

# Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1974

Dedicated to finding the causes of difficulties in learning reading and spelling.

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## 1. Book Review

Noory, Samuel. *Dictionary of pronunciation*, (2nd edition), Mar. 1974. New York: A.S. Barnes & Co, \$8.95. pp 525+ xliii.

This dictionary is unusual – it is not intended as competition for the conventional dictionaries. It contains very few meanings – only when needed to clarify homonyms. However, each word is identified as to its part of speech.

Two modern developments influenced the author to make this dictionary. One is the modern computer which increasingly requires phonetic coding for its operation. The other is the application of phonetic principles in the teaching of reading and spelling in the schools.

The book starts with a 19 page chapter on "Why Johnny can't read" – an excellent thesis on the subject but differing from the sensational book by Rudolf Flesch. This one immediately acknowledges the lack of pronunciation giving English spelling as the culprit. Before one can learn to read a word, one must learn how to pronounce that word. The spoken language is what we learn first (or should). But all too often (!) the spelling of a word indicates a wrong or obsolete pronunciation. Hence the value and usefulness of this dictionary.

This chapter is followed by a 17 page discussion of the phonetic alphabet used as the pronunciation key. This consists of 40 symbols, 9 of which are digraphs, and 3 vowel letters with a macron for the long vowel (digraphs for the other long vowels), and a (') for the elusive sound (the glottal stop). This comprehensive book dispels the worry that a phonetic transcription of English is not possible because of the many differing dialects. To be sure, when there are noticeable variants in pronunciation, the other dialectal pronunciations being listed first.

Of the 58,000 entries, 45,000 are the phonetic spellings of common terms, and 1,300 are names of persons, places, names from the Bible, literature and legend, covering all but some rare words and names in English. Even some of these are included when interesting because of spelling and pronunciation

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1974 pp2,3 in the printed version*]

## **2. Beginning Reading: Shapes of the Letters, by Emmett Albert Betts, LL.D.\***

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That there is a need for consistent spellings of words in beginning reading cannot be gainsaid. This problem has been spotlighted by a very few scholars for generations. And, not like Mark Twain's weather, considerable research in various disciplines has hastened the day when this goal of an initial learning medium (or initial teaching alphabet) is to be realized.

Two factors in the development of an initial learning medium have been paid special attention:

1. The discriminability of letter forms in isolation (e.g. the letter *b*) and embedded in words (e.g., the letter *b* in *bat*).
2. Perceptual-motor skills required for reading and writing.

While this discussion deals primarily with these two factors, the reading processes are assumed to embrace two types of decoding:

1. Decoding writing into speech.
2. Decoding the message into thoughts.

### **Beginning Reading: Preparation**

A few unusual children are ready for beginning reading instruction at age two or three. Some learn the basics of beginning reading in the kindergarten, although this is not the sole purpose of the kindergarten. Most, not all, children are ready for reading at age six. But some exceptional children, for one good reason or another, may not be prepared for beginning reading until age eight or later.

Readiness for beginning reading cannot be predicted by referring to the calendar for the age of the child. Neither can it be predicted by the affluence of the home.

### **What's Ahead for Beginners in Reading**

Unless they are prepared for the activities, beginners in reading are up against many hard contradictions and confusions which can lead to *frustration*. Unless they have learned to cope with life, they may say, "to heck with it!" and withdraw from the situation by many NORMAL reactions to frustration: truancy, feeling ill when it is time to go to school, bed wetting from anxiety, avoiding reading matter, including the "funnies," developing a strong aversion to the teacher, and so on.

Teachers do have an opportunity to learn from experience, but too often administrative-supervisory staff and/ or parents put the pressure on teach ALL children to read at a certain age. Hence, the opportunity to learn from experience is defaulted. On the other hand, a parent may have only one opportunity to learn from experience. Then it is too late.

This situation is something like the laconic New Englander who was noted far and wide for his judgement. When a news reporter called on him to obtain information on how he had achieved his reputation, he replied, "From experience." He was further questioned on "How did you get experience?" His reply is classic: "From bad judgement."

Here is a partial list of some "Simple" learnings which may loom very large in the beginner's mind:

1. Reading a line from left to right. (Some foreign languages are read from right to left; hence, good judgement is exercised by teaching the child to read one language first.)
2. Identifying words from left to right.
3. Learning the alphabetic principle that some words -- too few -- have spellings to represent sounds, as in *sat*, *bet*, *hit*, *lot*, *cat* and *made*, *cake*.

This brings up the age-old problem of phonics -- to teach or not to teach. There are those who insist

on teaching phonics, regardless of learner confusion. Sure, the *o* and *e* in *home* signals a so-called "long" *o*, but what does the child do when he comes to *some*, *done*, *come* and *gone*? How does one teach a child the use of phonics -- the relation between spellings and sounds -- on *you*, *one*, *bread*, *friend*, *great*, *any*, *shoe*, *was*, *has*, *use* (verb or noun), *grew*, and a host of other commonly used words? Maybe -- just perhaps -- some attention needs to be given to the use of *consistent spellings* for sounds in *beginning reading*. In the meantime, blind zealots and unscientific traditionalists continue to "brag" about phonics -- one of the chief contributions to the frustrations of some beginners in reading.

4. Learning to read like one talks--with rhythm.

The teacher can drill on the isolated word and but this word is shortened to *an'* or *'nd* or *'n* in speech, as in "*this and that*" or "*Tom and Jerry*" in conversational speech. The same is true of *or* and a number of other words that connect ideas.

5. Learning to interpret punctuation, as a period or a question mark that signals the end of a sentence. Or, the quotation marks and comma to signal a direct quote. Learning to interpret punctuation marks is one small part of reading rhythmically -- one index to understanding, or comprehension.

6. Learning to write as correlated with learning to read. Learning to copy words or to write them from memory requires a whole complex of skills. Not the least of these are the visual-motor skills which require (1) adequate vision, (2) motor coordination, and (3) the simultaneous use of visual-motor skills.

### **Visual-Motor Skills: Research**

Here are 22 conclusions based on experimental research:

1. Learning to respond to significant contrastive features (*similarities* as in *c-o* and *differences* as in *b-d*, *c-e*, *f-t*; curve versus straight and diagonality of letters and other two-dimensional geometric forms) is a formidable task for beginners in reading. These distinctive features include (a) ascenders and descenders as in *p-b*; (b) left to right orientation as in *d-b*, *p-q*; (c) closure as in *o* versus *c*; (d) angles as in *A*, *K*, *M*, *N*, *X*, *V*; (e) symmetry as in *M*, *X*; (f) shapes; (g) positions; (h) sizes.

2. Letters in isolation and embedded in words represent different levels of complexity. Hence, reading is, among other processes, a special case of form discrimination and perception.

3. The process of discrimination is one of using cues to distinguish one form from another; e.g., *circle* or the letter *a*. Hence, discrimination emphasizes letter and word *forms* as stimuli.

4. The process of *perception* is arriving at the structure of the stimulus which is consummated in meaning -- orthographic, linguistic, semantic. That is, naming the form as a triangle, use of grammatical structure of a phrase or sentence as an avenue to meaning, especially for function words (e.g., *of*, *and*), the referent of the letter *a* as representing the sound /a/ in *cat*, or the "life-meaning" of a word such as *cap*.

5. Visual-motor skills can be developed via determination of achievement level for initiating instruction and the development of *concepts* of the figure (e.g., diamond) and guided figure reproduction.

6. 'Word perception as well as discrimination skills are *learned*; mature readers making minimal use of distinctive features (physical characteristics) of mere forms.

7. The development of visual-motor skills -- when achievement is raised to the accurate reproduction of a horizontal diamond -- increases significantly the ability to differentiate between word forms.

8. Developmental activities for visual-motor learning increases the range of differences among five-

and six-year-olds; that is, learning of skills and abilities increase the need for differentiated instruction via individual and/ or group instruction.

9. Confusion errors produced from visual-motor learning activities include (a) reversals, (b) rotations, (c) size change, (d) perspective change, and (e) transformations (e.g., from line to curve).
10. Visual-motor deficiencies are one possible cause of difficulty in beginning reading activities.
11. Visual-motor deficiencies contribute significantly to variability of achievement among "lower-class" groups; some of these children are "successful" and others who experience extreme difficulties are low achievers.
12. Observed deficits in visual-motor functioning tend to be non-organic; that is, those skills may be improved by estimating the achievement level and adequate instruction beginning at that level.
13. A significant number of errors in visual-motor performance may be a sign of organic brain pathology, but this diagnosis is made by a competent neurologist.
14. Visual-motor deficits may be complicated by emotional conflicts.
15. Degrees of rotation tend to be more significant than mere incidence (or evidence) of rotation; hence, scoring systems increase the discriminating power of rotational errors
16. Distinctive features of geometric designs have relational properties; the greater the number of distinctive features the fewer are the confusion errors.
17. Distinctive features of geometric designs are *learned*.
18. Multi-sensory learning (e.g., visual-auditory, visualhaptic, etc.) is more effective than unisensory channel learning because there is intermodal transfer.
19. The criterion of visual-motor learning is an increase in the specificity of patterns, distinctive features, and other properties (e.g., the angles of a triangle).
20. Visual-motor skills comprise a complex of subskills which are among the prerequisites for beginning reading.
21. Diagonals of forms (e.g., letter *A*, and triangle) appear to be lower in discriminability than curve-straight features (e.g., letter *P* versus letter *R*). Hence, the need for beginning with reproducing the circle when pre-testing indicates this need.
22. Movement appears to be a necessary condition for perception, at least in the primitive stages of development.

### **Written Symbols for Sounds**

The development of an initial learning medium, using consistent spellings, requires attention to two factors among many: discriminability of letter forms and essential perceptual-motor learning processes. To yield an initial learning medium which can be processed rapidly and effectively by the young minds, additional research is needed on these and other identifiable factors in learning. From this mosaic of factors, an interdisciplinary team of productive scholars can and will generate a closer fit between writing and changing language (speech).

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1974 pp3,4 in the printed version]

### 3. English Around the World: a General Question, by Sir James Pitman, KBE.

\*Reprinted from *English Around the World*, no. 10, May, 1974. (published by the English-Speaking Union of the U.S.A., New York, N.Y.).

Is it possible that the English language might more easily – and so sooner – become world wide if it were regarded as *a*, not *the*, *lingua franca* of the human race?

This question is prompted by Mr. Peter Desbarats' most excellent appreciation in the May, 1973 issue entitled, "*Quebec-a Question Mark*." Moreover, his appreciation raises further questions – whether one language can ever hope to become the *lingua franca* of the world; whether it could be practical to plan for more than two languages and hope for world acceptance; and if no more than two, which other language should be chosen as the duplicate.

A single language would at first seem to be the ideal whole loaf. Certainly it will be for only good and sufficient reasons that two half-loaves should be allowed to (appear to) compromise the ideal.

The words "appear to" have been added because it may well be that Man, as the animal which uniquely communicates by words, is greatly better for knowing a number of alternative words covering the single concept of magnitude such as *big, large, great, huge, colossal, gargantuan*, not to mention also a number of those 135 or so other adjectival synonyms for magnitude listed in *Roget's Thesaurus*. Surely we are all bettered when we have an alternative language for thinking – as well as for speaking. Indeed, *one lingua franca* may well not be the ideal.

Oddly it has been the English who have been most averse to learning a second language. Perhaps this has been because they for so long regarded the study of Latin and Greek as a *sine qua non* of cultured education. Perhaps too it has been the demise of those already "dead" languages as advantageous objectives of study which has erected for us English our emotional blockage against learning any alternative languages, and more against learning a living language as a second one.

In contrast, those who speak French have by and large been keener to learn a second language than the English and Americans – even though they often take pains to conceal their knowledge whenever to do so is not to their disadvantage, and English in particular. Mr. Desbarats reports that the Quebec Government has made "the teaching of English as a second language... a more important part of the curriculum in French language schools," – even though the inhabitants of France and of Quebec Province, with English as a second language, are (understandably) reluctant to use English orally to those who are English-speaking and are held to be too idle, or contemptuous, of adding French as theirs.

Is it too much to expect all English-speakers to learn French, all French-speakers to learn English, and those of all other languages to learn both – or at any rate one of the *linguae francae*? I suggest that there are very great practical advantages for everyone in accepting such a policy.

Furthermore, the timing for such a new policy for the English-Speaking Union is now very apt. Modern thought is coming to recognize that the traditional orthographics (T.O.) of English, and *les formes imptimées traditionnelles* of French, constitute a very considerable handicap to the learning of either language in its oral – and so incidentally also in its literate – form, and that an initial learning medium (I.L.M.) designed to systematize that language's traditional orthography with no effective disturbance of the conventional forms, will enable both the literacy and the oracy of that language to be learned more easily, and also conjointly.

