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1. Reaction to Ives' 'Acceptability of Proposed Spelling Reforms', by Helen B. Bisgard, Ed.D.

In his discussion about the acceptability of spelling reforms, Ives limits himself to only one method for achieving reform – gradual change – and giving recommendations far the first eight steps.

A large number of people with whom I've talked during the last 40 years would agree with him that change should be gradual. 'When asked for their opinion on what procedure will succeed in reforming spelling, they express a preference for tackling first the extremely irregular forms.

This has long been considered the most practical approach. It was the decision of both the Philological Soc. of England and of the American Philological Assoc. in 1886 when they published lists of words based on 24 rules and of the Simplified Spelling Board in 1920 with its lists based on 28 rules.

Therefore, I am not surprised that Ives' respondents find "Progressive Spelling" acceptable. The

number of his respondents is not given in the article, but regardless of whether it has little statistical significance, the results seem valid to me.

However, the very people who say they favor reform by gradual stages do not realize how impractical they themselves might find this procedure. Successors of the above mentioned Philological Societies and the Simpler Spelling Board abandoned the gradual approach. My personal experience in using Lindgren's Spelling Reform Step 1 may indicate a reason for the impracticability of instituting reform in successive stages.

I use SR-1 because it proclaims the need for spelling improvement and may do its bit toward influencing public opinion. However, I doubt that eventual reform will come about as the culmination of a series of SR steps. The general public will feel frustrated when trying to change certain habitual spellings during each stage of the progression. From first grade on, a writer has acquired his skill after years of learning small parts until the whole process became automatic. When he writes he composes his thoughts without being conscious of how his pen or typewriter spells. As the words flow, he pays no attention to their formation any more than he thinks about the pronunciation of each word when he talks. He concentrates entirely upon putting across his intended meaning.

When I wish to have SR-1 forms appear in the final copy of my writing, I go over the rough draft carefully, looking for syllables which have "short e" sounds. This requires extra effort which I am willing to exert because I hope that the SR spelling will attract attention to the need for simplification. However, the general public, trained to write in the traditional manner, has little impetus to make changes. People find that altering any techniques in the slightest manner disrupts the smooth functioning of a skill, whether it be bowling, driving a stick-shift car, or speaking French.

Learning an entirely *new* subject does have appeal, tho. We are in an age which adjusts to drastic changes such as space travel and computer operations. I believe that a new spelling system will eventually be accepted as a total system. The time should come when people will learn a code such as World English just as they master shorthand, atomic symbols, the Metric System, or Russian. At first they will think of it as a supplement to traditional orthography – a second system. But after a while, exposure to the better system, where words are spelt as sounded, will familiarize them with it so that with use it will become an easily acquired habit.

We cannot predict what force will persuade them of the necessity for adopting a new and better code. It may be political developments, or economic reasons. Think of the present orthographic changes in China. Are we more backward than they?

I hope to develop the subject further in future issues of *SPB*.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1979 pp2-4 in the printed version]

2. Helping the Foreigner to Learn English, by Sir James Pitman, KBE*

* London, England.

His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh has shown great interest in making our language easier to learn so that many more foreigners will be encouraged to learn it and many more may come to succeed.

His two public statements in this important direction have been:

1. in an interview on the BBC with Richard Baker on 10th July 1969, and,
2. a message graciously sent as Patron to the opening session of an International Conference of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language held at Oxford in January 1977.

The first of these was detailed and specific, the second more general – a plea for "simplification and rationalization" of English so that the barriers to easy learning may no longer cause frustration to the beginner while he is most prone to give up, but rather be deferred while he makes quick and satisfying progress in the early stages.

Surely there should be wide agreement in favor both of the practical value of a common tongue and of simplifying and rationalizing the English language to promote its even wider use as the World's most prevalent common language?

1. The two main elements in any language used for communication are the spoken word and the written word. Each is supplementary to the other though nevertheless in themselves quite separate, but each will respond greatly to simplification and rationalization during the learning period.

Thus oracy needs to be the starting point. And in clarification of this, we mean that spoken English needs to be spoken in a form which may be so widely recognized and understood that all English listeners will have no difficulty in understanding it when they hear it.

It is deplorable that far too little effort has been made by teachers of or by learners of English to prepare foreigners to become as widely understood in their English speech throughout the whole English-speaking world, as were Sir Winston Churchill and Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt in their world-wide hookups on television and radio broadcasts during the last war.

The following quotation from Genesis, Chap. XI, Verse 1

> "And the whole world was of one language and one speech. . . And the Lord said, 'Behold the people is one and they have all one language. . . and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.' "

will convince us of the advantages to all people in the world, were any language to become more widely conventional and alert us to what extent a tower of Babel has been built and is yearly being extended higher and higher in the English-speaking world. We need to heed the warning of the possibility that if the process is left to continue, the English language could well suffer the fate which the Latin language suffered and split into a number of different spoken languages, none of them comprehensible by the speakers of the others.

Taken in time and by employing equipment now available such as tape recorders, the steps already taken towards the Tower of Babel may be even be reversed.

A teacher's personal interest in teaching literacy through a notation which no longer falsely represents the sounds of speech, will make his hopes all the more easily attainable. While the tape recorder helps to ensure that by following the text visually while listening, both the written and spoken versions of the language will become more easily learned and generally understood.

In his interview with Richard Baker he postulated that simplification of literacy would mean that "the same sound is always written in the same way."

St. Paul's observation to the Corinthians, Chapter XIV, Verse 8, was: "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" Truly the notation of sounds needs to be logical and systematic if the learner is not to be confused. EIGH has one value in EIGHT and a very different value in HEIGHT – a very false note, and there are countless more examples.

The Bullock Committee agreed fully.It unanimously found that "the obvious course" (for notation of sounds) "would be to aim at a one-to-one correspondence between the oracy and the literacy of the language" **[1]** and that "written English falls short of this alphabetic ideal." Such a proposal for simplification and rationalization of the correspondence between oracy (on the tape) and literacy (in the book) would greatly enhance the opportunities for the learner to conform to whatever dialect of "standard English" (British, Scottish, Irish, American, Canadian) will have been spoken into the tape, no doubt by a newscaster whose speech is particularly comprehensible. The correspondence between oracy and literacy and vice versa, even from the very beginning during the learning stages, will greatly facilitate the learner's task in *understanding speech,* in *speaking so* that he will *be understood,* in reading and in writing.

But such a simplification in relationships is only one of two possible helps in the foreign learner's earliest period of learning. Concentration and repetition by the device of selecting and limiting both in vocabulary and in grammar what is first learned, should be a second help.

The validity of vocabulary selection has been accepted and practised generally for years but not the strict limitation of grammar. There are over a hundred adjectives which convey the concept of magnitude:- not only great, big, vast, huge, immense, collosal, but even, to the despair of a Frenchman arriving at Victoria Station, where he was confronted by a newspaper poster reading, "Cavalcade *Pronounced* Success." It surely must be easier to learn any language, (particularly when the vocabulary is as great as that of English), if the synonyms be reduced as far as possible. Indeed, why not enhance the repetition by sticking to only one word for each concept, say: great, greater, greatest, greatly, and in just such a logical usage? Synonyms abound in English but for ease in learning, repetition which offers consistency of what is to be heard from the tape and printed in the books, will clearly be most helpful to the learner. Subsequently, and once the beginner is able to communicate within the limited vocabulary and of understanding much of what is spoken and what is written even outside his restricted vocabulary, he will have a foundation on which to develop his understanding of a widening vocabulary and of guessing by context the meaning of more and more words which reach his ears or eyes.

The rub comes not only in deciding what literacy is to match the desired oracy but also in selecting what limitations of vocabulary and grammar will yield (for better is always the enemy of the good!) a substantial improvement in the ease of learning – both oracy and literacy.

The British Government in 1944 gave to Ibadan University in Nigeria a substantial grant to ascertain what benefit would be enjoyed by the foreign learner if the literacy is in correspondence

with the oracy. In 1968 the Grant Foundation of New York gave a substantial grant to enable The Education Department of The Gambia to ascertain the benefits if both of these suggestions were to be employed in concord from the very beginning, and with tape cassettes.

The first of these researches was most favourably reported on by the Nigerian Ministry in 1966 and the second by the Education Dept. of The Gambia (by J.E.M. Thornhill of the British Council and others) in 1973.

It seems to be the fate of any Research in Education, which promotes innovation and change in educational theories, that it is ignored and comes to be "resisted in a rooted unwillingness to consider evidence." [2]

Certainly while the findings of the first research, by the University of London Institute of Education and the National Foundation far Educational Research, into the value of simplification to the already English-speaking learner have been validated by not a few millions of learners and of the value of it to the non-English-speaking foreigner by the thousands, nevertheless the average teacher has remained not only resistant but oppositions.

It may be that foreign teachers of English (who start with an astonished awareness of the confusions in English spelling as a system of notations of sounds) will bring an objective judgement to assessing research on the benefits of simplification of the notation. Moreover they are already convinced of the inevitability of selection and limitation of what vocabulary and structures are presented to the learner in the earliest stages and it is possible that they will be less rejective and less oppositious than native English-speaking teachers in accepting whatever comes to be put forward as the practical steps for each of the two innovations.

The task of formulating a new notation is easy enough. It will be in obtaining agreement about any particular proposal that the difficulty will arise.

Perhaps the best first step is to put forward an exact specification of what would most help the foreigner to make the right sounds in response to viewing the words of English which he should strive to speak and by copying from what he hears on the tape. [3] (attached as Appendix A is such a specification which is subdivided into 20 different sections and titled "Desiderata.")

It is likely that most of the sections will be generally accepted and such disagreement, as may exist, will be directed towards small objectively discussable units.

The possibility of acceptance should be increased by three factors:

1. The existing notation is so deficient as a notation of sounds, and so capricious, that the new product when accepted will anyhow be an incomparable improvement. The principle of simplification has been not only proved among millions of English speaking children and many adults but also confirmed among thousands of foreigners. It is both practical and effective.

2. Perfection is neither possible, nor necessary. The better can be the enemy of the good and its pursuit leads to delays and even inaction in achieving what could have been a great improvement.

3. Each learner will establish from his tapes the sounds which he is asked to speak and will see the character which acts as its notation. He will speak inevitably with his own idiosyncratic minor variations. As G. Bernard Shaw wrote in his Will:- ". . . 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 fingerprints" If, by such means, the learner

develops a speech which is easily intelligible to every other English speaker, he will have achieved his aim and will retain so much of his own individuality that his friends, when spoken to on the telephone, will immediately identify him from his pronunciation. As Prof. Max Müller, the great philologist, said in 1876, "Writing was never intended to photograph spoken languages: it was meant to indicate, not to paint sounds. . . Language deals in broad colours and writing ought to follow the example of language which, though it allows an endless variety of pronunciation, restricts itself. . . for the purpose of expressing thought. . . to a very limited number of typical vowels and consonants. . . Those sounds from the various English dialects. . . only can be recognised which in and by their difference from each other convey a difference in meaning." [4] In other words, what the phoneticians now describe as 'diaphones' (in contrast with 'phonemes') must prevail and, in the converse, diaphones (e.g. the -American *cot* and *caught* and the S. English *law* and *lore)* having different meanings, must be differentiated visually.

For limitation of vocabulary and grammar, it is probably less feasible to provide a subdivided specification for preliminary agreement.

The only academic research in the use of both of these proposals has been that conducted in Gambia in which the learning material was restricted in large part to the supposedly 850 words of Basic English (Ogden) and to the use, as verbs, of only its eighteen verbs.

From the very favourable report on the simultaneous use of both aids, it may be reliably inferred that Basic English affords a successful restriction, though perhaps so greatly restricted that both the vocabulary and grammar might with advantage be less restrictive. After all, the late C. K. Ogden intended his restrictions not for an initial learning medium (ILM), but for the provision of an effective international language, which it has failed to become and, if I may say so with no disrespect to his memory, it could never become. As Mr. Arnold Field, the Field Commander of the National Air Traffic Services has pointed out, an already fully English-speaking air controller or pilot, certainly in moments of stress, cannot possibly restrict his speech artificially. Translating a passage from full English or an idea into the greatly restricted form of Basic English is a slow process and in a crisis what has become a reflex skill will inevitably take over so that speakers with no time for consideration and translation will all cut adrift from restriction and speak what comes naturally thus making restriction impractical at the stage when quick communication is essential.

It is rather as an ILM that Basic ought to have been promoted. Indeed it is as an ILM that it ought to have been designed, in which case attention ought to have been paid to frequency. The established frequencies of words such as *can, ought* and others (not included in the 850 words) are so high that they will be very frequently heard or read by the learner. It is no more than an interesting restrictive device to banish them and then to need the circumlocution forced by the restriction to only 18 verbs, to need to speak or write *be able,* instead of *can; is* right (probable); it *is* in your interests to, instead of you *ought;* etc., and to be denied the normal verb forms. It is a handicap because it forces the learner to use a stilted, unnatural form of grammar.

