

News7. [*Underlined words and letters are presented as headings or in italics here.*]



SIMPLIFIED SPELLING SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER. FEBRUARY 1985

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Section One

1. Letter from Mona Cross, Editor and Publicity Officer

Dear Members and Interested People,

Thank you all for the letters and articles which you have sent to me.

From the News Letter you will see that the theme which they have in common is *the wish to get rid of unnecessarily peculiar spellings and to replace them with phonetic ones*. From those simple aims has followed a preference by some for an adaptation of the well-thought-out, formerly recommended "New Spellings". Others prefer "Cut Spelling", which cancels out the phonetic variations e.g. "committee", and which is leading to a form of "Speed Reading".

It is comforting to me to know that all readers are absolutely certain that "*Spelling Reform*" never alters *language*. The recent oral correspondence on the "Today Program" on Radio 4 begun by John Ogden, showed such a silly ignorance by two members of the public. One lady had written to state that she was "furious that anyone wanted to change our beautiful English language" — she was obviously unaware that when she had read Shakespeare's "beautiful English language" at school that she had read it in an orthodox script quite different from that in which it had been written.

I am still hoping that our replies to her will be read out. Following the two ladies' Radio letters, John Ogden raises two points which represent very common reactions:

1. Equating spelling reform with *language* reform.
2. Seeing simplification as a serious cultural threat.

People need to be reassured that we do not contemplate an assault on the language itself, but rather to do it in the service of representing it more accurately.

John Ogden has not received enough copies of articles written to newspapers by members. Perhaps you've only been *thinking* of reading? Without your help we can't reach ordinary people. If we don't then all the work on reform schemes is wasted, for no-one will even hear about them. Your own realisation that simpler spelling means easier reading will never be grasped by them.

At the [Conference](#) on July 27, 28, 29 there will be speakers with one aim, but varied opinions. Judging by former conferences ([1975](#), [1979](#), [1981](#)) it will be a friendly, stimulating weekend. As there'll be plenty of time to discuss things you would find it particularly worth your while to come. I hope to see old and new members and "Interested People" there.

The next newsletter will be published after the Conference i.e. an August Newsletter.

You may have noticed that the cover is different yet it has the same words as the October Newsletter. This is because two people made an October one (based on my July one) so this month I am using our Committee member, Alan Bye's design (after altering the month) — you yourself might like to make a cover, using the 'New Spelling' words. It would be received with pleasure!

Yours sincerely

Mona Cross

P.S. This letter and comments written by me show an attempt to use the early stages of New Spelling reform.

[Stanley Gibbs: see [Journals](#), [Newsletters](#), [Leaflet](#)]

2. ITEMS FROM MY POSTBAG

From the Hon. Secretary, Stanley Gibbs, Oadby, Leicestershire

Professor E. Gregersen, New York. Dec 1984 [see [Journals](#), [News5](#)]

I hope that the SSS will reconsider the need for greater fonetic accuracy and greater toleration in dealing with dialect variation.

R. Craig, Weston-Super-Mare, Jan 1985 [see [Journals](#), [Newsletters](#)]

If you want six reforms for Stage 2, I would suggest:

1. Deletion of initial silent letters from words such as, wrote, know, gnaw, psalm, hour etc.
2. Only a singl consonant after schwa vowel; apear, aproach, atempt etc.
3. Deletion of surplus h's (in digrafts); chaos, choism, what, when, school etc.
4. Only a singl consonant finally, wil, shal, al, spel, etc.
5. Deletion of l in woud, coud, shoud.
6. Internal y pronounced i to be written i; sistem, mith, simptom, etc. (reply, happy, etc to be left for a later stage.)

H.W. Herbert, Kenmore, Queensland, Australia, Jan 1985

About 100 people replied, 85% favoured the ough and augh reform being adopted first. Of the 15% who disagreed, 2 people wanted to start with SR1 (short e) and the rest wanted no change to spelling.

Below is a reference to the Hon Secretary's next proposed "C as in the word chemist, spelled cemist"

Committee Member **Alan Bye** of Northampton replies: February 1985 [see [Bulletin](#), [Journals](#), [Newsletters](#)]

This I think is a non-starter unless all other c e words ar respelled with an S. Chemist, Christmas etc should need K and be rendered Kemist, (or Kemmist) Kristmas etc

Mrs J Lintern, Gen Secretary i.t.a. federation, Oct 1983

My experiences convinced me of the crying need for a simplified but augmented alfabet to provide a speech-related fonetic START for our children. I must be honest and say that I hav not yet accepted the idea of spelling reform my love for history and tradition creates a barrier for me.

The S.S.S. is doing a 'fine job' and I wish it every encouragement

Dr. John Beech (now at Leicester University) January 1985 [see [Bulletins](#), [Quarterly](#), [Journal](#), [Newsletter](#)]

[Laurie Fennelly: see [Journals](#), [Newsletters](#), [Pamphlet 12](#), [Leaflet](#)]

3. The Revision of NEW SPELLING

In 1948 the Society published the 6th Edition of its NEW SPELLING, as revised by Daniel Jones, a fonetician of world-wide renown. The project for spelling reform was presented to Parliament in 1953 and narrowly defeated. Since when nothing more has been heard of NEW SPELLING.

All our letters to the papers, all our propoganda ar so much time wasted if we cannot answer the simple question, "Well, what is your scheme?"

Recognising this, the Committee of the Society has set up a working Party to review NEW SPELLING, and to bring out a revised version if that is found necessary. NEW SPELLING is itself a most valuable book. It sets out a logical and consistent scheme for spelling reform, based on a careful statistical analysis of current (i.e. 1940's) practice. When one reads it today, the only immediat criticisms one is tempted to make ar really quite minor. Its style smacks very much of a past academic world, and some of the pronunciations recommended ar no longer current. But a more serious criticism has come to be levelled agenst NEW SPELLING in the last ten years or so, notably by Axel Wijk. This is that NEW SPELLING has no chance of being accepted by public opinion because it changes the spelling of too meny words. One might rejoin that public opinion never does accept change, but nonetheless it seemed sensible to take these criticisms seriously and re-examin NEW SPELLING in the light of them.