Each such an I.L.M. needs to differ so little from its ordinary medium as to be immediately legible by anyone used to reading the ordinary medium. It needs to be so compatible that it may be dispensed with as soon as it has accomplished its only purpose – that of teaching literacy in the conventional form, and oracy with as acceptable an accent as may happen to have been spoken into the teaching tapes.

Anyone wishing to study the principle of these new techniques (at present available only for learning English and French as second languages) and specimens of the appropriate I.L.M.'s may read about them in *The Incorporated Linguist* (London: Lloyds Bank Chambers, Eng. Jan. 1972).

Copyright in the use of the media has been given freely to all. What is now needed is a determination of policy to urge not one single, but two, recommended *linguae francae*, with English and French as the duplicates; and the authors and publishers to make use of what has become so aptly available.

**Ed. note:** Sir James Pitman, grandson of Sir Isaac Pitman of shorthand fame, is perhaps best known in the as designer of the 44-character Initial Teaching Alphabet, used in the early grades in many of our schools. His opinions certainly deserve consideration. As for the editors of EAW, we have no objection to bilingualism or indeed multilingualism as long as English is one of the languages listed.

*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1974 pp4-7 in the printed version]*

#### **4. Research in Reading; Grassroots Variety, by Harvie Barnard\***

\*Tacoma, Wash.

This research report, while based entirely on actual classroom teaching experience, is wholly unconventional. No references are cited. No supportive statements are offered. No statistical analysis of data is given, and no correlations, standard deviations, data tables, distribution curves, means, averages, or mathematical proofs of reliability are offered. In short, the findings herein reported are presented as the unadorned facts and observations as determined by a mature and experienced teacher working with pupils in a very unique teaching situation, in a jail of the U.S. Army, euphemistically known as the "stockade" school at Fort Lewis, Wash., a unit of the Gen. Ed. Development program.

The pupils were all men, physically mature but mentally children. Their "academic background", was identical -- 100% dropouts and 100% delinquent. Their reading abilities were similar. All were reading from three to ten years below grade level. Plainly speaking, they were all illiterate, functionally non-readers, with little reading experience beyond the "comic" picture books which for the most part had become disgustingly boring and provided neither entertainment nor educational development.

Altho some could "read" within the confines of a limited vocabulary, their main comprehension came from cartoons, pictures, and from personal observation. Their communication could be described as being about 95% verbal, 4% physical contact, and the rest a kind of empathy. In some cases there was, at times, a strong emotional reaction which welled up strongly as a sort of feeling which superseded all the usual communicative processes. For all practical purposes, all were illiterate as far as reading was concerned, and they did not write at all.

Preliminary testing, much to my surprise, indicated that the greatest deficiency of these men was in basic arithmetic, not language. Standardized achievement tests showed the mathematical performance to be at a grade level of about 4.5, very few scoring above 6.0 grade.

The lowest rating of all was in attitude toward learning and evaluation of self. Virtually all had long since given up on school or education in any sense of the word. All believed themselves to have been "short-changed" by the system, especially the school system. And I could not help but agree with their appraisal.

The first step in attempting to teach these "unteachables" was not only to gain their respect and confidence, but to convince them that they could learn, and next, that it was worth their while to make an honest effort to learn -- no small order!

Since this report is not primarily concerned with math, I will pass over that part of the work with this short summary. All, 100% of the group who remained in the class after the first two weeks, (about a third of the original group were lost by discharge or by transfer to other penal facilities), survived to learn sufficient math in six weeks to pass the General Educational Development tests, presumed to be "High School Equivalent." In truth this was more nearly equivalent to 8th grade achievement, and included basic arithmetic through fractions, decimals, and percentage, with a smattering of geometry and problems in business arithmetic. Their progress, however, was sufficient to convince me that these people, despite all their handicaps, could learn about as readily as the "average" junior high school student, provided the material offered them was presented in a

logical, straightforward, no nonsense manner. Fortunately for them and me, math appealed to these people. It was logical and dependable. Numerals had a definite, dependable, consistent value, whether it was great or small, expressed as a decimal, a fraction, a percentage or a proportion. There was something wonderfully true and valid about a symbol which could be relied upon to represent something definite, dependable, and not subject to the variations, vagaries and eccentricities of pronunciation and spelling which, in their mode of expression, "screw up" the English language. And again, I had to agree with them that they had been screwed up, fouled up and in general mixed up and frustrated by their unfortunate early exposure to a system which to them did not make sense.

Altho illiterate, these young men were not stupid, dumb, nor wholly unreasonable. It must be admitted that a considerable number were stubborn, and demanded, at least at the beginning of our teacher-pupil relationship, that that they be met at least "half-way," and in some cases more than half-way. They were totally fed-up with the totalitarianism of their early contact with "education" and the dictatorial methods of army administration. Altho firmness and uniformity of behavior and obedience were necessary to military procedures, these men had for the most part come into the army with the idea that "the cards were stacked" against them. Their initial attitudes to me, (their teacher, they referred to me as "teach"), conveyed very positively the idea that they did not trust authority in any form, whether it appeared in the form of the school, the law, or the army. And it was apparent also that this characteristic "blockage," (which undoubtedly had much to do with their military delinquency), had begun with their early "educational" experiences.

Not only was it essential that I overcome this deeply ingrained resentment toward authority, but also it was obvious that I must, without direct questioning, locate and if possible remove the key "log" or road block which has caused this unwillingness to conform or to accept much of the status quo of the traditional conventions of education, the military, the schools, the language, and in general the system which has resulted in their confinement in a military jail, the stockade.

This was, to say the least, a challenging situation, and I not only accepted it but was able to convert an adverse condition into what has been aptly described as a "learning situation." Briefly, this was accomplished by complete frankness and honesty, and required many statements, admissions and even confessions on the part of the teacher which might have resulted in his being "fired" out of any normal school-teaching job. I agreed in general with the pupil's belief that sometimes teachers make mistakes, that possibly principals, school boards, and even parents could be mistaken about the logic and some of the "facts" which were presented in the public schools. This was heresy, dissent, and disloyalty (in a sense) to the system and the status quo, but it was the truth, and these unfortunate delinquents were desperately in need of some agreement with their point of view.

I was unable to pinpoint their basic problems with literacy and communication until the latter part of our work with math. Their progress with arithmetic was remarkably good until we proceeded from computations involving number symbols to problems involving words, "story problems."

As long as we stayed with numbers, whether multiplication, division, fractions or decimals, things proceeded smoothly. But when problems were written out as words, in sentence form, progress virtually stopped. They were afraid of words. My analysis, superficially, was that they were not "reading." To put it more plainly, they had not learned to "decode" or to translate the written word into a VISUALIZATION.

Therefore, to make use of their basic arithmetic we had no alternative in many cases but to go back to attack the problems of basic language, the meaning of alphabetical symbols, which in a practical sense, in order to make any sense to the reader, amounts to a conversion of words into a mental picture, which I choose to call "visualization."

It became obvious in working with these illiterate adults that they had not developed or learned the "art" of successful reading-visualization. They could not "see" the words or the concept that the word – the printed word – represented. Altho they understood the spoken word reasonably well, their vocabulary in terms of written or printed language was almost nil.

How, or why, had this happened? The answer(s) could undoubtedly fill volumes; yet my analysis of the problem is relatively simple. Failure to "learn," or to accept those things which impinge upon the human consciousness, in a large measure depends upon the receptivity of the individual. To be accepted by the human "computer," the memory bank or mind of the learner, whether child or adult, there must be a satisfactory degree of consistency in the input – that material which is presented. If the data is contradictory, inconsistent, or disorganized, or confused, the "mind," or the computer, cannot or does not accept or properly classify the information. This is much more important in initial learning than at any other time. Confusion causes failure to learn – which brings on frustration, especially in the early stages of any learning process. This can be disastrous to the learning of any program. During this highly sensitive stage of the process, motivation may be severely hurt, temporarily at least, or cut off entirely. And generally, without motivation there will be little real progress, if any. In summary, any factors which discourage motivation, (and there can be many), or any inconsistencies which lead to confusion and frustration, will impede or "road block" the learning process.

I do not believe that anyone will disagree with the concept that learning to read is a basic learning process, any more than they would deny that mastery of the art of reading is vitally important to the process of acquiring either a skill or an education. While there are many simple skills which may be acquired by observation and/or imitation, a well developed reading ability is fundamental to the higher levels of learning.

My real problems with these men began when I asked them to write. It was impossible in the beginning to know whether they could not or would not, but it was obvious that they *did* not. When, after much persuasion, I was able to coax a minimal amount of "composition" from them in the form of a letter to someone, the root of the difficulty became apparent. They could not spell. They had no concept of a sentence, and had no knowledge whatever of capitalization or punctuation. And they were trying to hide these deficiencies, lest they be ridiculed or criticized, by the convenient means of simply *not writing*. The only condition under which they would write anything at all was after I had agreed that no one would be required to sign or otherwise identify his work.

The immediate disclosure which came out of these initial attempts at writing was that their efforts were essentially phonetic. Somewhere along the path of initial instruction they had been foiled by the fact that there was no dependable connection between sound and symbol, or between pronunciation and spelling. Their thinking was too logical to accept the illogical nature of English spelling. For example, if Jack, Jill and Jim were spelled with a "J," why not Jorge, (rather than "George")? "Oh, but there are inconsistencies in the spelling of names!" Well, then, what about *cat* and *kit*, *sit* and *city*, *can* and *kin*, *fat* and *phone*, *right* and *wrong*, *dumb* and *dummy*, *said* and *sediment*, *throw* and *through*, *cough* and *coffin*, *bough* and *bought*, *buzz* and *busy*, *magic* and *majesty*, ad infinitum.

An initial innovation in my program was to supply all pupils with dictionaries, paperbacks at 50 cents a copy. Most of the men had never been introduced to a dictionary, and they looked upon these limited abridgements as a kind of "code book," or as a secret entry into the mysteries and esoteric anomalies of the English language. Within three weeks, all of the initial 35 copies had been taken, swiped, and "borrowed," a very significant step toward learning to read, the best steal they'd ever made.

I had some difficulty replacing these first 35 copies and was cautioned by the military personnel in charge of the school that I should devise some method to prevent the theft of these "code books." They had been turning up under mattresses, in clothing, blankets and pillows, which proved to me that the fellows had been doing a bit of homework, purely voluntary, and obviously based on the belief that learning to read has some connection with discovering the meaning of words, *printed words*. I was convinced that the purchase of these 50 paperback dictionaries was unquestionably the best investment the army had ever made, a basic investment in human development.

But these dictionaries, however popular, were not the complete answer. These people, essentially lojikal in their thinking, persisted in the "wild" noshun that words should be spelt as they were sounded, not as the dikshunary said. On this point I was beat, up against a real challenge. Several heretical noshuns passed through my mind: Esperanto, World English, the "new" simplified spellings advocated by Mark Twain, Theodore Roosevelt, Carnegie, or even i.t.a. as presently taught by the adherents of John Downing and initially developed by Sir James Pitman. Although I had felt equal to the various challenges arising up to this point, I was now ready to admit defeat. Even these "10,000 words, simply defined," presented a degree of confusion because of the considerable number of exceptions to logical phonetic spelling.

In good conscience I could not condemn the system – the status quo – although it was perfectly obvious that it was the system more than it was the teaching, or the lack of "readiness," or the deficiency of background, which had derailed or road blocked these people at a very early stage in their "education." All that I could do at this point was to confess and admit that the schools were, in spite of their avowed good intentions, hide-bound and tied down by the traditional inconsistencies of the "King's English," the spellings which we inherited from those early scholars and printers of the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, not to mention the ancient Aramic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and the conglomerate distillate of all these early tongues which evolved into the primitive English of the Wycliffe Bible.

Having already established a fairly good rapport, (we seem to have picked up a little French along the way), my confessions of illogical thinking and inconsistent spellings of our "modern" English were accepted, though somewhat condescendingly by most of the students. Having already been exposed to a world of compromised confusion, they could (or could) realize that little consistent effort had been made to put "a new show on the road."

But how about the kindergartners, first and second graders? Our so-called logical explanations, however simple and consistent, are not likely to impress little Jonnie, Kate, or Jorje. The time could be better invested in teaching something *teachable* rather than in attempting to explain the *unteachable*. What luck would you have in trying to program a computer with contradictory data? (Ask Paul Hanna!) A "self-respecting" machine, whether electronic, mechanical, or organic (the human brain), would stop, balk, reject, or blow a fuse!