Publishers producing text-books for learning English may, while including all the 850 words of the Basic vocabulary, their permitted extensions, and the so-called international words *arithmetic, asbestos, autobus,* etc., no doubt be advised to extend that restrictive vocabulary and grammar and aim to teach an English which will nevertheless be very repetitive but not as restrictive as basic English.

Moreover the need within a technology for a new common language, will make desirable the inclusion of *ad* hoc additions to the vocabulary for each separate technology – as was the case in Caterpillar English.

The resulting specification and proposal will inevitably be subjective and thus more arguable than that for the system of notation, but here again realization that perfection is impossible and that what is required is *a* good limitation, will make agreement less unlikely.

These proposals do not imply a consequential first step toward, a Spelling or Language Reform of English. Indeed the proposal is limited, with all possible emphasis, to the short period while the I.L.M. is still able to help the learner acquire fluency in English in both oracy and literacy, that is until, when either listening to, or reading in, good English, he is already guessing what the next words are very likely to be.

When that stage has been reached it is certain, without any possible doubt, that the transition to reading in the normal medium of English literacy, notwithstanding its very many and great deficiencies as a notation of speech, will make T.O. read as effectively as the I.L.M. Indeed our T.O. will come to be read even more effectively than the I.L.M. (the great number of heterographs in English is a help to effective reading); and English speech listened to with full understanding, at any rate for all those many words of which he has already learned the correct pronunciation, stress (rhythm) and vowel changes.

The analogy is very apt to the ease of transition in reading from one form of handwriting in continuous English to another and a very different form, and to the transitions to and from FORMS, Forms, forms, etc.

It is surely a credible experience that the shapes of the I.L.M. (having been designed to resemble the lower case forms of T.O. as closely as it is compatibly possible, having regard to the aim of helping the foreigner) are so similar to the T.O. shapes that the transition, if undertaken when context has become a dominant factor in reading, is very easy and in fact almost automatic.

Thanks to the motivation of what are termed the "International Companies," it is likely that money for the textbooks and tape records may become available in due course. After all the money raising is likely to present few problems with the motivation of the big exporters of Britain, America and all other countries which are English-speaking, to increase their recruitment potentialities for English-speaking staff and to increase the likelihood of comprehension by their customers of the literature accompanying their products when printed in English.

There would seem to be four fields of action required:
(1) The first is to have adequately evaluated the Nigerian and The Gambian experiences of simplification and rationalization for learning medium;
(2) the second to invite two panels of experts whose prestige gives hope that their recommendation respectively on the notation and on the restriction when each operating together will be a great improvement;
(3) the third will be to persuade teachers and learners of English to use the simpler and more rational version of their proposed initial learning medium,
(4) and the fourth will be to raise and provide the money for these three actions, for which by far the greatest sum will be the provision of enough printed books and of enough completed tape cassettes and the players to enable a sufficiently large body of persuaded teachers and learners to have demonstrated convincingly the potential of simplification and rationalization of the initial learning medium and confirming the ease of the Transition.

There will be one further, quite different action, which will be essential, namely to engage someone who will be the full-time director of the Grand Design intended to make the English language more and more a convention for world-wide communication in a world-widely comprehensible form or oracy. Nothing will ever be accomplished without the continuing drive of a very industrious, devoted and competent someone wholly concentrating his efforts to the end desired.

Notes.

[1] This quotation has been altered to avoid the use of "phonemes" for oracy and "graphemes" for literacy, but the meaning is the same – the notation of the sounds ought to be reliable, not misleading.

[2] This is a quotation from a "Press Release in behalf of the Univ. of London Institute of Education and the National Foundation for Educational Research" issued by their respective directors, Profs. Lionel Elvin and William Wall, Oct. 1960. The evidence to which they were referring was the benefit which was found to learners of literacy if the notation were made not only indicative of the sounds but (so far as was possible while achieving that purpose) greatly conservative of and so resembling as far as possible the notation used in traditional orthography.

[3] The tapes will need to vary to cover the appropriate regional "accent." Churchill and Roosevelt spoke with widely differing accents and both of their accents no doubt differed slightly from those of some of the most comprehensible radio announcers in their respective regions. Any variations in accent if still effective for comprehension world-wide will not matter: it will be *only when any variation begins to reduce comprehension* world-wide that they need to be avoided.

[4]. *Fortnightly Review, vol. 25,* April, 1876, pp. 556-79.

[5] The idea of simplifying the learning of English literacy by limitation of vocabulary and grammar (but not also by simplifying the spelling) has occurred also to the Caterpillar Tractor Co. of Peoria, Illinois, U.S.A.

They need to be able to service their machines sold in countries speaking many languages besides English. The Company has "more than 20,000 publications which must be understood by thousands of people, speaking over 50 different languages." This imposes on the Company a major problem in communication and in financial costs. Moreover the slow speed of translation and printing in foreign languages and the relatively high speed of technological improvements necessitating changes in what has been already translated and printed, results together in less than satisfactory communication in a large number of the translations printed, & a waste of much work, time & money. Their Catterpiller (sic) Fundamental English is based on Basic English and is in part a compression (the omission of basic words without which he, the dealer, "could not talk to his wife in English") and an extension of "vocabulary selected to fill that (technological) communication need."

The result has been a vocabulary of 800 words: "450 terms & things" (nouns), 70 actions (verbs), 180 characteristics (adjectives), 100 'small words' (articles, pronouns, prepositions, numbers, ate.). . ." and that "if or when this man" (the dealer or service man who could not talk to his wife) "would like to advance his knowledge of English, he will find that everything he has learned is *correct, simple English. . .* The English language is not distorted into something artificial."

Their satisfactory experience in simplifying communication has been that "the results are extremely encouraging and that the dealers' response is enthusiastic."

It is likely that there will need to be no great number of words to be varied from technology to technology and there will remain a not inconsiderable common core of the undistorted and unchanged body of English which will be retained in each of the technologies.

Could more be needed to indicate that it is right to attach great importance to the concept of limitation (by adapting Basic English) as a factor in simplification? It may be noted however that the Catterpillar Co. as yet attaches no importance to teaching comprehensible oracy and has thus confirmed only one of the two obvious simplifications of our language for the foreigner in his earliest stages of learning. It is like training a man to use only one hand in doing all his work.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1979 pp4–6,20 in the printed version]
[Letters in green should be joined, as in ita. Green z = reversed z. Green r should have an approach stroke].

Appendix A:
3. Desiderata

I suggest as criteria for any good and serviceable I.L.M. the following 20 principles:

Literacy:
A. *The fundamental essentials for simpler alphabeticism:*

(i) No character should represent more than one "diaphone" – see (xiv) below,
(ii) No character should be used unless it denotes unequivocably the diaphone to which it has been uniquely alloted.
(iii) Vowel diphthongs should be treated as single sounds and each be represented by a single symbol. (The beginner will regard the word *toy* as only 2 sounds, not as 3.)
(iv) Consonantal diphthongs may conveniently be similarly represented by a single character (e.g., j, ch* and wh*, but the two former may also (where the advantage is thereby offered of a much closer similarity to T.O.) be represented by the two other but wholly appropriate characters in digraphic form(e.g., ʤ; tch*; $_{or}$ tʃh* provided they represent the two sounds in that diphthong in a practical alphabeticism, as in fact they do.
(v) Double letters as in *middl,letter* should be retained. They do not mislead the reader, who as a beginner is unable to appreciate the subtle difference between *middle* and *midday, rattle* and *rattrap.*
(vi) There must thus be at least as many characters as there are "diaphones."
(vii) The complexity of an I.L.M. in its notation of the discrete sounds, rises steeply the greater number of discriminations which are selected for notation.

It may be that the Oxford English Dictionary is right to have continued the late Dr. James Murray's preference for so very sophisticated, and very many, discriminations between sounds. (He discriminated, and represented, no less than 101 different sounds in the 'Key to Pronunciations' of his Oxford English Dictionary including 22 different foreign sounds adopted in English and including 17 different varieties of the "obscure vowel" as he called it.)

It is likely however that this very high degree of discrimination has little value; possibly even for Bernard Shaw's Professor Higgins teaching English oracy to Eliza Doolittle and that 40 sounds plus two "obscure vowels" (the Schwa and what I call the Schwi) are all that are desirable for the purpose of teaching and learning oracy even with the desired complete comprehensibility, world-wide, which needs to be the aim of any I.L.M. designed for that purpose.

B. *The ways to increase acceptability of a new literacy:*
(What will appear as bizzarre will be a great barrier to acceptability.)

(viii) Every character which is statistically most frequently now used for any one diaphone should be retained as the character for that diaphone, e.g., *p, b, t, d, a* (in cat) and *u* (in but) etc.
(ix) The present digraphs are equivocal. Monographs should supersede them, be discriminating and not confusable (e.g., the use of the two characters *s* and *h* in the words *mishap* and *bishop* should be sufficiently distinct not to be confusable).

Additional characters sufficient for each of the other diaphones of the language must be provided to enable those other diaphones which are not already represented by characters (as in (viii) above) to

be discriminatingly represented, and to be in monographic form resembling the digraphic characters statistically most frequently used in the language, e.g., ch in church ʃh in ʃhip, œ in tœ, etc.

(x) A few, but very few, concessions may be advisable from the one-sound-one-character relationships (but *never* from the one-character-one-sound essential) and are desirable if thereby greater resemblance between the learning medium and the established medium may be obtained yet with no significant addition to the burden of learning, e.g., the addition of z as an alternative for the sound of /z/ whenever that sound is represented by the *s*, as in *was, bags*, etc., will add very little to the learning load and will preserve, with very little additional burden, much of that resemblance which proves to be most valuable not only in gaining greater acceptability by teachers and others (by being less bizarre), but also for the learner later on at the time of the transition from the initial learning medium (I.L.M.) to the final to-be-everywhere-read medium, e.g., Haz, hiz, when, whot, her, (but herriŋ), stir (but stirriŋ), [2] etc.

(xi) In the spellings to be chosen, advantage should be taken of the fact that the new medium, being in its intention a reading and not a writing system, the spelling to be preferred should relate to that one from the great range of pronunciations vouched for by any of the leading pronouncing dictionaries, British or American, which justifies a spelling more closely related to the prevalent spelling in Traditional Orthography (T.O.) – for example, since *dustbin* is also given in Daniel Jones ,'it should be preferred to *dusbin* and *often* to *ofen, poestman* to *poesman*. Even similarly *sceduel* should be preferred to *sheduel* and *fuetiel* to *fuetil.*

(xii) The typography of all "augmentations" should be happy bedfellows alongside of the "retentions" and of printed English generally. Matter printed in the I.L.M. should not appear bizarre but resemble as closely the same passage when printed in Traditional Orthography (T.O.) as is a consistent simplified and rational notation.

(xiii) In the design of the augmented characters, advantage should be taken of the tendency of the eyes of the skilled reader to see what he expects to see (e.g. the ee in feet and the ω in fωt are completed by the eye, finding feet and fωt to be no more than a non-misleading misprint), and is largely satisfied.

(xiv) The "diaphones" in principles (i), (vii) and (viii) above, should be not the phonemes of a particular (model) pronunciation but their diaphones, covering the whole range of phonemes heard and understood world-wide by those who listen habitually to generally acceptable English.

For instance, the word not has eight American diaphonic pronunciations recorded by Kenyon and Knott, and three British pronunciations, yet again different, recorded by Daniel Jones.

Clearly all eleven of these diaphones, while being strictly speaking, each a separate phoneme with its own discrete character in the International Phonetic Alphabet, must nevertheless be regarded as the spoken version of but a single word, having a common single message for the purpose of auditory communication and needing a common single notation for written communication.

Thus the need to redefine a "sound" is necessary because the word "phoneme" is the appropriate word for a sound in a *writing* system and the word "diaphone" the appropriate word for a sound in a *reading* system, which is what is at issue. . . a system in which the reader supplies his own idiosyncratic and virtually unique pronunciation for that word were he to have read it out loud. The issue is thus one of helping the learner to read his own individual version of that word rather than to lead him, as in a writing system, to learn to conform to a pronunciation laid down for him by the editor of a particular Pronunciation Dictionary.

(xv) English is a world language with a literacy in common among all those who use it, regardless of the many differences in the pronunciations of it. This fact seems to raise no problems: even in those cases where two words, having quite different meanings, are pronounced by the

speakers of some dialect, but not of others, in identical sounds. In such cases, the notation ought to reflect the discrimination in meaning of those who make the distinction – and may do so without inconvenience to those who do not.

In the American accent, the words *bomb* and *balm, cot* and *caught* are sometimes homophones; in the Southern British accent (The Received Standard Pronunciation), the word *law* and the word *lore* (unless followed by a vowel) are often homophones. In all such cases the pronunciation which affords a heterograph should be preferred. The reader habituated to homophonic pronunciations will no doubt in his reading continue, as he will do in his listening, to comprehend the words in their discriminating meaning and pronounce them, if called upon to do so, in his habituated homophonic pronunciation, being no more influenced by the spellings in their printed forms than he has been in the past, because he is not looking for pronunciation in the spellings, but only for the meanings of the words.

