# Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 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. Late News

Mr. Eugene Kelly, formerly Pres. of Coca Cola of Canada before his retirement, has (Nov. 25,1969) left the income from his estate of over $6 million to further the success of the Initial Teaching Alphabet, it was announced by Prof. J. R. Block, Director of the i.t.a. Foundation (in America), at Hofstra Univ., Hemstead, New York.11550.

The making of this gift coincides with the recent publication of the long-awaited British Schools Council Report on the tests and use of the Initial Teaching Alphabet in British schools. This comprehensive government-sponsored report concluded that: "It would appear that the best way to learn to read in traditional orthography is to learn first to read in the Initial Teaching Alphabet."

"It is extremely gratifying to me," said Sir James Pitman at a dinner given him by the Academy for Educational Development at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Douglass Cater, in Washington, D.C., "that a philanthropist such as Mr. Kelly had the foresight to leave such substantial resources to a cause which is so intimately related to the growth of men's minds. Only a literate man can realize his full potentiality, and I believe that the i.t.a. is an extraordinarily potent weapon in the war on ignorance everywhere."

Sit James Pitman was in the U.S.A. at the invitation of Congressman R. C. Pucinski, Chairman of the General Subcommittee on Education, House of Representatives. He testified on i.t.a.'s use in American and British schools before the Congressional Sub-committee on Education.

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*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1969 p3 in the printed version]*

## 2. Alphabet-amation by Ivor Darreg

More than two thousand years ago, the stone cutters of Ancient Rome were at work, and their customary practice determined the shapes of capital letters, many of which forms survive to this very day. In deference to their memory, you will find such inscriptions on buildings as: MVSEVM, recalling that the rounded form of capital U is a comparatively modern invention. Even when so revolutionary an invention as the typewriter appeared on the scene just about a century ago, its makers copied quite slavishly the serifs (spurs or short lines at the ends of certain letter-elements) originated by those Ancient Roman stone-cutters, tho there was no real need to do so.

Similarly, there have been almost no innovations in letter-shapes since then despite the extensive use of Linotype and Monotype machines, or even the new phototypesetters. Influenced by this inertia, many spelling reformers have given up all hope of adding any new letters to the alphabet, and with noble resignation, try to work with the traditional 26 letters. They take the typewriter keyboard and the customary appearance of the printed page of English with the blind obeisance due a law of physics or a religious precept.

If pressed on this point, they usually have recourse to some economic argument: "It would cost too much to change. Think of the staggering expense for new type, and the impossible cost of

transcribing from one orthography to another."

As recently as ten years ago, these and other such arguments still seemed plausible. But in this last decade, the computer and its accessories have entered into almost every phase of our lives, and printing cannot remain an exception. Indeed, it hasn't. Computers programmed to insert hyphens at the ends of lines, and to convert the code from typewriter keyboards into a very different code chat will operate Linotype or other typesetter keyboards, are already in operation in many newspaper plants. There is now an electric typewriter which produces a magnetic tape recording which can be edited, altered, and erased before transmitting the typed material to a computer. This means that automation is affecting the field of automation itself! That is, punched paper tape and punched cards are giving way to invisible recordings on magnetic tape that can be erased and reused indefinitely.

Does the story end there? Hardly. The big news at present is OCR – optical character recognition. Why? Because the appetite of a computer and its associate apparatus (technically known as "peripherals") for data is incredibly large. What point in building computer insides to work at microsecond (one-millionth of a second) and nanosecond (one-billionth of a second) speeds, if hundreds of girls are condemned thereby to the boring, repetitive, and necessarily slow work of punching thousands of cards? Or the not much faster work of punching tape? Even the somewhat speedier method of typing onto magnetic tape still interposes the human eye and hand between the printed page and the computer's input, with all the possibilities for error, and the fantastic disparity in speed between human and machine is scarcely alleviated.

This disparity in speed entails great expense to provide "buffer storage" and "interfacing." When computer time is quoted in dollars per second, it can't stand idle for the proverbial wink of a gnat's eyelash. Almost as expensive is time on telephone lines, leased wires, radio links, etc. provided to get data from one place to another. The facilities cost money even when standing idle for a split instant.

So if a machine could be taught to read, the gathering of data could be largely automated, and many people would be released from monotonous jobs, to do something more interesting and more human. This process has already begun: optical character recognition is an accomplished fact, tho still in its infancy. Not only that: one segment of our economy couldn't wait for OCR and so MICR was invented – magnetic ink character recognition for bank checks. The ink used to print those queerly-shaped numerals contains magnetic material rather like the coating on magnetic recording tape, and pickup heads something like those on tape recorders can "read" this ink.

Thus you have before you an example of the influence of automation on the design of printed characters. The numeral 7 has been distorted to the point that it looks like a question mark (or the I.P.A. symbol for the glottal stop, to be exact).

Machines are stupid – unthinking. While human beings have brains enough to tell, by consulting the context, whether zero or the capital letter O is meant, and similarly, to tell whether small I or the numeral one is meant (in most cases but not all), a machine – particularly one that *must* not cost too much – cannot tell what meaning a symbol is to have. Accordingly, this similarity between letter- and numeral-signs can no longer be tolerated. This has led to the design of new type-faces (and typewriter type) that machines will be able to read. Depending on how much you can or are willing to spend, an optical character reader can deal with numerals only, numerals and a few capital letters, capital letters only, or a complete alphabet in both lower and upper case with a few mathematical

signs thrown in. Experimental machines can even read hand-printed numerals, if these are written in pre-located "boxes." Some machines can read several styles and/or sizes of type, but so far the machine-reading of cursive handwriting is for the future.

The usual process of reading is a *scanning process,* rather like the way in which a TV camera breaks up the picture into lines and dots so that it can be transmitted fragment by fragment. The coarseness or fineness of the scanning pattern determines how well the machine can read, and recognition of small details naturally costs more. (This scanning process was foreshadowed by an invention for the blind, which converted lines of print on a book page into groups of whistling tones via photocells.

Very high reading speeds are now possible, and this will increase still more in time to come. However, for better reliability, the material is preferably printed in a special machine-recognizable font, so many typewriter manufacturers are already selling the specially-fitted typewriters for this purpose. Thus the economic pressure is now operating for change and innovation in letter-shapes, rather than *against* change as it has been the case for centuries.

Now this means that some of the opposition to a new spelling, and additional letters for the English alphabet, is crumbling. But – and this is a big but – these new letters *must be designed with machine-reading in mind.* Moreover, the alphabet, and thus the spelling, must be remodled with yet another kind of machine governing the design: Eventually there will be automatic reading-out-loud-machines. These optical character recognizers will actuate synthetic speech devices, doubtless thru a digital-to-analog converter, and for that we *must* have a phonetic spelling. If we continue using silent letters, they will get pronounced, and if we insist on digraphs and trigraphs, they will get pronounced as the separate letters are, and not as the special sounds for which we are too stingy to assign proper new letters. To build a machine that could recognize the *th* in *other* as a unit sound when its properly programed result would be as in *outhouse,* would be expensive, if even possible. Multiply this by the ten other digraphs now used plus the long vowel sounds, would result in an astronomical cost.

Punctuation marks will probably make their own noises, a la Victor Borge, because machines cannot be made that will think and interpret our names for them. Italics will come out in a special tone of voice, while capital letters – now let's see – what *would* a capital K sound like?
How would you learn the new spelling? By one of these reading-aloud machines, of course. Read along with it and listen, and soon you would learn even a completely new alphabet. Write or type in it, and see if the new machine could read it aloud as it should. So there goes the big bugaboo, how to learn a new spelling, up in a thin wisp of smoke.

Special computer programs would also take care of the gargantuan task of retranscribing old orthography into the new, altho a certain amount of human editing would be required. That is, the machines could read existing books and produce printing places, no laborious retyping or reading and copying being required.

Admittedly, some of this sounds like science-fiction, but it is "breathing down our neck" and if we don't get ready for it, *we* will be obsolete.

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*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1969 p3 in the printed version]*

## 3. Must we always have absurd spelling? by K. G. Aberdeen, Sask, Canada

"For the want of a nail the shoe was lost,
For the want of a shoe the horse was lost,
For the want of a horse the rider was lost,
For the want of a rider the battle was lost,
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail!"

So goes an old children's poem – and there's more truth than poetry in it. It is also true that in our education system and in international communication there is an obvious, but unsolved, detail which is causing trouble everywhere. That detail is the inconsistent and absurd spelling of words in the English language.

It is widely known that some of our spelling is ridiculous, but only on a careful study is it found that our spelling is less than 20% phonetic! We get so used to many words such as: *one, was, is, any, two, eight,* that we don't realize the difficulties they present to Grade I pupils and foreigners.

Many people say that spelling reform would be desirable but that it would be impossible to attain. Do they really mean that in this space age such a housekeeping chore is too difficult to put into effect? In this age of scientific achievement does it make sense to use in our written communication a system which grew up like an unattended garden that has never been cultivated? Russia, Turkey, Norway, and many other countries have reformed their spelling, even tho before reform they were more reliable than ours. Why cannot we?

Having been a school teacher for 40 years, I have observed the difficulties caused by spelling irregularities: it affects all people from Grade I to university and those in all walks of life. I have been interested in spelling reform for 30 years and have gathered a good deal of information from Canada, United States, England, Australia and Sweden, where a keen interest is being taken and much good work is being done.

I am now retired and I'm anxious to do whatever I can to aid the progress of spelling reform.

The New Democratic Party of Canada has a proven record of putting "humanity first." So I believe it should be in favor of spelling reform because it would increase the efficiency of our language, make it easier to learn to read and spell, would decrease the number of dropouts from our schools, would prove unnecessary the endless search for better methods of teaching reading, and last but not least, cut the cost of education and the time for graduation. Certainly these points are worthy of serious consideration.

Therefore, I propose to present to the N.D.P. national convention a paper calling for the party to adopt, as a plank in its platform for the next federal election, the establishment of a commission to study the need for and the advantages of a reform in the spelling of English and to work for its use in Canada.

Some party members and delegates to the convention may consider this matter of too little importance to include in our election program. But anything that so vitally affects the future of generations of our children needs some serious thought, discussion with dissatisfied teachers and unhappy parents, and then to decide if it is not worthwhile to make the English language easier to attain for the millions of foreigners who struggle to use it. Many of them have said that: If English were regularized, it would soon be the International World Language. Think of what that would mean to better international understanding. Not to mention commerce, scientific advancement, etc.

As with the horseshoe nail in the rhyme, let us not allow something small and apparently inconsequential to undermine and retard our people. Be unselfish in your consideration of such changes in spelling as to hinder you little yet be of tremendous aid to future generations and foreigners.