And that, in essence, is why we have confused non-readers, illiterates, academic failures, "unteachables," dropouts, and delinquents. In consequence, we have either the criminally inclined or the emotionally disturbed, and my conclusion is to be proclaimed loud and clear: *The continuation of attempting to teach that which is inconsistent, illogical, confusing, and frustrating to young children will continue to result in illiterates, incompetents, the emotionally disturbed, and the criminally inclined!* That this is true has never been successfully denied, and yet, unwilling to accept the obvious truth, the leaders of our great institutions of learning, our politicians, and our government, seem complacently satisfied with the status quo! The reason? Those who "have it made," or think they have, are *afraid of change*, and that includes a lot of us who are locked up in the stockade, the local jail, the penitentiary, or the "home for the disturbed."

And so. . . what? It would seem reasonable and lojikal to expect those most interested in solving the problems of education to take immediate steps toward progress in *removing the basic road blocks* to the teaching of reading. We are presently spending millions, if not billions, of dollars each year "to improve the teaching of reading." Witness the publications of the National Reading Center, a subsidiary of the U.S. Office of Education, a branch of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. There is little doubt that some good is being accomplished with their series of condensed discussions on "Spelling and Reading," and "Helping the Beginning School Child with Reading" and others of a related nature by a group of reading specialists from Indiana Univ. Such efforts, while helpful, cannot be more than partially successful because they do not get to the *fundamental* problem of resolving or eliminating the underlying obstacles to the teaching of reading in schools, mainly our deceitful system of English spelling.

Altho in their Number One folder on reading problems, titled "reading and Spelling," it is frankly stated, "learning to spell English is more difficult than learning to spell most other modem languages, just as learning to read English is more difficult than learning to read other languages which have more *consistent* systems." While the direct connection between spelling and reading is clearly implied by Dr. Leo Fay, (Indiana Univ.), he does not suggest a solution to the situation. Dr. Fay points out that, "The value of our alphabetic writing system is often lost because of the inconsistencies of pronunciation. Early in his life the child encounters (for example), *goes-does, to-go*. Spelling too, is illogical: *bear-bare, their-there*, and many other like – unlike sets of words add to his confusion in both reading and spelling. Some words he must simply memorize, others have rules and sub-rules." Altho Leo Fay's folder, "Reading and Spelling" points out that various programs for simplifying or reforming English spelling have been proposed ". . . to improve both reading and spelling skills," it would appear that the educational profession as a whole, or that the presumed leadership thereof, had little comprehension of the problem, or are reluctant to attack it in a determined or consistent manner.

It is the plight of the little children, the little people who are faced with the truly difficult and confusing problem of *learning* to read, which seems to have been ignored. Those who by sheer perseverance and memorization have mastered the reading problem have, over the years since the daze of the McGuffey reader, taken the attitude, "We had to 'sweat it out,' why make it any easier for these kids? If we make things too easy to learn, school will be too simple." It is these people, most of whom are semi-literates, who do not comprehend the severity of the problems of illiteracy or the tragedy of the drop-out. They fail to recognize that our national problems of crime and delinquency are very closely related to academic failure, and that flunking out or dropping out of school is most often a direct consequence of deficiency in reading or failure to read well enuf to "pass." Failure to "make the grade" leads eventually to giving up, quitting school or "flunking out," and it is from this group that we get most of our delinquents.

So what are we waiting for? More "research," more "studies," more publications, or more action? The National Education Assoc., the greatest professional organization in the United States, or in the entire world, could get some action if they got behind the bill presently gathering dust in congressional committee files. Before the turn of the century a program to implement spelling reform or simplified spelling was approved and endorsed by virtually every leading academic association and organization in the United States. An international meeting was planned to implement action. At the 1911 conference of the Simplified Spelling Society and the Simplified Spelling Board, they unified their thinking to implement lists of recommended simplified spellings, and by 1916, 72% of all the leading universities and colleges in America had received, acknowledged and accepted the spelling recommendations of the Simplified Spelling Board. 25% of the colleges and universities agreed to use those spellings in official correspondence and publications, and only 18% voiced opposition to the recommendations. But there was no official governmental legislation to implement these recommendations. But the most unfortunate deficiency

in the whole program appeared to have been the oversight of extending this simplification program to the *teaching of* spelling and reading in the primary grades.

The simplifications of the Board had the support of President Theodore Roosevelt, who, with his characteristic enthusiasm for everything in which he believed, went "overboard" with the Board's recommendations, and issued a personal memo to various governmental bureaus and department heads giving his personal endorsement to a list of some "300" words. This proved to be a mistake. He was bucked by a hostile congress who felt that such orders were their prerogative, and it became a deterrent to the acceptance of the idea that the spelling of English words could be changed or in any way improved. Here again, the need to solve the problems of teaching reading to beginners, the primary learners as well as foreigners who hoped to learn English, were ignored. It is quite probable that the somewhat violent enthusiasm of the embullient "TR," Teddy Roosevelt, did more to kill academic support for simplified spelling than any other single factor. Mr. Roosevelt's action tended, in a sense, to make the matter of progress in language and spelling modernization a political issue, thus defeating the idea of simplification and perhaps accounting for a fading interest in the progressive developments of the Spelling Board between 1907 and the early twenties.

At the present time a bill has been proposed "To establish a National Spelling Commission to reform the spelling of English words (applying to the U.S.), to publish the United States Official Dictionary, and for other related purposes." This bill is presented in ten very clearly stated sections, copies of which are available from Newell W. Tune, Editor of this magazine. At the present time this bill lies dormant, but not dead, in the office files of several different congressmen who have been approached on this subject. But congressmen are just people, more specifically political people, which means that they respond mainly -- perhaps only -- when prodded.

There is one organization in the United States which holds a very sharp stick, as far as prodding is concerned, and that is the N.E.A., the National Education Assoc. We wonder why there has been no action on the part of the N.E.A. in this matter of eliminating the basic causes of illiteracy in the United States? But the national organization of the N.E.A. is also staffed with political minded people, and that means getting elected to office, holding a job, and staying on a payroll. And in turn, in the past at least, that has meant not rocking the boat, diligently polishing the apples, being a good "solid" conservative, and adhering to the principles of the glorified status quo. Isn't there someone, someplace, somehow, with the courage *and* the common sense to light the lamp of PROGRESS IN EDUCATION?

The electric light would never have been invented if Mr. Edison had depended upon the traditional status quo of the science books of his day. He had to utilize the new idea of a vacuum to make the electric light work. Possibly we could now reverse Mr. Edison's process, take the vacuum out of Education and the N.E.A. and turn on the light of literacy and improved communication. Isn't there anyone willing to try? There *must* be someone! Could it be you?

*[Spelling Reform Anthology §5.3 p78 in the printed version]*  
*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1974 p7 in the printed version]*

## **5. Tuward a Moer Piktueresk Speech, transliterated into a modified W.E.**

Mobster testifieing befor an investigaeting comitee: "ie refuez too anser, on the ground that it miet tend too eliminaet me."

Man in resteraent: "This chicken aa laa king taests liek the chicken abdicaeted."

Sien up! On scool blackboerd during egzamz: doo yoor oen think.

"If yoo lurn too reed buuks, yoo ar never aloen. (Kay Starr)

"The oenly tiem marrej iz 50-50 iz when thae ar boeth that aej. (Bill Balance)

"Ie hav graet respect foer the trooth – and uez it froogaly. (Bill Balance)

"Deturminaeshon regardz a faeluer az oenly a step on the roed too sukses." (Newell Tune)

"Free advies iz jeneraly regarded az not wurth whot it costs." (Newell Tune)

Reeding iz a gesing gaem in which the winerz stae in scool and the loozerz drop out." (Samatha Jitters)

It's beter too hav bliend feer than blind cueriosity." (Chris Tune)

"Noebody can jump down yoor throet if yoor mouth's shut." (Graffiti)

Speling iz lurning aul the inconsistenseez English wuudn't hav if it wur riten foeneticaly." (Newell Tune)

"Perfoermans iz az much a mater ov persistens, practis, and paeshens az it iz ov perfecshon." (Newell Tune)

An ouns ov "keep yoor mouth shut" beets a tun ov eksplanaeshon.

Noe wunder wee ar aul dizzy -- with revolving credit, spieraling priesez and soering taksez.

Sins the former ruelerz ov Rushya wer cauld the zar and zareena, thaer children shuud'v bin cauld zardeen.

Halloween. kook's niet out. Friet niet: this iz the tiem too plae it gool.

Ekspens account: det ov a saelzman. Victim ov fortune-teller: seersucker.

[*Spelling Reform Anthology §11.2 pp159–164 in the printed version*]  
[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1974 pp7–12 in the printed version*]

## 6. Oracy and Literacy, by Sir James Pitman, K.B.E.\*

\*Reprinted from *The Incorporated Linguist*, vol. II, no. I, Jan. 72

The part played by the learning medium in the acquisition of both language skills in a second language.

### Reviewing the Past

In the past consideration has been concentrated on the efficiency of the teacher and his methods rather than on the medium in which the teacher, the method and the student are required to function. It is true that the International Phonetic Alphabet (I.P.A.) had a vogue as an initial learning medium, but it has today too small a following to be relevant, save as a pointer.

The great success of the Initial Teaching Alphabet [1] and its wide adoption by many thousands of teachers throughout the English-speaking world has brought to the surface the need to consider the fundamental questions of language learning and, in particular, whether a medium which is greatly more efficient in teaching literacy to those who have oracy in English might not be at least as beneficial in teaching both oracy and literacy to those who have neither.

### Teaching English Oracy

When it comes to teaching English oracy as well as literacy, a modification of the Initial Teaching Alphabet (i.t.a.) is clearly desirable. A medium designed for teaching only literacy to those who already have English speech as their first language can hardly be the best also for the different purpose of teaching both oracy and literacy in English.

### Contrasting Purposes

A medium (such as i.t.a.) for the initial teaching of literacy to those who already speak a mother tongue is all the better for being no more than a reading system – i.e. one which proceeds from grapheme to phoneme based no better than on a broad transcription – seeing that a reading system need not be perfectly phonetic, or even phonetic at all, (ours is only partly).

That any reading system which is only partially, or not at all, phonetic should come to be easily read may seem surprising, but this nevertheless has happened in a number of languages, no doubt because learning to read and write has followed, not preceded, learning to listen and speak. Thus the skilled speaker of any language who becomes later a writer and reader is able to anticipate each word and supply any missing word (or a satisfactory synonym) to overcome any misprint, or even blank in what he is reading. This he does because he enjoys the benefit of context which enables the reading system for that language to be effective (when learned) notwithstanding that the system may be only very imperfectly phonetic, as in the case of English literacy, or not even phonetic at all – or even alphabetic -as in the case of Chinese literacy. [2]

This the reader may well concede when he appreciates how he is able to forestall, or later to retrieve, what words he needs to complete the context, and how readily misprints are correctly read and how legible can appear a passage ..... contains blank spaces in the places of some of the printed .... This happens because . missing .... are supplied ...the reader, provided he is a skilled .... and is thus able to infer from ... context clues adequate to identify the .... words. This he is enabled .. do by ... knowledge of the language and .. the subject covered. Thus a medium for reading may not only be very imperfectly phonetic but not even alphabetic at ..., as the reader will have discovered from his success in reading a short passage containing two misprints and thirteen spaces. [2]

### **A difference in purpose**

However, a medium intended for the initial teaching of oracy as well as literacy needs to be up to a point a writing system as well as a reading system, that is to say one which is alphabetic to a higher degree – a degree which nevertheless can never hope to be absolute. [3]

That which is to be presented to the learner of speech in any unknown language must take much less, indeed very little, for granted: the learner must be assumed to be totally ignorant of the sounds of the new language and of the character-to-sound system, and to need to be taught both the sounds and the alphabetic system as well as their combinations in every word to be spoken or read – while of course being also taught their meaning.

Ordinary i.t.a. is a reading system designed for the purpose of teaching reading to those who already know English. It cannot unmodified be best also for the other and different purpose of teaching speech.

### **Modifications for this different purpose**

How, then, should i.t.a. be altered for the purpose of teaching English speech? What phonetic clues need to be added and how can "Speech i.t.a." [4], in differing from ordinary i.t.a., supply them without sacrificing the precious advantage of similarity to Traditional Orthography? [5]

It may seem that the modifications in the specimen on this page are very few and unimportant. They are in fact many and very important. They seem few and unimportant because they give the additional phonetic clues with no disturbance either to the shapes of the 44 characters of ordinary i.t.a. or to the spellings with them. The sentences remain as easily readable by all who can read English in T.O. as those printed in ordinary i.t.a., because all the characters and all the spellings are unchanged. They are very important because they make ordinary i.t.a. sufficiently phonetic to allow the learning of oracy and literacy to proceed in parallel complementarily, and vice versa.

