Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969

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 progress"

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1. From This Week Magazine (of Canada)

Easy Reading

Somewhere between 7 and 11% of our school children experience difficulty in learning how to read.

In Japan, however, fewer than 1% find difficulty in learning how to read. Why the wide difference? Prof. Kiyoshi Makita of Keio Gijuku University, Tokyo, who has tested the reading ability of 10,000 Japanese children, cites as the cause the abstract nature of the Roman script used in English and other Western languages.

The Japanese language contains some 1850 "ideographs" or "characters," as compared with our 26-letter alphabet. Offhand, one would think the American child would find reading easier than the Japanese child. But this is not so. Our English alphabet has many confusing mirror-image letters, such as b and d, q and p. Children mistake *no* for *on, was* for *saw, not* for *ton, left* for *felt.* They have a great deal of trouble with the vowels, some of which sound closely alike to others.

Japanese children have no trouble with mirror words. They have none. Japanese written words look like or suggest the subjects they describe.

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2. The Necessity for an Uniform Accurate Pronunciation of the English Language, by Ellen C. Henderson*

*B.A. thesis Univ. of Utah, June, 1911.

More than 30 years before the close of the 18th century – only 40 years after the appearance of the first pronouncing dictionary – Thomas Sheridan, "elocutionist" and actor, formed "an ideal plan for establishing exact uniformity of English speech;" so that the hope of having an uniform accurate pronunciation of the English language is not new. Sheridan's dreaming, however, amounted to no more than another dictionary which was not even considered good authority except by a few and that only for a short time. During the years that followed the Revolution and the War of 1812, there was less unity in written English than there had ever been before. England, glorying in her ancient customs and traditions, refused to recognise the new words which came into use in America. Consequently, in 1812 Webster's American Dictionary came into existence "to supply the definitions of words which had a different meaning in English diction."

For many years, all dictionaries of the English language have included the meaning of all words that are in good usage wherever English is spoken. The same books and journals are being read and studied everywhere, in homes, offices, schools, colleges and universities. With the present facilities for travel, we are coming to understand and appreciate each other; our interests are becoming identical and we are laying aside national prejudices. It seems very probable that this cosmopolitan life will, in the process of effacing all national characteristics, treat the differences in speech in a like manner, eventually resulting in a pronunciation that will be comparatively uniform.

Altho this diffusion of education and co-operation of interests is gradually bringing about uniformity in the spoken language, there stems to be no unified ideal of correct utterance. "There is

but one best pronunciation of the French language; cultured Germans require an accurateness in speech which amounts almost to fastidiousness; while in the English language, spoken over a greater area than any other tongue, and having in proportion to the number of native people speaking it, fewer who are illiterate than can be found in any other, English is, likewise, the only great language that has no ideal of accurateness of pronunciation. The tendency in London and in the south and east of the United States is to take the usage of the people for the standard of authority, while in the west and the great middle west of the United States the tendency is to follow the standard of the dictionaries.

Historical precedence favors taking the usage of the educated classes as the standard of authority. The word has always been within the control of the educated users of speech; and it may be taken for granted that the constructions and pronunciations which have been retained in spite of all opposition, have supplied demands which really existed. But, it is to this practice that we owe what is unsatisfactory in the construction and pronunciation of our words as well as what strength may have bean given to the language.

It is the purpose of this paper to show that if we hope to preserve the beauty and power of the language, as well as its understandability, it is imperative that we have not only an utterance that is uniform but also one that is accurate.

To have an uniform, accurate pronunciation does not mean that everybody shall speak exactly the same – that all variety of inflection shall be lost. 'This would be impossible, even if desirable. The speech of one person never resembles precisely that of another, the utterance of each individual being constantly modified by circumstances. Differences of thought may be expressed as adequately with correct pronunciation as with incorrect. The right kind of attention given to our speech, far from making it stilted and pedantic, will add to the variety of modulation by giving clearer, richer sounds with accurate, more natural accent.

It seems as if the present interest in the form of the written word may cause more attention to be given to the study of the language us a whole. If this had been done when printing first made uniform spelling necessary, there would now be no need of a reform in spelling. Even educators have not considered that thousands of words are spoken to every one that is written or read, In *New English Regulations for Colleges,* a pamphlet recommending the exhaustive study of English, nothing is said about the beauty of the spoken language or the growing tendency toward careless articulation and indifferent pronunciation. Educators do not seem to realize that spoken English should be given a place in the school curriculum along with spelling and grammar.

The foreign student of English is confronted with a great problem. He will find no rule that is entirely dependable. He can never be absolutely sure that two similarly spelled words are pronounced alike. Then, unless his teacher happens to be one of the very few who speak all of the language accurately, it will be necessary for him to relearn the pronunciation of many words when he gets far enough along to care about speaking correctly.

De Alexander Ellis says (in his book) that altho in England alone there are three distinct dialects, the Northern, the Midland and the Southern, there is some tendency to regard the speech of the most cultured London circles as the best; but, that in those circles there is great diversity of pronunciation. In the United States, even among the educated, there are three dialects: the New England, the Southern and the Western; and unless public sentiment changes these three will

continue to be spoken, for in general the people obstinately mold to the dialectal pronunciation of their environment or else as dilligently affect the manner of speech which they happen to consider the most cultured.

It is claimed that in England there is less of the nasal tone and usually a higher key than in America. They put greater stress on the first syllables and correspondingly slight the last syllables so much that the word is often indistinct. The other extreme, found in American speech, is very objectionable to the English who insist that it is extremely uncultured.

The best educated Englishmen neither leave off the initial h nor add it where it does not belong as it is done by the uneducated thruout England except in certain parts of the south. Usually they give the right value to *u* and *a*, but they do not give *r* a uniform sound. "Doent you kneow" is becoming a fashion among many of the elite of society. Among the educated who speak the New England dialect, there is a tendency to drawl or give a double sound to some of the vowels which is very evident in the speech of the untutored. The misuse of the letter *r* is much more distinct than in any part of Great Britain, for in addition to giving it another sound, they add it to many words such as *idea.* In the Southern dialect the *r* difficulty is even more pronounced, final *g*'s in *ing* endings are left off, and there is a decided drawl due mainly to a tendency to place the accent near the end of the word. In the Western dialect the wrong sounds are given to the *a, o* and *u* of a great number of words and the final *r* is often over pronounced.

Besides these dialects, mistakes are constantly made by well educated people, some due to ignorance, many to indifference, and more to carelessness.

Occasionly one hears *altso*, *hantsome* and *orfand*. College students could not write these words as they are written above without being severely criticized; yet in another year two students who habitually make these mistakes will be graduated from a university serenely unconscious of the fact that every time they speak they proclaim their lack of culture.

Many mistakes are made in misplacing the accent, but since the great change that seems to be effecting our pronunciation at the present time is the shifting of the accent to the first part of the word, perhaps there is excuse for some of these mistakes. Indeed, the dictionaries record two pronunciations for many of these changing words, without stating a preference, altho the best pronunciation is given for most of them. We constantly hear "illustrate" with the accent on the first syllable and "advertisement" with the accent on the third altho a great majority of the best authorities call for the accent on the second syllable of both words. For "romance" there is no authority for the accent to be on the first syllable. For a great number of words like "formidable" there is no authority for the accent to be on any but the first syllable. Often no distinction is made between the noun and the verb pronunciation of words, the two forms of which are spelled alike, or nearly alike. One occasionly hears envelope (properly with the accent on the first syllable) pronunced like the verb envelop should be, with the accent on the second syllable. The verb pronunciation of detail (with the accent on the last syllable) is often given to the noun; altho according to Alfred Ayres, all of the later authorities give preference to the accent coming on the first syllable.

Misuse of the vowel sounds is a result of indifference rather than any incapacity to make those nice distinctions which are made by the most careful speakers. The most noticeable of these is giving the flat sound of *a* in *ăt* to a half dozen or so words which should have the broad Italian *a* of *ärm*; and

also to a great number of words which should have the sound just between the Italian and the short *a.* Thus we hear *hălf*, *lăugh, ăunt, ăsk, chănce,* ănt instead of the richer *half, laugh, aunt,* a*sk, chance, ant*. The *or* of *former*, so important for the ultimate richness of the language, is given a sound like the *ar* of *farmer*, nasalized. The habit of giving to *there, care, air, their*, a decided nasal tone instead of placing the sound in the throat is the brand of the American that is ridiculed by Englishmen. The sound of short *o* is often lengthened and broadened until instead of *bŏdy,* gŏne, and *lŏst*, we hear *baudy, gaune*, and *laust*. The short *oo* of *wool*, the long *oo* of *mood*, the sound represented by *ou* in *could*, and the *ū* of d*ū*ty are so much shortened and "swallowed" that many words like *good*, *choose, would* and *duty* become *gud*, *chuse, wud*, and *dooty*. In words like *work, girl, her, church,* the vowel and *r* become either *urr* or the short sound of *u*, when as a matter of fact in certain words the combinations *or, ir*, and *ur* are all given the same sound.

The vowel in many unaccented syllables is often mangled beyond recognition and we hear *perul*, *sentunce, justuce, developmunt.* Such mistakes due to carelessness in articulation are extremely common in the speech of people who know very well how such words should be pronounced. Words with the prefixes *pro-, pre-, par-* and *en-* are almost habitually uttered as if the words were spelled: *pernounce*, *perpared, pertake, injoy.* "Effect and affect", "except and accept" – words the meaning of which depends upon the prefix -"or and are" and "pore and poor" are pronounced as if there were no clearly defined distinctions between each pair. No account is taken of the proper syllabication of certain words and we constantly hear for "interest", "different", "poem", "glory" and "every" the very inelegant words, *intrist*, *diffrunt, pome*, *glorry*, and *evry*. "Did you" is too often *did chow*, altho the former is as easily articulated as the latter, if the organs of speech have been properly trained.

Not infrequently, people who have given much attention to their speech give, in an endeavor to be nicely correct, pedantic pronunciations which are as incorrect as the opposite extreme. One of the commonest errors in this respect is made in giving to the vowel in a syllable following an accented syllable, a full vowel quantity; thus the *i* and *u* of "police" and "deputy", and the second *e, i* and *a* of "element," "ability" and "palace" should be barely touched in passing. In unaccented syllables following accented ones, *ar, er, ir, ur*, and *or* should be pronounced exactly alike as in *liar, brier, elixer, sulphur* and *actor*, but they often are not. Besides the dialectal mispronunciation of giving a second or broken sound for *r*, the commonest mistake in such words is made as a result of laying too much stress on the final syllable, thus giving to the vowel a distinct sound which it should not have and to the *r* a harsh note which is not natural to final *r*'s. If the correct value were always given to the vowel, the *r* sound would never be offensively prominent. Sometimes the wrong vowel sound is given to the letter in a syllable and we hear *captun* for "captain" and *certun* for "certain." Just why those who make such mistakes should say *palus* for *palis* (palace) cannot be explained, and yet these mistakes are often found in the speech of carefully correct speakers. In natural speech the ideal which all of the orthoepists call for, both "me" and "my" are pronounced *mi*, unless the thought emphasis calls for the long sounds of ē and ī. Often in conscious speaking or reacting, these words are mispronounced. Occasionally actors go to the other and much worse extreme of giving to one or both of them the long sound of *ē*, and say, "Give mē mē book."

Careful attention to articulation and accent would soon prove efficient remedies for all these faults. It would take time; it would take energy: but would be fully worth while. We really owe it to our associates and to coming generations to make of ourselves models of accuracy in pronunciation. If this generation would make the effort, the problem would be practically solved. We imitate what we

hear, and the person who hears only good pronunciation cannot long continue if he starts to make mistakes.

At one time Alfred Ayres very aptly said, "A gross error, orthoepical or grammatical, may quickly take the nap, off the handsomest suit of clothes that ever came from a tailor." All educated men realize that bad pronunciation invariably indicates that one's surroundings have been of an unlettered sort and see to it that they avoid those pronunciations which belong to the speech of the imperfectly educated. Nor is this greatly to their credit. There is no more difficulty in avoiding them than in avoiding the violation of the ordinary rules of grammar. But if they fully realized that no qualification goes further in making one appear to advantage than does a correct utterance, they would not be so careless and indifferent.

