

# Spelling Progress Bulletin

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

"A closed mind gathers no knowledge; an open mind is the key to wisdom".

Published Quarterly  
Mar, June, Oct, Dec.  
Subscription \$3.00 a year.  
Volume IV, No. 1  
March, 1964

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## Announcements and Late News

Three events of importance to Reading Teachers will occur in England this Summer at Trinity College, Oxford.

On July 20 to 24, an i/t/a Workshop will be held which offers a comprehensive course in the use of the i/t/a medium of teaching reading. Lectures will be given by Sir James Pitman, John Downing, Albert J. Mazurkiewicz, Harold J. Tanyzer, from the U.S.A., Maurice Harrison, Director of Education for Oldham. Visits to nearby i/t/a schools will be arranged as well as to Stratford-on-Avon. Arrangements can be made to stay at Trinity College at a reasonable cost.

Following this will be the First British I.R.A. Conference from July 24-27, also at Trinity College. Talks will be given by Nita B. Smith, John Downing, Richard Madden, Helen Robinson, Henry Bamman, Bernard Schmidt, D. E. O'Breine, on subjects different from those at the U.S.A. Conference of the I.R.A.

Next following from July 28 to August 1, the Univ. of Oxford, Institute of Education will hold a residential conference for training teachers and college lecturers interested in the teaching of reading. This will be held at St. Hilda's College under the direction of John Downing of the Univ. of London, and will have lectures by most of the Americans listed above and also by the British experts in reading, Dr. Joyce Morris, Dr. M.D. Vernon, Dr. J. C. Daniels. Study sessions in small groups under a tutor will clarify questions raised by the lectures. These will cover important new developments in teaching reading, both in England and abroad.

If desired, three credit units can be obtained for attending the three events by registering with Dr. James B. Manwaring, Bureau of School Service, School of Education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y. Costs can also be arranged thru Syracuse.

After these events, on August 5, 1964, the Third Annual Conference of the Reading Reform Foundation will be held in Hotel Roosevelt, New York City. The guest speaker will be Dr. Max Rafferty, Supt. of Public Instruction and Director of Education of the State of Calif. An address of importance will be given by Watson Washburn, President of the Reading Reform Foundation, on *The Reading Crisis - its Cause and Care*. Following this will be a movie film showing phonetic instruction on an old Arizona Indian Reservation, presented by Mrs. Raymond Rubicam, Vice President. A panel of experts will discuss "Old and New Methods of Testing Reading Ability."

Further information and arrangements to attend can be made with the Reading Reform Foundation, New York.

Since the previous Bulletin, several new i/t/a projects have been announced in U.S.A. and Canada. Dr. Fred Zannon, Supt. of Curriculum of Santa Monica City Schools announced over the radio that remedial reading instruction using i/t/a will start next fall.

Dr. E. N. Wright, Acting Director of Research, Board of Education, City of Toronto, Canada, started last fall on a project entitled *Proposed intensive study of pupils learning to read through the Pitman i/t/a*. This is not a duplication of the project in England but a study of how best to use the i/t/a and the problems encountered by children in using the two methods - i/t/a and conventional spelling.

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[i.t.a. letter pairs marked in green, e.g. **ee** should be joined. The base of t of **th** in *that* curls to the left and the crosspiece touches the h; the base of t in **th** as in *thread* curls to the right as in T.O.]

## **LEARNING TO READ In The Silent World**

An unfamiliar piece of typography on page 291 of this issue introduces a subject to which teachers of the deaf might well give their minds, Sir James Pitman's 'Augmented Roman' alphabet and the claims he has now substantiated that it helps children to learn to read. Having proved itself in hearing school experiments sponsored by the University of London Institute of Education, can it now help deaf children?

Of all the subjects calculated to raise ire in the minds of traditionalists none is more potent than 'messaging about with our alphabet'. We've had it a good many centuries. We are familiar with its idiosyncrasies and contradictions, we can handle it (most of us) and mould it and we answer sentimentally to the colour and imagery it evokes. 'Love' is a beautiful word but we shie away from 'Luv' as if it were deformity; how full of noble earnest is 'Thorough' - how feeble 'Thoro' and where would the vituperative force of 'Blackguard' be if we spelt it 'Blagard'?

Well, it's all right for us. We know. We long ago got over any distress. We might have felt on discovering that although *bough* and *how* sound the same, *cough* and *cow* don't while *row* and *dough* might or might not as our context takes us. The teaching world might be a better place if the sorrows of earliest childhood were not so completely forgotten 'You'll get over it' we say heartily, whether it is a grazed knee or a humiliation. We forget how we ourselves once suffered; that little limbs are more tender than calloused ones, inexperienced minds far more sensitive to ridicule.

Why, says Sir James should any infant at its most eager and unformed stage, be forced to swallow our untidy language whole? The one thing the really innocent cannot reconcile themselves to is contradiction. 'Do this, it's good - don't do that, it's bad. But now you can do that - it's good now because it's a Wednesday'. Or some other nonsense. F makes Frog. Learn it thoroughly. But be sure, tomorrow, you are not spelling Photo with an F. What the augmented alphabet will do is teach a child *consistently*, one symbol one sound, until he has assimilated a fair amount of language. Then, when he is older he can be taught the variations, the curlicues and vagaries we use because they are traditional. At the beginning he will recognize **ee** as meaning what we call long e, he will read **leef** and **beet** and **meeter** always the same - one symbol one rule - and only later will he be asked to master the curious fact that these sounds - or lip movements - are traditionally spelt leaf, beet, and meter.

The first reaction to those who have not gone into the question will probably be 'why put the poor kids through something twice if it need only be done once?' But the nub of the argument is that reading and writing are never learnt 'once' but many times over - in capital Roman and lower case Roman, capital and small-letter script. And if Augmented Roman or any other system can be used to build up language more quickly than these multiple systems then the deaf child surely needs it beyond all others.

But only the teachers can say. It is something in their very specialised highly skilled field of endeavour, and all we can ask is, will someone begin an experiment in a school for the deaf?

Reprinted by permission of *The Silent World*  
PUBLISHED BY THE ROYAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE DEAF, London OCTOBER  
1962. VOLUME 17 No. 10.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1964 p3-5]

### **TEACHING THE DEAF by SIR JAMES PITMAN, K.B.E., J.P.**

Would it not be worth finding out whether the new 'Learning to Read' Augmented Alphabet which is already helping so many hearing children, might also help in the education of deaf children? Would it not be helpful in the teaching of speech and lip-reading? Would not both these vital accomplishments be more easily acquired if the written word were presented consistently right from the beginning? Effective communication of some sort is the essential starting point of all education and a written form that is *always* the same, letters that *always* mean the same sound and lip movement, will surely make learning more easy than the complicated and inconsistent structure of traditional writing and printing.

The new Augmented Roman Alphabet has already proved itself in the teaching of children who can hear normally. It has proved particularly beneficial for just those children who experience the greatest difficulty - those who are so little communicated with at home and so little listened to when they are seeking to communicate, that they have none of the experience with words which is the essence of language, and upon which reading and writing must be based.



*James Pitman, inventor of the Augmented Roman Alphabet.*

How much more are deaf children (and their teachers) thus handicapped? For them there can be no background at all of meaningful words which may be associated with printed and written forms: for them man's most precious gift of language can come only through the eye, or the sense of touch, never through the ear.

What then are these simplifications, which are likely to be more profitable to the education of the deaf child than even to his friend who hears? How may the reception of sight-print language be made to help reception by sight-lip (and sight-manual) language and above all how may the development of receptive language in its three forces help in the development of emissive language, not only in writing, but manual and speech?

### **Consistency for simplicity**

First let us deal with the simplification which the special alphabet offers. Even more for the deaf child than the hearing child picturable nouns (a dog), demonstrable actions (taking, giving), directional motions (down, up), sensible qualities (hot, sweet, yellow), and measurable quantities (one, two, etc.) must be the starting points; structural words such as *a, and, for*, may follow only later. Take any of these words in the first class. Surely it is pedagogically essential that a single form, a consistent form, as single and as consistent as the picture which is used to demonstrate it, and as single as the concept so pictured, should first be associated with that single concept. Whereas the teacher will consistently display a particular single picture of a dog (and consistently mouth the lip-reading analogy) he needs, unless he simplifies his alphabet and thus artificially controls *all* his material, to confront the child not with one, but with a number of the written representations because D has two forms (D, d) and G has three producing DOG, Dog, Dog, dog, dog.

**Thiſ is printed in an augmented rœman alfabet, the purpoſ ov which is not, as miēt bēe ſuppœsd, tō reform our ſpelliſ, but tō imprœw the lerniſ ov reediſ. It is intended that when the beginner has aſhœvd the iniſhal ſuſceſſ ov flœwensy in thiſ ſpeſhally œsy form, hiſ fuetuer progreſſ ſhœvd bēe confiend tō reediſ in the preſent alfabetſ and ſpelliſ ov them œnly.**

**If yœ hav red as far as thiſ, the nue meedium will hav prœvd tō yœ ſeveral pointſ, the mœſt important ov which is that yœ, at eny ræt, hav œſily mæd the (hæn) from the ordinary rœman alfabet with convenſhonal ſpelliſ tō augmented rœman with ſystematic ſpelliſ.**

Since the last of these five variants is the easiest for the child to recognize and above all to write, it has been adopted in the learning alphabet as the standard invariable print-form which is to be associated both by observation of the picture of the animal and with the speech motions of the mouthing teacher. Again in the word *Taking*, 'T' has three forms (T, t, [cursive] t ), 'A' three (A, a, a), 'K' two, 'I' two, 'N' two and 'G' three.

This simplification by consistency of form, so obvious that it is normally hidden from the eyes of the literate and sighted (who control all education, not only that of the deaf) would afford great benefit itself alone to the deaf child, who needs this help so much more than his hearing friend.

But this is not the only help which the new alphabet has been designed to afford. The provision of additional characters sufficient in number to provide a single character for *every* sound of the

English language, enables clearly visible classifications of words in print to correspond with the clearly visible classifications of the speech actions of the mouthing teacher. These additional characters are so closely related to the existing digraphs - e.g. th, **th**: sh, **sh**: ou, **ou**: ee, **ee**: etc., etc. - that transition from the new alphabet to the older ones and vice versa is automatic and effortless.

### **One sound, one written form**

Speech and lip-reading are thus more easily taught in a triangular perfect relationship. The mouth actions for the sound of **ie** in *aisle* are the same as those in *isle* and *I'll*. The attempted speech of the deaf and the mouth actions of the teacher will surely be greatly assisted when the visible relationship in the mouth may be correspondingly visible in print. Conversely the estimated 20,000 inconsistencies (or 80,000 if we multiply by a factor of four for the further inconsistencies of AISLE, Aisle, [cursive] aisle, aisle, aisle in a good reader's vocabulary make quite impossible those visual classifications and those associations within each classification which, however unconsciously, are the basis of human learning.

On the average some 73% of the words on the printed page are inconsistent and thus cause difficulty even to the hearing child. In fact, the inconsistencies are even worse than 73% because there is not a single printed word which is always consistently presented. Even the indefinite article has three forms:

A, a, **a**: even the apparently consistent *in* has four: IN, In, in, [cursive] in, and the exclamation Oh! can be O! Furthermore, on the average, some 50% of the words on every page are misleading as to their speech equivalent. If *so*, *no*, *go* be taken as indicative of their speech form, then *do*, *to* and *who*, mislead. Even the definite article, the most frequently occurring of all words, is greatly misleading to the hearing child and even more so to the deaf, for there is no *t*, and for that matter no *h* spoken or heard in the word **the**.

In the field of teaching the hearing child, great benefits are being found from bringing consistency and analogical order into this vast chaos of visual mis-representation. How much more important, and therefore how much more beneficial, will such consistency and analogical order be found in teaching the far more handicapped deaf child?

Just as in the teaching of the hearing child, the use of the new alphabet leads on to the reading of ordinary print, with all its inconsistencies and misdirections, so for the deaf too it will lead towards full literacy. But for the deaf child with its inevitable lack of verbal background it is even more important that the first approach to communication should be easy - an approach which will bring encouragement and confidence. For it is even more essential for the deaf than for the hearing that the first (and only) approach should be a successful one.

### **A school experiment wanted**

Are there teachers, and is there any research worker, who would be interested in examining further these possibilities? It was from just such a question posed in *The Times Educational Supplement*, that the present research by London University Institute of Education and The National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales broke through from academic conception to practical investigation. Will this article in *The Silent World* have a similar result?

There is no need to claim acceptance of the idea (or any prejudice) that its adoption will greatly help in the teaching of the deaf, only that it is a proposition worthy of further attention.

A copy of the paper, *Learning to Read*, which was given to The Royal Society of Arts by the author of this article, is available free to anyone who cares to ask for it. [1] It is to be hoped that among

those replying will be someone able and willing to take the leadership - and the load of detail - in initially exploring and, if thought fit, in applying the idea.

Conflict between the rival schools of pedagogic thought who respectively swear by 'Look and Say' or by 'Phonics' has been resolved (because it is no longer relevant) by those who now teach by Augmented Roman. Is it not possible that some of the dispute between oralism and visualism in deaf work might be removed if reading were taught by same means. Is it the shortcomings of the child or has it been the deficiency of the medium which has created the supposed conflict?

Are there not here great possibilities? A standard pronunciation of words established on gramophone records making the choice between *bath*, *bat*, *iether*, *eether*, *much*, *mωch*, etc., etc., and even between *luutenant*, *leftenant*, to correspond with the establishment of a standard print-form is surely as desirable as it is possible. Do we sufficiently realise for instance that the mouth movement for speaking *mωch* in the varying accents of English speaking people are as different from that for *much* as *MUCH* is from *much*; that is to say virtually as great as between *beaucoup* and *much*.

### **Standardizing sound and sight**

Similarly we will become able, as we ought, to standardize the characterization of the 40 standard sounds (and thus 40 mouth actions) with the teachers' gramophone records to establish the standard pronunciation of each sound which is to be linked to that standard character. Will not all these simplifications, designed to give consistency and reliable analogy, greatly help the teacher and thus the deaf child in his attack upon an integrated verbalism? - because it must surely be right that the deaf child should seek to acquire the power of communication in an integration of all six verbal skills;

A. *Receptive* (1) lip-reading, (2) reading print, (3) reading manual methods;

B. *Emissive* (1) speech, (2) writing, (3) signing and finger-spelling.

Finally let us not forget the over-riding importance of communicative ability and of its success on the emotions and behaviour of the already handicapped child. Even to frustrate a left-handed (hearing) child by impeding his manual effectiveness leads to distress and disturbance.

So too it is being found in the course of the current reading research that impediments to effective verbalism in our present methods of teaching reading lead to dire side effects and personality damage among those who do not overcome the present, quite unnecessary, impediments. It is likely that this potentiality, which would ordinarily be overlooked, may prove the most heart-warming of all the potential benefits which this new, and no doubt provocative, idea of a consistent alphabet could achieve. The idea of applying the new medium in the teaching of the deaf was first advanced in the paper to The Royal Society of Arts in November 1960, mentioned above, but received no attention. Will it fare better in *The Silent World*?