### **Variations in stress and in vowel sound**

It has been possible, without any disturbance of compatibility with ordinary i.t.a., to indicate not only three degrees of stress, but also two additional vowels. [6] Primary stress is represented by black type, secondary by ordinary type, and absence of stress by smaller type. This difference in size offers a choice of "position" – either raised or pushed down in relation to the line of print. The employment of the smaller characters (in the lower of the two positions) thus provides not only an indication of loss of stress, but also a symbolization for the vowel change to the unstressed "schwa" – the vowel spoken in weak syllables such as those in "metal", "continent", "pencil", "atom", "upon", "picture", etc., and in the weak forms of words such as "are", "to", "that", "would", etc. Similarly, the positioning of the smaller characters in the higher position provides not only an indication of loss of stress, but also a representation of the unstressed "schwi", as I have called it, the vowel spoken in the weak forms of words and syllables such as "be", "been" (and such as "the" in front of a vowel or of "Y", in such conjunctions as "the onion", "the United States", "the yellow submarine"), etc., and of the weak syllables in "equator", "before", "Sunday", "committee", "dotage", "printed", etc.

It will be noted from the specimen of Speech i.t.a. on this page how much additional phonetic information has been supplied – all without any departure from the characters used or the spellings employed in ordinary i.t.a.

## Where I.P.A. falls short

az every reader will not the international  
phonetic alphabet is widely used as a medium  
for teaching listening and speaking, but with  
great a departure from the forms of  
traditional orthography (T.O.) that teaching of  
reading, writing and particularly of spelling in  
T.O. is greatly vitiated.

thus the great advantage of speech i.t.a. is  
that which it may be used just as effectively  
as I.P.A. to teach listening and speaking, it  
offers also a much more effective tool in  
teaching reading, writing, and especially as  
research has established, even spelling also.

az 'evri 'ri:de wri 'nəu, ði mte'næʃnəi fa'netik  
'ælfəbet iz 'waɪdli 'ju:zd əz ə 'mi:diəm fa  
'ti:tʃiŋ 'li:snɪŋ ənd 'spi:kɪŋ, bət wɪð səu 'gɹeɪt  
ə dɪ'pɑ:ʃtə frəm ðə 'fɔ:mz əv tʃə'dɪʃnəi  
ə:'θɒgrəfi (T.O.) ðət 'ti:tʃiŋ əv 'ri:dɪŋ, 'raɪtɪŋ  
ənd pə'tɪkjələli əv 'speliŋ ɪn t.o.ɪz 'gɹeɪtli  
'vi:ɪeɪtɪd.

ðas ðə'gɹeɪt əd'vɑ:ntɪdʒ əv speeç i.t.a. iz ðət  
'waɪt ɪt meɪ bi 'ju:zd 'ðʒɑ:st əz ɪ'fektɪvli əz  
ɪpɑ tə 'ti:tʃ 'li:snɪŋ ənd 'spi:kɪŋ, ɪt 'nɒz  
'ə:lsəu ə 'maʃt mɔ:ɪ ɪ'fektɪv 'tʃu:ɪ ɪn 'ti:tʃiŋ  
'ri:dɪŋ, 'raɪtɪŋ, ənd 'k'evənʃəsli əz ɪ'stʃ hæz  
ɪs'tæbliʃt, i:vn 'speliŋ 'ə:lsəu.

The above text has been set in Speech i.t.a., the text following is in the I.P.A., as contrasting specimens. [\[6a\]](#)

## Why I.P.A. falls short for that double purpose

The I.P.A., after all, was conceived internationally for a different purpose. Consequently in aiming at representing the speech sounds of all nations, the I.P.A. needed to sacrifice to a very high degree compatibility with the traditional orthography of any one national language. That this is so is clearly seen by comparing the above two passages, and by further contrasting the forms of the same passage translated into French and reproduced both in the I.P.A. and in l'Alphabet d'Apprentissage (a.d.a.) which I have proposed.

lə lektœr n e pa sũ savwar kə l alfabe fonetik  
ēternasjənal (A.P.I.) e larʒəmūt ytilizə kəm  
mwajē d ūsɛpmũ də l ekut e də la parol, mez il  
e tɛlmũ diferũ də l alfabe e dez epelasjɔz  
ordina:r ← fɔrmz ēprime tradisjənel → (F.I.T.) kə  
l ūsɛpmũ də la lektyr e də lekrytyr ū F.I.T. e  
grɑ:vmūt ūdɔmɑʒə. ēsi lə grāt avɑtɑʒ də  
l alfabe d aprũntisa:ʒ (a.d.a.) aplike a la parol  
rezid dũ la pɔsibilitɛ kil œfr, tut ū puvūt ɛtr  
ytilize avɛk yn osi grũd efikasite kə l A.P.I. pur  
la formasjɔ də l odisjɔ e də la parol, d ɛtr  
œn uti boku plyz efikas pur l ūsɛpmũ də  
la lektyr, də lekrytyr, e mem kyrjɔzmũ, kəm  
lə rɛʃɛrʃ l ɔt etabli, də l ortograf.

le lecteur n<sup>e</sup><sub>t</sub> pa<sub>s</sub> saŋ<sub>s</sub> savoir  
que l<sup>e</sup>alfabe foneti<sup>q</sup><sub>e</sub> i<sup>n</sup>ternasional  
(A.P.I.) e<sub>t</sub> larjemen<sup>t</sup> utilisee comme  
moi<sup>y</sup><sub>i</sub>ŋ d<sup>e</sup>en<sup>se</sup>gnemen<sup>t</sup> de l<sup>a</sup>ecoute e<sub>e</sub>  
de la parole, mais il e<sub>t</sub> tellemen<sup>t</sup> diff-  
erē<sup>t</sup>, de l<sup>e</sup>alfabe e<sub>e</sub> dees eepelasjɔns  
ordinair<sup>es</sup> — forms i<sup>n</sup>primee<sub>z</sub> tra-  
disjionell<sup>z</sup> — (F.I.T.) que l<sup>e</sup>en<sup>se</sup>gnemen<sup>t</sup><sub>t</sub>  
de la lecture e<sub>e</sub> de l<sup>a</sup>ecriture e<sub>n</sub>  
F.I.T. e<sub>t</sub> gravemen<sup>t</sup> e<sup>n</sup>dommaje. i<sup>n</sup>si le  
grā<sup>t</sup> avā<sup>n</sup>taje de l<sup>a</sup>.d.a. appliquee a la  
parole reeside dan<sub>s</sub> la possibilitee  
qu<sup>e</sup>il offre, tout e<sup>n</sup> pouvan<sup>t</sup> ɛtre  
utilisee avec une a<sup>u</sup>ssi grā<sup>n</sup>de  
efficacitee que l<sup>a</sup>.P.I. pour la  
formasi<sup>o</sup>n de l<sup>a</sup>audisi<sup>o</sup>n e<sub>e</sub> de la  
parole, d<sup>e</sup>ɛtre u<sup>n</sup> outi ba<sup>u</sup>cou plus  
efficace pour l<sup>e</sup>en<sup>se</sup>gnemen<sup>t</sup> de la  
lecture, de l<sup>a</sup>ecriture, e<sub>e</sub> meme  
curieusemen<sup>t</sup>, comme l<sub>e</sub>z rech<sup>e</sup>rch<sup>e</sup>,  
l<sup>e</sup>o<sup>n</sup>t e<sup>t</sup>abli, de l<sup>a</sup>ortographe.

### **Why Speech i.t.a. and a.d.a. excel for their purpose**

It will be noted how the two media, i.t.a. for English and a.d.a. for French, have been designed nationally, that is to say to maintain compatibility, each with its own traditional orthography. [7] The two media differ greatly from the I.P.A. In that they are both national, whereas the I.P.A. is international. The greater compatibility of both Speech i.t.a. and a.d.a. with their respective orthographies is convincingly demonstrated by the comparisons of each with the corresponding I.P.A. specimens. [8]

### **Where T.O. also fails – and fails even more badly**

Where T.O. is used to teach the child both to listen and speak as well as to read and to write, great difficulties arise, but only because T.O. is misleading, and so harmful [9] as the medium for teaching oracy, and for teaching literacy while oracy is being also taught.

### **English spelling the barrier**

It is generally admitted that English is one of the easiest (and one of the most valuable) languages to learn. Equally the misleading spelling of English is regarded as the great stumbling block – which makes it in practice among the most difficult. This cause of difficulty is, however, as we have now discovered, not inherent in the English language – only in the employment of T.O. as the medium for the earliest teaching – that is to say before a language skill in oracy (as well as literacy) has been developed. [10] Experience has now shown that the employment of an initial learning medium can eliminate much difficulty in those early stages – and with no subsequent ill-effects on the learner. In the past we have in ignorance accepted as inevitable a difficulty which can be circumvented. Everyone will admit that the spellings in T.O. are misleading and even contra-indicative of pronunciation, instead of being helpful. It has been only for that reason that the visual form of the language has been hitherto withheld from the child – who is thus taught literacy only when he has learned the spoken language.

### **Where Speech i.t.a. overcomes the difficulties**

Thus not only has the I.P.A. been shown to fall short in its great departure from the patterns of T.O., but also T.O. has been shown to fall short in its so many contra-indications of pronunciations. Speech i.t.a., however, has been shown to combine the merits of both without the demerits of either. This is because Speech i.t.a. combines a high degree of that phonetic assistance which the I.P.A. affords with at the same time a high degree of compatibility with T.O. It is therefore an ideal initial medium for the learning of both oracy and literacy as complementary studies.

### **A positive aid**

Indeed, because it is both highly phonetic and highly compatible, Speech i.t.a. enables the learner to learn listening, speaking, reading and writing together with comprehension, *pari passu*, during each learning period, including the very first period. In so doing, his ability to read and understand a great many of the words which he may see around him, notwithstanding that they are printed in T.O., will have been largely assisted without damage to his pronunciation. [11]

Thus all three of his senses may be involved supportively (and no longer conflictingly as in T.O.) – first his sense of hearing /wuns/, then his sense of seeing "wuns", then his tactile sense not only in speaking /wuns/ but also in writing "wuns" – so that kinaesthetically the movements of his lips and vocal organs, as well as those of his fingers, hand and arms, are working in supportive harmony with his language experience in his two other senses. All the time too he will begin the transition from literacy in i.t.a. to literacy in T.O. With only few exceptions (of which "once" above is an

example) the words he already knows in a passage are sufficiently alphabetic to be very easily guessed in context. Thus his earlier success in simultaneously learning oracy and literacy, so that each complements and supports the other, is accompanied by evident success also in the medium in which his literacy will finally continue.

### **Is the phonetic harmony close enough?**

Might it be advisable to make the relationship between the visual and the auditory, the auditory and the visual, even closer? Could Speech i.t.a. excel even more in the merit of indicating pronunciation without losing unduly its high degree of superiority over the I.P.A. in its compatibility with T.O.? What advantage would there be in adopting one particular "accent" of spoken English and excluding all others, and employing an even "narrower" system of representation for that one which would thus need to be chosen?

The number of changes in order to make Speech i.t.a. agree even more closely with the more perfectly phonetic I.P.A. passage would be few and of little significance in value. [12] The issue is moreover more academic than practical seeing that, as will be shown later, the needs of compromise between the two differing teaching aims, oracy and literacy, involve a balance between the two aims in which the aptness of i.t.a., for learning literacy must be dominant once its aptness for oracy has been found – to be adequate for that other purpose.

### **A question of degree**

The question, however, may with advantage be considered whether Speech i.t.a. ought to be left alone or be made even less [13] perfectly phonetic, even at some sacrifice of its aptness as a writing system. What then are the pros and cons of greater perfection and what is the proper balance between a reading and writing system?

### **Greater phonetic perfection not worth it**

It is evident that the i.t.a. characters and spellings could be adjusted to give the phonetic information more accurately still – even up to the highest degree of phonetic representation which the I.P.A. can provide. This, however, could be worth while only if the purpose were to teach English speech, and with a perfect English accent – that, for instance, of Received Pronunciation (R.P.) if that were to be chosen. In which case the writing system would need to be phonetic to a high degree. [14] It would need, however, to be a different writing system if the choice of accent were to be different, depending for instance on whether the purpose intended for a learner were to be perfection in R.P. or a Mid-West American accent – or an Australian or a Lancashire accent. Each writing system will need most certainly to be different if the learner aims at so exact a pronunciation of that particular variety of English speech that he will be mistaken to have been born and brought up in educated circles in the South of England or, as the case may otherwise be, in America, Australia, etc.