All classes of educated people agree that we should use the best pronunciation but there are some most amazing opinions about what that best is. One woman tells us that it would be safest for us to imitate the speech of the most cultured whom we meet. Another informs us that it is stress that proclaims a person's culture rather than vowel sound. From magazine articles the writer collected information of unknown value: that *ant* and *aunt* are pronounced alike quite correctly by those who prefer the flat sound to the broad; that people may with propriety imitate those of the English nobility who for "leaving" say *leavin'*; that certain proper names become vulgarized when all of the syllables ire pronounced; that when a vowel sound is obscure it is not worth while to trouble oneself about it one way or the other, but one should pronounce it as convenience and habit shall prompt; that we cannot hope to have uniform pronunciation because to engraft upon our speech the peculiarities of accent and intonation of all speakers would be affectation and snobbery; and that the tongue of mankind is not to be denied the *urr* sound given in some dialects to *er*, just because it is distasteful to the Londoner who prefers the *ah* sound in such cases.

Some of our greatest philologists declare that there is no hope of having uniform pronunciation for the reason that there is and can be no absolute standard of authority as long as there is a large list of words about which there can never be exact agreement until the several classes, of which each claims to be the highest, cease to differ from each other and among themselves.

It is true that there are 2000 words, the pronunciation of which committees composed of a great number of prominent philologists in educational institutions in Great Britain and America, and representative writers and speakers thruout the English speaking world have not been able to find agreement; but a great majority of the words we habitually mispronounce do not come in this list. Since Johnson's dictionary in 1775 there has been recorded no authority for the gross American misuse of the sounds of *a*, nor for any but the regular sound of *r*. *Is it not evidence of the grossest kind of neglect that we are incorrectly pronouncing words for which there has been undisputed written authority for more than 150 years?*

All educators agree that our present dictionaries may be considered reliable as a good guide to general usage and that any person cannot afford to use his own pet pronunciation for words, in contradiction with that on which the orthoëpists are agreed. But until this passive agreement is replaced by the same demand of public opinion for accuracy in pronunciation that is required in the other forms of expression, conditions will not improve.

However, public opinion is changing somewhat. Cultured people everywhere are becoming more anxious to place the accent correctly. The *h*-difficulty is practically settled in England (except for the uneducated Cockney). And excepting from graduates of Harvard, one never hears *lawr*, *idear*, *Cuber*, and *Hanner*, in any speech but that of the illiterate. Then, since all actors have begun to give the right sounds to *a*, there is a decided tendency on the part of cultured people, even in the West, to do so. It is the *r*-difficulty which is clung to most tenaciously and affected most assiduously. Even most of the great actors and many public speakers carefully avoid as many *r*'s as they possibly can. Indeed there is often the most absurd inconsistency in their speech. Recently an instructor spoke of "Shakespeare (with the *r* sounded) and Chaucah" and in the next sentence of "Shakespeah and Chaucer." During several months of careful study of the pronunciation of a number of very well educated teachers, actors, public speakers and readers, the writer has noticed that when the word happens to be the one which conveys the most important part of the idea – in other words, when it is stressed – the *r* is often given its full value. A circumstance of this kind in the speech of one who naturally omits the *r*, proves that it has its proper place in the sounds of our language. It is a matter of general observation that the reader or actor who habitually misuses any of the sounds of the language can not be as effective as can the one who, being equally qualified in other respects, makes all the sounds serve him properly. This is especially true with respect to the letter *r*.

The claim that a language, as it grows older, loses certain harsh sounds cannot be substantiated by actual facts. Nor are the distinctive sounds of the languages of the world due either to climate, temperment or any incapacity of the organs of speech. They are due to the way these organs have been trained to act. It is a well known fact that with a French nurse, an English child will talk French like a Frenchman, or with a Greek nurse he will talk like a Greek. It has been suggested that the *r*-difficulty is a result of negro influence but this cannot be proven, and it is more likely to be vestigial of Southern British accent the ancestral heritage of the early settlers.

Because of the fact that in America there is no trace of the *h*-difficulty, it is supposed that that habit grew up after the English settlements were made in America, probably as the result of French influence. It is supposed that the misuse of the letter *r* must have begun comparatively recently, for in the speech of the western people who only a century ago moved from the places where it is most prevalent, there is absolutely no trace of it. Two hundred years ago the common ancesters of all must have spoken much alike. If the present custom had been general, it is not likely that education or environment could have triumphed so completely. When after many years of frontier life, the western people began to provide for education, their teachers, realizing their lack of education, acquired the habit of consulting Webster's Dictionary; and as a result the most accurate pronunciation of the English language is found in the Middle West. If those teachers had been calling *r* by another sound, some of them would have continued to do so. Our scholars of today, in ignoring the *r*'s do it with some method in their practice. An instructor not long ago gave in a list of names, that of Hamlin Garland. A student asked to have the name repeated, whereupon the instructor said, "Gahland, g-a-r-l-a-n-d, Gahland."

It is most probable that at first the final *r*'s were left off very much as we sometimes allow ourselves to leave off the final *g* of words ending in *ing*. At first a bad habit, it must have become a fad and, like other fashions, carried to the full length until now we have not only the final *r*'s playing truant but every other one that is no, actively engaged in introducing a syllable of its own. With a little pains, we might be able to find a substitute for them.

There was a time when in the speech of a few fashionable fops, *r* and *v* were supplanted by *w*. A man was spoken of as being "wery wich." *A* and *o*, *f* and *v*, *w* and *v*, have at various times taken a turn at standing each for the other. Lord Foppington in Vanbrugh's "Relapse" says "O Lard, Tam" and "a crawnpiece." Squire Weston in Fielding's Tom Jones says, "dressed out so vine" and "not a voot of land." In Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker* we read of "winegar" and "starved veezel". These temporary transitions have not been incorporated into the dictionaries and, except in some of the dialects, have left very few traces in the language. "Egad," defined in the dictionaries as a minced form of the oath, "By God," is the only evidence we have of this interchange of *o* and *a*. Other than this, literature, both serious and intentional caricature, is the only source of our knowledge of these transient influences.

During the last century the misuse of the letter *h* has been the subject of ridicule by English critics and men of letters and it has been conclusively proven that only those practices which, because of the inherent need, are here to stay can live and thrive in spite of ridicule. Since Dickens spelled the *h*-difficulty into the speech of Uriah Heep and other characters, the *h* has taken its place in the speech of educated Englishmen. Since Riley and others, drew the attention of the reading public to the peculiarities of the Hoosier dialect, practically the only vestiges we have of it today are found in their writings. It seems as if the books of such writers as Mary E. W. Freeman will before long be our only record of the New England vowel difficulty. Among educated negros, dialect is fast dying out. The field of triumph is still open for the ambitious writer who may hope to strike the death knell of the prevalent *r* difficulty. So far it is spelled into the negro dialect and a very little into the speech of the typical southern gentleman, but not in the light of the ridiculous as it might easily be done. It is interesting to know that in all serious literature there is not one proof that poets have sanctioned giving to the *r* any but the regular sound. Nowhere do we find such rhymes as "word" with "flood."

The construction of the language as it is written has not changed much in the last two or three hundred years. There have been many changes in spelling. Many words have become obsolete and have been discarded. There is no real good way of knowing just how much pronunciation has changed.

Before 1400 it is supposed that the accent fell on the last syllable more frequently than now for the reason that in Chaucer's poetry there are many instances of it. "Laboure" rhymes with "pore." Many French words retained their full metrical value, for instance, "marriage" requires three syllables in order to make up the line. Dryden and Pope rhyme "sea" and "tea" with "way" and "obey."

> "Then as you meant to spread another way
> By land your conquests, far as his by sea."
> "Here thou, great Anna, whom these realms obey
> Dost sometimes councils take, and sometimes tea."

With "line", "shade" and "train" they rhyme "join," "mead" and "scene." These early pronunciations are not recorded in the dictionaries. Yet it is unlikely that these are examples of poetic license as these master poets could easily have found words to rhyme without stooping to such discreditable practice.

The history of words would make it seem that while many pronunciations have been shortened like "business" and "parliament" as a result of a continued slighting of the syllables or of a single letter, there has been a decided tendency to accomodate the spoken to the written language making silent

letters speak. "Fault," "default" and "assault" came to Old English from the Old French forms of "faute." Later it was discovered that the Latin original contained an *l* and it was inserted by some pretended scholar. Appealing constantly to the eye, it came to be recognized by the voice. By the beginning of the lithe century the *l* was universally adopted in the written word; but its claim to pronunciation was not fully established until some time after 1770, for in that year Goldsmith rhymed "fault" with "aught."

"Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault."

It is probably this tendency to pronounce a word as it is written that has changed the pronunciation of "nature", "daughter," and "obliged" from *nater, darter*, and *obleeged*. When the first dictionaries were made "asparagus" and "cucumber" were pronounced *sparrowgrass* and *cowcumber* as they had formerly been spelled. Many continued to give the old pronunciation in spite of the plea for the better pronunciations. Not until after Smart and Knowles, in the middle of the 19th century, took a decided stand against them did they disappear from the speech of the cultured. With the record of almost two centuries before us, we can be hopeful about the probability of the ultimate triumph of the standards of authority in pronunciation.

We have a right to suppose that when English words were first written down their forms represented their pronunciation. Judging by the difference in the appearance of the written form of the words of Chaucer's time and those of Shakespeare's, pronunciation must have changed greatly. If "sparrow" had been pronounced then as it is now it would hardly have been written *sparwe*. If "though" had not been written until the sound represented by *ough* had been changed to *o* we would have had *tho* from the begining.

We can but conclude that the present bad spelling of the language is mainly the result of faulty pronunciation. Unless something is done the same kinds of changes will continue. We have lost those powerful Anglo-Saxon gutterals: at this time one half of our strong *r*'s are in danger of being lost.

It is the little changes that produce the final sweeping ones. Scarcely noticeable at first, they grow and spread until, as now with the English language, there is such a diversity between the written and the spoken word that a reform in spelling seems imperative. The most conservative philologists believe that the most rational method of simplifying our spelling would be to omit many silent letters, substitute *t* for final *ed* and write the sound pronounced instead of *ough*. But unless a complete renovation of the written form is made there will still be seven ways of representing the sound of *e* in "let" – as in *bead, heifer*, *leopard, says, said*, and *many* – and 13 ways of representing the long *o* – as in *so, sew, owe, o, oh, bow, roe, boat, beaux, bureau, haut-boy, yoeman,* and *though*.

Even tho all silent letters are dropped and false combinations replaced by truer ones, if we continue in our present course it will be a matter of only a short time until it will be necessary to have another reform which will change the appearance of the language as much as a complete change today would do. We would not easily get accustomed to seeing "large" pronounced and spelt the same as "lodge," "heart" as "hot," "hard" as "hod," and "for" and "far" written *fah*, It would seem strange to see monosyllables like *more, door, pure*, and *four* divided into two syllables as they would have to be when pronounced *mo-ah, do-ah, pu-ah,* and *fo-ah.* If this change ever comes the language will have lost much of its beauty, impressiveness and strength. It would also create some unnecessary homophones. "Actahs, ahratahs and readahs may with puah hahts – and, incidentally, a

goodly reserve of strength cahve the enduaence of men with such lack of powah that the wuld's wuk will nevah be intahfeahd with by any of theyah mahvelus wuds."

Any changes that are to be made should strengthen rather than weaken the language. There is no reason why the English tongue, stronger for being a composite of many languages, should not be as adequate as any other. Even tho it be true that we have no rule guidance, must we hopelessly give up and do nothing? Is it not a fact that at some remote time there were no rules for 'the study of grammar?

Those who create popular sentiment in educational affairs should take an active interest in the actual study and practice of the spoken language. The superficial opinion that prevails should be replaced by the sentiment which requires accurateness in spelling and grammar. The language in all of its forms should be lifted from the low level of the puzzle to the higher ground of useful knowledge.

Systematic study would bring about a combined reform in the written and the spoken word. It would prove to those who claim that simplified spelling will destroy the origin of the language that many of the simpler forms which are being suggested and sometimes adopted are the forms of the Old English which have been made cumbrous and awkward thru ignorance or error. Thus the so-called American spelling of "honor" is nearer the Latin origin than when written "honour."

If we Americans would busy ourselves with overcoming our own faults of pronunciation by learning to pronounce the language as recognized dictionaries say it should be pronounced, interest would be awakened in every place where books and periodicals are read in English. Great Britain and America are far too closely united in interests for either to be unconscious of the other. Long before we shall have entirely overcome those qualities of voice and manner which are so offensive to the English, and acquired a surfeit of the culture which they find lacking in us, England herself will have the American tendency of pronouncing words in accordance with their orthography.