[1] From the R.N.I.D., London.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1964 pp6,7,14]

### **The Babes of '64, by Helen Bowyer.**

In the twelve months of this Anno Domini, some 4,000,000 tiny Americans will begin their post-natal life. In most respects they show good judgement in choosing this as their land of birth and the scene of their early childhood. There are so many lands where "being a baby is the most hazardous

of all occupations" - and one can almost congratulate the poor little things who refuse to cope with it any longer, after a few months, weeks, or even days of trial. But here we have so greatly reduced infant. illness, blindness, deafness, disablement, that most of our current crop will come through their babyhood and pre-school years in pretty fair shape. It is what will happen to them *then* - if we permit it to happen - which will make them 4,000,000 of the most unfortunate little humans on the face of the earth.

They will be six years old and starting school.

Most of them will come with a hearing-understanding vocabulary of at least 10,000 words and a speaking vocabulary not much less. And a great eagerness to add to these, the *seeing* vocabulary through which Daddy and Mommie have so thrilled them with the adventures of *Jak, the Jieant Kiler*, with *Goeldiloks*, with *tauking fishez* and *dansing elvz* and *wichez rieding broomstiks throo the skie*. They will want to learn their letters and how they line themselves up to mean *muther, Ant Filis, Kuzn Jorj, wun, too, for, ait, - munki, donki, elephant, jiraf - bred, meet, kabij, spinij, orinj joos, doenuts*. If by that time we have summoned the pedagogic decency of the Mexicans across our southern border and the Russians overseas, it will be with something like this delightful consistency, this easy predictability, that these words will meet their eyes - not with the *mother, Aunt Phyllis, Cousin George - one, two, four, eight - monkey, donkey, elephant, giraffe-bread, meat, cabbage, spinach, orange juice, doughnuts*, in store for the six year olds who started school this February just past. In store altho we *know* how poor at best and how tragic at worst the results will be for some half of them. We have a preview of it in the reading retardation and failure, the alley gangs, the vandalism, the delinquency and youthful crime, the drug addiction and the out-of-school and out-of-work menace of millions of adolescents, who, eight, ten, a dozen years ago were sitting in the first grade classrooms of our lands. Tens of thousands of them under the very same teachers as these first graders of today.

Let's go back to 1952, the first school year of our present eighteen year olds. Spite of the tons of books and the acres of articles on reading which the Education press has keep pouring out since then, the trouble was essentially the same as now. Most of the children found so little alignment between the LOOK of *who, do, you, flew, blue, shoe*, and the SAY of *hoo, doo, yoo, floo, bloo, shoo*, that all that some 60% of them could show at the end of their first year was a none too certain recognition of perhaps 200 of the 350 words to which they had been exposed. Above these average achievers were some 20% who got rather more than 200 - with a tiny minority in active possession of the whole 350, and a rare few of these, of hundreds of other words which they had learned on their own. Poor little unfortunates, many of these last two groups. They've had to pay for their brightness, some of them very heavily. Pay a price which need never have been demanded of them. But we'll come back to that later.

Below the average achievers was a 20% who learned less than 200 words, ranging down to just a few, or even none. Poor little unfortunates, these, also. They were the core from which were to come a high proportion of our problem adolescents of the last four or five years. As well as less serious problems of the primary and elementary class rooms. Dumbells, seeking sanctuary from their frustration and humiliation in passive withdrawal into themselves, or avenging their wounded egos by spectacular misconduct towards their teachers and classmates. None of which need have been. None of it was inherent in the process of *learning to read* - only in learning to read *in a grossly misspelled language*. There was hardly a physically normal child in those first grade classrooms of 1952 who couldn't have managed *waul, sealing, flor, blakbord, chauk, teacher*, had the LOOK of such words been thus phonemically lined up with their SAY.

As things were, would it have helped if the seriously retarded had been kept another semester, or even a year in Grade One? In spite of the hurt to their pride this would involve, and the danger to

their "life adjustment" which separation from their "peer group" threatened. But their first grade seats were needed for the incoming beginners of 1953. Besides, First Grade reading retarded and failures had been known to catch on in Grade Two. Perhaps with new teachers and new hooks, those lumpish little Joe Jeffersons and fractious little Gregor Popskoffs.... Sometimes this *did*, but in all too many classes, the rise of last year's E's was more than matched by the fall of it's B's. In Grade Three, the downslide became even more serious, in part because the impudence, the noisiness, the spitballs, the kicks and hairpullings of the Joe's and Gregor's so distracted the attention of the teacher and class.

At this stage many schools were doing remedial work with their most serious retarded - even tho, in most cases, this was but an intensification of the classroom instruction which had failed to register. There were a lot of little memory devices, like the long tail on the end of monkey and the two little round eyes looking out of moon. There was much trial, too, of the kinesthetic method - such as writing *rim*, *hymn*, *limb*, over and over in the hope that the hand would help impress upon the brain that these last two letter-sequences rhymed with the first. One hears that in these and such like ways, many children were permanently helped. None the less, of those beginners of 1952 who reached high school, a third never learned to read beyond fifth grade norm, and tens of thousands of these not beyond fourth grade, third or even second.

And the reason they didn't was because they were deliberately, systematically prevented from doing so. If, as a group, they brought lower I.Q. s to their first classroom than did their agemates who attained sixth grade level and beyond, all the more reason why every bit of intelligence they did so bring, should have been deliberately, systematically nurtured, given every chance to burgeon to its utmost. And, there, in a wun-sien, wun-sound alfabet, was an all but magic medium for this nurture, this burgeoning. But every primary teacher in the land left it lying in the writings of Benjamin Franklin, Noah Webster, Sir Isaac Pitman, Thomas Lounsbury, Melvil Dewey, George Bernard Shaw, Upton Sinclair, the Library of the Simplified Spelling Society, and went her disastrous way with *air*, *there*, *care*, *prayer* - *phone*, *loan*, *grown*.

What was the matter with them? Most primary teachers are kindly souls and intelligent enough in other areas of the primary program. Many of them have stayed in the first three grades from a genuine love of little children. Let Billy cut his lip or bruise his knee in classroom or playground, and his mother herself couldn't be more tender and consoling. Why is it that so few of them have ever shrunk from the mental cruelty which for generations they have been inflecting on their defenseless charges-and are even now beginning to inflict on the new enrollees of this February just past? How many of them even noticed that it was mental cruelty?

In 1893, before all of our present primary teachers were born, the U.S. Bureau of Education issued Circular of Information No. 8, entitled *The Spelling Reform*. In it, the Commissioner of Education, the Honorable W. T. Harris, gives some data on the big primary grade phonemic program carried on for many years in St. Louis while he was Superintendent of its schools. Besides the ease, speed and pleasure with which the children learned to read, he claimed for it the development of logical power of mind in the pupil. He can safely be taught to analyse a word into its sounds and find the letters representing them.... hence, analytic power is trained instead of mere memory, from the day of his entrance into school-and analytic power is the basis of all thinking activity."

Can the simple tragic explanation of our primary school cruelty be that its teachers were denied this analytic training in their own early days; and so grew up undeveloped in the thinking activity required for the scrapping of these it rational spellings?

Has that been true, also, of the leadership of our Education Press, of our big educational organizations, of the reading clinics of our universities? On our Los Angeles Library shelves,

among crowded rows of comparable publications, stands a thick hard cover book of the prestigious *Educational Records Bureau*, entitled "*Eight More Years of Research in Reading*." Herein are listed, annotated and summarized the 760 books, articles, conference reports, etc. published in the period 1944-52 which its editors deemed most significant in the reading area. This book was a continuum of an earlier one "*Another Five Years of Research in Reading*" which did a similar job with 527 writings turned out during 1940-44. This one in turn carried on from "*Ten Years of Research in Reading*" with 618 references published through 1930-40. A total of 1905 selected writings on reading over a period of 23 years, all ready for those beginners of 1952 to profit by - if there was any profit for them in that tremendous expenditure of time, energy, scholarship and hard cash.

Was there? Oh, some. There's something to be gained by treating the symptoms of malaria patients while leaving the malarial swamps undrained. And something by doctoring hook worm victims while leaving the infested soil untouched. And be it said to the credit of the Bureau's realism that it made precious little claim for its wares. In a section of *Eight More Years* headed "*Reading - Then and Now*" it gives the opinion of a dozen outstanding authorities on this crucial comparison. They vary, a little up or a little down, around that of J. Raymond Geberich in the *Phi Delta Kappan*, March, 1952, that "reading is being taught as efficiently now as it ever was."

As for how efficient that "teaching now" was - and how much more so the research of these last dozen years has made it-and those thousands on thousands of others who managed to sit out their retardation till they got their high school diplomas in their hands, let our drop-outs among our eighteen year-olds testify.

Wasn't this a recognition, this section, that the children who are now our eighteen-year olds were starting reading with no spectacular chances of success? Little greater, at most, than had their predecessors of ten, twenty, thirty years earlier. And these predecessors? Wasn't it because they had been doing so poorly, that by the mid-thirties most the schools of the country had switched from phonics to Look and Say?

Well, what to do about this no-improvement, or so little improvement, back there in 1952? Oh, for the most part, more of the same. More tons of books on reading, more acres of articles, more conventions and workshops, nation, state and local, more in-service courses for teachers, more paid subscriptions to the education journals, more memberships in the N.E.A. and the scores of other educational organizations. More of almost everything except.... Except that revamping of our spelling to the phonemicism which already stares us in the face in *not, net, nit, not, nut - our sour, flour*, and speaks to us from the parentheses of every elementary dictionary in our schools.

So, what our eighteen-year olds got, back there in their crucial primary years, was a stepped up attempt to make memory do the work of reason - to the supression, even the penalizing of that "logical power of mind" which phonemic spelling would have so simply, so all but automatically, developed in them. More little mnemonic devices - even tho the long tail on the end of *monkey* and the little round eyes looking out of *moon*, had never helped much with the exactly similar appendage on the end of *chunky* and the identical little orbs peering forth from *spoon, noon*. There was an increase, too, in the kinesthetic activity, tho the writing and rewriting yet again of *after* and *water* had heretofore been so little help for *laughter* and *daughter*. Also, there was an expansion of remedial work - through which, no doubt, quite a few of our current drop-outs, whose reading would otherwise have stopped at third grade norm, can manage, - when they have to - to decipher at fourth grade norm.

This, tho there is hardly an adolescent in the land who couldn't now be handling newspapers, magazines, books, as competently as his I.Q. allows - as comparable in Russia, IF... If, that dozen

years ago when we began to get those warnings of "*The Challenge of Soviet Education*," we had revamped our spelling to the easy, speedy, happy learnability of Russian and the 60 other Soviet tongues.

The trouble was, of course, that our learners hadn't even *noticed* this easy learnability. What they gospelled to us was the six day schoolweek, the longer school year, the serious homework required of the Soviet child - tho, as a matter of fact, in the first three grades, where reading is the main concern, the school week was but 24 hours long, the school year but 34 weeks, and homework very light. Yet not even in 1958 when our then Commissioner of Education, accompanied by eight outstanding experts, toured through 7000 miles of Soviet classrooms, Ministries and other pedagogic setups, did it dawn on him that what he was glimpsing was a childhood Utopia of phonemic spelling. A terrible pity - for our eighteen year-olds were only twelve then. We couldn't have given them back what they lost in their elementary grades - we couldn't have graduated them from high school on a level with their Soviet agemates, but we could have turned them out the most knowledgeable, straight thinking, responsible young Americans ever to receive their diplomas since high school entrance became compulsory.

But we didn't, and altho the Challenge of Soviet Education has grown more formidable with every year, we are still slating 99.99% of our beginners for *oh, know, owe, go, sew, though, hoe*. But now with this break, this potentially tremendous break in our long blindness - the light our education specialists could not bring back from Russia has reached our shores from England. Scattered in i/t/a projects here and there across our land some 2000 five and six year-olds are demonstrating the magic of a wum-sien, wun-sound spelling so incontestably, it seems incredible that a single First Grade classroom could open next September with the gross misspelling of our present primers which is the basic cause of difficulties in learning to read. Too soon, too preposterously soon for anything like such a changeover? Not if we *realized* what that spelling has done not only to the least able of our eighteen-year-olds, but to the most of the rest of them. With the helplessness and bewilderment of poor little Kathy and Debbie making undue demands on teacher's attention, and the fractiousness of Gregor and Joe so frequently disrupting the order of the classroom, what wonder if the more capable, better behaved majority of the children "adjusted" all too well to these conditions and carried into adolescence that tolerance of needless stupidity, that apathy towards lawlessness which characterizes so much of our adult public?

Just as disastrous was another reaction into which the unreasonable difficulty of their basic learning tool misled this majority - the attitude of the average achiever - and even of many of the considerably above average - toward the really brilliant one or two in his class. He did not like them, not even in the primary grades, and what this dislike led to in his high school days, our readers may recall from that study of Dr. Abraham. Tannenbaum's "*Adolescent Attitudes Toward Academic Brilliance*" which this Bulletin reviewed last October.

All those formative years, while Russia has been inculcating in her young a happy liaison with their more gifted agemates, we have needlessly exposed ours to a resentment, ridicule, rejection from which all too many have sought escape by deliberately lowering their school performance to average, or even below. "If I wanted to, I could get the highest marks in the class," Dr. Tannenbaum quotes one tenth grader, "but if I did, I wouldn't have many friends. And I think friends are important, too."

Is there any charge we could bring against our spelling more damning than this: that it pressures the very bright among our young to demote themselves to mediocrity - to sell their birthright for enough social acceptance not to be too lonely, too out of everything?

Now to get back to those babes with whom this article started - the 4,200,000 new little Americans already born, or yet to be born in this 1964. Presumably they will run much the same gamut of

native intelligence as will the somewhat larger number of their Soviet birthmates. Which means that all but a tiny percentage of them will have the brains to learn to read. To learn to read speedily, happily and well, and to go on from their primers and primary readers to whatever education will best fit each of them for a worthwhile life in the wonderful, unpredictable, mind-demanding new age ahead of them. But only if we refrain from addling their brains with that grossly distorted visualizing of their beautiful mother tongue to which we subjected their first grade predecessors of a dozen years ago.

