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Contents

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The Society

Founded in 1908, the Simplified Spelling Society has included among its officers: Daniel Jones, Horace King, Gilbert Murray, William Temple, H G Wells, Sir James Pitman, A C Gimson and John Downing. Its aim is to "bring about a reform of the spelling of English in the interests of ease of learning and economy of writing". Its present officers are:

[Chris Upward: see **Journals**, **Newsletters**, **Pamflet**, **Leaflets**, **Media**, **Book and Papers**.]

1. Editorial
Chris Upward

THIS ISSUE

In this issue we celebrate a double first. Our first first is Donald Scragg's inaugural address as the Society's new President, in which he distils some judicious reflections from his years of study of the history of writing and of written English in particular. What emerges perhaps more clearly than anything else is the sheer fluidity of writing systems: their endless onward flow through the millennia, swirling and eddying and rarely subject to the kind of rational control that spelling reformers dream of exercising. In most systems the relation between speech-sounds and graphic units has become crucial, and yet on the fringes of even the most phonographic system today (more so today, perhaps, than ever before) there is a host of graphic images (international road-signs are just one of many examples) that lie outside the rules of sound-symbol correspondence. Sound-symbol correspondences is central, yet it can no longer be quite the predominant guiding principle that it was to the New Spelling generation of reformers in the first half of this century. In a language like English, whose writing system has evolved over some 15 centuries, a revolutionary break is inconceivable because impracticable. Instead, so Donald Scragg suggests, we must capitalise on present trends in spelling. We must swim with the current that is bearing us along, and not make futile attempts to dam or avert it.

Our second first is the Professor Asmah's account of the Malays spelling reform of 1972, which our editorial consultant in Singapore, Adam Brown, was instrumental in arranging for us. What is unprecedented about her article, as far as this *Journal* is concerned, is that it is not about some castle in the air, which is still alas the substance of which spelling-reform proposals for English are largely made: rather, she is describing a successful reform that she had a hand in implementing. Maybe the social, political and linguistic circumstances were unusually propitious, but that does not detract from the fascination that the achievement must have for us. The underlying linguistic analysis is itself interesting, but what must surely give us most pause for thought is the political and administrative skill that must have been involved. Are there any direct lessons for English? Perhaps the previously different writing systems of Malaysia and Indonesia have a parallel in the irritating differences between British and American spelling. Perhaps to tackle them first (as the Australian Style Council was in effect considering doing) would be just the kind of swimming-with-the-current that Donald Scragg is advising as the most promising approach to modernizing written English.

Professor Asmah's article is however just one of a rich selection in this issue of reports on spelling developments in other languages. Their collective message is that the modernization of writing systems ought in all languages to be accepted as normal and necessary, and there should be recognized machinery for carrying it out. Our Submission to the National Curriculum Council suggests that that body might tentatively develop such a role for itself, and that an uncontroversial issue on which it could start is that of the many alternative spellings now found in English

EXPLOITING ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS
English spelling, as observed in our last editorial ('Prescriptivism'), is often thought to be unduly rigid, and as Donald Scragg points out, it might be beneficial if our literacy culture tolerated variants, such as between the error-prone <-ant, -ent> endings. However, another view of English spelling is that it is in fact not rigid at all, or rather, as it has increasingly stabilized in the past 400 years, its stability-cum-rigidity is mainly confined to commonly occurring words and morphemes; and indeed, once one begins to collect spelling variants, one cannot fail to be struck by how many there are.

The reason is not far to seek: since written English (unlike most languages) has no firm inventory of sound-symbol correspondences, the lexicographer has no authority to turn to for approving one variant or condemning another. When a preference is stated, as often in the OED, it can appear quite arbitrary. Convention is the main guide, etymology and analogy having so frequently proved false guides in the past; but if a word is rarely used, it may be that no single convention becomes established. Who, for instance, can stipulate today which of *gibe, jibe, gybe* should be the preferred spelling? Loan-words from languages using the Roman alphabet usually bring their spelling with them (though *guerilla, garotte* do not), but if a word has to be transliterated/transcribed from a different alphabet or writing system, English can find itself at a total loss for what letters to use. Hence we find in Collins Dictionary as many as four possibilites for such non-Roman delicacies as Russian *borshch, borsch, borsht, borsh* (Collins even recommends different pronunciations for the different spellings) and Chinese *lychee, lichi, litchi, lichee.*

Perhaps, though, spelling reformers can use all this confusion for constructive ends. Why not analyse all the variations for their sound-symbol correspondences, and use the findings to establish an inventory of existing correspondences which can then serve as the yardstick by which the most regular, phonographic forms from amongst all the variants can then be determined? If this were done, dictionaries might then feel they had an authority they could call on for the purpose of recommending the best spellings from amongst the alternatives available. Here, then, is a research task waiting to be carried out: the systematic search for alternative spellings of English words given in a widely-used modern dictionary, as a basis for recommending the most consistent forms.

That could in itself be an important task. But a curious question arises: when does a misspelling achieve the status of an alternative spelling? Webster gives *surprize* as an alternative to *surprise;* yet in Britain the <z> form would clearly rank as an error. Perhaps if American dictionaries are more tolerant of variation, they would be the more rewarding source to search. However, if we pursue this point, it suggests a further possible field for investigation: paradoxically, perhaps misspellings are themselves a basis for the ideal inventory of sound-symbol correspondences in English, since by definition they imply a kind of consensus. Then such common forms as *accomodate, seperate* might be proposed as a new standard.

2. Correspondence

Acceptability problems
From His Grace, the Archbishop of York:-
I admit that though there is a good case for modest simplification, I had never previously heard of the Society. Having read your literature my immediate reaction is that it contains some excellent ideas, but that you are probably trying to do too much all at once and that your proposals may therefore suffer the fate of Esperanto. The fact that American spelling has not proved acceptable in this country is, I suppose, an example of the resistances likely to be encountered.

Indeed the difficulties in changing something so fundamental to most people's educated awareness are formidable and it is difficult to know where one begins. Perhaps computer language might be a good starting point because being new itself it is not likely to resist further innovation. Furthermore the next generation will, I suspect all be using it. It might thus gain currency alongside standard spelling without in the first instance threatening it.

Oldest member
From Mrs D M Castell, St Leonards on Sea, E Sussex:-
I regret to inform you that my father, Mr H V Borley of Bexhill, died on May 1st, aged 93. He kept your magazines from April 1926 and January 1927. For his own notes he would often use simplified spelling. In 1931 he was writing for the *Decimal Education Magazine.* He was certainly most keen on spelling reform and was reading your *Journal* until the last one received.

Axel Wijk
From Mrs Anna-Greta Wijk, Stockholm:-
I was deeply touched learning that my husband's *Regularized English has* been such a source of inspiration. I read every issue of the SSS *Journal* with the greatest interest and I follow the development of your efforts thoroughly. My husband was fully aware of the enormous difficulties in finding a solution to the reading and writing problem of the English language, and he often said that it will take generations to find a suitable way to solve the problem. For Axel, who was such a skilled phonetician, it was an intellectual challenge to present a system that he believed in.

Waning enjoyment
From Alison Tams, Birmingham:-
I am a nursery teacher whose job it is to encourage the first enjoyment of writing, and the mother of an 8 year old who has seen that enjoyment slowly wane. At 4 and 5 she was happily exploring the delights of writing, but now only sees it as an irksome, troublesome school activity. I am convinced that the problem of spelling was one of the factors which discouraged her. She used to write phonetically and understandably with great enthusiasm; she now writes with no enthusiasm, still struggling with the transition from phonetics to English spelling.

One day, on a rare occasion when I *saw* some of her writing, I commented that had she been American, some of her spellings would have been right. I was touched by the look of relief, pleasure and pride in her face. I think this shows the degree of strain she was under trying to interpret and follow the inconsistent rules of English spelling. I think she was relieved that it was not her who was incapable, but the English language which was unreasonable. I now take every opportunity to point out the inconsistencies to her in order to bolster her confidence.

Trying out Cut Spelling
From Timothy Moore, Cambridge:-
I'm sur u'l be glad wen th Cut Spelling Working Group produces its Practicl Guid. I'l be glad too — not to mastr th systm, bt just to hav a guid.

I don't think forenrs can be taut *Gardian,* or *Upwrd,* or *Moor* — wat about telefon directries?

Th reasns for my using CS now ar:
as a jestur of suport, as an exampl to othrs and as an exercys of my freedm. Obviusly I shan't use it in unsuitbl circmstances.

I'm sur u no that 1st staje CS *can't* produce fonograficly regulr spelings, bt has to be a comprmise between sevrl ireconcilbl criteria.

How cn th foren lernr deduce th pronunciation of *both* 'purpose' and 'supose', or of 'hos' and 'som' and 'bom'? How cn he deduce frm th pronunciation tht 'rite' isn't spelt 'ryt' (as in 'insyt') or 'hos' isn't spelt 'hooz' (as in 'booz').

I don't see tht, becaus 'tense' has to keep th finl <e>, 'purpose' shud, or that becaus 'princess' needs th finl <ss>, 'mes' can't be spelt like 'yes'.

Modernizing World English
From Harvie Barnard, Tacoma, WA, USA:-
In promoting English as the 'Language of the World', we are reminded of the present program here in the US to make US English our 'Official Language'. But altho most of us speak and write a more or less Johnsonian English according to
Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of 1755, the US English organization has not as yet defined precisely what form of English they would legalize as 'Official'.

The Honorary Chairman of US English, S I Hayakawa, has been in communication with me, and has agreed that the archaic English of the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries is not what we need as the basis of an international medium of communication. I have also had extensive correspondence with other leading members of the US English group, including their Director of Research, who has agreed with me that Johnsonian English may well require some modification before it is wholly acceptable as a world-wide language for all English speaking, reading, writing and spelling purposes.

This problem is not as yet resolved. We are therefore concerned that our family of English speaking peoples need to consider the fundamental issues at stake before a world-wide program of English promotion is permanently tied to an archaic outmoded orthography which has perhaps done more harm to the extension of our language than any other major factor.

3. English spelling and its Reform:
Some Observations from a Historical Perspective
Donald G. Scragg

We here present the inaugural address of the Society's new President, given at a meeting of the Society on 24 September 1988. A profile of Donald Scragg can be found in Item 3 of ***Journal 88/2.***

1. Role of President, scope of address
Some fifteen years ago, in *A history of English spelling* [1], I said that the Simplified Spelling Society and indeed the spelling reform movement generally have had periodic bursts of energy. I think in future decades we will look back to the 1980s for one of these. Some excellent new work is being produced today, much of it recorded in the Society's *Journal,* and I look forward to reading more of it during my term of office as President.

I will not pretend to you, however, that this paper offers new insights or new information comparable with the best of the research being undertaken at present, nor does it offer an exciting new synthesis of the progress in recent years. I have never had an active role in the promoting of reform, and I do not see it as my function as President of the Society either to propose or to direct a reform campaign, since constitutionally that is the job of the Chairman and his committee; nor do I wish to enter into controversy about the relative value of one reform scheme over another, although I shall always be happy to comment in detail on any proposals that come before the Society. I speak today not as a practical reformer, nor on the subject of a practical reform; rather, I would like to put reform into a slightly wider context and look at some aspects of the nature of the written language, and to suggest ways in which these might influence the thinking of the practical reformer. In particular, I shall be looking at them from a historical perspective, since that has always been my special interest.

2. Speech and writing
I shall begin by making the less than profound but very necessary observation that speech and writing are two independent forms of communication. We were all once able to communicate in speech without having any knowledge of writing, and although some people never learn to read, their ability to speak is in no way limited because of this. Similarly it is possible to learn a foreign written language without having any knowledge of its spoken form. In practice, however, since most literate people have command of the spoken form of their language as well, it is convenient and economic to have links between the two. How close the links are depends on the language and the history of its written manifestation.

The development of a written language is always secondary to that of a spoken language, both in the general sense that writing is a relatively late development in human society, and in the particular sense that most people learn to speak long before they learn to read. The universal link between speech and writing is on the level of the word, in that written languages generally have a representation either of a whole word or of a segment of a word, either a syllable or a sound. In languages using the common European alphabet, historically the link is at the level of sounds, since the alphabet, as its name implies, provides a symbol for each sound in the language system. English, using the roman variety of the common European alphabet, has the sound-symbol match as the underlying principle of its writing system, as may be seen from the fact that literate speakers of English when faced with having to pronounce a written word which is new to them, most usually a name, resort to "spelling it out", or assuming that its spelling is broadly phonetic, however much experience they may have had of what may be called the Leicester-Arkansas category.

3. Evolution of the alphabet

Most authorities now agree that the common European alphabet stems from the North Semitic alphabet in use in the second millennium B.C., and that this in turn drew on the pictograms and ideograms of Egyptian hieroglyphics. For example, the pictogram of the head of an ox, stylized as an arc with two prominent horns, and that of a house, stylized in ground-plan as two conjoined squares, were adapted as the first two letters of the alphabet, and given names signifying their origin: aleph is Hebrew for an ox and beth for a house. That great trading nation the Phoenicians seems to have been responsible for spreading the alphabet around the eastern Mediterranean, where it was picked up by the Greeks, who developed it by the introduction of regular representation of vowel sounds. (It is sometimes maintained that only after its modification by the Greeks did the Semitic syllabary truly become an alphabet.) At some point in the tradition, writing shifted from vertical lines to horizontal ones, and the letters were tipped onto their sides, so the ox's horns moved from the top of the character to the right side, and the conjoined rooms of the ground-plan of the house were set one below the other rather than side by side. With the move from the stylus to the pen and from clay tablets to skins, we find a more cursive script in which ox-head and houseplan become the Greek letters alpha and beta. Of all the many and varied writing systems developed by Semitic tribes and those who imitated them a thousand and more years before Christ, the Greek alphabet proved to be the most flexible and efficient for Indo-European speakers. Its use spread to Italy, where it was later adopted and adapted by the Romans, and it was carried by them — and especially by Christianity — from Italy to the world. It was the Romans, incidentally, who coined the term alphabet.

4. Adapting the alphabet to English

Christianity introduced the roman alphabet to the Anglo-Saxons at the end of the sixth century A.D., and there has been a continuous tradition of written English in that alphabet from then until now. The principal reason for the complexity of English spelling today is the very full and largely unbroken tradition of recording legal, historical and literary texts in the language over this long period. [2] English of the sixth century was represented in letters roughly matched with sounds, in much the same way that missionaries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries recorded the languages they came into contact with according to broadly phonetic principles. Since sixth-century English contained some sounds not found in Latin, a few new characters were needed. A <d> with a cross-stroke through the ascender, for example, was the earliest attempt at recording the dental sounds of *this and bath.* Almost all the alterations proved marginal or temporary, however, and failed to make any serious impact on the history of writing. Crossed <d> for example survives only in the International Phonetic Alphabet and in Icelandic. But another sound which gave difficulty was the bilabial semi-vowel of *was* and *which,* for which Latin provided only the ambiguous <u/v>. Early Anglo-Saxon scribes doubled the Latin symbol, and when these were ligatured some centuries later, as part of a series of modifications to the script which took effect around the twelfth century, the letter <w> was created, the one alphabetic innovation which English has given the world.

Many more signs and symbols than are generally realised originated in some manipulation of alphabetic symbols. For instance, the practice of grading student essays with Greek alphabetical symbols, <α> for first class, <β> for second class, and <χ> for third class, which still operates sporadically in universities, began in the Renaissance when schoolmasters at all levels adopted the practice as part of the emphasis laid on the classics in education generally. The first and last of the symbols were soon equated with good and bad, right and wrong, and written with an ever greater degree of freedom, so that <α>, which was written from the point of the bottom horn, round the arc and out through the upper horn, gradually had the lower horn attenuated and the upper one extended, until it became a tick (<$\sqrt{}$>), and <χ>, with the bottom loop widened and then split, became a cross (<x>). Children today are introduced to Greek before they — or their teachers — know it.

The development of the English alphabet is a fascinating topic in its own right, and one of considerable moment to the reform movement. One of the projects that the Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies at Manchester is working on at the moment is the mounting of an exhibition of varieties of script used up to the Norman Conquest in all forms of writing, on parchment, wood, bone, stone

and metal. This would include examples of the runic alphabet, a variety of the common European alphabet used by all the Germanic tribes while they were still pagan, and introduced into England first by the Anglo-Saxons and later by Danish and Norse Vikings, as well as use of the roman alphabet in both Latin and English writings produced in England. The aim would be to show the development of distinctively English styles of writing by comparison with continental use, and the hope is that this would be the first of a series of exhibitions illustrating changes in script down to the present day. Some such investigation is a necessary prolegomenon to the compilation of the complete history of English spelling which seems to me to be one of the most important tasks facing the historian of the English language today.

5. Different qualities of speech and writing

To talk of varieties of English script, even to introduce the question of upper and lower case letters, is to acknowledge that English has moved far from the phonetic principles at work in the sixth century. But without developing this theme fully, I would like to add a general word on the necessity of a link between speech and writing at all. Writing, as a system of communication independent of speech, was invented to serve different purposes, and it still does. Speech, leaving aside as relatively peripheral such modern developments as mechanical recording, storage and transmission of sound, is a means of immediate communication between physically contiguous individuals. The segmental sounds of speech, whether they be the three successive sounds which the layman easily perceives in *cat* or the less easily perceived three in *thought,* are placed within a framework of suprasegmental pauses (between groups of sounds — which may or may not equate with words — and between sense-groups of words) and within a similarly suprasegmental framework of stress and pitch patterns. And speech is usually accompanied by facial expression and gesture — body language without which radio and telephone communication is that much more inefficient.

Writing serves purposes very different from those of speech. It communicates across time and space, and however close a match it has with speech in terms of sound — symbol relationship - however phonetic a writing system is — there can be no equivalent of the body language which accompanies speech, and writing is therefore limited in communication value in the same way that radio and the telephone are. There are other important differences: writing has only a very imperfect representation of the suprasegmental phonemes, but has evolved other means of representing syntax. Word-division is marked more clearly in writing than in speech, and the division of words into syntactic units (phrases, clauses and sentences in conventional terminology), which is indicated in speech by a combination of stress, pause and the rise and fall of pitch, is represented much more uniformly in the written language by means of marks of punctuation. In other words, although there is some very vague parallel between punctuation on the one hand and variation in pitch and sentence-stress on the other (because each serves the same function ultimately, that of communicating syntactic information), there is no real attempt at a suprasegmental sound-symbol match.

A spelling reform which in any sense aims at a closer match of spelling and pronunciation is usually concerned only with segmental sounds. But we need to be clear about the different functions and modes of operation of these two systems of communication, speech and writing. Speech in conjunction with body language is a more flexible system than writing, but is by its nature it is ephemeral. Writing has the advantage of permanence and of open-ended recapitulation, but lacks the accompanying body language, and has, as a built-in compensation for its failure to reproduce the variations of stress and pitch of speech, a different set of syntactic markers. Hence, for example, it is easy to define a sentence in writing — generally, it begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop; but the definition of a sentence in speech is much more difficult, and has led in the past to an attempt by those instructing the young to impose the conventions of the written language onto the spoken language, to try to encourage an improvement in oral communication by imitation of the patterns of written communication. In some cases such improvement is possible, but not in all, because, as my message so far has proclaimed, speech and writing are independent forms of communication, and their linking is a convenience, not a necessary condition of comprehension.

6. Abbreviations

Another feature of written language which can be overlooked is its frequent use not of words in the conventional sense but of cyphers. In the Middle Ages, writers of Latin had a very wide vocabulary of abbreviations designed to facilitate the copying of books when this had to be done by hand. Today we use abbreviations as much to increase reading speed as to facilitate writing, but their variety is no less great, from the more obvious ampersand, Mr, Mrs, Co. Ltd, £, $ etc, to the numerals and mathematical symbols. We notice such forms only when they depart radically from what we expect, as, e.g. when we attempt to drive on the opposite side of the Atlantic from the one we are used to and find that a road sign abbreviation *for south* is *sth* or simply *s* in Britain but *so* in North America. But all these abbreviations have their counterpart in whole words, and the literate reader copes with them as easily as he does with variations in letter shape or with the two alphabets in upper and lower case.