### **Perfectionist or functional**

Such a perfection in learning English as a second language is, however, for a very small minority only. The great majority are satisfied with a mastery of English speech which enables them, while communicating rapidly and accurately, to be congratulated on their accent as well as on their functional skill, well aware that the native listener is nevertheless making no false suppositions about the speaker's birth and upbringing.

### **Compatibility with the traditional literacy**

The decision to aim with Speech i.t.a. no higher than such a (high) functional standard has enabled

Speech i.t.a. to succeed in the double aim of teaching speech to the standard required and of maintaining complete compatibility of Speech i.t.a. with i.t.a., and so to retain its compatibility with T.O. which is so dramatically demonstrated by the comparison between the I.P.A. [Fig. 2] and Speech i.t.a. [Fig. 1] It has no doubt been right to sacrifice an even higher degree of phonetic perfection for the more practical aim of winning for the learner a high degree of communicative competence and a good (but acceptable) "foreign" accent. Furthermore, in aiming no higher than this, [15] Speech i.t.a. has been able to attain its objective without tying itself to any one particular "accent" R.P., American, Australian, or any other – but of allowing all options as to choice of accent to remain open for a determination by the accent on the talking tapes.

### **An acceptable accent**

Thus Speech i.t.a. is indeed suitable for the teaching of English speech with whatever accent may be desired. All that is required is that the Speech on the tapes shall be in that family of pronunciations which is desired. The accent of those whose speech is recorded on the tapes will establish the particular grapheme-to-phoneme relationships which have been determined by the speakers on that tape. The particular writing system will thus be inferable from the characters in relation to their sounds on the tapes and the speech on the tape will establish whatever phonetic relationships are intended for the learner. [16] The medium will thus remain primarily a reading system in which, while the print is standard and invariable, the grapheme-to-phoneme relationships may be varied at discretion. In other words, Speech i.t.a. functions as a writing system for teaching the particular pronunciation and accent chosen for the tapes and as a reading system from which the transition to T.O. is very easily made. [17]

### **Stopping another Tower of Babel**

It is greatly to be hoped that the pronunciations on the tapes to be used in conjunction with the books will be chosen with discretion – that is to say, within those restricted limits which radio, television and the films maintain. Indeed, the teaching and wide use of minimally differing versions of English speech may well become a most valuable by-product from a general acceptance of Speech i.t.a. Thus Speech i.t.a. could yield an improvement even more socially valuable and important than the main achievement of teaching, the English language (in at least four of its manifestations) much more successfully and easily. It is generally agreed that English speech is becoming "Babelized" as Latin, was earlier. It is thus most important that further building of the tower should be stopped, and that those storeys of it which have been already raised should be razed to the ground – in the opposite meaning of those respective "heterographic homophones". It will be a happy day if the general acceptance of an Initial Speech Learning Medium – and a wise choice of the pronunciations recorded on the tapes – were to bring it about that the ordinary man-in-the-street of New York, Melbourne, Lagos, Singapore, Bombay and London could sit round a table communicating in, say, Jamaica, each in his own version of English speech freed from those interferences of variant pronunciations which impede functional communication and make inter-communication by speech so often irksome and even sometimes impossible. This is an aim as feasible as it is desirable, as was shown by the success of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill when they were able to speak, each in acceptable English, to vast English and American audiences notwithstanding the differences in their pronunciations. [18]

The proof of the pudding has been – and will continue to be – in the eating. I must therefore not anticipate the task of reporting the successes which Speech i.t.a. has enjoyed over the past 16 months in The Gambia. This task the Editor has entrusted to Mr. G. O'Halloran. It must now suffice, in paying tribute to his work in getting Speech i.t.a. tried in The Gambia, to conclude by

reminding those concerned with the teaching of English that wherever the national policy of a country is to adopt English as the language of education, national progress and prosperity are the issues at stake. The success of such a policy will depend on the first year or two at school, when young children [19] will seek to learn listening, speaking, reading and writing in a new language for which our present alphabet and spellings are a stumbling block and the reverse of helpful.

Permission has been given to all who wish to employ the Initial Teaching Alphabet (including Speech i.t.a.) and l'Alphabet d'Apprentissage, without licence and without royalty, fee or restriction other than that the use must conform to the designs of each of the characters and to the established spellings with them.

Speech i.t.a. is protected by patents in Britain and a number of countries, and all three by copyright in the name of the Foundation. However, the legal position will be used only to protect the medium from "Babelization", so that those who buy materials may be assured that what they buy conforms to the common standard, and so that teachers and children may not find themselves misled into teaching and learning with a variety of media all purporting to be, but not being, what they are described to be. Moreover, publishers and printers may thereby be equally assured that there is a common standard.

All may also be assured that no variations in the alphabet or spellings, which might render what they have produced less saleable, will be initiated or tolerated by the Foundation.

### Notes

[1] "There is no evidence whatsoever for the belief that the best way to learn to read in traditional orthography is to learn to read in traditional orthography. It would appear rather that the best way to learn to read in traditional orthography is to learn to read in the initial teaching alphabet", is the conclusion from P. 235/6 from "i.t.a.: An Independent Evaluation: The Report of a Study Carried out for the Schools Council on the use of the Initial Teaching Alphabet as a Medium for Beginning Reading with Infants". F. W. Warburton and V. Southgate. 1969, W. & R. Chambers and John Murray.

[2] It is arguable that a reading system such as T.O., which misleads the reader by its abuse of its alphabet, is even worse than one, such as Chinese, which at least gives no false alphabetic directions, because it gives none.

Misprints: are, legible

Total blanks: which, words, the, words, by, reader, the, missing, to, his, of, all, blank.

[3] The impossibility of achieving phonetic perfection even in the narrowest of possible writing systems is well brought out in the following extract from Clause 36 of the Will of George Bernard Shaw:

"I desire my Trustee to bear in mind that the Proposed British Alphabet does not pretend to be exhaustive as it contains only sixteen vowels whereas by infinitesimal movements of the tongue countless different vowels can be produced all of them in use among speakers of English who utter the same vowels no oftener than they make the same finger prints. Nevertheless they can understand one another's speech and writing sufficiently to converse and correspond."

[4] It used to be called "World i.t.a."

[5] The short paragraph on page 2, shows that the additional phonetic information can be supplied with virtually no sacrifice of similarity – to i.t.a. and so to T.O.

[6] Intonation may be also indicated, just as it is sometimes indicated when employing the International Phonetic Alphabet (I.P.A.). The space for the conventional markings is generally provided between the lines. Such space may as easily be provided when Speech i.t.a. is printed.

[7] For instance, the i.t.a. characters *ch* and *ou*, which are so helpful in learning the literacy and oracy of "church" and "out", need to be used in French for helping the learning of two very different sounds, those of *chanson* and *ouvrier*.

[8] Because the I.P.A. aimed to be international, it needed for example to preempt the character *j* to represent one particular sound. In choosing to maintain compatibility with that character's value in the traditional orthographies of the German and Dutch languages, it necessarily grossly breached compatibility with the traditional orthographies of the French, English and Spanish languages, where *je* greatly departs from "je", *dʒam* from "jam", and *xwan* from "Juan". As will have been seen in the specimens of English (Speech i.t.a.) [Fig 1] and of French (l'Alphabet d'Apprentissage) [Fig 4], the English word *used* is spelled in Speech i.t.a. as *uexd*, not *ju:zd*, and *just* as *just*, not *dʒʌst*, and the French word *cas* as *ca*, not *ka*:

[9] c.f. "Once upon a time" – which is not pronounced as /onky upon a timme/, which it ought to be if "on" is alphabetically /on/ and "tim" /tim/. And what about /wuh/hossel/? Few readers will recognize the sounds thereby indicated as relatable to those in /hɒz/. For instance, too, in the word "they" there is no sound which is represented normally by "t" as in /ten/, none by "h" as in /hat/, none by "e" as in /egg/, and none by "y" as in /yellow/; and if it were to be suggested that at least "th" (if not also "ey" – c.f. "eye") is a digraph and represents the sound in /with/, what about the four other uses of "th" in /shorthand/, /thin/, /Thames/ and /Southampton/, where it has four other values for that digraph, namely: /t/h/, /th/, /t/ and /th/h/?

[10] That T.O. is eventually not a stumbling block to pronunciation is shown by Lewis Carroll's poem in "Through the looking glass". None of his hundreds of thousands of readers, who were skilled in reading in T.O., had any difficulty in correctly pronouncing the "nonsense" words which they had never before either seen in reading or heard in listening: 'Twas brillig and the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe;' etc. The reader automatically rhymes "toves" with "stoves", rather than with either "doves" or "moves".

[11] Some 80% of words in T.O. which the learner already knows will be sufficiently close in form to their equivalents which he has read in Speech i.t.a. for comprehension of T.O. to be possible with little if any hesitation.

[12] A technical paper has been prepared showing in relation to the passage [Fig.1] what would be the changes that could be made to Speech i.t.a. were it thought desirable to direct it to the Received Pronunciation only (as the specimen of the I.P.A.) and to represent that speech version thus exclusively. If copies are desired they may be obtained from the author at The i.t.a. Foundation.

[13] Ordinary i.t.a. is a version of Speech i.t.a. which sufficiently meets the alternative of whether

Speech i.t.a. could be made less perfectly phonetic.

[14] The trials of Eliza Doolittle in submitting to the teaching of Professor Higgins with his 130 vowels will be well known to those who have read or seen Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion" or attended a showing of "My Fair Lady".

[15] The acceptance of a somewhat less perfect phonetic representation of speech does not at all prevent those who use Speech i.t.a. from attaining the highest standard of English in whatever dialect is represented to the learner auditorily. That such perfection is sometimes attained even when using T.O. indicates that it is the "ear" of the learner for very fine phonetic distinctions and the speech of the tape, and of the teacher and of others, which together produce the high quality of his listening and his speaking. However, Speech i.t.a. accompanied by tapes and a similar auditory example, are able to produce the same high quality – only more easily and quickly.

[16] There will be more than one grapheme to only one phoneme in some cases: cf. the Lancastrian "buck" and "book", the Scottish "pull" and "pool", the American "bomb" and "balm", the Canadian "cot" and "caught", etc. This, however, is no departure from the alphabetic principle in representing phonemes – only a duplication of characters for a single phoneme – as in general is "c" or "k" in "cat" and "kitten". It is after all only in encoding – spelling – that there is importance in a one-for-one phoneme-to-grapheme relationship. In decoding, where the relationship is the different one of grapheme to phoneme, there may be more than one grapheme for a given phoneme provided, however, each grapheme represents (as it does in Speech i.t.a.) only that one phoneme.

[17] It is interesting to reflect that a totally deaf and dumb man who could read but not lip read would approach any reading medium as a reading system and not at all as a writing system. English print to him would be as little a phonetic writing system as Chinese pictographs to speakers of any of the differing Chinese spoken languages.

[18] What is needed is a listening system – one in which the variations in pronunciations are restricted, as they are in our reading system in which the variations are restricted, in the case of the conjunction, to five: AND, And, and, and, &.

[19] Children at this early age are imitative to a high degree and very competent in their imitations. The ability of children in The Gambia to approximate in their speech to the speech of English children recorded on the tape has been quite noticeable and very encouraging.

[*Spelling Reform Anthology §3.1 p40 in the printed version*]

## Section 3 Viewpoints on Spelling Reform

This section is devoted to giving quotations of opinions of well-known or famous authors on the subject of spelling reform.

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1974 p13 in the printed version*]

### 7. Viewpoints, by Emmett Albert Betts\*

\*Research Prof. Graduate School, Univ. of Miami, Fla.

This VIEWPOINTS column is written for one chief purpose: to direct attention to crucial problems in the development of a system of writing from inter-disciplinary points of view. This purpose is based on the premise that scholars in linguistics, orthography, psychology, pedagogy, and cognate disciplines need to be recruited to achieve the spelling reform that will command respect and the support from academia.

One of the critical dichotomies is the emphasis on reformed spelling per se by one group and the view by another group that spelling is only one facet of orthography. It is this writer's opinion that this dilemma may be resolved by inter-disciplinary approaches to the development of a spelling system for beginners in reading. At the same time, the ultimate goal of general spelling reform is kept at least within peripheral view.