So, if you are the parent or grandparent of one of these babes - or even just a citizen farsighted enough to realize your stake in the optimum education of all of them - find out about your nearest i/t/a project and visit it if you can. My guess is that you will come away with the enthusiastic conviction that this - or a program equally phonemic - is not only what we should have but must have in every public school by the time this year's contingent of future beginners are ready to begin. If you would like to send us a report of your visit, we shall be happy to receive it. The addresses of some i/t/a projects are in the late news of this and the previous Bulletins.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1964 pp8-10,24]

### **How Does One Learn to Read? by Newell W. Tune.**

In a recent I.R.A. meeting it was stated that very little was really known about how we learn to read. But before we can discuss "learning to read", we must first have a commonly accepted meaning of what constitutes "reading." Is it merely decoding the symbols on the printed page, as stated in *Basic Reading* by Glenn Mc Cracker and Charles C Walcutt? Quoting from this book: "To define reading, we must try to get at the element that sets it apart from other similar activities. It will not do, for example, to define reading as a thought getting process because we get thoughts just as surely from a lecture or a conversation. There is, to put it another way, no difference between "reading" a page of difficult philosophy and trying to understand it - and simply hearing the page "read" to us by another. The problem of understanding is virtually identical for both reader and listener."

Nobody would deny that the purpose of reading is to get information from the printed page. But since we get information in the same way from spoken language, this purpose does not define reading in a way that distinguishes it from talking. As soon as we grasp this point, however, the problem resolves itself immediately. If we see that meaning *resides in language*, then we can ask how writing (which we read) is related to language (which we hear). If language, which is sound, carries the meanings, what is writing? It seems obvious that writing is a device, a code, for representing the sounds of language in visual form. The written words are in fact artificial symbols for the spoken words, which are sounds. So reading must be the process of turning those printed symbols into sounds."

The author goes on to explain. "The moment we say this, however, someone is sure to ask (and probably in a tone of the greatest anxiety), 'But what about meaning? Do you propose to define reading as mere word-calling, without regard for meaning?'"

"Yes, we do. Reading is first of all and essentially the mechanical skill of decoding, of turning the printed symbols into sounds which are language. Of course the reason we turn the print into sound (that is, read) is to get at the meaning. We *decode* the printed symbols in order to hear what they 'say.'"

Now what is the value of our definition as regards the teaching of reading? We believe its value is that it enables us to put *first things first* and approach the task of learn to read, with our children, in an orderly and effective manner. We are intensely concerned that our children understand what they read, but the mechanical "decoding" skill must come first if we are to get them started properly. In the earliest stages of learning to read, there is very little need for thinking or reasoning on the part of the child. What he needs is practice in mastering a decoding skill, and the thinking will come along quite some time later."

While this is a good explanation of the first step in the process of reading, it is a greatly oversimplified explanation of a very complicated process. To be sure, 'word calling' is the explanation of children's first attempts at reading, but they are soon taught that the period, comma, quotation and question marks all are used to modify the sounds of the words they speak. These are the symbols on the printed page that add expression to the sound code symbols and convert word calling into expressing meaning.

As a further explanation of this process, let me quote from Dr. John R. Bormuth of U.C.L.A. in a recent personal communication, "First, meaning does not reside in language. Language is only patterned noises. The meaning resides in the individual. It is his mental response to the patterned noises that we call meaning."

"Second, the spelling system does not reproduce all of the language or even attempt to. It spells only part of the pauses (junctures), ignoring those between syllables and failing entirely to spell those between syllables and failing most of the time to distinguish between the pauses between words within a phrase and words in adjacent phrases. Nor does it spell the stress patterns which are also used to signal meanings, such as in this sentence "She took up light house keeping." These are signaled by the forms of the words, by the syntactical patterning of the sentence, and by the meanings of the passage. In other words, reading involves two mechanical processes, (1) saying the sounds of a printed word, and (2) saying these words with the proper pitch, stress and juncture. Responding to the meaning of a passage can be ignored for a moment.)"

"It is only when the individual can recognize not only the sounds but also the pitch, stress, and juncture patterns intended by the author that the individual has sufficiently reproduced the spoken language that he can comprehend the author's intent. Further, recognizing the phrase structure also aids in recognizing the words. For example, running water does not mean one & only one thing in the sentences 'We are running water down the drain.' and 'That is running water.' They are not even pronounced the same. This is because they appear in different phrase structures in each sentence, More obvious examples are the words 'contract' and 'permit' whose pronunciations are determined entirely by the phrase structures in which they appear.

"Now to come back to the meaning problem. We must teach the children to respond to the printed symbols by reproducing not just the sound patterns of words but also the pitch, comma and juncture patterns of words, phrases, and sentences. In this task (which we have misleadingly labeled 'word recognition') we have two choices. First; we can make it entirely a mechanical process in which we teach phonics, then parts of speech, and then syntax. All of these can be, and have been, divorced from meaning by the linguist so that they are completely mechanical. Second, we can use meaning to reinforce the child's primitive but thoro grasp of grammar and, by a combination of the two, teach the total word recognition process.

"In other words, reading is a psychological process that can be taught by many different means. We can select a 'pure' means (that is, one that conforms to the limits of only a single one of the conventionally defined academic disciplines but we do so at the risk of leaving much untaught. The now defunct look say method is a good example. It was purely psychological, devised and

espoused by the psychologists. We can easily name a number of other 'pure' methods which failed as badly because they taught only a part of the skills needed in reading. Educators have been off down this primrose path more times than it does our ego any good to admit."

"In conclusion, theorizing about the nature of reading is dangerous when it is viewed from only a single standpoint. Reading people (teachers) may not know exactly what it is, but we think we have a pretty fair idea of many of the things it might include."

The next step is to show why our pupils have difficulty in learning to read. First, let us consider-- learning to read in what medium? and what language? Pupils learning to read in a phonetic language such as Finnish, Turkish or Czech do not have the stumbling blocks that we have in our unreliable, malphonetic English spelling. Our pupils come to school all eager to learn to read, and having a natural sense of logical reasoning. They are taught that 2 follows 1 and 3 comes next, followed by 4,5,6,7,8. They are taught that each of these symbols is reliable - it always represents the same number. This develops their natural sense of logical reasoning. Then we start to teach them reading one, two, four, eight - and we have to undo this sense of logic that we are nurturing like the growth of a tender plant by scorching it with the inconsistencies of our English spelling. We start out with teaching regular phonetic words like "cat and dog also ran" but we soon find we have to introduce "of, was, to, is, as, you, have, are" (Dewey's Relative Frequency of English Speech Sounds) because they are among the two dozen most frequently occurring words. These confound the reasoning of "for, this, no, see, out, cave, mare." How difficult it is to climb a mountain of sand if every time you move up a foot, you slide back eleven inches. We end up by producing enough confusion in the pupil that he fails to gain confidence in his ability to reason - his ability to use the analogy of symbol to sound relationship he learned in yesterday's words. This then, is another thing we should have learned about the process of learning to read, but apparently most of us in America had our sense of logical reasoning destroyed in grade one - destroyed by a malphonetic system of spelling which could be learned only by forgetting logic and by training a photographic memory by dint of constant repetition - by Look and Say, word by word, suffix by suffix. Many of our children gave up the struggle and dropped out of school because they could not cope with such irregularities and inconsistencies.

In English we have 526 different letter combinations to represent the 40 (or so) sounds of English speech. Should not our logical sense of reasoning tell us (if we still have any), that it would be easier to read if every symbol represented only one sound? But, of course, I realize that you are concerned only about teaching reading in the Status Quo. You feel that you have to live with our conventional spell just like you have to live with drop-outs, crime, juvenile delinquency. But you could do something about it if you really wanted to do so.

One does not try to teach a baby to walk before he learns to crawl and learns how to keep his balance. Hence, why should you expect to apply phonics successfully to a language that has so many exceptions to the rules that rules become undependable. Of course, you can climb that mountain of sand if your strength lasts long enough- And some people say the exercise is good for you.

In England, for the past two and a half years, an experimental teaching project has been going on, of which you (and the educational press in America) could not be unaware. I refer to Sir James Pitman's Initial Teaching Alphabet being used under the direction of John Downing of the Institute of Education of the University of London. Yet most of the educational press in America has ignored it. Are they suffering from that destroyed sense of logical reasoning previously mentioned? Even though one may have lost the sense of logic, one can hardly ignore the impressive results which statistical evidence from this teaching project shows us.

These results show that it is not the *method* of teaching reading that is at fault. It is the medium by which reading in English is taught. Spelling reformers have for centuries been pointing out as facts that we could learn to read in a phonetic system of spelling in a small fraction of the time needed to learn to read in our grossly misspelled, only half phonetic spelling. But, of course, I am forgetting that you are concerned only with teaching under the Status Quo. However, Sir James Pitman (and he was knighted for this very idea) reasoned that if children were first taught to read in a reliable phonetic medium, they could transfer their skill and confidence to our conventional spelling (or Traditional orthography - or T.O.), provided that there was a close resemblance between the characters used and our T.O. Every character of the 42 (now 44) letter Pitman Initial Teaching Alphabet was carefully designed so as to make the transition to T.O. as free from confusion as possible. The letter b was rounded at the bottom and the letter d had its serif extended so as to prevent possible reversals in the mind of the learner. All the digraphic letters have their top coastline connected because Dr. Edmund D. Huey showed in his *Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading* that the top half of the letters were much more easily readable than the bottom half. In many other ways, this i/t/a system shows careful logical planning. A few slight modifications have recently been made in the light of the experience of the last two years to make it even more nearly perfect in its ease of transition to T.O. Many critics of i/t/a have worried about this ease or difficulty of transition - and indeed, most of the planning was done because of this worry. But not only were Pitman and the education authorities surprised and pleased at the ease of transition, so were all of the teachers. Some of the most skeptical teachers were converted after using it to become the most enthusiastic supporters of the i/t/a program, And only as recently as March 26, 1964 did the present Minister of Education, Sir Edward Boyle, of Her Majesty's Government in a debate in Parliament give praise to the accomplishments of the i/t/a program and also further financial support, I would that we had this kind of man in our cabinet.

Have we in America learned anything about reading from these accomplishments? Well, about as much as the results you will find from spilling a bucket of water on that mountain of sand. We are still grasping at straws - acres and acres of print in books on reading research - 10 more years of reading research, after 8 more years, after 5 years of reading research - all since world war II. And yet so little realization of what our Commissioner of Education, W. T. Harris issued from the U.S. Bureau of Education as Circular of Information No. 8, 1893, more than two generations ago. This 86 page report tells about the various experimental teaching projects of his day, and while they did not have the standardized tests to prove statistically the results of their experimental teaching projects - it should have at least stimulated later researchers in reading to investigate and prove the enthusiastic results which the American Philological Society reported in 9 reports from 1875 to 1886.

We should have learned, one that reading is a process of decoding; two, that pupils learn to read more easily if these decoding symbols are reliably phonetic, three, that confidence and speed are acquired more rapidly if the stumbling blocks are removed. And fourth that once a child (or an adult) is able to read in this reliable phonetic medium, he can transfer this skill and confidence to learning to read in conventional spelling. Of course, the stumbling blocks are still there and must be learned one by one, the same as the Chinese do, but stumbling blocks then do not present such a difficult problem as they do to a baby learning to crawl. How readily do you think a baby would learn to crawl and to walk if he had to live on a rough cobblestone floor? Even if you took him away for two hours a day and let him play on a smooth soft rug, would he be able to learn how to crawl and then to walk as easily as if he lived all the time on the smooth rug?

We have let the Status Quo - the sanctity of English spelling blind us to the main basic cause of the difficulties in learning to read. Difficulties that were obvious to every spelling reformer for centuries, but which most educators blinded themselves and were afraid to speak about except in a whisper for fear their supervisors would not approve.

Supervisors were afraid to approve the idea of spelling reform because in the past it had been ridiculed and (resented to the public as a cracked-pot scheme that didn't deserve serious consideration. The stench of this contamination still lingers on. But when has the press (until recently) presented spelling reform as something between a joke and an impractical, visionary, impossible scheme? When has spelling reform been presented to the public as a sensible, logical development that is practical and possible without everyone having to go back to school and learn all over again-without having to disrupt the business world, the libraries, our schools and everything now printed in our long obsolete English spelling?

Again, fear of the unknown, fear of the amount of change necessary and lack of confidence in our readers to adapt themselves readily to simplified spelling has caused our educators and our legislators to shy away from this mountainous task (which is really only a molehill when it is climbed and you look back; for example, ask Turkey and other countries which have reformed their spelling).

Most of you recognize that Benjamin Franklin was one of our wisest men in colonial days, and far ahead of his time. Let me quote from his letter to Miss Mary Stevenson, in 1768, printed in the old South Leaflet No. 196:

Deer Madam: The objection you make to rectifying our alphabet "that it will be attended with inconveniences and difficulties" is a very natural one; for it always occurs when any reformation is proposed, whether in religion, government, laws and even down as low as roads and wheel carriages. The true question then is not, whether there will be no difficulties or inconveniences, but whether the difficulties may not be surmounted; and whether the conveniences will not, on the whole, be greater than the inconveniences. In this case, the difficulties are only in the beginning of the practice; when they are once overcome, the advantages will be lasting. To either you or me, who spell well in the present mode, I imagine the difficulty of changing that mode for the new is not so great but that we might perfectly get over it in a week's writing. As to those who do not spell well, if the two difficulties are compared, viz. that of teaching them the true spelling in the present mode, and that of teaching them the new alphabet and the new spelling according to it, I am confident that the latter would be by far the least. They naturally fall into the new method already, as much as the imperfection of their alphabet will admit of; their present bad spelling is only bad because contrary to bad rules; under the new rules it would be good. The difficulty of learning to spell well in the old way is so great that few attain it; thousands and thousands writing on to old age, without being able to acquire it. It is, besides, a difficulty continually increasing; as the sound gradually varies more and more from the spelling; and to foreigners it makes the learning to pronounce our language, as written in our books, almost impossible.

Now as to the inconveniences you mention: The first is, 'that all our etymologies would be lost; consequently we could not ascertain the meaning of many words.' Etymologies are at present very uncertain, but such as they are, the old books still preserve them, and etymologists would find them there. Words in the course of time change their meaning, as well as their spelling and pronunciation; and we do not look to etymologies for their present meanings. If I should call a man a *knave* and a *villian*, he would hardly be satisfied with my telling him that one of the words originally signified a *lad* or *servant*, and that the other an *under plowman*, or the inhabitant of a *village*. It is from present usage only that the meaning of words is determined.

Your second inconvenience is, 'the distinction between words of different meaning and similar sound would be destroyed.' That distinction is already destroyed in pronouncing them; we rely on the sense alone of the sentence to ascertain which of the several words, similar in sound, we intend. If this is sufficient in the rapidity of (spoken) discourse, it will be much more so in written

sentences, which may be read leisurely, and can be attended to more particularly in case of difficulty, than we can attend to in a past sentence, while the speaker is hurrying us along with new ones.

"Your third inconvenience is, that all the books already written would be useless.' This inconvenience would only come on gradually in a course of ages. I and you and other now living readers would hardly forget the use of them. People would long learn to read the old writing, tho they practised the new. And the inconvenience is not greater than what has actually happened in a similar case in Italy. Formerly its inhabitants all spoke and wrote Latin, as the language changed, the spelling followed it. It is true that at present a mere unlearned Italian cannot read the Latin books, tho they are still read and understood by many. But if the spelling had never been changed, he would now have found it much more difficult to read and write in his own language; [1] for written words would have no relation to sounds; they would only have stood for things, so that he would express in writing the idea he has when he sounds the word *Vescovo*, he must use the letters *Episcopus*. [2]

"In short, whatever the difficulties and inconveniences now are, they will be more easily surmounted now than hereafter; and some time or other it must be done, or our writing will become the same with the Chinese, as to the difficulty of learning and using it. And it would already have been such, if we had continued the Saxon spelling and writing used by our forefathers.