*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1969 pp4,5 in the printed version]*

## 4. The Phonics Dilemma, by Bruce A. Lloyd*

*Western Mich. Univ. Reprinted from *Reading Horizons,* vol 10, no. 1, Fall, 1969.

The quicksand of confrontation in phonics methodology has been the either-or dichotomy exemplified by the nature-nurture controversy of yesteryear. The proponents of heredity as the prime dictator of human growth and development had well-polished arguments for their position and so did those who believed in the preeminence of environmental factors. In the phonics controversy, the oversimplification of viewpoint was equally clear-cut. Either we teach phonics as *synthesis* or we teach phonics as *analysis,* but we cannot do both. However, modern phonics instructional theory and practice indicates that perceptive teachers are taking both handles and doing just that up to a point.

### The Synthetic Approach

Through the process of synthesis, the reader looks at each letter of a word, says the sound of the letter, and puts the sound together with the next letter. This procedure is used with all letters in the word to the end that the reader will be able to pronounce the word when he has all of the sounds together.

At first glance, this system might appear to work and work well for pupils attacking unknown words, words not in their sight vocabulary. But all too frequently in actual practice, more confusion than enlightenment was generated. Not only is the meaning of the word not forthcoming, but word pronunciation is equated with reading.

The problem of synthesis can be illustrated as follows: take the word BAT. Readers were supposed to say the sound of the letter B first and it usually came out something like BUH. Probably the vowel A gave no trouble and the reader would say A. So far he had BUHA. Finally, he looked at the letter T and probably said TUH. Putting all these sounds together, he came up with BUHATUH which is a far cry from the sounds heard in the word BAT.

### The Analytic Approach.

Analysis, on the other hand, called upon the reader to look at the word as a whole, to find familiar parts, and to see which phonics rules could be applied. From the known parts, the reader could determine the rest of the word providing he knew and could apply techniques such as initial consonant substitution, initial consonant blend or digraph substitution, and/or the substitution of phonograms. For example, if the reader saw the word MAT and did not know it, but did know the word BAT, then all he had to do was substitute the sound of M for the B sound and arrive at the correct pronunciation.

Unfortunately, this technique, like all other techniques used with our presently spelled English words, has its advantages and its disadvantages or limitations as well. Looking for known word parts or word families (phonograms) is an acceptable word attack skill, but its use is restricted to those word elements that are: (1) known to the reader and (2) fit the confining pattern. Likewise, not all English words fit these nice, neat patterns because of the ridiculous and inconsistent, irregular spellings which are an ever-present roadblock to learning to read. To illustrate the limitations of analysis techniques, take a look at the word TOGETHER. A reader may analyze the components TO and GET and HER, and not be able to continue reading because that is not the meaning of the word.

Another fly in the phonic analysis ointment is the methodology based on rules. Readers were taught the many generalizations and the exceptions thereto with the assumption that they would look at a word, think of the generalization(s) appropriate to it, and come up with the pronunciation. For

example, the basic (and comparatively unusable) generalization regarding two adjacent vowels goes something like this: "when two vowels come together in a word, the first vowel usually takes the long sound (says its name) and the second vowel is silent." That rule is illustrated by words such as: *seat, boat,* and *hail.* Recent studies have found this rule to be less than fifty percent effective as there are more words that do not conform *(break, lead,* and *said)* than there are that do. Moreover, a number of rules of English phonic analysis have been shown to be of considerably less utility than was once thought. So it would seem that the analysis technique using known word parts and/or phonics generalizations has also left something to be desired.

**The Modern Approach.**

This brings us to the basic question of the present dilemma, namely, what is the proper place of phonics in present-day, meaningful reading instructional programs. Synthesis has its limitations and so does analysis. What is the reading teacher to do?

Perhaps the best answer tests with the proper use-stress continuum.
Phonics can be defined as the correct association of speech sounds with their corresponding symbols. In other words, there is a phoneme-grapheme relationship (imperfect as it is) and readers need to be taught the correct phoneme response to the appropriate grapheme. Herein lies the problem. Because of imperfections and inconsistencies in English spellings, with the corresponding lack of utility in either analysis or synthesis, how much stress should be given to modern phonics instruction in today's reading programs?

To answer this question, we must look to the actual use of phonics as the reader needs the appropriate skills to apply in attacking words. Initially, the young or inexperienced reader has a limited sight vocabulary and is faced with the problem of attacking many of the words he meets. So there are many printed symbol groups whose pronunciation needs to be unlocked in order for the reader to read and to read better.

The real problem, then, tests with the reader's recognition vocabulary (his store of sight words) simply because the larger the number of words he recognizes instantly, the easier it is to read and to comprehend. The fewer words he knows and/or recognizes the more he will have to rely on word attack knowledge. The larger the vocabulary of understanding (recognition vocabulary) acquired by the pupil, the more effective will be his use of phonic analysis. Once the word is pronounced, the appropriate mental associations must be made with the word, then the individual can continue reading with understanding. For the reader who has a limited vocabulary of understanding, using the dictionary is the best resource. Phonic skills do not give the reader word meaning. Even if the reader can "sound out" or pronounce the unknown word through the application of phonic analysis, he is still unsure of the meaning and must resort to context or the dictionary. Phonic analysis does not provide word definitions. These come from the reader's previous experiences.

Mature readers follow a similar pattern. They also find phonic analysis skills of service in the pronunciation of unknown words. Such individuals usually look at words, find familiar parts, attach sounds to symbols, synthesize correctly, and come up with a pronunciation. Then, if the set of sounds is in the reader's vocabulary of understanding and he recognizes this from some previous experience, the meaning becomes apparent and he continues reading. On the other hand, even if lie can say the word, he may not know its meaning. Therefore, he must use clues that the context may give or tie resorts to the dictionary. Once the meaning is known, the reader can proceed until he comes across another unknown word. The process is then repeated.

What, then, is the real value of phonics? Simply this: the skills of phonic analysis can help, when the reader looks at a word, makes the correct sound-symbol associations, *and recognizes the word* from his own individual store of words. If he cannot attach the sounds to meanings, no amount of

phonic knowledge will help the reader understand what lie reads. Phonic analysis, by whatever approach used, has these limitations. Although it is considered to be the best single word attack skill procedure needed by readers, the value of phonic analysis is restricted and reading instructional programs should be adjusted accordingly. It is especially significant to note that reading skill instruction programs cannot be limited to phonic analysis alone. Other skill building learning procedures must be included.

## The Dilemma Overcome.

The proper, effective, stress-use continuum regarding the teaching of phonic analysis should follow a pattern and sequence that is most beneficial to the readers needing such instruction. The foremost concept teachers should consider is that reading for meaning is the ultimate goal of all reading instruction. Mere word pronunciation, of itself serves few real purposes. Words must be read in context and have meaning for the reader. When reading is meaning-centered, phonics can assist the reader providing the analysis skills have a firm foundation. The skills should have a solid base in order to, be useful to readers. This base is made up of experiences and instruction provided by the teacher.

Initially, the skills of phonic analysis should be caught on an informal basis. Then teachers can gradually lead up to a more formal phonics program in which the skills are stressed for a time. Ultimately, however, phonics skill instruction should taper off so that the time can be devoted to other, more vital skill activities such as structural analysis, critical reading, drawing inferences and conclusions, predicting outcomes, and most vital of all, increasing sight vocabulary.

## Conclusions.

It has been noted that phonic analysis is a serviceable but limited tool or device for helping readers pronounce words whose visual forms are unfamiliar and/or unknown. Its utility declines as readers progress through the grades. Ultimately phonic skills have little value for readers and there is a need for higher level skills. Phonics most certainly does not help with the *meanings* of words if those meanings are unknown to the reader. In this instance, he must resort to use of context, the dictionary, or some other source.

The best way to help pupils become better readers is to teach them to increase their own sight recognition vocabularies and give them many experiences so they can learn more words. A large sight vocabulary is obtained by constant exposure to meaningful experiences and to words. This can be achieved orally (teacher-pupil dialogue; pupil listening) or visually (reading). A large sight vocabulary is retained by constant, meaningful reexposure to words (extensive and intensive reading, many experiences, and discussing experiences). A sight vocabulary is increased by continuous in-depth, in-breadth reading and more experiences at an ever higher level.

Altho phonic analysis is a key of some utility in unlocking word pronunciation, getting meaning is the major purpose of reading. This phonics cannot do.

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*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1969 pp5–7]*

# 5. The Concept of Readability, by Jack Gilliland



Conditions which affect the difficulty experienced when print is read have been the subject of much research. The effect of these conditions and their control are also the concern of any person obliged to direct the attention of others to print in whatever form or situation. Any attempt to minimise the difficulty created by this direction involves a matching exercise. By assessing the material to be read and by assessing the capabilities of the individuals, it is hoped that an appropriate match will produce efficient and profitable reading. Since, in the great number of instances, neither the complexity of the reading material nor the capabilities of the readers are systematically measured and quantified, decisions concerning choice of reading matter must be largely based on the personal impressions and hasty subjective evaluations of the teacher. These primitive forms of matching may be affected by any number of factors, not always relevant, such as a person's own reading, misleading publicity material, inadequate introductions. Though there have been wide differences, Chall (1958) quotes evidence to suggest that some experienced teachers could rank reading material in order corresponding well with empirically determined difficulty. These rankings were inadequate when matched with children.

Conventional reading schemes constructed so as to accomodate certain types of difficulty usually provide the teacher with manuals and explanatory tracts which may be of use in determining the suitability of the various stages of the scheme for children with different levels of reading skill. 14owever, there is rarely any analysis of the difficulty inherent in the vast amount of other printed matter to which children are likely to be exposed in their general school activity. It is argued that some consistent technique for the evaluation of any reading material would be of great practical value in the reaching situation. The development of general measures of reading difficulty which may have this desired wide application has concerned researchers for some time and has commonly been described as the study of 'readability.'

Dale and Chall (1948) proposed the following comprehensive definition of readability: "In the broadest sense, readability is the sum total (including interactions) of all those elements within a given piece of printed matter that affects the success which a group of readers have with it. The success is the extent to which they understand it, read it at optimum speed and find it interesting." It is recognised that there are several variables to be considered, that they are complex and they interact and while this generalisation is intended to clarify the meaning of readability, it does little to indicate the assumptions or methodology on which it is based. Although the definition implies three main criteria, the factors affecting readability have been studied from four points of view.

(1) The characteristics of the child (motives, sex, interests, etc.)
(2) The characteristics of the print (size, colour, line spacing, etc.)
(3) The characteristics of the language (syntax, word frequencies, etc.)
(4) Subject matter (fact, fiction, detail given, etc.)