As a matter of fact that tendency has ceased to be solely American. As the words which England is so proud of having spelled with four syllables but pronounced with two, are appearing more and more in print and pronounced as similarly written words would be by students of English whom the English people consider cultured, Englishmen themselves are beginning to do likewise. "Leicester" may yet with the free consent of the English either be spelled "Lester," or pronounced with three syllables.

An uniform, accurate pronunciation of the English language, besides making it richer, more dignified and more valuable, would result in other good. It would make it possible to be written phonetically. Both nations, freed from the bands which bind into each little group the conviction that its little way is the one broad outlook, will develop national character. Americans will have gained culture and power; Englishmen will have lost arrogance and scorn. The best in both peoples will have been brought out and these two nations of one blood with one common literature will be united in a bond of mutual good feeling that will be the inspiration of the great triumphs which we yet look for in the field of English literature.

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3. The Spelling of Geographical Names, by K. H. Lavender, F.R.G.S.

After thinking carefully about the question whether geographical names are spelt phonetically, I believe this is normally true, except in English! Since about 1950 many British atlases try to print the names as the locals spell them, e.g. Wein, rather than Vienna (from the French form, Vienne), Roma for Rome, and München for Munich, etc.

Being English, I would like to show you some amusing things about our place names, which confuse even English speaking peoples. On the Welsh border is the market town of Shrewsbury which can be pronounced either as Shroosbery or Shroezbery. In my own county of Kent we have the villages of Petham and Walt-ham. Yet across the Thames Estuary in Essex the latter is pronounced Wal-sham. Which way do the people of Waltham in Quebec Providence pronounce the name? And in the U.S.A. in Thames, Connecticut, the locals pronounce it phonetically to rhyme with James, I am told.

Minister-in-Sheppey and Minister-in-Thanet, like Westminister, London (Lundern), come from the German Munster meaning a church. The Weald (Weald) comes from the German Wald (Valt) forest. Towns ending with -ton, as Brighton, Monks Horton and Wootton are Danish settlements meaning "fence, enclosure, homestead, village or town". Likewise those ending with -by, like Grimsby and Whitby (there is a Danish village of this name today, called Vitboo, as it should be in Danmark). Settlements ending with -ham, like Birmingham (shortened to Brum by the locals), Elham (Eelham), Ham, Harrietsham and so on are Danish hamlets by name. Again so are the places terminating in -den, as Tenterden, Biddenden and Bethersden, meaning a forest clearing. Irregularly spelt places in Kent are: Beltinge, Hawkinge and Lyminge, all ending with a soft g-sound as in "jam." Yet more Danish names are: -sted as in Lynsted, Milsted. Modern Danish pronounces -sted as: *sleth*, as in Tisted (Tisteth).

From the German burg (berg) we have: -borough,-brough, -burgh, and -burg, like Market Harborough (Harburah), Middlesbrough (pronounced as Middlesboro, Kentucky). But just notice: Brough (Bruf) in northern England, Edinburgh (Edinbura) and Bury (Buree) all meaning a fortified place.

The Romans have left us indications of where their camps or castras were in Lancaster, Manchester, Rochester, etc. Other Roman names from Kent are: Richborough (Roman Rutupiae), Lemanis, now Lympne (pronounced Lim) Dubris now Dover and Themsis now spelt Thames but said Thems. These are thought to be based on Keltic (or Celtic) names.

In Canterbury the River Stour is sometimes pronounced *Star* instead of Stour, being a Keltic name for river. Avon is derived from Welsh Affon, also meaning a river.

There are some French or Norman-French names in England, as Sarre, Capel le Ferne, Wickhambreaux, also spelt without the last *a*, (Wick-ham-brer). Before leaving England, how about Hardres and Meopham in Kent. Believe it or not, they are pronounced Hards and Mefam! (But in Received Standard they would be Hodz and Mefam).

Altho English is derived from Teutonic languages like German, Dutch and Danish, and Romance tongues like French and Italian, yet about half of our geographical names are not spelt as said. This makes life very interesting, but it is terribly confusing, as Gillingham in Kent (Jil-ling-ham) and Gillingham (Gill-ing-ham) in Dorset, Eng.

Edinburgh in Scotland has been mentioned but except for Kingussie (Kinyoosie) their names are spelt as said. Oban, Inverness and Loch Maree are just three examples. The Scots, of course, roll their *r*'s and say *ch* like *church* half way down their throat.

Welsh, the language of the Ancient Britons or Kelts, is another absolutely regular language. There is no letter *u* but *f* is used instead. Welsh has *ff*, *dd*, and *ll*, which is really two ell's one after another. Welsh *y* serves several different purposes. However, if you know the rules, it is regular and consistent. Aberystwyth, Brecon and Cardigan and places beginning with Llanfair are spelt phonetically by the Welsh. Their *w* is like English *u* normally, as in Llanrwst and Betws-y-coed.

In France also this Romance tongue is spelt regularly. In Britanny and Alsace, Keltic and Alsatian German are the everyday languages. Quimper (Kamper), Paris (Paree), Aix-les-Bains (Aiks-lay-Ban), and Sélestat and Heiligenstein (Sellestah and Hilligen-shtine) are a few examples.

The latter takes us into Germany. German is spoken in over half of Switzerland and Austria, besides across several of the frontiers in S.E. Holland and South Denmark, for example. But always every name is said as spelt, which makes it easy for travellers knowing German. Stuttgart (Shtoutgart), Wiesbaden (Veesbarden), Heme (Haim) and Berlin come to mind.

In Switzerland many towns have two spellings: one for German and another for French (--): Basel (Bale), Bern (Berne), Lutzern (Lucerne), and Biel (Bienne) for example. In Austria we have Innsbruck, Tirol, Linz, Salzburg and Graz, spelt as pronounced (German *z* like *ts*).

Denmark is full of interesting names, too, with German and English equivalents. Danish names are spelt in Danish as the Danes say them Esbjerg (Es-byerg), København (Kerbenhoun), Nykøbing (Nookerbing), and Helsingør (Helsinger), which in English is Elsinor, are a few.

Another regular language is Swedish. The English Chipping (meaning market) comes from Swedish Köping (Sherping). Norway regularly changes its spelling to be phonetic but place names always have been phonetic to my knowledge. The last Teutonic country I will mentior is the Netherlands. Yet again names are spelt as said, like Arnhem, Rotterdam, and s'Gravenhage or Den Haag, known to most people as The Hague.

Coming into Belgium, we have French and Dutch (--) names for many places, for instance: Ostende (Oostende), Bruges (Brugge), Gand (Gent), Anvers (Antwerpen), Liége (Liet), and Bruxelles (Brussel), the capital.

Finally in Europe one or two Italian names like Elba, Livomo (Leghorn, in English), Genova (Genoa), Firenze (Florence), Milano (Milan), and Roma (Rome). As far as I know, other Romance tongues are phonetic, too.

In the British Commonwealth, local native names are spelt as said in Africa, India, Pakistan and Australia. But place names taken out from England and transplanted around the world are subject to the awkward vagaries of English spellings.

It would be out of place for me to tell Noah American readers about their place names, especially as I have never been to the New World, No doubt most readers know Canada is Northern Amerind for the Phrase "I dont understand."

Getting back to central Europe, Praha is spelt in English Prague, suggesting the old aspirated *gh* or *ch* in loch. But how do the English get some versions of the names for foreign places, like Firenze (English -Florence)? I will leave you, the reader, to work that one out!

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 p7 in the printed version]

4. Phonics – a key to Success in Reading, by Jack P, Crowther

Dear Parents: Reading is one of the most important skills your child can develop. In both school and adult life, reading is the major tool used to gain information and an understanding of our world. Increased emphasis and time have been given to daily instruction in reading and language in Los Angeles city elementary schools. Our teachers have been provided with additional phonic materials because development of phonic skills is a vital part of the reading program.

Communication and mutual understanding between parents and teachers are necessary for children to make full use of their abilities. Together, we can help your child to achieve success in reading-and in life.

***Phonic skills help assure success in reading**
To the beginning reader, a written word is a group of strange symbols having little or no meaning. In order to read a word, the child learns the function, or code, of the letters used in it. Phonic skills help develop understanding of the code of letter symbols. They help the child to apply sounds to the letters. When these sounds are blended together to form familiar speech, decoding of words (or reading) has begun.

***Phonics background begins at home**
A young child's speaking ability develops from what he hears at home and at play. His understanding and use of words will increase in relation to the experiences to which he is exposed in his early years.

***Phonics instruction begins in the kindergarten**
In kindergarten the child continues to build a rich background of experience by using a variety of materials and equipment. Kindergarten teachers emphasize the development of oral expression and recognition of the use of visual bonds. The child begins to realize that reading is deciphering the "talk written down." His knowledge of written symbols expands as he learns:

To discover the likenesses and differences in words.
To discover that many words begin and end in the same way.
To recognize the names and sounds of the letters of the alphabet.

***Phonic skills are developed in all grades**
Children develop at different rates, and reading instruction thruout the grades is geared to individual abilities. Phonic skills are taught in a sequential, step-by-step manner. The child's reading ability gradually increases as he recognizes and uses phonic. elements, such as:

Consonant sounds at the beginning, middle and end of each word: tap, water, bat.
Various vowel sounds and the differences between these sounds: about, rate, are, care.
Rhyming ending of words: man, can; red, bed; hat, cat.
Silent letters: know, sign, numb; and letters that change sounds: yes, sky, baby, cake, city.
Words that are spelled the same but have different sounds: cow, grow, though, through, thought.

***Phonics is a part of the total reading program**
Reading is a complex process of thinking. Sound decoding of words (or phonics) is one of the tools used to obtain meaning from the printed page. The total reading program also includes instruction in:

Comprehension skills (critical thinking, inferences, main ideas, etc.)
Reference skills (use of dictionary, encyclopedia, index, appendix, etc.)
Organizational skills (summarizing, alphabetizing, skimming, etc.)
Vocabulary development (figurative language, synonyms, antonyms, etc.)
Literature appreciation (character traits, writing styles, mood, etc.)
Structural analysis (prefixes, suffixes, syllabic skills, sentence structure, etc.)

Reading skills are developed and maintained by systematic instruction and use in varied reading situations. Children are taught to read for both information and recreation, and to become successful and independent readers.

***You can help your child improve his reading**
Children want and need your help. Parents provide the major influence that develops a child's attitude toward achievement. You can further your child's interest and ability in reading when you:

Read stories to him, and listen as he reads to you.
Praise and encourage him when he reads independently.
Use a variety of words and help him express his ideas.
Assist him in pronouncing a word he is trying to read, but encourage him to "decode" the word for himself.
Supervise his choice of radio and television programs.
Take him to the library, and help him select nooks; also let him see you read books at home – set a good example.
Show your interest in what he is learning at school by asking questions.
Arrange regular conferences with your child's teacher to discuss ways in which you and the teacher can help him improve his reading habits.

Jack P. Crowther, Superintendent of Schools, Los Angeles City, Calif.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 p7 in the printed version]

There was a man named David Byrd
Whose courage rose when he was stirred;
Thus all his friends to him referred
As quite first class, not second or third.
Then one day David gave his word
To join a pal whose name was Ferd.
And though it all seems quite absurd,
Some dreadful thing must have occurred.
For nothing more was ever heard
Of David Byrd and his pal Ferd.

Faith M. Daltry

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 p8 in the printed version]

5. Look-say and phonics are both obsolete
John Downing

Reprinted from *Education* 31 January 1969.
Dr. Downing is at London Institute of Education Dept. of Psychology.

The real issue today in teaching children to read is in helping them to understand the purpose of written language and the thinking task involved in reading it

The Guardian's report of Beatrix Tudor-Hart's experiment with i.t.a. states: 'The "phonic" method of teaching children to read – in which words are built from letter sounds – is much more effective than the "look-say" or sight-reading method widely used'. But the truth is that teachers long ago discovered the futility and emptiness of this kind of jargon. Research in child psychology and psychologistics confirm that these extreme positions are both obsolete. The old 'phonics' versus 'look-and-say' issue is as dead as the dodo. The real issue today is – how can we best help young children to understand the purpose of written language and the nature of the thinking task involved in reading it.