Dr. Robert A. Hall, Jr., an internationally recognised linguist, recommends a phonemic approach to spelling reform:

"If we are to 'start from the bottom,' our first concern must be to analyse the sounds with which humans speak. Clearly it will not do, for several reasons, to begin our analysis simply with the letters used in our conventional spelling. The 26 letters of the Roman alphabet are by no means sufficient to represent even all the sounds of the English language, to say nothing of all those which the human vocal apparatus is able to produce. Furthermore, the use which our conventional spelling makes of these 26 letters is, in many instances, inconsistent and capricious, so that we could not base any rational or accurate analysis on them, either in alphabetical order or in any other. How, for example, would we go about analyzing "the sound of the letter *c*," when it is used in so many different values (as in *carrot*, *cent*, *indict*, etc.) and when the sounds for which it stands are also represented by other letters, as in *karat* and *scent*? The result could only be a hopeless hodgepodge. (Hall, Robert A. Jr. *Introductory Linguistics*, New York: Chilton Books, 1964, p.36.)

Dr. Robert F. Biehler, a reputable educational psychologist, has made a significant beginning in alerting psychologists to the need for action:

"The English language developed with no thought of the problems of generalisation or negative transfer. The unsuspecting child is forced to deal with all kinds of inconsistencies. For example, a first-grader learns how to write *I* and then discovers it is wrong to use *I* for *eye* or *aye*. Because English is not spelt phonetically, the regular alphabet causes many problems for children learning to read. (There are 22 different ways the sound of *I* is spelled in different words.) (Biehler, Robert F. *Psychology Applied to Teaching*. Atlanta: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974, p.368.)

In brief, at least one linguist recognises the need "to start from the bottom" – with the phonemes to be represented by spellings. And educational psychologists who have concerned themselves primarily with learning are being reminded to begin serious efforts to evaluate the medium (spelling) – one of the *whats* of learning.

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1974 p13 in the printed version*]  
 [Vowels with acute accents should have single dots above them instead.]

## 8. Orthography: Phonemes and Dictionary Respellings, by Emmett Albert Betts

Researchers concerned with initial teaching orthographies deal directly with symbolization of segmental (stressed and "unstressed" syllables of words) and suprasegmental (e.g., intonation) phonemes. Because both phonemicists and phoneticians tend to invent their own symbols (e.g, the barred *i* /*ī*/ to represent speech sounds, alphabeteers may avoid confusion and save much time by using dictionary respellings based on phonetics.

Also, researchers on initial teaching orthographies find an elementary school dictionary, especially one usable in the primary grades, to be more nearly relevant to their needs. Dictionaries for use in high school and colleges and unabridged dictionaries tend to record phonetic variations in *respellings*, adding complexities and distinctions unnecessary to consider in the development of a phonemic initial learning medium.

The 1970 edition of G & C Merriam *Webster's New Elementary Dictionary* (distributed by American Book Co.) is a very satisfactory dictionary for phonemic respellings. For example, the respellings often record the pronunciation of a word in isolation and in conversational speech reflecting intonation (phrase unstressing):

<i>Word</i>	<i>Respelling</i>	<i>Word</i>	<i>Respelling</i>
and	/ənd, and/	or	/ər, ór/
for	/fər, fór/	nor	/nər, nor/

This dictionary also records alternate pronunciations:

aunt	/'ant 'ánt/	hog	/hog, 'häg/
duty	/'düte, dýüt-e/	new	/'nü 'nyü/
half	/'haf 'háf/		
often	/'ot-ən, of-tən/	'rut/	root/'rut,
roof	/'ruf, 'ruf/	route	/'rut, 'raut/

G & C Merriam *Webster's Student Dictionary* (distributed by the American Book Co.) records additional information on respellings which may not be relevant to the development of an initial teaching orthography:

<i>Word</i>	<i>Elementary</i>	<i>Student</i>
creek	/'krēk/	/'krēk, 'krik/
just (adverb)	/jest 'jəst/	/(,)jəst, (,)jɪst/
nor	/nər, nor/	/nər, (')no(ə)r/
season	/'sēz-n/	/'sēz-- <sup>ə</sup> n/

A caveat: There is an old wives tale still extant to the effect that the first respelling given is the preferred pronunciation. On page 32a, *Webster's New Elementary Dictionary* is this clarification:

"Your dictionary may give more than just one pronunciation for some words just as it gives more than one spelling at some entries. All pronunciations given are correct. The one given first is as frequent in the United States as any pronunciation that follows it, and it is often more frequent.

Pronunciations vary for many reasons. People in one part of the country may use one pronunciation rather than another. Some people may just like the sound of one pronunciation better. A frequent explanation is:

'We've always said it that way. Why should we change now?'"

[*Spelling Reform Anthology §4.4 pp.60–62 in the printed version*]  
[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1974 pp14–16 in the printed version*]

## 9. On Reforming Written Chinese by Wen Hua

August 10, 1973. *Peking Review*, No. 32

THE written language of our country, said Chairman Mao in 1951, must be reformed and oriented to the use of a phonetic alphabet as is common with the world's other written languages. He added that alphabetization of the Chinese characters requires much preparatory work and before realizing this it is necessary to simplify the characters in order to facilitate their present-day use. In 1958, Chairman Mao called on all cadres to learn *putung hua*, the "common speech" which is the standard spoken Chinese.

Chairman Mao's instructions are the guiding principle for reforming the Chinese written language.

### Necessity

Chinese characters currently used constitute one of the time-honoured written languages with far-reaching influence in the present-day world. Historically, they have made indelible contributions over the past several thousand years. These characters still serve as a media which we must use today and for a considerable period of time to come, and they will continue to play their due role. However, we have to admit that the Chinese characters – ideograms – have their serious drawbacks mainly because they must be learnt and memorized one by one since each has its own special form. Most characters require numerous strokes and are complex in structure, not to speak of the total number of characters. The commonly used ones number around 5,000 and these together with those used in specialized fields of work, the names of people and places and classical writing amount to somewhere between 8,000 to 10,000. Since the Chinese characters are difficult to pronounce, recognize, memorize, write and use, the Chinese people have long wanted a language reform. But in the old society their hope was no more than castles in the air. It was only after the masses of the people were liberated politically and economically under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and demanded raising their cultural level that reform of the written language has become realistic.

While engaging in the cause of socialist revolution and construction, the masses are eager to master the written language as quickly as possible so as to study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and obtain cultural and scientific knowledge. But the complicated and difficult characters are an obstacle to their efforts. Hence the necessity to reform the written language.

The advantages of reforming the characters are manifold. It helps lessen the students' burdens, improve teaching quality and shorten the time for study, all favourable to implementation of Chairman Mao's proletarian line on education. It creates favourable conditions for typing, printing, telecommunications and other work to become highly mechanized and automated as well as computerized. It also helps strengthen the unity of our country's various nationalities and facilitates the study of the Chinese language, both spoken and written, by foreign friends, thereby promoting mutual study, friendship and unity between the Chinese people and other peoples of the world.

A written language never remains unchanged. Its development is governed by its own objective law. The history of both Chinese and foreign written languages proves that they generally have gone through a process of gradual development from pictographic to ideogrammic languages. Judged by its historical development, each letter of the Latin alphabet which is a phonetic one stands for the shape of a specific object and is a "pictograph." After a prolonged process of development, the letters finally became purely phonogrammic ones and at the same time their forms were simplified. This is also true of the Chinese characters. Following the development of Chinese society and the evolution of writing tools down through the centuries, not only have the forms of these characters undergone many evolutions and become more and more simplified, but their

phonogrammic components have gradually increased with the appearance of more and more picto-phonogrammic characters. At present, the many new simplified characters created by the masses are a reflection of the tendency of the development of these characters. This notwithstanding, the characters still have not been freed from the ideogrammic system and many problems which are hard to solve still exist in studying and using them. Therefore, to develop the Chinese written language into one using a phonetic alphabet is the pressing demand of the masses and conforms with the objective law governing the development of the Chinese characters.

**Figure 1.**

1st row: Evolution of the character ma (horse). 1. pictograph. 2. characters in complex form. 3. simplified character.

2nd row: Evolution of the character dou (struggle). 4. pictograph. 5. characters in complex form. 6. simplified character.



### Threefold Tasks

The change from characters to a written language using a phonetic alphabet means a fundamental reform of the system of written Chinese. This calls for a greater amount of arduous and complicated work and takes a longer transition period compared with written language reforms in some countries (in most cases they only switch from one phonetic alphabet to another). On behalf of the Party and the People's Government, Premier Chou En-lai put forward in 1958 three tasks for the reform of written Chinese, namely, simplification of the characters, popularization of the common speech and implementation of the Scheme for the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet. These are important tasks which should be actively and persistently carried out before alphabetization becomes a reality.

The first task involves simplification of the forms and reduction of the number of Chinese characters. Although this is only a reform within the framework of the present character system and not a fundamental reform of the written Chinese, it suits the urgent needs of the masses and, in particular, makes it easier for school-age children and old people who were deprived of any schooling in the old society to learn to read and write. The simplified characters recommended for use since 1956 have been widely used in the nation's newspapers, magazines, books and textbooks and have gained popular approval. Through practice in the past decade and more, the masses have more and more keenly felt the need to continue the work of simplifying the characters. They have taken the initiative to simplify them of their own accord and this has become an irresistible tide of the times. The simplified characters originate from the masses and in turn serve them. In simplifying the characters, therefore, it is necessary to follow the mass line and carry out the principle of "**from the masses, to the masses.**" This requires the department in charge of language reform to go deep among the masses, collect, sift and classify the simplified characters and work out a second Scheme for Simplifying the Chinese Characters, so as to do a good job of this work step by step on the basis of soliciting the opinions of the masses and the experts concerned.

The second task, popularizing the common speech which uses the Peking pronunciation as its standard, the dialect spoken in north China as its basic form and the modern vernacular style of writing as its grammatical structure, is an important preparation for alphabetizing written Chinese. With a vast expanse of territory, China has a great diversity of local dialects. Such a state of affairs adversely affects the political, economic and cultural life of our people and makes for difficulties in

alphabetizing our written language. It is therefore necessary to make big efforts to popularize the common speech so as to meet the needs of the present development of our socialist revolution and construction and the need to orient our written language to alphabetization as is common with other languages in the world.

Since the directive on the popularization of the common speech was issued by the State Council in 1956, there has emerged a nationwide upsurge in spreading and learning it and more and more people are able to understand and speak it. The popularization work has achieved some success and stress is now laid on popularizing the common speech in commercial communications, post and telecommunications departments and the service trades as well as in schools in areas using local dialects. Meanwhile, special attention is paid to handling the relations between the common speech and dialects well. That is to say, popularizing the common speech does not mean prohibiting and abolishing the dialects.

Carrying out the Scheme for the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet and popularizing the phonetic alphabet – the third task – is another important preparation for achieving alphabetization. The Scheme for the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet approved by the National People's Congress in 1958 has been warmly welcomed by the masses and widely used in various fields of work. Teachers in most primary schools throughout the country have used the phonetic alphabet to teach their pupils to learn the Chinese characters and the common speech.

### **Struggle Between the Two Lines**

Written language is a system of symbols recording speech. It does not bear any class nature itself, but the work of reforming it has a clear-cut class nature. Subordinated to the political line of a particular class, reform of written language serves the interests of that class. The language reform which we are now carrying out is part and parcel of our socialist revolution and construction and serves to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat. Precisely because of this, the fierce struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and between the proletarian revolutionary line and the bourgeois reactionary line at home inevitably finds expression in the reform work. The bourgeois Rightists wildly attacked this work in 1957. A handful of class enemies who had usurped the leadership in the cultural and educational departments even more rabidly opposed Chairman Mao's many directives on reforming the written language. They slandered alphabetization as "slavish imitation" and spread the fallacy that "simplified characters are helpful for immediate needs, but will cause losses in the long run." While advocating preserving the dialects, they mouthed such nonsense as "everything will be all right even if the common speech is not popularized for a hundred years." Even more, they abused that part of power in their hands to abolish the study of the Chinese phonetic alphabet in primary schools, and restricted and obstructed its use in various fields of work.

They opposed reforming the Chinese written language simply because this is favourable to the labouring people in their effort to study revolutionary culture and master revolutionary theory. They advertised the landlord and capitalist classes' culture and deprived the working people of their right to learn to read and write for the purpose of fooling and deceiving the people and pushing their counter-revolutionary revisionist line, subverting the dictatorship of the proletariat and restoring capitalism. All this serves only to expose them as vassals of the reactionaries at home and abroad.

Since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began, we have smashed the counter-revolutionary revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi and other political swindlers. As in other work, language reform is now being brought to a new phase of vigorous development. While making energetic efforts to study Chairman Mao's directives on reforming the written language, the department concerned is now conscientiously summing up experience, relying on the masses to carry out deep-going investigations and study and soliciting opinions from all quarters, so as to actively and steadily reform written Chinese.