Oracy.
C. Recognition that changes in rhythm and stress and changes in vowel sounds when in stressed and unstressed positions play a most important part in the comprehension of what is spoken:

(xvi) The learning by the foreigner to speak the English language in a form which will be easily understood requires that rhythms, the stresses *and* the changes of vowel sounds, which stressing and unstressing affect, shall be indicated, and ideally with no misleading change in the overall visual forms of the words or of the letter patterns which are to become, or have already become, familiar while also learning literacy.

The weak and stronger forms of so many of the very commonest words are the very essence of the rhythms of English. They then differ greatly in their pronunciations of the vowels as well as in their stress – all with no change of meaning of the word.

For instance:
1. It **was** (stressed) silly of me to have done **that** (stressed).
2. You are wrong. It <u>was</u> (unstressed) Peter, not James whom you saw.
3. Give **that** (stressed) to **me** (stressed), not to James.
4. Give *<u>me</u>* (unstressed) a chance!
5. Give <u>the</u> (unstressed) pen to Tom.
6. Give *<u>the</u>* (unstressed) other pen to James.
7. I claim <u>that</u> (unstressed) it is **that** (stressed) pen which belongs to **me** (stressed).
8. I want neither of these pens but **the** (stressed) pen I want is **that** (stressed) black pen which belongs to **me** (stressed).

Thus by reason of changes in stress, the words in italics above *(was, that, me)* are spoken with two different vowel sounds, and the word *the* with three different vowel sounds. This change of stress and the change of vowel which accompanies it is the very essence of English rhythm, which is of very great importance in the comprehension of the speech of any speaker.

(xvii) In a *reading* system, it is normal to ignore changes in pronunciation of any single root word; in a *writing* system, the purpose of which is to indicate pronunciations, [3] the changes in phonemes, in a diaphonic usage, need very much to be notated.

Clearly it will only create confusion to – the learner of the reading system if the notation in the writing system is such that it appears to depart, to a major degree, from the reading system. The letter patterns and the word or syllable shapes of every root word ought to remain as stable as possible and ought not to vary confusingly with every capricious change of vowel sound, as capriciously happens when the International Phonetic Alphabet is used to indicate such changes in vowel sounds.

(xviii) The desired degree of compatibility of the writing system with the reading system may be achieved by a number of printing devices of which the following is perhaps the most helpful to the preservation of the letter patterns and of the wad shapes of every wad the pronunciation of which varies, and so to be most helpful to the learner.
a. The *stressed* word or syllable may be printed in heavier (semi-bold) type as so marked and marked as stressed in the 9 examples shown in xvi above.

1. **was that** 7. **that me**
3. **that me** 8. **the that me**.

b. The *unstressed* vowels which should be pronounced with the "schwa" which are underlined and marked to the above numbered sentences,

2. was 7. that
5. the

may be printed in *smaller* type *and* in the *lower* position.
c. The *unstressed* vowels which should be pronounced with the "schwi" which are italicized and underlined as marked in the above sentences.

4. *me* 6. *the*

may be printed in smaller type *and* in the *higher* position. Other words may be printed in ordinary type.

(xix) Only when the reading system for literacy and the writing system for oracy are made consistently and not only truly systematic but also compatible each to each can literacy and oracy be learned with each supporting the other. No doubt the origin of the attempts of learners in the past to learn first the oracy and only later the literacy has lain in the fact that the initial learning medium has hitherto been one in *which* the literacy was so frequently contradictory to the oracy and the relation of the literacy to the oracy was so chaotically misdirecting.

With the media for each being simple and rational for purposes of relationship, the task of learning each may be expected to become very much easier. At any rate the *a priori* case for learning each in association with the other has been most convincing.

(xx) "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." The reports of the use of such an I.L.M. in both the Nigerian and The Gambian schools have been so good that the stage is surely now set for an open-minded evaluation and a series of major demonstrations in a large number of non-English speaking communities, and a widespread learning of the English language.

This 20th and last of the "desiderata" is surely the aim of the design and thus the purpose of the 19.

Notes

[1] The characters of the initial teaching alphabet have been used throughout because they are self-evident in notation to all, whereas those of the international Phonetic Alphabet are known to some but their values are not self-evident to others.

[2] To print *hwot is* too disruptive of the literate form. Moreover so many speakers do not pronounce the initial aspirate that the precedence of the w is most acceptable to them, while those who aspirate it accept happily the monograph wh* as the notation for their aspirated pronunciation.

[3] For teaching English oracy.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1979 pp7,8 in the printed version]

Downing: schools not using reading research
4. Back to the basics is bunk, says UVic prof
By Donna Danylchuk

the Ring – Page 6, March 9, 1979

Since our notoriously difficult English language is one of the reasons why Johnny can't read, the language should be changed through its alphabet to suit Johnny.

This is the opinion of international reading expert Dr. John Downing (Educ-PFED).

Downing doesn't want to do away with our standard English alphabet – he would simply like to do away with the irregularities that cause children to fail in reading.

Downing: conducted reading study with British schoolchildren

The UVic professor has been studying how to make reading instruction more effective for more than 19 years. He holds a doctorate in psychology from the University of London and has conducted research in countries on both sides of the Atlantic and as far away as Russia.

He is convinced many children fail to learn to read and spell the English language partly because of the irregular way in which letters in the alphabet represent the language's sounds.

Learners, he says, become confused by the language's awkward and inefficient way of using the same letter or letters to represent different sounds, or using different letters to represent the same sound.

The way to help children with reading problems, he says, is not to drill them harder until they learn the gross irregularities of English spellings, but to change the spellings.

"We should take into account in teaching and other activities how the people doing the activity actually perceive, instead of forcing them to adapt to our way."

He predicts failure for the return to basics called for in the B.C. Education Ministry's new core curriculum.

"We know it will fail! Drilling in spelling and arithmetic tables and certain traditional ways of teaching have long since been disproven as having any value at all."

The system Downing would like to see implemented would be similar to what is called ita, for the initial teaching alphabet, invented in 1960 by Sir James Pitman, grandson of Sir Isaac Pitman of shorthand fame.

The ita system has 44 letters, each representing a sound in the English language, and the letters are

consistently used to represent one sound. But even with our traditional 26 letters the four different sounds of o in 'some women do go on' could be represented by 'sum women doo goe on'. 'I like my pie' could be'ie liek mie pie.'

Downing points out that his belief that our spelling should be regularized is not considered a radical stand among those who have given thought to the idea of spelling reform.

"People have been proposing such changes for hundreds of years. Some people want to do away with the alphabet altogether and start with another. That would never succeed. Society would never accept it. To me, that is not really the kind of thing that would be useful to the general public."

Downing is currently president of the British Simplified Spelling Society, a three-quarter-Century old organization whose royal patron is the Duke of Edinburgh. ("It was suggested that I try to persuade him to become the first royal patron. I wrote him a letter asking him, but never thought he would. I was successful! He replied with two pages of ideas on spelling reform and said there should be moderate changes.")

The Society is not highly active at the moment, notes Downing. "It is quite small and includes a number of rather eccentric people. And, it is in low water financially. It is a kind of hobby for me now."

But, during its history, the memberships roster has included such well-known names as Sir Charles Darwin, Lord Baden-Powell, Andrew Carnegie, Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. William Temple, and many British professors.

Downing began to become concerned about problems of children with learning difficulties when he taught in the British school system for 10 years.

His involvement with ita arose out of debates that occurred in the British Parliament during the 1950's. "Linguist and MP Dr. Mont Follick brought in a private members bill requesting that a law be passed to reform the spelling system to make it easier for children and immigrants to learn to read, write and spell. The first bill was thrown out but when another was introduced Parliament was persuaded that an investigation should be made to determine whether children would learn to read more readily if simplified spelling were introduced in the schools."

Studying British children

Downing was invited by the London Institute of Education and the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales to direct the inquiry, termed by the Institute's Director at the time as "one of the most interesting, difficult, and potentially important pieces of experimental research work the London Institute of Education has ever undertaken."

The system of inquiry Downing adopted was to follow two groups of children in the British school system over a period of five years in the early 1960s. One group was taught with the ita system by teachers specially trained in ita methods; the other control group was taught the standard curriculum. Everything except the spelling was matched in the two groups.

Downing says he approached the inquiry with an open mind. He had never been interested in spelling reform prior to his research.

After seven years of study he became convinced that Pitman's system works better for children both with and without learning disabilities.

"Ita works. It cuts learning disabilities by as high as 50 per cent."

Reports published out of the inquiry consistently favor ita over the traditional alphabet system and state that ita not only cuts by half the incidences of real learning disabilities among children, but also enables quick learners to shoot ahead more rapidly. It does not wipe out failure, but many more slow learners do succeed in reading, the reports state.

Pitman believes that our present system of lettering and spelling would not be imperiled if ita gained widespread acceptance in schools and society at large.

The system was specifically designed by Pitman, Downing explains, to make it easy for students trained in ita to transfer from the 44-letter alphabet to the traditional 26-letter alphabet system of spelling.

"Ita's chief difference from other modified alphabets is its special design for transfer from ita to traditional orthography. We obtain most of our information from the upper half of a line of print. Ita characters and spellings of ita words have been designed to preserve, as far as possible, the top half of the line of print of traditional orthography.

"When a child's fluency in ita reaches the appropriate level, he easily switches from the top half of ita to the very similar top half of traditional orthography. Research show that ita pupils are either equal to or better than traditional orthography pupils as regards traditional spelling after the third year."

In spite of such assurances, it has been 12 years since Downing's report, *Evaluating the Initial Teaching Alphabet*, was published, and acceptance of the proposed system has been slow in England. Downing says it is used in about 10 per cent of British schools and much less frequently in North America.

Success in Australia

The approach Downing would prefer to see adopted here is that now being followed in Australia, where calls for spelling reform have met with modest success.

"It is a good example of what we should do here. Harry Lindgren proposed that they adopt what is called SRI or the Spelling Reform 1 system, whereby things would change gradually. His proposal has been accepted by several Australian teachers unions. Their idea is to start by getting rid of different ways of spelling the 'e' sound as in read, said, dead. It is now correct to spell dead either dead or ded. Quite a few politicians support the idea."

Downing sees little indication that ita is about to catch on in this country.

"It will take a long, long time. Most people don't want changes. Research now has almost no effect on the actual teaching in schools.

"In some schools good things are happening, but it is due to the presence of good teachers and principals." Though he doesn't expect to see overnight changes in the B.C. school system, Downing is planning to carry on with studies which have gained him wide recognition since he came to UVic in 1970.

A fellow of the British Psychological Society, the Royal Society of Arts and the American Psychological Association, his publications include *Evaluating the Initial Teaching Alphabet, Comparative Reading*, and *Reading Readiness.* Coming out shortly is his book for the lay as well as the professional educator, *Reading and Reasoning,* the result of his investigations into the thought processes of children who are learning to read. He is also working on a book entitled *The Psychology of Learning to Read* for psychology and education research graduates and neuropsychologists.

Prof brings Russian studies to UVic

Downing suggests that North American educators would be well advised to look to the Soviet Union for directions in reading education.

He spent a sabbatical in 1976 visiting Russia to study the work of reading experts there and to arrange for their reports to be translated into English.

"They've been onto linguistic awareness (how children perceive the structure and function of language and task of reading) long before us, both theoretically and practically.

To bring the Soviet knowledge home, Downing has received a grant from the former Canada Council, with which the Russian studies are being translated into English at UVic, in the Soviet Reading Research project, by research assistant Isabel Heaman.

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If you can read this – thank a teacher. From *Spelling Action.*

The difficult is always avoided when something easier is readily available. Newell Tune.

Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man. Francis Bacon.

Reading is the magic carpet that carrys you to adventure. Newell Tune.

Every step in progress is at first a noble experiment. N.T.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1979 pp9–12 in the printed version]

5. A New Approach to Education via the Organic Computer, by Harvie Barnard*

(ritten in a modified spelling)

*Tacoma, WA.

Recently when I discussed present-day educational problems with the president of a San Francisco publishing company, we approached the fundamental concept of how educators view education in terms of mental development.

I suggested that we begin by recognizing the possibility that the human mind is essentially an "organic computer," and that education is fundamentally "a process of programming human minds." The publisher, a well educated and successful business man, gave me a rather penetrating stare, and without the slightest hesitation sed, "If educators don't understand *that, they haven't eny business in the teaching profession*."

It was obvious that the gentleman who so emphatically made this statement believed that education had alredy become established as a lojical procedure – if not an established science! Amazing! As a former teacher and serious student of that profession, I wondered privately if there wer eny schools in the United States which had progressed far enuf to accept as fact the computer concept of the human nervous system, particularly respecting the functioning of the brain as the memory bank, classifier, and switching system for all sensory input?