7. Increased rigidity of written English

Finally, in considering the characteristics of written English, one must note the increasing rigidity of the system during the last two centuries. Undoubtedly individual words have continued to develop in spelling in this period, probably many more than most people realise, as I indicated in A *history of English spelling* some years ago. But the general trend of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been towards ever greater stability within the system. This is not a movement which coincides with the spread of literacy, for the literacy rate of seventeenth-century England was higher than that of the nineteenth century, but it is linked, I believe, with the increase in availability of printed material, particularly books.

Nowadays, we all accept a relatively wide variation in the pronunciation of individual words, not only because of regional or social dialects but in contextual variation caused by such factors as differences of stress patterns. It is for reasons such as these that any attempt to make spelling strictly phonetic has now largely been abandoned. Why, when variety is so fashionable in the spoken language, is such store laid on lack of variation in the written language? The simple immediate answer is speed of comprehension. If a given word always has exactly the same written form, recognition, it is argued, is faster, and so is reading speed.

8. Reading psychology and spelling reform

However the human mind is a very complex organ, as the operation of language itself amply illustrates. In spoken communication, an audience is constantly faced with sentences that it has never before heard, and understanding is achieved by recognition of the potential meaning of individual words coupled with recognition of the grammatical structure in which they occur. In written language too, the mind focuses not on individual isolated symbols (letters) but on sequences of letters (words) and sees them in the context of other words. The process, for the competent reader, is a fast one, involving recognition of the whole shape of a word rather than its constituent parts. That is why proof-reading a book is difficult — it is hard to force yourself to read letter by letter for compositors' errors — and indeed a great many printing errors (e.g. *assimlation, asssasination)* may never be noticed because few people read words segmentally, letter by letter. The eye takes in the outline, and writing has become hieroglyphic again, with words not now being pictograms like the ox-head but ideograms, stylized pictures representing ideas.

The fact that literate people read in this way must be taken into account in a spelling reform proposal. It has relevance, I think, in the instance of highly irregular and unpredictable words like those involving <gh>. I assume that by any statistical count, the word *sight* is much less frequently misspelt than the word *separate,* simply because the word picture is both easily recognized and easily reproduced. The difficulty is that spelling reform takes as its starting point the convenience — felt particularly by learners or those experiencing learning difficulty — of the link between speech and writing. Whatever differences of surface-structure there may be in the two systems, they have the same deep-structure, and since virtually everyone learning to read and write has already acquired a spoken language, it would appear that the closer writing is made to match that spoken language, the sooner fluency in it will be achieved.

As far as English is concerned, this has been the position, explicit or implicit, of spelling-reformers for over 400 years, ever since the first practical suggestions for reforming spelling were published in 1569. It is a perfectly logical premise, as long as the function of the reform is recognized. A reform that aims at assisting learners very reasonably attempts to build on the known of the spoken language. But what I have been saying must call into question the usefulness of developing a general principle of reform on the practicalities either of basic teaching of reading or of remedial teaching in writing. Should not a general reform take account of the wider issues of writing as an independent means of communication?

9. New Spelling

Let me take as a basis for discussion the system of reform officially proposed and supported by the Society*, New Spelling,* which was created almost fifty years ago and which has been modified in only minor respects since. Without wishing to engage in any debate about its appropriateness to conditions prevailing today, I would argue as a historian that *New Spelling* represents the most significant advance in the philosophy and practice of reform during the twentieth century, and arguably of the whole 400-year history of the movement. It is a scheme with a sound academic basis which has been worked out most carefully over many years by a series of dedicated and learned scholars. Also, because it was adopted by Sir James Pitman for i.t.a., it is the most successful reformed system there has been in that more people have been exposed to its recommendations than to those of any other reformed spelling, even if they used them only in conjunction with a transition script. Its guiding principles are those which have been reiterated most frequently by reformers over the centuries, and summarising them will help to identify the traditional concerns of those advocating reform.

Firstly, the roman alphabet as traditionally used is retained (minus 'unnecessary' letters such as <q> and <x>) and no new diacritics are introduced. Secondly, by the principle of least disturbance, current usage is retained wherever possible, and new combinations of letters are excluded as far as possible (although exceptions are made in the difficult case of vowel representation). Thirdly, the most fundamental principle is that of regularity: each letter or combination of letters is self-contained (in other words, no double consonants or final unpronounced <e> to indicate the quality or quantity of a preceding vowel) and each has a match in the sound system, so that, for example, spelling may be deduced from pronunciation and pronunciation from spelling. The scheme has all the advantages sought by generations of reformers, in regularity of representation of, and closer match with, the spoken language (although, in conformity with twentieth-century linguistic thinking it avoids close phonetic representation as neither feasible nor desirable), and it meets many of the familiar objections to reform in that it retains links with traditional orthography [= TO] as widely as is consistent with its principles.

10. Imperceptible change

To take those principles in turn, there can be little doubt that a reform proposal that seeks to move too far from TO will have little chance of success. Four centuries of effort have proved that. But it is worth taking a moment to consider how far the rigidity of the written language extends. For those of us who are already practised readers, the written language appears so conventional that we are no longer aware of, for example, the sequential arrangement of words, lines and pages. No doubt we would all be greatly disturbed by printing which reverted to the practice of the earliest uses of the alphabet and arranged words in vertical columns rather than horizontal, but how much alteration can be effected before the average reader becomes upset?

From the historical perspective, printed English has changed more than might be supposed over the last few centuries. Up to the eighteenth century it was usual to print at the foot of a page a word or two anticipating the opening words of the next page (catch words) but these have now totally disappeared. It may be hard to see what relevance this might have to spelling reform, but in fact it is a significant change, in relatively recent times, in our expectations of the presentation of written material. Others of a comparable nature have occurred much more recently. In the twentieth century, particularly since the paperback revolution, many books have been printed without running

titles, the page headings which remind the reader of the title of the book or chapter. And in the last twenty years right-hand justification, or straight right-hand margin, has often been abandoned, while the placing of the page number, traditionally top left in left-hand pages and top right in right-hand ones, has in some presses become uniformly top left.

Changes in letter shapes are often even more difficult to detect. People concerned with commercial book and newspaper production have been creating new typefaces and printing styles since Gutenberg and Caxton. Significant and wholesale changes, such as the abandoning of long <s> (<ʃ>), are rare, but alterations less easily perceived do nevertheless take place frequently. The most widespread change in recent years is the decline of ligatured letters. Ligatures (which initially imitated those of medieval manuscripts) have always been used in printing, sometimes quite widely, but today they are almost wholly confined to <f>, still sometimes physically joined to a following <i>, an <l>, or perhaps another <f>.

And finally there is the use of upper case letters, which in the eighteenth century heralded the majority of nouns (as they still do extensively in German) but today are confined to proper nouns or names. Even here practice varies, but the tendency is for capitals to be used ever more sparingly. Most noticeable are nouns and pronouns referring to the deity, which until recently would invariably be capitalised where now the pronouns in particular are not. This is not so much a feature of the secularisation of our age, I suggest; rather it relates to the prevailing view that initial capitals are a nuisance which we can well do without.

You may here glimpse at last the trend of my argument. The written language is not as static as is sometimes assumed, and the reading public has accepted without any noticeable outcry a series of changes, particularly those which publishers have deemed to be commercially desirable. There is hope here for the reformer. The concern shown by the creators of *New Spelling* for keeping the closest possible links with TO might be modified: the reformer should be ready to capitalize on those features of TO which show signs of alteration anyway.

11. Computers and spelling reform
Some of the changes in the presentation of written material that I have just been describing are the result of the introduction of computers to production processes, and it is worth digressing for a moment to look at the impact of computers on the written language more widely. At first it appeared that computers might work to the advantage of the spelling reformer, since at the press of a button a global search and replace procedure might convert the written form of any given word throughout a large body of material. But the advent of the spelling checker, a computerized word-list which will highlight any aberrant spellings for those anxious not to have any departure from TO, seems likely to fix even more firmly total adherence to the artificial norm created by the lexicographers over the last three centuries. On the other hand, because computer software is often international, a spelling checker produced in America or in the Far East will take account of the greater variation which exists in spelling in U.S. or World English than in British English. Spellings such as *program and disk,* already widespread because of the computer industry, may spread beyond the reach of the ultra-conservative advocate of TO.

12. Avoidance of diacritics
This brings me to a second principle adopted in *New Spelling:* the avoidance of any new diacritics. English is uniquely blessed among major Western languages with a relative freedom from extra-literal characters above and below the line. The one we have, the apostrophe, gives nothing but trouble. In historical terms it is quite a newcomer, not being fully established as we use it today until well into the nineteenth century, and though it may well now be in its death throes, these are proving unnecessarily long drawn out. Euthanasia is called for.

13. Regularity and flexibility
But the major principle of *New Spelling* is that of regularity. Regularity is seen as the key to easier learning, and to the resolution of difficulties in either spelling or pronunciation in those who are generally competent in written English. I have shown already that there are difficulties attendant on

the basing of a reform on the closer match of sound and symbol. There is, I believe, a particular problem with *New Spelling* in its retention of the desire to use spelling as a guide to pronunciation, a concern of reformers which goes back as far as the sixteenth century. In the later twentieth, this seems to me quite outmoded.

But *New Spelling,* like all its predecessors, has failed in its main purpose of reforming spelling principally because of public resistance to change. A first step in the breaking down of that resistance might come through the dissemination of the concept of greater flexibility in spelling, and through the promoting of an awareness of how much variety already exists in the written language, for instance of letter forms and in the use of abbreviations. It is ironic that the single most tangible outcome of four hundred years of pressure for reformation of the English spelling system has been the creation of a highly inflexible public attitude to spelling. One of the concerns of the earliest reformers was to stabilize spelling, to reduce the variety still available in private, and to a less extent in public, spelling. By the mid eighteenth century they had succeeded. I think they were wrong.

14. Conclusion: progress through tolerance
I am not, let me stress, arguing for anarchy in either public or private spelling. But I am arguing for a significant change of public attitude, so that minor variation — in double consonants, in unstressed suffixes such as <-ance, -ence>, in all those peripheral details which do not hinder communication even momentarily — should no longer be seen as in any way important. I can talk from the moral high ground here, because my spelling is relatively good, but I freely admit to occasional uncertainty. Very few of us, I suspect, can claim never to have recourse to a dictionary merely to check a spelling. Is this an appropriate use of time? Can we not convince the general public that obsession with the goal of what is seen as orthodox spelling at the expense of other aspects of language is misconceived? Personally I would rather see too many <e>s *in separate* than a failure to distinguish the meaning of *disinterested* from that of *uninterested.*

Ought we not to be opening a public debate on the true nature of written language, not as a system carved in stone and impervious to development and change, nor as a pale reflection of its older sister, speech, but as an independent vehicle of communication, just as effective when allowed scope for variation as speech has proved to be? Let me offer you the proposition that the worst public speller is the greengrocer, whose colourful permutations on *broccoli and lichee* are matched only by less comprehensible ones on *asparagus and lettuce.* Yet we continue to buy his produce. I would like to see this tolerance extended much more widely. Over the last twenty years, we have seen in Britain the encouragement of regional and class dialects, and a general rejection of the proposition that only those who can speak with a Received Standard voice are worth listening to. Is it too much for the historian to hope that by the twenty-first century, strict adherence to the fixed spelling of the printing houses is not seen as a necessary condition of literacy?

Notes
[1]   Donald G Scragg *A history of English spelling.* Manchester University Press, Mont Follick series Volume 3, 1974.
[2]   Many problems. of course, go even further back, and relate to the creation of the alphabet itself. Cf. the judgement of Ernst Pulgram, in 'The typologies of writing-systems', *Writing without letters,* ed W Haas, Manchester University Press, Mont Follick series Volume 4, 1976, pp. 1–28, esp. p. 24: "It is worth noting that there did not occur at any point in the history of writing a revolutionary step, a scrapping of the old and an entirely new beginning, a break that had to do with the invention of an altogether new system. It is all a matter of gradual evolution. If man is an inventive animal, he certainly has not proven himself a scintillating innovator in conceiving ways of writing: nothing new has in fact been added since the adoption of the alphabetic system about three thousand years ago."

4. The Malay Spelling Reform
Asmah Haji Omar

Having studied Indonesian Language and Literature, Professor Asmah took a PhD in General Linguistics at the University of London. She is now Professor of Malay Linguistics and Director of the Language Centre, University of Malaya, in Kuala Lumpur. She has published several books on the linguistics of Malay and related languages, and her role in the spelling reform was that of Deputy Chairman of the Permanent Committee for Bahasa Malaysia since its establishment in 1972.

1. Background to bahasa Malaysia
Malay, as referred to in this article, is the national language of Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore. However, the term 'Malay', or 'Melayu' as official nomenclature, only applies in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore; in Malaysia it is known as *bahasa Malaysia,* and in Indonesia *bahasa Indonesia (bahasa* = language).

The original name of this language was *Melayu* or *Malay,* while its native speakers were and are still known as Malays. They are the Malays of the Malay Peninsula, Singapore, Brunei, parts of Sarawak, and the eastern part of North Sumatra known as the Riau mainland together with islands off its coast. The population of the native speakers has been small compared to the non-Malay peoples whose various tongues are not Malay, but belong to the same family as Malay. These are the natives of the islands of Southeast Asia, better known in history as the Malay archipelago which mainly comprises the four countries mentioned above. Malay has been the lingua franca among these peoples from time immemorial.

The Malay maritime hegemony which spread over the archipelago from the seventh to the nineteenth century, as represented by the various empires in Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, Borneo and the southern Philippines, had contributed enormously to the spread of Malay, not only as the trade language of the area but also as the language of administration, literature, religion and philosophy. Great literary and religious traditions from outside entered the archipelago through the Malay language. At first it was the great Hindu and Buddhist traditions, and these were later followed by those of Islam.

With the arrival of Western imperialism, specifically, that of the British, the role of the Malay language in officialdom began to diminish in the former Malay states of the Malay Peninsula, Singapore and Brunei. In Sumatra (Indonesia), Malay as the language of administration was replaced by Dutch, whereas in Peninsula Malaysia, Singapore and Borneo, it was superseded by English.

2. Roman and Arabic scripts in Malay

A literacy program in English was designed in the British territories, viz. the Malay states and Singapore, through the 'English Schools', that is, schools using English as medium of instruction. At the same time literacy in Malay was not neglected, although the Malay vernacular schools provided education to the rural Malays up to Primary VI only. For this literacy program in Malay, the British colonial government decided to use the Roman alphabet as a writing system for writing Malay. It was only in 1904 that the first Malay spelling system was introduced; this is now known as the Wilkinson System, after its originator. This system was used widely in Malaya, Singapore and Brunei.

When the Romanised spelling system was introduced, the Malays already possessed a writing system, and that was the system using the Arabic script. This was the script used for recording their religious and literary traditions. This was also the script used in the correspondences between the Malay kingdoms of the archipelago. The introduction of the Roman alphabet, strictly speaking, was not a step in making an illiterate people literate, but it was more of an addition of another writing system to the knowledge of an already literate people. Hence, from the dawn of the twentieth century, the Malays have been writing their language in two entirely different systems of writing.

In Indonesia, although there was Javanese, which was the language of the majority of the Indonesians, the Dutch colonial government had chosen Malay to be the language in which they interacted with the natives. Although the Dutch did not build Malay vernacular schools for the Indonesians, they found it necessary to write the Malay language using the Roman alphabet. A spelling system was formulated by a Dutch scholar of Indonesian, van Ophuysen, known as the van Ophuysen system. While the spelling used in the British areas was based on English graphemes, that of Indonesia was based on those of Dutch.

The differences between the Wilkinson and the van Ophuysen systems were most obvious in the choice of graphemes for the vowels and consonants shown here:-

Phoneme	Grapheme		Phoneme	Grapheme	
	Wilkinson	Van Ophuysen		Wilkinson	Van Ophuysen
ə	e	e	ʃ	sh	sj
e	e	é	ɲ	ny	nj
u	u	œ	x	kh	ch
c	ch	tj	y	y	j
j	j	dj			

3. The Soewandi and Za'aba amendments

In 1948 the van Ophuysen system in Indonesia underwent changes in the two graphemes for the vowels /u/ and /e/, which then came to be written <u> and <e> as in the Wilkinson system in Malaya. The change was effected by Mr Soewandi, the Minister of Education at that time, and the van Ophuysen system with these two changes came to be known as the Soewandi system of spelling. In this system the schwa and /e/ were represented by one grapheme, <e>. This was the system that was in use until 1972.

In the meanwhile, in Malaya, the spelling system was also undergoing changes. In fact, the situation in Malaya, which was later known as Malaysia, was more fluid than in Indonesia. Long before the van Ophuysen system came to be replaced by the Soewandi system in Indonesia, the Wilkinson system had already undergone a major change in 1924. However, the changes did not involve new graphemes, but reflected a decision on the vowels that should occur in final closed syllables. The reform devised by Za'aba, a well-known Malay grammarian, replaced the vowel grapheme <u> with <o> in final closed syllables when the final consonant is represented by <k, h,

ng> or <r>. It also replaced <i> with <e> in final closed syllables, where /k/ or /h/ is the final consonant. Examples are given in the table below:-

Wilkinson	Za'aba	English	Wilkinson	Za'aba	Wilkinson
batuk	batok	*cough*	bubur	bubor	*porridge*
jatuh	jatoh	*fall*	itik	itek	*duck*
burung	burong	*bird*	putih	puteh	*white*

Za'aba had no explanation for such changes. One could see that his uppermost consideration was the phonetic realisation of those words. Wilkinson was more concerned with the vowel harmony that should be represented in the orthography, and we should remember that the Soewandi system in Indonesia was similar to Wilkinson's in the treatment of the vowels in words such as those above.

Apart from the choice of vowels in designated closed syllables mentioned above, the Za'aba system also introduced a new grapheme, which was <ĕ> for the schwa. With the diacritic mark thus represented, the Za'aba system differentiated schwa from the half-open vowel /e/. In this way, there was greater facilitation in reading texts using the Za'aba system of spelling compared to that of Wilkinson.

The Za'aba system was the one adopted in the teaching of Malay in the schools from the 1930's onwards, and it came to be known as the school spelling system. Even with its spread via the schools, this system was not to be left unchallenged. Various sectors were not happy with the system, and suggestions for a reform appeared intermittently as time passed by.

4. Eclecticism of the 1940s and 50s
During the Japanese Occupation of Malaya and Indonesia, there emerged a system which was supposed to uniformise the systems in the two countries. The system known as *Fajar Asia* (or 'the Dawn of Asia') appeared to use the Soewandi system of writing the vowels and the Malayan system of writing the consonants. This system only existed during the Occupation.
When the war was over, the two countries reverted to their separate ways.

In Malaya, talk about reforming the spelling system never ceased, unlike in Indonesia. In 1956, a year before the Independence of Malaya, the Third Malay Congress, held in Johore Babaru, came out most decisively for a spelling system known as the Congress System. This system never came out in print except in the proposal papers of the Congress. The reason was that it was not practical for use by the ordinary people and certain graphemes proposed by the system were not represented in the typewriters. This system prescribed the use of symbols in the International Phonetic Alphabet for <ch>, <j>, <ng>, <ny>, and <sh>, going by the dictum of one symbol for one phoneme. It also made a new proposition in the writing of diphthongs. Whereas the Wilkinson and the Za'aba systems had <au> and <oi>, the Congress system suggested <aw> and <oy>. This innovation did not seem to gain acceptance of people in general. Even then, certain groups particularly those affiliated to the Literary Movement 1950 used the Congress graphemes for diphthongs in their own publications. This group even reverted to the Wilkinson style of writing the vowels in closed final syllables which was, as said earlier, similar to the Soewandi style in Indonesia.

Since the Malay sections of publishing houses were mainly manned by members of the Literary Movement 1950 or their sympathisers, the Movement's style of spelling seemed to gain a widespread currency through published works. In the meantime, the schools and the government publications were still using the Za'aba or the school system of spelling. Hence, the public became confused as to which system to follow. Language usage outside the precincts of the school reflected a state of confusion in the minds of the people in the spelling of their language using the

Roman script. It was not unusual to find several systems used in a short passage in the print media not to mention in individual writings.

