it appears that the digraphs are not generally acceptable. Evidently most

people would rather continue relying on final-silent-E, double consonants, and context to distinguish between long and short vowels, – than to contend with a silent-E after each long vowel, – contrary to simplicity.

PITMANS "I-T-A" is a rather hieroglyphic modification of the E-digraph systems. Therefore, inasmuch as the digraphs were tested and discarded, *it is hardly probable that the I-T-A will ever come into general use*. Most critics look upon it as just another "flash in the pan" that will eventually burn out for lack of public support, – just as all its predecessors have died aborning. In fact it is reported that some schools have already abandoned their I-T-A programs. Altho some teachers volunteered to test the I-T-A, some parents agreed to furnish the "giny-pigs" they seem *reluctant to approve its adoption for general use*. Perhaps they are looking for something more conventional.

"FOOL-PROOFING" THE ALFABET:- As demonstrated in this paragraf, the alfabet kood be made "fule-prufe", – if we delete yuseless silent letters, – if the letters ar not permitted to pinch-hit for wun anuther, – if final-silent-E olways indikates a long voul in the last silabul, – if dubul konsonnts olways indikate a presedong short voul, – if "oo" olways sounds az in look", – if "ar" before a voul olways indikates the basik foneme hurd in "marry, merry, Mary", – if "er" iz olways soft and "ur" is olways stressed. Even nou "ar" olways sounds az in "are" before konsonants and terminally, – and final -A iz olways nutral in multi-sllabul words. Thus, thare iz no exkyuse for perpechuating inkonsistensys, – even tho the alfabet iz not truly fonetik spelling.

THE TEN-VOWEL ALFABET;- Inasmuch as the paired symbols A-a, E-e, I-i, O-o, U-u, are individually distinctive, we have had a ten-vowel alphabet for generations which belies the arguement that the dearth of vowel symbols precludes basically fonetic spelling. No doubt A, E, I, O, U, would be more acceptable to more people, as long vowels, than any kind of digraphs. All we need do is to just stabilize them as such, – the same as stabilizing the consonants.

BASICALLY FONETIK SPELLING:- az demanstrated in this paragraf, biy yuzing smal kapitals A, E, I, O, U, az long vouls, and a, e, i, o, u, az the short, WE HAV A 31-leter alfabet sufishent for basikally fonetik speling, – no nu leters, – no silent leters, – no nu kambinations, – no unorthadax yus av eny simbal, – no diakritiks. .yet WE RETAN mor tradishanal spellings and familyer paterns than eny uther basikally fonetik notashan yet aferd. .perhaps this orthography wood surv az wel, and be mor akseptabul tu mor pepul than *pitman's hiragliflik I-T-A.

SUGGESTIONS:- Let researchers forget about Johnny and his environment, and turn their efforts toward *implementing orthografik reform* in primary grades and subsequently extending it to all grades as current texts are consumed. Let them publish specimens of various proposals in newspapers and educational journals, with pro and con discussion of each, and clip cupons for readers to express their preference in the field of simplified spelling.

LEO G. DAVIS (PIONEER teacher) Palm Springs, Calif.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1968 p19 in the printed version]

[The diacritics are more like single and double quotes than acute accents and umlauts.]

11. World Language: *Sistemïzd Ænglish*

Boston, Mass., U.S.A.

ALIgrams

By ALI FIUMEDORO

(in Sistemïzd Ænglish)

Those who do not
understand
are always wanting
to command.

Thöz hü dü not
undrstand
ar olwäz wontën
tü cománd.

Changing the things
that don't need to be
is one of the signs
of insanity.

Chänjën thú thëngz
thát dö'n't nëd tü bë
iz wún ov thú sïnz
ov insánitë.

One should do
his very best
and leave to God
all the rest.

Wún shud dü
hiz verë best
and lëv tü God
ol thú rest.

The world
will never be
any better
than what the women are.

Thú würlð
wil nevr bë
enë betr
thán wút thú wimen ar.

12. Zonic

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Zone-Zonic-ic</p> <p>Each letter represents a single Zone of closely related speech sounds</p> <p>AT LAST A PRACTICAL PHONETIC SYSTEM!</p> | |
| <p>Easy to read Easy to write Only 33 letters No silent letters No double letters No digraphs Saves time and space Conforms with dictionary Each spelling verifiable Typewriters easily adapted</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Zonic Alfabet</p> <p>23 Prezent leturz (omiting K Q X) 4 Lang veelz (az in tra tre tri tru) 3 Nu veelz (az in lang hes lat) 3 Nu consonants (az in ein sin hin) 33 Total</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A practical wa tu rit hwat yu sa Savz ovur 10% in tim, papur & inc!</p> |
| <p>***SPEAKING IS SPELLING*** by William W. Murphy</p> <p>Read all about Zonic spelling in this 35-page booklet by the originator of this system.</p> <p>PARTIAL LIST of CONTENTS Sounds of the Zonic letters Examples (370 words) Twenty-third Psalm Gettysburg Address Star-Spangled Banner Verses from Shakespeare Proverbs and jokes in Zonic Zonic equivalents of dictionary symbols Answers to most questions</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Contest - Win Prizez</u> Test yur scil wih Zonic Speling</p> <p>Yuz he abuv Zonic Alfabet in he manur illustrated herin tu rit in hand leturing he complot furst vurs ev he patriotic song "America" begining,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>MI cuntre, 'tiz ev he</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Furst Priz \$10.00 Secund Priz 5.00</p> <p>A ti, if ens, wil be desided in favur ev he entre having he urlrest postmerc.</p> <p>Contest clozez Marc 1, 1969.</p> |
| <p>LECTURES GIVEN in the METROPOLITAN NEW YORK – NEW JERSEY AREA</p> <p>Address all communications to: ZONIC SPELLING SERVICE A nonprofit enterprise to encourage the uniform and orderly growth of Zonic spelling GLEN RIDGE, N. J.</p> | |