I hav bin advised that this viewpoint has bin cautiously accepted by some of our most advanced scientists in the field of computer programming – a viewpoint to be applauded! Yet as with all new concepts, especially in the area so reluctant to accept change, why hav steps not bin taken to reduce this significant idea to practice? Aside from the usual fear of innovation, why the timidity, the unwillingness to accept a conceptualism having such tremendously valuable potentialities?

There is an explanation, of course, and in a few words it has bin termed "cultural lag." [5] This cultural lag is described by Kenneth H. Ives [5] as "A persistent condition of lack of progress in any area of social endeavor." This amounts to a failure to recognize, accept, or utilize advances or inventions in some area of human development. This might be described as a general unwillingness to disturb the rigor mortis of the status quo – which might also be expressed as fear of tarnishing the status of those who alredy "Hav it made"!

Altho there hav bin several Montessorian innovations as well as "pin-wheel spectaculars", such as the New Math, the world of the classroom is still essentially flat! Traditional attitudes still prevail and rote memorization is still considered the basic mental process. The Education Training colleges preach psychology, but frequently ignore it in practice. I propose acceptance of the following basic psychological truths – those which hav apparently suffered from cultural lag:

1) The human "mind," or the brain-nervous system complex, functions as our "organic computer."
2) Programming the organic computer, which is education, starts soon after birth and continues thruout life.
3) This programming of life experiences is the "input process" which cumulatively determines our functioning as individuals for the duration of our survival.
4) The input from the five basic senses of the nervous system, having bin programmed into the computer, form the basis for all human behavior.
5) The process of "thinking" – a uniquely human capability – is based upon the programmed input. When the input is recorded in a lojical, consistent, orderly fashion, and when the material is

compatibl and not contradictory, it will be redily retained, and will be retrievabl on demand, which we term "memorization."

6) When memorized, input material can be utilized in thaut processes, and will be rapidly and clearly availabl without confusion in reaching decisions, answering questions, and solving problems.
7) All human experience may be considered as programming for the human computer. When considered in this perspectiv, the input must be recognized as controlabl in the same sense as the environment may be planned. Altho rarely if ever completely controllabl, there are reasonabl limitations recognized as favorabl or unfavorabl, "good" or "bad", desirabl or undesirabl, within which perimiters the input may be regulated.
8) As the complete human organism develops, and programming continues to expand into new areas as well as into greater depth and complexity, the organic computer develops the capacity for acceptance or rejection of input. It will accept that which is perceived to be favorabl to the organism, rejecting that which is unfavorabl or which appears harmful or in some manner inimical to survival. In accord with the basic "instinct" for survival, this capacity for acceptance or rejection will manifest itself as freedom of choice except under circumstances wherein the individual is forced or deceived into accepting input which is in some manner harmful or unplesant.
9) When under some form of duress, abuse, coertion or deception, the computer will either reject (rebell), or will not operate effectively. Conditions which are too restrictiv or inhibiting may be classed as abusiv or harmful, which will result in rejection, or at best, partial acceptance. Under severe or prolonged abusiv circumstances, the individual may go far beyond simpl rejrction and react with defiance and "anger," as tho his survival was in jepardy. In such circumstances the computer becomes inoperativ – in the sense of normal or acceptabl behavior.
10) To operate smoothly and efficiently-to accept input effectively-the organic computer requires considerate and consistent treatment. Our computer is in essence an egocentric organ which is highly susceptibl to injury or damage by eny form of abusiv treatment. When permitted and/or encouraged to function without the impairment of over-restrictiv or harmful restraints, the organic computer responds with remarkabl capacity for retention-memory -classification of input, as well as with productiv output-often termed "intelligence."
11) A major factor which must be recognized as essential to full development of the potential of the individual which we now recognize as the programmed computer is proper and complete nutrition.

Altho the nutritional factor is of great importance to the satisfactory development and programming of the computer, as well as the physical body operated by the computer, the essentiality of good nutrition is outside the scope of this discussion.

Our basic concern here and now is with the pupil who has not lerned to spell, rite, or read in accord with the existing precepts of presently constituted authority over the English language. The public school pupil is not alone with the problem of functional illiteracy. In terms of the literacy of hi-school graduates, combined with the communicativ insufficiencies of would-be college entrants, it would appear that not more than 50% of our 12 year public school product had achieved an acceptabl level of functional literacy. Additional evidence of poorly programmed communicativ skills would be the "uhs", "aahs", and "yuh knows" which litter the speech of our heros and celebrities whose TV interviews reveal the shocking deficiencies resulting from our public schooling-call it "education", if you will.

This is not to castigate the student, his parents, teachers, or society in general. The educational programming which has bin set up for all our littl Jonnies and Marys has bin inadvertantly obstructed by a labyrinth of roadblocks, detours and accidental impediments littering the hiway of

English orthografy. In simpl terms, our English spelling is worse than just difficult – it is so illojical, inconsistent and irregular that without the gift of perfect (or fotografic) memory, it takes constant, life-time lerning to master it, and even then we must keep a "speller" or dictionary handy in order to avoid misspelling even the commonest words.

What makes the problem more serious is that our undependabl and weird symbol combinations – our spelling according to the Johnsonian dictionary of 1755, (the standard of all English orthografy) – is that it impedes the lerning of reading, discourages writing, and retards thought. The overall effect of this basic difficulty – the problem of lerning to communicate adequately – whether by writing, reading or by speech, is that we, because of limited communicativ ability, are frequently lacking in the most fundamentally important human ability – UNDERSTANDING – and /or the ability to make ourselves clearly understood!

Yet meny, if not most of you who are able to read this, will say that "there is no problem" – that some peopl simply "don't hav it", and others hav better genes and can lern almost enything. You who spend a lifetime lerning the "codes", the skills, the decoding process (reading), the encoding process (writing), will, until you hav patiently labored and reached the frustration point in attempting to teach "basics" to illiterates, deny that eny problem exists. Secure, more or less, in your own confident control of the intricacies of the English language, you hav long since forgotten (if you ever recognized), those long tedious years of childhood lerning which, to those who do remember, may hav bin frought with travail and frustration-both for you as well as your teachers.

Let's revive some childhood memories of primary schooling, or, if you will, step into some modern primary school classroom. Consider what happened then; and what is still going on in pretty much the same way today.

Our littl six year olds, bursting with pride and enthusiasm for lerning the mysteries of the grown-up world, enter kindergarten with a hop, skip, and jump of pure joy! They look forward to lerning to read, perhaps to write, and to take part in the life which has bin heretofore denyed their comprehension. Altho meny of them can alredy name letters and numbers, they hav, for the most part, not lerned to use them. Some are "redy," and some are not, but all are confronted with the same problem: the "basics" must be mastered before they can move on to more interesting facts-of-life. The "basics" of language come first. What hav we here?

Without destroying the myth that "lerning is pure joy," the primary teacher has the task of programming her littl peopl with an alfabet of 26 letters whose names most of them alredy know, but whose sounds will become more mysterious and confusing as time goes on. Altho there are but 40 (some say 41 or as meny as 44), basic sounds in the English languages our pupils will soon discover that their 26 letters do not always hav the same sound, and that the sounds they are lerning are expresst by a bewildering combination of letters, some of which seem to be used as "fillers" or silent letters, and hav no sound at all! The littl computers dont like this situation and noiselessly reject or turn off. (These are the kids who are "dum(b)", obstinate, "stupid", or simply don't seem to "lern.") The dum computer ceases to accept or to lern!

The computer called "Jonnie" is told that there are "rules" to be lerned, and exceptions to these rules, and Jonnie's teacher does her utmost to avoid the exceptions and keep it a kind of a secret from the computer that the 40 basic sounds, insted of being expresst by just 40 letters, or letter combinations, are represented by some 334 different spellings; (some authorities hav sed that there are over 500 different – Dewey: 561, based on a thoro analysis of 17,000 standard dictionary spellings in actual use.)

Because of this multiplicity of symbol combinations for the same sound – there is an average of

more than eight (8) spellings for each of the 40 or 44 different sounds – there is no reasonabl number of rules or exceptions to these rules which can be relied upon to spell "correctly" the words of the English language. (See Godfrey Dewey, A. J. Ellis, Paul R. Hanna, Max Muller, Sir James Pitman, G. B. Shaw, Abraham Tauber, Mark Twain, and Ben D. Wood.)

One careful research study involving the computer made by Paul R. Hanna (and others) [4] was sponsored by the U. S. Office of Education. They fed a lengthy sampl of T. O. prose into the computer to find out how helpful the rules for spelling could be. Godfrey Dewey [3] criticized the results saying (in effect), When he (Paul Hanna) programmed a large commercial electronic computer with 77 graphemes manipulated by 203 rules and exceptions to the rules, it was able to spell only 49.3% of the words correctly, and another 24% with only one mistake per word.* Considering the complexity of the problem, it did fairly well! Would we be satisfied with this kind of results in the writings of our pupils?

* Ed. note: To be completely fair to the large electronic computer, if it wer given insted of 77 grafemes, some 334 grafemes (probably needing a great meny more rules), it probably could spell about 90% of words correctly. And if we expanded the list of 17,000 words to the size of the unabridged dictionary with 200,000 words with Dewey's 561 grafemes, it could spell 100% of the words correctly. But meny of the rules would apply to only one word (as 'of', where it is the only word with f for the v-sound). But such a computer would hav to be huge and cost over $100,000.

Of course, littl Jonnie doesn't know about this study and if his teacher did know about this "secret," she certainly wouldn't let Jonnie's computer know about it either. Yet in spite of this obviously insurmountabl obstacl, all our littl Jonnies and Marys are driven thru the same routine of programming and spelling, (and reading and writing), of the English language. This valiant approach to the impossible (now why did I add that final /e/ when according to the rule, "the final 'e' makes the preceding vowel "long," as in 'mine'," so that final 'e' isn't really needed, is it?) makes Jonnie stumbl along for 8 or 10 years or until something drastic occurs. Jonnie's computer can giv up the whole thing as hopeless – resulting in Jonnie's academic failure, and subsequent dropping out of school, or Jonnie can start programming all the exceptions as individually lerned spellings. If by some act of merciful fate, Jonnie has developed his computer until it has prodigiously good "memory," he will go along with the exceptions, programming into his computer everything that comes along, until considerably later he becomes fairly competent both as a speller and a reader. But his writing will be laborious and his thinking will be difficult, because his computer will hav to "fish" out words to express ideas which relate to sounds which do not relate consistently to the spellings which are supposed to express those words!

Fully comprehending the pitfalls and ideosyncracies of the English language, (which Jonnie's teacher has lerned thru long and painful experience), she employs every conceivabl method as well as the drugery of endless repetition to pilot all the littl Marys, Jonnies, Janes and Georges, (or should it be Jorjes?), thru the labyrinthine channels of 'English spelling and spelling rules. When words are spelt fonetically, the teacher smilingly points out the consistent relationship between sound and symbol; when the spelling is non-fonetic, inconsistent or odd-ball, she grits her teeth and sez, "Now what we hav here is an exception – write it ten times, or until you lern it!"

The question might well be raised, "How do primary, and others, for that matter, *all,* teachers accomplish as much and as well as they do? Considering the material they are given to work with- the spelling of the English language, *not* the pupils – they do remarkably well! Altho the determined, experienced, patient and thoro teacher may hav a failure rate of less than 5%, according to recent statistics, the literacy level of high school graduates,(not counting those who hav "graduated" via the dropout route), is at about the 6th grade level, and the percentage of functionally illiterates may be 15% or higher!

But as for teaching efficiency-in terms of time required to accomplish desired goals – the U. S. teaching is outrageously ineffectiv! According to Ralph D. Owen, Ph.D., Prof. Emeritus of Education, Temple Univ. (Philadelphia), "It takes our English-speaking child nearly three years to progress as far in reading as the Italian child does in one year." He goes on to say, "The teacher has to drill him (the English-speaking child), in recognizing every word as a whole. This is a process similar to that used in drilling a dog to ride a bicycle."

In terms of computer programming, are we trying to accomplish the impossibl, or are we attempting to make lerning as difficult as possibl? Obviously, we are not making the teaching/lerning of spelling, reading, and writing as efficient as possibl. The fact that a large number of peopl hav lerned to spell, read, and write does not validate the system. Using our present T.O. (traditional orthography) even with the best of teachers and programming systems, plus all the teaching gimmicks, aids, teaching machines and memory improvers, I would hav to conclude that in terms of true literacy we will not exceed 50% if we require that literacy include the' ability to write effectively as well as reading with clear comprehension. Thus, on a national basis, our communicativ ability is poor-hardly passabl – and because of this it should appear that there is ampl room for improvement.