The working party is far from having completed its work, but there is one general comment on NEW SPELLING that may be made. Its authors seem to hav credited ordinary English speakers with a fonetic awareness that they ar far from possessing. For example they insist on differentiating between voiced and unvoiced consonants — notably in the final 'plural' 's', which must become 'z' where the sound is voiced. Thus 'dogz' as agenst 'cats'. No ordinary person would be conscious of this difference unless his attention wer drawn to it, and in eny case the fonetic difference is less important from the point of view of consistency than the grammatical relationship.

Do not spelling reformers today tend to be guilty of the same error?

The working party has a second task — to examin the method of introducing eny spelling reform, and the administrative problems involved. There seems to be surprisingly little work on the subject in English, tho clearly there must be work in other languages. Possibly the magnitude of the changes needed in English means that the experience of other languages is of little relevance.

At the moment introducing a spelling reform by 'stages' is the policy of the Society, and indeed of most reformers, and dare I say, it has become almost received doctrine. But apart from an article by David Stark in our last News Letter, I know of no work that has been done on the subject, and indeed how can there be, unless one has a specific scheme to work from? The basic difficulty is that in meny words two or more changes will hav to be made. Is it really feasible to divide these changes up over several stages? As an example, if the superfluous 'gh' is to be dropped in 'taught', what is one to do with 'fight'? Does it become 'fite' or 'fiet' or, if I may leak one of the working party's probable proposals 'fyt'?

The Society has tested this experimentally by introducing a 'Stage One' consisting of five individual changes. And despite all its care it has come up against the same problem. In accordance with one of the changes 'head' becomes 'hed'. But what then does 'headed' become? 'Heded' would be pronounced like 'heeded', so it would be necessary to introduce the double 'dd'. But the abolition of this method of indicating a short vowel is a key feature of NEW SPELLING. To introduce 'hedded' temporarily as a sort of intermediate stage is clearly impossible.

And of course a reform of English spelling could not be spread over more than two or three stages if chaos is to be avoided.

Finally there are the administrative problems to be considered. Just as a start, there would be a complete upheaval in all alphabetical listings. Then every household would need a small work-book of old and new spellings. (Perhaps this would not be too great a problem — the Highway Code was once issued like this.) But the problem in the schools would not be quite so simply solved. Seven to eleven year olds would no doubt make a fresh start, with whatever enthusiasm, but who would lay down a uniform policy for the older pupils — and for the examining boards? Clearly adults can be allowed the freedom in their private spelling that they once enjoyed, but it is an illusion to think that any kind of spelling reform can be introduced without the participation of the government.

The devastating criticism has been made in the past that there is no hope for spelling reform, as the reformers cannot even agree among themselves. The Society must meet this by producing a single, thoughtful scheme which it is prepared to put forward as viable and practicable, worthy to be considered by a governmental commission and by similar bodies in the USA and the Commonwealth, New and Old. Only in this way can we win the attention, not only of public authorities, but of academic and business institutions, and of the mass of ordinary people.

Our Conference in late July is designed under the theme of "Spelling Reform Now" to give the spelling reform movement a new start. The various topics of discussion are listed elsewhere in this News Letter, but behind them is the idea of efficiency. As our President said last year, the present system of spelling English is above all inefficient. It is inefficient for learning, inefficient in general use, and now inefficient in the computer age. The main international language must become efficient.

Laurence R. Fennelly

Addendum: This article has been spelt in accordance with Stage One. In its rather more than a thousand words there have been 33 changes as follows:-

ph - fonetic (2), alphabetical
ough - tho
as for augh - thaut
e - eny (3), meny (2), agenst (3), sed, spred
drop e - ar (5), hav (2), giv, wer, -ive (3), -ine (3), -ate (3)

Section Two

The Simplified Spelling Society

4. Fourth International Conference (1985)

on

"SPELLING REFORM NOW"

The Conference will be at Southampton University from Friday, July 26th to Sunday, July 28th, 1985. Accommodation and lectures will be in the Connaught Hall of the University. It is open to all who are interested in spelling reform, whether they are Members of the Society or not.

The aim of the Conference is above all to discuss a practical programme for spelling reform.

The topics to be discussed are as follows:-

1. The Simplified Spelling Society presents a revised version of its "New Spelling" (6th Edition 1948) for discussion and, if acceptable, eventual adoption as the Society's policy.
2. The method of introducing a revised spelling system. Is a policy of "stages" feasible, and if so what stages should there be? What are the other social and administrative problems involved.
3. A revised spelling of English for those countries, particularly in the New Commonwealth, which use English as a second language.
4. Spelling reform in relation to the computer and other modern technology.
5. Spelling reform as a way to more efficient learning in schools.

The list of speakers is being drawn up at the moment, but those who would like to contribute to any of these topics are asked to write urgently to Mr. R. Baker, the Convener of the Conference, at the address given below.

There will also be a time set apart for short contributions on other topics of spelling reform.

Southampton is an attractive city at the centre of an area of great historical interest. It is 70 minutes from London by Inter-City train, and there is a frequent coach service direct to Heathrow Airport.

Connaught Hall itself is pleasantly situated. There is a good bus service into Southampton City Centre, and it is only 5 minutes by car from Eastleigh Airport, and from an access point on to the M27. (The M27 motorway is now complete, and is fully open.)

Accommodation and Cost

Connaught Hall offers mostly single study-bedrooms with washbasins. There are a small number of double rooms, and also a somewhat larger number of single rooms built in pairs, and sharing a washbasin. Meals are taken in the Hall.

The inclusive cost for the Conference and 2 days with full board will be £48, The non-residential fee will be £10. Residential members are asked to pay a deposit of £10 on booking. The deposit is refundable for cancellations made before May 1st, but not after.

Enquiries. All enquiries should be addressed to: Laurence R. Fennelly, Southampton. Hants

Offers to speak and correspondence concerning the programme should be addressed to the Convener of the Conference, Mr Robert Baker, at the same address as above.