To adults who are literate the purpose of reading and writing seems obvious to extend the communication of ideas and information. But Jean Piaget in *The Language and Thought of the Child* has demonstrated that the logic of young children is qualitatively different from and not just a watered down version of the logic of adults. Vygotsky in *Thought and Language*, reports that 'The tremendous lag between the schoolchild's oral and written language' has two main causes. Firstly, the child 'has little motivation to learn writing when we begin to teach it. He feels no need for it and has only a vague idea of its usefulness'. Jessie Reid's research (*Learning to Think About Reading*, Educational Research – 1966) found that for Edinburgh five-year-olds reading is a 'mysterious activity to which they come with only the vaguest of expectancies'.

This vacuum in the child's conception of reading is waiting to be filled. Beginning with the old formal 'look-and-say' flash card drills may teach children that reading is shouting out lumps of language to marks on cards. Old-fashioned rote learning of letter sounds in the classical 'phonic' method may teach children that reading is grunting to smaller marks on cards or blackboards.

Vygotsky's research showed also that 'the abstract quality of written language' is 'the main stumbling block'. Much of his research and that of Piaget indicates that children at the infants school stage have great difficulty with abstract concepts. Jessie Reid's Edinburgh pupils were very confused about abstract technical terms of language such as 'word', 'sound' and 'letter'.

The consensus of research results in child psychology is that such abstract procedures as formal 'phonic' drills are quite inappropriate for the stage of development which the young child's thinking has reached when he first comes to school. Vygotsky puts it like this: 'The direct teaching of concepts is impossible and fruitless. A teacher who tries to do this accomplishes nothing but empty verbalism, a parrotlike repetition of words by the child, simulating a knowledge of the corresponding concepts but actually covering up a vacuum.' Jessie Reid explicitly warns against

such practices as teaching letter names. She believes rather in providing experiences which foster 'the understanding of classification, order and regularity'.

Children learn the true purpose of reading by participating and sharing in real-life reading; e.g. reading recipes for cooking activities, reading instructions for making or doing things in which they are vitally interested, sitting with mother while she reads a story, and so on. This is the essential first stage in learning to read, not 'phonics', and not 'look-and-say'. It uses whole sentences and words, because these are the stuff of real-life language which young children know from their previous experience.

How can teachers help children to understand the real nature of the thinking task it involves? Actually, the task consists in relating the structure of spoken language to the structure of written language. The conventional English writing-system (as it is called in linguistics) is an 'alphabetic' one. Letters of our alphabet ('graphemes'), either singly or in groups represent sound-units ('phonemes') within words. Words are represented by groups of graphemes separated from other words by white spaces. Children learn what a word is because we consistently chop up continuous language into words with these white spaces. To understand that words can be chopped up into phonemes is much more difficult, especially in English, because of irregularities in the system. This is why i.t.a. has been so dramatically successful in helping teachers to develop pupils' understanding of how an alphabetic writing-system works.

The i.t.a. clarifies the structure of English in four ways:

1. It greatly increases the frequency of regular letter-to-sound correspondences because each phoneme generally is coded with only one grapheme. In contrast, conventional English spelling has too many alternative graphemes for a single phoneme;
2. The number of characters in an i.t.a. word correctly signals its number of phonemes, whereas conventional English spelling may have more or less letters than the number of phonemes;
3. The spatial arrangement of the characters in i.t.a. is in the same order as the phonemes occur in the spoken word. But in conventional spelling the letters often represent phonemes in an incorrect and confused order;
4. False clues to the structure of English are abolished in i.t.a. In i.t.a. each different vowel is represented correctly by its own different character.

From the very beginning with i.t.a. children have very many more concrete experiences of these regular relationships between the structure of written English and the structure of the spoken form. With i.t.a. there is no necessary connection with out-moded 'phonic' rote learning methods. On the contrary, i.t.a.'s great value is in helping children to understand the task of relating written English to spoken English. As one ESN teenage boy put it to his new classmate: 'It shows you how words work'.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 pp10–12 in the printed version]

6. Initial Teaching Orthographies, by Godfrey Dewey, Ed.D.

*Vice Pres. Education Foundation, Lake Placid Club, N.Y.
*a paper delivered at IRA-SSA meeting, Boston, Apr. 26, 1968

It is not without reason that this meeting is co-sponsored by I.R.A. and the Simpler Spelling Assoc. Logically, it is obvious that both reading and writing, and the teaching and learning of both, must be profoundly affected by the characteristics of our orthography, and historically this connection has been recognized for more than four centuries. John Hart, one of the earliest spelling reformers, writing in 1554 and again in 1570, entitled his publication "A Method of Comfortable Beginning for all Unlearned Whereby They May Bee Taught to Read," and William Bullokar, who published about 1580 four books in his latest "Amended" spelling, made the point that for "easy conference" the new orthography must not differ too much from the old. Translating these two statements into modern terminology of initial teaching media and compatibility, brings them right down to date.

Ten years ago the title of my paper, if it was understood at all, would not have attracted a corporal's guard. Its timeliness is directly due to the conspicuous success of Sir James Pitman's Initial Teaching Alphabet, i.t.a. It is not my purpose here to discuss that success, either pro or con. At the 4th International i.t.a. Conference in Montreal last summer, I presented a paper "i.t.a. – not spelling reform, but child and parent of spelling reform" **[2]**, which reviewed briefly the background of each and their interrelations, and I will not attempt to cover that ground again. What I shall try to do here is to examine the criteria for a phonemic notation for English for general use, and to point out the most significant differences involved in adapting such a notation to the particular purposes of an initial teaching orthography.

I take for granted, on the basis of a century and a quarter of experience, both in this country and Great Britain, that the use of a phonemic notation as an initial teaching medium has, to say the least, an important contribution to make to education. My purpose here is to examine the resources available for creating such a notation, the qualities to be sought, the pitfalls to be avoided, and the principles which should guide the final synthesis and application of such a code. Where I may seem to speak with more assurance than the data I have time to present may seem to warrant, I can only plead that 70 years of writing English phonemically (in shorthand) and nearly 50 years of active concern with the problems of spelling reform, including various items of research, have given me a more than ordinary basis for judgement.

The problem may be broken down into an examination of sounds and symbols and the principles which should govern the assignment of symbols to sounds, including the influence of the particular purpose to be achieved.

Sounds

In the choice of sounds to be distinguished, the twin dangers are sophistication and ambiguity. Talk of phonemes and their allophones, morphemes and allomorphs is for the linguistic scholar, not the teacher or student. An initial teaching orthography should be the simplest in form and substance that will achieve its purpose: Phonemic rather than phonetic; making all those distinctions and only those distinctions which are semantically significant; and making only those distinctions readily recognizable by the average untrained ear. Incidentally, it should be broad enough to absorb the most important regional differences in pronunciation – a problem which will be discussed later.

Specifically, consider the 40 sounds distinguished by Pitmanic Shorthand, commonly classed as 24 consonants, 12 vowels and 4 diphthongs, disregarding such sophistications as whether the vowel sounds of *bait* or *boat* are, in fact, diphthongs, or whether the vowel sounds of *youth* and *few* are different or the same, and if the same, whether they are both consonant plus vowel or both true diphthongs. These 40 sounds are the only phonemic basis for writing English which has been proved in practical experience by millions of writers for more than a century. If you will subtract from the 44 characters of i.t.a., four characters: *c* (an alternate for /k/); the reversed *z* (an alternate for /z/); the *wh* ligature (a single character for the consonant cluster /hw/; and the modified *r* (which merely signals that the preceding vowel is to be pronounced as schwa), you will have remaining this basic 40-sound structure. To these 40 phonemes must be added some provision for schwa, which in shorthand is usually disregarded or omitted, but which must be recognized and provided for by some means in longhand or print. This phonemic basis is the soundest (no pun intended) foundation for an initial teaching orthography. Possible modifications to meet particular purposes will be discussed later.

To maintain uniformity of symbolization in the face of regional differences in pronunciation, this basic code should maintain distinctions which a large number of cultivated speakers do make, even tho another large number of cultivated speakers do not make them; e.g.:

Writing post-vocalic /r/, which "r-keepers" pronounce, but which "r-droppers" omit (as in *far*), or reduce to schwa (as in near).

Writing *wh* (for /hw/, altho a substantial number of speakers, especially southern British, do not distingit from /w/.

Distinguishing the vowel of *father* and *calm* from the vowel of *bother* and *comma*, as in most British pronunciation, altho general American pronunciation does not make this distinction. This has the added advantage that (except before *r*) it follows quite closely the T.O. spellings with *a* and *o* respectively.

Uniformity in symbolizing lesser divergencies will be greatly facilitated by the tendency of each region to attach its own values to the symbols, especially for the vowel sounds. For a textbook or dictionary key to pronunciation, to be read rather than written, three ambivalent symbols will further facilitate this; more particularly:

For the vowel of *ask, bath, aunt*, which varies regionally but also unpredictably between the vowels of *cam* and *calm*, with the former more usual in the U.S.A. For the vowel of *air, care, their*, which varies regionally between the vowels of *bat, bet*, or *bait*, use of the latter, as in Pitman shorthand, causing the least confusion.

For the high unstressed vowel, sometimes called schwi, which combines all of the shortness of *i* in *bit* with much of the closeness of *ee* in *beet*, heard in the last vowel of *any*, and the first vowel of *believe*.

Symbols

The symbols for an initial teaching orthography may be derived from either of two sources:

Standardizing the Roman alphabet, by assigning to each single letter and to each graph selected to represent those sounds for which the available letters do not suffice, a single sound, keeping strictly

within the resources of the universally available Roman alphabet; as exemplified by World English Spelling.
Supplementing the Roman alphabet, by assigning to each of the 23 useful letters (exclusive of *c, q* and *x*) a single invariable value, and creating some 17 or more new symbols; as exemplified by i.t.a.
S*upplanting* the Roman alphabet is a third possible source – by creating and making available on typewriters and composing machines thruout the world some 41 wholly new characters, quite independent of the Roman alphabet; as specified by Shaw for his Proposed British Alphabet. **[10]** This is an interesting philosophic speculation, but completely unrealistic in that it eliminates the indispensible factor of "self-reading" compatibility (See below).

Assignment of Symbols to Sounds
An initial teaching orthography should have, so far as practicable, only one symbol for each sound, and should regard, so far as possible, the predominant T.O. spellings of sounds. This aspect is important primarily for writing. Conversely, it should have, so far as practicable, only one sound for each symbol, and should regard, so far as possible, the predominant T.O. pronunciations of the symbols. This aspect is important primarily for reading.

Note that these two limitations are *not* just inverted statements of the same fact. Thus, the predominant spellings of the name sounds of A, E, U are the letters *a, e, u*, but the predominant pronunciations of these letters are as in *bat, bet, but,* respectively. Similarly, the commonest spelling of the phoneme /z/ is the letter *s*, but the commonest pronunciation of the letter *s* is /s/. It is the ignoring of this second aspect which completely invalidates the data of Lee's 1957 study "Is the Irregularity with Which English is Spelled an Important Cause of Reading Difficulty?" **[6]**.

In applying these criteria, a successful initial teaching orthography must achieve a substantially" self-reading" degree of compatibility with T.O.; that is, a degree of similarity to the words and graphemes of T.O. such that the notation may be immediately readable by those familiar only with T.O., and that T.O. may be readable with little further study by those who have mastered the phonemic notation. It should achieve this goal, of course, with as few rules or exceptions, alternative spellings or ambiguous pronunciations, as possible. Unfortunately, however, once the basic 40-sounds, 40-symbols code has been determined, all further gains in compatibility must come from concessions from strictly phonemic symbolization, with a corresponding departure from complete simplicity. *This equation between simplicity and compatibility is the final, most searching test of the validity of a phonemic initial teaching orthography.*

It is in striking this balance between simplicity and compatibility that the chief differences appear between a spelling reform notation and an initial teaching orthography. A spelling reform notation, to be written as well as read by the general public, must emphasize maximum simplicity; that is, a *minimum of rules or exceptions* or *alternatives,* even at some expense of compatibility. On the other hand, while almost any reasonably phonemic notation, regardless of idiosyncrasies of symbolization, may be learned far more easily than T.O., an initial teaching orthography *stands or falls on the ease of transition to reading and* writing in T.O. Considerably greater emphasis on compatibility, thru alternative symbolizations, rules or exceptions (provided that these affect a significant proportion of words) is therefore warranted, for these alternatives are, in effect, a preparatory phase of the transition, and mistakes due to wrong choice of alternatives during the temporary period of writing the initial teaching orthography, are of no lasting importance.