Altho we cannot change the fact that English is a composit, a "mulligan stew" of meny languages – just 111, if you consult the preface and "explanatory notes" of eny standard collegiate dictionary, we should recognize that this situation does not preclude simplification. Our Roman lettering system, altho adapted primarily for Latin, as a modification of Greek, is altogether adequate and quite adaptabl to a simplified spelling system if we are willing to accept as standard meny of the digrafs and vowel combinations (diphthongs). presently in use. The basic 26 letters may be pared to 24 if we wish to drop the .q' and the `x', but these symbols need not be removed from the present alfabet, altho for purposes of programming the elimination of unneeded letters, it might be desirabl, but not essential.

As pointed out by Newell W. Tune, (*Spelling Progress Bulletin,* vol. 10*,* # 1, Spring, 1970, pp. 16-18, and vol. 19, Spring, 1979, pp. 18-19), a relatively easy and simpl step toward implementing a more efficiently programmabl English spelling would be the elimination of the meny unnecessary silent letters common in English words. Thus, according to Tune, it would be feasibl to simplify about 2300 of our commonest words by simply eliminating the unsounded letters, such as the silent terminal 'e' where it wrongly indicates a previous long vowel, such as the *e* in the suffixes *abl(e), ibl(e), oubl(e),* and in frequently used words such as *hav(e), ar(e),* and *becaus(e).* In our 1000 commonest words, there are, according to Tune, 339 examples in which eliminations are possibl with minimal change to the spelling without affecting the pronunciation. In nearly every case, improved foneticity would facilitate both spelling and pronunciation, as well as ease of programming.

Other redily implemented simplifications, such as the SR-1 advocated and alredy in use by Harry Lindgren in his publication *Spelling Action* '(Australia), would contribute simplicity as well as improved fonemic (or fonetic) spelling for approximately 240 commonly used words. Lindgren's SR-1 involves just one simpl rule, which is to use the singl letter *e* to express the short e vowel sound, as in 'bet', wherever it may occur, as in *eny, agen, hed, sed,* and *ses.* Such spelling modifications are quite inconspicuous, and the singl rule governing this simplification should create no confusion and littl if eny controversy.

In Lindgren's Australia, progressiv conservativs and teachers' organizations hav alredy accepted and are currently using SR-1 in the schools as well as in some publications.

There are objections to change, "naturally," just as when peopl came down out of the trees, and when the electric light replaced the kerosene lamp and the candl. Yet in view of the obvious advanteges of: 1) saving of teaching time, 2) making it easier for everyone to spel "correctly" – which would be in accord with pronunciation, 3) developing lojical thinking insted of rote memorization, 4) *promoting a respect for rules to be observed, insted of being broken,* 5) removal of the greatest barrier to the Americanization of our non-English speaking population, and 6) giving hope and encouragement to the extension of English as an international language, it would appear that serious consideration of spelling reform would be very much worth while.

Altho lengthy dissertations could be (and hav bin) ritten in support of the above mentioned advantages and benefits – eny one of which could properly be advanced as sufficient reason for rationalizing English spelling – the $ sign and the economics of the matter seem at this time to outweigh all social or educational benefits.

So be it, – if it's *got to be* a matter of dollars and cents, we still hav much of the evidence on the side of lojic and common sense! Consider the known facts: 1) In the United States, using the traditional spelling in combination with our best teaching methods, it takes the good student a minimum of 2 or 3 years to lern to read; it takes the average student from 5 to 8 years; the poor student struggles along for 10 or 12 years, and even then reads poorly and may not be able to compose a simpl English sentence with eny degree of acceptabl literacy. Compare these meager accomplishments with rates of lerning achieved in Italy, Spain, Russia, and Germany, where the spelling is largely fonetic. (Both Italy and Spain hav nearly 100% fonetic spelling; Russia, since their alfabet was simplified and made nearly fonetic following the revolution, and West Germany hav spelling which is about 90% fonetic.)

In these four modern countries it is being demonstrated that the average student Terns to read in a year or less insted of the more than three years required in the U.S.A. According to one academic authority, Ralph D. Owen, (and substantiated by meny others), "It takes our English speaking child nearly three years to progress as far in reading as the Italian child does in one year."

We can conclude from the above evidence that *most of the pupils in every school in the United States are presently losing a year or more of schooling time because of the needless and endless repetitive teaching/lerning process,* (traditional spelling based on Samuel Johnson's dictionary of 1755), now in use. If the cost of this inefficient public education – including salaries, buildings, administration, maintenance, supplies and all other incidental expenses – amounts to about $1000 per student per year, the losses arising from excessiv teaching time alone calculates to approximately 20 BILLION DOLLARS a year. This loss to the taxpayer does not include the losses arising from *failures, dropouts, truancy, delinquency, vandalism,* and the "security" expenses attending operations of nearly all school systems.

This continuing every-year-loss of 20 billion dollars figures to about $ 200 added taxes for every taxpayer each year. If to this needless expense, we add the cost of crime resulting from delinquency, we hav additional taxpayer expense of enywhere from 10 to 80 billion dollars, depending on what costs are included beyond the losses of property and the tremendous expense of crime "control" – which at best is known to be highly inefficient!

Perhaps we're not really concerned about the $200 to $1000 being lost to the taxpayer – every taxpayer, every year? But how about the loss to the individual, the losses to society which are the inevitabl consequences of failure, delinquency and criminality? Are we as a nation of confused, fearful, disillusioned and perhaps functionally illiterate taxpayers concerned with the problems of our ineffectiv public schools where few pupils lern to communicate effectively, and where too meny take too long to lern to read and write.?

If we would pause to think lojically, with reason and with concern for our fellow humans, which means as well our unfortunate children, we would hav to agree that there is good and sufficient reason to adopt an improved national program, plan, organization – or whatever it takes – to more efficiently, if not humanistically, properly program the human computer, which in essence is or should be, rational, lojical, reasonabl education.

Meny recognized patriots, leaders, educators, and men of letters both in this country and in England hav strongly advocated spelling reform. In America, these reformers hav included Benjamin Franklin, Theodore Roosevelt, Andrew Carnegie, Wm. D. Whitney, Godfrey Dewey, Frank Laubach, and John Steinbeck. Steinbeck sed, "Some people there are who, being grown up, forget the horrible task of learning to read. It is perhaps the single greatest effort that the human undertakes, and he must do it as a child!"

The most eloquent appeal of all is offered by Mark Twain, (Samuel Clemens), in his essay on "Simplified Spelling" in *his Letters from the Earth,* [1] in which he sed, "But I appeal to you in behalf of the generations which are to follow you, . . . age after age, cycle after cycle. I pray you, consider them and be generous. Lift this heavy burden (traditional spelling) from their backs. Do not send them toiling and moiling down the 20th century still bearing it, still oppressed by it. . . I pray you, let the hieroglyphics (old spelling) go, and thus save millions of years of useless time and labor to fifty generations of posterity that are to follow you. . . This cost of time is much too expensive. It could be employed more usefully in other industries, and with better results."

Mark Twain has sed it well. I can only add, "Amen!"

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1979 pp12,13 in the printed version]

6. Does Practice Make Perfect?, by Raymond H. Pierson*

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(A partial critique of two common and dangerous clichés):

1. Practice makes perfect.
2. That is the exception that proves the rule

Introduction

Clichés have been examined, discussed, cussed, criticized, and condemned. Yet they persist undyingly! Some are even directly contradictory when taken in pairs: "Look before you leap" vs. "He who hesitates is lost:" Still, each of these is often used to suit the occasion of the moment.

Clichés are trecherous! They pop up even in the writings of intelligent well-educated persons, and thereby sometimes indicate a momentary and unfortunate lapse of clear thinking!

This present discussion might not have been undertaken had not its author recently seen two examples on the same day of such inappropriate uses of the first cliché cited above. Both were in articles by highly intelligent, highly educated, articulate persons, both of whom are keenly interested in education, the English language, and spelling

(a) *Spelling Action,* June 1978, p. 2, col. 1, paragraph 4, re: a number of SR-1 spellings missed in an article: "Practice makes perfect: it'll be better next time." Harry Lindgren, author of *Spelling Reform* and editor of *Spelling Action.*

(b) *Spelling Progress Bulletin,* vol 18, Fall 1978, p. 14, line 3 from bottom of column 1, re: the author's rule number 4 for a recommended approach to simplified spelling. "Practice makes perfection – you will find it easier than you expect," in the article, "The Key to Better Education" by Brenda M. Johns.

Part 1, "Practice makes perfect"

(1) Practice in itself does *not* make perfect; the clich6 suffers drastically from over-simplification: Practice tends only to lead *toward* perfection, and then only if it is of the proper kind, in the proper amount, and by a person whose aptitude is adequate for the activity chosen.

(2) It is well known that practice of the wrong kind is detrimental. It takes time for a person to unlearn incorrect techniques and then learn the proper ways.

(3) The words "perfect" and "perfection" represent concepts not easily defined in an absolute sense, and in meny cases it would be advisable to substitute for them, phrases such as "more nearly perfect" or "nearly perfect" or "approaching perfection," etc. The scientist will tell you, for example,

that an "absolutely perfect measurement" is a myth, *except* in the sense of being a *completely adequate* one for a given set of circumstances. When a statistician examines and compares two sets of measurements, he will be able to say there is or there is not a statistical significance. [1] To the person who will use the measurements, there may be a practical significance which may or may not coincide with the statistical result. That is, there are four possible cases as shown in the following chart of significance regarding two sets of measurements:

Case	*Statistically Significant difference*	*Practically Significant difference*
1	yes	yes
2	yes	no
3	no	yes
4	no	no

Case 1 means there is a practical difference that is revealed statistically by the two sets of measures.
Case 2 means the measuring tool(s) are good enough to show a difference beyond that which is of practical interest.
Case 3 means better tool(s) are needed for the measuring tasks at hand.
Case 4 means there is neither a practical nor statistical difference in the sets of measurements.

(4) No two people are alike Poor Joe Average will never be able to play a violin with eny degree of success (far below "perfection"). The Seashore Test for Musical Aptitude could tell him that, before he ever started eny lessons or practice.

"All men are created equal" is another monstrous fallacy. In how meny ways are they born unequal? In size, shape, helth, color, appearance – the enumeration would go toward infinity. Men are not even "born equal before the law" – because in court, regrettably, "money talks" very loudly in most cases. Even the difference in color of skin – which should make little or no difference, has been a factor of considerable consequence leading to great injustices.

That "There ain't no justice" and "Justice is blind" are cliches that come close to being valid. Some people believe "This (our) world is the best of all possible worlds" but meny have been disillusioned and do not think it is. See for example such books as:

Candide by Voltaire, 1759
Jurgen, by James Branch Cabell, 1919
The Rebellion of Leo McGuire, by Clyde Brion Davis, 1944, a well-told interesting story that merited the best 3 seller list but never appeared thereon.
Passages from Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's. Court,* 1889.

Because of the vast array of personal differences, the cliche "Practice makes perfect" would, in order to be valid, need to be expanded so much that it would lose all its "clout" along with its over-simplification. It would need to be something like "A great amount [2] of the right kind of practice is essential for a person to reach a level of achievement approaching his inherent potential!"

The acronym ULOPODA has at times been used by psychologists to mean "Ultimate Limit of Possibility of Developing Ability," which is perhaps a little more specific and understandable than the shorter terms "innate potential" or "born-with aptitude." The acronym seems to me a good one in helping to explain to Joe Average (if necessary) why he should *not* take up the study of the violin. In Joe's case, "Hitch your wagon to a star" is most inappropriate with respect to violin playing.

Part 2. "That is the exception that proves the rule."

The above is a unique cliché in that there is nothing wrong with it *except* that most people do not read into the word "proves" its correct meaning in this statement. Unfortunately this is what sometimes happens when one uses homophones – the wrong meaning is: interpreted. This misinterpretation is exceedingly obnoxious to scientists.

The incorrect interpretation signifies "verifies" or "validates," whereas the correct one is *probes* or *tests*.

The U.S. Government maintains at Aberdeen, Maryland, a facility named "The Aberdeen *Proving* Grounds." This facility *tests* (evaluates) various kinds of ordnance; it *probes* them.

When a scientific person finds an exception which does not fit his rules (law of physics, chemistry, etc.), he does *not* say "Ah, that proves (verifies) the rule as correct; on the contrary, he says, "Oh, oh, wait a minute-something is haywire, this must be looked into further." Either some valid explanation of the exception which would enable fitting it into the law (which is more likely than not impossible) or *a new rule* or law is imperative. Such a variance between a rule and a "finding" can lead to discovery of something of great importance not before known to mankind.

Conclusion

Beware of cliches; avoid them as much as possible. They are trecherous, sneaky and dangerous.

[1] "significant" can be defined as "there is a difference large enough to make a difference (in judgement)."
[2] or more rigorously an "optimum amount."

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1979 p13 in the printed version]

7. It's Easy to Speak, Tough to Write Right, by Sydney J. Harris*

*Reprinted from *Detroit Free Press,* Mon. Jan. 2, 1978.