Section Three

[Madhukar Gogate: see [Journals](#), [Newsletters](#)]

5. FIRST ROMAN LIPI SAMMELAN

Received from the organizer Madhukar N Gogate, Bombay.

The Indians had a wonderful "First Roman Lipi Sammelan" judging by the material sent to me by Mr Gogate. It was a Conference to argue for the general use of Roman Script. I was pleased to see that contributions were sent in by Mr S.S. Eustace who was a former Secretary of the Simplified Spelling Society and creator of System 2 (a development of Nue Spelling), Valerie Yule who was one of the organisers of the Edinburgh Conference, and Professor Hofmann, Visiting Professor of Toyama University; and a new member of the S.S.S.

I cannot send to you, in this letter, a copy of the sheaf of more than thirty papers which was sent to me by Mr Gogate, but I will let you borrow it if you riet to me. The "Consensus" of opinion. which he makes at the end of each group of lectures is most interesting; two of them are applicabl to our own efforts.

"INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH, CONSENSUS.

Whether we like it or not, English is firmly saddled in hier education and hier business. Our languages ar not likely to displace it totally; Roman Script machines will be always needed."

"PHONETIC PERFECTION. CONSENSUS.

Try to make the script phonetic, but do not overstress the point. Pronunciation is an important factor but convenience too must be seen"

"RESPELLING ENGLISH WORDS. CONSENSUS.

English words which have entered our language should be re-spelled, as our perception (or distortion) of pronunciation" — should this apply to place-names which are foreign to us e.g. Paris or Pari.

6. AN EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST ROMAN LIPI SAMMELAN

Edited by Madhukar N. Gogate

We must integrate as a nation, and we needed link languages. We chose Hindi in Devanagari script, and English, for the purpose. It was earlier hoped that Hindi would replace English, in the course of time. This did not happen, one reason being that the non-Devanagari people felt handicapped, to buy machines for their scripts as well as Devanagari script. Hindi could therefore progress only as a semi-conversational, bazar link language. This is unfortunate. We needed a rich, Hindi link language, in which currents of thoughts from all corners of India would flow, to give us a national personality. With due respects for English, it is not a mass language, and it does not stir us emotionally. As a matter of fact, too much use of English creates sort of snobbishness, and cuts roots with the country.

Advocates of Hindi suggested that non-Devanagari languages should adopt Devanagari. In a way, this is an admission that scripts can be changed. In the same token, one can suggest Roman lipi for Hindi.

Under Constitution, which is difficult to amend, Government of India is committed to Devanagari for Hindi. Some years ago, Government formulated a comprehensive Devanagari, with extra symbols, to suit all languages. This proposal was not accepted by people. In the meantime, English is marching ahead as a compulsory second language in all high schools in India.

During freedom struggle, we were anti-Roman, as we had to boost public morale. But 37 years of

freedom have given us some maturity. World too has changed. Let us now give a fair trial to Roman lipi. Our languages can then just "grab" machines used for English, at all levels. Our languages would get elevated to new heights, at the same time opening new links for integration, development of Hindi, and fast literacy drive. Roman lipi is linear and scores over our multitier scripts. (Analogy of linear .25 and multitier ¼ comes to mind. Decide, which is suitable).

We are aware that Romanization is not as easy as it looks. There are many problems. What rules of orthography? Since Government is not interested, who is going to teach Roman lipi to peoples? And what exactly are the benefits of Romanization? And so on.

Apart from fixing sound-symbol relations, the Sammelan should consider these various problems of popularization.

Response to our call for papers was small, probably because our institution is new, and it was not taken seriously. Still, there are enough valuable papers and notes, which will churn our minds. For reasons of economy, we had to use cyclostyling and omit all non-Roman symbols.

We invite your written comments, and participation in the Sammelan. Proceedings of the Sammelan will be published by 1st January 1985, and they will be sent to members of Roman Lipi Parishad, authors, Sammelan participants and any other persons who convey their interest before 15th December 1984. Suggestions are also invited for holding a Second Sammelan after one year, in some other city.

We are proud of our near-Phonetic Davanagari.
It is like Gold.
But we do not use gold, in day to day transactions.
We use paper currency.
Similarly we may use Roman Lipi.
Roman Lipi for our progress!

7. ENGLISH SPELLING REFORMS

Delegates to the First Roman Lipi Sammelan who are planning the use of roman script can also bear in mind that the time must be coming when the major international language of the world, has an international spelling,

Most people who use the English language today are not using it as their mother tongue. They are not of British or American origin. More than 600 million people use English language today, and the numbers of non-native speakers increase every year. It is *their* language, for international use and they have a right to have the easiest spelling for easiest international communication.

An international spelling for English at present must obviously be very close to what exists now, to avoid disruption. It would be best to keep present English spelling but clean it up. The clutter and irregularities can be cleaned up.

For example, the first paragraph is rewritten below with different spellings. Is it easier?
"Delegats to th First Roman Lipi Sammelan who ar planning th use of roman script can aulso bair in mind that th time must be cumming when th majer internasional languaj of th werld has an internasional spelling."

Extract from an article printed in Madhukar N. Gogate of Bombay's "Roman Lippi Sammelan" papers.

Mrs Valerie Yule, Dept. of Psychology, University of Aberdeen Scotland.

Section Four

8. A FRIENDLY APPEAL TO THE SIMPLIFIED SPELLING SOCIETY

By a foreigner
November 1984

Dear Sirs,

The aim of a justified noble cause like English spelling reform is unalterable but obviously the best approach to it is not.

A statesman is perhaps obliged to adjust his policy to attain some purpose as social and political conditions change. A once-for-all university accepted valid English spelling reform should be built up on the full phonetic knowledge of conventional English orthography rather than prejudice or localism.

That knowledge is very complex but could be available now.

It could be shown by phonetic analysis that a reformed spelling has been rejected by the public because it is deficient in phonetics. Without intervention by the government, however, the reform could never be realised.