I am, my dear friend, Yours affectionately.  
B. Franklin London, Sep 28, 1768

[1] That is, if the language had retained the old Roman spelling, and been pronounced as the modern Italian. This is a fair state of facts, and a complete answer to all objections to a reform of spelling.

[2] In the same ridiculous manner, as *we* write, *rough, still, neighbor, wrong, tongue, true, rhetoric*, etc. and yet pronounce the words, *ruf, stil, nabur, song, tang, tru, retoric*.

We also respect and admire Noah Webster for his intellect. Hear what he has to say in the same Old South leaflet:

The advantages to be derived from these alterations (simplified spelling), are numerous great and permanent.

1. The simplicity of the orthography would facilitate the learning of the language. It is now the work of years for children to learn to spell; and after all, the business is rarely accomplished.. A few men, who are bred to some business that requires constant exercise in writing finally learn to spell most words without hesitation, but most people remain, all their lives, imperfect masters of spelling, and liable to make mistakes, whenever they take up a pen to write a short note. Nay, many people, even of education and fashion, never attempt to write a letter, without frequently consulting a dictionary.

"But with the proposed orthography a child would learn to spell, without trouble, in a very short time and the orthography being very regular, he would ever afterwards find it difficult to make a mistake. It would in that case be as difficult to spell *wrong* as it is now to spell *right*.

"Besides this advantage, foreigners would be ably to acquire the pronunciation of English, which is now so difficult and embarrassing that they are either wholly discouraged on the first attempt, or obliged after many years labor, to rest contented with an imperfect knowledge of the subject.

2. A correct orthography would render the pronunciation the language as uniform as the spelling in books. A general uniformity thro the United States would be the event of such a reformation as I am here recommending. All persons every rank, would speak with some degree of precision and uniformity. Such a uniformity in these states is very desirable, it would remove prejudice, and concilliate mutual affection and respect.

3. Such a reform would diminish the number of letters about one sixteenth or eighteenth. This would save a page in eighteen, and a saving of an eighteenth in the expense of books, is an advantage that should not be overlooked.

"Sensible I am how much easier it is to propose improvements than to *introduce* them. Everything *new* starts the idea of difficulty; and yet it is often mere novelty that excites the appearance; for on a slight examination of the proposal, the difficulty vanishes. When we firmly *believe* scheme to be practicable, the work is half accomplished. We are more frequently deterred by *fear* from making an attack than repulsed in the encounter.

"Habit also is opposed to changes; for it renders even our errors dear to us. Having surmounted all difficulties in childhood, we forget the labor, the fatigue, and the perplexity we suffered in the attempt, and imagine the process of our studies to have been smooth and easy. [1] What seems intrinsically right is so merely thro habit.

Indolence is another obstacle to improvements. The most arduous task a reformer has to execute, is to make people *think*; to arouse them from that lethargy which, like the mantle of sleep, covers them in repose and contentment.

"But America is in a situation the most favorable for great reformations, and the present time is, in a singular degree, auspicious. The minds of men in this country have been awakened. New scenes have been, for many years, presenting new occasions for exertions; unexpected distresses have called forth the powers of invention; and the application of new expedients has demanded every possible exercise of wisdom and talents. Attention is roused, the mind expanded, and the intellectual faculties invigorated. Here men are prepared to receive improvements, which would be rejected by nations whose habits have not been shaken by similar events.

"*Now is* the time, and *this* the country, in which we may expect success, in attempting changes favorable to language, science and government. Delay in the plan here proposed, may be fatal; under a tranquil general government, the minds of men may again sink into indolence a national acquiescence in error will follow; and posterity will be doomed to struggle with difficulties which time and accident will perpetually multiply."

[1] Thus most people suppose the present mode of spelling to be really the *easiest* and *best*. This opinion is derived from habit; the new mode of spelling proposed would save three fourths of the labor now bestowed in learning to write our language. A child would learn to spell as well in one year as he can now in four. This is not a supposition; it is an assertion capable of proof; and yet people, never knowing, or having forgot the labor of learning, suppose the present mode to be the easiest. No person but one who has taught children, has any idea of the difficulty of learning to spell and pronounce our language in its present form.

There is little more that can be said, except that he was right in his estimation of the, indolence of the American people. "None are so blind as those who don't want to see."

**Suggested criteria for an initial teaching medium (i.t.m.) for English,  
by Godfrey Dewey, Ed.D.**

I. Sounds

- A. A phonemic rather than a phonetic notation,
  - 1. Making all those distinctions and only those distinctions which are semantically significant.
  - 2. Making only those distinctions readily recognizable by the average untrained ear.

II. Signs

- A. Keeping within the over-all characteristics of the familiar Roman alphabet letters.
  - 1. For the earliest stages of instruction, keeping within the pattern of the lowercase print Roman alphabet both for reading and writing.
- B. Augmenting the single letters of the Roman alphabet by additional symbols; either
  - 1. Digraphs consisting solely of Roman alphabet letters,
  - 2. Symbols resembling such digraphs, either ligatured or blended,
  - 3. New letters congruous with the Roman alphabet letters.

III. Assignment of signs to sounds

- A Signs for sounds,
  - 1. Should have only one symbol for each sound. This is important primarily for *writing*
    - a. The burden of proof is on those who would employ more than one symbol,
  - 2. Should regard so far as practicable whether in selection of digraphs or design of new letters the predominant t.o. spellings of sounds.
    - a. Relative frequency of occurrences (in connected matter) is in general more important than
    - b. Relative frequency of items (different words in the dictionary)
    - c. The relative degree of importance of occurrences vs. items (e.g., 60-40 or 80-20) is arguable; perhaps a matter for experimental determination.
- B. Sounds for signs
  - 1. Should have only one sound for each symbol. This is important primarily for reading.
    - a. The burden of proof is on those who would permit more than one sound.
  - 2. Should regard so far as practicable the predominant t. o. pronunciation of spellings.
    - a. Explicitness of probable interpretation is of major importance.
- C. Uniformity
  - 1. Should provide so far as practicable for existing divergencies of pronunciation, national or regional, without requiring alternative symbolization.
  - 2. Should maintain distinctions which a large number of cultivated speakers do make, even the another large number of cultivated speakers do not make them.

Application of criteria  
as exemplified in N.S. (New Spelling), W.E.S., and i/t/a  
"Erst in Erschränkung erscheint die Meister"

IV. Sounds

- A. The 40 sounds of Pitmanic shorthand, 24 consonant and 16 vowel,
  - 1. Are common to N.S., W.E.S., and i/t/a
  - 2. Are the only phonemic basis for writing English which has been proved in practical experience by millions of writers for more than a century.

- B. The sound of schwa, usually omitted in shorthand, must be provided for in longhand writing or printing; either
1. lay a specific character, or
  2. By substitution of the nearest equivalent vowel letter of t.o. This latter solution materially facilitates the transition to t.o.

## V. Signs

- A. The burden of proof is strongly on those who would permit any symbol whatever, whether for a particular sound or as a diacritic, which is not now available on the standard typewriter keyboard and/or in the ordinary printer's font.

## VI. Assignment of signs to sounds

- A. The primary values to be assigned to 23 of the single letters of the Roman alphabet (all except c, q, x) are common to N.S., W.E.S. and i/t/a.
- B. The remaining primary symbols for a 40 sound notation are supplied
1. *In N.S.*, chiefly by simple digraphs of the Roman alphabet letters, reproducible on any standard typewriter and in any Roman alphabet font of type.
  2. *In W.E.S.*, chiefly by simple digraphs, which may be distinguished, for the earliest stages of instruction, by a ligature centered beneath the letters; which would require on the typewriter one offset dead key, and for printing, new matrices for each symbol.
  3. *In i/t/a*, chiefly by single character blends or modifications of the Roman alphabet letters; which require for the typewriter new characters on a new keyboard, and for printing, new matrices for each character.
  4. The relative value of these devices is a matter for experimental determination.
- C. Additional alternate symbols (e.g., c, ck, or cc for the sound of k), as employed in i/t/a.
1. Create closer similarities to t.o. looking forward to the transition to t.o.
  2. Create alternative choices calling for tolerance, in individual writing, of word forms varying from the uniform standard which should obtain in printing.
  3. The relative merits and demerits of additional alternative symbols are clearly a matter for experimental determination.
- D. Provision for regional divergencies of pronunciation
1. Will be greatly facilitated, especially for the vowel sounds, by the tendency of each region to attach its own values to the symbols.
  2. Examples of distinctions to be maintained, as in III C 2
    - a. Writing post-vocalic r, which "r-keepers" pronounce but which "r-droppers"), omit (as in *far*) or reduce to schwa (as in *near*).
    - b. Writing wh, altho some Southern British speakers do not distinguish it from w.
    - c. Distinguishing the vowel of *father* and *calm* from the vowel of *bother* and *comma*, altho General American pronunciation does not make this distinction.
    - d. Perhaps also providing for the vowel of *ask*, *bath*, *aunt*, which varies inconsistently between the vowels of *cam* and *calm*.

## VII. Moot points

- A. A Specific assignments of primary symbols to sounds
1. Changes in W.E.S. since the 1955 unification with N.S. (e.g., th and oo) should be resolvable by statistical analysis and discussion.
- B. How far alternative or multiple symbolizations should be permitted in the interest of maximum compatibility with t.o. can probably be determined only by carefully controlled experimentation.
1. The objective is a degree of similarity such that the i.t.m. may be immediately readable by those familiar only with t.o., and that t.o. may be immediately readable by those

familiar only with the i.t.m.; to be accomplished with a minimum departure from the ideal basis of one sign for each sound and one sound for each sign.

- C. How far it may be expedient to depart from the position of no new characters and no diacritics, steadfastly maintained by the S.S.S. for more than 50 years, can probably be determined only by a combination of experiment and experience. The advantages of adhering to a no-new-letter code so far as possible are very great; both for the pupil and the teacher, and for adults abroad to whom English is a second language.
1. For the pupil
    - a. It obviates learning to read, and especially to write, a substantial proportion of characters, usually of more complex form, which will shortly be abandoned, instead of gaining additional practice in reading and writing the Roman alphabet which are a lifetime acquirement.
    - b. It permits use of the standard typewriter in the very earliest grades, increasing fluent expression, at a time when control of the more complex motions of writing is still a considerable effort.
  2. For the teacher
    - a. It facilitates preparation, on any standard typewriter, of supplementary teaching materials adapted to particular situations.
    - b. It makes available the standard typewriter as a teaching instrument in the earliest grades, as demonstrated by Wood and Freeman more than 30 years ago.
  3. For the adult abroad to whom English is a second language
    - a. It offers the exciting possibility of continued use of the i.t.m. as an auxiliary international communication medium, where English as a second language has been taught by the i.t.m. procedure; *reading* t.o. but *writing* in the i.t.m. (compare VII B 1), thereby bypassing the considerable added burden of learning to *write*, i.e., to spell t.o.

#### Compatibility

##### **A footnote to Criteria.**

*For a word*, the maximum degree of compatibility is of course identity with t.o.; e.g. *and, our, jee, himself, value*.

The second degree of compatibility might be either the same letters in the same order, merely omitting a silent letter or letters (most often e), e.g., *hav, giv hed, hart, frend, gest, bildin, bom, midl*; or the same letters and the same length with silent e transposed, e.g. *maed, heer, liek, hoem, ues* (noun).

Other elements of compatibility are the same letters in the same order except for doubling, e.g. *too* (to), *doo, bee, hee, morral*; and similar readjustments without introducing letters not already represented in the word, e.g. *faather, shuud, throo*.

*For a single sound*, maximum compatibility is quite obviously choice of the most often used symbol, whether single letter or digraph, which is sufficiently unambiguous to be suitable.

Examples are most of the assignments of New Spelling and/or World English Spelling.

The second degree is choice of the most used letter or letters differently arranged or doubled; e.g. *ae* (instead of *a* plus consonant plus *e*), *aa, uu*.

### The best assignment for *oo* and *uu*.

The present assignment in W.E.S. of the digraphs *oo* and *uu* as in *good fuud* instead of the former S.S.A. assignment as in *guud food* was reluctantly conceded by the S.S.A. committee in 1955 for the sake of complete agreement with the British S.S.S. It is the one change which we have been unable to get any of our major collaborators, specifically including Dr. Laubach who has done so much important work in this field, to accept. The following study supplies objective data which were lacking in the 1955 discussion, with the hope of providing a basis for unanimous agreement.

One of the principal criteria of the S.S.S. has been, from the very beginning:

"To depart as little as possible from the current spelling, appropriating, where possible, to each sound the symbol now most commonly used to represent it. We have thus been able to retain unaltered an immense number of words, and, in a still larger number, to suggest only a slight alteration. This "principle of least disturbance" needs no apology. It is important in two aspects: not only to make the change as easy as possible for a generation which has learnt the old spelling, but to enable the new generations to read old books with the least possible trouble."(New Spelling, p. 13)

This principle of maximum compatibility with traditional orthography becomes even more important where such a notation is to be used as an initial teaching medium, to be followed by an immediate transition to traditional orthography.

In Dewey's "Relativ Frequency of English Speech Sounds", Tables 9 and C, 1,370 commonest syllables occurring oftener than 10 times in 100, 000 words, include 93.4% of all the syllables. These tables show 31 syllables totaling 2,393 occurrences with the short vowel of *good* and 36 syllables totaling 2,752 occurrences with the long vowel of *food*, after eliminating the preposition *to* (2,924 occurrences), which may be written with *oo* in either case, since the unstressed pronunciation corresponds to *good* while the stressed pronunciation corresponds to *food*.

Analyzing these tables with the help of the original unpublished entries, we find 6 spellings of the short sound and 7 spellings of the long sound, as follows:

	o	oe	oo	ou	u	u-e	ue	Totals
short( <i>good</i> )	362	---	368	546	766	298	53	2,393
long ( <i>food</i> )	690	141	313	1,168	157	216	67	2,752

Examining these data from the standpoint of compatibility, we may disregard *ou* as replaceable equally well by *oo* or *uu*. Grouping the remainder, we find:

	Short	Long	Difference
Spellings with u: u, u-e, ue	1,117	440	667
Spellings with o: o, o-e, oo	730	1,144	<u>414</u>
	Total difference		1, 091

In other words, we find that the previous S.S.A assignment as in *guud food* makes over 1,000 spellings per 100,000 words more compatible than the S.S.S. and present S.S.A. assignment as in *good fuud*.