Several interactions which might be reflected in reading difficulty may be readily isolated; for example, subject matter used may affect sentence length or the proportion of infrequent words used.

Readability studies may be most conveniently described under the three definitions of success given by Dale and Chall above: readability defined as legibility, interest and ease of understanding.

Tinker (1966) summarised research on legibility under seven broad headings. While many of the technical findings are of most use at the stage of preparation and publication of material, an awareness of the findings may improve the quality of a teacher's selection of reading material. Providing optimum legibility of print is not the responsibility of the publisher since much research concerns such factors as conditions of illumination, visual discrimination in various situations. The conclusions and methods of study into legibility require fuller treatment in a more restricted frame of reference than that provided by the concept of readability.

Readability when studied as interest leads to the analysis of subject matter and themes preferred by groups of children differing in various special ways. Chall (1958) reviewed research work in this field. The major and easily anticipated generalisations reported were that interests were chiefly individual and that large differences in preferences were observed in the groups studied. However, some trends were related to maturity and sex. Children between ages six and eight were found to be interested in stories of animals, children, familiar experiences, nature and fairies, lively stories containing elements of surprise and humour. No differences between the preferences of the sexes were reported. Between eight and twelve, action and humour were common factors exerting greatest influence. While boys showed a preference for adventure, mystery, sport and realistic animal stories, girls preferred stories of home and school life. Above the age of twelve, boys and girls showed a common interest in adventure and humour while girls showed an interest in love stories.

Further studies quoted by Chall (1958) investigated more specific factors of organisation, style, and presentation which affected interest, particularly when reading was a peripheral activity. Content, style, format and organisation were found to affect interest in that order. A report of the responses of high school students listed style, content, format and organisation, and went on to indicate within each heading, chose aspects which most affected the pupils' interest and willingness to persist in reading. Other researchers noted a preference for writing which varied in the level of abstraction together with a preference for a general statement followed by detail. Conversational style was preferred to narrative expository style. An increased number of personal references was also said to affect interest and persistence in reading.

The difficulty of applying such generalisations, together with weaknesses in the methods of study, reduce the value of such reports to the teacher wishing to predict and control the reading matter of individuals. There is also a problem of quantifying interest and expressing, simply, its influence on readability.

Of the three definitions of readability, 'ease of understanding' has received the most attention and is the one on which the revived interest in readability has centered. The availability of procedures for studying and quantifying both complexity of material and comprehension makes it possible to carry out studies at any level. It is a topic which might be investigated by teachers in an informal way as well as within the limits of large and controlled experiments. The first hand information obtained by use of the methods developed for studying this aspect of readability may be of great practical value in dealing with selection and matching problems.

Early investigators were concerned with the production of formulae designed to reflect difficulty. A number of variables in a passage would be measured and then related to the level of comprehension of groups of children as measured by test, or in some cases by teachers' rankings. A recurring problem was the conflict between the researchers' desire for accuracy and the teachers' desire for ease of application. A spate of these quantitative studies were published as a result of the interest in readability during the period immediately following World War II. By using the number of words in the sample, the number of sentences, the number of prepositional phrases, and the number of infrequent words, Lorge (1939) produced a formula for readability which was said to be reliable and

easy to apply. Flesch (1950) made use of words and sentences, syllables and words. Also the argument that difficulty of understanding depends on the author's choice of words and the complexity of the relationship of ideas led to the development of an 'idea analysis technique.' These and other studies are discussed and criticised by Chall (1958) and Klare (1963). Although low validity correlations were reported and limitations in use were examined, the application of these formulae represented a significant attempt to deal with a fundamental problem. The variables examined may still provide a reasonable, if crude, means of validating material.

These researches helped to produce a structure within which readability might be studied. Attention was concentrated on dealing with a word factor, sentence factor, and passage factors, though limitations in methods of study became a handicap to progress.

Interest in readability has revived in recent years, particularly as a result of the development of a number of techniques for the study of the characteristics of language, which may in turn be used to deal with the problem of measuring reading difficulty. This revival is to be welcomed, particularly at a time when the amounts of published material which a teacher may be required to evaluate has reached vast proportions.

Bormuth (1966), in a thorough study, points out which of the new linguistic measures may be applied to determine readability. These techniques may be developed for use with reading units of any length and have a ready application at various levels of difficulty. Many are suited to small scale researches which might be undertaken by interested teachers for their own immediate purposes. 48 variables listed and examined by Bormuth included the conventional long established ones. Of the methods and variables which have been recently used in readability studies, he lists the cloze test, word depth analysis, letter redundancy, and proportions of parts of speech as being of most interest. The principles of the semantic differential would seem capable of adaptation for use in readability studies though this does not appear to have been done. It is hoped to discuss these techniques more fully later.

It is becoming increasingly possible to devise flexible and useful methods of measuring reading comprehension, by use of linguistic methods to examine the complications of literary style, to examine the variables which influence readability for readers at different levels of attainment, and to produce measures of readability which are both accurate and easy to apply.

It is unfortunate that the literature concerning such a basic problem in reading should receive such little attention and it is hoped that this general discussion may lead to a revival of interest in a topic which seems to leave that quality which so many find missing in much research work – practical application in the classroom.

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*These three references contain comprehensive bibliographies for anyone interested in this subject.

*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1969 pp7–9 in the printed version]*

## 6. An Examination of Measures of Readability, by Jack Gilliland

Reprinted from *Reading* – official organ of the UKRA, vol.3, no. 1, March, 1969. 

In the previous article, the concept of readability was discussed and a general review made of the approaches to it. It was argued that a re-examination of the topic was justified on the grounds that it could provide the class teacher with evidence on which to base the selection of reading materials which would be more reliable than publicity material or collections of subjective impressions. Also, that methods of analysis together with the findings of recent studies have a bearing on the problem of measuring the difficulty of different reading materials. This article is concerned with the need for a suitable measure of understanding against which the other factors can be matched (a criterion measure), the description and discussion of two long-established readability formulae, and the description of recent methods of linguistic analysis which may be used in readability studies.

The development of readability formulae depends upon the satisfactory assessment of reading comprehension in some form, since in order to measure the influence of different factors upon a person's ability to understand print, it is necessary to examine the extent of his understanding. The comprehension difficulty of a passage has been traditionally measured by means of questions to be answered immediately after the reading of the passage. If the passage is removed, the subject has to rely on memory and clues obtained from the questions, and if the text is retained, then the subject may attempt a matching of contextual clues and clues from the questions. In both of these conditions, understanding has been measured largely in terms of information. The comprehension tests involve the use of open-ended or multiple-choice questions. These procedures have been criticised on a variety of grounds. It has not been possible to establish whether the response made reflected the difficulty of the passage or of the questions. For example, difficult questions about a simple passage may produce a different result from easy questions asked about a complex passage. It is also well established that the answers to multiple-choice items are affected by the number and nature of the alternatives offered. Also the opportunity for random responses and for guessing have an effect upon the, comprehension score which is quite independent of the language in the passage or the individual's understanding of it. These and other objections to the use of these techniques as a criterion measure have handicapped the development of satisfactory approaches to readability. Bormuth (1966), however, suggests that the cloze test, devised by Taylor, may provide a measure of comprehension difficulty which has fewer limitations than the traditional procedures.

A cloze test is prepared by replacing every fifth (usually) word with a blank of standard size throughout the passage. The subject then attempts to complete the blanks, replacing the words deleted. The score of the subject reflects the extent to which he has used the exact words. It may be argued that the cloze procedure will produce spurious comprehension scores since some words substituted will simply reflect responses to speech patterns. This will result in 'function' words (e.g. pronouns, prepositions) being easier to restore than 'content' words (e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives). However, the influence of the type of word and its context may be more easily controlled and measured than in the question and answer procedure. Additionally, if the blanks in the cloze test are appropriately selected, then this objection to the use of the procedure for this purpose may be reduced. It may be preferable to use this procedure with children so as to investigate not only their response to the content of the passage but to the linguistic cues which hold the passage together.

Whatever the academic arguments about the cloze test, its ease of application and established reliability make it a useful tool with which a teacher may investigate children's comprehension of printed material. There appears to be little published evidence of the use of the test in this country (England) and the value of the procedures is still based upon assumptive evidence.

The improvement of comprehension measures alone does not justify the reappraisal of readability measures. The isolation and measurement of new factors affecting comprehension scores suggests that existing readability measures should be overhauled. There has been general agreement that readability is affected by two principle factors – a word factor and a sentence factor, though the particular variables examined have differed from measure to measure. As the two examples below indicate, the variables to be used are arranged in a formula. The figure arrived at after the calculation represents the level of difficulty of the passage. Since each variable added to the formula produces a diminishing return in terms of increased reliability or validity, and considerably increases the amount of work involved, few formulae have used more than three variables. In research work, time-consuming procedures may be justified, but for the vast majority of uses, ease of application has been a dominant consideration. Three of the most popular formulae, the Dale-Chall, Flesch, and Farr-Jenkins-Paterson, each involve the use of only two variables. Two are given here for examination and comparison.

The Dale-Chall formula (1948) is:

$$Xc_{50} = .1579X_1 + .0496X_2 + 3.6365$$

where $Xc_{50}$ is the reading grade score of a pupil who could answer one half of c series of test questions correctly,
$X_1$ is the Dale score (the relative number of words outside the Dale list of 3,000 words),
$X_2$ is the average sentence length,
and 3.6365 is a constant.

The interpretation of the formula score is done by relating the score to a series of estimated corrected grade levels for American school children. The authors argue that this predictor of readability is easy to apply. Of the two factors, the measure of vocabulary load alone (the number of words outside the Dale list) is claimed to have a greater predictive value than two formulae using three different factors.

A formula devised by Flesch and recalculated by Powers *et al*., quoted by McLaughlin (1968) is:

$$r.g. = 4.55W_1 + .0778S_1 – 2.2029$$

where $W_1$ is the average length in syllables of the words in the passage,
$S_1$ is the average length in words of the sentences in the passage,
and r.g. is the reading grade of a child who answers half the questions on the passage.

Both formulae use as the measure of reading difficulty a comprehension test of the question and answer type which has been criticised above.