I recommend listing out the phonetic obstacles standing in the way of reform. It could be most difficult to deal with weak syllables, but today research in fundamental phonetics has developed to a new level and could settle the matter.

I appeal to the Simplified Spelling Society to look carefully into the matter of English phonetic structure and taking resolute actions.

From Mr Peh Ling Lee, Ganzou, Jiangxi Province, China.

A HOPE EXPRESSED BY RAYMOND ELSER OF LYONS U.S.A

18 Desember 1984

Hoep dhøt fyr (fiea) iz just paat ør øn ilabøsit smøek skreen før ødopting Vasilyerz' alføbit fø Nue Speling

The following article was written in 1981 by Committee Member Gilbert Rae (London) He has revised his idea on I and Y in 1985. It will be interesting to compare this with the Working Party's conclusions in 1985. There is so much agreement among reformers and the same difficult decisions to make about words like "ought".

M. Cross

[Gilbert Rae: see [Journal 2](#) Item 9, [News 3](#) Item 6]

9. PHONETIC SIMPLIFICATION OF ENGLISH SPELLING by Gilbert Rae

When Dr Johnson's dictionary was published in 1755, he must have given up all hope of English spelling ever again being so near to phonetic simplicity as it once had been. There were too many immigrant words from other countries. It is obvious however, that he was revealing his subconscious belief in the advantage of a phonetic language, when he said "The best spoken English, as a general rule, is that which deviates least from the written word".

For the benefit of newcomers to this subject, it should be explained that a phonetic language has one letter to one sound. Learn the sounds of the letters and, hey presto, one can read! What could be simpler? English however cannot be converted to fully phonetic at a stroke, but it can be improved a certain amount, with the material we already have.

People who see English written phonetically for the first time, imagine it is something very difficult. The contrary is the truth. With a little practice, one finds that one forgets the old illogical spelling which one has been using for many years, and can only remember the new phonetic spelling!

There is one large obstacle to changing the spelling. It is not possible to change all books overnight. Nor is it possible for all the people to change overnight, and some may not want to change at all. There will be millions of books in the old spelling which will not be replaced or discarded for a long time to come. The old and new spelling must therefore exist together for years, and spelling of many words will be "permissive". It will be necessary to keep a certain similarity between old and new. This has been done in the present scheme. The key word is RECOGNITION. Apart from that, the scheme is confined to putting our house in order. For example, surely there should have been one letter "t" dropped from putting, without anyone needing permission to do so. "Putting" should belong to golf only.

The first stage of this scheme is really to make some preliminary moves to facilitate the change.

- 1.. All schools to teach English Phonetics for reading, so far as is possible.
- 2.. A system of accents to be used initially in teaching reading and pronunciation. This removes the need for guessing sounds, and without having to unlearn anything later.
- 3.. Convert all PH pronounced as F, into F. Apart from words throughout the dictionary being affected, there are more than 600 words with initial Ph to be transplanted to F. This is a trial run for this kind of conversion.
- 4.. Convert all words embodying 'ough' and 'augh' into something more rational phonetically. These words have been screaming for rationalisation for years. This is a trial run for an isolated group conversion.

	NEW		NEW
(doh)	(doh)	draught	draft
dough etc.	doah	laugh	laaf (2nd 'a' can be)
though etc	tho	laughter	laafter (dropped later)
through etc.	thru	slaughter	slauhter
bough	bowh	aught	auht
nought	nowt	caught	kauht
drought	drowt	fraught	frauht
naught	nauht	ought	oht
		dauhter	daughter
bought	boht	taught	tauht

brought	broht	(taut)	(taut)
fought	foht		
sought	soht		
wrought	wroht	Silent letters	are retained for recognition
cough	kof	purposes and	modification of vowels.
trough	trof		
rough	ruf		
tough	tuf		

All suggestions would be discussed and tested by the Simplified Spelling Society before being adopted. Even if the experiment stopped at this point, Britain would benefit. A greater ease in reading and Pronunciation should result. An adhesive label for one's notepaper could be issued, and in the following stages, a leaflet would be issued in conjunction with the publishers of dictionaries.

So far there is not likely to be opposition to this kind of simplification. In fact the dropping of silent letters could be encouraged. However, it is proposed to tidy our phonetic house further, and for recognition of visual relationship, either silent letters should have been dropped in the old spelling or we must wait till the new is established before doing so. Of course, like everything else in English there are exceptions to the rule. The word 'program' was creeping into Britain in 1920 thanks to the American movies, but since the talkies arrived it has been going out again. On its own merits, 'program' is better than 'programme'. The visual relationship is clear. It is unlikely to be changed in any way, and can not be pronounced wrongly, so 'program' could be adopted immediately.

Further stages of simplification could meet with opposition, but with the passage of time, the government, the Education Authorities, School Examiners, Private Employers, and Public Employers, could see the advantages of the stage which had been reached. They might even enjoy Permissive English as much as Franglais! Cooperation with the publishers of dictionaries will be essential.

Since they would get increased trade, it is probable that they would look on simplified spelling favourably.

An outline of the 2nd stage can now be given. It consists in ending the use of hard C, and Q.

1..Hard C should be replaced by K. e.g. kleen kollar akt.

2..Q should be replaced by K.

..QU, when U is sounded, should be replaced by KW. e.g. KWIK KWEEN

The rule, with the usual exceptions, is that W is not in general, stressed. This seems to be the only reason for continuing to use letter W.

..Silent 'tails' as in antique, must be dropped when Q is replaced by K. Thus: ANTIK

Greek K

It could be an improvement if all Greek words which have been latinised in spelling, were converted again to the original Greek. This would be a matter for the Simplified Spelling Society of course. Example: Encephalitis should be enkefalitis.

Soft C to become S or SS?

In many cases this would be satisfactory, but what about CELL, MICE, & SCIENCE? SELL, MYSE and SYENSSE do not seem useful. In special cases use SC — SCELL, MYSCE and SCYENSCE? A solution to this is still being sought.