*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1974 p16 in the printed version]*

**THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY JULY 8, 1973**  
**10. Peking Is Stressing Latinized Alphabet in Sinkiang**

By TILLMAN DURDIN  
Special to The New York Times

HONG KONG, July 7 – Peking is intensifying efforts to spread the use of a new Latinized alphabet for the languages of more than 4 million people and concedes that a major motivation is anti-Soviet.

A recent broadcast monitored from Urumchi, capital of the Sinkiang region, reported that a conference had called for a quickened pace in popularising the new script among the Uigurs and Kazakhs of Sinkiang and said this was necessary for "enhancing unity among nationalities, insuring unification of the motherland, consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and strengthening the anti-Soviet struggle."

The Uigurs and Kazakhs in Sinkiang in Central Asia have resisted giving up their script because of its links with their faith, Islam, and because, through the new symbols, a new ideology and terminology are being introduced.

To represent sounds peculiar to Uigur and Kazakh, letters have been added, making a 33-letter alphabet, with 8 vowels for Uigur and 9 for Kazakh.

**Close Links to Chinese**

The anti-Soviet aspect of language reform for the two scripts indicates the Chinese desire to minimise cultural ties between Sinkiang's Uigurs and Kazakhs and the same ethnic groups on the Soviet side of the 1400-mile border.

The traditional script used by the two peoples in the Soviet Union is Arabic in origin, dating from the conversion to Islam, a thousand years ago. The Cyrillic alphabet used elsewhere in the Soviet Union is also widespread.

The Chinese, in trying to supplant the Arabic script, will give the two minorities written languages different from those in Soviet Central Asia. It will also provide the same alphabet to be adopted in the eventual Romanization of the Chinese national language, displacing pictographs and ideographs.

The Urumchi conference stressed the necessity of strengthening leadership in the popularizing of the new script and of organising "cadres and masses so as to enable them to learn and use the new script earnestly."

The conference decided that use of the script in administrative organs and publications must be speeded up. It pointed out that "as many as 70,000 spare-time teachers" were giving instruction in the new writing and said that all Uigur and Kazakh schools "at primary and middle levels" had switched.

Works by Lenin, Marx and Mao Tse-tung were reported available in the new writing. The Sinkiang and Ili newspapers using it were said to have doubled in circulation.

Introduction of the script in Sinkiang – officially called the Sinkiang Uigur Autonomous Region – began a decade ago and appears to have gone rather slowly.

The New York Times/July 8, 1973.

The call to "study Chairman Mao's writings, follow his teachings and act according to his instruction" is shown at the top in the new Latin type Peking is urging on the Uigurs in Sinkiang, and at bottom in old Arabic form that has linked them to Uigurs on Soviet side. Similar change is being pressed on Sinkiang's Kazakhs.

The Turkic Uigur people are the most numerous ethnic group in Sinkiang, their number usually being given as 4 million. This is an old figure, so the total is probably greater. The Kazakhs number a few hundred thousand.

The population of Sinkiang, which is about the size of Texas, is believed to be around 9 million – the Chinese gave the figure of 8 million in early 1970 in a broadcast from Urumchi – and the steady, heavy migration of Han Chinese from the eastern provinces of China, principally from the Shanghai area, is believed to push the Hans too half or almost half the total.

The region has many other smaller minority groups – Khalkhas, Mongols, Uzbeks, Tajiks and Huis.



## 11. Our Readers Write Us

### About Sir James Pitman's Letter

**Dr. Helen Bonnema:**

**Harvie Barnard**

I was tremendously impressed by your letter to Sir James Pitman, – Item 6, [Summer, 1974 issue](#), and by his appreciative reply to you.

It seems to me that all advocates of Spelling Progress, Reform, or whatever it is called, should take special notice of several questions and statements propounded in your letter to Sir James. In your 3rd prg. I was particularly impressed with your query, ". . . is phonetic perfection as important as stability in the appearance of a meaning unit?" The entire prg. is indeed an expression of the heart of the reading problem!

I also liked very much your comment, "Some alphabeteers expect a spelling system to so closely represent local speech sounds that it can improve a child's articulation. *Certainly that is not the task of an alphabetic code.* (My italics).

The following 2-line quote should also be sung far and wide: "The primary purpose of an orthography is to promote literacy, not what you (Pitman) have so aptly called 'oracy'."

And then the 3rd from the last prg.: "Our aim in a universal orthography for English is that it will represent speech which is intelligible to any other user of English, even tho the quality of the sounds so indicated may not be phonetically identical." That, in my humble opinion, might very well be taken as the basic aim and purpose toward which all English orthographers should strive, and this aim should be broadcast far and wide wherever the general purpose of an international or universal form of English is proposed.

I am working in the direction of developing support from John Gardner, President of Common Cause. He has no political ambitions, but is always on the lookout for new programs of broad significance for the Cause. He might be able to aid us in promoting your suggestion of utilizing UNESCO as a vehicle or agency for the furtherance of better international understanding and cooperation thru a more logical, comprehensible English Language.

Would you be interested in considering consultation work along these lines? Kindly give the matter some serious consideration. It is generally recognized that the language barrier is a major roadblock to the furtherance of international understanding, and without substantial improvement in this direction, the United Nations can never achieve its greatest objective, – Peace.

It will be a pleasure to hear from you along these lines.

Tacoma, Wn.

**In re. Orthographies, 1974.**

**Emmett A. Betts, Ph.D.**

**William J. Reed.**

No changes have been made in New Spelling since the 1973 edition was published. At that time the S.S.S. was in accord with the P.S.C. on sound-symbols.

It seems to me, and to some others, that spelling reformers should not expend too much of their time and energy on working out the details of new spelling systems.

It is more important that they should first make sure that the public realises the extent to which the present system has failed (and is continuing to fail) and that it realises the educational, social, financial and international need for reform. Medical research should lead to more effective treatment of disease and, generally, it does. Educational research, including research into spelling systems, should lead to a more effective treatment of prejudice and ignorance. After 50 years of teaching, I would say that it is not, at present, having that desired effect.

I have written fully and frequently to the committee on *Inquiry Into Reading and the Use of English* set up by the Department of Education & Science. On 23rd Jan. 1974, our Society achieved a notable success in persuading the D.E.S. committee to meet members of our S.S. Society. The meeting lasted only 90 minutes and it is doubtful if we made much impression on the Committee's prejudices – not to mention ignorance; but it was some sort of break-through, and we can now be more hopeful about the possibility of a more reasonable approach to the whole problem of phoneme-grapheme relationship.

Generally we think that even the most perfect system in the English-speaking world will have no chance of being adopted unless people can be made to see the urgent need for reform. The necessary research has been done during recent times, and particularly during the last 100 years. The chief need now is for a concerted and determined effort to make people realize what is wrong and how it could be put right. The most difficult ones to convince are likely to be Ministry officials, (hence the importance we attach to our meeting on Jan. 23rd), many teachers – especially those with fancy schemes for teaching backward readers, and publishers who are making large sums of money out of Infant Readers and books for backward children. If the education authorities would adopt a rational system of spelling our language, as they have now adopted sensible decimal coinage and Metric weights and measures, most of the difficulties connected with retarded readers would be solved very quickly. Long experience as class-room teacher and headmaster (I still teach regularly) has shown me that these difficulties are of our own making and these difficulties remain with us because administrators, and to some extent teachers also, refuse to take advantage of all the research which has been done. Meanwhile, the community suffers and, sadly, children continue to suffer – and will continue until concerned parents decide it's time to take some action to help future generations.

Broadstairs, Kent, Eng.

## Concern for Literacy

President & Directors of Washington St. Retired Teachers

Harvie Barnard

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I was concerned by certain comments in your recent communication which seemed to suggest that recent increases in teachers' retirement payments were the best answers to the problem of general inflation which the retired teachers could expect, and that all of us should be thankful for such services, – as indeed we are.

As professional people, even tho retired, there is much more that we could and should be doing to help not only ourselves, but the community, the nation, and the administrators who are, we trust, doing their best to improve the quality of education.

Why, on an official basis, cannot those who are most experienced in the actual practice of education, the retired classroom teachers, – be regularly and seriously consulted on specific subjects concerning teaching practices, materials, and subject matter?

We should all be deeply concerned – and involved – in the overall subject of LITERACY – literacy in *all* its aspects – not simply reading, but also writing, and verbal communication. The statistics in these areas reveal shocking deficiencies in all three categories.

If high school graduates finished the 12th grade with one leg shorter than the other, or several fingers missing, or some other serious disfigurement, then there would be plenty of horror stricken hell-raising, but when 10% to 30% cannot read with reasonable comprehension, and 50% to 80% can neither write nor speak with acceptability, almost no one seems to express concern.

There are plenty of well-informed experienced teachers who know the reasons for these glaring deficiencies, and I will not bore you with the facts or the truth at this writing, *but* if you are concerned, and if you, (or any one of you), care to persue the subject further, I would be most happy to go into the matter in depth – not simply from my point of view, but from that of many specialists and others who are better advised on the details than am I.

Kindly advise me, or Newell W. Tune, or Drs. Helen Bonnema, Emmett A. Betts, Godfrey Dewey, Wilbur J. Kupfrian, Ben D. Wood, or others to whom I would gladly refer you, all of whom are highly competent educators and who would be pleased to offer their aid and broad experience in the areas of reading, writing, and literacy in general.

It is hoped that you will not only give this matter some consideration but will favor me with a response soon.

East Seattle, Wn.

## The sound and the visual image

Mr. Newell W. Tune, Editor:

Arnold Rupert

I got your summer Bulletin yesterday and immediately lost myself in your lead article by Nelson Francis, which neatly defines a few of the concepts & terms of the language arts. He concedes that a regular "fit" of graf to fone would be best for the beginner but then goes on to infer that "expert" readers no longer move their lips (as Bergen did when Charlie spoke) or even indulge in a bit of secret sly thinking of the sounds. Perhaps I am still semi-literate. I find that I absorb the meaning more dependably when I go slow enough to have time for this childish pleasure. Sometimes my lips get a bit behind or tired but the neurons race on with their part. The concept & the sound values never get too far apart & a mental image of that horrible spelling often intrudes even when my eyes are far from the page or I am trying to compose a sentence to speak or type. If the sound comes to mind but not the spelling to flesh out the concept, I sometimes type a more phonetic form & then realize that it does not match the visual image that my eyes have learned to recognize. I have a roll of *co-rec-type* to patch up these messes. They can be seen if you hold this sheet up before the window. Oh, I might crow that my eyes can give my mind the meaning directly like a Chinese glyph can have meaning to a deaf-mute Chinaman who never went to school, but I take more pride in the skill that makes the sound pounce into my head & try to move my lips, a process that takes effort to inhibit. Luckily, the same impulse carries meaning to my cortex, perhaps a bit different, when my eyes scan /their/ instead of /there/ but, if so, I seem to get the message just as well from the single spoken form. If such distinction had been necessary or useful enough in speech, it would have developed over the years before spelling and writing, as it has between the oral forms of /that/. I think that that is so, & a reformed script with a complete alphabet, including schwa /a/, would give the distinctions that the wisdom of the ages recognized.

I am also infantile enough to prefer a script that could spell *fish* as /fif/ when I *can't* remember the reasoning that took over a hundred lines to explain. English spelling *is* a system, & tho I can apply some of it's rules without realizing it, there must be quite a few of them that elude me, or I would make fewer mistakes. G.B.S.'s stupid joke (if it was his) must have had some clout (as reform comment if not as humor) or it could not have circulated so well. I wish I were smart enough to do likewise. We reform nuts can only hope that it is effective if not serious evidence of the need for reform in English spelling. I have re-read the article several times & can find no hint of the author's attitude to reform, it's possibility, or it's value if possible, but at least he concedes that there is a reading problem & suggests research to help the kids live with it. Let us hope they will not always have to do so. A well known bird expert failed to predict the disappearance of sparrows from the streets of his home town & so failed to sell his interest in a horse farm soon enough. All these linguistic experts may be as short-sighted, tho right so far, 11 years for this writer. The general pessimism of so many language experts is one of the chief causes of continued failure of political authorities to support spelling reform. But the real reason for their hesitation is the amateurish quality of what has been offered so far by a series of part-time innovators who know reform is feasible but can't afford to put the necessary time & effort into preparing an adequate offering. Precious little of quality comes without hard work now-a-days! Thanks.

Lunenburg, Ont. Canada.