These objective data reinforce the argument urged by the S.S.A. in 1955, that U.S. Army tests used in developing a notation for intensive language courses during World War II showed that the spelling *oo*, either alone or in nonsense syllables, was in the great majority of cases pronounced as

the long vowel of *food*.

It is greatly to be hoped that agreement can be reached on the *guud food* assignment before any large scale printing using W.E.S. as an initial teaching medium is undertaken.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1964 p15]

### **What Kind of Spelling Reform Should We Strive to Obtain, according to the views of Axel Wijk, Ph.D.**

If a spelling reform is to be achieved, it should obviously be essential to devise a system which preserves the semblance to the traditional spelling to a far greater extent than is the case with the systems proposed by the Simplified Spelling Society or by Prof. Zachrisson (now called World English).

In the reformed spelling that the present writer ventures to propose, the problems have therefore been dealt with in a radically new way. As far as the vowels and diphthongs are concerned, in both stressed and unstressed syllables, no changes whatever have been made in the *regular* use of the traditional symbols, nor has any completely new symbol for a vowel sound been introduced, though the use of two of them, of *aa* and *oe*, has been considerably extended. The writer has instead been content to change only the irregular spellings and to replace them by regular ones, by which procedure we achieve the effect that practically all the new spellings are self-explanatory. Consequently the fundamental idea of the proposed new spelling is to generalize the rules and tendencies already inherent in the present orthography and to avoid, as far as possible, any change in the traditional regular values of the existing vowel symbols as well as the introduction of any new symbols into the language.

In the case of the consonants, too, the author has as a rule been content to regularize their usage and to change exceptional spellings only. Here, however, I have felt strongly inclined to suggest certain deviations from this general principle, especially with a view to making English more serviceable as an international auxiliary language. From the international point of view it must be deemed highly desirable that English should normally distinguish in writing between the voiced and the voiceless pronunciation of *s*, which could best be done by replacing *s* by *z* wherever it is voiced, except, for special reasons, in the plural and genitive endings of nouns and in the endings of nouns and in the ending of the third person singular of verbs. In connection with such a change, it would be appropriate to replace *si* by *zi* in those words where it represents the voiced equivalent of the *sh*-sound, as for instance in 'vision'. Finally I would venture to suggest the introduction of one entirely new symbol into the language, namely *dh* to be used for the voiced sound of *th* in the medial and final position, as for instance in *gadher* and *badhe* (but not initially, cf. the discussion of *th*, pgs 295-6).

A further important feature of the proposed new orthography is the regularization of the use of the final silent *e*. Here, too, the regular uses of *e* in the existing orthography whether phonetic or graphical, have normally been retained, whereas its irregular uses have been abolished. Thus *e* has always been dropped after a simple vowel plus a single consonant when the vowel in question does not have its regular long pronunciation as in '*have, give, live; come, done above accurate, definite, examine, active, handsome practice.*', etc. On the other hand, *e* has sometimes been added when this has seemed desirable in order to provide adequate guidance as to the pronunciation, namely in the case of various words ending in two consonants preceded by a simple vowel that has its regular long pronunciation, such as '*child, find, pint, most, both*', etc., and further in words containing the

combination *oo* followed by a single final consonant or by two final consonants, when *oo* has its regular long sound, as in '*fool, moon, root, boost*', etc, cf. the detailed discussion on page 232.

By the consistent, though not rigidly dogmatic application of the various principles described above, the author has contrived to devise a system of orthography for English which on the whole offers adequate information with regard to the pronunciation and which makes English spelling roughly as simple and regular as that of French or German. Since in from 90 to 95% of the vocabulary, it may further be said to agree with the present orthography, apart from the addition or omission of a final silent e or the replacing of *s* by *z* referred to above, it is obvious that continuity between the old and the new orthographical system has been preserved to as large an extent as is a radically possible without sacrificing any of the essential advantages that the reform is intended to bring. Thus, in spite of the very numerous and sometimes weird changes in spelling, the language in its new garb still is and mainly looks English. My proposed plan for a reform of English spelling probably offers the only likely solution of the problem, if it is to be solved at all. This does not mean, of course, that the solution would have to agree in every detail with the suggestions made. It could very well be slightly more or less radical, but there would seem to be no other way of solving the problem.

I will conclude this by a quotation from the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche who, as we may recall, was a brilliant language scholar - appointed professor of classical languages at the University of Bâle at the age of 23 - before his interests turned to philosophy. The quotation dates from 1878 and is interesting because in it Nietzsche simultaneously predicts the coming of aviation and the coming of a universal auxillary language,

"The learning of many languages fills the memory with *words*, instead of facts and thoughts, and the memory is a kind of vessel which, with every person, can only contain a certain limited amount of material. The learning of many languages is further harmful, as it makes a person think that he possesses certain talents and as it actually lends a kind of alluring prestige in social intercourse. It is also indirectly injurious, since it obstructs the acquiring of thorough (actual knowledge, and since it operates against, the intention to earn the respect of men by honest endeavour. Finally, it is the axe which is laid to the root of a delicate command and appreciation of our mother tongue, and thus our instinctive feeling for it is incurably injured and destroyed. The two nations which produced the greatest stylists, the Greeks and the French, learned no foreign languages. But as human intercourse must always grow more cosmopolitan, and as for instance, a good merchant in London must now be able to read and write eight languages(?), all this language learning has certainly become a necessary evil. When this is finally carried to an extreme, however, it will compel mankind to find a remedy, and in some far-off future there will be a new language for all, used at first as a language of commerce, and then as a language of intellectual intercourse generally, as surely as some time or other there will be aviation. Why else should philology have studied the laws of languages for a century and have estimated what is essential and valuable and what is particularly excellent in each individual language?"

\* Quoted from the book *Regularized English*, 1959, pub by Almqvist R Wiksell, Stockholm, Sweden.

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explains also the retention of the doubled consonants in such words as *egg, ball, rabbit* and other departures from complete wun-sound-sound-sien consistency.

The alfabet book is soon followed by *redy for reading* - 64 big pages of engrossing activities with the configuration and sounds of the 44 symbols, and practice in the manuscript writing of the first ten of them. Pictures, big and little, colored and to be colored, permit the temporary recognition of a much larger number of words than the children are expected to retain. At this stage, most of them are meant, as the authors put it, just *to be experienced* - the actual number to be learned and remembered is only 42. Yet why say only? In the conventional classroom, at the time the young i/t/a finishes this book, only a few of his agemates have acquired any words at all.

In any case, along come books 2 and 3 which together add 398 words to those 42. A total vocabulary thus far of 450 - more than the total which the conventional series provide for the whole of the first year. And these fortunate little tykes have four more readers to come!

Books 2 and 3 are vividly illustrated little collections of stories, ranging, as Dr. Mazurkiewicz puts it, "over the wide field of children's interests from play to fantasy, to dreams, to imagination, to feelings and emotions in adult relationships." The first line of story 1 brings out a happy characteristic of i/t/a which goes quite some way to explain why 4, 5, and 6 year olds learn it so easily. Neither to begin a sentence nor to begin a proper name does it use any capitals. What faces the child when he opens book 4 is the i/t/a equivalent of "this is ted", not "This is Ted." The only differentiation for capitals is that the *th* and *t* are just a little larger than the other letters of the sentence. So obviously helpful is this simplification, one wonders why orthodox writers and publishers of textbooks had not adopted it long ago.

A workbook accompanies each of these readers, with aural-oral activities which involve the handling of such plurisyllables - of course in i/t/a characters - as *blockhouse, carnival, cocoanut, suddenly, surprised, thanksgiving*, and their meaningful use in sentences running in length up to 8, 9, and 10 words in Book 2 and to 12, 13, even 17 in Book 3.

Books 4 and 5 add a whacking 792 more words to the first year i/t/a vocabulary, making a total thus far, of 1242. You don't need to be a six year old to be entranced with Book 5. Nor even the parent or grandparent of such a child. Once you've opened it at any of its eight folk tales and fairy stories, you'll go back or forward and read them all. It isn't only that they have everything which makes *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Three Bears* immortal, they have the charm, also, of coming from some other lore than ours. Their rabbits and their elephants, their wolves, bees and peas, their fishermen and shoemakers, their elves and leprechauns, kings and dancing cats, may talk with the same command of English as do *Hansel* and *Gretchen* and the wicked step-sisters of *Cinderella*, but the things they say in it and the situations in which they are involved would seem to come from lands of other tongues. If any of our readers know among what people these little treasures took shape, please send me word. I'd like to read more of them.

The workbooks which come with these two readers continue the inestimable service of the earlier ones - they give the children a chance - a real chance - to use their brains. A chance they couldn't have if their higher mental faculties - their sense of consistency, of the relationship of cause and effect and their recognition of analogy had been stymied from the first by the like of *over, cover - had, what, lot - bone, grown, sewn*. By the end of Book 3, they have so far mastered their 40 basic speech sounds and corresponding symbols, that word recognition per se can safely share their attention with certain other indispensable functions of good speech, good writing and good reading comprehension. Take the matter of the plurals of the nouns. When does one just add s or z to the singular, as with *hat, hats - dog, dogz*, and when must it be *ez* as with *dish, dishez?* - a similar problem arises with the third person present of verbs - one must learn to write: "he *wishez* for sum

applz, but they *wish* for sum." Then there's the whole wide field of contractions and the use of the apostrophe - ie'm, ie'd, ie'll - shee'z, hee'd, thae'll, can't, won't, didn't, etc. Calling for care, also, is the comparison of adjectives, up and down, - *deer, deerer, deerest - delieted, more delieted, most delieted - eksieted, less eksieted, leest eksieted*. Important, too, is the making of compound words... and oh, such a lot of other things.

Sounds pretty complicated for six year olds? Not a bit of it! Not when presented with the skill and judgement with which these workbooks handle their job. Few things are more delightful to most youngsters - provided, of course, that they can read - than picking the right word to fill a blank in a sentence. Such as this one on the selection of an adverb: "jak ran..... (kwickly, waurmly, kiendly) doun the street." Or this one on verb forms: "wee ar..... (plan, plennd, planning) a party." Not that filling a blank is the only device - or even the major one - the workbooks use. It just happens to be the simplest to describe.

i/t/a symbols are easy to write in manuscript style, and in i/t/a classes every encouragement is given the children to supplement the stories in their readers with stories of their own. All their books are full of pictures which may stir the creative impulse in this or that child. But in Workbook 5 are big whole page exciting scenes on which the whole class is asked to "riet a story about what is happening and whot miet happen nekst." Few of our small Americans have gotten that far in the program yet, so no samples of their response have come our way. But those that have reached us from the Easy Year projects in England have been all but unbelievable.

Books 6 and 7, which round out the series, will raise the *taught* vocabulary to 1500 words. But as most of the children have yet to reach these, we'd better leave both for a later review. Suffice it to say that the chief role of Book 7 is to effect an easy transition to t.o. Or to put it more accurately, to finish and fill in a transition already well under way. For as demonstrated these two and a half years in England, i/t/a children early begin "catching on" to our gross misspelling through their constant incidental exposure to it. Through books and magazines in the home, headlines on the newsstands, billboards, advertisements on the busses, the primers and readers of the little pal across the street. So, if you get a chance to start a child in an i/t/a project next September, don't worry that he may have to pay for his miracle first year by retardation in his second or third. With a reading vocabulary so very much greater than most of his classmates there, and with the training he has in using his head, the danger, if any, is that he may be too far in advance of them. But with free access to a good children's library, he'll be able to take that in his stride. So, if there's a project within your district next September, do your best to get him enrolled.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1964 p17]

**G. B. Shaw on Language, Edited by Abraham Tauber. Ph.D.  
Reviewed by Newell W. Tune.**

While this book is Shaw's ideas on language, and no one can deny that Shaw was very forceful in his expressions of the language of his characters, most of the book does not confine itself to the broad aspects of language, but to his ideas on spelling reform. To be sure, the first chapter on dialects and the chapters on Pygmalian, and Broken English, are on pronunciation, the rest of the book is chiefly excerpts from various writings on spelling reform and in later years alphabet reform.

Shaw was for many years Chairman of the B.B.C. Committee on Spoken English. To be honored by this position, he had to establish himself as an authority on pronunciation. This he did in several of his plays, mainly in Pygmalian, but also in Captain Brassbound's Conversations, Spoken English

and Broken English. Early in his career he found that English spelling was unsuited to portray these dialects and had to devise some spelling of his own to portray accurately the quaintness of the speech of cockneys, costermongers, etc. He was not quite satisfied with these attempts because English letter combinations did not have fixed sound values.

Long before his later years, Shaw was convinced and convinced many others that it was futile to try to patch up our Roman alphabet and make it useful for a reform of our spelling. He found so many faults with the Roman letters that the money left in his will was to be spent on a new alphabet designed along scientific principles so as to be easy to learn and to save considerable space in printing. The winning alphabet from the contest is included at the end of the book so that everyone can see and evaluate it and use it - till, as Shaw said, "the new one proves its merit and displaces the old."

Shaw seized upon every occasion to promote alphabet reform. And each statement became a cumulative summary of the case. G.B.S. pointed out that only a recognition of the economic follies of the present spelling 'can move Cabinets to sit up and take notice.' G.B.S. referred to himself as 'the only true phonetician, economist, and man of letters who realizes how much money there is in a British alphabet with which every sound in our speech can be written with one graphic and easily written symbol without even crosses or dots.' He constantly hammered away at the terrible waste the public is compelled to make every day due to writing English with 1/3 to 1/2 more letters than there are sounds in most English words. [As an example he gave: "the kneeling knight thought he knew" which could be written with 17 letters instead of 30, because it has only 17 speech units.](#) [See Bulletin Bites.] He went at great lengths to point out that not only is the saving of space important but also it is the saving of labor and time in writing each sentence that is equally as important. Shaw was fond of telling the public in articles and letters to the newspapers of the terrific waste of time, effort and money needed to write the two sounds in *though* with six letters and the five sounds the in *knowledge* with nine letters. A total of 15 letters for seven sounds - more than 100% wasted letters - which mean a stenographer's and a printer's and a postman's wasted time effort and space. He would multiply these two words by the hundreds each person would write per day, and by the number of people doing writing and come up with an answer in the billions of Pounds Sterling wasted each year - enough to build a fleet of battleships. But the very prodigiousness of his claims defeated his purpose. Most of the people can't think in such large terms - hence could not believe the conclusions of his analogies.

Editor Tauber is to be commended for careful arrangement and selection of Shaw's letters. It makes for interesting reading and especially to spelling reformers.

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[Spelling Reform Anthology §8.3 pp129-134]

[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1964 pp18-23]

### **A Minimal Change System of Spelling Reform, by Newell W. Tune**

Since there may be quite a few persons who would object to a radical change in our spelling, let us see if a minimal change system can be devised that would be practical and yet worthwhile. From the suggestions of several alfabetees, we may be able to devise a system with no more change than necessary to be consistently regular and yet one that will follow a few rules, and by doing so, will be easy to teach. This should be acceptable to the many who are ultraconservative and fear that a reform of our spelling will be unreadable at sight without having to go back to school and learn all over again. Of course, such a spelling system cannot be expected to be entirely phonetic because it will have to follow some of the rules governing our present spelling.