CH as in loch is easily solved. Change it to LOKH.

CH as in MUCH — remains as it is now.

This stage is labelled Stage 3, but in working it out practically, the stages are likely to have their numbers altered, if not their content.

Soft G to be replaced by J

George would become Jeorje or Jorj.

Gem would become jem, and gist would become jist.

Against the old rules, G in GET and GIRL is hard,

but in the new phonetic ruleg is always hard.

This is stage 4 and is kept separate as it is the only alteration made to English vowel usage.

I and Y - New Rules

To have one vowel with three pronunciations is ridiculous.

To have a second vowel with almost the same three pronunciations is mad! The two vowels are I and Y.

The 2 short vowels are given in.. *Whisky*

The 2 long vowels are given in ... *Fine Sky*

For the most part the French I = EE English. e.g. *Machīne, Prestīge, Antīque.*

It is nearly always foreign words which use ... Y French = EE Engl.

The new rules demand that

English I be always short: *Whĩskĩ*

English Y be always long: *Fyne Sky.*

The French sounds can remain as now, or if desired they can be changed to the English EE, or a Single E with the long accent.

Y as a consonant is the only other sound attached to Y.

It remains unchanged. The consonant is easily recognised by always being followed by one or more vowels, e.g. YE YEAR and YIELD. It is pronounced as a French Y (=Eng.EE) but muted.

This mute makes it a genuine consonant. The vowel following is always stressed.

It may be observed that new uses of old symbols can cause confusion, unless diacritic marking is used. With the new rules then short i may have to carry two dots or some other mark. There is no long i. Long Y can have the traditional long vowel mark. There is no short Y in the new rules. The French I and Y do not need an accent but, for clarity, can carry any suitable symbol as accent e.g. the equal sign *machīne marīne.*

This particular spelling reform seems easy to perform in some respects. People have been using it with nouns and without accents since 1914, and probably before that. Possibly the I & Y reform could have been a first stage reform!

The simplified spellings considered here are enough to employ one's interest for a long time. In a future second section there are many more — most of the vowels, sounds which have become attached to the wrong letters e.g. A and O, other irregularities, and all the odds and ends of spelling and pronunciation to rectify.

For the final stage, the remaining letters which have become attached to wrong basic sounds are A and O. These must be regularized. Then there are S and Z, whose duties overlap now and again, and X = KS or GZ in a similar position. W and U also overlap. Finally there is E which sticks to its own sounds but likes other vowels to accompany it.

1..A pronounced as O.

It is possible to write "all" as AULL (already there is the word "awl"). Preferably AU should have been as in German HAUS sounded as in "house". It would also be practical to write "all" as OAL or simply as OLL. Another suggestion is for the public to pronounce A as A (short).

It is necessary here to give the three sounds of U.

Short U sound is explosive as in FUN, BUN, GUN.

Long U sound as in PULL, FULL.

Diphthong U as in MULE, PURE. As if written MIULE, PIURE. Most dictionaries give this diphthong as long U.

2..Short O is correct as O in OR.

Long O is correct as in ORE

Short O can be explosive, sounding same as short U in SUN, SON. Should pronunciation not revert to natural short O, it could be marked with a stress-mark 'sün.

There are many irregular, odd, unique illogical sounds;-

NEW				
do	du	flood		One
to	tu	floor	tomb	once
too	tuu	food	comb	
*Two	tuo		women	
tow	towe		woman	
(toe)	(toe)		done	

* Only Scots pronounce 'two' correctly.

The above could be simplified or regularized at any suitable time.

3..S and Z do not need to be changed for the time being. For the most part, pronunciation is automatic. With an aspirate or unvoiced letter on either side of S, the S is sibilant. With voiced letter on either side it is sounded as Z. There are exceptions.

4..X = KS or GZ for the most part follows a rule similar to that for S and Z. As an initial letter X is usually pronounced as Z.

5..U and W overlap. Few should be pronounced FEEU. FEU is correct. Language should be langwage Quick — qwick. Etc.

This is really the end of this scheme. It is intended only as an effort to produce a start in simplifying spelling. To stop at any stage however would not mean wasted effort, but it would be regretted if the scheme was not completed. There is much to be simplified after that too. So far, only large scale accepted irregularities of single letter pronunciation have been dealt with here. Two ways of spelling one sound, means one spelling is regarded as irregular.

10. Ken Tillema, Chatham, Ontario CANADA

Ken Tillema — the man who makes the people of the Chatham area of Canada know about spelling reform and admit its necessity and its possibility. He has sent me an excellent magazine of which, this month, I can only show a page.

I am impressed that a contributor should write to him to say that schoolchildren should not waste time learning how to spell our unspellable spelling but should "*use it to create or convey beautiful or practical meanings*". I was saddened tho' not surprised to hear the two replies to John Ogden's letter on BBC Radio "Feed Back" the other day. One lady was *furious* because she believed that we wanted to tamper with what she described as "Our beautiful and flexible language".

To that John Ogden comments "People need to be re-assured that we do not contemplate an assault on language itself, but rather to do it the service of representing it more accurately".

I hope we, like Ken Tillema, can bring that home to people in 1985

EDITOR

SPELING

MAGAZIN Chatham ON. Septdes 1984 third triəd

Short Speling, Chatham Ontario.

Deer M. Tillema: We wer amusd by yur leter in th Open Forum of th Lakvil Journol on May 10, espesiali so, as we hav bin kompyling a list of werds that we konsider veri liojikoli speld. Sens we ar medikol asistents, we ar konsernd prymerili with medikol terminoloji, and thot that yu shud perhaps konsider a apendix tu yur diksioneri. We ar shur it wud be apresiated by medikol personel and patients alyk.

Enklozd ar a few exampols. Senserli, Karen Bowman, Beth O'Neal. NewHaven Ct.

periferal, hemeroyds, diafram, hipertenshun, dizeez, nurology, sykiatry, sykosis, roomatic (rumatik) fone, hart, stomak, brane, nee, fazishun, bak

Deer Beth and Karen:

Thankyu kyndli for yur leter showing th need for a understandabol efishient speling for medikol terms. Yur speling list made a lot of sens tu me, as wel as I'm shur, tu meni peepol.