## Standardizing phonemic spelling

Dear Newell:

Kingsley Read

May I add my trifle to the letters exchanged in your Summer issue between Dr. Helen Bonnema and Sir James Pitman? The problem is how sound-spelling is to be standardized where words have several variations recognized in speech and even in dictionaries. Given the task of advising international publishers of sound-spelled matter, on what principles should we choose standard spellings to be read in all contexts by readers speaking a variety of dialects?

Surely we limit our choice to a truly phonemic representation of each word as it is sometimes heard and always understood, though hearers and readers may themselves never so pronounce it. We write and print to communicate ideas. We read to understand.

As your correspondents agreed, the end served by spelling is the systematic construction of ideograms called words. Words are, for the accomplished reader, unit symbols of meaning. He is no longer concerned to analyse their sounds (unless a word is unfamiliar to him): he merely accepts word-meanings and hastens to define them more precisely by their context. Only the infant learner decodes words into sounds before attaching meanings to them. Soon he too values a constant spelling of each word, instantly recognized.

My own general rule (with overriding considerations often operating) is to sound-spell exactly the allowable pronunciation which least affects the word's familiar appearance in orthodox spelling. It may not be majority usage in the English-speaking world; it is enough that it is everywhere intelligible, and least unfamiliar in print. My enlarged Roman alphabet has its new letters designed to be guessable (in context) as sound values while differing as little as may be from familiar shapes. I feel that UNESCO or any other sound-spelling authority needs to choose its alphabet of some 42 characters first in order to choose the spelling least altering word appearances.

I am well aware that any endeavour to retain some similarity between old and new word-graphs plays into the hands of the digraph-using school of thought. To me, digraphs are anathema. I go further: diphthongs should for simplicity be represented by single letters, allowing what variant pronunciation suits the writer or reader.

The problem is complex; but it is not difficult to solve it with courage, determination and good will. No one will long quarrel with publishers' sound-spelling -- when in general use. And when will that be? Only when we decide that we need it and what we want.

Yours ever,

\* Abbots Morton, Worcester, England.

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## On word signs

Dear Kingsley:

Newell Tune

I hope you don't mind if I partly disagree with you. Not only do children, in reading and learning, to read, pronounce words to themselves, but many adults do also. I do whenever I am reading difficult or important matter. We need a reliable phonetic code to establish a standardizable dialect for English speech around the world.

You seem to echo Godfrey Dewey's thoughts in preparing his WES Dictionary. He kept "been" and "to" as word signs even tho the former is only pronounced phonetically in a small area around Boston and in Southern England. The latter was used both to increase the number of familiar words (fewer alterations) in running text and to save space. Both of these signs are anathematic to me because the first indicates a wrong pronunciation (for the vast majority of readers), hence mitigates teaching by phonetics, and tends to spread the use of an undesirable dialect. The second makes the teaching by analogy more difficult for the majority of English words ending in *o*: *go, ho, to, mo, no, ro, so, yo-yo*, and is incongruous because in W.E. he spells *do* as "doo."

If we are going to admit these word signs, why stop there? There are a dozen more high frequency words which could be retained to make the printed page appear less altered. But there's no stopping there. Where do you draw the line? -- at "to" but not "do"? As Pitman reflected (in words to this effect): In trying to cater to the slippery slopes of the sand-hill of public opinion, you end up at the bottom making no changes at all. The word "to" occurs with a running frequency of just 2.6%. Who would really care whether the printed page in the new spelling had 44.4% unchanged or 47%? Is the difference noticeable?

I think the principle of these word signs is not only fundamentally unsound but also unnecessary, Those who oppose reform will object to any change or even minor change -- those who want reform will insist that such a half-loaf reform is inadequate.

## Computers and Optical Character Recognition

Greetings from the Slums:

Ivor Darreg

I would like to call your attention to an article in the recent Atlantic Monthly, called "Computers aren't so smart after all" by Fred Hapgood. This is mainly concerned with debunking the overoptimistic predictions in the 1950's about so-called "Artificial Intelligence" and cutting down things to size. Unfortunately the man slightly overpleads his case and the article may be dismissed in some quarters because of this.

I have to agree with him about the fiasco of machine translation attempts and the overconfidence of the experts.

This casts some reflections on the questions of artificial languages or some kind of simplified English for world use. The advocates of machine translation had hoped that they could automate all translating and thus make international auxiliary language unnecessary. But they found that was not to be.

However, it does not spoil the possibility of optical character recognition or the possibility of respelling into a new orthography by some kind of properly-programmed computers. Hapgood's article does not say very much about information retrieval, which still seems a logical thing to have computers do.

My interest in the article was mainly because Hapgood's philosophical approach is contrary to the Behaviorists, and mechanistic materialists, and I have a 22-years-long acquaintance who has been trying to get me on the Artificial Intelligence bandwagon all that time -- so finally I have some ammunition to use against him!

Meanwhile, there are various news items about machines to read aloud (how do they cope with the spelling problem? and especially how do they deal with your long list of homographs?) and the usual predictions and hints about voice-recognition, but still very little in the way of concrete results or advances. This sort of news story got into *US News & World Report*, *Time*, and *Newsweek* recently. But until there is something more definitive, I have to remain skeptical and unimpressed.

Yours, \*Los Angeles, Ca.

[*Spelling Reform Anthology* §5.2 pp78,79 in the printed version]  
[*Spelling Progress Bulletin* Fall 1974 pp19–20 in the printed version]

**"The Folly of Spelling Reform", an attempted answer,**

**Dear Sir:**

**by Donald, L. Humphries**

Since the author of the above essay concluded that "The Folly of a Phonetic Alphabet" would have been a more proper title, the following attempted refutation of his arguments is based on this latter thesis.

1. "*Proper pronunciation*" makes phonetic spelling difficult. This assumes that there must be a 'proper way' – and one and only way – of saying, and hence spelling, a word. But this insistence on orthodoxy has only grown up in our language since the advent of printing and of dictionary making. Prior to that people tended to spell as they pleased, i.e., more or less phonetically as the language allowed, even using four or five different spellings for the same word in one piece of prose. It would seem that dictionaries originally only recorded the commonest, or suggested-best, way of spelling a word, and that all other options were omitted for lack of space. The prime aim of dictionaries was to tell us the meanings and origins of words. The idea that they should also give us the 'correct' spelling seems to have arisen later. But should we now revert to 'free-n-easy' spelling? This would make writing phonetically so much the more possible, but would not different dialects tend to establish themselves in writing as well as in speech? Would this result in Babelization – often feared by opponents of spelling reform? Perhaps but the alternative is more frightening.

2. "*Adequate symbolism*" to cope with the variety of dialects, etc. The belief that a new phonetic alphabet may not be able to cope with this problem, ignores the fact our present alphabet presumably copes even *less* – otherwise reform would not be needed. But with the use of the mass media of communication (radio, television) and the greater world and inter-state travelling nowadays occurring, it seems to be likely that dialects and accents in the English-speaking tongue will gradually be ironed out into one more-or-less uniform speech. Hence, phonetic symbolism could then cope (also a 'proper' pronunciation would be much more easily established – see 1, above). There seems to be common agreement that some 40 symbols would make English into a phonetically-spellable language. A minimum of half-a-dozen new vowel symbols would be a necessary major step forward.

3. "*Typewriters, printers, investments, vested interests.*" The new symbols could be devised by acknowledged experts in the field of phonetic spelling, so that agreement is the more likely on what such symbols should be. Once derived, the symbols could be added *around* the present letters on the typewriter keyboard – rather than replace any of them. The Russian alphabet has many more letters than does the English. How are these accommodated on present Russian typewriters? If only the aforesaid minimum 6 new letters were involved, our problems are that much the easier. With printers, little trouble is caused either way. Countries that recently changed over to decimal currency had to scrap or modify existing accounting machines, cash registers, etc. Yet the expense was considered worth while in view of the long term benefits. Vested interests are *always* being upset by changes in various fields, so there is nothing unique here.

4. "*Indexes, filing systems, teaching, names.*" By adding the new symbols to the *end* of our present alphabet, we would only have the problem of discarded letters (c, q, x) to consider. Old books need not become obsolete entirely provided the new alphabet did not diverge *too* greatly from our present one. Could proper names be altered *en masse* by government decree?

**Conclusion:** The above four points are an attempted answer to the essay on the possible impracticability of utilizing a phonetic alphabet. In making this attempted answer I have used certain suppositions:

1. That rigid orthodoxy in spelling is neither desirable nor necessary. I advocate a return to '*free-n-easy*' spelling.
2. That the intended phonetic alphabet will take the form of an *Augmented Roman Alphabet*. That is, that it will not be an entirely new set of symbols to replace our present alphabet.
3. That *only* some 40 symbols will be needed (inclusive of our present ABC's), and that a minimum of about 6 new ones will suffice if needs be.
4. That the bulk of reforms to our present spelling to make it more phonetic would simply involve a *proper re-use of present letters* (so that words like '*of, use*' were then spelt '*ov, uze*', or the like).
5. That *experts* would decide just what the new symbols would be like, and that *governments* would participate in the change-over.

(NOTE: My main query in respect to any new symbolism is the difficulty of devising both a printed and written form for any one letter.)

There seems to be some general agreement that World English Spelling, and the Initial Teaching Alphabet, are the most sensible basis on which to campaign for spelling reform.

Some of the ideas expressed from time to time in your Bulletin by individual reformers are either too extreme (being comprehensible only to themselves) or too trivial (as Harry Lindgren's SR1).

The basic problems of spelling reform seem to centre (center) around (1) *what* is to be the nature of the reform and (2) *how* is it to be introduced. Insofar as (1) is concerned, the problem then further subdivides into (a) the vowels, (b) the diphthongs, (c) the triphthongs, and (d) the consonants – in order of difficulty.

Insofar as (2) is concerned, the problem consists of (a) step-by-step reform, or (b) all-at-once reform.

Of course, there are other problems, such as clashes in spelling between the reformed and old spelling, the problem of homonyms, the need for modified typewriters or remote printing machines, type, etc. But none of these are really insurmountable.

The major difficulty is, it seems to me, the modern insistence on spelling *orthodoxy*, this contrasts with earlier times (e.g., 18th century) when *all* citizens paid no heed to 'correct' spelling; indeed, a person would even boast that 'he spelt like a gentleman, and not like a pedant.'

In probably no other field of learning is there such hide-bound resistance to *any* change in the status quo. Even in the closely related field of *words* themselves innovation is permitted. Americanisms such as 'know-how' and 'think-tank,' not to mention all the 'beat-nik' expressions, find their way into our language. Yet imagine what it would be like if we could not coin new words as occasion demanded? This does not mean that such words are immediately or universally accepted. Or that they are the only possible way of conveying the same meaning – alternative words can be used. But at least a degree of tolerance exists, and they are not rejected out of hand.

To translate this same tolerance into the field of spelling reform, I would like to suggest that while WES and i.t.a. could well form the *basis* of a reformed program, that even here a degree of latitude could exist. For example, if I prefer to write the vowels: *ae, ee, ie, oe, ue*, using *the macron* over the letter instead of the added 'e', then this could be permitted as an alternative spelling, understood by all. (Some brand names use the macron, e.g., APECO, No-Doz). Continued use of the letters 'c, q, x' could be allowed provided 'c' was always used with 'h' as 'ch', 'q' was always 'qu' and 'x' was always 'ks/gz.'

As further alternatives to the long vowel notation, the 'at' sign could be used to denote 'ae,' with similar encirclement used for the other vowels. Since vowels occur more frequently in spellings than do consonants, undue elongation of many words by the use of digraphs should be avoided if possible.

The problem of the two 'oo' sounds and their spelling has always been a source of contention. The current decision to use 'oo' for the long sound may be all right, but use of 'uu' for the short version can result in such awkward spellings as: *wuulf, wuul, wuud*. Myself, I prefer to differentiate completely: using 'ew' for the long sound and 'oo' for the short.

Examples of my ideas on these are available from: Melbourne, Vic. Australia.

*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1974 p20 in the printed version]*

## **12. paed advertisement**

Dhis iz riten in a reviiid moed ov speling which dealz with aul wildly spoeken variietyz ("standard diialects") ov Engglishe A 33 paej monograf REVIIZING dhe ENGLISH ORTHOGRAFY layz out the prinsipulz ov dhis revizyon. Unambiguous conventyonal spelingpaturnz aar uezd in a meny-tu-wun graf-tu-morfofoen mapings. Dhe 5 paej list ov riitingz on dhe prinsipulz ov orthografy & orthografic revizyon byy it's self iz wurth dhe priis ov 1,25\$ from

Hurb Booth, Portland, Oregon USA

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