There are four rules presently used quite extensively, yet not consistently. These are:

1. The silent terminal e, used to indicate that the sound of the previous vowel is the long vowel sound. Sartorius tells us in her book that out of the 1000 commonest words, there are 345 conformals to the rule, 369 exceptions to the rule, and the balance of 286 words do not come under the rule.
2. A consonant is doubled to indicate that the previous vowel has the short sound, consequently, an undoubled consonant generally is preceded by a long vowel.
3. C is used for the sound of k before a, o, u, while k is used before e, i, and y and at the end of words. (Usually it is ck, but this is an unnecessary duplication).
4. One syllable words ending in a vowel have the long vowel sound.

In order to stay as close as possible to conventional spelling, it is likely that these rules should be followed - but followed consistently with no exceptions, otherwise the reform would not be worth having. Perhaps there are other rules that we will find necessary to follow in order to get a minimal change yet consistently regular system of reform.

In the March, 1963 issue of the S.P.B. there was a proposed alphabet system suggested by E. Jones which purported to be a minimal change system. However, that was published long before Dr. Godfrey Dewey's excellent book, *The Relative Frequency of English Speech Sounds*. Hence, Jones did not take into consideration the frequency with which some sounds would appear on the printed page and wrongly used a different symbol for the voiced sound of th while leaving unchanged the symbol for the unvoiced th-sound, which occurs less than 1/9th as often. This mistake certainly made his system look unnecessarily strange. Also in the March S.P.B. there was an article on the *Best Means of Representing the Th-sounds*. While Dr. Dewey prefers to use for the symbol for the unvoiced th-sound, the letters *thh*, this author prefers to use *tth*, partly because it is easier to write, saves space, but in general looks less changed.

There seems to be general agreement among most alphabet designers that the following consonant digraphs are used consistently with sufficient regularity to warrant their adoption: *ch, ng, sh, th, wh, zh*, along with the new *tth* or *thh* will complete the 7 familiar consonant digraphs.

Before proceeding to select individual symbols, let us make assumptions as to those letters to be accepted as phonetic symbols to be unchanged in our minimal change system. It is generally agreed that the following consonant letters are used with sufficient consistency in our present spelling to warrant our using them phonetically *b, d, f, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, qu* (for the kw-sound), *r, s, t, v, w, y, z*. In addition, it should be agreed to use the *g* only for the hard sound, as in *gag*. If *x* is to be used (and it occurs quite frequently in conventional spelling), it should be used only for the ks-sound and the words spelled phonetically whenever *x* is now used for any other sound. *C* will have to be used consistently according to rule 3. Whether we should also use the rest of the rules as outlined by E. Jones, is a debatable question. Certainly they are necessary if we consider that minimal change is preferred to strict phoneticism, so let us try using them. They are:

A second symbol is used for some of the sounds in certain defined positions; i.e.,

*k* for c before e, i, and y (when sounded as *k*, and at the end of monosyllables; (but cynic (sinnik), cycle (sytle)).

*y* for i before vowels and at the end of words. Also, at the end of words, in formatives from the same, and before vowels in the middle of a word, use -

*ay* for ai, as in pay, payer, payee, payment, payabl;

*oy* for oi, as in joy, boyish, loyal, toying, joyful;

*aw* for au, as in saw: sawing, sawyer, lawful;

*ow* for *ou*, as in *cow* *coward*: *power*, *vowel*, *bowing*.

General rule: A vowel not followed by a consonant has its long or name-sound. Special applications:

1. At the end of words: *be*, *she*, *go*, *sho*, *my*, *by*;
2. A vowel before another vowel in the middle of a word is long, as in *trial*, *dual*, *deist*.

In Jones' article, he makes one use that is not listed in the rules; that of *w* for both its consonant sound and the vowel sound in *boot*. Since this never occurs in our regular spelling and we are not following Welsh, it is considered a mistaken idea, and the *oo* will be used consistently for the vowel sound in *boot* while *uu* will be used for the vowel sound in *full*, *book*, *could*.

Almost all alphabet designers agree on the use of the single vowel letters for the short vowel sounds, as in: "That, bet, is, not, much." So they will be used only for these sounds, coupled with Jones' rules. A study of the long vowel sounds in Dewey's book indicates that *ee* should be used for the long e-sound when it cannot be indicated by the rules. Likewise, *ie*, *oe*, *ae*. But long-a is more frequently indicated by *ai*, as was well demonstrated by E. Jones in his article, so this deviation from the regular sequence of the *e* following a vowel to show the long vowel, will be used. The vowel diphthongs will be used

as in; *aid*, *pay*, *oil*, *boy*, *out*, *cow*, *fuel*, *yoo*, as well as *au* and *aw* in *caught* and *saw*.

If there are other rules needed to complete our system, it is hoped that the readers will call our attention to them.

Now let us see what a passage of diversified prose looks like in our minimal change system; we will use the nonsense passage which George B. Shaw used to illustrate the sounds:

"Chang at leezhuer waz superi or too Linnch in hiz roozh, munching a lozenj at the beri al in Meri on Square ov Hi-peeri-on, the Alyen hoo vallued hiz billyards so hily.

"Quick! Quick! Heer the queer story how father and sun wun time sat in the house man to man eeting bred and telling the tale ov the fur on the side ov the roed too the sity by the see, following the coast too its faul fuul too fathomz deep. There tha livd toogethur servd by the cari-ur, hooz nerrowur minde tthroo bir waz sore and hooz puur boy shivvurd over the fire aul day lingering in a tangul ov tactles empty instinct ineptly swallowing quartz ov stingko."

The first thing that should be noticed is that the above prose is inadequate to illustrate many of the unphonetic letter combinations such as: *tion*, *sion*, *ssion* (*shun*), *ci*, *sh*, and such as *exit* (*egsit*), *exact* (*egzact*), *xylol* (*zylol*), *except* (*exept*).

The second thing we find is that the rule of a vowel before another vowel having the long vowel sound, needs some modification as it is frequently a short vowel. In this case a dash was used to separate the short vowel from the second vowel. Another thing found was that the r-diphthongs and triphthongs require special treatment. They were used as follows: *err* (*air*, *verry*), *fur*, *ore* (*for*), *ir* (*here*), *sorry* (*forr*), *poor*, *fire*, *flour*, *pure*. Whether there is need to distinguish between *far*, *starry* and *sorry* is a moot question, which we do not feel qualified to decide. At least T.O. does, and perhaps we could follow it without a violation of the rule of regularity.

Another thing that should be noted, is that one syllable words ending in a vowel do not always have the long vowel sound, *vis*; *do*, *data*, *the*, *to*, *two*, *who*, *pa*, *me*. This was pointed out by Theodore Clymer in *The Utility of Phonic Generalizations* in the Jan. 1963 *Reading Teacher*. In his table,

compiled from the words used in four widely used readers, he noted that in 23 words the rule was applicable while in 8 words it was not. These latter are among the most commonly used words. However, *a* and *i* are never sounded long in the terminal position. Long *a* is spelt either by *ay* or *ey*. Long *i* may be either *y*, *ye*, *ie*, *igh*, or *uy*, but most frequently is *y*. *E* is seldom long in the terminal position, there being only 6 one syllable words following this rule, viz: be, he, me, she, we, ye, whereas 32 one-syllable words use mostly *ee*, but also *ea*, *ie*, *ey*, *y*. Two words ending in the diphthong *u* are spelt with *u*, and the only word ending in *u* (Hindu) has the long-oo sound. [1] For long-o, there are only 7 one syllable words (fro, go, ho, no, pro, so, lo) plus 6 two syllable words (ago, also, banjo, forego, hello, outgo), whereas there are 32 one syllable words and as many more multisyllable words that don't follow the same scheme. True there are many borrowed words from the Romance languages that use terminal-o, but most of these are multisyllable words, to which the rule would not apply. Hence, the rule should be considered as unworkable.

The following plan will be used to indicate the long and short vowels. In addition to the silent terminal-e, and as alternative, certain vowel digraphs will be used, such as:

*ai* for long-a (initial or medial), and *ay* (terminal)  
*ee* for long-e  
*ie* for long-i (initial and medial) and *y* (terminal)  
*oa* for long-o (initial and medial), and *oe* terminal  
*ue* for long-u (initial and medial), and *ew* (terminal)

This will necessitate using final-y only for long-i. We cannot use *ye* as five times as many words use *y* in final position for long-i as *ye*. So for words ending in short-i, the letter *i* will be used. While this will make many words look strange, it is necessary to avoid confusion.

In conventional spelling, a consonant is frequently doubled to indicate the previous vowel has the short sound. These are: b, d, f, g, l, p, s, t, v, z. K is not doubled but ck used instead. To be consistent, perhaps the other consonants j, m, n, and r, should also follow this rule. Actually, m, n, and r, are doubled because they are so pronounced. Can we eliminate the unpronounced doubled consonants by strictly following the rules for long vowels? Undoubtedly this would make too many altered words. So it appears the rule of doubled consonants needs to be followed whenever the letter might be mistaken for a long vowel.

For the diphthong sounds, Jones' rule seems to cover properly the most frequently used symbols, so it will be followed. While this plan is a great deal more complicated than a completely phonetic system, it should leave unchanged a much larger number of words. Let us compare this system with that of Leo Davis, and the Ryt Ryting of Dr. Clarence Hotson, and the Regularized English of Dr. Axel Wijk, and the Revised Spelling of F. T. Du Feu.

Leo Davis has 12 rules for his Minimal Change Orthography. He says, "It is quite evident that the basic and major trouble with T.O. is the erratic interchanging of the symbols, rather than the number of roles a given letter may play. As herein demonstrated, dominant patterns of T.O. can be stabilized in such a manner as to constitute basic and major reform without distorting the pattern beyond fluent legibility. With this thought in mind, I offer these simple rules for M.C.":

1. Retane oll dubbl-konsonants indicating a preseding stresst short vowl, suplying the extra konsonant only in avoiding kreashon ov identical spelling for tu different wurd. (Oltho this apls mostly tu the shorter words, it 'helps a lot').
2. Retane final silent-e indicating a preseding long vowl in the last sillabl, suplying the *e* after a konsonant folloing a long vowl, but suplying it elsewhere only tu avoid kreating identikal spelling for

different words. (Thus most of the long vowels, in the last syllable, are identified. This, in conjunction with rule wun, leaves little doubt about pronunciation of short words, and 'word memory' is quite dependable for the longer words, because: the wrong pronunciation of even one vowel in a multi-syllable word seldom produces a bona fide word).

3. Use *ar* in *lu* or *er* in such as: very, there, their, air, merry, etc. (Thus we avoid most of the conflict with *er* as the soft-r notation).

4. Use *ur* for the stressed-r and *er* for the unstressed. (This preserves a more familiar over-all pattern than if either a notation were used all the way, and adds in determining stress).

5. Use hard-c before *a*, *o*, *u*, *l*, and *r*; elsewhere use *k*.

6. Use *aw* as in *law* in final position only; elsewhere use *o* in *lu* or *a* in such as: what, are, all, etc. (Inasmuch as the basic vowel phoneme in *are* and *starry* is the same as in *sorry*, the use of *a* in this position is won over from the basic troubles with T.O. The sound unquestionably belongs to *o*).

7. Use *qu* within the syllable and *kw* elsewhere. (It is to be noted that *kw* is seldom seen in T.O., and then only in separate syllables as in *awk-ward*, never as the blended phoneme in such as *quiet*).

8. Use *ks* as independent letters in separate syllables, before a stressed vowel, and *x* for the blended phoneme elsewhere in rule words. (Although *ks* is seldom seen in T.O., it will be seen more frequently in M.C., because of the *cc* words to be adjusted. In keeping with this rule we have such as *ak-sept* because of the following stressed vowel, but *ax-ident* because of the following unstressed vowel).

9. Use *yu* initially and *eu* elsewhere. (This retains a more familiar over-all pattern than if either notation were used all the way).

10. Use final-y for short-i and long-i, not only in rule words, but also in variants. But use *i* instead of vowel-y elsewhere. This not only eliminates confusion about where to change *y* to *i*, but also adds the pupil in recognizing the rule words involved).

11. Except for *a* and silent-*e*, let the unassisted vowel indicate its long sound in the final position. (Inasmuch as final-a is traditionally soft or indefinite, the familiar *ay* is retained in the interests of M.C. Furthermore, final-long-a is truly a diphthong, anyway. Likewise final-long-i may be treated as a diphthong in avoiding a wun-letter word, by offering *iy* for *eye*).

12. Although plural and tense endings may be spelled phonetically, the final silent-*e* must be retained, even though it is not pronounced.

Minor inconsistencies such as the two sounds of *th*, the missing *g* in such as *ink*, and the differences in the vowels in *cot* and *caught* are considered to be insignificant to justify further distortion of the pattern, leaving those technicalities to oral instruction, per diacritics in the dictionary, just as in the past.

Clarence Hotson, Ph.D., says, regarding his system: The common sense solution to the problem of spelling reform is to find the best way we now have of representing any particular sound of English speech, and to make that the rule, excluding so far as practical all other representations. At present we use over 500 symbols for 40 sounds, so that English is 8% phonetic. My reformed system that I call Ryt Rytting reduces the number of symbols to 43, with the result it is 85% phonetic. This makes certain that the new spelling shall not be too unfamiliar, and yet conserves everything of our present style that is worth keeping.

Now for the 25 rules for Ryt Ryting:

Consonants are: b, ch as in chat, d, f, g (only as in go), h, i (consonant, as in *ia, ie, iu*), j, k, l, m, n, ng as in rang, nk as in rank, p, r, s, sh, t, th as in this, tth as in tthin (thin), v, w, y, z, and zh; 26 consonants. 'gh' may be added, but it is used only for the guttural sound in Gaelic and German (not in modern English at all) as in *logh* (Loch Lomond). The symbols c, ph, qu, tch and x are for use in proper nouns only.

Vowels are: a as in had, ah as in fahthur (father), hurah, sahri (sorry), ai as in aid, or terminally, ay as in pay, au as in taut, e as in bed, ee as in feed, o as in got, oa as in oats, oo as in boot, ui as in guid (good), i as in bid, y as in my, oy as in boy, ow as in owl, u as in bud; 16 vowels.

When *u, eu, or ew* or anything except something with consonant *y* is pronounced *yoo* in present spelling, the symbol *iu* is used for that sound in Ryt Ryting. In this combination *i* is used as a consonant. Examples: iniuendo (inuendo), iutiliti (utility), iunyun (union), kumiunyun (communion), iufemizm (euphemism), iuniform (uniform), saliutaishun, but jeenyus (genius), unyun (onion), yungstur.