5. Malaysia and Indonesia after Independence
Malaya became independent in 1957, and with this Malay became the national language and one of the official languages, the other being English. This meant that Malay had to play a more significant role in administration and in the education system than previously. This also meant that the state of confusion in spelling the language became more widespread and came to everyone's attention.

In 1959, Malaya and Indonesia signed a Cultural Agreement, which included the implementation of a common spelling system for the two countries. The system agreed to in this Agreement was known as the Malindo System, *Malindo* being the contraction of Malaya and Indonesia. However, this system was never implemented or even published for the information of the public, mainly due to two factors. Firstly, the system was very similar to the Congress system which was found to be impractical. Secondly, relations between Malaya and Indonesia made a turn for the worse soon after the signing of the Agreement; the cause of the deterioration in this relationship was the idea behind the independence of Singapore, Brunei, Sarawak and North Borneo — that these territories would be given independence by the British government only if they joined Malaya to form Malaysia. Soekarno, the President of Indonesia at that time, saw this as a threat to the security of Indonesia. The formation of Malaysia in 1963, the "crush Malaysia" policy of Soekarno's Indonesia, and the severance of diplomatic relations with Malaysia from 1963 to 1966 are now history.

When the warfare between Malaysia and Indonesia ended at the end of 1966, among the first items on the agenda of a detente between the two countries concerned was a common spelling system. With the green light from their respective governments, language experts of the two countries sat down to serious work on formulating a spelling system that was practical and above all accepted by the two parties concerned. Six years passed by, and in August 1972, a common spelling system was adopted by the two countries. It was announced simultaneously in Indonesia and Malaysia on 16th of August 1972, the eve of the anniversary of into Indonesia's Independence. In Indonesia, the announcement was made by President Soeharto, while in Malaysia it was by the Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak.

6. The 1972 spelling reform
A grace period of five years was given in both countries for the people to get used to the new system. In Malaysia this meant that students were not penalised for making mistakes in spelling words according to the old systems. However, a rigorous programme was undertaken by the government's Language and Literacy Agency *(Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka)* to see to the implementation of the new spelling system by giving special classes to the people, especially teachers and administrators, on how to spell their language according to the new spelling system. The grace period also allowed the publishers to dispose of their old stocks and to publish revised editions and new titles in the new spelling. Names of roads places, and institutions had to undergo a change in appearance, using the new spelling system.

The common spelling system of Malaysia and Indonesia is characterised by four main traits: practicality, simplicity, symmetricity and flexibility.

7. Standard characters, no diacritics
Practicality in the spelling system means that all the graphemes consist of characters that are easily available in the typewriters and the printing machines. The IPA symbols were out from the start, and no new characters were created.

Simplicity can be viewed from two aspects. First is the use of diacritics. The old spelling systems in

Malaysia and Indonesia made use of diacritics. We have seen the diacritics used on the schwa and /c/. The new system, guided by the Wilkinson and the Soewandi systems, has discarded them and uses <e> for both the vowels concerned. The Malay language shows a higher frequency of the schwa compared to /e/. The Malaysian Za'aba style of placing a diacritic mark on <e> to stand for the schwa was not economical in terms of the time taken for writing, quite apart from the fact that the text was full of diacritics. Furthermore, with a few exceptions, the occurrence of /e/ is predictable, as /e/ usually occurs in a harmonious relationship with itself and /o/ in two contiguous syllables where the vowel of the other syllable is also /e/ or /o/. On the other hand, the schwa enters such a relationship with /i/ and /u/, as seen here.

With /e/		Without /e/	
telor	*accent*	telur	*egg*
tetek	*breast*	titik	*dot*
serong	*slan*	terung	*eggplant*

There are cases where the occurrences of the schwa and /e/ are not predictable as in *semak* (with the schwa) 'bushes', and *semak* (with /e/) 'revise', but such pairs are few and far between.

8. Removing apostrophes and hyphens
In the old systems, particularly in Malaysia, the apostrophe was placed before a vowel, if the vowel is syllable-initial, to indicate the pharyngeal fricative which appeared in loan words from Arabic. However, Malay does not have this phoneme in its inventory. Most Malays actualise this sound as a glottal stop. Since syllable- and word-initial vowels in Malay are always accompanied by the glottal stop, the apostrophe to indicate the Arabic pharyngeal fricative was discarded, so spelling certain Arabic loanwords with one grapheme less, as here:-

Old Spelling	New Spelling	English
Juma'at	Jumaat	*Friday*
ta'at	taat	*loyal*
'alim	alim	*pious*

The use of the hyphen became significantly less with the new spelling system. The old spelling systems were liberal in the use of the hyphen e.g. between the affix *di-* or the postpositional emphatic word *lah* or the clitic form *nya* and the rootword, or between certain prepositions and the nouns that follow them. In the new spelling, the hyphen in the first set of contexts is removed and the components are written as a complete or whole word; in the second context, the removal of the hyphen results in two distinct words, one a preposition and the other a noun, as here:-

Old Spelling	New Spelling	English	Old Spelling	New Spelling	English
di-buat	dibuat	*is made*	di-rumah	di rumah	*at the house*
rumah-nya	rumahnya	*his/her house*	ke-rumah	ke rumah	*to the house*
Ambil-lah!	Ambillah	*Take*			

In the present system, the hyphen is used between components of reduplicated words, e.g. *menari-nari* 'keeps on dancing', *rumah-rumah* 'houses'.

9. Agreements on common letter-values
The second aspect of simplicity lies in the choice of graphemes for the former <ch> in the Malaysian inventory, and the Indonesian <tj> and <dj>. For the Malaysian <ch> and Indonesian <tj>, a new grapheme was agreed on: <c>. Previous to the new spelling system, <c> did not have the status of a grapheme either in Malaysia or in Indonesia. The common spelling system has given it graphemic status. It is not only simplicity that is indicated in the choice of <c>, but also the end of the confusion arising from <ch> for people reading Malaysian and Indonesian texts. In

Malaysia, this grapheme stood for the voiceless alveo-palatal affricate while in Indonesia it was for the velar fricative /x/.

As for <dj>, the Indonesians agreed to adopt Malaysian <j> for the voiced alveo-palatal affricate spelt <j> in English. Linked to the Indonesian acceptance of <j> was their acceptance of the Malaysian <y> for the semi-vowel.

Symmetricity in the new spelling system has been demonstrated by the utilisation of the rules of vowel harmony as seen in the choice of <e> for the schwa and for /e/. It is further indicated in the choice of various other graphemes as discussed below.

When the Indonesians accepted <y>, they also accepted <ny> in place of their <nj>, for the palato-alveolar nasal. Arising from this, a new grapheme was created to replace the Malaysian <sh> and the Indonesian <sj>, both of which stood for the palato-alveoler fricative, and this was <sy>. Like <c>, the grapheme <sy> was new to both parties. The decision was made in consideration of the symmetricity provided in the pair <ny> and <sy>, where <y> indicates the palato-alveolar component of the underlying phoneme.

Another symmetricity feature can be seen in the retention of <h> as a component in certain graphemes, and it indicates 'gutturalisation'. Such phonemes mostly occur in loan words from Arabic, and they are represented in the graphemes <kh>, <gh> etc. Here, it is worth mentioning that the Indonesian side had agreed to the grapheme <kh> for /x/ to replace their <ch>.

10. Reduplication
The writing of reduplicated words can also be included under the rubric of symmetricity. In Malay reduplication is very productive as a morphological process. There are three types of reduplication in Malay: the reduplication of the first syllable of the root, the reduplication of the stem of a complex word, and the reduplication of the whole word, be it a simple or complex word. In the old spelling systems both in Malaysia and Indonesia, the first type of reduplication was spelt in toto, but the character <2> was used to indicate the reduplication of the second and third types. In the reduplication of the whole word, the character <2> was placed at the end of the word, for example, *rumah2* was read as *rumah-rmaah 'houses', makan2* as *makan-makan* 'to while away the time eating'.

The writing of the reduplication of the complex word with the character <2> was not neat and consistent. The use of <2> made it possible to write the same word in more than one way. One was to separate the components with a hyphen and place <2> after the component that was duplicated (see *i* below), and the other was to place <2> at the end of the whole word (see *ii* below).

Both i and ii above should be read as *bermain-main.*

The first method facilitated reading, but it violated the rule of writing complex words with affixes, viz. an affix should be written together with the stem so that the word appears as a complete whole. As for the second method, while it observed the morphological rule, it caused difficulty in reading. Speakers, especially non-native ones, were prone to reading the second example above as a total reduplication *bermain-bermain* which is ungrammatical. Although native speakers, with their native competence, may not read *bermain2* as a total reduplication, because the total reduplication of forms falling into this pattern does not occur in the language, there are other patterns where native speakers themselves find difficulty in deciding whether the written word with the character <2> represents total reduplication or only that of the stem. An example is *sekali2.* As a total reduplication, *sekali-sekali,* it means, once in a while', whereas as a word which undergoes reduplication only at the stem, *sekali-kali,* it means '(not) ... at all'.

The use of the character <2> was economical in nature. It was a form of shorthand in writing the cumbersome reduplicated word. However, facilitation in reading and mastering the language was the overriding factor in discarding it altogether as a shorthand symbol for reduplication. This makes the physical writing slower but it has brought simplification to the learning system.

11. Consonant clusters in loanwords

Flexibility is a very important factor in the writing of loanwords, specifically from English. The flexibility factor can be seen in the acceptance of new consonant clusters in all positions in the word, and the schwa in the word final position as well as a nucleus in the closed final syllable of the word.

The old spelling systems in Malaysia and Indonesia did not recognise the existence of consonant clusters at the word-initial and word-final positions. Loanwords which have such clusters are mainly from English. Before the new spelling system was implemented, English loans such as *project, process* and *complex* were spelt as *perojek, peroses,* and *komplek.* This was based on the established rule of Malay phonology that the syllable structure consists of only a single consonant as its onset and its coda. Therefore, the cluster at the beginning of the word was neutralised by inserting a vowel, usually a schwa, between its components.

There were two ways in neutralising the cluster at the end of the word. One was by dropping off all the components but one, as in the writing of *perojek* (<t> was dropped off), and *komplek* (<s> was dropped off). However, in applying this method, there were certain words which showed a difference in the perceptions of the Indonesians and the Malaysians on the clusters concerned, viz. on the component that was more significant and should be retained. This concerned mainly clusters with <r> as the penultimate component, as in *passport, import,* and *export.* In Indonesia, these words were taken as <paspor>, <impor>, and<ekspor>, which indicated that <r> was more significant than <t>. On the other hand, the Malaysians, perhaps very much influenced by British pronunciation, wrote and pronounced those words with the <t>, without the <r>; hence <paspot>, <impot>, <ekspot>. In their quest for uniformity, the Malaysians and the Indonesians decided to neutralise their differences by putting back both <r> and <t> in those words. Hence, in the new spelling the words are spelt as <pasport>, <import>, <eksport>.

The second method of neutralising the word-final cluster was to insert a vowel in between its components. An example is the writing of the loanword for film. In Indonesia it was *filem*, in Malaysia *filam.* The Malaysian version was guided by the phonological rule of the time which did not admit the schwa in final closed syllables.

With its flexibility rule, the new spelling system has admitted clusters in the initial and final positions of the word. This has facilitated the borrowing of technical terms from English for the various sciences. However, those words which have existed for a long time in the Malay language with one or two components decapitated have been allowed to remain, so as not to cause too much destandardisation. The word *filem* remains in Indonesia and has been adopted by Malaysia. Among those which did not undergo a change in form by having their clusters reinstated are the Malaysian examples of <komunis> 'communist', <rekod> 'record', <moden> 'modem'.

12. Word-final schwas in loanwords

As Malay is essentially disyllabic in nature, monosyllabic words with final consonant clusters in English are assimilated by giving them a disyllabic appearance, viz. by placing the grapheme <a> at the end of the word. For example <plasma> from *plasm,* <kuspa> from *cusp,* <kalka> from *calc.*

The acceptance of **<filem>** by the Malaysians also indicates their acceptance of the schwa in the closed final syllables. Linked with this is also their acceptance of <e> for schwa at the end of the

word as in <koine> which has been taken *in toto.* This has greatly facilitated the work of the various terminology committees of the *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka,* already mentioned, in assimilating loanwords from other languages.

Acceptance of the final schwa does not mean acceptance of something foreign. The pronunciation adopted by the Radio and Television Malaysia (RTM) actualises the final <a> as a schwa, based on the Johor dialect of Southern Peninsular Malaysia. In the northern part of the Peninsula and in Sabah' and Sarawak, <a> is realised as [a], as also in Indonesia. However, the acceptance of this final schwa does not mean that all cases of <a> in the word final position are changed to <e>. Native words continue to be spelt with <a>, and this <a> can have various styles of pronunciation. The final <e> for schwa is meant only for loanwords.

13. Further linguistic co-operation

The cultural pact between Malaysia and Indonesia has resulted in a common spelling system for the two countries which have the same language as their national and official language. Their co-operation did not end with their common spelling; they have continued with the effort to have a common scientific terminology, and to work closely on matters pertaining to language. This co-operation is directed by a Council, which was officially formed in December 1972, known as the Language Council for Indonesia and Malaysia *(Majlis Bahasa Indonesia-Malaysia,* or MBIM for short). The Council consisted of a high-powered committee on each side, mostly consisting of language experts. In 1986, Brunei Darussalam officially joined as a member of the Council, and the Council was obliged to take a new name, and that is Language Council for Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia *(Majlis Bahasa Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia — Malaysia,* or MABBIM for short).

Brunei had been attending meetings of MBIM as an invited member long before it became an official member. The common spelling system and a common scientific terminology were crucial to the successful implementation of the national language policy. The spelling system in use in Brunei before the common spelling system was adopted was the Malaysian Za'aba System. As language developments in Brunei had always been closely linked with those of Malaysia, the decision to adopt the new spelling system was a practical one.

Although Singapore does not use Malay as much as her neighbours, due to her four-language policy (consisting of English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil), it was also a practical consideration on her part to move with the times. There has never been anything official on Singapore's part on her stand on the new spelling, but implementation of this system has taken place as evidenced by publications in Malay produced in Singapore.

14. Conclusion: achievements of reform

The Malay spelling reform was a success in three ways. Firstly, it resulted in giving a standard norm in spelling the language in place of a situation where many norms existed. Secondly, with its practicality and flexibility it has paved the way for a tremendous growth and development of the language. Finally, it brought together the Malay speaking countries in a close cultural and linguistic network.

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5. Progress of the spelling reform debate in France
Susan Baddeley

Susan Baddeley belongs to the HESO research team and AIROE association, Paris (for details see *JSSS* 89/1 p10) and keeps the Simplified Spelling Society up date on spelling developments in French.

The first seven months of 1989 have been a very eventful time for all those concerned with spelling reform in France, and the question has received substantial press and media coverage.

1. In the press and media
A debate was set off in the press last November, when the primary school teachers' union (SNI) journal published the results of a questionnaire they had carried out on spelling reform. To the question "Should spelling be simplified?" 1035 of their readers replied "yes" (as against 107 "no"), and gave their opinion on a certain number of reform proposals. Among these, the AIROE proposals (simplification of past participle agreement, of certain doubled consonants, regularising use of accents) received widespread approval.

These results were commented on by the AFP (French press agency), who interpreted them in a news dispatch as "90% of primary school teachers in favour of simplifying spelling", which wasn't strictly true, but was sensational enough to be taken up by a large number of newspapers, as well as by radio and television. Four of the biggest French daily papers ran articles on the subject, in particular *Le Figaro* and *France-Soir,* both of right-wing tendency, who adopted an extremely hostile point of view towards the question. "Fotil réformé l'ortograf?" was the title in *France-Soir,* making use of an extreme phonetic transcription, such as an illiterate might use, to ridicule and discredit the proposed reforms. "Qui peut réformer l'orthographe?" asked *Le Quotidien,* putting its finger on the weakest point in the spelling reformers' case, and concluding, as indeed many linguists do, that spelling reform is "technically necessary, but socially unthinkable".

Le Figaro and *France Soir* in particular presented the idea of spelling reform as a symptom of social and educational decay, a 'levelling-down' to encourage the ignorant and the lazy. This press campaign is in many ways reminiscent of the one which, at the beginning of this century, put a stop to reform proposals which had even been accepted by the Académie itself.

2. Public opinion
A more serious survey was carried out by the literary magazine *Lire* in March. An opinion poll commissioned by the magazine revealed that 44% of those questioned were in favour of spelling being reformed, 50% against, and 6% uncertain. However, in answer to questions concerning specific points of reform, 76% declared themselves to be in favour of a certain amount of 'cleaning up' by eliminating anomalies. These results are not as contradictory as they may seem: the word 'reform' obviously conjures up for many people the idea of phonetic spelling or other radical reform projects, whereas putting a bit of order in the use of hyphens or doubled consonants apparently isn't thought of as a reform. The AIROE spelling reform working group, as a result of this, is drawing up a list of points which could be presented as simplifications, or regularisations, which are likely to meet with less opposition.

It was interesting to note that, among the people interviewed for the survey, a number of public figures (politicians, including the current Prime Minister), journalists and intellectuals were among

those in favour of reforms.

A commission has recently been set up by the Prime Minister, Michel Rocard, to look into the problems of French teaching and the use of French in the world, and we hope that, as a result of the interest shown by the press, the spelling question will receive the attention it needs.

3. Campaigns
The AIROE association has continued, all this year, its campaigns in favour of a moderate and limited reform of French spelling (for the four main points of these reform proposals, see *Journal* 88/1, p31). A leaflet sent to all university teachers received an encouraging number of positive replies and an increase in AIROE's membership. Several members of AIROE appeared on radio and television programmes following the press reports earlier this year, to talk about the Association's aims and its proposals.

An important event in February was an appeal, in *Le Monde,* on behalf of TO of France's most eminent linguists (including Nina Catach, president of AIROE) in favour of modernisation of French spelling. Referring to the past history of French spelling, they pointed out that periodic reforms, which had been regularly carried out until quite recently, are necessary if French is to keep its place as a world language and if literacy is to be increased, and gave the example of several countries which have rational spelling reform policies, where linguists and politicians meet to discuss these questions, which is not the case in France.

Another important body of professional opinion, the primary school teachers, has also recently declared itself in favour of simplification of spelling. The teachers' union, whose news magazine originally commissioned the report on spelling reform which set off the nationwide debate at the beginning of the year, will shortly be bringing out a publication on the teaching of spelling and its reform, with the collaboration of AIROE.

4. Future prospects
With the support of many linguists, schoolteachers and public figures, and with the impending publication of a number of books on the subject, **[1]** the campaign in favour of simplification of spelling is likely to gather speed over the next few months. It will not be the first time the 'spelling question has received so much attention: the satirical weekly *Le Canard enchaîné* recently compared it to the Loch Ness monster, which 'pops up' occasionally and causes a commotion, but is soon forgotten about.

However, historians and spelling reformers know only too well that spelling is much more than a convenient way of writing down the spoken language, that it is widely held to be "part of the national heritage" (according to the opinion poll mentioned earlier, 86%), and that public opinion on the question is not always amenable to logical and reasonable discussion. Would-be spelling reformers must tread carefully, for a sensational headline in "ortograf fonetik", or a vigorous statement from a public figure (such as that made recently by a politician close to Giscard d'Estaing, who described the president of the teachers' union, which is now recommending a certain number of reforms, as "the Pol Pot of the French language") can make more of an impression than any well-reasoned argument, and can instantly destroy the results of years of work and campaigning.

[1] — *Que vive l'orthographe*   Paris: Seuil (forthcoming). Book published by the SNI, primary school teachers' union; articles by Philippe Cibois and Michel Masson of AIROE.
—Nina Catach *Les dé1ires de l'orthographe.* Humorous account, in dictionary form, of what French spelling is about, and what the French think it is about. (Paris: Plon, publication due at the end of August).