Th onli reeson that som kering and wel kwalifyd persons du not bekom nurses, is that th speling of meni medikol names is just tu frytning. If th werds wer shortend, and wer riten as spoken, they wud be eezi tu remember. Meni nursing students fale just bekoz of mal-formd speling.

Long medikol werds, with lame leters in them, such as "sykosis", mak doktors seem smarter and mor important than they reli ar. I'm shur that simpler speling (sound speling) wud demisthify dizeezes for patients.

Th meening of most werds kan not be asertaind from its komponents. "Under-stand" doz not meen stand under. "Ortho" doz not meen "strait".

Wud yu form a smol organyzasion in order tu promot a sane speling? Yu kud print a poster, or ryt leters tu newspapers. Or ... ? Wud yu ask ol yur frends tu yuz short speling, wer posibol?

In a living langwij, speling must grow along with changing pronunsiasion. But our spelling has sort of dyd, as it no longer represents kurent speech, but speech of th 1500's befor th advent of speling-meening diksioneris. Our speling is sik; our langwij has "diksionerytus"(frozen speling).

I hope that yu wil promot short speling, — naturol short speling.

It's a lot of fun. Pleez feel free tu ryt agen. Hapi Speling.

Deer editor:

A politikol komision has kold th american edukasionol sisteml "mediokre" and "a risk tu th nasional sekuriti". Oan reeson this is so, is that skols are wasting tu much tym on lerning "how tu spel owr unspelabel speling" insted of on "using speling tu kreate or konvey beautiful or pratikol meenings".

Now th korekt speling of "laf" is L-A-F, akording tu th prinsipol of simbolik. speling in alfabetikol ryting. Fyv hundred yers ago wen th "gh" and "au", wer enunsiated, th korekt speling was indeed "Laugh".

Luge is a nys french speling but a poor amerikan speling.

Bekoz english speling is inkongruent and is not geerd tu pronunsiasion, it has bekom th most obstruktiv faktor in elementari edukasion. Pleez spel "laf" as l-a-f, so that th diksionaris kan rekord this proper speling in ther buk of named meenings.

From Robert Craig, Weston-Super-Mare.

11. LINKAN'S QUETISBARQ ADREC RITAN IN NJU WARLD SPELIG

Mr Craig is an ardent worker for reform but as you see he makes more changes than the Society would accept.

Foarskoar aend cevan jians agau ouar faazars broat foarcz on zic kontinant a nju neixan, kancyvd in libarty, aend dedikeitid tu za propasixan zaet oal men aar dryeited ykual.

Nou wy aar enqeidxd in a greit civil woar testig wezar zaet neixan, oar eny neixan cau kancyvd aend cau dedideitid, kaen log endjuar. Wy aar met on a greit baetal-fyld ov zaet woar. Wy haev kam tu dedikeit a poarxan ov zaet fyld aes a fainal restig-pleic foar zaus hu hiar qeiv zear laivs zaet zaet neixan mait liv. It is oaltuqezar fitig aend propar zaet wy xud dv zic, bat in a laardxar cenc, wy kaenot dedikeit, wy kaenot haelau, wy kaenot koncikreit zic ground. Zaus breiv men, livig aend ded, hu straqald hiar haev koncikreitid it faar abav ovar poar pouar tu aed oar ditraekt. Za world wil lital naut, noar log rimembar, wot wy cei hiar, bat it kaen, nevar farget wot zei did hiar.

*c = s

s = z (except flanking consonant)

z = th (voiced)

cz = th (unvoiced)

j = y q = g

g = ng

x = sh

dx = j

tx = ch

a = e(r) the shura vowel

aa = a (r) (pass)

ae = a (cat)

y = ee

au = oe

ei = ae

ai = ie

u = ou a = u (Cup)

oa = au

* Note C = S in Russian and some Greek.

Section Five

[David Stark: see [Journals](#), [Newsletters](#)]

12. FROM DAVID STARK

LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

I am often amazed by the ingenuity of spelling inventors and am confident that a reformed orthography can be perfected to meet almost any given criteria. There has been less time devoted to the problems of introducing a revised orthography to an existing, literate English-speaking World, but I am sure that the problems involved in this can be adequately defined and solved. However, I am less confident that spelling reformers are in a position to convince existing literates that there is a great need for reform, and that there are social benefits to be gained from the troublesome process of conversion from one orthography to another.

The last in-depth discussion I remember hearing on this topic was the paper of Abe Citron, entitled "Spelling Reform As a Redistribution of Power", presented at the Spelling Reform Conference in Edinburgh in 1981. I would like to start to redress the balance with this article.

There will no doubt be many people who will argue that all languages are equally difficult to learn, and that it cannot be advantageous for, say, Spanish and Italian to be more consistently alphabetic than our own, because their cultures, standards of education and political systems do not seem superior to ours. After all, it was English and French speaking peoples who created most of the great imperial and commercial empires of the last two centuries, and English and French have the most complicated of all the alphabetic orthographies in the World. This argument would admit that there will be some people who will fail to master reading and writing, but there will inevitably be failures in life, and anyway, the undoubted increase in poor spelling in recent generations is a good indicator of falling educational standards.

There is certainly a relationship between language and society, but it is more difficult to define this and determine which affects which. Rash claims have been made about peoples and languages, based in reality on social prejudice and subjective judgement. "French is the natural language for love, Italian for opera, and it isn't surprising that Germany should have spawned Fascism with such a hard, guttural language, ideal for ordering people about."

It is no wonder that most scholars steer clear of such arguments, but with a little more linguistic evidence, the theories become more credible. I remember reading an article in the "Observer" by an English professor which sought an explanation for the lack of a formal form of the second person pronoun in English, a feature which is present in many other European languages. For example, in French one has to distinguish between people distant and intimate in order to know whether one should use "vous" or "tu" when saying YOU.