These two formulae use measures of word difficulty, word frequency, and syllable counts. It may be that these last two variables are independent of one another and equally valid, but a closer investigation suggests that they may in fact be related to one another. An examination of the words appearing in frequency counts reveals that words occurring frequently tend to be short, due either to their Anglo-Saxon derivation or to the effect of Zipf's 'law of abbreviation' described by Klare (1966). This law is reflected in a tendency for words to become shortened as they are used more

frequently; for example, television to 'tele' or TV, omnibus to 'bus. Less frequent (and longer) words tend to be relatively rare in speech and so there are fewer occasions on which to learn their meaning. This will be reflected in increased difficulty in understanding them when they occur in print. The difficulty experienced by many children in coping with longer words will be all the greater because they have had even less exposure than adults to the use of such words in everyday speech. In view of the close relationship which may exist between the two variables, a potential user of the formulae would prefer the Flesch variable since the counting of syllables will be less time consuming than referring to a list of 3,000 words. Apart from practical considerations, a further examination of the variables suggests a factor which may be equally easy to measure and equally valid. If the number of syllables in a word gives an indication of its difficulty, then the number of letters (an even more basic component of words) may be of use and has the advantage of being easier to count. Bormuth (1966) gives experimental results which show that letter counts may not only be useful but may provide the best measure of the difficulty of individual words.

Both the established readability formulae quoted above measure the same variable for determining the difficulty of sentences and do so in the same way (by calculating the average sentence length in words). Bormuth's results suggest that letter counts may also provide a useful measure of difficulty at the sentence level, though the correlation quoted was lower than for the word level. A further outcome of Bormuth's investigation was the apparent suitability of other, more recent, techniques of linguistic analysis as measures of readability. The three most useful, in addition to letter counts, were word depth analysis, the length of independent clause and the proportion of parts of speech.

Word depth analysis (outlined by Bormuch) involves firstly a method of diagramming sentence structure and is based on a theory of how a sentence is produced. A numerical value is attached to each word; this figure represents the number of grammatical facts which must at any particular point still be stored and produced to make a sentence. The total word depth is calculated by the addition of the numbers across the sentence. The mean word depth (word depth divided by words in the sentence) showed a close relationship with sentence difficulty. Independent clause lengths were found to have a higher correlation than sentence lengths to passage difficulty. This was so regardless of whatever the measure of length used (letters, syllables, words). The results suggest that independent clause length reflects one type of grammatical complexity whilst sentence length may be reflecting aspects of prose style. Bormuth's examination of the ratios of parts of speech highlighted a number of correlations which indicate a relationship to reading difficulty. The fact that authors vary considerably in ratios of words used in their writing and the investigation of these ratios may be of great assistance in measuring the readability of different prose styles. The ratio of pronouns to conjunctions had one of the highest correlations for a single variable in the whole study.

The description of these three sentence factors has, of necessity, been brief and though a more detailed description of the procedures might have been justified, this would go beyond the scope of the present article. From the mass of variables examined by Bormuth, those referred to above would seem to offer some possibility of immediate use in small scale studies, many of which are required if the effectiveness of these variables as measures of readability is to be ascertained.

The suitability of the cloze test as an improvement upon existing criterion measures of reading comprehension could now be examined in the light of results obtained from a series of small scale researches, particularly in view of the obvious unsuitability of American reading grades. This type of study could fall into the range of activities of local UKRA councils. Alongside the examination

of this type of test, it would be possible to assess the value of the potential measures of readability described above. The argument for a test of the measures together is strong, but may be beyond the capabilities of small groups of workers and an examination of each in turn might be more appropriate. The evidence from previous work suggests that a readability formula requires the examination of more variables than those used in the Dale-Chall and Flesch measures, that more recent studies in linguistics provide new variables likely to be reliable, and that the measures need not be so complicated as to deter the class teacher with limited time and facilities. A number of researches could help to provide the evidence upon which more modern and reliable readability formulae will need to be based. It is hoped that these two general articles on this rarely discussed topic will be of use to teachers wishing to evaluate their materials both actively and systematically.

Any comment from interested readers, particularly those who have studied or may be studying this topic, will be welcomed either directly or through the UKRA, Stockport, Cheshire, England.

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*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1969 p2 in the printed version]*

## Cartoon


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*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1969 pp9,1 in the printed version]*

## 7. Half a Loaf is better than no Bread at all!
## by Leo G. Davis, Palm Springs, Calif.

Certainly it is time to streamline our orthography in keeping with the missle age in which we live. Altho most people are in favor of basic reform, many are averse to radical change. Thus, any new orthography must be a compromise between the traditional idiotic and the futuristic ideal – something less than perfection. But we must not let lack of unanimous agreement block progress. Therefore, the following comments are based on the premise that "Half a loaf is better than no bread at all." We'd better be satisfied with what is within our reach, instead of reaching for the stars.

Of course, *simplified* spelling is any modification (but not necessarily fonetic) that is an improvement – less complicated than the traditional. Example: *sikolojy* is a simplified spelling because it is less complex than *psychology*. The point is: in orthographic reform it may sometimes be more practical to accept mere simplicity in lieu of fonetic perfection – because of alfabetical deficiency.

But a meager *fonetic* spelling would require at least 38 letters – 26 consonants and 12 vowels, which would include 14 new unconventional symbols – for the 7 extra vowels and the 7 digraphs: *ch, ng, sh, th* (voiced) and *th* (unvoiced*), wh,* and *zh*. However, it hardly seems probable that John Public will be in the mood to "buy" such radical change in the forseeable future. Evidently we must "make do" with established symbols in traditional roles, whether in mere stability, use of digrafs, or mixed fonts of distinctive type faces.

However, there appears to be little or no public sentiment in favor of vowel digrafs, as evidenced by the fact that simplified spelling associations in America and England have been sponsoring the e-digrafs (ae,ee,ie,oe, ue) for decades with no apparent success. Evidently most people would prefer mere stability, with *arbitrary,* rather than "general" rules for use of double-consonants and/or final-silent-e, when it is necessary to identify a short or long vowel – rather than cope with a silent-e after each long vowel-contrary to simplicity or brevity.

As for the different faces of type – there doesn't seem to be but 10 distinctive vowel symbols among the familiar fonts (A, a, E, e, I. i, o, *a,* U, u). Thus we are faced with a choice between "doubles" contrary to simplicity or brevity, or "double-duty" for a couple of vowels, augmented by diacritics in the dictionary, to perpetuate the distinction. Which do YOU prefer?

Obviously the idea of fonetic *reading* stems from the lack of it in the idiotic whole-word approach to literacy – which is diametrically contrary to the fundamentals of alfabetical orthografy, and basically identical to the "tur-key-trak" approach that has been a millstone around the Orientals neck for eons. But it should be noted that China is shifting to a fonetic alfabet. Then, by what logic should we be stuck with the whole-word policy? Why not stabilize the alfabet, just as other peoples hav dun to solv their reading problems?

According to Gertrude Hildreth's comments on Russia's basically fonetic alfabet (Jan. 69 *Reading Teacher*) it seems there are neither reading teachers nor reading failures in Russia – just ALFABET teachers, and the children take it from there with nothing more than instructions on *what* to read rather than *how* to read it. How much longer must we sacrifice initial literacy on the alter of tradition?

The writer learned the fundamentals of alfabetical orthografy, and reading, before the turn of the century. Thus he is in position to have "before-and-after" pictures of the reading situation. It has

been his observation that there were no "reading" failures, per se, prior to the whole-word debacle – just *spelling* failures due to the idiotic inconsistency of T.O. Under the traditional *alfabetical* approach to literacy, children were taught to pronounce the words of their probable listening vocabularies, after the teacher to see that they were not saying something like *sex for six,* then SPELL the words and define them – before they were expected to see them in context. Thus they acquired a "sight" vocabulary with meaning *systematically* thru direct instructions – rather than by haphazzard mental fotografy as seems to be expected today. Under such a systematic approach, children failed in reading only to the extent they had *already* failed in SPELLING. Obviously the idiotic inconsistency of T.O. is the very root of our reading problem.

The main reason why modern Johnny can't read is because he isn't trained to notice individual letters and he can't *spell.* He can't spell because of the inconsistencies in T.O. To learn to spell *go* is no help in learning *row*, *sew, though, toe, depot.* To learn *how, now, brown, cow* is misleading with *slow, low, grow, mow.* A pupil cannot confidently transfer his knowledge learned on one word when he tries writing a rhyming word. Why cant educators see the harm of such inconsistencies? And our orthografy is still inconsistent only because educators adamantly refuse to even tolerate regularity or consistency – much less teach it. The only reason why we have such inconsistencies as *go, though, one, won, to, too, two, ate, eight, no, know, doe, do, dough* is because teachers wont tolerate such pupil innovations based on logical reasoning as *go, tho, wun, too, ate, no, do,* etc.

Around the turn of the century the writer was struggling with such irregularities as *grey, thresh, plough, queue, programme, catalogue, charivarii, esquimau,* etc. But today Johnny is helped along with more sensible spellings, viz, *gray, thrash, plow, cue, program, catalog, shivaree, Eskimo, etc.* The point is: apparently this transition took place thru "common usage" without any orders from anyone – and the public *loved it!!* So WHY should any progressive educator hesitate to condone, or even teach simplified spelling? Why not have a "gentlemen's agreement" among progressive educators to refrain from correcting(?) anybody for using modified spellings that follow dominant traditional patterns?

It seems to me researchers(?) haven't done enough investigating to discover that there ever was a *spelling* approach to literacy; or that the whole-word approach has not only created countless drop-outs, but also a crew of teachers who, thru no fault of their own, have no practical concept of alfabetical orthografy. They have had no experience with the SPELLING approach as the first step tord a sight vocabulary. All they know is the "mental fotografy" approach, augmented by dubious gimmicks and abstract theories in child psychology. Really, the primary teacher is to be pittied, rather than censured. It isn't her fault that Fate dumped the whole-word Frankenstein into her lap! It's the "higher-ups" who are to blame – for not stabilizing the alfabet. They deserve to be prosecuted for contributing to juvenile delinquency by confusing innocent beginners! And these satirical comments on research(?) seem to be supported by the satirical epilogue Dr. George Spache delivered at the IRA convention at Boston – a "left-handed" – but logical criticism of our research(?) programs.

Thus it is suggested that all those interested in solving our *mis*-called reading problem "forget" about perfection, per se, and turn their efforts toward *simplified* spelling, with phonics in second place. And it is further suggested that they cooperate in publicizing "comparative" studies of the various proposals for simplified spelling, via all news media, and subsequently conduct public surveys to determine which proposal would be most acceptable to most people – public acceptance and cooperation being far more important than academic superiority. Then bequeath to posterity a basically fonetic alfabet, even tho it falls short of perfection. After all, "half a loaf is better than no bread at all." Well! What are we waiting for?

Let's go!