Consonant *i* occurs also before *a* as in brilliant, familiar, sivilian, valiant, and before *e* in ailien (alien), ekspedient, ekspiriens (experience), graidient (gradient), ingredient, kunvenient, obedient, rezilient, and sailient (salient). Where *ie* must be pronounced as two vowels, the hyphen separates them: durti-est, nasti-est, priti-est (prettiest).

Letter *y* is used as both a consonant and a vowel, but its own vowel sound is only that of *y* in by, fly, my. The first personal pronoun is *Y* (I). With *a* it makes the vowel sound in: day, pay, say, way. With *o* it makes the vowel sound in: boy, joy, toy. If *y* immediately precedes a vowel in the same syllable, and begins the word or syllable, it is consonant *y*, if not, it is vowel *y*.

The doubling of *y*, with consonant *y* preceding vowel *y*, is possible only in three words I find in the Oxford Universal Dictionary and nowhere else: *yyk* (yike), *yyp* (yipe), and *yyt* (yite).

To distinguish *yearn* from *iron*, Ryt Ryting spells *yearn* as *yurn* and *iron* as *yrn*. It writes *ion* as *y-un*, iodine as *yodyn* and iodoform as *y-odoform*. If spelled phonetically, ionic will become *y-onik* and Tieyoung (a place name) will be *Ty-yung*. But aside from the rule that proper names are exempt from spelling reform, such occasions for the hyphen are rare anyway.

Lyunyz for lionize is clear enuf, the rule being that if *y* is preceded by a consonant and followed by another vowel, and can be pronounced as vowel *y* to form an actual word, it must be so pronounced, and the following vowel must begin a new syllable.

Examples of vowel *y* are: bryt (bright), byur (buyer), defyunt (defiant), denyul (denial), dezyn (design), dyet (diet), dyul (dial), dyur (dyer), forsyt (foresight), hwyt (white), hyt (height), inspyr (inspire), jyunt (giant), klyunt (client), kuntryvuns (contrivance), kwyt (quiet), lyun (lion), myt (might), nyt (night), pyn (pine), pryoriti (priority), pryur (prior), relyunt (reliant), revyl (revile), syuns (science), sylunt (silent), tryul (trial), wyn (wine), ydea (idea), ylund (island), yrait (irate), y (eye), Y (I), y-odyn (iodine), y-unyz (ionize), y-unyzaishun (ionization), yrn (iron).

Examples of consonant *y* are: bilyus (bilious), bunyun (bunion), iunyun (union), jeenyus (genius), lauyer (lawyer), sauyur, unyun (onion), yank, yard, yarn, yel, yelo (yellow), yeeld (yield), yesturday, yet, yir (year), yogurt, yu (you), yuir (your), yungstur (youngster), yutth (youth).

Except before *r*, the vowels *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u* are pronounced in closed syllables, as in: bag, beg, big, bog, bug. Before *r* in the same syllable, vowels are pronounced as in: bar, bair (bare or bear), bir (beer or bier), bor (boar or bore), bur (burr), and buir (boor). Example: Th bairfaist buir hu spoak witt a bur bor hiz bir frum th bar. (The barefaced boor who spoke with a burr bore his beer from the bar.) Pure and cure are spelled piur and kiur.

At the end of a word and also in its compounds, *ay* is preferred to *ai*: alay (allay), aray, betray, bray, day, defray, delay, display, flay, gay, gray, hay, klay, kunvay (convey), lay, may, pay, play, portray, pray, say, survay, sway, thay (they), tray, way; and also baybari (bayberry), betrayul, daybraik (daybreak), daylyt (daylight), hay-fevur, haystak, layman, mayfly, maypoal (maypole), payload, paymastur, portrayul, survayor (surveyor), waylay, waysyd (wayside), way-worn, waywurd (wayward.).

Instead of the conventional spelling of gaiety and laity, Ryt Ryting has gayeti and layiti, preserving the root form of the words. Whenever the *ai* sound is followed by a vowel, *ay* is mandatory. Thus, betrayul, defrayul, portrayul.

Kayman, krayfish, and mayhem are rare cases where *ay* is preferred at the end of an open syllable. But, daili (daily), laibur (labor), laiden (laden), maiden, naibur (neighbor), naishun (nation), oraishun (oration), raiment, saibur (saber), sailur (sailor), traitur (traitor), follow the main rule for the end of an open syllable which is not the end of a word.

Where *z* is added to *ay* for the plural or otherwise, *ay* is retained: obay (obey), obayz; play, playz; pray, prayz. Thus, day, dayz (daze, daiz) way, wayz; wayz and meenz, yayz and nayz. Where *d* is added for past tense, *ay* is usually retained, but not always: lay, layz, laid, pay, payz, paid, as well as play, playz, playd; pray, prayz, prayd; way (weigh), wayz (weighs), wayd (weighed). Follow the model of present-day spelling practice in this regard. [2] Otherwise, *ai* takes over in closed syllables especially, and as shown above, in most open syllables also.

When final *ia* in present spelling is pronounced as two vowels, it is spelled thus: amonea (ammonia), ahrea (aria), anemea (anemia), but area, numonea (pneumonia). When, however, it is pronounced in one syllable, it is spelled thus: inursha (inertia), milisha (militia), nostalgja (nostalgia), nuiralja (neuralgia).

For convenience, the indefinite article *a* is left as it is, however actually pronounced.

*Ah* is employed where *o* (as used in closed syllables only) seems inadequate to convey the emphatic *ah* sound required: "On bahmi dayz th swahmi fed pahm leevz and pahpahya to hiz kahm Leahma." Note that the *ah* sound in kahm (calm) requires the *ah* vowel even tho in a closed syllable. Short *o* is confined to close syllables, of course, so that in open syllables *ah* is always needed for this sound: "Ah, bah" sed Mahma, "this drahma, aul spah, howdah, and blah, iz not wurth a hurah."

Letter *e* at the end of word or syllable, or as a syllable by itself (except at the beginning of a word), has the sound of *ee*: be, he, me, she, we, ye; employe, legate (legatee), siniue (sinewy); barborean, bereul (burial), being, belo (below), but bello (bellow); defend, depo, desent (descent); desunt (decent), detuir (detour), feloneus, but felun (felon), and felo (fellow); reseshun (recession), resunt, rezent, durteur (dirtier), lareat (lariat), laureat (laureate), realiti, champeun (champion), espeonahzh (espionage), delireus (delirious), infireur (inferior), kareur (carrier), sireus (serious), supireur (superior). But, eedikt, eegotist, eegur (eager), eekonomi, eekwul, eekwyn, eethur (either), eethur (ether), eevun, eevent, eevul (evil), eez, eezi.

Since the definite article *the* is pronounced differently before a word beginning with a consonant than before one beginning with a vowel, the *e* slurred before a consonant is to be dropped: "Th big felo met the old man in th street." Since final *e* always has the sound of *ee*, and the vowel in *the* before a word beginning with a consonant is reduced to the minimum needed to vocalize *th*, *e* must thus be dropped for consistency. It also results in quite a saving of letters. Otherwise *e* sounds as in beg. In closed syllables the *ee* sound must be written *ee*, beef, deed, deal (deal), neet (neat).

Vowel *i* in final position, or at the end of a word, sounds like short *i*, but almost like *ee*. duli, duti, siti (city). Plurals, duteez, siteez. Otherwise vowel *i* sounds as in big, except, of course, in *ui*: buil (bull), buir (boor), guid (good).

Letter *o* before *ng* or *r*, has the sound of *au*: along, gong, song, strong; or, bor, mor, sor (sore).

Letter *o* has the sound of *oa*.

(1) When it is a syllable by itself, or ends a word or syllable: obo (oboe), open, omit, ovur, odeus; hobo, pokur, topur, polo, solo; gro, so, wo; folour (follower), swoloing.

(2) Before *ld*, *lt*, *st* or *tth* in the same syllable: bold, bolt, host, post, both (both). Roster, in the present spelling, must be written rahstur, to avoid rostur (roaster). Postern in present spelling will be pahsturn to avoid confusion with postur.

Letter *o* otherwise in closed syllables has the sound in bog. In such syllables, the long *o* sound must be written *oa*: boat, goat, tthroat, telefoan.

Letter *u* has the sound of *oo* in boot:

(1) At the end of a word or syllable: du, hu, tu, yu; bruur (brewer), duli, duti, duur (doer), gruel, kruel, influens, instrument, lusid (lucid), pursuur, stupid, wuur (woer).

(2) Before *tth* in the same syllable: butth (booth), rutthles, sutthsayur (soothsayer), trutth, tutth (tooth), unkutth (uncouth), yutth (youth), but, sooth (soothe), and smooth.

Before a consonant in the same syllable, or in a closed syllable, *u* has the sound in bug. Except before *tth* in the same syllable, the sound of *oo* in closed syllables is expressed only by *oo*: food, introod (intrude), inklood, eksklood, prood (prude), proon (prune); fool, rool (rule).

Because of the vowel sound of *ui* in buil, buir, guid, puir, *i* may never follow an ordinary *u* directly; du, but dooing; su, but sooing, tatu, but tatoeing; wu, but wooing; inkongruus, but inkongrooiti.

Thus,

altrooist (altruist), flooid (fluid), intooishun (intuition). But after *iu* it is all right: ensiu, ensiuing, pirsiu, pursiuing, riviuing (reviewing).

To conform to Ryt Ryting rules of position among others, don't is written do n't and won't, wo n't. Can't is ka'n't and shan't is sha'n't. Mayn't is may n't, doesn't is duz n't and, wasn't is wuz n't. Weren't and daren't become wurn't and dairn't and mustn't becomes mus'n't. Y'm (I'm), yui'r (you're), wi'r (we're), and thai'r (they're) are needed, as well as Y'd, yu'd, we'd, thay'd, as well as Y'v, yu'v and we'v, thay'v, he'z and she'z. Y'l, yu'l, he'l, she'l, we'l, thay'l and it'l complete the needed list of colloquialisms.

The great merit of Ryt Ryting is to bring out with emphatic distinctiveness the specific sounds of English, particularly vowel sounds, and to reduce to a minimum the symbols needed to express these special sounds. These rules are mostly codifications of peculiar English practices which are worth preserving, and when preserved make for good readability and efficiency. It is consistent and essentially phonetic, efficient and easily learned either by new learners or by people used to our

present style. It can be used especially to teach foreigners to read English, as a phonetic key to transliterate ordinary English text, thus overcoming the stumbling blocks of irregular English.

Dr. Axel Wijk's *Regularized English* was comprehensively detailed in his book by the title published by Almqvist and Wiksell, of Stockholm, Sweden in 1959. This 361 page book gives some 62 rules and about 35 exceptions to the rules in order to regularize English with as few changes as possible. Naturally with such an objective it does not pretend to be as nearly phonetic as other reform systems. In fact, it allows seven different letter combinations to stand for the sound of *sh*, such as: sh in bishop, ssi in mission, sci in conscience, ci in special, si in pension, ti in nation, ce in ocean, while at the same time each of these letter combinations represents different sounds in such words as: mishap, mississippi, disciple, circus, city, sit, design, tin, tide, celt, cent, cello. From this acceptance of numerous anomalies it appears that his sole objective is to retain unchanged as much as possible of our erratic traditional spelling. In this objective he claims that Regularized English is 85 to 88% unchanged from T.O, and therefore deserves the prize for the most unchanged system of reform. However, Newell Tune proposed a system requiring only two rules, and which was 99.98% unchanged. The rules are: Drop the unnecessary silent letters in the following 135 words: head, know, knew, gnu, etc. 2. Spell the rest of the 77,000 words in the dictionary as they are now spelt. Nuf sed.

As it would take more space than we could possibly give, Wijk's rules cannot be given here. Instead an example will be given: (from page 316, *Regularized English*).

#### Prezent State ov Affairs in English Orthografy

In the corse ov its historical development English haz becum the moste widely spoken and the moste widely taught ov aul the languages in existence. To aul intents and purposes it iz indeed aulreddy the principal language in the wurld. Oeing to its wide diffuzion and to the grait political, cultural and financial importance ov the peeples hooze mudher tung it iz, it seems likely that it will continue to hold this pozition and even becum increasingly important az time goes on, if we ar not aul engulft by a major world catastrofy.

For its role az the principal auxiliary language in the wurld, English iz exceedingly well equipt in several respects. Its greitest merit, in comparison widh udher languages, lies undoutedly in its comparatively simple grammatical structure, which makes the language eazy to lern from this particular point ov view, expecially at the loer and intermediat levels. Enywun hoo haz tried to lern to speak a forren language will admit that this iz the quolity that must first ov aul be required ov an auxiliary language. English haz furdher the advantage ov an enormously rich vocabulary, which cuvers aul existing fields ov knolledge and thought and enables us to express every imaginable shade ov meaning. It iz true that this immense welth ov vocabulary entails a drawback in so far az it makes it extremely difficult, not to say impossible, to acquire a complete mastery ov the language. But nowun needs to master the vocabulary in its entirety in order to uze the language az a means ov everyday oral or written communication. A knolledge ov the 3,000 commonest words togedher widh their moste frequent compounds and derivativs will generally suffice to enable us to understand ordinary spoken or written English, Too udher important features ov the English language, shood be emfasized the international caracter ov its vocabulary and its extraordinary capacity for absorbing and evolving new linguistic material. Theze quolities ar largely due to the fact that English derives its origin from three principal sorces: Germanic, Romance and Latin speech elements.

Besides the abuv-mentioend advantages, we aulso finde wun very greit disadvantage, which forms a serious obstacle to the general acceptance ov English az a universal auxiliary language. Its orthografical system iz hopelessly antiquated and confuzed. Thare iz hardly a letter or a combination ov too or three letters in the alfabet that cannot be pronounced in too or three different

ways, and a good meny ov them actually hav from haf a duzzen to a duzzen different pronunciations. Moreover we offen finde a greit meny different spellings for wun and the same sound, especially in the case ov the vowel sounds. It iz the first kinde ov irregularity, the varying pronunciations for wun and the same letter or for wun and the same combination ov letters, which iz particularly objectionable, and which in eny attempt to reform the spelling, it will be essential to eliminate to az large an extent az possible. The second irregularity, the meny varying spellings for wun and the same sound, may be sumwhot disturbing to thoze hoo think that it wood be desirable to hav a completely fonetic spelling for Inglish. But actually it duz not matter very much if we hav too, three or even foar or more different spellings for a particular sound, az long az the various symbols for it ar oenly uzed to denote this particular sound. In fact, it iz in many cases extremely useful to hav several symbols for wun and the same sound, since it enables us to distinguish between words that ar identical in sound, such az mail-male, vain-vein-vane, pray-prey, way-weigh."

It might be interesting to figure the percentage ov unchanged words in the above running text. Of the 605 words, 445 were unchanged, or 73½%, which is considerably higher than other systems but less than the percentage of unchanged words in the dictionary as he expressed at between 85 and 88%. This is because the common words which occur more frequently, also are more irregular and require change.