6. The Latest on the 'Re-regulating' Written German

On 19 July 1988 the West German daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* published an article by our editorial adviser, Professor Dr Gerhard Augst on the proposals that were shortly to be presented to the West German government for the 're-regulation' of German orthography. After some introductory remarks on the German writing system, we here summarize his
account and an analysis of press reactions to the proposals that appeared in *Sprachreport* 4/88, the quarterly bulletin of the
Institut für deutsche Sprache (Mannheim).

English 'spelling' and German 'orthography'
The English concept of 'spelling' does not have an exact equivalent in a language such as German. In English, 'spelling' suggests the choice of letters of the alphabet to represent specific words, and is notoriously an arcane, arbitrary and yet quite rigid procedure that bears a somewhat remote relation to the sound of words. Printers may also bother about punctuation, hyphenation and capitalization, but such matters are not felt by individual writers to be of great concern, and they scarcely impinge on the question of 'spelling' itself.

German, on the other hand, enjoys by and large a much more straightforward relation between sounds and letters, and such traps of sound-symbol correspondence as may exist usually 'only' worry the less well-educated. Thus whatever grammatical mistakes English students of German may make, they are less prone to pure misspelling in German than in their mother tongue. However, the conventions such as punctuation and hyphenation, which in English are largely relegated to the province of typography, are in German subject to strict rules, and their infringement is stigmatized in much the same way as misspelling in English. The English concept of 'spelling' is therefore subsumed in German under the broader concept of 'Orthographie', or, to give it its equivalent native German name, 'Rechtschreibung' ('right writing'). The question of which letters to use in writing is then only one (and arguably not the most important one) of the questions with which German orthographers are concerned.

The 1902 rules and the role of Duden
German orthography is sanctioned in law. In 1901 a conference was held in Berlin (at which the Austrians had observer status) and decided to remove certain oddities and coordinate the variations that had hitherto prevailed in the different states (or Länder) of the Reich. In 1902 the rules drawn up at the conference were made legally binding by decree, and were also accepted by the Swiss.

The subsequent history of the rules then promulgated is bound up with the successive volumes of 'Duden', the reference work founded by the 19th century educationist Konrad Duden which in the 20th century acquired quasi-official status as the authority for written German. A complication however was that Duden was soon required to act as the authority not only for the teaching of orthography in schools, but also for the practice of printers who needed stricter and more sophisticated guidelines. This distinction is an interesting one which the English-speaking world might do well to reflect on: two levels of precision, a stricter one for publishing and a more relaxed one for private use. As time went on, the Duden Orthographical Dictionary attempted to formulate guidelines for increasing numbers of special cases, and an originally fairly manageable set of rules developed into what was for most people an almost impenetrable, illogical and sometimes even contradictory jungle. For instance, the original rules stated that when compound words resulted in three consecutive identical letters, one of them could be omitted; so when *Brenn* ('burn') was joined to *Nessel* ('nettle'), the compound 'stinging nettle' could, optionally, be written *Brennessel;* but later rules made the omission obligatory, while insisting on exceptions when another consonant followed; thus only two <f>s were allowed in *Stoffetzen (=Stoff   +Feizen),* but three were required in *Sauerstoffflasche (=Sauerstoff + Flasche).* By the 1970s the whole situation was widely felt to have become unacceptable, and the urge to simplify began to rear its head.

Decapitalization
An early rnanifestafion of this urge was the controversy aroused in 1972 by the writer Gerhard Zwerenz, who suggested (with what seriousness is not entirely clear) that the widespread uncertainty over the use of capital letters for nouns in German should be overcome by their complete abolition. This extreme suggestion provoked equally extreme opposition, but by 1982 orthographers from all four German-speaking countries (the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, Austria and Switzerland) had met to agree on a scheme for so-called 'moderate decapilitazation' ('gemäßgigte Kleinschreibung'). By this was meant, not the total abolition of capitals, but that ordinary nouns should henceforth be written with small letters (as had been the practice with some avant-garde poetry since early in the century), although proper names and God would keep their capitals. This would make the rules for capitalization as simple as in French. Amongst orthographers the debate on this question centred on whether the benefits for the reader, who is believed to be assisted by the highlighting of nouns in the text, are outweighed by the disadvantages for the writer, who has to make sometimes quite subtle decisions as to which words count as 'nouns'. Among the public, however, even this 'moderate' suggestion proved controversial, and the advocates of re-regulation decided it would be wise to give this particular proposal a lower profile for the time being.

Progress towards new rules
A positive result of that 1982 international agreement of orthographers was that the political authorities began to take an interest, notable among them the Austrian government and the education minister for the West German state of Rhineland-Palatinate (Rheinland-Pfalz). He instigated an official request from the West German Minister of the Interior and the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education of the West German states to the Mannheim Institut für deutsche Sprache in February 1987, that the latter should prepare a report on the possibilities for 're-regulating German orthography' (the term 'reform' being avoided as too controversial).

In fact, an agreement had already been reached by the orthographers of the four countries in 1984 on word-breaks for line-end hyphenation and by 1987 they had agreed on 're-regulating' punctuation, which chiefly meant relaxing the rules for the use of the comma. In 1988 they agreed to 're-regulate' the patterns of compound formation, especially links between nouns and verbs. That left two main areas to be dealt with (if we exclude the vexed question of decapitalization): establishing standard sound-symbol correspondences, and advising on the spelling of loan-words from other languages with different writing systems.

The Commission submitted the 250-odd pages of its report to the government on 17 October 1988. The ball was then in the politicians' court to decide whether to accept it, and if so, to provide the necessary official, legal framework for the new rules to be implemented.

Simplified rules for the presentation of text
Objectives. The orthographers' strategic aim in 're-regulating' the rules was to re-establish the old distinction between simple rules for the learner and for private use, and sophisticated rules for publishers. Children and adults who do not write often must be able to master the essential rules needed for written communication. But compositors will need the full panoply of rules covering all complications, and these too will have to be worked out afresh.

Line-end hyphenation. Previously, German has used different rules for splitting German words and loan-words, the one according to syllable-structure, the other according to etymology. In future, writers will be able to use their own judgement as to a sensible division into syllables. So whereas, before, the Greek-derived *Pädagogik* could only be hyphenated as *Päd-ago-gik,* now the alternative *Pä-da-go-gik* would also be permissible (as it used to be in 1902, in fact). Another old rule was that the consonant string <st> could not be split *(Fenster* could only divide as *Fen-ster),* although <sp> and other pairs could perfectly well be separated; but the new rule would allow *Fens-ter too.*

Compounding. The rules for triple consonants at morpheme-boundaries in compound words would be regularized: if the separate morphemes contain 2 + I identical consonants, the simplified rules will require them always to be kept, thus giving *Brennnessel, Stofffetzen, Sauerstoffflasche. Splitting* some verbal compounds would now be optional, allowing both *Erfolg versprechend* and *erfolgversprechend.* In other cases, where some parallel structures were always compounded and others never were, the new rules align them, giving *kennen lernen* and *schwimmen lernen,* whereas the former was hitherto written *kennenlernen* as a single word; similarly, *radfahren* would be allowed to align with *Auto fahren* as *Rad fahren.*

Punctuation. One of the most difficult features of German orthography both for Germans and for foreign learners has been the strict but complex rules for marking clause-boundaries by commas. Hitherto a comma has sometimes been required before the conjunction und ('and') and sometimes not; henceforth the comma would be optional in that position. Similarly, commas would no longer normally be obligatory before certain participial or infinitive phrases.

Re-spelling words
Sound-symbol correspondence. One of the less drastic proposals in this area involves simplifying the rules for the use of <ß> and <ss>, so that <ss> is always written after a short vowel and <ß> only after a long vowel; there would thus be no variation between the forms of individual roots, as occurs at present. Thus while today the plural *Flüsse* ('rivers') contrasts with its singular *Fluß,* the new rules would give *Fluss, Flüsse.* However, after a long vowel <ß> would be retained (though it is not used at all in Switzerland): *Fuß ('foot'), Füße (*but *Fuss, Füsse in* Switzerland). More disturbing for traditionalists is the simplification of the conjunction daß ('that') to the spelling of its homophone, the pronoun *das,* although this merger would overcome one of the greatest sources of misspelling in German (consider the difficulties that writers would face in English if *that* had to be spelt *thatt* whenever it served as a conjunction rather than as a pronoun).

Writing <ss> for <ß> however in a sense only represents a change in letter-form, rather than a changed spelling as such. More striking, visually, are cases involving the omission or addition of a letter. Thus vowel length is at present indicated by a doubled vowel-letter in some words but not in others, and greater consistency can be achieved by using only one in all cases; for example, since *Staat* ('state') rhymes with *Skat* (a card-game) and *Boot* ('boat') is a homophone of *bot* ('offered'), the proposals recommend the cut forms *Stat, Bot.* In some other cases the rather unusual long <i> is extended to the standard <ie>; so present *Biber* ('beaver') is aligned with its rhyme *Fieber* ('fever') as *Bieber* (Cut Spelling in English could produce the opposite result with the equivalent words: the forms *bever: fever* show the longer word aligning with the shorter, not vice versa). Some redundant <h>s are also cut, as when *rauh* ('rough') becomes *rau* to match the rhymes *blau, grau,* and *Fehde* ('feud') is cut to *Fede* to parallel *Feder* ('feather'). In some cases a consonant would be doubled to match the spelling of related words: the anomalous As *('ace'), Tip* ('tip'), *numerieren* ('to number') would become *Ass, Tipp, nummerieren* to match the plural *Asse,* the verb *tippen* and the noun *Nummer.*

Much more radical-seeming, and evidently found much more disturbing by the public and the media, are proposals that actually require different letters to be used to represent certain sounds. At present the same vowel-sounds can be represented by the graphemes <e> and <ä> and by the two digraphs <eu, äu>. Often the forms with <ä> represent <a> with a changed value ('Umlaut') in an inflected form; thus *Mann, Haus* ('man, house') become *Männer, Häuser* ('men, houses') in the plural; and in these cases the <ä> would be kept. But in other cases there is no reason to link <ä, a> and <äu, au>, and the spelling would be changed accordingly; so *räuspern* ('to clear the throat') would be respelt *reuspern.* Similarly, the sound normally spelt <ei> is occasionally found as <ai> (as in *Kaiser),* and it is proposed that this vowel should almost always be written <ei>; but the suggested form *Keiser* has particularly affronted national sentiment. Lastly, a few consonants in German are pronounced unpredictably, as when the <b> in Abt ('abbot') and the <v> in *Frevel* ('misdeed') are devoiced; these words would therefore be spelt *Apt, Frefel.*

Loan-words. In all writing systems irregularities are inclined to arise when foreign words are introduced into the vocabulary in their original spelling, whose system will then often conflict with

that of the borrowing language. German has in recent centuries borrowed many words from French, and the older ones have frequently been respelt according to the German rules of sound-symbol correspondence; so French *liqueur* is normally written *Likör.* Other French loan-words are found in two forms, one with adapted spelling, the other not; thus French *cousine* appears both as *Cousine* and as *Kusine.* Others again are not normally adapted at all, and the proposals then sometimes suggest a cautious move towards further integration. *Chaiselongue* might stay as in French, but *défaitiste* would become *Defätist,* while for *mayonnaise* the French form (duly capitalized) could remain as an alternative to the Germanized *Majonäse.*

Relatively few English words, on the other hand, have seen any attempt at adaptation, in some cases perhaps because the   underlying Germanic sound-symbol correspondence of English has not been perceived as being so inconsistent with German norms, but no doubt also because many English words are of more recent borrowing. The present proposals however do suggest the forms *Träning and Hobbi* for *training, hobby.*

Public reactions
The 4/88 issue of the Institut für deutsche Sprache's quarterly bulletin *Sprachreport* described public reactions to the Commission's proposals. A typical response from the press was to damn the reforms by exaggerating the effects, with sensationalizing headlines like "Wenn der Keiser im Sal den großen Leib isst" designed to shock readers with its four changes from the present spelling "Wenn der Kaiser im Saal den großen Laib ißt'. Several important proposals received little public attention: the simplified rules for the use of the comma, for splitting and joining words, and for spelling foreign words. Nor have the media said much about the reasons for the changes, often merely implying that they are an arbitrary innovation deliberately designed to annoy everyone. Some commentators concentrated on the earlier de-capitalization proposal, although that was not formally part of the Commission's present proposal. By and large the press treated the proposals either as a bad joke or as wilful mischief-making. Public opinion all too often saw them as the work of mad scientists, criminals or communists, whose plans to ruin the language and its cultural heritage had to be stopped at all costs.

However, even more thoughtful newspapers showed little understanding of the issues involved. Objections included: complexity is valuable in itself; English and French spelling are in far greater need of reform than German; the proposals mean lowering standards; and conversion to a reformed orthography would be fraught with practical obstacles. Objections to reform were often self-contradictory: opponents sometimes recommended other changes themselves while rejecting all the Commission's changes in principle; or they tripped up in their correspondence over precisely the difficulties the reforms were designed to remove. Another view was that people who can't write 'correctly' have no need to do so.

But the Institut also received letters in support, especially from people who have direct experience of the problems caused by the present rules, such as teachers; and the news-magazine *Spiegel* stood out for its well-informed treatment of the whole question. Some contributors to the debate actually wanted the proposals to go even farther in the direction of phonographic representation.

The fierce controversy aroused by the proposals has meant that the real issues have been largely obscured. Actual reformed spellings (such as *Keiser* for *Kaiser)* are limited and enhance the regularity of the system. The present distinction between *daß: das* is grammatical, not phonological, and requires children to be taught grammatical subtleties they would otherwise be spared.

The practicalities of implementation need cause little difficulty if a relaxed approach were adopted, perhaps along the following lines: "People who want to continue writing as before may do so; but they will have to tolerate the new forms when reading. Primary schools will launch the new forms, but printers will have a certain number of years to effect the change."

7. Roman Lipi Parishad

Roman Lipi Parishad (RLP), based in Bombay, aims to encourage the adoption of Roman script (lipi) as a common alphabet for the many languages of India. RLP chairman, Madhukar N Gogate (see below right), keeps us informed of progress: we first published a report in the *Simplified Spelling Society Newsletter* of **Spring 1986**, again in **Summer 1986**, and in our ***Journal 1987/3***; ***Journal* 1988/1** included an Indian view of English spelling reform. We here first present extracts from the proceedings of RLP's third conference, held in December 1988, which explain some of the thinking behind the Roman lipi proposed, and follow this with most of the text of an RLP leaflet, which states the proposals in some detail.
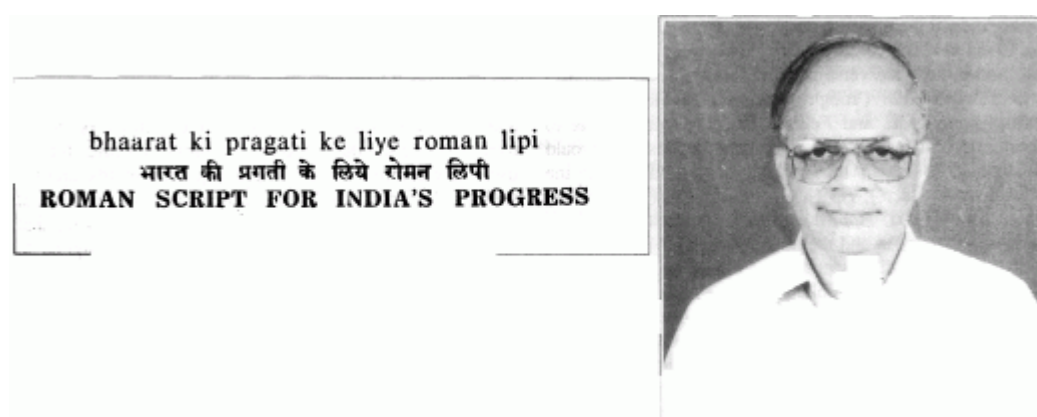
From the Proceedings of the Third Roman Lipi Sammelan
The Chairman's remarks included the following:
... Average man ... does not bother with subtle phonetic differences. We have given outline sound-symbol relations. Let every language modify them, if they wish. After all, we have no enforcing power. We do not recommend use of diacritical marks (bars, dots above/below letters) since they are not available on all machines, and so we have adopted colon symbol, to distinguish a few sounds. We prefer small letters, reserving capital at beginning of a name…

Cinema people should be persuaded, but generally they consult astrologers for 'lucky' number of letters in titles, and accordingly they use spellings *GITA, GITAA, GEETAA* and so on. A script has no religion. Hindu scriptures are propagated abroad in English (Roman script). Marathi Christians in Vasai (north of Bombay) use Devanagari for Bible, and Bangladesh Muslims use Bengali script for their prayers. Please do not confuse Roman script as a part of Christian religion...Please note that the existing scripts are not to be discarded. They are helpful to transmit knowledge. Roman script would be only an alternative. If this is made clear, 90% resistance melts down. Roman letter sequence can be altered bringing lip consonants together, for instance <p, ph, b, bh, m), but we prefer popular sequence <abcd ... xyz> for phone books, dictionaries, etc...

Hindi/Marathi use common Devanagari script for differing words, but we manage. Similarly we have to manage using *cement* in English, *siment* in Hindi and so on...

... Fixing sound-symbol relations is only 1% of the job, 99% is how to popularize Roman lipi, how to

produce writers and readers for that script. Do not spend time further on sound-symbol relations. No scheme would satisfy everyone. Scientists have chosen C for carbon, Ca *for* calcium. Why not *Ca* for carbon and *C* for calcium? One does not argue about it One accepts standard symbols, closing debate.

Why Roman Lipi?

1. India is a multi-language, multi-script vast country. Various scripts are in use for a long time at different levels. They are vehicles of knowledge and literature. They must be used and studied. But Roman lipi (script) should be encouraged as an optional script. Roman lipi consists of 26 letter <abcd ... xyz>. It would benefit us in a number of ways.

2. Main industries in India have accepted English as business language. "Send this share certificate in Bengali script to a Bengali investor. Send this scooter with Tamil label to a Tamil customer" — such problems are not wanted by industries. So all correspondence, invoices, share certificates, dividend warrants, engineering drawings, legal contracts, audited accounts etc are in English. Most office equipments such as typewriters, teleprinters, computers serve English language and print Roman script. Industrial goods such as soaps, toothpastes, radio sets, fans, even village bricks display Roman alphabets. People are familiar with them.

3. Only 3% Indians know English, but since the literacy level is 36%, it means that 8% literates know English. They are spread throughout the country. Their number is fast growing, as English is taught as a second language in all high schools. English newspapers account for 20% total newspaper circulation. Professional bodies of doctors, engineers etc insist on English medium for higher education, to keep abreast with latest knowledge and to exchange views at seminars.

4. Though we use English our hearts are with mothertongues. We can understand and express thoughts much better in our languages than in English. For an average Indian, it is difficult to acquire mastery in English. Our mothertongues should prosper, so that knowledge is transmitted to all strata of society. Newspapers and books are printed in our scripts, but as regards office equipment, people look to economy. It costs money, afterall, to buy and maintain 2 typewriters for 2 scripts or a multi-script expensive electronic machine. General trend is to buy machines only for English, and use a mere pen to write our languages. This lowers prestige of our languages. Today it is electronic machines, tomorrow it may be some other machines. If we accept Roman lipi, our languages will be immediately linked to the world's latest machines.

5. All English printing machines in India are made by our efforts. Foreigners are not imposing Roman script on us. So we should not mind using these machines for development of our languages. Roman script can be adjusted to indicate various vowels and consonants.

6. Each script has separate numeral symbols. But we have accepted global numerals 0123456789 for phone dials, calculators etc. All of us have benefitted thereby. Tamil and Malayalam languages have accepted global numerals for all books and newspapers. Devanagari numeral *one* looks like global numeral *nine*, causing confusion. So Marathi textbooks and science magazines have accepted global numerals.

7. Indian scripts are multitier with symbols attached to each other at different levels. Word *murti* ('idol') is written in Devanagari equivalent to muitr, with <u> below <in> and <r> above <t>.