One can trace the beginnings of the loss of this distinction in English back to the time when the language was almost solely spoken by the peasants, who were all equals, and when the aristocrats and churchmen spoke mainly Norman French. The inclination was established, therefore, for social distinctions not to be applied to English grammar, although the separate, singular and informal forms did make a comeback in the King James bible with the words "thou", "thy" and "thee".

Scholastic research can demonstrate how linguistic features arose, but licence is required to interpret their effects on society today. The author of the article then went on to postulate that if,

traditionally, a German businessman has to decide when to start using the familiar form of "you" when addressing new business associates, a first name relationship may take longer to foster, and he will also be less likely to call a more senior colleague by his first name, lest this is taken as a sign of disrespect. The lack of such formality in English grammar, and the consequent aid to social fluidity, should expedite the formation of business relationships among English speaking people. This is an attractive hypothesis (and gratifying if one speaks English), as it appears to be borne out by reality, especially in America.

The domain of spelling reform extends beyond an individual grammatical feature to the more general observation that English orthography is difficult and time-consuming to learn, and that this must have a detrimental effect on English speaking societies and peoples. Again, we can trace the reasons for the state of English spelling today in a fairly certain, scholastic manner. However, the translation of the effects of such a spelling system on contemporary society is more subjective, and anyone committed to spelling reform will start with the premise that traditional orthography is a liability and set out to prove it.

There are about 2 million adults in the UK with serious literacy deficiencies. An easier orthography would surely reduce this number and benefit society. In an attempt to extend literacy and education among their people, some countries have already simplified their spelling systems. China has greatly simplified its "picture" writing symbols with the desire to make its people more skilled and competitive in World labour markets.

China is of course a communist country, and would probably require more dramatic simplification of its orthography to match the levels of literacy and mass education of most western countries, which have alphabetic orthographies. Simplification of English spelling would seek to further extend the levels of literacy in English-speaking countries, thus extending the skills and effective democratic power of individual people.

It is surely no coincidence that Greece was the birthplace of both democracy and alphabetic writing as we know it today. In ancient Greece, if one knew how to pronounce a word correctly, one could also read or write it. The alphabet delivered literacy from highly educated and privileged kings and priests to more numerous merchants and scholars. The spread of knowledge mushroomed thanks to the alphabet.

It is an apparent anomaly, therefore, that English and French, the two languages whose adherents have done most to develop and promote modern democracy, have themselves the most complicated alphabetic orthographies. Perhaps traditional English orthography has been beneficial to democracy as it developed. Explanations must be sought.

All languages are difficult for foreigners to learn. They contain unusual constructions, grammatical irregularities, subtle semantic nuances, and a host of other linguistic complexities which make them memory intensive. Languages cannot be learned by quick formula or straightforward logic. One has to "live" a language to learn it properly. This gives native speakers an advantage over foreigners who might seek to enter a society from outside and take advantage of its knowledge and institutions.

A language is a key to knowledge, the key only being available to those who have the time or take the time to learn it; and during this time, these people can be inculcated with the standards expected of them when using the language. If this is true of spoken language, it is even more true of written language, especially in a democracy.

It is an absurd notion to expect millions of people to have a say in the way they are governed

without experiencing chaos. It is so absurd that only a small number of countries in the World can claim to be true, stable democracies. Freedom of information and freedom of expression are the two main pillars of democracy, and in the fight to obtain and preserve these, the pen is mightier than the sword. Would it be sensible to hand out swords to all and sundry without first ensuring that they could use them responsibly?

If it takes time to teach English literacy, there will be time to instil the rules, standards and laws expected in adulthood. Lots of practice is necessary to learn to read and write, and the establishment controls the subject matter for this. Furthermore, if the British Empire was built on the misery of childhood, what better way to drill children than by learning spelling lists; to discipline them by punishing them for the inevitable-spelling mistakes; and to teach them obedience by encouraging them to accept certain things (like spelling) to be correct and irrefutable, no matter how unreasonable they might seem.

In a democracy, a difficult alphabetic orthography is better than an ideographic one, like Chinese, because it is less complicated to teach. A difficult alphabetic orthography is better than an easy one, like Spanish, because it extends the level of difficulty between reading and writing. Reading, being less precise, is the easier of the two to learn, and English reading is probably not much more difficult to learn for English children than Spanish reading is for Spanish children. However, English spelling is a great deal more complex. This means that English-speaking children will, by comparison, assimilate more information by reading before they will have mastered spelling. In theory, it would be impossible, unlike say Spanish, for someone to conquer literacy after only a few years of education (and indoctrination), and proceed to publish convincing revolutionary and anarchic pamphlets.

To master English spelling has been a major part of the initiation procedure for acceptance into positions of power and influence in society. Spelling mistakes were ridiculed, dampening the confidence of the poor speller. Employers would judge, and still do judge, the educational abilities of potential employees by their spelling correctness.

If spelling reform is to succeed, reformers would have to reassure existing literates that their cherished culture, which is associated with their conception of written language, will not be shattered if spelling is simplified. If my theory about the historical relationship of English orthography and the development of modern democracy is correct, reformers must persuade critics that the democracies in English-speaking countries are now sufficiently robust to allow easier acquisition of literacy, and that the persuasion of the modern media plays a similar stabilising role to the one which an authoritarian educational system once did. Reformers must also argue that easier acquisition of English by foreigners is important in extending the international influence of the English language, which may hold the greatest promise of security for both ourselves and the whole world in advancing international understanding.

I have a "gut feeling" that spelling reform for English would be correct, and am trying to develop and justify the concept. However, I also recognise that many people I speak to have a "gut feeling" that traditional orthography should not be tampered with, a feeling which suggests reasons for objection beyond the obvious ones they cite — inability for future generations to read traditional literature, loss of homonyms, forcing spelling into a dialect straightjacket, etc. The strength of this feeling is such that they seem to defend traditional orthography with the same passion that they would defend the soil on which they were born.