In *Revised Spelling*, a new approach to the problem of English spelling reform, by F. T. Du Feu, M.A., he says:

"In this approach to the problem of English Spelling Reform, we ascertain the sound most commonly represented by any particular letter or group of letters and then restrict that letter or group to that one sound only.

For example, if the language is represented by the 5,000 commonest words, it will be found that the digraph *ea* represents the sound in *dream* or *near* 92 times, the sound in *thread* 19 times, the sound in *break* or *bear* 8 times and the sound in *real* 3 times. We accordingly restrict *ea* to the sound in *dream* or *near* and re-spell the words in the other three groups.

After earlier spellings have been carefully considered, all the words in a minority group are re-spelt in the same way or left as exceptions.

As none of the words *shut*, *shoot*, *shout*, *shot* is in a minority group, and *u*, *oo*, *ou*, *o* are the only spellings of the short vowel heard in *put* and *foot*, it follows that there is no current spelling available for this important vowel. We represent it by the letter *w* for the following reasons:

- (a) Because it bears the same close relationship to the semi-vowel consonant *w* (*wet*) as the short vowel *y* (*myth*) bears to the semi-vowel consonant *y* (*yet*).
- (b) Because the other five short vowels are represented by one letter only.
- (c) Because *w* represents this vowel in the current spelling of a number of Welsh place names.

The complete integration of *w* with the other five short vowels calls for some small changes in the consonants that follow *w*. Thus *rook* is respelt *rwck* to bring it in line with *rack*, *reck*, *rick*, *rock*, and *ruck*; while *footing* is respelt *fwtting* in line with *cutting* and *sitting*.

The suffixes *-hood*, *-ful* are re-spelt *-hwd*, *-fwl*.

It will be seen:

- (1) that very few words are not immediately recognizable at sight;

- (2) that words have been re-spelt, when necessary, in such a way as to obscure their derivation as little as possible;
- (3) that there is no loss of efficiency as would be the case if words like *mete*, *meat*, *meet* had a common spelling;
- (4) that the rules of current English spelling have been clarified rather than superseded.

In the following examples an accepted spelling is shown in relation to one or more re-spellings of it:

1. k for ch; sh for ch; ch. Because of a mekanical fault the man's parachute opened much too soon.
2. gi; ji for gi. It would make me giddy to look down from the top of that gigantic cliff. (jibe is an alternative spelling for gibe.)
3. q for qu; qu. The masquerade was quite a success.
4. ce for se; -se. A pencil is no uce for that work; you must use a pen. (Note: advice, noun - advise, verb).
5. -s; -ss for -s; -s. (in words of one syllable) Has the visitor given thiss child some toys?
6. -e (mute); -y for -e. I much prefer a columbine to an anemony.
7. -ie for -y; -y. He will occupie till next January the house we occupied last year.
8. ie for i; i. Do you miend sailing in a strong wind?
9. i-e; e-e for i-e. This device is much used by the polece (gasolene is an alternative spelling of gasoline).
10. ia for ie; ee for ie; ie; i for ie. The propriator of that large feeld has just died in the colonis. (cheef, feeld, feend, greef are found in Chaucer).
11. ea; ei for ea; e for ea. I mean to return home to-day for a breik, indeed, I ment to return last week. (fether, hevy, jelous, ment, are found in Chaucer; steik is the M.E. spelling of steak).
12. ear; er for ear; eir for ear. These shares are not dear; we lem that they beir interest at 6%. (derth, herse, perl, yern are found in Chaucer).
13. ea for ei; ei. Seaze the reins if the animal tries to move. (reave is an alternative spelling of reive).
14. ee for e; e. The patient had no feever and was never very ill.
15. ey; ee for ey. (in words of one syllable) They must be very careful not to lose the kee.
16. ay for ey; ey. (in words of more than one syllable) A party of students will leave here to survay the abbey.
17. a (before l); au for a (before l). Thou shalt not bear faulse witness against thy neighbour. (cauldron is an alternative spelling of caldron).
18. ae for a; aa for a; a. Potatoes, tomaatoes and radishes are the main crops.
19. a; o for a. It is not necessary to splash so much when you wosh (wobble is an alternate spelling of wabble)
20. or for ar; ar. A swarm of bees invaded the farm.
21. aught for ought; ought. We thought that the plants wwd suffer from the drought.
22. oo; w for oo. Thiss food is unfortunately no longer any gwd.
23. ow; ou for ow. The nativs attacked with bows and arrows from the bou of the ship. (hou, nou, bouel are M.E. spellings of how, now, bowel).
24. oo for ou; ou; u for ou; ow for ou. A small woond was found on the yong boy's showlder. (cariboo is an alternative spelling of caribou; sowl is found in Chaucer).
25. oar for our; our; ur for our; oor for our. The director spoke to foar of our jurneymen on his toor of the factory. (burgeon is an alternative spelling of bourgeon).
26. oa for o (before r); o (before r). Thare will be an oaral examination in moral philosophy.
27. oe for o; o; u for o; o. They came oever on the hovercraft to recover the property. (spunge is an obsolete spelling of sponge; many words now spelt with an *o* had an earlier spelling with a *u*).
28. oo for o; o. Doo your friends always go by ship?
29. ur for or; or. There was far too much wurk on that land for one fork.
30. ue for u; u; w for u. The puema rushed into the bwshes to escape. (pws is Welsh for puss, pwidin for pudding).

As an example of the above system, he has transliterated a portion of Alice in Wonderland:

The Fish-Fwtman twck a greit letter, as large as himself from under his arm and handed it oever to the uther. "For the Duchess," he sed, "an invitaetion from the Queen to play croequeh." Then boeth fwtmen boud low and in a moement the Fish-Fwtman was gon.

Alice went timidly up to the door and knockd. "Thare's no uce of knocking," sed the Fwtman with the frog face, because I'm on the same side as you are and because they'r making such a noise inside, no wun cwd possibly hear yoo."

This was quite true but at last, after lissening to a greit deal of foolish tauk bie the Fwtman, Alice oepend the doar and went in.

The doar led right into a large kitchen filld with smoke. The Duchess was sitting on a three-legd stool nurcing a baeby. The cwck was leaning oever the fire stirring a pot of soop. "Thare's too much pepper in that soop!" Alice sed to herself, trying as well as she cwd to keep from sneezing.

Even the Duchess was sneezing and the oenly things that did not sneeze wer the cwck, and a large cat which sat grinning from ear to ear; thiss proovd to be a Cheshire cat.

After a while the Duchess, hoo had been moest unplesant to everywun, suddenly cried, "Here! Yoo may nurce it a bit." And she flung the baeby at Alice. I must go and get redy to play croqueh with the Queen, and she hurrid out of the rwm.

Alice caught the baeby and it grunted in her arms. She lwkd at it and found that it had changed into a pig. Alice carrid it out into the oepen and fienally pwt it down on the ground, and felt quite releevd to see it trot quietly away into the wwd."

In the above example of 309 words, there are 226 unchanged - exactly the same percentage as in Wijk's system.

Some of the short-comings of the above system are readily apparent. The use of *w* as a vowel cannot be justified if one is trying for minimal change. The short *oo*-sound in *put* and *foot* is represented by *u* or the combination of letters *ou* with sufficient frequency that *uu* would took less changed than *w*. For example, put, puut; could, cuud, What happens in Welsh has no possible bearing on English because Welsh is completely unreadable to an Englishman. His other reasons have no relation to minimal change.

The "uce" of *c* for the *s*-sound is most certainly an infrequent use that should be eliminated - not extended. Also the use of *g* for the sound of *j* is a maladroit that no system should espouse. Many of the examples he uses to justify exceptions are too unusual or rare to be considered in a minimal change plan.

On the whole, the rules are not expressed in a workable manner and are too complicated to be taught successfully and easily.

The whole scheme is based upon faulty logic - that the most frequent letter combinations among the 5000 commonest words (and the most illogically spelt) could promote regularity, when they often conflict among themselves, and are often unphonetically spelt. Even this is not followed consistently. Take the examples of the *w* and the *uce*, a well as the "or left as exceptions."

In a future issue, the *Bulletin* will compare these systems in a prose especially designed to illuminate the duplication and consequently confusing characteristics of some of these minimal change systems.

[1] These are: Zebu, Emu and Gnu.

[2] Ed. note: If you must know and follow our present system when in doubt, is this a very satisfactory rule?

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[Spelling Reform Anthology §8.4 p134]

[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1964 p23]

### **John Hazel, by F. T. Du Feu, (in the Author's Revised Spelling)**

Mie heero was an aulderman hoose yung vivaecious daughter  
Protested that he ran as deep as eny Lakeland wauter.  
John Hazel thaught himself to be a moest astute detectiv;  
Hou Sherlock Holmes misssd simple clues occaasiond his invectiv.  
Sed Pam wun day, "I doen't feel well." Then speaking raather louder,  
"Nou be a reeal comrad, Pop, and purchace at the village shop,  
A tieny Seidlitz pouder."  
He acquiesced and left in cloethes not smart but clean and decent.  
Haa! Blutstains on the fwtpath and comparativly recent!  
So Hazel saught his microscope impeld bie force of habit;  
That blud had never vietalized a sheep, a dog or rabbit.  
It must in fact be hueman; the conviction made him shudder,  
And feel for thirty seconds like a ship without a rudder;  
Or vaerying the simily, an unsupported girder.  
Determind to investigae thiss glaring cace of murder,  
He found, a furlong up the hill, the stains wer sumwhot lighter,  
While haaf that distance doun the hill, incomparably brighter.  
I can't see whot he gatherd from thiss trivial observaetion,  
But he continued doun without a moment's hesitaetion.  
The gruesome trail meanderd past the houce of Sargent Brissle,  
Hoo, thogh off duety, came along betimes and blew his whistle.  
A corner turnd and they discerned, across a feeld of stubble,  
Sum six or seven officers approaching at the dubble.

As they drew near their cheef remarkd upon their smart appearance,  
Their curage to enforce the law and brwk no interference.  
The possy moovd along at wunce, John Hazel nou observing  
Hou, in the cace of justice, they wer loyal and unswerving.  
The trail wos followd to an inn, and here, it seems, the barman  
Had oenly seen a taul marene, a painter and a carman.  
The painter wos a frend of his, the carmm wosn't wauking  
They'd recognise the felon and shwd not delay the stauking,  
For hevvy clouds wer roeling up and rain wwd spell disaster,  
They aught to make an effort to progress a little faster.  
Nou haaf a mile beyond thiss place the train appeared to finish.  
Recoiling from the sudden shock, they felt their zeal diminish.

But Hazel saved the force again, with staggering composure  
He led them to an iron gate before a small enclosure.  
They entered stealthily. A man was nonchalantly giving  
The pillar box a coat of paint. Visions of not outliving  
This melancholy day arose. Men who could crush a riot  
Should scarcely find it difficult to keep the matter quiet.  
Accordingly the workman was permitted to continue,  
Completely unaware of all that wealth of brawn and sinew.  
But Hazel is no more a sleuth; and credit his assertion,  
He thinks the C.I.D. a sham, and catching butterflies for Pam,  
Is now his sole diversion.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1964 p24]

### **i/t/a reading classes visited**

At the end of January, the Editor accompanied Mr. John Bormuth of U.C.L.A., Dr. Fred Zannon, Supt, of Curriculum into Monica City Schools, Dr. Carrell, Principal, Santa Monica, on a trip to visit an i/t/a class in Lompoc, Calif.

But before telling about the class, we must tell about sitting the teachers. When the 320 teachers in the district heard about the two day orientation class being given last fall, 150 of them immediately volunteered, nearly swamping the facilities. After this two day training and the arrival of the new American i/t/a books, Miss Dorothy Ingamells changed over the instruction medium for her third grade remedial reading class of 16 just before Thanksgiving. All of them had been one year or more below their grade level. Most of them were disabled readers, but a few were almost in readers. When we visited the class they had had only two months of remedial instruction 40 minutes a day and not quite finished all the vowel sounds, which were introduced in family group words. It was very heartening to see nearly all hands respond with confidence when asked to volunteer to sound out a new word. Each was then asked to write the word in their workbook and one student wrote on the greenboard (not blackboard). Small boards were available to which magnetic letters were attached to spell the words Each pupil was then asked to write the word in their workbook, taking care to keep the letters between the lines. Next they were asked to change the vowel to make new words - a family of words. All together this makes 4 ways of making impressions - sound, sight, writing by hand, and substitution. The latter also gives good ear training in phonetics. The Curriculum Superintendent, Bob Thompson was very much pleased with the progress so far.

In March, the Editor visited two experimental i/t/a classes - a first grade and a kindergarten class in the Lower School of the Laboratory School of the University of Chicago, under Dr, Robert E. Newman, Principal. Miss Sadako Tengan, First Grade teacher of a class of 24, had attended the Greater Cleveland school for orientation in i/t/a in the summer, conducted by John Downing. She had an assistant teacher who is a graduate doing her practice teaching. Her class, out of 4 available, was selected for i/t/a because they were found to be not ready to learn to read by the Lee Clarke Readiness test. The Metropolitan Achievement Test is being used to measure progress.

Instruction proceeded as follows. After the class has sight training with a small number of sight words, sounds are taught in context and when needed to show differences, by direct phonics. Pupils spend part time at the greenboard writing words, then all copy the words in their notebooks. They read back what they have copied and the assistant helps any bewildered child to correct its mistakes. The pupils ask the visitors to do this, too.

In the four months since a late start, most have finished Book 4 in the Early to read series, some Book 5, but a few are still in Book 3. Some also read Dr Seuss' *Hop on Pop* and all children enjoy it immensely.

Some of the kindergartners were doing almost as well as the first graders, but a few lacked interest. The kindergartners were using the English series of books, Some were in *Out and About*. They require frequent help but often read a book in two days, hence the need for a large number of books. These children are reading for pleasure so they expect and require reading matter that has story interest at their grade level, not the monotonous readers of look-and-say.

In a book by G. Stanley Hall, entitled *How to Teach Reading* (pub, 1886), the following is appropriate, "There appears in many children a period lasting many months between the ages of 5 and 8 when both interest and facility in learning to read culminate, and if this period passes inutilized, they learn it with greater difficulty and at a certain disadvantage." We must be ready for this opportunity.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1964 pp25,26]

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## TORSKRIPT TRAK5

·jak sprat kəd it nou fat  
hız waif kəd it nou lin  
and sou, bitwıkst ðem bouh, yu si,  
ðei likt ðə plətər klin

"ðə taim hɔz kum,"  
ðə wolrəs sed,  
"tu tok əv meni hınz:  
əv euz - and eıps - and sılın waks -  
əv kabəjəz - and kınz  
and hwai ðə si ız boılın hat -  
and hweðər pıgz hav wınz."

ðıs ız ðə forəst praimivəl. ðə  
murmərın painz and ðə hemlaks,  
bırdəd wıð mos, and in garmənts grin  
ındıstınt in ðə twılait,  
stand laik druidz əv eld, wıð voisəz  
sad and prəfetık...

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