8. Love for our scripts is understandable. But an overloyalty is dangerous to unity and progress. Demands are being whipped up (and already partly fulfilled) to print phone books and vehicle number plates in local scripts. When this change is completed, the police would be unable to identify vehicles coming from other states. Obviously, crime will thrive. A doctor cannot be called if a phone book is unreadable. *Recognition to Roman lipi will curb this harmful fragmentation.* In cities some signboards are in English and local language. But mostly everywhere they are in local script baffling unfamiliar visitors. It is desirable to replaint them in local language, both in current script and Roman lipi. Today Hindi-Tamil, Marathi-Kannada etc dictionaries are very difficult to make or use. A Marathi person does not know symbols or their dictionary sequence in Kannada script, and vice versa. They do not read each other's literature, though hundreds of words are common. They do not come closer by minds, though they are geographical neighbours. Hindi is a fine language, but it could not be cultivated as our national language. Watching a Hindi film is good entertainment but using Hindi as official language is a serious business. It requires extensive machine support, dictionary support at all levels. Until Hindi takes Roman lipi, its literature writers may be only Varma and Sharma, but no Barua, Banerjee, Reddy, Aiyar or Patel. Roman alphabets, by themselves, are mere diagrams. But their acceptance would signify the birth of machine-consciousness and mutual considerateness, vitally necessary for progress.

Popularization

9**.** During last 2 years, RLP had concentrated on Marathi language, and arranged several talks, articles in newspapers, discussions at annual literary conference, and so on. Bombay Doordarshan took note of our campaign, and invited RLP for a half hour program. It was telecast on Maharashtra-Goa network in April 1988. Several editors, authors, scientists, thinkers, even common people favour Roman lipi. Of course there is opposition too, but that is natural in a democracy. In 19th century, Marathi switched over from Modi script to Devanagari. Bombay-Pune is a highly industrialized belt and that changes people's outlook towards script. People read stock-exchange quotations in a-b-c-d sequence. People see English keyboards everywhere. These factors have helped in advancing Roman lipi among Marathi people. Role of RLP is to stimulate and coordinate efforts. Later on media, universities etc. would popularize Roman lipi. Government would take interest when public opinion is aroused.

Simplified Marathi

10**.** RLP intends to publish a Marathi-English guide book of about 500 words, typical 100 sentences, and basic grammar rules. As a prelude to that book, we here present 5 Marathi sentences, about 25 Marathi words with English translations. *Roman lipi is quite capable of writing according to standard* grammar (Set A). In fact it may improve on present orthography. *Madhe, garam* are written unphonetically in Devanagari, equivalent to *madhye, garama.*

11. Several non-Marathi persons in Bombay desire a practical, quick-to-learn guidebook for Marathi, relaxing some rules of grammar. They do not seek high proficiency. A few mistakes here and there, but they would like to talk to Marathi people and understand their TV programs. They have no time to go to classes. They are repelled by complex grammar. *To build bridges of goodwill and communication between various language speakers, some grammar simplification seems desirable.* It is true that every language has evolved a grammar after years of usage and research. It should be followed for standardization. But for a beginner, an unknown language should be made attractive and easy. If he develops keen interest he will lateron learn standard grammar, current script and so on. On a trial basis, we present Set B with simplified grammar. Therein we have omitted the colon symbol. Postpositions are separated from main words. Hyphen

(dash) is introduced before endings. This is meant for dictionary convenience. Actually there is no pause at the hyphen. Set C is word-to-word translation of Set B. Proper translation is given in Set D.

12. Marathi grammar contains gender, inflections etc. Verb *aahe* can be used with *I, he, she.* On same logic, *jaail, jaain* verb variety is reduced to *jaail*. Adjective *laal* ('red') is invariable. On same line, *hirvaa, hirvi, hirve, hirvyaa* (a variable adjective according to gender, number, case) are reduced to a common form *hirve* ('green'). Nouns *desh* ('country'), *bhaashaa* ('language') have common form in singular and plural. Similarly, *pustak* ('book') need not have a separate plural form *pustake.* Marathi counting 1 to 100 should be simplified like English cyclic counting. There are many other endings, as in *jaa-taanaa* ('while going'), which have not appeared in these examples. There are few special words, such as *gele* ('went') which need not be replaced by an artificial word *jaa-le.* It will be seen that the grammar simplification is marginal and not drastic. With the aid of dictionary, one can quickly learn a simplified language. Of course, idioms cannot be literally translated.

13. We request non-Marathi readers to comment whether they found the translation process easy enough. Please give Set A, Set B, Set C sentences in your language, in Roman lipi, to give end translation as in Set D. Underline words in your language. Give dictionary of' relevant words. Explain areas of grammar simplification, Let us compare notes. Explain special symbols if required.

Sound-symbol Relations

14. Sound-symbol relations for Roman lipi can be best explained to people with their script symbols. Here they are based on English words. Symbols are so chosen that the English printing machines can be immediately used, without any change, for our languages. The script has been made reasonably phonetic. But minor sound variations are ignored. After all, current scripts too are not perfectly phonetic. The script should be compact and easy for writing, reading and printing. A colon symbol is used to distinguish shades of sound.

15. Vowels are as follows: <a> (*u* in *up*), <aa> (*a* in *army*), <ae> (*a* in *apple*), <aw> (*aw* in *law*), <e> (*egg*), <i> (*it*), o (*open*), <u> (*u* in *put*). Note that <ai, au> are read as <a> followed by <i, u>, and not as in English words *main*, *author.* Long vowels are <e:> (*ay* in *may*), <i:> (*ce* in *meet*), <o:> (*oa* in *road*), <u:> (*oo* in *cool*).

16. Consonants are as follows: <b> (*boy*), <ch> (*church*), <d> (*th* in *they*), <g> (*girl*), <h> (*he*), <j> (*jam*), <k> (*king*), <1> (*lamp*), <m> (*man*), <n> (*no*), <p> (*pin*), <r> (*run*), <s> (*sit*), <sh> (*she*), <t> (soft *t*, not in English), <v> (*w* in *woman*), <y> (*yes*), <z> (*zebra*). Note that <ch, sh> contain non-phonetic <h>. But <h> is phonetically added in <bh, chh, dh, gh> etc. English uses sounds of <jh> (*s* in *measure*), <ph> (*ph* in *phone*), <th> (*thin*), <vh> (*v* in *victory*). For hard sounds add colon: <d:> (*d* in *dog*), <1:> (hard *l*), <n:> (hard *n*), <t:> (*t* in *toy*).

17. Minor variations may be made to suit particular languages. Thus Hindi, Gujarati require vowel nasalizer <m:> as in Hindi *kyum:* ('why'). Marathi does not need <e:, i:, o:, u:>. Tamil, Malayalam use peculiar sound <zh>. Urdu uses <f, q> and so on.

18. Names will be respelled as *gaandhi, jawn* in place *of Gandhi, John.* If this is not possible due to reasons of documents, retain old spelling, with first letter capital. Note that Marathi words *van* ('forest'), *sun* ('daughter in law') are read like English words *won, soon.*

SET A (Marathi)

mumbaipaasun dillilaa i vimaanaane jaain. pinjryaamadhe ek hirvaa popat: aahe. kaal khup paaus pad:laa. chauryaahattar nambarchaa peshant:laa dawkt:ar aushaddh detaat. tyaalaa garam kawphi aavad:te.

SET B (Simplified Grammar)

mumbai paasun dilli-laa mi vimaan-ne jaa-il. pinjraa madhe ek hirve popat aahe. kaal khup paaus pad-le. sattar chaar nambar-che peshant-laa dawktar aushadh de-to. te-laa garam kawphi aavad-to.

SET C (Word-to-word translation of Set B)

Bombay-from to-Delhi I by-plane will-go. Cage-within one green parrot is. Yesterday much rain fell. Seventy four number's to-patient doctor medicine gives. To-that hot coffee likes.

SET D (Normal English)

I shall fly from Bombay to Delhi. There is a green parrot in cage. It rained heavily yesterday. Doctor gives medicine to patient number seventy-four. He likes hot coffee.

WORD DICTIONARY

aahe is *aavad* 'like' (verb), 'liking' (noun). *aushadh* 'medicine'. *chaar* 'four'. *dawktar* 'doctor'. *de* 'give'. *dilli* 'Delhi'. *ek* 'one'. *garam* 'hot'. *hirve* 'green'. *jaa* 'go'. *kaal* 'time, yesterday'. *kawphi* 'coffee'. *khup* 'much'. *twdhe* 'within'. *mi* '1'. *mumbai* 'Bombay'. *nambar* 'number'. *paasun* 'from'. *paaus* 'rain'. *pad* 'fall'. *peshant* 'patient'. *pinjraa* 'cage'. *popat* 'parrot'. *sattar* 'seventy'. *te* 'that, he, she'. *vitwan* 'aeroplane'.

ENDINGS DICTIONARY

-che (after noun): possessive sense. *-il* (after verb): future tense. *-laa* (after noun): 'to'. *-le* (after verb): past tense.
ne. (after noun): 'by'. *-to* (after verb): present tense.

BASIC GRAMMAR

a) Verb is placed at end of sentence. b) Marathi uses postpositions and not prepositions. Thus *mumbai paasun* 'from Bombay'. c) Nouns have same form in singular, plural.

Successor to Laurie Fennelly sought as SSS Secretary

At the 1989 Annual General Meeting Laurie Fennelly announced his intention, after many years of service to the Society, of giving up his office as Secretary as soon as a successor was found. The committee therefore wishes to encourage any member who may be interested in taking on some of the duties of the post to contact the Chairman, Chris Jolly.

8. Romanian-English Orthographic Anecdote

George C Biscoff, in his privately printed 1975 *Improved Spelling and the Metric System* (St Catherine Press, 1954) introduces his book with the following anecdote (pp. 9–12), in which we preserve the French-style spelling *Roumania*.

The arguments advanced by (opponents of spelling reform in English) were much the same as those used in my native country (Roumania) against the adoption of phonetic spelling there. It was easy for me to counter this opposition by putting forward the same arguments for a change in spelling as were used during more than ten years of struggle by the pioneers of phonetic spelling in Roumania.

One of my most convincing arguments was the following story of a personal experience. When I started going to school, most Roumanian words were spelt as originally written in Latin, in spite of the great change that their pronunciation had undergone through the centuries.

When I entered a secondary school there were still some doubts among the pupils as to the spelling of many words. These doubts were increased by the different ways in which certain words were spelt in some books and newspapers, just as in England the word *gaol* is sometimes spelt *jail*...

Eventually phonetic spelling was adopted by the Roumanian Academy in 1904, and by the time my son went to school and had learnt the alphabet he was able to read and write correctly and without any hesitation. The time previously taken up in learning to read and to spell was devoted to the study of other subjects.

I pointed out that Roumanian spelling — even before it was made phonetic — was less difficult than English spelling, as the former had only nine vowel-sounds whilst the latter has eighteen. This illustration was a potent argument against those who maintained that a change of spelling was neither possible nor necessary.

Another point that stood me in good stead in advocating a change of the English spelling was an incident connected with the visit of a British Military Mission during the first World War to the Roumanian Army. As is customary, the reception was to include the playing of the British National Anthem, but the Commander of my Division thought that in addition to this a song sung in English would be a very nice gesture to our British friends.

This, however, was not easy to arrange, as although most educated Roumanians spoke French and some German, very few knew English, and as I was the only one in my Division, the task fell to me. 'It's a long way to Tipperary' was very popular in 1917. 1 was, therefore, instructed to teach the men this song, and in order to make the words readable to them, I used the Roumanian alphabet to convey as far as possible the English pronunciation.

This is how the song appeared on the blackboard which I used for the purpose is:

Iţ e long ŭĕĭ tu Tipĕrari,   *Gud baĭ pichedili,*
Iţ e long ŭĕĭ tu goŭ,   *Feĭr ŭel Lestăr Scŭer,*
Iţ e long ŭĕĭ tu litl Mari   *Iţ e long, long ŭĕĭ tu Tipĕrari*
Tu dze sŭitĕst gherl aĭ noŭ, as   *Băt maĭ hart's raĭt dzer*

I had to sing it to them in order to let them hear the melody. After the first rehearsal, the Captain who was conducting said to me: "Tell me, Lieutenant, why do some people say that English spelling is so complicated? I see that you pronounce each word on the blackboard as it is written".

I replied: "No, Captain, this is not English spelling. I used the Roumanian alphabet to enable each word to be read, as far as possible, as pronounced in English. In fact, the usual English spelling is like this: <It's a long way ... >" Here I was interrupted by the Captain: "Come, come, Lieutenant, you are surely not going to tell me that they write /vai/ and pronounce it <ŭĕĭ>." I replied: "I'm sorry, Captain, but I can assure you that that is how they write the word<ŭĕĭ>. And that is far from being the most difficult word to read; look at these". And I wrote on the blackboard, giving him the separate pronunciation of each word: *mature, nature, plough*.

Before I was able to give him further examples, the Captain showed signs of impatience, and changing the tone of his voice, which had up to then been quite friendly, said "I would remind you, Lieutenant, that you are speaking to your senior officer and that you are not permitted to make fun of his lack of knowledge". "But Captain, I..." He interrupted and dismissed me, and of course I had to obey.

Fortunately for me, however, we had with us a French Captain who was teaching us how to use the French guns, and who knew a little English. I appealed to him and together we went to see the Captain. I asked the French Captain to read the words still remaining on the blackboard and when he read them (as pronounced in English) in the same way as I had done, the Roumanian Captain was absolutely stupefied; he was unable to say a word, but simply made the sign of the Cross — an action which denotes something which is most unusual and extraordinary.

Later he became friendly again and said to me: "I could learn three languages in the time it takes to learn to read and write English".

[Journal of the Simplified Spelling Society, 11, 1989/2 p.21 in the printed version]

9. Visual disruption from Letter-Omission.

A factor in assessing the likely acceptability of specific reformed spellings is the degree of visual shock they provoke. Readers are invited to rank from 0-5 the relative visual shock they experience from the following forms:

foreign	*present*	*committee*
oreign	*resent*	*ommittee*
freign	*pesent*	*cmmittee*
foeign	*prsent*	*comittee*
forign	*preent*	*commttee*
foregn	*presnt*	*commitee*
forein	*preset*	*committe*
foreig	*presen*	

[David Stark: see **Journals**, **Newsletters**]

10. The Principal of Minimal Interference — 2
David Stark

This article is the second in a series concerned with the implementation of spelling reform. The first appeared in ***Journal* 1989/1, J10**.

Spelling Reform will be of no direct benefit to those who are at present fully literate. On the contrary, they will tend to see it as a threat. If society converts to a new standard which they do not have a proper command of, they could lose status and power.

A common tendency of reform proposals therefore has been for them to look as near as possible to traditional orthography by retaining existing alphabetic relationships, where they are acceptably consistent and simple, and the existing alphabetic symbols (graphemes). This reduces the risks of rejection by existing literates and makes it easier for them at least to read text in the new orthography. It would also facilitate reading of traditional orthography by those who have been educated in the new one.

There needs to be a balance between the present, complicated and inconsistent orthography and a completely 'rational' one. The ultimate latter solution could be said to be the one inspired by George Bernard Shaw, who left money in his will to fund a competition. The winner invented a completely new alphabet with spelling rules of mathematical consistency. However, it has never been considered as a practical solution.

An existing literate converting to a new orthography will learn it in a different way to a child. The existing literate will already possess all the comprehension skills and will be impatient of any obstacle which impedes quick understanding of the text. In contrast to the child who tends to rely heavily on alphabetic relationships for reading and spelling, the adult will not wish to regress to phoneme-grapheme units.

To do this would reduce reading to around 60 words per minute. This would be very boring to a brain which has developed to deal with comprehension of speech and hence script at about 200 words per minute. The experienced reader processes whole words and bits of words at a time to reach this speed. Writing is slower, largely for reasons of limited manual dexterity, but still relies heavily on non-alphabetic skills.

In reading, therefore, the existing literate would require to relearn a multitude of syllabic and word signs as well as alphabetic relationships. Writing is a different and more difficult problem. The existing literate, as well as having stored in his brain a number of syllabic and word signs, will have memorised a literary pronunciation for most words.

The need to make a good first impression on existing literates is also a reason to seek minimal interference with traditional orthography. It may be an emotional response for someone to dismiss a new spelling as 'peculiar' or 'ridiculous' merely by looking at it. However, it will be easier to make them look a second time, and convince them that the new spellings are merely a more rational advance on the old ones, if the link with traditional orthography is clear.

There are a number of guidelines to be followed when aiming at minimal interference.

1. Use only the existing letters of the alphabet
There are only 26 letters to represent about 43 phonemes. In theory it might be sensible to invent the extra letters to suit. In practice one has to make use of digraphs at present in traditional orthography.

2. Maximise TO sound-symbol correspondences

Ideally one should standardise the most common phoneme-grapheme relationships in traditional orthography. For the consonants this is possible, but when the most common way to spell /z/ is <s>, one is more inclined to adopt the less common <z>. When one confronts the vowel sound in *see* one finds that the graphemes <ee> and <ea> are about as common as each other. In choosing one of them, the reformer will be changing at least 50% of the spellings of the vowel.

One must resist using a redundant grapheme like <x> (which could be substituted by <ks>) for a phoneme with which it has not been associated in traditional orthography, say the <ch> sound in *loch.* It is also unfortunate when a set of proposals like New Spelling has to use <ae> for the vowel in *take* when this grapheme is not used commonly for this purpose in traditional orthography.

3. Do not make new phoneme contrasts

Many reform proposals split the two <th> phonemes in *this:thin.* In so doing they require to invent a new grapheme (usually <dh>) and force existing literates to make th' phonemic distinction for the first time. It is unnecessary to introduce this complication, as traditional orthography has proved from experience not to require the phoneme contrast for any morphemic purpose.

The RP distinction in the vowels of the words *lass-pass* is also one which traditional orthography has survived happily without. The introduction of opposing graphemes <a, aa> is unnecessary.

4. Minimise the chances of semantic confusion

Some words will translate into the new orthography in forms which suggest other words in traditional orthography. For example the word *talk* will change to *tauk* perhaps, while *talc* (short for *talcum powder)* might change to *talk.* Someone who learned TO first would hesitate at the new word *talk* in its context before making sense of it.

However, the most obvious area for semantic confusion for the new user of the revised orthography is the translation of homophones. Previously differentiated words like *whole: hole* will now normally be spelled the same.

5. Retain existing spellings in preference to phonetically precise pronunciations

Even if one accent is used to base the revised spelling system, the poor interpretation by ordinary people of phonetic distinctions allows some latitude in the pronunciations suggested by the spellings. For example, if RP is used as the base dialect one might accept *more* as opposed to *mor* to retain the existing spelling.

6. Retain TO spelling rules as far as possible

The retention of slightly more complicated alphabetic spelling rules will not make the acquisition of literacy significantly more difficult. For example, the TO rule for the vowel sound in *coin* is that it should be represented by <oi> before a consonant and <oy> before a vowel and terminally. The TO user will be familiar with this. (There are a few exceptions like *gargoyle, oyster.)*

7. Retain as many non-alphabetic TO rules as possible

Traditional orthography contains a mixture of alphabetic and non-alphabetic patterns. For example, the <-tion> ending occurs in hundreds of words, and with its unclear vowel sound might be better not translated into alphabetic elements (<-shun, -shon, -shin>?). It would certainly suit existing literates if it were not.

To many reformers, the criteria set out above would, if fully implemented, produce a solution which diverged too much from the straightforward alphabetic strategy. That is, that there should be one grapheme to match each defined phoneme, with the minimum number of spelling rules to be learned.

Nevertheless, these reformers accept that their more radical proposals will have great difficulty being accepted by existing literates. Consequently, a variation on minimal interference has been

developed over the last 20 years or so, where one advances towards the ultimate reform package in a series of minimal interference reforms.

The first of these step-by-step reforms was published in 1969 by Harry Lindgren in Australia. In 1984, the Simplified Spelling Society in Britain formally accepted Lindgren's first stage or SR1 along with 4 other elements as its Stage 1. In 1985, Chris Upward proposed Cut Spelling as a first stage reform.

While the criteria for normal minimal interference will apply at least in the early stages of step-by-step reform, stage reform has a number of additional factors to be considered. These were first set down in the Simplified Spelling Society's Newsletter of October 1984, after I had explored the problems involved in stage reform by designing a theoretical stage one proposal called NUFASE (New User Friendly Alternative Spellings for English).