To guide these crucial decisions, both in setting up and applying the code, objective data on the relative frequency, both of phonemes and graphemes, are greatly needed. So far as writing, more particularly learning to spell, is concerned, data on a dictionary basis (unweighted for the relative

frequency of occurence of particular words) may be sufficient, but for reading, which is the primary function of an initial teaching orthography, data which take into account frequency of occurence on the printed page are considerably more significant. So far as phonemes and phoneme combinations are concerned, my *Relativ Frequency of English Speech Sounds* [3] still provides the most significant data available – data which have been relied on in the most important revision of the British New Spelling in 1930, in the construction of Ogden's *Basic English,* and of Pitman's i.t.a., as well as a host of less well-known projects. For graphemes, the available data are much less adequate. By far the most significant data thus far available are in a recent study by Hanna [5], which examined about 17,000 words, based on the Thorndike-Lorge list [9], which was culled from about 4½ million running words. This study reported on phoneme-grapheme correspondences, taking into account such further factors as position in the syllable and the presence or absence of stress. His data, however, give no indication of the relative frequency of occurrence of particular graphemes on the printed page, for his category of most frequent words (corresponding to the Thorndike-Lorge AA) includes, without discrimination, words ranging in frequency from *the,* (probably about 75,000 occurences per million running words), down to words such as *winter*, for example, with a probable frequency of about 100 occurences in a million. I have in process a study of the occurences of graphemes, based on the 100,000 running words of my study of phonemes, which should give, for the first time, trustworthy data on the relative frequency of occurrence of the commoner spellings of the sounds of English. [4] In passing, it is interesting to note that Hanna finds, in his 17,000 word corpus, a total of 334 spellings of 52 phonemes, requiring 170 odd different graphemes, as compared with 507 spellings of 41 phonemes, requiring 262 different graphemes in the 1963 edition of my *English Heterografy.* [1]

Using these data and taking into account further so-called environmental factors, and the morphological factors of compounding, affixation, and word families, the Hanna study then constructed an algorithm or rule of procedure, which manipulated 77 different graphemes according to 203 rules. A computer programmed according to this algorithm was able to spell just under 50% of the investigated 17,000 words correctly, and another 36% with only one error! **I can think of no more significant treasure of the potential value of an initial teaching orthography or the ultimate importance of eventual spelling reform than is provided by those figures.**

Pitfalls

Before turning to an examination of i.t.a. as the outstanding example of an initial teaching orthography of the *supplementing* type, and of World English Spelling (WES) as the most thoroly researched example of the standardizing type, a word as to the commonest faults found in phonemic notations, whether devised as initial teaching orthographies, or more frequently, for spelling reform without recognizing the important differences in emphasis involved in an initial teaching orthography.

Phonemic faults, common to both the supplementing and standardizing types, include distinguishing too few, or occasionally too many, different phonemes; assigning existing single letters with too little regard for their predominant values in T.O.; and introducing too many rules or exceptions for phonemes or word groups of relatively infrequent occurrence.

Perhaps the most egregious fault, in any type of notation, is *misuse* of the letters *c*, *q,* and/or *x* for values wholly unrelated to their T.O. significations (e.g., for vowels, or instead of consonant digraphs for wholly unrelated values, such as *th*), for this involves the effort of dissociation from any previous familiarity, which is a constant offense against compatibility, and, for an initial reaching orthography, an eventual redissociation from the acquired alternative value. Closely

related to this fault, in its psychological impact, is the use of caps and/or small caps for values other than the corresponding lowercase letters.

Another somewhat less serious, but nevertheless severe, graphemic handicap is the attempt to base an entire new (but professedly Romanic) alphabet on uppercase forms, which are inherently less legible for lack of ascenders and descenders, instead of on the lower-case forms which make up over 95% of our reading and at least 99% of all our writing.

Yet another unnecessary handicap is the effort to provide a duplicate alphabet of upper-case as well as lower-case forms, and sometimes even two more alphabets of large and small cursive letters, instead of concentrating on a single lower-case form, to be written disjoined (manuscript writing) for handwriting, with an enlarged or heavier letter or a single diacritic (capsign) to identify capitals where desired.

The temptation to use diacritics is another pitfall which combines the disadvantages of both the supplementing and standardizing solutions, for a letter with a diacritic mark is, for the printer, just as much an additional character as a new design, and on the typewriter requires three strokes (letter-backspace-diacritic), unless the typewriter has been altered to provide a dead key, in which case it still requires two strokes. In handwriting, it requires an interruption to the smooth flow of the pen to place the diacritic in its proper place, wasting time, while if omitted, may be misleading.

For the standardizing, no-new-letter type of notation, to which the immediate future of spelling reform chiefly belongs, because of the enormous difficulties or making new characters available in hundreds of type faces and sizes in tens of thousands of printing plants and on tens of millions of typewriters, the central problem is choice and assignment of digraphs. Here the commonest fault is failure to recognize that a digraph is a unit, quite *independent of the values of the component letters,* and should therefore be devised and assigned for *maximum compatibility with T.O.* usage, rather than striving for a forced or logical relationship to the component letters at the cost of a bizarre result.

The initial teaching alphabet

Turning now to i.t.a. as the outstanding example of an initial teaching orthography which supplements the resources of the Roman alphabet by additional characters, we find, quite predictably, that by our criteria its phonemic basis (that is, the number and nature of the sounds to be distinguished) rates practically 100%. The 40-sound foundation is supplemented by schwa, using both of the suggested devices: retaining any single vowel letter of T.O.; and a special symbol, the modified *r*, which is, in effect, a diacritic signaling that the immediately preceding vowel, stressed or unstressed, is to be pronounced as schwa.

Graphically, the code is greatly simplified, and its effectiveness correspondingly increased, by having only one form, corresponding to lower-case print, for each symbol; identifying capitals merely by a slight increase in size.

Assignment of the single letters of the basic code agrees completely (except for the inclusion of *c* as well as *k*) with the long experience of the British New Spelling, as well as the spelling reform version of WES. In my judgment, for the purposes under consideration, these assignments cannot be improved upon.

Of the 20 new symbols supplied by i.t.a., 13 are easily recognizable ligatures of the digraphs employed by *New Spelling* and WES, which again are in complete agreement on 11 of these (all

except the two symbols for *th).* Since these digraphs in turn are based largely on prevailing T.O. practice, their form, altho more cumbersome in use than a simple unitary character, undoubtedly contributes somewhat to the ease of the all-important transition to T.O.

Most of the remaining 7 i.t.a. symbols (the majority being for phonemes of relatively low frequency) are obviously suggestive of familiar T.O. graphemes. The precise forms of some are perhaps debatable, but personally I regard criticism of these details as altogether unprofitable at this time, for assuming that some could be improved, the overall effect on teaching results would be too slight to be significantly measurable by any tests now available, and the encouragement which such tinkering would give to what Sir James has called Babelization would be unfortunate for all concerned.

Personally, I doubt if a *significantly* better initial teaching orthography *of the supplementing type* can be devised. The one aspect that does abundantly warrant experimental determination is the choice between the *supplementing* type and the *standardizing*, no-new-letter type, of which more hereafter.

While certain aspects of the basic i.t.a. code itself, e.g. choice of relatively cumbersome symbol forms resembling familiar T.O. graphemes, instead of streamlined forms designed to save effort and space and therewith money (the aspect on which Shaw laid chief emphasis), tend to differentiate it from a spelling reform notation, the chief differences appear in the application of the code; the deliberate departures from strictly phonemic writing, thru rules and exceptions *based on T.O. practice* rather than on phonemic distinctions, which collectively enhance compatibility in ways which contribute directly to the all-important transition to reading and writing in T.O. This aspect has been too little understood or justly evaluated by some of the more vocal critics of i.t.a.

It is at this point that objective data are particularly valuable; nevertheless, subjective judgment finally enters in, in determining how small a gain in compatibility warrants an additional rule or exception. Thus, one of the most dependable phonic generalizations of T.O. is that where a single vowel is followed by a doubled consonant, the preceding vowel is short. In consequence, the i.t.a. rule retaining doubled consonants for a single sound where T.O. has doubled consonants, improves the compatibility of nearly 7000 words in 100,000 running words, and preserves the exact T.O. forms of about 2000. Similarly, some 70% of T.O. spelling's of the /k/ phoneme involve the letter *c* to some extent; so that the i.t.a. practice of writing *c* (including *cc* and *ck*) where T.O. employs *c* for the /k/ sound, improves the compatibility of some 6,500 words out of 100,000, and retains the precise T.O. forms of some 1,200. On the other hand, the rule or exception which writes *tch* after a vowel where T.O. has *tch*, but *ch* where it does not (writing *clutch* but *much*, *etch* but *each*, *match* but *ranch,* etc.), which affects less than one word in 100,000 running words, is difficult to justify. In between lie such borderline cases as writing *nature* or *picture* as *naetuer* or *pictuer*, instead of *naechur* or *picchur*, altho current dictionaries no longer allow the more careful pronunciation, which affect only about 2 words in 1,000, but offer a distinct advantage in preserving the root which is retained in such derivatives as native or pictorial. On balance, it is most unlikely that experimental tinkering with such minutae would yield significant differences in overall results, as measured by any tests presently available.

To summarize, it would seem that, for the present, far more maybe accomplished for education by research to explore and develop the full possibilities of a phonemic notation as an initial teaching medium, using the wealth of teaching materials, more than a thousand items, already available in this particular medium, i.t.a., rather than by seeking minor adjustments before the major factors have been fully explored.

World English Spelling

Finally, we come to an examination of the one outstanding example of an initial teaching orthography of the standardizing, no-new-letter type, summarized in the folder, "World English Spelling (WES) for better reading" [8] available from the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation. The spelling reform version of WES has been developed over a period of nearly a century by some of the foremost linguistic scholars of Great Britain and the United States. As an initial teaching orthography, this has been modified in the light of the distinctive concessions from strictly phonemic writing, for the sake of compatibility, recently developed and tested by i.t.a. Since both WES and i.t.a. derive most of their phonemic structure and much of their symbolization from the same sources, it is not surprising that they are virtually identical, except for the elimination of new characters by the use of digraphs instead of ligatures or new letter forms.

More particularly, the phonemic basis of 40 phonemes is identical, but WES treats schwa by simple rules only, without a special diacritic symbol. The assignments of the 24 single letters employed (excluding *q* and *x* in both notations) are identical and 12 of the 13. ligatured symbols of i.t.a. transliterate directly into the corresponding digraphs of WES. Of the 7 remaining i.t.a. symbols, WES eliminates the alternate forms for *z* and *r*, and for the rest substitutes the digraphs *zh, ng, aa, oo, uu*, of which only *zh* and *uu* are wholly strange.

In applying the basic code, the spelling rules and exceptions of WES for the sake of greater compatibility with T.O. are virtually identical with i.t.a., except for eliminating marginal details of insignificant effect, such as the *tch* alternative previously referred to, of the writing of *judge* as *judzh* instead of *juj.* This has. been done, not only because those carefully studied exceptions to phonemic writing are one of the important factors in the success of i.t.a., but also to eliminate, so far as possible in experimental comparisons, any independent variable, other than the fundamental difference between the *supplementing* and *standardizing* types.

The case for employing new characters not in the universally available Roman alphabet, rests on the logical premise that a simple phonemic notation should have an explicit unitary character (a standardized digraph is an explicit symbol) for each phoneme; and on the assumption that a beginning student, especially an infant, will be confused by the fact that the value of a digraph is rarely if ever a fusion of the values of the separate letters; e.g. the sound of *th* in *then* is not that of *t* plus *h* in *shorthand; ng* in *spring* is not the *n* plus *g* in engage; the sound of *au* in *author* is not a fusion of the vowel sounds in *bat* and *but*; *ie* in *tie* is not a fusion of the vowel sounds in *bit* and *bet*; etc. To this assumption there are at least three replies.

1) The number of digraphs, exclusive of doubled consonants, in the leading languages of Western Europe, ranges from 5 or 6 for Spanish or Italian, to 22 for Dutch, with a medium of 12 or 14 for French or German; yet so far as I aware, no spelling reform movement in any of these countries has included proposals to create new single characters to replace these digraphs.

2) Misleading juxtapositions, such as in *shorthand* or *engage*, are so infrequent as to be almost negligible, and in any case may be separated by a dot in the earliest stages of learning, if this be deemed necessary.

3) So far as either the theoretic or practical objections are concerned, a ligature below a digraph, used if desired at its first introduction or during the first weeks of learning, makes it just as much a unitary symbol as the ligature above or between the component parts of the majority of the i.t.a. ligatured symbols.