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

# Book Reviews

## 8. The Intelligent Parent's Guide to Child Behavior, by Beatrix Tudor-Hart, Reviewed by James F. Magary, Ph.D.*

2nd American Edition, Pub. 1968 by Delacorte Press, New York. 222 pp. $5.00.
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Clarence Darrow, the famous Chicago defense attorney for unpopular causes once remarked in his typically cynical way, "The first half of our lives is ruined by our parents and the second half by our children." Darrow was not a child psychologist but rather a confirmed pessimist. For most of us, one of the greatest pleasures in life is the rearing of children and the enjoyment of watching our children master various hurdles. The normal parent enjoys his child's accomplishments and is willing to accept the child's integrity and individuality as distinct from his own. The neurotic parent, contrariwise, often attempts to live out unfilled desires, hopes, and aspirations in the life of his child. The neurotic parent has more difficulty in accepting his child as a distinctly separate human being.

Certainly childhood can be a time of great joy and happiness, and parenthood can also be an intensely rewarding and gratifying experience. Ideally, Darrow's epigrammatic statement could be rewritten as follows: "In the first half of his life, a child is aided and loved by his parents and in the second half, now a parent, is able to provide his offspring with the security and warmth which he received as a child."

Prof. Beatrix Tudor-Hart has written a book for parents and teachers to help them understand the child from birth to adolescence so that the child-rearing process can be more pleasurable and meaningful. This account, based on a lifetime of firsthand experience with children covers many of the situations and problems which a child – and his parents and educators – meet in the first 12 years of life, from the earliest feeding and sleeping through learning to read, write, and adjust happily to other people.

Almost every parent wants to be sure that his child gets the best possible start in life. So many books that are supposed to deal with the formative years of a child's life give advice that is incomplete, conflicting, or ambiguous. Many books for parents read like very dry college textbooks and merely rehash the research conducted in various areas of child development. Thus there is a need for a book which gives full explanations of its child-rearing recommendations without sacrificing either warmth or humanity. This book is that kind of a book. Published originally in England, it was widely read and praised by all the British Commonwealth. I have taken the liberty of changing some of the British terminology as well as augmenting the bibliography. The book, however, remains essentially the work of Miss Tudor-Hart.

Prof. Tudor-Hart is presently in the Dept. of Child Care of the Northwestern Polytechnic in London and lectures frequently on child psychology. The American reader has the benefit of the wisdom of an outstanding British child psychologist who has studied at Cambridge as wall as in Germany and

America. Perhaps her eclectic theoretical orientation is a reflection of her diverse educational background. As the reader is no doubt aware, contemporarily and historically the field of psychology has been divided into many schools of thought. We have had the Behaviorists or Watsonians; the Gestaltists; the Psychoanalytics or Freudians; and now the Skinnerians. In this book, we discover a child psychologist who is not committed to any one school of psychological thought. Instead we find a writer who is well read in European psychology, as well as Russian and American viewpoints, and whose recommendations represent her judicious weighing of the research evidence against years of professional experience.

From 1927 to 1933, Miss Tudor-Hart operated her own nursery school for children of 2 to 7 years of age. In 1933, after assessing what she had learned about young children thus far, she ran a cooperative, non-profit school for children of 2 to 12. Thus Miss Tudor-Hart is truly a specialist in children; the knowledge she has gained from research and reading could always be confirmed or discredited in her own day-to-day experience with young children. The generalizations presented in this book are based upon research findings sifted through the nervous system of a highly skilled, perceptive child psychologist, and tempered by the common sense of an educated Englishwoman.

Miss Tudor-Hart emphasizes the importance of individual differences and respect for the individuality and integrity of each child. She develops the interrelationship of all complex psychological processes. For the author, maturation, social learning, motor learning, and the development of intelligence are all aspects of a unified, complex process.

This is a book about the developing child written in easy to understand language. In writing about development Miss Tudor-Hart has placed the focus where it properly belongs – on the child himself, and not on his feeding disturbances, or his motor development or his social behavior. One feels as one reads this book that the author is writing about Mary or Johnny or a real child we have known, rather than about some abstract or hypothetical child.

Miss Tudor-Hart has wisely selected research studies to illustrate various points. It would seem as if she asked herself the following questions before including the synopses of the studies in this volume: Is this study important in helping a parent gain a deeper understanding of his child? Does this study contribute in assisting the reader in making a worthwhile generalization about a principle of human development?

Many writers of today are writing about atypical or exceptional children – those who are deeply emotionally disturbed or who are learning at a very slow rate. Miss Tudor-Hart's professional experience has been with relatively normal children. She discusses the handicapped child only to illustrate a point she is making about the normal child.

The author opens this book by introducing the reader to an understanding of the central nervous system. She emphasizes the early-infancy period as one of great import for later mental development. She points out the inseparable biosocial foundation of all human behavior.

In Chapter 3, "Getting to Know the World," perception and the glimmerings of self-awareness are discussed. This process is the beginning of the infant's lifelong task of structuring his world and, gradually, of structuring an accurate yet adequate picture of himself as well. The author presents

specific recommendations regarding temper tantrums, overcoming irrational fears, bedtime problems, and feeding and table manners in the next few chapters.

Problems which frequently occur during the nursery- school years are discussed in Chapter 9, while problems of the elementary school years are discussed in Chapter 12. The author presents some concrete recommendations for helping the child who has a reading or arithmetic disability. Apparently, the "bogey of arithmetic" is just as much a part of the frustrations of British schoolboys as of their American counterparts.

Miss Tudor-Hart discusses intelligence in a lively, provocative manner. She does not sidestep the issue regarding the fact that intellectual potential is inherited, but yet she presents the evidence regarding the importance of environment in molding one's intellect. In discussing intelligence testing, she states, "Whatever test is used, it *must* test responses which have been learned, even if the learning was not the result of deliberate instruction." She categorically states, however, that a single intelligence quotient should never be the basis for a decision about a child's future.

Many American parents are intensely concerned about character development or the development of a sense of morality in their children. Certainly with the breakdown of nineteenth-century authoritarian patterns, where our motivation to lead responsible lives formerly came from without, namely from church, state and parent, we ourselves are now becoming the source of ethical standards. Establishing rational and valid codes of ethical behavior is now a task for each young person. This latter course, according to many psychologists, is the ideal level of character development for the mid-twentieth century.

Unfortunately, as David Riesman, Robert Havighurst, and Robert Peck have so skilfully pointed out, many Americans are completely "other directed;" they are "social shells" doing only what they feel is expected in terms of their reference group at a certain time and place. They not only feel they must "keep up with the Jonese;" the other-directed Americans feel "they must think and behave like the Jonese." Despite the fact that Great Britain is a much more highly socialized country than the United States, the British have always prided themselves on the development of an idiosyncratic pattern of life. Rather than condemn the eccentric, the British have always treasured individuality in their children and adults. Riesman would presumably say that England is a more "inner-directed society" where an individual is able to feel comfortable with his individually sanctioned patterns of behavior. Thus, the cultivation of creativity and individuality in our children becomes a value for many American parents.

Another area of concern to most American parents is the question of sexual morality, sexual instruction and sexual conduct. On this topic, the British psychologists look to the American protégés of the late Alfred Kinsey for assistance. The American parent, however, can find in this book sound advice and direction in the sphere of sex education in the midst of conflicting points of view. It is the conviction of the author that it is really not so difficult to deal with taboo topics in a casual, detached manner. In fact, she asserts, "it is not really difficult to treat elimination of waste from, the body and the sex organs as ordinary objective matters, like washing your hands or talking about your eyes."

Miss Tudor-Hart closes her book with an essay entitled, "Growing up in a Divided and Rapidly

Changing Society." Certainly British and American societies are both undergoing dramatic and often traumatic social change. We have the industrial, social, racial, sexual and educational revolutions all going on every day at a rather frightful pace. Both in England and America, population explosion, urbanization and automation are irrefutable aspects of life. We no longer have the extended family with grandparents and uncles and aunts sharing the responsibilities of child rearing as we did in our former agrarian society. We have smaller families living more closely together in densely populated areas who often experience real psychological estrangement from neighbors and relatives. The therapeutic or helping professions have come into their own, in part, to fill the gap in one's need for significant human relationships.

Sociology, psychology, cultural anthropology and other social sciences have provided mankind with many new insights regarding his being. Freud, Marx, Darwin, Skinner, Hebb, Rogers, and Harlow, and many others leave radically helped to change man's image of himself. Miss Tudor-Hart feels that the social sciences are now making it possible for 20th century children and adults to live more balanced rewarding lives. Psychology can contribute greatly to world peace if we can produce children who will become well balanced adults, leading a rational civilization "in which all men will be able to cooperate wholeheartedly."

Editor's comments: We think our readers will be more interested in Chapter 12, The Elementary School Years, than has been indicated by Dr. Magary in his review of the book. Miss Tudor-Hart gives us the benefits of a psychologist's experiences first in teaching, observing and analyzing the learning process of children in Nursery Schools, then in Infant Schools and on to higher grades. Each of these is related to the emotional disturbances bound to occur when teaching is incomplete or a pupil's understanding is inadequate or incomplete. Even our best teachers can profit from her careful explanations of how children do learn and when and why they do not.

One point is so well presented that we wish to quote it: "If the Pitman (phonetic) alphabet comes to be used for English spelling, learning to read will become as easy for English children as it is at present for German, Russian or Scandinavian children.

"It is not possible to overestimate the effect such a change of approach to reading would have on the majority of children. It is not only that they would remain self-confident and sure of their own value, but also that their attitude toward future learning would be different – enthusiastic instead of bewildered. Almost all knowledge at the higher secondary level is acquired through reading; if the desire to read is destroyed at the time of learning the skill, then it is very difficult indeed to restore it later on. If all children could enjoy learning to read, if the teachers provided them with well-written and interesting books, if the teachers would read to the children daily, and help and encourage them to use the public libraries by taking them there regularly and telling them about the literature available, what a different adult population we should have!"

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**9. Spelling Reform – a New Approach, by Harry Lindgren***
**Reviewed by Dr. Douglas Everingham, M.P. Parliament House, Canberra, Australia.**

*Author of the classic *Geometric Dissections,* and other works in math. Examiner of Commonwealth Patent Office, Canberra. Pub. 1969, Alpha Books, Sydney, Australia. $A 1.25

This is the best of dozens of spelling reform plans I've seen published. It meets the stalemate of competing plans by fixing on the least distirbing, least controversial change first: the short *e* sound to be spelt consistently. This should get other reformers on side and any writers likely to listen to them. It avoids tanglefingering the typists and typesetters who are the next most essential group to involve. He gives a short and long list of all the English words affected in this first stage (504 plus those starting *un*-). The most arresting are perhaps *eny*, *gest, red, ses, for any, guest, read, said, says.* He calls this step S.R.1, and asks writers to use the symbol SR1 on each page or article to show its use in spelling, or preferably putting a red line under the new spellings to call attention to their simplicity. He asks typesetters not to revert to their old habits nor to strike for special pay to use SR1, as it seems to affect only about one or two words to a page. When most of them are using SR1, the next step SR2 is decided on by someone – presumably a growing membership of SSS and SSA which jointly he fixes on as the most firmly established authority in the English-speaking world working for reform. He suggests a completely phonetic extension of their spelling scheme, avoiding clashes with earlier spellings by changing the older conflicting spellings years before introducing the new complete system. He shows the advantages and disadvantages of phonetic schemes with and without diacritics and other new symbols.