1. Each stage must stand on its own
It must be recognised that any stage might be the last one to be adopted. As the orthography tends towards regularity, society might decide that the benefits to be gained by progressing further with the simplifying process are not worth the bother of reform.

2. Each stage must be significant
Each stage must be significant enough to be worthwhile bothering about in the first place. It will cause people bother to adopt any reform, and its benefits must be obvious, especially in the initial stages. It must be a marketable product.

3. The route to the ultimate proposal must be planned
Since any stage reform is part of a package, the following stages must be planned, at least roughly, before the first stage is launched. A present stage must not determine or restrict future ones unless planned to do so.

Stage reform is not meant to be a substitute for more comprehensive reform but a means of reaching it. It may be possible to form non-controversial initial stages, but phoneme-grapheme correspondence choices, dialect definition, phoneme definition, indistinct vowels, non-phonic features to be retained or lost, and all the other difficult reform decisions require to be made as early as possible in the process.

4. The starting point for stage reform must be defined
Stage reform will, in effect, be a process of rounding up the large number of rules and patterns in traditional orthography into smaller and simpler groups of rules based on alphabetic principles. In the early stages there will be more traditional orthography rules and patterns, and these must be identified and accepted — for example, a final <e> changing the sound of a preceding vowel as in *cap/cape.* It must also be realised that traditional orthography is a mixture of graphic elements — alphabetic, syllabic and morphographic (units of meaning, i.e. whole words learned at a time). In general, the latter two would reduce and the alphabetic rules become fewer and simpler as the process progressed.

5. There should be as few stages as possible
Too many stages in the process of arriving at the final reform creates the following problems:
i   Small scale reform stages offer little or no benefit in themselves.
ii   It would be a cumbersome task to control and manage the presentation and introduction of several stages.
iii   It would take time to introduce each stage and have it accepted. By the time a long series of reforms had been presented, they would probably be out of date owing to changes in pronunciation.
iv   Several stage reforms might become isolated from each other, and the overall structure and plan of reform might be lost.
v   There is the possibility that, if any stages are accepted, they will only be the first ones.

vi   The Norwegian state reforms of 1907, 1917 and 1938 were on the whole each only accepted by the younger sections of society, resulting in one being able to work out roughly how old a person was by how out of date their spellings were. A series of reforms is likely to lead to people of different age groups spelling the same words in different ways.

6. Words should change as seldom as possible

Stage reform will involve some words having their spelling changed more than once before a final spelling is fixed, assuming each stage is the result of consistently applied rules. For example, the word *phase* may go through the *stages phase-fase-faze-faez.* The scope for confusion in this process is enormous, where the public become unclear as to which is the current spelling.

7. Visually cued reforms are easier to identify

In the first stages of reform, visually cued reforms are preferable, as these will be more easily spotted amongst the proliferation of phonographic relationships in traditional orthography. The likes of <ph-f> will be easier to notice in text and to remember than a phonetically cued reform like Lindgren's SR1 (/ɛ/= <e>). Here, each affected word would require to be learned individually.

Lindgren proposed 50 or more annual reforms, contending that each would hardly be noticed. This would not be an advantage, for as well as the large number of orthography changes proving a colossal administrative problem, each stage would be so insignificant as to prove difficult to sell on its own. SR1 has not yet been sold after 20 years. If it took 20 years to have each stage adopted, the reform process would take 1,000 years.

At its AGM in April 1984, the Simplified Spelling Society formally adopted what was generally considered as a candidate for a first stage reform. This consisted of the following elements:

SR: 1   Spell short /e/ with an <e>.
SR: ough   Respell all <ough> words.
SR: augh   Respell all <augh> words.
SR: d.u.e.   Drop useless <e> after short vowel syllables.
SR: ph   Respell <ph> words with a single <f>.

This package arose from a desire to agree at least a particular reform within the Society, but despite its limited size, it could have been justified as a first stage reform, or at least part of one, if the following stages and final reform had been defined. A working party set up at the time to devise a revised New Spelling never completed its task.

The Simplified Spelling Society **Newsletter of July 1984** is significant, since as well as reporting on the results of the AGM that year, it contained some of John Beech's conclusions on minimal interference, as well as Valerie Yule's, Chris Upward's and my own ideas on cutting out superfluous letters from TO. (My own proposals in NUFASE also sought to remove some of the worst horrors in the present spelling in an attempt to win the sympathy of existing literates who had trouble with spelling).

Valerie Yule reckoned that a spelling system with the removal of the 5% surplus letters she defined would be faster to read than traditional orthography. Chris Upward took this further, aiming at about a 15% cut (although this has since been reduced to about 10%). **Cut Spelling** has been the most widely publicised reform since, but he has still to convince many people that the large degree of cutting is a good selling point, that it can be part of a viable long term reform package, and that its rules and limits can be mastered by existing literates.

However, I believe that a main failing of stage reforms to date has been an inability to take on board traditional orthography rules and patterns at the start. They are so anxious to find the end result that they ignore the start, where we all stand at present. Without defining a start as well as a finish, it is impossible to show how far along the road one has travelled. My next article will address this.

11. Strategies of an adult dyslexic

We are grateful to Jean Hutchins, Editor of the South East Surrey Dyslexia Association (S.E.S.D.A.) Newsletter, for permission to reprint this account. Misspellings are from the original.

I am a 40 years old married man with two children, a boy aged 11 years and a girl who is 9 years old. I was the youngest of two brothers, and was educated intirely within the state system.

On leaving school at 17 years of age, with one O-level and six of the new GCSEs (it was the first year of this exam) three with grade 2 and the rest with grade 3, high joined the Metropolitan Police Cadet Corps. This was an achivement for me as the Cadet Corps set a 5 O-Level standard (English Lang. and Maths included). Having squeezed through an entrance exam I discovered my fellow cadets were all my peers with reguard to academic qualifications. All had numerous O-Levels and many had A-levels. This apart, I could hold my own in what was a Higher Education College for aspiring Police Officers.

On joining the Police Force, I completed my training, coming top in my class. I had no problems apart from pressure in 'written' situations. This I overcame by writing very badly! I had never been a very good speller, having had to cope with exams by not only learning the text, but key word spellings as well. Police examinations were easier to adapt to this system, but by taking them I would only be placing myself in the type of job situation that I was trying to avoid. I did not take any of the promotion exams for this reason, and joined the Traffic Branch. This branch does more report writing, but in 'plain English' with only a limited number of key words.

By making friends with the typists, I could dictate any complicated report, thus saving hours of time (and a forrest of screwed up paper!). Also, as one has more service, one's suggestions are listened to and acted on e.g. "I think it would be better to do this, not that." With this experience, I am able to manipulate events to insure that I'am not placed in a situation which will manifest my poor English.

When my son started going to school, it was soon aparent that he had trouble with the written word. He was tested and found to be dylexic. I started atending S.E.S.D.A. meetings. On listening to the speakers talking about 'Children' I knew that a large amount of what they said applied to me.

12. Alternative spellings and misspellings from age 6 to 11: can readers help?

As suggested in the Editorial (p2), the time may now be ripe to assemble further data on English spelling patterns. Such a task offers readers an opportunity to become involved in the necessary research; but arrangements need to be coordinated to ensure that procedures are standardized and work is not duplicated. Please contact the editor if you would like to contribute.

Alternative spellings
A systematic search through recent editions of medium-sized dictionaries is needed to compile a full inventory of alternative spellings currently listed. The potential importance of such data can be judged from §6 of the submission to the National Curriculum Council (see p34). Offers are sought from readers willing to scan a section (e.g. *A-E,* or *F-K* etc.) of one of the following dictionaries (or similar): American Heritage, Chambers, Collins, Gage, Longman, Macquarie, Oxford (Concise), Random House, Readers Digest, Websters (e.g. Collegiate).

Young learners' misspellings
Useful data has already been analysed (*Journal 1987/3*, Item 12) on the misspellings of university students and 15-year olds; but apart from the century-old evidence of Daisy Ashford's *Young Visiters,* we have not carried out such an analysis of the misspellings of 6–11 year olds. Readers having access to the writing of children of this age who would like to collect their misspellings for analysis are asked to inform the editor of the age of the children concerned and the kind of material from which the errors might be collected.

13. Morphemes and Cut Spelling
Edgar Gregersen & Christopher Upward discussion

Edgar Gregersen is Professor of Anthropology at Queens College of the City University of New York. His previous contributions were published in SSS *Newsletter,* **Spring 1986** (Item 4), and in **_JSSS_ 1987/3** (Item 11) and **1988/3** (Item 4).

1. *Gregersen*
As explained in my article in the 1988/3 *Journal,* an unsatisfactory feature of Cut Spelling appears to be its treatment of morfemes. CS claims to be very much concerned about the integrity of the morfeme, but sometimes it is and sometimes it isn't. For example, if one really were troubled by breaking up morfemes, one couldn't possibly write *symbl* for *symbol,* since this breaks up the relationship with *symbolic.*

1. *Upward*
Wat exacly is a morfeme then, if th <-bol> in *symbol* is to be classd as one? Etymolojicly we can distinguish a prefix *sym-* (also found in *symbiosis, symptom* etc — actually a modification of *syn-,* as in *syntax,* with further variants in *syllable, system)* and a root *-bol* (also found in *embolism, bolide* etc and cognate with *ball-* in *ballistics).* But do these elemnts in *symbol* hav any living significnce for users of th english languaj? Dos anyone but an etymologist make th conections?

If we compare th morfemes in *symbol* with those in, say *fireman,* th difrnce is clear; CS wad not cut *fireman* to *firemn,* because evryone senses th meaning man in th secnd sylabl (contrast CS *womn, jermn* wher th final sylabls in th TO forms *woman, German* do not hav th meaning *man).* In *symbol* th user has no mor sense of a seprat meaning in <-bol> than in *gambol,* nor has th difrnt <-bal> ending in *cymbal* any distinguishing valu. Howevr th form *symbl* has th advantaj of distinguishing th stress patrn in *symbl* from that in, say, *extol; symbl* must stress th first sylabl, wile *extol* givs mor weit to th secnd sylabl. (This clarification of stress patrns is a jenrl advantaj of CS over TO wich has not been widely apreciated yet.) Morfemic structur in itself dosnt sujest *symbl, cymbl, gambl* ar inadequat spelings.

As for th link with *symbolic,* we hav no quams about riting *able* rathr than *abil,* despite th link with *ability, so* we need be no mor concernd about th loss of <o> in *symbl.* Th pronunciation and speling of many words ignor th morfemic structur: we dont wory that *window, husband* no longr sho th structur *wind* + *eye* and *house* + *bond.* Edward Rondthaler proposes th useful principl that th speling of words shud be determnd by ther own sound, and not by th sound of a quite difrnt word — and that is an importnt reasn for riting *symbl.*

2. *Gregersen*
I see no reason for calling the <-bol> of *symbol* a morfeme to begin with: it has no independent meaning. The morfeme is (symbol) in its entirety — just as (caterpillar) is a single morfeme, not to be broken up into, say, {cat} + {er} +
{pillar}.

If one wants to build the 'integrity of the morfeme' into a spelling system, it simply means that as much as possible a single morfeme is going to have a single representation — no matter how it

may actually be pronounced in a given context.

A famous example comes from Russian, where the integrity of the morfeme is a fundamental principle of the present writing system. There is a morfeme we can write as *gorod,* meaning 'city', as in *Novgorod,* 'new city'. This morfeme has several realizations *górət', -'gərət, garód* — and so on, depending on stress and on whether the form comes at the end of a word or not. If the <o>s aren't stressed, they may be pronounced like <a>s; if the <d> is final, it is pronounced /t/. The only form from which all these variants (or allomorfs) can be derived is *gorod,* which is a purely hypothetical form in modern Russian and pretty close to Chomsky's underlying form. To maintain this single shape is to preserve the integrity of th morfeme {gorod}. To show variants is to go against the integrity.

2. Upward
Th behavir of russian dosnt hav to be a modl for othr languajs. Indeed, as Frank Knowles demnstrated *(JSSS* 1988/2, p15, §5.1), th closely related slavonic languaj byelorussian difrs from russian in precisely this respect: it dos not preserv th integrity of th morfeme; and it is claimd that litracy in byelorussian actuly benefits as a result.

3. Gregersen
Possibly in the learning stages, but once the system is mastered, few problems seem to result. For example in English, the possessive morfeme is always spelt <-'s> (or almost always) despite the fact that there are 3 different pronunciation: /-s, -z. -ez/, as in *cat's, dog's, Liz's.* To my knowledge, this is one part of English spelling that nearly never poses problems.

3.Upward
I wud hav to disagree with th idea that hardly any problms arise with th posessiv morfeme in english, at least insofar as th apostrofe is countd.as an esential part of it (i.e. of th morfografeme). Lernrs and adults alike experience enormus dificlty in placing this apostrofe corectly. Not merely is ther frequent confusion with th plural <s'> variant (*Dogs' Home*) and th special placing of th apostrofe befor th <s> in such iregulr plurals as *people's, children's,* but th apostrofe is also comnly misused to mark plurals and th verb inflexion: **apple's, *make's.* Even professionl riters face uncertnty with this morfeme wen th noun ends in <s> (*Jones', Jones's?*). Furthrmor, at least som foren lernrs (Adam Brown cites th exampl of malays) ar confused as to th pronunciation of th invariant <s>, since in ther nativ script <s> always represents voiceless /s/, wheras in english th <s> morfeme is usuly, but by no means always, voiced.

These dificltis al seem to point to one conclusion: morfografic regularity may wel not be a desirebl featur for an ideal riting systm if it conflicts unpredictbly with fonografic regularity. U wil notice that I am here implicitly almost arguing against my own case, that morfemic regularity is one of th atractions of CS! In principl it shud be subordnat to fonografic predictbility.

4. Gregersen
Please note that I am myself not an advocate of the integrity of the morfeme in all cases either. For instance, no one, as far as I know, has ever proposed cleaning up an egregious exception to morfemic writing in English, the indefinite article, <a> or <an>. I personally would not advocate such a clean-up job because it has little bearing on the rest of the system. But I think it would be desirable to deal with productive, widespread alternations in as unified a way as possible — for example, the possessive <-'s>.

Take an example from German: *bunt: Bund* are both pronounced the same in isolation. In inflected forms, the <t> and <d> are actually differential: *bunte: Bunde* (of keys), *Bünde* (bonds). To maintain such distinctions is not particularly onerous because the native speaker has it within his competence to link up one form to other forms. I can't imagine that German spelling should be reformed to show /t/ finally always.

4. Upward
But this featur too dos cause lernrs a litl dificlty in jermn. In purely theoreticl terms, this rases th question of wethr a riting systm shud idealy aim primarily to reflect abstract principls like morfofonemic regularity, or wethr th function requirements of users, especialy lernrs, shud take precednce.

5. Gregersen
Perhaps. But again, once people learn the system, morfofonemic regularity is not a serious cause of spelling errors.
Let us consider one example where TO resembles Russian and German. Consider the following words, all pronounced identically by most Americns: *idle, idol, idyll* (/ájdl/). (The English may pronounce the last as /ídil/, but let's ignore that because it has no bearing on the principles involved.) In a CS-based spelling system these would ultimately all become *ydl*. But note that in TO they are each a distinct morfeme, which shows up differently with different stress patterns: *idólatry (/ajdól'trij/), id'yllic* (/ajdílik/)-*idle* apparently has no such variants.

5. Upward
As u say, nativ speakrs may wel hav it within ther competnce to cope with such patrns — but foren lernrs find it less esy. We hav alredy mentiond th case of malays ho from ther own languaj ar acustmd to th letr <s> always representing a voiceless siblnt, and ho then hav to lern to interpret th far mor complex patrns of alternativ voiced and voiceless pronunciations of final <s> in english. Morfofonemic regularity is a direct obstacl to mastry of th languaj in ther case. Speling reformrs tend to asume that th ideal orthografy for english shud stil giv th <s> inflexion invariant speling, eithr always with <s> or always with <z> — but if we ar to cater for th needs of foren lernrs, it seems we shud seriusly considr riting *kats* but *dogz* (and for that matr *ript* but *ribd* too — an extension of th distinction TO alredy makes between for instnce *wept: webbed). For* lernrs at least ther ar therfor reons to dout wethr such integrity of th morfeme is useful.

6. Gregersen
Two points. First, I don't think your characterization of spelling reform is historically accurate. Nue Speling has always shown an <s: z> distinction in the plural — and in the possessive, and in the third person singular present ending of verbs — and most other reformers to my knowledge do the same. Henry Sweet in the 19th century certainly did. Harry Lindgren in the 20th certainly does. As I pointed out in my earlier discussion of the possessive, I would not, however. I have proposed in a previous issue of this *Journal* that <-z> be the invariant indicator of all three morfemes — but with different 'boundary' markers: <'z> for the possessive, but <.z> for the other two.

Secondly, I am amazed that you bring in the problems of foreigners learning English. When I criticized the use of <th> in late versions of Nue Speling for both the voiced and voiceless pronunciations/ð, θ, /, Valerie Yule countered that maintaining the older Nue Speling digraph <dh> for the voiced pronunciation made sense only for foreigners. And Cut Spelling would use <th> for both as well. I don't think you can remain on both sides of the fence.

6.Upward

Cut Spelling has no choice on this point, and dosnt in fact imply that eithr alternativ invariant <s, th> or difrential <s: z, th: dh>, is in principl th ryt aproach for an ideal orthografy. With 3 minor exeptions, CS as curently used adheres fairly strictly to th fonografotactic corespondnces alredy found in TO; therfor it canot start using <z> for inflexions, let alone a grafeme like <dh> wich dos not ocur in TO at al. Like any first staje reform, CS must be subject to severe limitations as to how inovativ its speling patrns can aford to be, and it draws th line at using <z> as an inflexion and <dh> in any circmstnces — watevr ther theoreficl merits.

7. Gregersen

Yet another issue has to be discussed. In the United States at present, the leading school of linguistics is that associated with Chomsky. Whether one is a member of that school or not, one must take account of the fact that he has made a tremendous dent in the way people think about language in the USA. CS doesn't take this reality into account, and may be confronted by objections from educators and the intelligentsia that its proposals are unscientific (read: anti-Chomskyan). I do not take this view myself, and I think that altho it would be a good thing to accommodate principles like 'the integrity of the morfeme' if it doesn't prove to be too difficult or awkward, ultimately something approaching a fonemic writing (with suitable modifications to take into account widespread dialect variations) must be the basis for an orthography.

7. Upward

Yr advice about how to confront th linguistic establishmnt in th USA is, I am sure, very wise. Nevrthless, I cant resist th oportunity here to giv my vews on Chomksys conception of english speling. I am very scepticl about it, even down to his implication that languaj as we speak, hear, rite and read it is merely a surface manifestation of undrlying, deep structurs. As I se it, any structurs such as morfemes wich we identify in languaj ar merely notions we impose on languaj in ordr to describe and explain th patrns we observ; but, as John Downing noted, ther is no evidnce that they hav any sycolojicl reality. In particulr, I canot se that Chomskys aproach justifys keeping th <o> in *symbol,* wen th post-accentul shwa it represents causes lernrs and even mature users such apaling dificltis.

It has always seemd to me (and Valerie Yule provided plenty of evidnce) that empiricly Chomsky is just plain rong to sujest that th integrity of th morfeme is an esential featur of ritn english. He quoted a few exampls to demnstrate his point, such as th fact that th speling of *courage* is preservd in *courageous,* despite th radicl shift in pronunciation. But ther ar numerus contrry exampls, th most fundamentl of al in english being th vowl altrnation in jermanic roots, as between *sang, sing, song, sung* or *deep, depth.* In words of romance derivation too ther ar many variations, as between *pronounce: pronunciation* and *maintain: maintenance.* Ultimatly, surely, one has to conclude that TO is such a hoch-poch of contradictry patrns that almost any jenrlization one may try to make about it can be disproved with a host of countr-exampls.