If it can be demonstrated that the educational results obtainable with the standardizing type, no-new-letter orthography (WES), keeping strictly within the limitations of the universally available Roman alphabet, are at least comparable with those obtainable with the supplementing type (i.t.a.), the former offers certain important advantages, both in the classroom and after.

In the classroom, for the pupil, it obviates learning to read, and especially to write, 20 new characters which will shortly be abandoned. For the teacher, it facilitates preparation, on any standard typewriter, of supplementary teaching materials adapted to meet particular situations. For both pupil and teacher, it permits use of the standard typewriter as a teaching instrument in the earliest grades, the great possibilities of which were demonstrated by Wood and Freeman 35 years ago.

For the adult abroad who has been taught English as a second language, WES offers the exciting possibility of continuing to use it as an international auxilliary medium of communication; reading traditional orthography but writing in WES, thereby bypassing the considerable added burden of learning to write, i.e. to spell T.O. Incidentally, for the native adult, who gets fed up with some of the grosser idiosyncrasies of T.O., it interposes no obstacle to carrying over into his own personal writing such phonemic forms as the spirit moves him to retain.

It is such possibilities as the above, both in and out of the classroom, which give point and even urgency to controlled experimentation with a no-new-letter initial teaching orthography, more particularly WES. Abundant teaching materials of high quality, from many publishers, are already available for i.t.a. I feel confident that sufficient materials of comparable quality can be provided for WES, probably with the help of some foundation, as soon as qualified investigators are ready to undertake the task.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 p13 in the printed version]

7. Discrimination Needed! by Newell W, Tune

The following list of words shows why we need separate symbols to distinguish the difference between the sound of w and wh.

In Southern British speech this sound of *wh* is not made, being supplanted by the sound of *w*. This carelessness of pronunciation is probably why the *wh*-sound has deteriorated in such words as: who, whose, whom, whole, whoop.

wac	whack	wen	when	wish	whish
wax	whacks	were	whirr	witch	which
wade	wheyed	weather	whether	wither	whither
wail	whale	wet	whet	wiz	whizz
warry	wherry	wig	whig	woe	whoa
watt	what	wight	white	wop	whop
way	whey	wile	while	worry	whirry
weal	wheel	winnie	whinny	Y	why
wean	wheen	win	whin	wattle	what'll I do
wear	where	wine	whine		

Do we dare list these that were at one time pronounced phonetically?

hoop	whoop	hole	whole
hoar	whore	woo	who

Some spelling reformers fail to have two symbols for the two *th*-sounds, thereby failing to distinguish between the two different sounds in these words: (lisping of word ().

that	that (sat)	this	thistle, thick	lathe	lath
they	thay(say)	tho	thoe (so)	loath (n)	loeth (v)
thee	theme	those	throes	northerly	north
the	Theka	thus	thrust	southerly	south
them	theme	thus	enthuse	teethe	teeth
then	Thendar	other	auther	thou	thouter
these	theses	bother	both	with	width
thess?	Thessaly	breathe	breath	wreathe	wreath
thy	thigh	brother	broth	wither	withal
thine	thin	either	eether	neither	neath

And thither has both sounds! Can you predict the *th*-sound in any word not in your speaking vocabulary? such as: Wathrop, Heythrop, onther, Thames, thane, Theaton, Theka, Thendar, Thoris, Thurick, Thaar, Thuston, thyme, Warthen, Wethick.

The spelling reformer who fails to provide for all the above sound discriminations must fail to realize how hard it is to teach foreigners who have small speaking vocabularies. The arguments that a child already knows the pronunciation of words spelled with *th*, and therefore automatically makes the discrimination, is not valid because you yourself do not know all of the above words and could not guess the correct pronunciation with certainty. Foreigners and little children do not always have the advantage of learning the proper pronunciation before seeing the word in print.

Other pairs needing discrimination are:

awe	ah	gone	gon
awed, aud	odd	haut	hot
awning	oning	hawed	hod
auks	ox	hawk	hock
all	olive	Hawley	holly
auto	Otto	laud	lod
audible	oddity	Maud	mod (ern)
awkward	occident	maul	moll
ball	bollicks	naught	not
bought	bottle	naughty	knotty
balm	bomb	orb	arbor
baudy	body	ore, oe'r	are
call	college	ought'er	otter
calling	collie, Collings	part	port
caught	cot	pawn	pon
caulk	cock	Paul	poll (abrev.)
dawn	don	Pauley	polly
daughter	dotter	raw	rah
Fawkes	fox	talk	tock
fall	folly	taught	tot
gaunt	got	vault	vol (unteer)
gawd	god		

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 p14 in the printed version]

8. What Happens in Grade One?, by Helen Bowyer*

*Finished posthumously by Newell W. Tune.

A baby is a small bit of human protoplasm of 6 or 7 pounds or so that leaves a warm comfortable spot in the mother's womb where it is nurtured and protected, to come forth on the outside so it can grow and fulfill certain needs and desires. It is growing at a very rapid rate now, faster than it will as it develops year after year (Glenn Doman).

To do this, it has six fundamental needs: Food, warmth, protection, exercise, sleep, and love. And it needs them regularly, spontaneously, and of the proper kind and at the proper time. When it does not get some of them, it lets its desires be known by crying. A mother (or someone really interested in caring for this baby) soon gets to know the difference in a baby's cries – it is communicating its desires and needs.

The next stage in the baby's development is learning to use the muscles in its beautifully arranged but as yet undeveloped body. These six fundamental needs are still important but exercise now becomes more important. Proper development depends upon growth and exercise, as well as food. The foreign policy of binding the child's feet or strapping the baby into a container on the back of the mother are cruel customs that greatly retard the development of both body and mind. It may surprise you that the mind is also retarded by these cruel customs, but it is demonstrably so because in all countries where it is done, it makes the child grow up into a submissive vegetable – a tree pruned to fit the shape – unable to think for itself and to protest any injustice done to it.,. Fortunately, our children are not afflicted with such an evil custom. But ours are not free from torture, as you will find out.

Dr. Doman found that it was important for a child to be able to crawl on all fours; not only for muscular development but also for the development of his mind. Children with retarded minds were allowed to play on the floor with blocks and toys that roll, as an important part of the therapy to develop their minds. They found it works wonders. The next stage, learning to walk depends upon the development of a sense of equilibrium – situated in the inner ear and the brain. This also depends upon having many opportunities to try – to fall and try again. The child at this stage has an indomitable spirit of wanting to learn. Dr. Glenn Doman (in S.P.B. Spring, 1965, page qe) said, "Between 9 months and 4 years of age, the ability to absorb information is unparalleled and the desire to do so is higher than it will ever be again. Yet during this period we keep the child clean, well fed, safe from the world about him – and in a learning vacuum."

"Yet learning, we will tell him, is the most important thing in life, and indeed it is. Learning is also the greatest game in life and the most fun. We have assumed that children hate to learn essentially because many children have disliked or even despised school. Again we have mistaken schooling for learning. Not all children in school are learning – just as all children who are learning are not doing it in school."

Just why should children, who came to school on the first day bubbling over with excitement and enthusiasm for learning, later on change to one that either resents the school, the teacher and all things connected with it, or sits there dejectedly, confused and bewildered, and unable to absorb learning? Something must have happened to this child. In most cases it is not dullness or low I.Q., as John Duncan says in, *Backwardness in Reading*, "Pupils are considered backward if at the age of 15 their reading ages were below 12 years". The ratio of backward readers in non-selective schools (England) in both rural and urban areas together amounts to 37%. But those of 15 with the mental

age of 12 is only 12%. "Intellectual dullness does not therefore appear to account for the extent and degree of reading backwardness which exists." Schonell stated (M.V. Vemon, *Backwardness in Reading*, page 75), "In the Middlesbrough enquiry (1953) about 27% of all his cases of specific backwardness in reading had I.Q.'s below 80 and 11% had I.Q.'s below 70."(tested by verbal intelligence tests) In other words, 73% of those who were backward in reading had I.Q.s of more than 80. Consequently, we must conclude that even low I.Q. cannot account for backwardness – if anything, brightness appears to!

Physical defects – such as poor hearing, eyesight requiring glasses, speech defects, and other handicaps account for only 3.4% of all pupils. These, of course, have real problems which must be corrected before they can be expected to progress. Hence the number of children with physical defects, being only about 1/10th of the children retarded in reading, means that 9/10ths of the children have no physical defects to blame for their inability to learn to read.

Teacher competence and overcrowded classrooms may account for some failures but not enough for important consideration.

Success in achievement builds self-confidence – repeated failures destroys self-confidence. Most children can weather the storm of an occasional failure, but not repeated failures.

The only remaining thing on which to throw the blame is the irregular nature of English spelling itself. Wouldn't you be disappointed too if you came to school all fired with enthusiasm and then a month or so later found that the book you are trying to read had run out of regular reliably sounding words and was beginning to introduce some of the most illogical, confusing, contradictory spellings? Can't you see their ability to reason was stifled in Grade One by a spelling that defies logic and reason and encourages a photographic memory? Listen to what Lord Lytton (Bulwer) said about this, "A more lying, roundabout, puzzle-headed delusion than that by which we confuse the clear instincts of truth in our accursed system of spelling was never concocted by the father of falsehood. How can a system of education flourish that begins with so monstrous a falsehood, which the sense of hearing suffices to contradict?" And John D. Morrell, L.L.D. (Royal Inspector of Schools in England) "The main difficulty in learning to read English arises from the intrinsic irregularity of English spelling. A confusion of ideas sets in the mind of English the child respecting the powers of the letters, which is very slowly and, very painfully cleared by chance, habit or experience, and his capacity to know words is gained by an immense series of protracted efforts." Dr. John Downing, in the conclusion to his book, *The i.t.a. reading experiment* (1964), said, "The evidence does appear to indicate rather strongly that T.O. spelling is an important cause of difficulty in beginning reading." And in his later book, *The initial teaching alphabet* (1967, pg. 295, "The evidence from these experiments is quite conclusive that the traditional orthography of English is a serious cause of difficulty in the early stages of learning to read and write:'

Then, if this is so (and spelling reformers have been telling us this for 3 centuries) we should teach pupils to read in a spelling that is regular and phonetic – that nurtures common sense, that aids the pupil by analogy with other similarly spelt words. The symbol he learned yesterday will be sounded the same tomorrow in whatever word he meets. Letter or letter combinations he meets are recognized as old friends who can be expected to say what he expects them to say. In this way the pupil can build up his self-confidence, gather a host of old friends he then recognizes as sight words and not be bothered with the mechanics of spelling.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 p15 in the printed version]

9. Simply Silly, Edited by Marvin Baker, Ed. D. Indiana Central College

riem in raen, riem in sun.
riem befor dae'z begun:
riem whiel yoo eat a bun;
yoo can riem whiel yoo run.
trie it nou. rieming'z fun!
put a caek that yoo baek
on a wael in a laek.
doo yoo think it will shaek
if the whael iz awaek?
tell that whael not too waek!
if a bat wor a hat
and then sat on a cat,
wuud the cat get kwiet flat
eeven if hee wer fat?
shuzd a bat waer a hat?
if yoo ever see nien
baeby tiegerz in a lien
dressd in velvet kwiet fien,
waering jooelz that shien –
just remember, thae'er mien!
doo yoo think yoo wuud plae
with a dragun kwiet gae
if the dragun shuld sae
"cum and see mee, ie prae,
for ie'm kween ov the mae!"?
if a dog askt a flee
sitting doun on a pee
"woen't yoo pleez cum too tee
in mie hous bie the see?"
shuud hee plae with a flee?
if a bird in a vest
had invieted, in jest,
a black cat too hiz nest
az an oeverniet gest,
wuud the cat pass the test?
doo yoo think yoo wuud staer
if a haer, with a glaer,
roed up cloes on a maer
and sed, "deer, wuud yoo caer
for sum carrots too shaer?"
wuud yoo bring a graet king
a fien ring on a string
that woz tied too the wing
ov a bird that woen't sing?
whot a thing for a king,
can yoo doo a hand stand
whiel yoo'er leeding a band
across mielz ov hot sand
in a farawae land
and still luuk very grand?
if a littl raccoon
with a fork and a spoon
cumz tuu dinner too soon
in the laet afternoon,
doo yoo scream liek a loon?
if on halloeween niet
a witch had a bad friet,
wuud yoo turn on a liet,
sleep with her aull that niet
until shee woz aull riet?
if an elefant fled
wae behiend an oeld shed
just becauz hee sau a sled
that woz not paented red,
wuud yoo puut him tuu bed?
if a pretzel can bend
and a river can wend
and a hart yoo can mend,
then this buuk, mie deer frend
can, ov cors, cum too an end!