Discussion about cause and effect in society is in the realm of reasoned opinion, not within the confines of strict rules of scientific calculation or research, with which spelling reformers might feel

more secure. Reformers cannot restrict themselves to alphabet manipulation and ignore the resultant social engineering which gives reform a reason for existence. They cannot take it for granted that traditional orthography is a failure, and that a reformed spelling will be a success. The social effects of both must be fully defined and explored if hearts as well as minds are to be won.

Comment

I agree with David Stark that spelling should indicate the way to pronounce a word, and that simple spelling would make for more literate people and that that can lead to an enlightened democracy. But I don't agree that poor spelling indicates a falling of educational standards, it merely indicates that teachers think that other matters are more important. If the educational standards *had* declined, how could it be that since *my* childhood people have gone to the moon, and to the depth of the sea, have calculated the beginning of life and the cold finish of the earth? It is today's teachers who have started children on the way to dealing with all that. They should be congratulated!

As for the notion that the discipline of learning our spellings led to the creation of the empire — that was brought about by discovery and trade and the victory in battle of illiterate soldiers for the Empire was ours before the Education Act. Learning peculiar spellings produces nothing powerful but a simpler phonetically pronounceable English Spelling sheet.

[Aye Citron: see [Bulletins](#), [Anthology](#), [Journals](#), [Newsletters](#)]

13. Words cut for speed in the "Computer Age" by Professor Abe Citron.

Readers might have fun making sentences of the words and asking someone else to read them.

SPD SPLG 100 Speed Words

	<i>t.o.</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>freq</i>	<i>l.s.p.m.w.</i>
1	the	t	59,971	139,942
2	of	o	35,411	36,411
3	and	n	28,852	57,704
4	is	z	10,099	10,099
5	he	h	9,543	9,543
6	for	f	9,489	18,978
7	with	w	7,289	21,867
8	be	b	6,377	6,377
9	are	r	4,393	8,786
10	you	u	3,288	6,572
11	she	s	2,589	5,780
12	more	m	2,216	6,648
13	can	c	1,772	3,544
14	do	d	1,363	1,363
15	like	l	1,290	3,870
16	even	e	1,171	3,513
17	year	y	949	2,847
18	people	p	847	4,235
19	just	j	872	2,616
20	good	g	807	2,421
21	very	v	796	2,388
22	kind	k	313	939
23	experience	x	276	2,484
24	question	q	<u>257</u>	<u>1,799</u>
	<i>totals</i>		201,498	360,664

	<i>t.o.</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>freq</i>	<i>l.s.p.m.w.</i>
1	to	tu	26,149	21,190
2	that	tt	10,595	9,616
3	was	wz	9,616	6,997
4	his	hz	6,997	5,133
5	had	hd	5,133	4,369
6	from	fm	4,369	4,361
7	but	bt	4,361	4,609
8	not	nt	4,609	3,292
9	one	wn	3,292	3,284
10	were	wr	3,284	3,037
11	her	hr	3,037	2,714
12	would	wd	2,714	2,619
13	him	hm	2,619	4,944
14	been	bn	2,472	2,252
15	who	hu	2,252	2,096
16	out	ot	2,096	3,922
17	said	sd	1,961	1,632
18	new	nu	1,632	3,234
19	some	sm	1,617	4,797
20	could	cd	1,599	1,412
21	two	tw	1,412	2,250
22	made	md	1,125	4,064
23	before	bf	1,016	1,934
24	back	bk	967	1,260
25	come	cm	630	1,839
26	write	rt	613	2,915
27	without	wo	583	<u>994</u> 124,065
28	high	hy	<u>497</u>	
	<i>totals</i>		107,447	

	<i>t.o.</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>freq</i>	<i>l.s.p.m.w.</i>
1	this	the	5148	5,148
2	have	hav	3,941	3,941
3	which	wch	3,562	7,124
4	there	thr	2,724	5,448
5	when	whn	2,331	2,331
6	will	wil	2,224	2,224
7	what	wht	1,908	1,908
8	them	thm	1,789	1,789
9	time	tym	1,599	1,599
10	then	thn	1,377	1,377
11	over	ovr	1,236	1,236
12	most	mst	1,013	1,013
13	where	whr	938	938
14	your	yur	923	923
15	well	wel	897	897
16	should	shd	888	2,664

17	because	bcz	883	3,532
18	little	ltl	831	2,493
19	state	stt	808	1,616
20	here	hir	750	750
21	never	nvr	698	1,396
22	might	myt	672	1,344
23	know	noe	633	633
24	however	hvr	552	2208
25	every	evy	491	982
26	does	duz	485	485
27	though	tho	<u>442</u>	<u>1,326</u>
	<i>totals</i>		39,741	57,323

	<i>t.o.</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>freq</i>	<i>l.s.p.m.w.</i>
1	their	ther	2,670	2,670
2	through	thru	969	2,907
3	still	stil	782	782
4	political	plcl	728	3,640
5	under	undr	707	707
6	while	whyl	680	680
7	himself	hmsf	603	1,809
8	house	hows	591	591
9	course	cors	465	930
10	enough	enuf	430	860
11	business	bzns	392	1,568
12	money	muny	265	265
13	education	edcn	214	1,070
14	secretary	secy	191	955
15	committee	cmty	<u>168</u>	<u>840</u>
	<i>totals</i>		9,845	20,274

	<i>t.o.</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>freq</i>	<i>l.s.p.m.w.</i>
1	against	ugnst	686	1,252
2	thought	thaut	515	1,030
3	school	scool	492	492
4	something	smthg	450	1,800
5	college	colij	267	534
6	knowledge	nolij	<u>145</u>	<u>580</u>
	<i>totals</i>		2,495	5,688

total letters svd per million words is 568,014

"Freq" means frequency per million (variously selected) textual words. "l.s.p.m.w." means letters saved per million textual words. The one and two-letter words of this list (52 wrds) will furnish to a child or an adult over 30 % of the words needed to write and read English at the high school level. The total hundred words, having a frequency of 361,026 furnish 36% of the words needed. They save over 10% of the letters used in writing English.