8. Gregersen

It seems to me that CS could at least consider the ending *furious, impetuous, generous, callous, monstrous, pompous, viscous,* etc for which the corresponding abstract nouns have <-osity>: *curiosity,* etc. If CS writes *curius, it* breaks up the relationship with the noun *curiosity. To* preserve the integrity of these morfemes, CS would have to write *curios,* etc.

8. Upward

Apart from th question of how *curios* wud then be distinguishd from th plural of *curio,* TO itself breks th integrity of th morfeme in these cases by droping th <u> in th noun; if th concept of 'morfeme integrity' had any real meaning here, TO wud rite *curiousity.* (Also compare french *curieux: curiosité — not* much morfemic integrity there.) And th word vacuum, by this argumnt, actuly justifys th CS speling *vacuus;* similry th pair *picture: pictorial* provides a TO modl for th <u: o> altrnation in *curius: curiosity.* Th reasn that CS drops th <o> and not th <u> in *curius, jenerus,* etc, howevr is that <-us> is a comn ending in english *(curius* then alyns with *radius, terminus,* etc), so that th CS forms alyn with wider regularitis; but th <-os> ending is rare *(rhinoceros* is unusul), and to giv mor words th rarer ending wud make th systrn less predictbl.

9. Gregersen

One point at a time. I don't concede that *curios* should be the plural of *curio* to begin with, since the ending <-os> is fonologically misleading and could be confused with that of *asbestos* no matter how *curious* were written.

9. Upward

If I may just intrject here: we seem to be talking about two difrnt kinds of speling reform — long-term and short-term. Th objection to *curios* as a plural form is a matr of long-term planning for an ideal english orthografy. But th CS objection to th letr <o> in *curious* is a practicl observation as to th problms that peple hav today in distinguishing such endings as in *curious: radius.* Th <o> in *curious* cud be dropd tomoro without any dificlty; but th <s> in *curios* cud only be chanjed to <z> as part of a fundmentl reorgnization of th riting systm. CS dos not atemt a fundamentl reorgnization; it merely atemts to streamline som of th uglir and mor trublsm excresnces of TO.

10. Gregersen

But secondly, TO is not consistently morfofonemic. As a matr of record, it is probably the case that the Chomskyans who were interested in spelling reform would try to make the system more consistent in this regard (rather than in showing actual pronunciation). They would probably suggest spelling the suffix <-able> as <-abil>, which you discussed earlier in a totally different way. The point I'm trying to make is that pointing out that TO — or French orthography for that matter — breaks the integrity of the rnorfeme is not a case for or against maintaining such integrity.

The arguments you give for writing <-us> rather than <-ous> are more cogent when you play up counter-examples from English itself. It is an empirical issue whether the counter-patterns are more common than the one I proposed.

Another problem with CS comes to mind: I see no rule in CS that prevents cutting both *sweety* and *sweaty* to *swety.* The spelling *swety* would seem to parallel *weevil>wevil,* and *easily>esily.*

10. Upward

Th CS respect for morfemes (and especialy morfofonemes) is particulrly aparent here. Wile th <a> in *sweat* and al its derivativs is fonograficly redundnt *(swet* shud mach th speling of *set),* th secnd <e> in *sweet* is not fonograficly redundnt *(sweet* ryms with *feet),* and therfor it is kept in al th derivafivs too.

Th same principl aplys to *easily,* wich is based on th root morfeme TO *ease.* Th <a> is fonograficly redundnt, as we se from th final sylabl in *Chinese;* but if we can cut *ease to ese,* th integrity of th morfeme demands that *easy, easily, disease* etc shud be cut likewise to *esy, esily, disese.* Ther ar

even intriging posbilitis here that th confusion between TO forms like *tease, lease, cheese, geese* cud be somwat reduced if CS adoptd forms like *tese, lease, chese, geese,* wher readrs and riters wud becom acustmd to th patrn of a voiced <s> preceded by a singl vowl-letr, but a voiceless <s> preceded by a vowl-digraf. (One wud howevr need to ask wethr such a distinction is worth making, or wethr an across-th-bord cut to *tese, chese, lese, gese* wudnt be betr.)

With TO *weevil*, alternativ CS forms ar posbl, and a decision is needd as to wich is prefrbl; CS cud eithr say th <i> is redundnt, and so rite *weevl* in line with *anvl*; or else th <ee> cud be simplifyd, producing th paralel spelings *wevil, evil.*

11. Gregersen
Well, even accepting that CS would not merge the spelling *of sweety, sweaty,* the same problem can arise in other cases. For instance, in CS as currently practised, it does seem that *who: hoe* are both spelt *ho*. Even if Klasik Nue Speling were not adopted, I can't imagine any final stage of decent rational spelling that did not distinguish them. (I myself prefer hu *for who.)*

11. Upward
This pair is indeed problmatic. We hav to ask wat alternativ ther myt be in CS to riting *ho* for both words: one myt refrain from cuting eithr one or both of them; or one myt go furthr, and respel *who* as *hu,* as u sujest. But th consequences wich that then implys for th re-speling of *whom, whose* ar not clear: presumably *hum, hus* ar not feasbl, tho *huse* myt be alryt. Howevr such drasticly chanjed forms incur problms of compatbility, especialy bakwrds compatility: if u had been taut *hu,* cud u read *who?* (Ther is of corse also a problm of bakwrds compatbility with *ho* for who, but it is less serius.)

12. Gregersen
I must say, I don't for a moment admit your criterion of "backwards compatibility" to begin with.

12. Upward
Do u therfor not think that at least for a transitionl period peple wud need to be able to read both old and new spelings? Surely that must be an indispensbl practicl requiremnt for th implementation of any speling reform. Othrwise evryone in th world ho used ritn english wud hav to be reeducated for th day of reform — hardly a practicbl proposition.

13. Gregersen
But apart from that, there is a further issue beyond the danger of collapsing pairs of differently pronounced words into the same form. There is also a danger that good spellings would be abandoned, only to be restored later. If the final spelling of *weevil* were to be *weevil,* as in Klasik Nue Speling, then wevil would be an unfortunate intermediate stage. If CS also contemplates cutting *needle* to *nedle,* that form too has profound disadvantages, since I presume *needl* (or somthing like it) is what the final stage is most likely to be.

13. Upward
These ar valid points. It is indeed posbl that th long <e> vowl (/i:/) wud in som ideal orthografy one day be spelt <ee> (tho many reformrs beleve that basicly th letr <i>, not <e>, shud be used to represent that sound, as that is its intrnationl valu). If <ee> wer envisajd, it wud admitdly be stratejicly absurd for a Staje I reform, such as CS, to move away from, rathr than closer towards, th final speling. So perhaps *weevl, needl* wud be prefrbl to *wevil, nedle.*

14. Gregersen

I still feel that these questions show that it is not clear what direction CS is going in. Where does it lead on to next?

14. Upward

Wile not denying that ther is uncertnty of this kind with a few speling patrns in CS, I dont think ther is any risk that CS wud preemt furthr reforms of any particulr kind on a larj scale. Aftr al, considr th basic rationale of CS: it aims to remove redundnt letrs, and if th letrs it removes ar truly redundnt, no later reform wud evr think of restoring them.

As for specific reforms that myt folo on from CS, one of th simplst cud be to respel hard <c> as as **<k>-,** at ti, same time **<k>** cud also replace <q> if that wer thot desirebl. Aftr that one cud atak th <c, s, z> problm.

But perhaps we cud now try and reach a conclusion about th extent to wich CS dos or dos not respect th integrity of th morfeme.

15. Gregersen

In a system of writing concerned with preserving the integrity of the morfeme, all three words *idle, idol, idyll* would have to be written differently. Klasik Nue Speling does so (the only thing that is missing there is a stress mark). Th CS aproach howevr wud not distinguish them, and therefore you cannot say that CS is for the preservation of the morfeme: it simply isn't. In fact the spellings *u, yr* for *you, your* go out of the way to ignore morfeme units.

15. Upward

In point of fact, CS (initialy at least) leves *idle, idol* as they ar, since to cut them to *idl* wud fail to indicate th preceding   long vowl, and sujests a rym with *riddle* (CS *ridl)*. If *idyll* wer deemd to rym (as in british pronunciations with *ridl*, on th othr hand, then it cud be cut acordingly to just *idl*. Th form *yr* for *your* is a tru abreviation, or a word-syn, used as a compromise solution between th english perceved pronunciation of *your* as a homofone of *yore* and th americn perceved pronunciation as a homofone of *ewer.* But perhaps th consensus wil be that in these circmstances your must be kept, altho it is a blatant non-rym with *our, sour etc.*

16. Gregersen

What to do? I suggest you must either give up saying that you are for the integrity of the morfeme, or else change CS drastically. Tertium non datur. The first option isn't all that bad: Greek and Latin certainly didn't maintain morfeme integrity — and as you pointed out earlier, the same is true in the orthography of some Slavic languages, including Byelorussian. There is a lot to be said for how they are written. A truly international spelling for English, where <iy> or <ij> or <ii> represented the sound of <ee> in *seen* would not be compatible with preserving morfemes and would further obscure dialect variations. For example, *obscene: obscenity* would be, written *obsiyn: obsenity* or the like, whereas in Klasik Nue Speling the relationship is at least partially captured: *obseen: obsenity.* Similarly for dialect variants such as *éekonomiks vs énomiks* (in non-morfemic spelling, distinguished as something like *íkonomiks* vs *ékonomiks).* But one could very well argue that the advantages of having international values for symbols greatly outweigh the value of morfeme integrity.

At present, I tend to be for morfeme-integrity, however, because we thereby ignore many variations in pronunciation which would break up the English-speaking world, since the treatment of

unstressed vowels varies dramatically across accents, and these variations would have to be ignored.

16. Upward

I think u hav shed a lot of lyt on th efect CS has on morfemes. Perhaps we can define that efect as folos: with few exeptions *(u, yr* being a striking case), CS preservs th integrity of morfemes wen these ar undrstood to be based on th stressd vowls in th roots of words that undrgo no fonolojicl chanje. Thus wen *sweet* takes a sufix, it keeps th speling of th root as in *sweety;* similarly CS spels th past tense of *need* as *needd,* not as *neded.* On th othr hand th english languaj comnly varis th speling of roots wen they undrgo fonolojicl chanje, as wen *lead* forms its past tense as *led;* and CS extends this patrn wen TO obscures it by means of redundnt letrs, therfor speling th past tense of *read* as *red.* Similrly TO obscures th fonolojicl altrnation between *symbol: symbolic* by means of a redundnt <o>; CS then cuts th <o> to produce symbl, wich then machs th TO altrnation between *able: ability.* To conclude: CS givs precednce to sound-symbl corespondnce over ful morfemic integrity, but preservs both wen they ar not in conflict.

17. Gregersen

Again, we disagree slightly about analysis. The form led (and the forms cited earlier — *sang, sung* etc) have to be considered as containing two morfemes (Verb + {Past}) — but of such irregular shapes that they must be treated in a fairly ad hoc way. The word *depth,* which you mentioned before, is more in line with the issue of maintaining the integrity of the morfeme, since <dep-> is clearly a variant of *deep.* The most consistent way to maintain such integrity would be to indicate <ee> as <e> with a macron, or bar above: d$\bar{e}$p vs *dep-th.* But barring the introduction of a macron or some other diacritic — which is typologically not so hot — <deep: depth> is about the best we can do.

17. Upward

My vew of a good speling systm is far less 'deep' than that — in fact, it is delibratly 'shalo'. It simply beleves that if u can spel words as they ar pronounced, that that is th best posbl speling systm that cud evr be devised, and in practice no one wud hav any trubl with it: such a systm wud be functionly perfect, and that is al that matrs. Th problm is that, in presnt circmstnces, th english languaj just dos not lend itself to a straitforwrd reform of that kind, so we hav to explor roundabout routes towards that end. And that is wher complications and disagreemnts so ofn arise.

18. Gregersen

To sum up my position. I tend to be for preserving the integrity of the morfeme if this just involves designing symbols in a special way (e.g. <ae> instead of <ey> or <ci> or <e> to keep words like *insane: insanity* together) or if it might also accommodate dialect variation (as not indicating vowel reductions in unstressed syllables often does). But I don't think it would be an absolute disaster if a purely fonemic systm were at the base of an orthography.

All I have suggested is that CS sometimes is and sometimes is not able to keep morfemes intact. That for me is not the major drawback of CS. But what I think that drawback is could be the basis for another dialog.

18. Upward

And since CS of corse dos keep *insane: insanity* togethr, perhaps we ar not so very far apart aftr al. Edgar Gregersen, thank u for this discussion.

[Valerie Yule: see **Bulletins**, **Anthology**, **Quarterly**, **Journals**, **Newsletters**, **Personal Views** 10 & 16, **Media**, **Books**.]

14. Experimentl Version of Cut Spelling — CS1 & CS2
Valerie Yule

Valerie Yule writes from the Faculty of Education, Monash University, Victoria, Australia.

In view of queries such as J Clausen's (**JSSS 1989/1**), it shoud be made clear that the principls of 'Cut Spelling' ar currently being investigated in two versions, wich might be called CS1 and CS2. CS2 is Chris Upward's mor radicl design, and is the subject of the Cut Spelling Working Group of the SSS. It has been described in articls in these pages, and Chris is working on a linguistic analysis, including criteria of compatibility and phonographicity.

Valerie Yule is investigating a mor conservativ version from the aspect of 'human engineering' — how reading and riting can be made mor 'user-frendly' to fit the needs and abilities of lernrs and skild users. This means investigating what those needs and abilities ar, by colating past reserch and experimenting in education and cognitiv psycology, to find out what realy is 'surplus'. Her concept of 'CS1' was first publishd in 1971, as part of a posibl 3-point reform — 'Cut unnecessary letrs, change misleading consonants, systematise misleading vowels' — and can be stated as "removal of letrs surplus to representation of meaning or pronunciation". This means mainly silent letrs, surplus dubld consonants, and misleading letrs in vowel digraphs.

An intended principl was that ordinary peple coud easily aply the rule "when in dout, cut it out". That is, when poor spelrs don't kno where extra letrs ar needed — leve them out. This difrs from the CS2 rule, "when in dout, don't leve out", wich is for good spelrs who kno the conventionl spelling, but want to change it. Anothr deference is that CS1 avoids changes that coud afect pronunciation or cause confusion with current spellings of othr words.

Valerie Yule is also investigating claims made for the value of othr features in riting systems, such as visual distinctivness, retaining spellings for units of meaning across related words, gramaticl markrs, distinguishing homophones in spelling, and wethr reading is easier if word-segments ar 'unitised' by retaining weakly stressd vowels. The parametrs and areas for reserch wer discussd in 'The design of spelling to meet needs and abilities' in *Harvard Educational Review,* 1986, 56.3, 278–297.

'Readers' adjustment to spelling change' by Yule and Greentree, publishd in *Human Learning,* 1986, 5. 229–247, described an experiment showing that adults and secondary scool students adjustd without any significant loss of reading speed or comprehension to reading continuum text in Cut Spelling 1, and with hardly mor dificulty to Cut Spelling 2 — wheras reading a 'spel as you speak' phonemic spelling is at first quite disruptive and a 'morphophonemic' spelling change, on the lines that the linguist Chomsky has suggestd ar 'optimum' was also significantly hardr.

Howevr,'the version of Cut Spelling 2 that was testd excluded words that coud be confused with othr words or hav a changed pronunciation. For exampl, in a recent articl in CS2 in **JSSS10** Item 3, th nativ readr woud hav to use context to avoid slips with *hom, wud, cud, hose, ho, cald, thot, esir* and might read *sepratly* as *spratly, litrat* as *lit-rat, orgnise* as *org-nise, dificltis* as *dific-litis* and *exlnt*

as *exel-not.* Poor spelrs might find dificulty in spelling some sylabls that look like consonant strings. This can be testd.

The report of an experiment on efects of CS1 has also been submitd for publication — no improvement over norml spelling in the limitd practice that was posibl, but som encuraging othr findings — and furthr experiments ar continuing. Howevr, these involv CS1 only, since useful reserch testing the mor radicl extensions of CS2 must involv practice, as imediat responses can be slo and even puzld. And subjects willing to giv time and efort to practice must be keen or paid, and pay means money to pay with.

What I woud most like to investigate now is television subtitling, wethr by simulation, or, idealy, by testing the public on public chanls, since subtitles coud be the most useful introduction for a cut spelling. They require fairly fast reading, and many peple complain they cannot read the words in time — and here also space is at a premium.

A feature wich distinguishes both CS1 and CS2 from previus reform-atempts, apart from Harry Lindgren's 'SR1' and John Beech's experimentl 'Regular Spelling', is that they modify traditions spelling by a systematic principle so remaining 'bakwards compatibl' with our heritage of print. Most othr reforms hav tried to bild a new orthography from scratch, usualy by 'spelling as you speak', or gon at it rathr piecemeal with lists, or in Axel Wijk's 'Regularized Inglish' by numerus smal changes whose basic principl (the most comon spelling) not everyone can aply. The principl of deleting rathr than changing letrs also means far less disruption to the visibl apearance of words, and hence fastr adjustment to the changes — wich ar oftn not even noticed.

The deference between CS1 and CS2 can be seen in a transliteration of the folowing paragraph ritn in Chris Upward's CS2 (from **JSSS 89/1**. Item 7). **[l]**

CS2. Speling reform aims primarily to make sound-symbl corespondnce mor predictbl. Redundnt letrs (wich by definition conflict with regulr sound-symbl corespondnce) ar particulrly trublsm featurs of th traditionl orthografy.

CS1. Spelling reform aims primarily to make sound-symbl corespondence mor predictable Redundnt letrs (wich by definition conflict with regulr sound-symbl corespondence) ar particulrly trublsom features of the traditionl orthography.

So the linguistic scolrship and psycologicl experiments continue, and we may hope our combined findings wil eventualy come togethr to make a design for spelling improvement that is a 'best fit' to the demands and abilities that ar involvd in all comunications tecnology.

[1] But note CS1 changes tend to swithr, as experiment goes on, and the author demonstrates inconsistencies as most new spelrs woud at first. Subjects hav oftn found <th> to be the only cut spelling that hits them, probably since *the* is the most comon word. In everyday riting I swithr between th, *the* and include some letr changes such as <f> for <ph> and not using the <y>-> <ie> modification in plurals.

15. Towards a Scientifik and International Orthografy
or
the Planning of the World Language
Robert Craig

Robert Craig writes from Weston-super-Mare, England.

To be akcepted English spelling reform has to offer more than an easier life for children and teachers. It has to break down language barriers. Our allies in this enterprise will be newspaper magnates such as Rupert Murdoch and Robert Maxwell, inkluding some, Axel Springer Vlg. for instance, who do not kurrently publish in English. What spelling reform kan offer men like these is 1) shorter words leading to more ekonomikal use of paper, 2) more rational spellings which make for akkurate kompositing, and 3) most important of all, it holds out the possibility of inkreased sales as more people bekome literate in a more easily learned form of English.

In the European context English has to be adapted to akt as a link language between speakers of Germanik, Romance and Slavonik languages. It has to take on the kharakteristiks of these large language bloks. The idiosynkratik nature of English spelling has to be reformed to give it a typikal orthography. In the worldwide kontext, it has to be able to develop with reference to Chinese (partikularly in its Pinyin Romanized form), Bahasa Indonesia/Malaya and Arabik which do not share the European vokabulary and those great languages of India which do.

Respelling, therefore, has to produce an English which is scientifik and international. I have looked at English from these perspektives. I have tried to take akkount of the frekuencies of sounds and symbols in English. For example, the /ʃ/ sound okkurs more frekuently than the /dʒ/ sound (as in *jet),* so it would appear that it would be sensible to have a single symbol for /ʃ/ and if necessary a digraf for /dʒ/ (i.e. the opposite of the usual situation now). My solution is <x> for <sh> and <gx> for <j>. An <x> for <sh> has good international precedents, while <gx> for <j> is perhaps less justifiable, but <g> is usual for that sound although <dx> might be preferred on fonetik grounds.

On the international side, the I.P.A. does not necessarily use symbols in the most international way, e.g. where languages have a voiced sibilant it is most usually represented by <s>, whereas <z> is more often used for /dz/, /ts/ or /q/.

When we look at substitution we find that we are restrikted in the substitutions we kan make.