Lindgren has a mastery of British, American, Australian and foreign phonetics which is sadly lacking in meny* [*SRI ] reform schemes. An appendix develops preference for certain italic fonts as easier to read, nearer to script and more compact. He could have added that his open-looped *b* and *p*, preferred for their avoidance of mirror-letter dyslexia, also avoids clashes with Russian "soft-sign" and *r* (written like *b* and *p* respectively). In keeping with this, a less simplified *g* would help avoid clashes with Cyrillic *d*. A late step in developing a phonetic scheme could be use of *q* for *ng* reminiscent of Greek *gg* and *conquer.* I'd like to see a glossary of phonetic terms like *clear, open* preferably with a vowel "map" or table like that in Wilshire's *Adventures in Alphabetland.*

The book offers concise, ruthless logic and wit in demolishing opposition, supplemented by 15 pungent cartoons about perverse insistence m efficiencies and tradition.

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## 10. Three Phonetic Dictionaries, Reviewed by Newell W. Tune

The Presto Word Finder, by Leo C. Davis $1.00 (n.d., 1969?), 64 pp.
Spel-Diction Speller, by Frank W. Epperson (Soc. for Phonic English Letters), 1957-59, $1.00, 69 pp.
World English Spelling (WES) Dictionary, by Godfrey Dewey, Sec. WES, Pub. 1969 by Simpler Spelling Assoc, Lake Placid Club, N.Y. $1.00. 99 pp.

There are three phonetic dictionaries with much in common. Each is in the author's favorite phonetic system. All are pocket books, cost $1.00, and all have a phonetic key in the beginning. One other thing that they all have in common is that they are one-way dictionaries. When you look into a Spanish-English dictionary, or any foreign language-English dictionary, you will find two sections: one of which lists the words in English spelling, the other in the foreign language. All 3 of these dictionary makers seem to think that English is English and hence needs only one section. But they don't seem to realize that written English is a different language from spoken English – consequently there needs to be two sections: one listing words according to T.O. spelling, the other section according to sounds. Both of the first two dictionaries list the words according to sounds, with the equivalent T.O. spelling afterwards. Hence, in order to look up a word one must learn the phonetic key to the author's system, then be able to pronounce the word correctly in the same dialect as the author, and then by looking up the word under the author's spelling, you will find the T.O. spelling – as if you didn't know it already. (Some foreigners might not). [1] The third dictionary, WES, wisely lists words according to T.O. spelling and follows after each spelling the pronunciation by World English Spelling. This makes it easier for the average person who already knows T.O. spelling to find what he doesn't know: the phonetic spelling of that word.

The first dictionary by Leo G. Davis uses his system which has small caps for the long vowel sounds and some digrafs for: oo, ar, er, gz, ng, or, ur, yu, zh. This makes for a less altered appearance of the printed page (if you ignore the fact that small caps are not the same as lower case and do look different). However, in order to avoid adding another two or three new letters, Davis makes no discrimination between the *odd* and *aud* sounds (as in *not* and *naught),* the two th-sounds, and does not list the wh-digraf as representing its usual sound – he merely ignores it. As a result of these compromises, Davis has such spellings as: fir=fear; but firoshus=ferocious; f*a*ul=foul; f*a*rs=farce, yet f*a*set=faucet; and f*a*t=fought; n*a*t=both *not* and *naught, naty*=both *knotty* and *naughty.* It is too bad Davis stubbornly refuses to make these needed discriminations as it spoils an otherwise good system.

Epperson's Spel-Lexicon also uses caps for the long vowel sounds, and incorporates such typewriter composites as: c) for *ch, a*) for *awe,* G for the j-sound of g, i) for *oi,* n) for *ng,* 0 for long-o, O) for vowel in *food,* o) for vowel in *foot*, T) for th in *thy,* t) for th in *thigh,* but *zh* for that sound – why not more digrafs? These strange symbols are difficult to write in script and could easily be misread. They look unnecessarily strange, and full size caps in the middle of a word are unnecessarily obtrusive and distracting – even bewildering at times. His system must be thoroly learned before being able to read most words in it.

The third dictionary uses no trick letters, no letters not on the ordinary typewriter and makes no unorthodox use of symbols or punctuation marks. It achieves its phonetic-ness entirely by means of digrafs-digrafs moreover which are frequent enuf in T.O. spelling so that printing in WES can be read by an uninformed person without any (or very little ) special training or re-education. With the help of context, almost anyone can read a page in WES without stumbling over more than a few words – something neither of the first two dictionaries can claim.

*If you are *reading* (decoding) something printed in a phonetic system and come to a word you don't understand, you can look it up in the section listing words by phonetic spelling. However, if you want to *write* (encode) a word in phonetic spelling, you have to look up the word as listed by T.O. spelling and thereby find the phonetic spelling. Of course, you may say, "but I thought a phonetic system of spelling was supposed to exist because one merely writes down the symbols corresponding to the sounds of the word." But that is true *only if* the reader knows the proper pronunciation – and most persons do not have a good idea of the proper pronunciation of many words, or they speak in a dialect differing from that used as a basis for the dictionary.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1969 p12]

**Wishes, by Anon.**

I wish I had a yellow cat
To sit before the fire.
If only I could have that,
T'would be my simple desire.
I wish I had an open fire
To warm my yellow cat.
T'would gratify my soul's desire
If I could have that.
I wish I had a little home
To hold my cat and fire,
And then I'm sure that I would have
My very heart's desire.
I wish I had a lady fair
To soothe my cat and hearth,
And grace my fireplace there,
And blend in with my garth.
I wish I had a child or two
To complete my family,
And give my home its due;
Then I'd live quite happily.

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*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1969 pp13–16 in the printed version]*

**11. i. t. a. – an independent evaluation, by F. W. Warburton & Vera Southgate, reviewed by Newell W. Tune**

Pub. 1969 by John & W. & R. Chambers, London, $10.00 333 pp.
A report to the Schools Council, London.

Having read a number of reviews and reports on this book, this reviewer is appalled by the divergence of opinions expressed as to the results reported in this book. Some of the reviews, one in particular reported in the Miami Florida Herald for Oct. 6, 1969, are a mirror of the preconceived notions of the reviewers. The Miami reviewer (who hides his dastardly dishonesty behind a cloak of anonimity) took pains to take out of context a number of derogatory remarks and present them so as to indicate that the i.t.a. experiments were an inconclusive flop in "a field strewn with lost causes and littered with exploded ideas." Some other reviewers reported that the book shows i.t.a. to be an important milestone in the never ending search for better methods and materials for teaching pupils to read in English. In the London Times Educational Supplement for Oct. 10, 1969, Elizabeth Goodacre says, "Although the report is long (over 300 pages), repetitive in parts, and at certain points deals with matters of considerable complexity, the reader who can sustain the course will certainly have had to do some rethinking not only about how to teach reading but also about present educational trends and ideas on the learning conditions of young children. The latter involves very personal value judgements on what one thinks about the ultimate goals in children's learning – should they be "happy" in the process of learning; should learning tasks be "easy" – and does a controlled environment with most of the risks and obstacles removed lead to better "human progress!' The difficulty is that, as with so many learning experiences, the reader will bring to the job of reading this report his past education experiences and will therefore find in its pages the evidence he needs to find to support long held attitudes, often related to personality needs and probably even to social class differences. Will you, the reader here, approve of such remarks as reinforce your preconceived expectances of i.t.a., or will you try to read with an open mind to learn all about i.t.a.?

This reviewer will try to be objective and present such quotations from the book as will give an honest evaluation of the composite results.

The preface by Sir Cyril Burt was somewhat critical of the results and suggests special studies to determine if improvements in i.t.a. would make it more effective. He notes in particular (of i.t.a.) that "for the reader, one of the most obvious defects is the lack of any hint as to where the accent should fall. English speech abounds in unaccented syllables, usually containing what is called the 'indeterminate e,' (or schwa). Oddly enough, for this recurrent sound the new teaching alphabet includes no specific symbol." What he says is also equally true of T.O., but he fails to mention this. Apparently, he is unaware of Pitman's World i.t.a. which shows both primary and secondary accents. But he concludes with, "Their book presents by far the most comprehensive and impartial study of this complex and urgent problem. It should prove of the utmost value not only to practising teachers and students in training colleges and institutes of education, but also to academic psychologists engaged in child study or educational research." Could one ask for any more?

The quantity of data collected and the vast amount of work done in collecting it staggers the mind of the ordinary researcher. Almost 400 people (388) were interviewed, their views described, catalogued,

and summarised in various chapters. Their vocations and experiences with i.t.a. are indicative of knowledgeable and experienced persons. One comment by Southgate, "One important sidelight on observing so many people who have learned to read by i.t.a. should probably be mentioned at this point. It was fairly obvious that an observer who did not have an extensive background of teaching reading and observing reading being taught, could not be expected to make a reasonably objective assessment of the reading progress made by children who had used i.t.a. The interviewer found it imperative to visit infant schools which were not using i.t.a. and were not interested in it. Such visits were extremely interesting in themselves, but, from the point of view of this enquiry, they preformed an essential function in that they reminded the interviewer of the normal standards of children using T.O. and the views of teachers whose experiences and interests were limited to T.O."

**General impressions of progress in reading.**

"When reports on children's reading progress with i.t.a. were reviewed in the light of the wide range of different relevant factors in the schools visited, one exceedingly interesting fact emerged. Despite the observed variety of background features relating to reading, the majority of teacher's comments were in the same direction – a favourable direction – improvement in reading progress. Most teachers who had i.t.a. with infants were in general agreement that it had enabled children to make a good beginning to reading. There were no doubts about their certainty on their certainty on the following four points:

1. i.t.a. makes beginning reading easier for children.
2. children are much happier using i.t.a.
3. children begin to read earlier with i.t.a.
4. children learn to read more quickly with i.t.a.

The teacher's greatest pleasure came from their observations that i.t.a. made the task of learning to read much easier for children and consequently they found more enjoyment in the process than formerly."

**Records of reading progress.**

"The few infant schools in which reading tests had been carried out both before and after the use of showed the i.t.a. children, after transfering to T.O., to be in advance of previous groups of T.O. children. One headmistress commented as follows: "We are very pleased with the results of i.t.a.; it really knocks Reading Ages into cocked hats. At the end of the first year, 50% of the children can make a good attempt at Burt's Graded Reading Test and Southgate Word Selection Test in T.O., although some of them have only been in school since March. Some children have Reading Ages of ten at this stage."