There is a tale that somebody once told Thomas Hardy, the novelist, that "sugar" is the only word in the English language that takes the sound of "sh" when the spelling is "su." Hardy lifted an eyebrow and replied, "Are you sure?"

Actually, what has prevented English from becoming the world-wide language that many predicted it would be is our complex, illogical and inconsistent spelling. As a spoken language, it is easy to learn; as a correctly written language, it is pure hell. Friday I used the word "grievous" in my column. I spelled it wrong, as I usually do, and my secretary corrected it, as she always does. "Tell you what," she suggested, "next time you use it, spell it the way you think is wrong, and it will be right." You can see who should be writing the column.

Otto Whittaker, in his book, *Such Language!* points out that there are 14 different spellings for the sound of "sh" in English, a situation no sensible tongue would tolerate. They are: *shoe, issue, mansion, mission, nation, suspicion, ocean, nauseous, conscious, chaperone, schist, fuschia, pshaw,* and of course *sugar. ,*

But what to do about it? There's the rub. Every reform aimed at simplifying English spelling has come to grief (greif?). G. B. Shaw donated a large part of his estate for the purpose, but the British court broke his will on the grounds of impracticability. Influential newspapers like the Chicago Tribune, which for years spelled some words phonetically ("frate" for "freight," as an example), finally gave up the battle.

More than 50 years ago, when H. W. Fowler published his monumental *Dictionary.of Modern English Usage,* which took the world by storm, he recommended a careful, piecemeal revision of our spelling system, which is so difficult for natives and nearly impossible for foreigners.

Yet, except for a few trivial reforms, like dropping the final "te" in 'cigaret' and the middle 'e' in 'judgment,' nothing has come of it. Poor spelling is the shame of the lower orders; only rich, powerful and educated persons can take a perverse pride in their bad orthography. (Like the Emporor Sigismund, who boasted that he was "above grammma.")

For most of us, the English language is filled with cunning booby traps for the unwary, defying both reason and common sense. It is hard not to sympathize with the shade of Bernard Pshaw.

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[Spelling Reform Anthology §6.5 pp93-96 in the printed version]
[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1979 p14-16 in the printed version]

8. Acceptability of Proposed Spelling Reforms, by Kenneth H. Ives*

*Chicago, IL.

Diffusion studies on cultural innovations indicate that one major factor in the speed of adoption is the perceived acceptability of the various separable aspects of the innovations offered.

An earlier article, "Cultural Lag and Prematurity: The Case of English Spelling" (*Spelling Progress Bulletin,* Spr. 1979, p. 17-18) concluded that the problems of adoption were a major unresearched area in the field of spelling reform. Since then a small preliminary study of reactions to a long list of possible revised spellings has been done. It asked for reactions graded from +3 to -3 on each one (see Questionnaire). One fourth of the respondents expressed neutrality (=0), a, fifth marked all changes -3. Many of these were traditionalists, but one was a classicist – his watch has Roman numerals. The rest of the respondents scored mostly over the full range.

Based largely on these results, a first eight steps of "Progressiv Spelling" have been devised, from words which received favorable average ratings in this study. The first four steps, shown in Table 1, included only reformed spellings which are listed as alternates in most college dictionaries. The count of occurences for the words listed comes from the Kucera and Francis (1967) study.

Table 1: Progressiv Spelling, Steps 1-4.

		:words:	occur in: 1 million:	saving: %:	sample: rating:
PS1:	altho, tho, thru, -out, thoro, thoroly	6	1,902	.045	+ 1.0
PS2:	catalog, -er, -ing, dialog, prolog, synagog	6	@ 25	-	+ 1.1
PS3:	canceled, diagraming, programed, -er, -ing, traveled, -er	7	@ 70	-	+ 0.3
PS4:	burnt, dropt, fixt, mixt, spelt, stopt	6	407	.01	+ 0.3

Should a spelling reform proposal prescribe universal use of a particular rule, on one hand, or only a short list of common words which make progress toward more consistent following of a rule. This is an issue not yet much discussed or researched by spelling reformers.

Experience in Australia with Harry Lindgren's "SR-1" indicates that many users of English are not accustomed to using phonemic rules. They have some difficulty, and make some errors, in trying to apply a rule on spelling reform. They omit some words which fit the rules, and include some which do not quite fit. Likewise, publishers and proof-readers want a definite list, rather than a rule, so they can quickly check newer spellings for accuracy.

These considerations, and concern for economy of effort, have led to the plan, in Progressiv Spelling, of only changing at first the most common words affected by a phonemic rule. Users can be encouraged to extend the rule to less common words, but learners and proofreaders, who operate by rote rather than by rule, prefer to have a manageable, definite list. Short lists are easier to memorize, or keep handy for reference. Long lists, such as the 264 words affected by SR-1 (Lindgren 1969, p.123-4) are clumsy to use and impossible for most people to memorize.

Three criteria were used in developing these lists. One was to have at least the five most common words fitting the rule, to make a substantive list. The second was to include all applicable words occurring 100 or more times in 1 million words of varied reading matter. Third, controversial words are omitted at this stage. These may have varying pronunciations, or result in homographs.

The rule for PS1 is to drop "gh," now silent tho originally pronounced, and a silent "o" or "u" also. This catches up to a change in pronunciation explained by Noah Webster (1789, p. 391-2). These words were proposed and adopted by the National Education Assoc. in 1898. The shorter spellings are used about 1% of the time in printed work, as shown in the Kucera and Francis word counts.

NEA also included "catalog, prolog" and several related words in their 1898 list of 12 words. These have achieved usage in printed matter about a third of the time. They rest on a rule of pronouncing "g" at the end of a word stem as "hard g," even if followed by a suffix starting with "e" or "i". These vowels, under a Romance language rule, would change pronunciation to "soft g" or "j." In English, this Romance rule has exceptions, notably "get." Spelling reformers generally prefer eventually to change "soft g" to "j." But changing "soft g" to "j" was rated about -0.6 in the survey.

PS3 follows Noah Webster's rule against doubling a final single consonant (under some limited conditions!) before adding a suffix (Shoemaker 1936, p. 267-271; see also Webster, 18-06, 1970). This change has received about 80% acceptance in this country.

While the NEA adopted in 1906 "-t" endings, as in PS 4, for those "ed" endings coming after unvoiced and some syllabic consonants (l, n), acceptance has been spotty. "Builded" is now archaic, "burnt" is common, but the others are rare at present, not being found in the 1967 study. The original pronunciation of the "-ed" ending was as a separate syllable, now only heard when one wants to sound Shakespearian. Pronunciation rules for the "-ed" endings are found in Laubach (1965, p. 67-70).

Examination of other possible changes receiving noticeably favorable responses in the survey, but not found in dictionaries, indicated that another four steps could be assembled. These are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Progressiv Spellings, Steps 5-8.

		:words:	occur in: 1 million:	savings: %:	sample: :rating:
PS5:	appeard, calld, concernd, considerd, coverd, designd, determind, followd, happened, involvd, livd, obtaind, opend, playd, receivd, remaind, returnd, seemd, servd, showd, turnd	21	3,382	.055	+ 0.3
PS6:	askt, developt, establisht, finisht, increast, lookt, publisht, reacht, slipt, stept, walkt, wisht, workt	13	1,953	.03	+ 0.2
PS7:	enuf, ruf, nabors, naborhood; foto, fotograf,	7	643	.02	+ 0.2
PS8:	fiscl, levl, norml, totl, locl	5	964	.015	+ 0.3

Edmund Spenser and John Milton used "-d" endings (Darbishire 1952, p. xi) as proposed in PS5. The rule for these is to drop the "e" after words ending in voiced consonants. The "e" is retained, and pronounced, after "d, t" word endings.

The rule for PS6 is to change "-ed" to "-t" after unvoiced consonants and some "syllabic l, n", as in PS4. Shakespeare used "wisht" and other of these spellings. Two words were omitted from this list because of conflicts. "Learned" is often pronounced with a "d" sound in this country, and shortening "passed" results in a homograph.

Some "gh" endings have changed pronunciation from gutteral to "f" sound. Hence respelling the two commonest of these as "enuf, ruf" starts PS7. Noah Webster proposed and used "nabor", dropping the "gh" and changing the initial vowel, but this did not catch on then. George Eastman popularized "f" for "ph" in "foto," and there still are "foto" shops in business as a result.

It was a surprise that shortening words ending in a "syllabic l" (Dewey 1970, p. 2) achieved a favorable re-action in this study. This is one case where unaccented schwa can apparently be dropt with popular approval, making PS8.

These 8 steps complete those phonemic improvements in spelling which were approved by a noticeable margin in the survey. Reactions to other proposed changes ranged from + 0.1 to – 1.4 ("wn" for "one").

In contrast to the positive ratings given the changes in PS1-8, the sample rated negatively some other proposals, in spite of their substantial savings to writers, or their popularity in spelling reform circles, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Other proposed reforms

changes:	words:	occur:	savings:	rating:
"th" for "the"	1	69,971	1.18	- 0.4
"ħ" for "the"	1	69,971	2.36	- 0-6
"n" for "and"	1	28,252	0.96	- 0.7
SR-1: agen, agenst, ded, deth, hed, insted, sed	7	4,213	0.1	- 0.5

SR-1 is "spelling reform, first step", popularized in Australia by Harry Lindgren (1969). Even if the "votes" of those who oppose any spelling reform are removed from the sample, this proposed change, using "e" for the sound of short "e" in some 264 words, received only about a zero rating, well below those of PS1-8. Thus it appears that its selection as a first step was not based on an adequate survey of acceptability of changes to non-reformers. Recent emphasis in Harry Lindgren's *Spelling Action* newsletter on encouraging the use of partially accepted reforms (such as PS1-4) indicates a broadening of outlook, and partial adoption of the "acceptability" criterion.

Use of new letters, "æ, ε" for "ae, ee" sounds, or "y" for "ie" sound as in "why, try, by" (if used in "hy, lyf, myt, syd, tym") scored – 1.1. Use of these three, plus "ħ" for the voiced "th" sound, would change about half the digraph usage in World English Spelling to single letters, making that variant of WES closer to the phonemic ideal of one letter per sound. These new letters could be fitted onto present typewriters which have two "changeable type" keys, by replacing "q" with "ε", and using

Anglo-Saxon "cw" again instead of Norman French "qu". But clearly this is not acceptable as an early reform. ("æ, ɛ, ħ" letters are available for SCM and Sears elite "changeable type" keys at $3 postpaid, from the author.)

What can we discern as the thinking of the sample members about reasons for acceptability of spelling reforms, from examination of their responses? Two bases for acceptability seem clear.

A first rule of acceptability seems to be that changes at the end of a word are more acceptable than those in the middle or at the beginning. This likely rests on the probability that word (and meaning) recognition is achieved by inspection of the root part (start and middle) of words, with variations in the ending modifying but not replacing the meaning.

The second rule of acceptability seems to rest on the fact that some proposed changes have been used by a minority of writers for many decades. Hence readers have seen them occasionally over the years. Thus changes in PS1-4 have 60 years or more of partial acceptance behind them. The first rule applies to PS 5, 6 and S. The second applies to "foto." While neither applies to "nabor," and it scored below the others (- 0.2), it was included to make a sizeable list for PS7, and because it also drops "gh."

From these findings, it would appear that a sound early strategy for spelling reformers would be to talk up the merits of moving toward something like World English Spelling, using it or i.t.a. as an initial teaching medium and as a later medium in schools, but urging adults to adopt some or all of PS1-4. This would help bring usage of some of these reforms from the present 1%, towards 51%.

Encouraging some people to use PS4-8 would build recognition and wider acceptance for them. Then these steps are more widely used, reactions to other changes should become more positive, and prejudice against "any" change become weaker. The possibilities and benefits of gradual changes, such as have been made in other languages (Dutch, Portuguese, for example) will have become more widely appreciated.

After progress has been made in the use of PS1-8, we should have more experience and understanding on the reasons for acceptability of various spelling reform proposals. Then we will be able to propose more wisely steps beyond PS8 which will be relatively acceptable.

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Questionnaire

How to introduce SPELLING REFORMS has not been seriously studied and discussed in the 60 years since Andrew Carnegie's financing of the Simplified Spelling Board ended at his death. Your reactions to various possible reforms (if introduced one or a few at a time) can help get this discussion going again.