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 pp15,16 in the printed version]

10. A Headmaster's Report, by William J. Reed*

*Broadstairs, Kent.

Education should make people healthy, happy, sensible, considerate, well-informed, and well-behaved. Some observers are not so confident of present conditions and tendencies as we would all like to be.

Recent headmaster's reports have referred to ways in which we waste children's precious time and energy. We have done this by using inefficient and out of date systems of notation; firstly of money, weights and measures, and secondly of spelling words. The former is due to be replaced by more efficient units during the 1970's. It is doubtful how much of the credit for initiating this reform can fairly be ascribed to the education committees: most of them are now hurriedly jumping on to the metric bandwagon.

Spelling is even more vital and fundamental because it is the basis of all reading, all writing and therefore of all studies from the infant school to the university. A sensible spelling enables even a beginner to pronounce any word that is printed and to write correctly any word that he can pronounce. A reasonably bright child should be able to learn both processes in a few months. But the 18th century spelling, which we make children learn now is ridiculously inconsistent**,** so our children take several years (sometimes many years) to learn what should take only a few months.

We all tend to dislike change, especially changes in the appearance of familiar objects, such as words. Apart from that, children cannot alter such things because they normally believe what their teachers tell them. Teachers cannot alter things because the authorities require the 18th century spelling to be taught in schools. No child would stand much chance in the 11+ examinations if he spelt words phonetically or sensibly. For any such improvement in this respect, the Ministry of Education would probably have to take the initiative.

Studies in Spelling (U.L.P.1961) was published by the Scottish Council for Research in Education. We read on page 183: "The existing spelling, with its confusions and inconsistencies, imposes an obvious burden on pupils and teachers throughout the English speaking world, and requires the expenditure of time and energy which could be better spent in meeting the increasing educational demands of a changing civilization. Bad effects are social as well as cultural."

Dr. R. W. Macan, D. Litt., who was Master of University College, Oxford, wrote on similar lines as follows: "The chaos of present English orthography is unscientific inartistic and unbusinesslike; it is an exasperating waste of time and energy which might be very much better employed on more rewarding tasks."

Sir T. Percy Nunn was professor of Education in the University of London and author of well-known text books such as: *Education, Its Data and First Principles.* He deplored that the existing spelling failed to meet certain educational requirements, and went on, "One might suppose there was no need to argue that its failure to do so is a misfortune, but no ancient abuse is without its apologists, and no educational stupidity lacks its defenders, armed against plain truths by a false psychology."

The greatest authorities on the English language have deplored its inconsistent spelling: no great scholar, except Archbishop R. C. Trench, has ever said we should *not* reform it. (thus proving Prof. Nunn's statement) The people who now control our children's education apparently do not know

these facts and it seems they do not want to be told. I have sent a dozen or more letters---based on the best scholarship and well documented-to Maidstone and have not received a single intelligent sentence in reply. I asked the County Officer if any of his staff knew any sensible reason why spelling and the problem of its reform should not be discussed at Teacher's courses but there was no reply. There is still, apparently, a ban on the subject. The chief threat to educational progress is probably not from children who do not know (they are young enough and keen enough to learn) but from certain officials who do not know and who are either unable or unwilling to learn, or to change their own teaching, writing and spelling habits no matter how much the benefit to the children.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 p16 in the printed version]

Book Reviews

11. Alphabets and Reading, by Sir James Pitman, K.B.E. & John St. John
Reviewed by Newell W. Tune

Published 1969, London, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 80/- (9.60) 349 pp.

In as much as the Introduction to this book explains to a far better degree than this reviewer could the reasons for writing this book, I will let Sir James tell you why:

"As its title implies, this book is not merely an apologia for my own initial teaching alphabet. While I hope it will come to be recognized as the definitive work on the structure and uses of i.t.a., the book's scope and purpose are more ambitious. Much of the first half is devoted to establishing the theoretical and historical justification for a special teaching medium and to showing that i.t.a., far from being an isolated invention, comes with a long pedigree of earlier reformed and teaching alphabets behind it. Since the time of the first Elizabethans, when our present spelling began to solidify and came to be regarded as sacrosanct, teachers and men of letters have tried out numerous ways of overcoming the difficulties inherent in an inadequate alphabet and of rationalizing spelling. My hope is that my own attempt will be assessed against the perspective of four centuries of wrestling with a problem that has provoked the intellects of such men as Benjamin Franklin, Walter Skeat, Daniel Jones, and Bernard Shaw, to mention but a few. There was also my grandfather, Sir Isaac Pitman, who devoted the greater part of his life to Fonotypy as well as Fonography, his system of shorthand.

In certain chapters will be found an interpretation of the subtle but as yet poorly understood psychological and conceptual processes involved in reading and writing, together with an analysis of the *methods* used to teach the skill and an attempt to explain and resolve the conflicts among the teachers these cause. Apart from one lengthy footnote, I have eschewed the temptation to propound my own personal views on teaching methods, because I am concerned not with a method of teaching but with a teaching medium that is applicable to all methods. On the other hand, throughout the book, I have not hesitated to advocate the importance of linguistic competence: for me, the learning of reading and language are inseprable.

Although this book confidently pleads a case, it is, I trust, sufficiently well documented and rigorously argued not to be dismissed as a polemic. There is no sin in advocating strongly one's opinions on education, provided they are held honestly; if I had not done so in the past, i.t.a. might by now have joined many other forgotten, untried or only half-tried innovations. Of course, teachers cannot be blamed for being chary of proposed changes in long-established practice or for being soured by what appear to be the naive enthusiasms of the reformer: only too often has education been influenced by fashion or some gimmicky pseudo-psychological approach. But it is equally true

that education suffers from vested interests alarmed at the prospect of reputations being questioned and lecture notes scrapped; from prejudice masquerading as down-to-earth, common-sensical" experience" or, more cunningly, as enlightened, open-minded neutrality;" from dogmas and assumptions that have never been tested. There is no guarantee that good new ideas in education will spread spontaneously. Theory and evidence have to be reinforced by persuasion and argument.

The audience envisaged for this book is therefore primarily the teachers and the educationists. Their verdict (or the children's?) will be decisive and will carry the day whereas the dry-as-dust, albeit impressive statistics of the researcher provide no more than one of the, factors on which a teacher's decision is based. Even so, most of the chapters are well within the competence of the layman, though if he skips the series of extracts from teachers' opinion in chapters 10 and 11, he will not lose the thread of the book's argument; similarly he may wish to hurry, past the descriptions of some of the earlier alphabet. (pages 76-105) and to avoid the appendixes and the detailed explanations of the i.t.a. characters (pages 131-9)

It may be wondered why this book was not. published earlier. The reason for the delay was partly in order to be able to include a summary of the main i.t.a. research findings (Chapter 9) together with a few, carefully pondered criticisms of what seem to me to be severe and quite unnecessary faults in the research design – despite its overall commendations. Delay was also necessary to accumulate sufficient experience of using the new alphabet before various conclusions could be drawn and/or confirmed. Now that i.t.a. is established in more than 10,000 schools in various parts of the world and i.t.a. readers are available from over 70 publishers, it seems a good moment to survey and consolidate what we have learned. Similarly, I believe it would now be a mistake if the i.t.a. characters or spellings were to be tampered with; in the course of time research will perhaps be undertaken, as explained in Chapter 13, and this may dead to some minor changes, but for a decade or two the new alphabet should be left alone and allowed an unimpeded chance to establish itself and generate its own set of attitudes. Meanwhile, i.t.a. is there for all to use without charge, royalty, or restriction. What is deft of the absolute copyright has been passed to The i.t.a. Foundation (London Eng.) so that it has the power in ensure worldwide conformity to the characters and spellings and to advise and approve any proposals for researches into possible improvements."

But even this well-covered introduction can be supplemented with some more ideas. The book starts out with Backward readers, the submerged sixth of those school-leavers-drop-outs, we call them – that furnish most of the poorest laborers, the unemployables, the roust-abouts and petty thieves. Tests for determining these poor readers are discussed. Then comes the Essentials of the Reading Process – a discussion of the psychological and physiological processes. A comparison is made of the various methods used in teaching reading. While searching for reasons for the high rate of backwardness in reading, it is easy to jump to erroneous conclusions and blame the wrong causes – the wrong method, the wrong kind of primers, and the wrong kind of teachers.

Theories of Reading Failure provides some excellent data and discussions on this still controversial subject. No doubt,, most readers of this magazine will consider that they have a good knowledge of the structure of English, but this thorn discussion should provide a new insight to the vagaries of English. This leads to a discussion of how English became such a polyglot language and then a history of four centuries of attempted spelling and alphabet reform – what has it accomplished? You may not know what, but something has been accomplished.

Part 2 brings us up to date with the initial teaching alphabet and what it has achieved. Whether or not one likes the idea of i.t.a., one cannot ignore it and moreover, everyone owes it to themselves to become better informed on such a widespread subject.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 p16 in the printed version]

Breaking it ought

There once was a man who for hiccough
Tried all of the cures he could piccough,
And the best without doubt,
As at last he found ouht,
Is warm water and salt in a ticcough.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 p17 in the printed version]

12. stAbul inglish, by Leo G. Davis, reviewed by Newell Tune

Published 1969 by Carlton Press, New York. 66 pp. $ 2.50

Mr. Leo Davis' fifth book published by Carlton Press is probably to be considered more in the line of a dictionary of spellings in the author's system of reformed spelling, stAbul inglish (for foruners). With 66 pages, it gives not only the spellings of 5567 words but also the more common equivalent of some words which Davis feels are needlessly highfalutin. In other words they are the simpler Anglo-Saxon equivalents of less-used ponderous words.

Davis' system is not only a spelling reform, it is also a grammar reform in that it eliminates plurals, preterite forms, case forms, and irregular verb forms. It also uses regularly and consistently the comparative forms, *ur* and *ust,* rather than the irregular forms which are so hard for a foreigner to learn.

Punctuation is also improved by starting a sentence as well as ending it in the Spanish manner with the proper punctuation mark so that the reader is forewarned of the intonation to be given to the sentence instead of our English method which hides the intonation until we reach the end.

Capitals are abolished as being unnecessary, but a provision is made for indicating capitalization by an asterisk preceeding the letter to be capitalized. This eliminates the need for capital letters on the typewriter and thereby provides spaces for the additional vowel letters (A. E. I. O. U and *a*) which Davis does not regard as new letters altho they probably are not on your typewriter. This gives him an alfabet of 29 letters, which uses *c* for the *ch*-sound, as do the Italians, and 8 digraphic combinations: hw, oo (foot), sh, th, zh, oi, yu, au. Davis makes no distinction between *thy* and *thigh,* thinking that these two sounds are seldom confused by English speakers, therefore do not need discrimination. He also makes no distinction between the vowel sounds: al(tho) and ol(ive), or *aud* and *odd,* for the sake of simplicity. Whether such innovations will be pleasing to teachers who are stickers for proper grammar and pronunciation remains to be seen.

However, one must say the Davis system results in a printed form that is more nearly phonetic than Spanish is, and yet preserves the printed form of English spelling to a larger degree than any other system yet shown to the public. This, of course, makes it easy to read for an adult who now knows by sight twenty thousand or more irregularly spelt English words, and yet is sufficiently phonemic for a foreigner who is learning English to have no trouble with 98% of the words he encounters. It sounds like a fairly good compromise, which is what it was intended to be. And the transition should be a breeze.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 pp17,18 in the printed version]

13. The Culturally Deprived Child, by Frank Riessman*, reviewed by Goodwin Watson°

*Chairman, Dept. of Psychology, Bard College.
° Teachers College, Columbia Univ.
Published 1962 by Harper & Row, New York & London, 140 pp. $ 3.95.

American education today is beset by problems, and the most serious and significant among them is that which Prof. Riessman has faced in this important book. Neglect of children from poor home backgrounds has been typical of most schools, both urban and rural. Pupils from culturally deprived homes are commonly resented as drawbacks to the morale and achievement of the school class. The fact that these youngsters do not see much value in formal academic routines, and have often been humiliated by by failure, breeds in them hostility toward school authorities and, in a vicious circle, deepens the alienation between teachers and the very pupils who most need their help.