1) In the past there were people who said that <c> should be used for /k/. This proposal is still heard, but those who support it need a very strong kase. On the face of it, the kase for using <k> for /k/ is overwhelming.

2) The use of <k> for /k/ releases <c> and <q> for other purposes. The other use of <c> is as /s/.

3) An <s> is used for /s/ and /z/. Since we are going to use <c> for /s/, we kan use <s> for <z>.

4) Now if we let <s>=<z>, we release <z> for some other purpose. the best use here would be <z> = /ð,θ/.

5) On to <x>. This kan be replaced by <ks>. So <x> is now available and its best use is for /ʃ/.

6) Bakk to <q>. This kan be used for /tʃ/. All these proposals have good international precedents.

There remains one problem as far as the konsonants are koncerned and that is how to use <y> and <j>. On the one hand the present use of <y> and <j> has wide international acceptance. On the other hand <j> = /j/ is also widely agreed and the kase for it is very good. Letting <j> = /j/, as in most European languages, would mean using some digraf for /dʒ/, and I have proposed <gx>. This has the advantage of releasing <y> to be used for the vowel /ʌ/, which does not kurrently have a recognized symbol.

I suggest that the first part of a step by step reform would start with <k> for /k/, as I have done in this artikle. The next step would substitute for the rest of the konsonants. The following stage would be substitution of vowels — a more kontentious process, bekause vowels are more affekted by dialektal faktors than are konsonants.

This artikle has already illustrated the first step, substitution of <k> for 'hard' <c>. So what would the second step look like?

"For at least ten jears zere have been predikxions zat komputers will transform our lives, kreate paperlecc offices, a kaxlecc society and mindlecc gxobs. Alzough zese predikxions have been fulfilled in part, why does ze transformaxion remain inkomplete? Probably bekause zese predikxions ignored boz ze limitations ov komputers and ze resistance of people to embrace ze teknologxy wholeheartedly. Zic is as true ov writing as anyzing elce. Many people now use word proceccors instead of typewriters to produce zeir writing but zere hasn't been muq qangxe in how zey use komputers to improve ze kuality ov writing gxenerally."

(Transcribed from 'The Computer as Style Guide', *English Today* 19, vol.5 No.3.)

As kan be seen, this already represents a konsiderabl improvement on TO, and it only rekuires two more stages to reach a fully reformed orthografy, i.e. 2) substitution of vowels and 3) kutting of surplus letters.

16. Kingman, Cox, the National Curriculum and Spelling

Readers may have followed the Society's submissions to the British government's recent committees which have been preparing the ground for the National Curriculum's programme for English language teaching in English and Welsh schools. Our first submission to Kingman, appeared in ***Journal* 1987/3** (Item 5). Our comments on the Kingman Report in **1988/2** (Item 8), and our submission to the Cox Committee (National Curriculum English Working Group) in **1988/3** (Item 7). The first part of the Cox Report was published by the Department of Education and Science entitled *English for ages 5 to 16* in November 1988 and the full (amended) version *English for ages 5 to 16* in June 1989. ***Journal* 1989/1** (Item 11) excerpted the passages concerning spelling in the first Cox Report. Our latest submission is here presented in slightly abridged form.

Submission to the National Curriculum Council from the Simplified Spelling Society and the United Kingdom i.t.a. Federation. 25 September 1989

The submission was prepared by Chris Upward, Editor of the *Journal of the SSS,* in consultation with Chris Jolly, Chairman of the Simplified Spelling Society and Ronald Threadgall, General Secretary of the United Kingdom i.t.a. Federation.

1. Kingman to Cox to the National Curriculum
This submission is the latest in a series ... which progressively refined our views of how English spelling needs to be treated in the National Curriculum.

A marked shift of view is detectable between the Kingman and Cox Reports. The first emphasizes the regularities of spelling and ... that children should spell correctly. The second, while not downgrading ... accuracy..., recognizes that the ... writing system is highly irregular, and that complete accuracy ... therefore cannot reasonably be expected. Instead, it stresses that children should make maximum use ... of such patterns and regularities as do occur in written English; and that at any given stage a fair degree of accuracy should be expected in spelling words of certain kinds (i.e. short words, common words).

Although the much greater understanding and realism of the Cox Reports must be ... welcomed.... the Reports do contain statements whose validity must ... be queried or which beg some fundamental questions. These queries and questions should however be regarded positively, as their answers, if rightly interpreted, suggest ... a future when English spelling could be much less of a problem.... with concomitantly higher standards of literacy. The passing of the Cox proposals to the National Curriculum Council provides the opportunity to establish some basic principles whose immediate practical impact would be imperceptible, yet which could lay the foundation for real improvements in ... English spelling ... in the long term.

The following comments are designed to set the context for that conclusion.
2. Comments on Cox 1: English from 5–11
The numbers ... refer to paragraphs in the Report.
3.12 What is 'English'?
"The overriding aim ... is to enable all pupils to develop to the full their ability to use and understand English." Perhaps this statement should appear highlighted on the title-page of the Report, since it surely states a criterion by which all subsidiary aims and recommendations must be judged. But with regard to spelling, it contains a crucial ambiguity. What is 'English' exactly? Is it

the spoken language, or the written language, or something more abstract than either, which has spoken and written forms each with an equally valid, interrelated, yet to a significant extent independent existence? The latter definition would be the most generally accepted today. But then, just what is the status of the written form which ... happens to be so difficult that most people cannot be expected to achieve total accuracy in using it? What if, as is surely the case, this very difficulty of the written form actually prevents most pupils from fulfilling that overriding aim "to develop to the full their ability to use and understand English"?

We ... argue that the written language can usefully be regarded as the visible clothing of that more abstract entity which is 'English', while the spoken language resembles the body within the clothing ... Clothing, to pursue the metaphor, wears out over time, and old styles ... become impractical for ... new requirements ... ; it is then replaced, and its style modernized.
Most languages understand that this metaphor applies to ... writing systems, but as yet the point is not widely grasped in the English-speaking world.

An ambitious... educational project like the National Curriculum ... needs that understanding — and ... to consider its implications. While recognizing the ... constraints on what can be undertaken in the short term, we would hope to gain acceptance for some basic principles that may prove useful ... for the longer term.

4.19 Standard forms
The concept of a linguistic 'standard' is frequently referred to in the Report. Such a concept is recognized to be hard to define ... as far as the spoken language is concerned. But for spelling it is in theory easy; in German for instance there is little question about ... the standard spellings of words... All that is required is for an authority (and the National Curriculum Council could emerge as   ... such an authority) to state ... the standard spellings of words ... in English.

... At present there is no ... explicit authority and no explicit standard. Dictionaries are the only authority that can be appealed to, and they usually claim merely to reflect usage; furthermore, they disagree among themselves. Although most common words such as *one, who* are always so spelt and no ... alternatives exist, for a ... number of words there are alternative forms which cause ... uncertainty... These alternatives may not impinge much on ... younger children, but they reflect the absence of a ... standard. One extreme example is ... the ... fruit *lychee,* which is also found spelt *lichi, litchi, lichee.* Far more problematic is uncertainty over the formation of inflexions (or ... *inflections?),* which the Report says children should master. Here uncertainty and variation are rife (do we write *traveled* or *travelled, gased* or *gassed, benefited* or *benefitted, kidnaped* or *kidnapped* ... for instance?), and it would be very helpful if a standard were indeed prescribed.

However, when setting such standards, it is important to appreciate that in most cases there are clear arguments, often of a complex and technical nature, in favour of one form or another, and it is ... essential that, if a standard is set, it should be based on sound ... criteria. Setting standards in such cases could be a small and uncontroversial, but highly significant   step in the direction of ... simplification ... ; and decisions would need to be based on the best possible advice and take many factors into account (for instance, the impact on the world outside England and Wales).

Setting such standards would at one and the same time an awesome responsibility and an exciting, desperately needed undertaking.

5.32 Specifying lists
"We do not propose to specify lists of terms and concepts which should be taught ... It is the responsibility of teachers ... to decide..." It goes without saying that it cannot be the responsibility of teachers to decide what the standard spellings should be. Lists ... will be needed.

10.5 Public and private standards?

"...it is perfectly appropriate to demand ... correct spelling ... in work which has a public purpose. But this may be less appropriate for work with essentially private purposes." This is a puzzling statement. If children are expected to spell correctly for public consumption, it will not help them to achieve that correctness if they do not practice it in private writing. If they are used to writing *frend* in private, how will they remember to insert the <i> for public purposes? A key concept with literacy skills is *automaticity:* if children are expected to write *friend* in public (and there is an argument for saying they should be explicitly taught always to write 'frend'), then they need to practise that spelling on all occasions until the movement of the ... hand produces the correct letters automatically, without hesitating ... whether to *write frend, freind or friend.*

10.12 Spelling for oneself

"...children should be helped to be confident in attempting to spell words for themselves." This approach is to be applauded, but although it will encourage self-confidence and self-expression, it can only be detrimental to the achievement of 'correct' spelling as long as 'correct' English spelling is so grossly at variance with the underlying alphabetic principle of sound-symbol correspondence. "Spelling for oneself" is also to be welcomed as encouraging understanding of the alphabetic principle and of the deficiencies of ... English spelling.

10.17 Principles of English spelling

"...the most frequent sound-letter correspondences and the other principles of English spelling. Despite the undeniable irregularities of English spelling, it is important that teaching and assessing focus on those areas that are systematic." These will need specifying, because they are not well known.

10.22 Levels 4, 5

"Spell correctly words which display the other main patterns in English spelling, including the main prefixes and suffixes,...words with inflectional suffixes, (eg -ed, -ing) consonant doubling, etc; and words where the spelling highlights semantic relationships (eg sign, signature)." it would appear that the Report here perhaps underestimates the lack of system currently displayed in English spelling by these features. The uncertainty about consonant doubling before the inflexional suffix <-ed> has already been mentioned, but before <-ing> the situation is even less straightforward (contrast *singing: singeing: hinging, ageing: raging).* As for semantic relationships, many people cannot see a relationship between *sign: signature* even when it is pointed out, because *sign* is initially taken to be a noun, not a verb. However, the idea that semantic relationships are a useful guide to English spelling is dangerous anyway, as we see from ... *speak: speech, high: height, wise: wizard, inveigh: convey, enjoin: injunction.*

10.33 How do you look up the unknown?

"...they should be encouraged to check difficult spellings in a dictionary." Here again the difficulties are understated: this may be an impossible task if not even an approximate spelling is known — except perhaps in a work such as David Moseley's *Aurally Coded English Spelling Dictionary.* For instance, if the learner wishes to check the spelling of *gnaw* (for which *nor, nore, naw* would be possibilities worth looking up in the dictionary), then unless the silent initial <g> (the greatest spelling difficulty in the word) is already known, the word will not be found. Of course, if English words were not spelt with unpredictable letters, the problem would be less; but in that case there would be less need to check spellings in the dictionary in the first place.

11.4 Standards of Welsh bilinguals

"The evidence suggests ... that there are no significant differences between the performance at I I in English of pupils educated mainly through Welsh and other pupils..." The evidence in this field is notoriously difficult to interpret, and this statement does not specifically mention spelling. However,

if it is the case that such bilingual pupils achieve the same standard in English spelling after a significantly shorter period of study, that would seem to imply that perhaps non-bilingual pupils are wasting rather a lot of their time. This is an extremely serious question whose implications need to be explored. It is for instance conceivable that if pupils reach the automaticity-level of literacy first in a regular spelling system such as Welsh, this might then benefit their subsequent performance considerably in English. If this were so, it would be another example of what we may call the i.t.a. effect: literacy is best achieved in English by introducing pupils first of all to a phonographic spelling system, and when they have mastered that (as they do very quickly indeed), they transfer to traditional English spelling with far greater confidence, motivation and success. The lessons for teaching methodology of this experience have been insufficiently drawn upon.... and the National Curriculum Council would do well to consider recommending a regularized Initial Teaching Orthography for literacy acquisition.

3. Comment on Cox 2 English from 5 to 16
The above comments generally apply to the second Cox *Report (English for ages 5 to 16)* too, from which part of a single paragraph (§17.33) is now quoted. We have italicized certain words for emphasis.

"With regard to spelling, the aim should be that by the end of compulsory schooling pupils should be able to spell *confidently most* of the words they ar *likely* to need to use *frequently* in their writing; to recognise those aspects of English spelling that are systematic; to make a sensible *attempt* to spell words that they have not seen before; to check their work for misspellings and to use a dictionary appropriately. *The aim cannot be the correct unaided spelling of any English word* — there are too many words in English that can catch out even the best speller."

A comment often heard on this paragraph is that it is entirely realistic in its modest expectations. But it constitutes an admission of defeat: in future, schools are to be satisfied if their pupils' spelling is only *fairly* correct. However realistic, this begs some serious questions ... :
— Are we to be reconciled to a future in which people no longer care ... about precision and accuracy in ... spelling?
— Can there be such a thing as a standard written language in those circumstances?
— Will dictionaries in 50 years time ... have to list *acomodate, accomodate, acommodate, accommodate* as four equally acceptable alternative spellings for the same word?

4. Dangerous realism
Such are the inevitable long-term implications of the new tolerance that the Report advocates. At worst, they could imply a return to the chaos that prevailed in written English in the 16th century, a step backward to a more primitive condition, and the very opposite of the standard by which such store is otherwise set. The Report's realism is thus at the same time dangerous. Whatever defects the present spelling system of English has, at least it is relatively fixed and serves — more or less — as a standard worldwide. We have a responsibility, in Britain as the original home of the language perhaps more than anywhere else, to ensure that standard is not jeopardized.

Teachers also need a fixed standard by which to teach (and the rest of society needs one too, for different reasons) and pupils need a workable standard to aim at. Yet the present standard, however unclear it may be, is unworkable (increasingly so, for various reasons that cannot be explored here, and with every prospect of further deterioration unless countermeasures are taken). But the conclusion to be drawn should then not be that the very notion of a standard for pupils to achieve must be abandoned, which is what the Report in practice is urging (though it does not say so explicitly). On the contrary, the conclusion should be that a new, workable and realistic standard needs to be devised.

5. Political constraints and possibilities

The Simplified Spelling Society and others who have long preached a thoroughgoing reform of written English have often been seen as asking for the impossible. Certainly it must be recognized that to ask for radical changes today in the way words are spelt in English is not to cultivate the art of the politically possible. When innovation as radical and
as controversial as the National Curriculum is being legislated, it would be inopportune to add yet further radical and controversial proposals to those already being debated.

Yet steps could be taken which would begin to lead in a positive direction without at this stage noticeably disturbing the existing consensus and conventions on English spelling. They are, by implication, actually called for by the Cox Report itself when it recommends the teaching of standard English. The present spelling of English, as was shown by several examples above, does not today offer an adequate standard, and it is acknowledged to be an unrealistic target for pupils to aim at. By applying certain linguistic principles it would be possible for the National Curriculum Council to set a more workable standard than now exists and to simplify a few of the complications that so often defeat pupils today.

6. Standardizing alternative spellings

The principle on which a good alphabetic orthography is built is predictable sound-symbol correspondence. For ... 1,000 years that principle has not been systematically applied in English, and the consequence is a ... system of unfathomable complexity that is a serious handicap to a society (and a world) in which the highest possible level of literacy is an economic and social necessity.

English spelling has never been officially standardized, and although most ... words today have a single agreed form, many others occur in variants, some of which conform better to ... predictable sound-symbol correspondence than others. For instance ... *jail: gaol* has two forms, the first ... is predictable from the pronunciation, while the second flouts two normal rules of sound-symbol correspondence. In these circumstances the National Curriculum could specify that *jail* should henceforth be the standard. Similarly, the patterns of consonant-doubling in inflected form of verbs are in many cases unstable, causing widespread uncertainty and error; these too could be standardized ... There are numerous other examples.

Such a procedure would not constitute spelling reform as such, because no new spellings would be introduced, but rather just a rational choice between existing variants.

Such a proposal probably has implications going beyond what was originally envisaged for the National Curriculum, but it is hoped it will be found sufficiently promising for its ... possibilities nevertheless to be explored.

7. Conclusions

The concept of standard English, which is central to the National Curriculum, must apply to ... spelling if it applies anywhere... At present there are no clear standards for English spelling, and the National Curriculum offers an opportunity to set them. This is a serious task with profound ... implications for the future of written English, and should only be undertaken on the basis of expert... analysis. Yet unless it is undertaken, the prospects for a significant improvement in standards of literacy, which is another key aim of the National Curriculum, are slim.
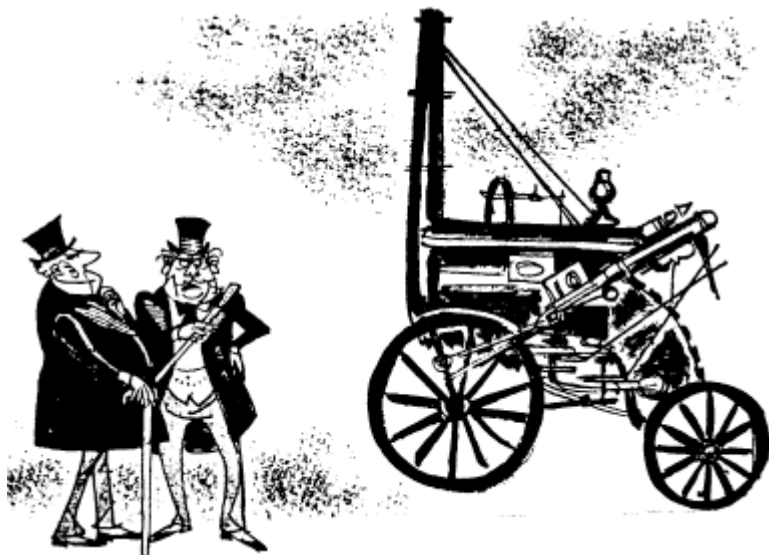
In terms of teaching methodology, we would also recommend that the benefits of using a regularized Initial Teaching Orthography ... be taken into consideration.

We will be glad to advise further on these questions.

17. Miscellany

Cartoon.

Harry Lindgren has kindly given permission for us to reproduce cartoons from his Spelling Reform — A New Approach.

Caption: "It's a lot better than horses. Need we improve it?"

[Journal of the Simplified Spelling Society, 10, 1989/2 p.36 in the printed version]

Literature Received

Publications and papers recently received include:

Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) Newsletter, No.34 Summer 1989

L'Association pour l'information et la recherche sur les orthographes et les systèmes d'écriture AIROÉ-INFOS, No.2, juillet 1989.

Department of Education and Science English for ages 5 to 16: Proposals of the Secretary of State for Education and Science, June 1989. (Cox Report 2)

Institut für deutsche Sprache, Mannheim Sprachreport, 2/89.

National Curriculum Council, NCC News, June 1989.

South East Surrey Dyslexia Association Newsletter No.37, September 1989.

English Today Vol.5, No.2 (ET18), April 1989; Vol.5, No.3 (ET19), July 1989.

United Kingdom Reading Association (UKRA) Newsletter, June 1989.

The United Kingdom i.t.a. Federation
(Gen Secretary, Ronald Threadgall, Holland-on-Sea, Essex.,

National Course Conference 1989, Warwick, Friday 13–Sunday 15 October 1989.

Theme 'Literacy and the Pre-School Child'. Speakers: Dr Tom McArthur, Jean Augur, Sue Lloyd, Dr Joyce Morris, Dr Doris Kelly. Fee including meals and accommodation £89.50.

Contact: Martin Sirot-Srnith, Conference Director,

Meetings of the Simplified Spelling Society

Main meetings are held four times a year and comprise a committee session for Society business and more general discussion of issues related to spelling reform, often including an address from an outside speaker. These meetings are open to all, but confirmation of the programme should be obtained beforehand from the secretary (details on title page). Meetings normally take place in London, beginning at 10:30 and closing at 13:30.

Meetings are currently scheduled for
30 September 1989, and in 1990 for 17 February & 28 April (AGM).

On 30 September 1989 Edward Carney of the Department of Linguistics, University of Manchester, will address the Society on the subject of. "Computer Speech from Spelling: how simple can you get?"