Please indicate your reaction to each of the following possible spelling reforms:

+3 approve strongly
+2 approve moderately
+1 approve mildly
0 unsure, mixed
-1 disapprove mildly
-2 disapprove moderately
-3 disapprove strongly

altho		ħy, lyf, lyk, myt		goin, doin,	
tho		syd, tym, whyt		havin, bein	
thru		agen, agenst, deth,		aftr, ovr, undr	
thoro		hed, helth		livd, seemd, turnd	
dropt, fixt		sm, smwhat		levl, locl, totl	
stopt, mixt		smwhere, smtym		bfor, btween, dliver	
clipt, dript, dwelt		nabor, naborhood		noe (know, noen	
spelt, publisht		naborly		(known), nolij	
learnt, leant		cn, cd, hd, shd		botm (bottom)	
catalog, dialog		cnt, cdnt, hdnt		hapn, sevn	
prolog, synagog		alwæz, awæ, dæ		sɛ (see), thrɛ,	
foto		mæ, græt, sæ, wæ		yɛr, rɛl, mɛn	
fotograf		cæm, cæs, fæs, mæd		ɛch (each)	
fotografi		mæk, plæs, sæm,		ɛvn (even)	
enuf		giv, liv, mor,		adishn (addition)	
n (for "and")		sens, typ		atenshn (attention)	
z (for "is")		clas, les, mis		fors (force)	
v (for "of ")		stil, tel, wel		ofis (office)	
th (for "the")		sherif, tarif		charj, larj	
ħ (for "the")		b (be), bn (been)		cmiti (committee)	
t (for "to")		bt (but)		sez (says)	
ħan, ħat, ħem, ħen		thr (there)		scool, caracter	
ħis, ħus, alħo, ħo		wr (were) wl (will)		memberz, orderz,	
		ej, rij, wej		matterz, powerz	
		jenera1, jentle		givz, livz, telz	
		programed, programer		centr, theatr	
		traveler, canceled		sed	
		wn (for "one")		litl, setl, midl	
		wrk (work),		ruf (rough)	
		frst (first)		betr, matr	
		anser, tord, riten			

Should sp. ref. prescribe use of rules for each sound or short list of common words

Instead of changes by lists of words, should a complete system be offered and rated?

Should every sound (including schwa) be indicated?

Should the reform system be introduced gradually, in steps like SR-1?

Thank you. Please return to: Kenneth Ives, Chicago IL
Your name, address,

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1979 pp17–19 in the printed version]

9. Word Perception: Bases of Orthographic Decoding, by Emmett Albert Betts, Ph.D, LL.D.*

*Winter Haven, Fla.

Scholars from many disciplines are now concerned with *jour* crucial facets of reading instruction: motivation, perception, cognition (comprehension), and differentiated guidance. One of these interrelated components, perception, is of increasing concern to linguists, orthographers, and educators who devise phonic and other techniques of word study. This area of reading subtends visual discrimination of letter and word forms, types of perceptual learning, analogical learning, factors in the perception of "visual language," mediation, and a host of other considerations that modify reading behaviors. In short, spelling reform to facilitate learning to read is rapidly becoming a focus of scientific endeavor which may influence profoundly the escalation of reading in the near future.

Part 1:Reading: Word Perception

In psychological terms, then, reading is:
1. A motivational state in which the individual has general and specific needs to be satisfied
2. A perceptual process, a special case of form perception, decoding orthography into speech
3. A thinking process, decoding the message

The conditions of word perception – the chief concern here – involve the written form itself and what takes place within the nervous system. Emphasis herein is more on what the learner does in word perception rather than on the characteristics of the physical stimulus: the word form as a series of circles and strokes set off by white spaces from other word forms on the page.

Furthermore, the chief point of this discussion is that the study of word perception goes far beyond and is far more complex than the study of phonics (relationships between sequences of letters and sequences of speech sounds). Learning phonic skills may produce word callers, but phonic skills learned in perceptual settings can speed up learning to read as a thinking process.

Phonics: Caveats

Relative to phonics, however, there are several caveats: Many commonly used words (e.g., *one, you* versus *solicit, constant)* have a very loose fit between spellings and the phonemes they represent. Furthermore, a preponderance of commonly used words are function wads (e.g., *and, or*) that have only grammatical meaning; i.e., they refer to nothing in the real, extensional world, as do *comb*, *congress, country.* Finally, obfuscators of phonic methods abound with their weird recommendations; e.g., having the pupil "sound out" *cat* as *"cuh-a-tuh." So* phonics may be a blessing or a curse, depending upon linguistic, orthographic, and psychological sophistication of the teacher and/or the textbook author.

Word Perception: Bases.

Word perception does have a psychological basis. On this basis, methods of teaching word-perception skills among other learnings – are developed. And on this basis, word-perception skills are developed so that they are used *automatically,* leaving the reader's mind relatively free to deal with the content of the message.

But word perception in reading also has a linguistic basis which is essential to consider. A speaker's message is encoded in a system of speech sounds. A writer's message is recoded in a system of writing (orthography) words, punctuation, italics, etc. Hence, linguistics supplies information on the

language code which serves as the stimulus to word perception.

Structural Meaning
One of the significant contributions of linguists is the distinction between structural meaning and referential meaning. They are concerned with structural units, beginning with the smallest unit-a distinctive speech sound (phoneme) as /a/ in *at* contrasted to /i/ in *it,* and proceeding to large units (sentence-types).

Structural meaning has to do with the function of the way the units of language are combined. The phoneme /l/ for example, includes variant sounds of /l/ in *lip, pill,* and *please* and, therefore, takes on meaning. Phonemes are combined to make morphemes, the smallest units of meaning, as *boy* and *s* of boys. Morphemes – more complex structures – are classified as parts of speech; e.g., *boy* or *boys* as a noun. Morphemes are combined into still more complex structures, sentence types. For example, *Pubbles agged raggies* has structural meaning even though it has no contextual meaning in the real world. On the other hand, referential meaning has to do with the relationships between the linguistic coding system and the real-life meanings, as the meaning of *moon.*

Word perception, then, embraces (1) the language code and (2) the process of decoding it. Perception is primarily an organizing process-understanding the organization or structural meaning of the word form and arriving at its linguistic and referential meaning in a contextual setting.

Linguists are concerned with the system of distinctive speech sounds, or the structure of a linguistic code. Certain psychologists are engaged in the study of how these codes are learned, and with the general problem of meaning. Semanticists assess the relationships between a language code and the reality which it represents. Educators, of course, devise and evaluate the methods for teaching pupils how to decode a writing system.

Word perception is a far more complex process than memorizing so-called phonic rules. It is far more than rote memorizing a list of sight words. Rather, it is insight regarding the complex structure of language and it is the use of complex processes of the central nervous system for the automatic identification of sequences of words.

Relevant Questions
The remainder of this discussion is concerned with the following and other questions regarding word perception and word recognition:
1. How does the beginner learn to perceive (to identify) a word?
2. What cues to the perception of a word are needed by a beginner?
3. How does a beginner differ from a competent reader in the use of cues to word perception?
4. What are some of the conditions that facilitate the learning of word-perception skills?
5. What conditions contribute to the *automatic* use of word-perception skills?
6. What conditions contribute to the pupil's recognition of the word when he sees it in another verbal context?
7. How does a reader attribute the right meaning to words with multiple meanings (homophones and homographs)?
8. How much more difficult is it for a learner to interpret a new (to him) word when it is spelled non-phonetically?
9. How does a reader get understanding of a word not in his speaking and understanding vocabulary?

Language

Learning to use language requires a high degree of integration. To say the least, the use of language is a complex process which is not very well understood.

To begin with, language is a system of symbols, meaningless in themselves. There is no one-to-one relationship between language and things. For example, these relationships shift from literal to figurative uses (e.g., our *horse;* to work like a *horse*), from one level of abstraction to another (e.g., *structure* of a building to *structure* of concepts), from one context to another (bank *note* and a *note* in music), etc. In learning to read, the child must sense these patterns of relationships which shift from one situation to another.

Secondly, the structure of language shifts. For example, there are basic sentences and variations (transformations) of them. The subject is not always at the beginning of a sentence. Modifiers may come at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of a sentence. While one can rightfully expect the authors of a series of basic readers to introduce these and other situations sequentially, the child still must learn to identify these structural patterns.

Thirdly, the relationships between speech sounds and the letters of written language shift. For example, the letters *ch* represent the /sh/ sound in *Chicago* and *chic,* the /ch/sound in *chief* and *choose,* the /k/ sound in *chasm* and *character,* the /kw/ blend in *choir.* On the other hand, the /sh/ sound is represented by *ch* in *charade, s* in *sure, sh* in *shop, ci* in *vicious, ti* in *nation,* etc. It is little wonder than an over- or under-emphasis on phonics can produce confusion in reading situations and chaos in spelling situations.

When the complex nature of concept development through language is considered, reading is, indeed, an obscure process. Predictably, children often have difficulty raising the veil on it.

Compared to the perception of words, the perception of objects is a relatively less complex process. Words, of course, are symbols of things. Word forms are far removed from the things they represent. Hence, reading is – among many other things-a special kind of form perception.

Part II: Perception

Perception includes the identification of objects in the real, or extensional, world, of representations of objects (e.g., pictures, drawings, etc.), of abstract patterns (e.g., mosaics, triangles, etc.), and of symbols (e.g., a word). An object may be examined via sight, touch, and other senses until it is identified – has meaning. But a written word (a symbol of a spoken symbol) does not yield its identity so easily. Its meaning may be in language structure (e.g., the words *the, of, for, and,* etc.) and/or in its reference to the extensional world (e.g., the word Fido) or to higher level abstractions (e.g., such as *love, beauty, democracy,* etc.). Furthermore, word perception is a special type of form perception.

Word perception is a process that is inferred; it cannot be directly observed. Perceiving is the process and a percept is a product. But the term perception is often used alternately by many writers to designate either (1) the process or (2) the product.

Perception is a part of an on-going process as the eyes move in little jerks (saccadic movement) across the lines of type. It is triggered by words on a white background; the process is automatic until the reader comes to an unknown word. How many cues to perception are used depends upon the experience of the reader, the more experienced reader using fewer cues than the beginner. But a stimulus (the written word) must be present and the focus of attention.

Perception is, in one sense, a transforming process, resulting in a percept. It structures the stimulus; for example, the reader may see the relationship between the *ou* in *out* and in the new word *about.* Or, he may see the relationships between the spelling pattern *meat-heat* and the pattern of the stressed syllable of the new word *repeat.* Finally, he sees the relationship between the referential

(real-life) meaning of the word in its verbal context and the word form. This making of a percept then involves structuring the stimulus (i.e., the word form) – sensing the relationships between the word form and the sequence of sounds it represents, and the relationships between the word form and its real-life meaning.

Mediated Response Learning
In word perception, certain obscure and unobservable processes operate between the stimulus (e.g., the word *cat* or the word *autochthonous)* and the response. In responding to the word *cat,* the beginner may call on pre-established associations with *at, hat, cap* or with cues from one or all three words. For the far more complex word *autochthorous* /'o-,täk-thən-əs/, the experienced reader may call on a number of pre-established associations: relating the number of places in which vowel letters occur in the word form to the probable number of syllables; relating the phonogram *au* to the sound /o/, the phonogram *ch* to the sound /k/, the phonogram *ous* to the unstressed syllable /-əs/; and so on. These internal, or psychological, processes are often called mediating (relating or intervening) responses.

Past learnings tend to mediate present learnings. The pupil who has systematically studied the *at-cat-hat* spelling pattern tends to bridge the gap between the stimulus *sat* and the response /'sat/, providing of course, he relates the sound /s/ with the letter *s*. The systematic addition of words fitting this pattern (e.g., *bat-rat, cap-tap*) controls, in a sense, the mediating process and increases predictability of responses.

The pattern *bar-car-far-jar-star* has structural (linguistic) meaning for the pupil who has studied it systematically. It is this structural meaning-grouping by spelling patterns – that is crucial to the mediating, or relating, process.

When the beginner in reading learns to tell the difference between letters (T and L or b and d) or between the spelling patterns of words *(sat* and *sit),* he is discriminating. Before this time, he has learned to discriminate between speech sounds, between referential sounds (e.g., *mother* /'math-ar/ and *daddy* /'dad-e/) and the emotive sounds, (e.g., *ah* /'a/). This discrimination learning involves a complex of skills prerequisite to listening and talking, and later, to reading and writing. Hence, discrimination becomes a mediating response.

When the pupil generalizes regarding the relationship between the phonogram *oi* in *oil* and the sound /oi/, he is using a powerful mediating process. This generalization process operates for the *he-me-we, my-by-shy, day-may-say,* the *not-lot, oat-boat-goat, eat-feat-meat* and other major and minor spelling patterns.

Commonly used words tend to be short words (e.g., *a, an, and, the).* In fact, there is some evidence indicating that about 50 per cent of these common words are one-syllable words. But the other half ranges from two-syllables (e.g., *again, exit, strengthen*) to words of many syllables (e.g., *repatriate, microevolution, telecommunication, anti-patheticalness* and *superseptuaginarian*). Certainly multisyllable words appear to be more complex stimuli than one-syllable words. Therefore, they require greater cue search, more complex groupings into syllables, and so on – and it appears reasonable to assume that complex processes of mediation are required for their perception.