It has been one of the proud achievements of public education in the United States that we were the first country in the world to try to give education beyond the three R's to all our youths. Secondary education in other lands has been highly selective: the Lycées of France, the Grammar Schools of England, and the Gymnasia of Germany and Scandinavia have been designed for the intellectual upper crust only. Most Americans have rejected the aristocratic notion that a small circle of the elite from the "best homes" should have a virtual monopoly on higher education, and an access to top posts in government, business, and cultural life. We assert our dedication to the principle of equality of opportunity.

In recent decades a spate of anthropological, sociological, and socio-psychological studies, many of them mentioned by Prof. Riessman, has revealed the appalling gap between our pretensions and our practices. We do not give the same kind of food, clothing, housing, medical care, recreation, or Justice to the deprived children that we give to those in comfortably-well-off homes. We don't like to think of class distinctions in American life, so we tend to shy away from these, unacceptable facts. Opportunities are far from equal.

The American public school is a curious hybrid: it is managed by a school board drawn largely from upper-class circles; it is taught, by teachers who come largely from middle-class backgrounds; and it is attended mainly by children from working-class homes. Often these three groups do not speak the same language. They differ in their manners, powers, and hierarchies of values.

In the flury of concern over the "gifted," most well-to-do families are pleased to think of their own children as being given well-deserved special consideration. Teachers are gratified because "higher standards" are in vogue. Yet the great reservoir of undiscovered and undeveloped intellectual talent in America is not in upper-class or middle-class neighborhoods. While the proportion of high I.Q.'s may be lower in underpriviledged areas – this is a slippery question, as Prof. Riessman demonstrates – the actual numbers of intellectually very bright children in poor homes are far in excess of those to be found in the relatively few homes of business and professional leaders.

What is needed now is some fresh approach to the discovery and cultivation of the talents that undoubtedly exist among millions of children from unpromising backgrounds. The usual tests won't identify these able pupils; the usual curriculum won't challenge them; the usual teachers won't inspire them. While additional research would be helpful, the more urgent need seems to be for

creative teaching on the basis of a different set of assumptions. It won't do to parade excuses, or to blame the individual, or the neighborhood. These pupils may not score high on verbal tests, but they are clever about many other things. They may be "uncooperative" in carrying out traditional assignments, but they often show extrordinary loyalty to their families or their gangs. Their parents may not volunteer for P.T.A. committees, but it would be wrong to assume that these parents are not concerned about what their children are able to achieve., Even their preference for television and movie shows over storybooks may arise from authentic awareness that print is actually a devious and improverished medium in comparison with the presence of speaking, acting persons.

Under-cultured children have much to learn from education, but educators could well take some lessons from some of these youngsters. Their language may not be grammatical, but it is often more vivid and expressive than is the turgid prose of text-books. These children face some of the "facts of life" more realistically than do many of their teachers. Even their pugnacity might be worth attention by some long-suffering, overworked, underpaid teachers. When it comes to making friends and standingby their pals, some children from under priviledged neighborhoods far outshine their priggish teachers.

The starting point is respect. Nothing else that we have to give will help very much if it is offered with a resentful, contemptuous, or patronizing attitude. We don't understand these neighborhoods, these homes, these children, because we haven't respected them enough to think them worthy of study and attention. Prof. Riessman's book is likely to be the pioneer in a series of investigations that will reveal to America that we have neglected a major source of trainable manpower and of creative talent. The stone which builders rejected may even become the head of the corner.

Editors comments: Even more should be said about this book. How many underprivileged children are them in our largest cities? He tells us that according to the last census one pupil out of every three in the 14 largest cities is in this category, due to the rapid migration to urban centers.

Many are the reasons offered to explain why these underprivileged do poorly in school. Is it motivation? – a lack of interest? – a low I.Q.?. – a lack of understanding due to environment – the need to help out the family income? broken family? – or some other reasons? Often deprived children have a hidden I.Q., not revealed by conventional tests. Creativity is a talent that does not show up in I.Q. tests. Environment and motivation are two of the most important factors among the causes of non-achievers. A child can be a slow learner and yet not a poor learner until the teacher gives up on this child.

Are the underprivileged non-verbal? Not entirely – they are poor in the use of verbs, but much better with descriptive adjectives. They understand more language than they can speak, generally demonstrate a surprising ability for fantasy, and express themselves best in spontaneous, unstructured situations.

The effective teacher needs to be a good psychologist and to be able to put herself in the position and mental attitude of her individual pupils. But this is only the first step.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 p18 in the printed version]

14. i/t/a as a Language Arts Medium, edited by J. R. Block*

*Proceedings of the 4th International i.t.a. Conference, McGill Univ. Montreal, Quebec, Canada, Aug. 1967. Pub. 1968 by Sir Isaac Pitman (Canada), Toronto. 414 pp. $5.50
*Director, i.t.a. Foundation, Hofstra Univ. Hemstead, N.Y.

This book is a complete reporting of all papers presented at the 4th International i.t.a. Conference. It has 57 authors who contributed 47 papers. It is divided into five parts: Historical Backgrounds, the Normal Child, Special Groups, Methods and Measures, the Future. Of these, the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th have sub-groups: Pre-first Grade, First Grade, i.t.a. in Canada; the 3rd has: the Disadvantaged Child, the Exceptional Child, Remedial Reading, Adult Remedial, English as a Second Language; part 4 has: Teaching Methods, Transition, Linguistics and Reading, Administrative Problems.

It is difficult to single out any one paper as being the most outstanding. That would depend to a certain extent on the reader's personal interests. Pitman's and Dewey's talks were certainly impressive and historically informative. Several papers on the Disadvantaged Child and the Exceptional Child are outstanding contributions in their fields. Another impressive paper by Margaret Wallace is well tabulated with encouraging data and impressive results. Richard Woodcock's report on the 2nd year results – the efficacy of six approaches to teaching beginning reading – is another report with well-tabulated results.

There are others also deserving commendation, but if continued on it would soon look like a description of most of the papers. So if one is at all interested in the results obtained by various i.t.a. projects thruout the world, one should get this book.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 pp17,18 in the printed version]

15. Growing-with-language Program, by Harold Tanyzer, Ph. D, Albert J. Mazurkiewicz, Ed. D. and Annie De Caprio. Pub. 1968 by i/t/a Publications.

The Growing-with-Language Program is a third grade or post-transition program which need not go with i.t.a. but works well with many other types or methods of teaching reading. It consists of 10 hard cover, illustrated books of about 60 pages each along with 10 laboratory manuals (one for each). These manuals have multiple choice questions designed to test the reader's understanding of that story book. Each also has places to write about that book, word study sections to test the reader's use of certain new (to him) words, or words that may require explaining or teaching. The correct answers are found at the end of the book so that the student can grade himself or his neighbor, if that is the teacher's plan. The last page in each manual is a table of spaces for Self-Progress Marking.

The illustrations are cleverly drawn and printed in several colors. A number of artists were used so that there is a variation in illustration style from book to book.

The titles tell the variety of subjects: Good Days-Bad Days, Myths & Magic, Poems & Prose, Catch the Sun, Fantastic Tales-Fantastic People, Troubles, Alone and Together, I Want-, I Need!, Winds of Change, Bats & Bears & Sloths & Squids.

Among the authors selected for inclusion in these books are: Carl Sandburg, Dr.Seuss, Laura Ingalls Wilder Lewis Carroll. Annie De Caprio adapted the Myths and magical tales from folk-lore from all over the world – and also wrote some appropriate stories when she couldn't find a suitable one. Peanuts (the cartoon by Charles Schultz) also contributes some thought-provoking pages.

Here is an engaging poem that shows the good judgment, of the editors:

Check, by James Stephens

The Night was creeping on the ground!
She crept and did not make a sound,
Until she reached the tree; and then
She covered it, and stole again
Along the grass beside the wall!
–I heard the rustling of her shawl
As she threw blackness everywhere
Along the sky, the ground, the air,
And in the room where I was hid!
But no matter what she did
To everything that was without,
She could not put my candle out!
So I stared at the Night! And she
Stared back solemnly at me!

Have you noticed how much better the rhyming would (optically) if the poem were printed in i.t.a. instead of in our aphonic spelling?

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 p19 in the printed version]
[The diacritics are more like single and double quotes than acute accents and umlauts.]

16. World Language: Sistemïzd Ënglish

Boston, Mass., U.S.A.

ALlgrams: a book everybody should have and will enjoy. $1.00

EXAMPLES

By ALI FIUMEDORO	(in Sistemïzd Ënglish)
When you are right, be brave and fight.	Wen iü ar rït, bë bräv ánd fït.
You may win or lose by the words you use.	Iü mä win or lüz bï thü wrdz iü iüz.
Either dress right, or stay out of sight.	Ëthr dres rït, or stä úwt ov sït.
The louder the mouth, the smaller the brain.	Thú lawdr thú múwth, tho smolr thú brän.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1969 p20 in the printed version]

17. The Ten-Vowel Alfabet A a E e I i O *a* U u

Leo G. Davis Palm Springs Calif.

Greetings, Inter-langu age Teachers;

Only impractical idealists give second thought to "constructed" languages. *English is already the de facto international language.* It is spoken, quite uniformally, by some 500,000,000 people, all through the world. No doubt there are more people studying English, as a foreign tongue, than any other language, – perhaps more than are studying all others combined. But the irregularity of its traditional orthography is a serious stumbling-block to its acquisition. It is needlessly confusing!

Inasmuch as millions of NON-literates live quite normal lIves, – very few people really NEED to read or write a *second* language. Most of those, who speak more than one language, work in fields where literacy is not a factor, – as tourist guides, oral interpreters, policemen, clerks, servants, industrial workers, crew foremen, etc. And inasmuch as any common world lingo would be spoken mostly by NON-Anglos, there is no reason International English should retain the Anglo inconsistencies. For these reasons *Only STABLE English should be taught in inter-language studies*.

Furthermore, "mother-tongue interference" makes it practically impossible for NATIVES to teach any FOREIGN language. Although natives may, in some cases, be able to teach the Anglo "code" acceptably, they cannot teach English pronunciation successfully. That is why Africa has as many versions of oral English as it has trIbes of natives. Thus, *only native Anglos should be employed for teaching English*, – either at home or abroad. Further, there ar more English-speaking people in the UnIted States, than in all the UnIted Kingdom combined. Therefore, – as a matter of democratic "majority rule", only the dominant, – or "midwestern" American dialect should be taught in inter-language studies, – and then only by "midwestern" Americans. But it is not a matter of political dominance, – just a matter of uniformity in pronuniation of the common world lingo.

This authors latest text, "stabul inglish" ($2.50, Carlton Press, New York, U.S.A.) is a spelling guide for transliterating "traditional" English into "stabul" inglish, – not only in stable spelling, but also in stable grammar, – no irregular nouns or verbs. And vocabulary is minimized, by substituting shorter and/or more common synonyms for the longer and/or less common. ."stabul inglis" is demonstrated as follows;

.bi stabulvzing smal kaputuls A, E, I, O, U, az thu long vauls, and lour-kas a, e, i, a, u, az thu short, – with onli "c" for "ch", we hav u 29-letur alfabet (no Q or X) sufishunt for truli fonetik speling, – no nu leturs, – no sIlunt leturs, – no nu kambunashans, – no unorthudaks yus av eni simbul, – no diukritiks. .yet thu orthagrufi kan be redud, bi eny liturut Anglo, without sirius difukulti, – bekaz ther be no unfumilyur paturns. .no daut mor forunurs wood lurn tu spek inglish kwikur and betur with this orthagrufi, than with the trudishunul, – nat onli bekaz it be muc eziur, – but also bekaz mor pepul wood be inturestud in lurning it. .no daut "stabul inglish" wood be mor akseptubul tu mor pepul, than eni av thu "constructed" languages, – bekaz it be mor "yuzubul" in u bigur part av thu wurld, – and ther be mor potenshul tecurs (teachers), hu spek inglish mor yunuformulli than eni "constructed" langwij wil evur be. .thus "stabul" inglish iz thu most praktikul uproc to inturnashunal undurstanding that haz evur bin prupozd.

Being comfortably retired, and in good health, the author wood consider typing transliterations of a few primary texts, – for subsequent publication via "off-set photography" – to introduce "stabul inglish" in various parts of the world. Would YOU be interested?

Realistically, Leo G. Davis, pioneer teacher.