"Test results, however, were only rarely quoted. Infant schools teachers' conclusions about children's reading progress generally represented subjective impressions based upon years of experience in teaching reading by means of T.O. to children of the same age. These impressions were frequently reinforced by the type of records of records of children's reading progress which many teachers keep... In short, whether or not teachers' assessments were backed up by records of children's progress over a number of years preceding, and during, the use of i.t.a., the majority of teachers gave examples which served to support their conviction that most children had made better reading progress with i.t.a. than could have been expected with T.O."

**Decrease in non-readers.**
"The decrease in number of non-readers among the children was remarked on by many teachers in comments such as, 'There is less backlog of slower children'; and 'Fewer children are left behind in reading.' One example came from a teacher who had previously taught in one of the schools visited as an untrained teacher at a time when the school was using T.O. After her college training, she returned to teach in the same school and found them using i.t.a. She immediately noticed the reduction in the number of non-readers in the school."

**Progress at different ages.**
"Examples of reading progress cited by teachers were not confined to any one age group of children. Many teachers in reception classes, particularly in schools in low socioeconomic areas, commented on the number of books in i.t.a. read by children during their first year, whereas formerly only a few children in the class would have read the first book or two in a reading scheme in T.O. Teachers of six-year-olds probably noticed the greatest differences in children's reading ability. Many of them talked of the proportion of children who used to come to their classes not having made a start at reading, or barely started, in contrast to the avid readers of i.t.a. books who now come up from the reception classes. One teacher of this age group remarked that the children who entered her class were now about a year ahead. Consequently, she no longer had to teach 'the tools of reading,' as the children were already using their reading skill. Another teacher of a class of 39 children, in a slum area, stated that when the children entered her class, at 6.5 years, the entire 39 had made the transfer to T.O. For the first time she 'didn't have to teach them to read!' Even the dullest child in the class could find a book which interested him and read it. Another teacher remarked that, 'Many top infants can now read second-year junior history textbooks on their own.' The headteacher of a school in a slum clearance area, which had used i.t.a. for three years, indicated that, of the 80 children who would be promoted to the junior School at the end of the summer term, every child was reading in T.O. by May. A number of schools gave specific examples of how younger children, beginning to read in i.t.a., soon surpassed older children in the school who were using T.O. In one such school the teachers were working under particularly difficult conditions in which the population of their classes was partially altered every term, a proportion of the children being promoted to the next class, while an equal number of the younger children came in from the preceding class. One teacher soon found that the younger i.t.a. children entering the class were well ahead of the older T.O. children in it. She felt so strongly that the older T.O. children should not be deprived of the opportunity of using i.c.a. that she re-started all the older children in the class with i.t.a., with good results."

**Materials, Methods and Procedures.**
"There are countless strands in the background and forefront of the situations in which children learn to read. Probably the most important factors in the forefront, disregarding those personal factors relating to both the teacher and the child, are the medium, the materials, and the methods used. That these 3 m's are closely interwoven with classroom procedure represents one of the major difficulties of both designing an experiment to test a new medium and assessing the results. Moreover, it is pertinent to remember that the methods employed in infant classes, and equally the reading materials used, have been developed over the years as the means of teaching children to read *in the medium of the traditional alphabet.* Much, but not all, of what is now accepted as commonplace in both methods and materials has arisen in response to the irregularities of T.O. The use of a simpler alphabet or code may well result in the development of different materials, methods and procedures designed to take

advantage of the simplicity and regularity of a phonetic alphabet.

"Regarding reading methods, the observer found that the majority of the early schools visited began with a look-and-say method. Indeed, the choice of *Janet & John* reading scheme made this practice almost inevitable. The timing of the introduction of phonics varied from 'after a sight vocabulary of 20 or so words' to 'towards the end of the infant school.' These schools also differed in respect of whether they gave specific graded instruction in phonic rules or whether they talked about rules arising incidentally. Only one class in one of the schools visited, began the teaching of reading with basic phonic training, that is, by teaching the children the sounds of the symbols, and then combining these sounds into words. No school claimed to use look-and-say methods entirely unsupported by any form of phonic work."

**The Transition to Reading in T.O.**

"The original anxieties of teachers regarding the difficulties children might experience at the time of transfer from i.t.a. to T.O. in reading had proved, in practice, to be groundless. From a functional point of view, teachers noted no recession in children's reading ability with T.O. books at the same, or slightly lower level of difficulty as the i.t.a. books they had recently used, only being necessary for a very short period of time before they continued to advance further. Current practice was to delay the transfer until children were extremely fluent in reading in i.t.a. Teacher's main worries about the transition concerned children who were still reading in i.t.a. when they had to move to, or were transferred to, other schools which would not be able or willing to support them in the use of this alphabet."

**Advantages and Disadvantages of i.t.a.**

"The majority of teachers who had used i.t.a. approved of it, and it was not surprising to find that the number of advantages put forward far outweighed the disadvantages. About half the teachers interviewed had found no disadvantages. Most of the remaining teachers, having listed what they considered to be the advantages of i.t.a., were prepared to put forward one or two disadvantages or, as they often phrased them, 'dangers,' which they perceived and which caused them some anxiety."

"The main advantages of using i.t.a. with infants, as listed by their teachers, related to children's earlier and easier reading and writing. Teacher's emphases were always on the comparative simplicity of learning these two skills, when the medium used was i.t.a. as opposed to T. O., and the corresponding pleasure and satisfaction gained by children in so doing. That children experienced less frustration and that there was a reduction in the number of non-readers and struggling readers, were also rated as advantages."

"Children's early ability and eagerness to attempt to read unknown words was given a high place among advantages. Associated with this facet of i.t.a. was the fact that children could read a variety of books outside basic reading schemes. This ability resulted in a widening of children's interests and an expansion of individual study which led to exploration and experimentation, in a manner thought likely to result in an increase in modern heuristic methods in infant schools. Infant teachers were also impressed by the advantageous effect which i.t.a. had on particular subjects in the curriculum, mathematics, spoken English and science being most frequently mentioned.

"The third group of advantages noted by infant teachers referred mainly to attitudes, behaviour and social relationships of children and staff. Among the advantages mentioned were the confidence and independence which children displayed in many aspects of school life, other than reading and writing, and improvements in their general behaviour reflecting more responsible attitudes and easier social relationships with each other, with teachers and with visitors. The effect of using i.t.a. on members of the staff, as reported by headteachers, included friendlier attitudes towards each other, an increased interest in reading, and greater satisfaction in the work they were doing."

"Of the three disadvantages of i.t.a. brought forward most frequently in infant schools, two were often termed 'dangers' than 'disadvantages.' These three main disadvantages concerned the difficulties encountered by teachers of transition classes, the dangers of allowing children to transfer to T.O. reading at too early a stage and the danger of children being permitted to read beyond the level of their reading comprehension. Two additional disadvantages were mentioned much less frequently than the other three. Certain teachers considered the quantity and variety of materials available in i.t.a. still insufficient for their needs. A small proportion of teachers also spoke of some children finding difficulty in writing i.t.a. symbols.

**Schools Using and Discarding i.t.a.**

"Regarding the small number of schools which had used i.t.a. and later discarded it, opinions were that most of these schools had done so for administrative reasons, such as staff changes. In the few instances in which an abandonment of i.t.a. was more directly related to the alphabet itself, it was suggested that worries regarding the transition in reading and spelling were the main reasons. Two reasons relating to staffing were also put forward. Firstly, a few headteachers, who were conservative and had older members of staff, had returned to T.O. Secondly, a few teachers of very good schools, in which the reading and writing had always been above average, were returning to T.O. on the grounds that they had noted no improvement when i.t.a. had been used."

**Is a new Spelling System Necessary?**

"A number of people in this group stated quite firmly that, in the words of one, 'i.t.a. is an entirely unnecessary invention.' A proportion, but nor by any means all of those holding this view, were authors of reading schemes and other reading materials in T.O., and who had vested interests in T.O. books. Some of them could be considered as reading experts. They tended to believe that the anomalies in our traditional sterling system did not represent a major cause of children's difficulties in learning to read.

"In contrast, there were others who firmly supported Pitman's and Downing's hypotheses that the irregularities of the English spelling system represent a major cause of children's reading difficulties. As one reading expert commented, 'Any fairly consistent spelling would be likely to be easier to learn to read and write than the present one.' An educational psychologist expanded this point of view more fully. He suggested that there was one important advantage which i.t.a., or any regular simplified spelling system was likely to have over T.O. He had come to believe that the irregularities of T.O. almost certainly prevented children from making generalizations in their concepts. He gave the following example of a child who may just be beginning to form a concept of the sound of the letter **a**, after having met it in, for instance, **man**,' **cat'** and **'ham**,' when he encounters the word **'ball'** and his newly crystalized concept is revealed as inapplicable. As the psychologist said, we do not really know how this sort of experience, which must occur very frequently when T.O. is used, inhibits the child's

concept formation and prevents him from making generalisations; but such experiences must undoubtedly constitute a series of setbacks to the child. We do know that dropouts are always discouraged and have lost confidence in themselves.

**Conclusions:**

**1. The Transition to Reading in T.O.** Doubts regarding the difficulties which children would be likely to experience when they change from books printed in i.t.a. to books printed in T.O. have proved to be unfounded. In the whole of the verbal evidence collected in the course of this enquiry, no teacher or anyone else who had closely observed children at the stage of transfer, reported children experiencing difficulties. On the contrary, those who have been close to children were almost unanimous in expressing their amazement and delight when they first observed the ease with which children moved from one medium to the other, often without even appearing to notice the difference.

**2. The Transition in Spelling.** Originally there were serious misgivings about the effect which the employment of a temporary spelling system was likely to have on children's later ability to spell using the traditional alphabet and spelling system of written English. The evidence collected in this evaluation indicated that the early use of i.t.a. had not adversely affected later spelling in T.O.

**3. Changing Staff.** One of the main fears of headteachers regarding the introduction of i.t.a. related to the current position in infant schools of frequently changing staffs. Headteachers were anxious about how those probationary teachers and married women returning to the teaching profession, who were entirely inexperienced in using i.t.a., would manage. In the event, it has proved little of a problem, the teachers concerned soon feeling quite at home with i.t.a.

**Remaining Disadvantages.** "Although experience showed some of the early forebodings about i.t.a. to have been unduly pessimistic, a proportion of them were confirmed as constituting dangers. About half of all those teachers experienced in working with i.t.a., and basically approving of it, nevertheless noted certain disadvantages, although these were considered to be less important than the advantages.