The complexity of mediating processes is increased by differences among individuals. Some beginners experience more difficulty in learning word-perception skills – for emotional and a number of other reasons. A few pupils have difficulty with closure – for example, given the sound of *oi* in *boil,* they are unable to complete the sound sequence for the word. These differences in abilities of pupils to use various mediating processes are a class of important variables, often called intervening variables.

Word Perception

Perception of words, as the structuring of stimuli, embraces:

1. The awareness of a personal need-motivation;
2. A preparatory set to use previously learned word-perception skills for identifying the unknown part or parts of the word, as *ea* in *reason* or the pass spelling pattern of *passive* /'pas-iv/;
3. An act of attention to significant word elements (attention getters) which are ambiguous, or unknown, as the *tesque* of *grotesque* /gro-'tesk/ or the syllable boundaries of *theory* /thē-ər-ē, 'thir-ē/
4. A discrimatory response; for example, discriminating between *hot* and *hat, meat* and *met, bone* and *done*;
5. A set of variables, such as the readability of the material for a given pupil, an understanding of the alphabetic principle (the relationships between patterns of sounds and patterns of letters), repertory of phonic skills, awareness of structural and referential meaning, and the ability to group sounds into syllables;
6. Awareness of significant sound contrasts – distinctive speech sounds, or phonemes – which the pupil uses and responds to automatically;
7. Awareness of the sound patterns of spoken words that enter into the perceptual act by feedback to the written word, as the sound pattern /'hēt/ for the word *heat*;
8. Ability to detect the organization, or pattern, of a word, as the consonant-vowel-consonant pattern of *hop, lot,* etc.;
9. Skill in noting the constancy of sound-letter relationships, as in the sound */at/* in *bird, sir,* etc.;
10. The ability to relate an appropriate sound to the phonogram of a word, as the sound /k/ to the letters *ch* in *chasm;*
11. Awareness of irregular spelling patterns (variables of the stimuli), as in *cough* and *some.* (Learning consistent spelling patterns does not solve all of the problem of word perception.)
12. Ability to complete the whole word (closure) after an unknown part has been identified; for example, identifying the whole word *work* after the /ər/ sound of *or* has been recognized;
13. Skill in detecting spelling patterns of stressed syllables embedded in words of more than one syllable, as *sat* in *satisfaction* /',sat-əs-'faksh-n/ and *not* in *monot*onous /mə-'nät-n(-)əs/;
14. Versatility of detecting probability of syllable stress, as in *about* /a-'baut/, *below* /bə-'l'ō/, and *defer* /dē'-'fər/;
15. Using intonation (the rhythm of a language) as a cue to phoneme-grapheme relationships, e.g., *has* /'haz, (h)ez, z, s/ and *has to* /'has (')tü or tə or tu/;
16. An effort for structural/referential meaning, as the ability to use the verbal context and/or a dictionary to identify the appropriate meaning.

Perceptual learning has been discussed in previous issues of *Spelling Progress Bulletin* as:

1. Category learning
2. Cue learning
3. Probability learning
4. Alternation learning
5. Relationship learning
6. Mediated response learning

(To be continued in next issue)

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1979 p19 in the printed version]

10. Book Review, by Katherine P. Betts, Ph.D.*

*Winter Haven, Fla.

The Evolution of Language. Rostam Keyan.
Philosophical Library, New York, 1978, pp. 160, $10.50.

Rostam Keyan's book is a slender volume (160 pages) consisting of 26 chapters organized in four sections, or parts. In Part I, the author presents "Language as a Comparative and Progressive Evolutionary Process from Object Representation towards Abstract Thinking,"; Part II, "Some Structural and Philological Aspects of the Evolution of Language,"; Part III, "The Language of Everyday Living, etc.,"; Part IV, "Synoptic Considerations Concerning Various Aspects of the Evolution of Language."

Mr. Keyan's book is a philosophical treatment of the gradual development of language; his terminology, unique to his point of view. He prefers unusual terms outside the realm of linguistics, psycholinguistics, psychology, and orthography. For example, he apparently uses the terms *hermaneutic* for *interpretation, centrifugal (i.e.,* moving away from a center) for *expressive language, centripetal (i.e.,* moving toward a center) for *receptive language, devolution* for *regression, primordial* for *primitive, synoptic* for *general view, philology* for *linguistics,* and so on. Consequently, at least for this reader, his logic is frequently obscured by his language: an abstruse, often archaic, ponderous style.

The author excludes the phonetic and grammatical developments of language from his discourse, addressing the evolution of language in its "spacio-temporal and cultural totality" both as a symbolic system that lives and dies out, and as a facet of human behavior. In fact, his central thesis is that the evolution of language has paralleled the cognitive evolution of man from a pre-hieroglyphic image thinker (capable only of concrete thought) to ultimately an abstract thinker. In abridged form, the acquisition of language by the young child also progresses from concrete image thinking to abstract thinking. Furthermore, the mind of man is his internal world by which he interprets the external world. According to Keyan, the mind created language to express and communicate its conditions and contents to the external world.

With reference to orthography, the author perceives no problem with the complex spellings of written language:

> "A reform in the phonetic aspect of speech, namely attempting to make 'people spell as they speak,' or pronounce words exactly as they are written or spelled, is unrealistic and fruitless for many reasons. The auditory memory is not only different from visual memory, but also it is trained differently. The English language is rather uniform in the method of pronunciation in a vast geographical area, with rather unimportant variations of dialects, if it is compared with other languages. Thus, it should not have become a cause for alarm for some writers who noted only a few variations in the spelling and speaking of certain words in the English language. A comparative study of phonetics of different languages shows greater variations in many other languages. This may be proved simply by observing the diversities of pronunciations, of dialects, and of phonetic variations of the same language, which is written the same in a certain geographical space, but spoken differently in different areas." (p. 24)

On the same page, Keyan offers examples to support his position, such as German which is written the same in Germany and in Switzerland, while the spoken form of Swiss German is entirely

different from the German spoken in Germany and is not easily understood by them. This is the case, of course, but the problem is not with the variety of dialects that a writing system represents but rather with the consistency of symbol-sound (grapheme-phoneme) relationships between the writing system and the dialect. In this respect, English spellings are notoriously complex and variable, posing considerable difficulty for many learners attempting the acquisition of reading/writing skills.

To the very end, the author remains true to his topic. But throughout the book, this reader wondered "Who is Rostam Keyan?" No information was given. On the other hand, this volume merits consideration by the serious student of language. Its communication value would be greatly enhanced by a glossary of terms, by brief chapter summaries, and by an index.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1979 p15 in the printed version]

11. Cobbservations, by Mary D. Cobb

(Read by Dr. Herbert L. Downie at her funeral services on March 24, 1979 -- from her "clippings.")

"Life is many things – a time for youth and irresponsibility, a time for maturity and responsibility, a time for old age and resting on one's laurels. At the last a quietness, a pause before taking off for the great adventure. Successful old age ends finally in its own time and in its own way."

"Help us to accept old age with dignity and to view death as a natural and appropriate end to a satisfying life."

"Learn to like what doesn't cost much,
Learn to like reading, conversation, music, plain food,
Learn to like fields, trees, brooks, woods.
Learn to like people even though some of them may be very different from you.
Learn to like your work and the satisfaction of doing your job as well as it can be done.
Learn to like the songs of birds, gardening, carpentering, puttering around the house.
Learn to like the sunrise and sunset, the beating of the rain on roof and windows.
Learn to keep your wants simple. Refuse to be owned and anchored by things and the opinions of others.
Learn to realize that what you do influences others, shapes their lives, so keep yourself as a good example to others."

"A successful and happy life is one that inspires others to noble deeds, original ideas, and accomplishes benefits to mankind."

"Behind every successful man there is an adoring and helpful woman."

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1979 p20 in the printed version]

12. Spelling Reform or Learning Reform ?

Dear Mr. Turnley: **Sir James Pitman, KBE**

1. My friend, Newell Tune, has sent me a copy of his letter to you of Aug. 21st. I have sent him, in answer, an extract from a letter of mine to A Spelling Reformer.

2. My answer to his question to you is that no difficulty, because of variations in dialect, can arise in reformed spelling unless difficulty will arise also in speaking and in listening. The *reader* has more time than the listener to adjust to variant accents. For the *writer* there is therefore less need for uniformity than for the *reader.* If he writes as he speaks, he will be easily read and understood if his characters are legible and if the alphabeticisms he uses are widely practiced and accepted:- i.e., have become conventional.

3. While it is thus very desirable to have a single common standard *for reading,* (the computer will cheaply achieve this both in type-setting and in type-writing); it is unrealistic and even impossible to achieve a common standard *for writing* (i.e. spelling in a *Reformed* Spelling)unless miracles can happen and success may be expected in imposing upon all writers of English a new orthography in which many of the words spelled will inevitably be not what the writer would pronounce and the required spelling will thus be often in breach of the fundamental principle of a phonetic Reformed Spelling. This will be so because the pronunciations of so many of the writers will vary in so many words that every speller will need to learn which of a number of alternative spellings is the one which has been chosen as the "sealed and approved" pronunciation, and which is therefore the "sealed and approved" (standardized) spelling.

4. The facts in the case, so unpalatable to Spelling Reformers, raise the need to distinguish between reading and writing. Clearly the facts dictate conformity to a single standard for reading material – in which Traditional Orthography may continue as the effective standard as heretofore; or a new orthography would be introduced which, inconsiderable, if to a much less degree, is in breach of the principle of the reform but nevertheless roughly phonetic to the pronunciations of some at any rate of the *readers.*

5. After all we must concede our Traditional Orthography has been for some centuries, an effective reading medium notwithstanding its chaotic spellings which are thus shown to interfere not with reading, but rather with learning to read. It is, after all, sufficiently alphabetic for literally millions of learners who have learned with or without the benefit of a reading reform spelling (such as i.t.a.), to be readily able, thanks to the benefit of context, to read not only the alphabetic. and largely alphabetic words but also such non-alphabetic words as *once, whose, ought, all, was,* etc. – and we all read misprints easily – because they will almost certainly have *a* pronunciation which all readers will understand and accept, at worst reluctantly. For writing however – individual spellings – i.e. freedom and variety of spellings, reflecting the differing pronunciations of every writer whose speech is understood, will be functionally effective for *every reader* and a boon to *every writer.*

6. These two facts, if properly exploited, could make a permissive Spelling Reform acceptable. As Bernard Shaw explained to me, every educated reader who is used to reading in T.O. will greatly regret, and oppose, the change in spellings of words with which he has become familiar after much effort and practice. Moreover G.B.S. further pointed out that every educated writer who has learned to spell – if not 100% perfectly, at least adequately – in T. O. will resist to the death any proposal to make him learn afresh a strange new orthography. If he

is allowed to write as he speaks, what he writes will be read and understood provided it would be understood if spoken and provided his characters are legible and his alphabeticisms are widely enough practiced.

7. We who believe in a Reading Learning Reform for helping illiterate children and adults to enjoy the boon of reading first in the reform and then in T.O. (which will continue to remain for a century, if not longer, a desirable attainment) are confident that it will succeed. (It seems from p. 196 and 197 of your *Funny Picture Book,* that you are probably in agreement). That hope however raises the very pertinent question-which perhaps both you and Newell Tune will kindly answer – whether it is not wiser in our present generation to try only for the more attainable objective – a Learning Reading Reform (paragraph 5 on your page 196 is very much on the ball) – and to avoid, possibly for ever but certainly until the more attainable objective has been achieved, arousing the hostilities of virtually all educated men (as mentioned in paragraph 5 above) against any proposed Re-Spelling Reform.

8. I'm sending a copy of this to Newell as his mind is a questioning one. He not only wants to further the acceptance of the first limited objective, but is already aware of the damage done to hopes of acceptance of it by the lunatic fringe (of spelling reformers), and I suspect could be possibly receptive to the case made in paragraph 6 above – that we all ought to unite in a single cause: Learning Reading Reform, and pipe down on Re-Spelling Reform.

9. Thank you incidentally for the great compliment you paid on page 196 to the compatibility of i.t.a. with T.O. I believe that my acceptance of the desirability that i.t.a. should depart as little as possible from T.O. and that the spelling in i.t.a. should reflect that regional pronunciation which most closely approaches the T.O. form (e.g., not only *sau* and *sor* for *saw* and *sore,* but also *sceduel, derby,* and *fuetiel, stuepid*) in order to make it more acceptable to the majority of the public, which will make it possible for publishers, printers, and booksellers to provide books in either T.O. or Learning Reformed Spelling – the same kind of choice which they have provided in type faces and even in those type faces: A, a, *a,* etc. I myself believe that the choice will go to T.O. because heterographs (*there, their, they're*) are as easily legible and are more certainly and quickly understood than homographs.

10. Another good point: publishers, printers and booksellers have, if they would only recognize it, a vested interest in Learning Reading Reform. With at least 33% of the English-speaking public never buying books, or papers, a 50% improvement in sales is likely if the great failure were to be ended and everyone were to become literate-and enjoy reading!

Yours sincerely, James Pitman

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