4. The greatest danger to a child who begins to learn to read with i.t.a. lies in the possibility that the learning process may be interrupted at a stage before he is ready to transfer to T.O. There are two situations in which this is most likely to occur. First, the child's family may move to an area in which the child has to attend an infant school which uses T.O. only. There is little that headteachers can do to prevent such a situation arising. The T.O. school to which the i.t.a. child is going should certainly be supplied with information regarding the child's attainments, if not the actual books on which he is working, as co-operation between schools in such a case could, to some extent, help diminish the child's difficulties.

"The second situation is that in which a child still using i.t.a. is being promoted to a junior school which does not have or is not anxious to continue i.t.a. instruction. Infant teachers, knowing of, or suspecting, such a situation may tend to rush the transition. Alternatively, the junior teachers concerned may cause children to transfer too early. The clear answer to this danger is that an infant headteacher would be unwise to even contemplate the introduction of i.t.a. into the school until she is absolutely satisfied that the junior school to which the child will be promoted is willing and able to continue to use i.t.a. with those children requiring its use. Continuity for the child would, of course, be more easily

assured by co-operation between the infant and junior school; visits of junior teachers to the i.t.a. infant school, joint discussions on a case-study basis and the passing on of detailed records from infant to junior schools represent some of the more obvious ways of providing such continuity.

**5. The Transition and the Teacher.** "One of the disadvantages mentioned most frequently by both infant headteachers and class-teachers was the heavy demand made on any teacher in charge of a class in which both i.t.a. and T.O. were being used by different children. It should be noted that in a vertically-grouped school, all teachers find themselves in this situation, while in schools in which children are grouped according to chronological age, most teachers face this dual task because children transfer from i.t.a. to T.O. at widely different ages. Nevertheless, the majority of infant teachers, even while stating that the transition was hard for them, considered that the benefits to be gained by the children and also by themselves in various other ways, when i.t.a. was used, more than compensated for this additional work."

**6. T.O. Outside School.** "The modern trend in infant schools is to utilise the child's total environment as the learning situation. Certain local advisors, infant teachers and other educationalists who disapprove of the whole idea of utilising simplified spelling systems as media for beginning reading, are committed to this belief. Consequently, their aversion to i.t.a. springs mainly from their concern about the child being faced with one form of printed words in school and a different form elsewhere." However, those teaching with T.O. don't seem to realize that they are teaching with 3 somewhat different alphabets: the upper case (capitals) are different from lower case in of most instances, while the script is different entirely. So why should a fourth be unassimilable especially if it is introduced first and the others not introduced until the child has gained fluency in i.t.a.?

"However, it was not only the opponents of i.t.a. who were concerned about this particular danger. This same fear, that children might be confused by the two alphabets, was also expressed by a few of the teachers who used i.t.a. and approved of it. Parents' verbal evidence gave a certain amount of confirmation to the existence of this danger. Most of the verbal evidence given by teachers who had used i.t.a., however, as well as the interviewer's observations in schools led to the conclusion that this represents less of a danger than the preceding two disadvantages."

"Another aspect of children being exposed simultaneously to two different spelling systems arises from a phrase sometimes used in Educational psychology, namely that perception is functionally selective.' This simply means that, although the human eye is capable, at any one moment, of seeing a wide field before it, in practice a person only perceives or pays attention to such phenomena as are of interest to him at that time. Thus it would be a mistake to imagine that all infants are constantly noticing the words printed in T.O. in their environment and mentally comparing them with the i.t.a. words seen in class. Many children may show little interest in printed words on shops, buses, cartons, and so on until the time when they try to decode words for themselves at school. A comparatively short time generally elapses between this moment and the time when they are reading fluently in i.t.a. and beginning to pick up books without realising they are different. It is only during this brief period that confusion between the two spelling systems might be likely to occur."

"The interviewer's conclusions on this agree with the common view that children are much more adaptable than adults usually suppose. The child starting school meets anomalies all the time. He often

finds dual standards of behaviour or speech at home and at school; to these he generally adapts himself. Children who learn to read with T.O. demonstrate great adaptability, for example, when they learn to accept that a letter represents one sound in one word and a different sound in another word. It could well be that it is simpler for many children to reconcile themselves, for a short period, to i.t.a. in school and T.O. outside school, than to adapt themselves in the initial stages to all the various rules governing the pronunciation and spelling of words in T.O. It might also be that the hardest step in learning to read is one of the early ones, namely that of realising that a spoken word is an assembly of discrete sounds blended together, and that these sounds are represented by specific letters printed on the page in a particular order. The i.t.a. would seem to ease this first step and it could be that the child is then in a more receptive state for accepting the rules and anomalies of T.O?'

**7. Inadequate Reading Materials.** "Although the supply of reading books and other materials published in i.t.a. has continued to increase since 1961, even in the academic year 1966-67 certain teachers, local advisers and H.M. Inspectors still considered the supply of reading materials to be inadequate in quantity and in variety and, consequently, counted this as one of the disadvantages of i.t.a. Nevertheless, there are two reasons why the writer considers this to be the least important of the four main disadvantages mentioned."

"Firstly, it should be noted that those children who learned to read so easily with i.t.a. in the first few years of the experiment did so with a much smaller selection of reading materials than is now available. Indeed, the most spectacular results of all were obtained in the first year, when the supply of i.t.a. materials could well have been described as totally inadequate. A variety of interesting conclusions might possibly be drawn from this fact. For instance, it could be assumed that the fewer printed books available and the more the teacher and the children have to produce their own form of written words, the better children's reading progress is likely to be. Alternatively, the conclusion might be drawn that reading materials are of little importance compared with other factors in the total reading situation, of which, in this instance, the medium employed or the teacher's enthusiasm and drive may be the most potent. Whatever the reasons may be, it can be said that many children have already learned to read easily and speedily with i.t.a. despite a shortage of books. Secondly, as i.t.a. continues to be used, the supply of reading materials in this medium is bound to increase. Concurrently, practical experience with i.t.a. should lead to the production of materials more appropriate to the medium itself, in contrast to the mere transliteration of books designed originally to avoid the inconsistencies of our irregular spelling system."

Many more advantages of using i.t.a. could have been excerpted from this book, but if all of them were printed here it would be a small book in itself. In view of all this material available, it seems to this reviewer that those who found and magnified some of the faults of i.t.a. in this book must have done so by diligently searching for something to confirm their preconceived notions that i.t.a. was not all it appeared to be from the early reports of the researchers.

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*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1969 pp16–19 in the printed version]*

## 12. Reactions of Sir James Pitman, KBE, to the findings in the book by Warburton & Southgate

I greatly welcome the Schools Council Report, and am most grateful to Prof. F.W. Warburton and to Mrs. Vera Southgate for the thoroughness and conscientiousness with which they have completed a truly monumental, and I believe historic, report.

Because of their report, it is now likely that millions of children throughout the English-speaking world will very much sooner benefit than they otherwise would in school and throughout all of their subsequent lives. If the general adoption of i.t.a. were thereby to be accelerated by only one year, six million more English-speaking children will have been saved from the delays, frustrations and failures which will continue to be their lot so long as an antiquated alphabet and irrational spellings is continued as their first learning medium. The early removal of that ancient millstone from around so many million little necks will owe so much to the publication of this Report.

I thus welcome it – in spite of certain reservations and caveats which need to be answered – for these four main reasons:

1) that it is so favourable that the headteacher and staff of every Infant and Junior School are now in conscience obligated at least to study i.t.a. and to try it in classroom conditions;
2) that those in authority over the head teachers are now similarly obligated to allow, indeed to encourage, head teachers to try i.t.a. and to provide the money to enable them to do so – a minute fraction of 1% of the total expenditure on education for a single year;
3) that a position has been established which is most favourable for the Teachers' Centres up and down the country to "win their spurs" in what is very much their concern.

The three parties to education: The Secretary of State, The Local Authorities, and the Teachers' Organizations who set up the Schools Council, now have the occasion to cooperate together in those very places where cooperation is now most important – that is to say, in all the Local Authorities of the nation where Teachers' Centres have been and are being set up. And finally, I welcome its publication because the lack of that authoritative evaluation of i.t.a. has been greatly inhibiting to decision and to freedom in action by those who have been hesitating whether to make the big changeover or not. No longer will "We must wait for the Schools Council Report" be put forward as a reason for sitting on the fence in an issue so important to the educational system.

**The Reservations and the Caveats Examined**

**Reservations:**

1. Not all children benefit.
2. It is more effective for bright than for dull children.
3. There is a set-back at the transition.
4. After the transition the advantage is lost.
5. The good results are the product of enthusiasm, not of the medium.
6. T.O., if properly taught, would achieve as good or better results.

**Caveats:**

A. It is not a universal panacea.

B. It is not the final answer.

C. It needs improvement and there are alternative simplifications.

D. More research is needed.

E. Parents move home: moreover i.t.a. ought to be taught only if the Junior School is able to continue i.t.a. with those found to have been least ready for reading.

**Reservations**

**1. Not all children benefit (p. 276, 282)**

No one, least of all I, supposed that all children would benefit. There are necessarily some who for various reasons (see pp. 30-39 of my book *Alphabets and Reading*) will never succeed whatever the medium, whoever the teacher, and however favourable the home environment. These are anyhow a small percentage of all children. Seeing that they now fail when taught in T.O., they present no case for denying i.ta. to the rest who do benefit.

**2. It is more effective for bright than for dull children (p. 283)**

This reservation has been sufficiently answered in the Report itself under F. *Slow Learning Children* (pp. 165-168). The answer there given has since been made even stronger by the recent publication *i.t.a. and the Slow Learners – a Reappraisal* (John Downing, *Educational Research,* vol. 11, no. 3, June, 1969) of which Warburton and Southgate could have no knowledge at that time. Similarly the *Report on the use of the Initial Teaching Alphabet in a Sample of London Schools,* by A.H. Morgan, further supports the thesis that, "the improvement appears *at all levels, including that of the poorer readers*."

On page 283, Warburton and Southgate call attention to this difference in findings:

> "There was a certain divergence between the conclusions drawn from the verbal evidence and the research evidence concerning the relative performances of children of high, average and low intelligence. The verbal evidence suggested that i.t.a. had proved beneficial to children of all levels of intelligence. The research evidence suggested that i.t.a. was more effective for bright than for dull children."

It is thus satisfying to find that research workers are now finding that the teachers were right after all.

**3. There is a set-back at the transition (p. 283)**
It is interesting to note how widely the evidence from the Research differs from that obtained in the Interviews – interviews with a grand total in all categories of 276, (p. 300). The point is well covered on p. 283. The explanation of the divergence lies in the unsuitability of the tests employed by the research worker for measuring the achievements of the children at the transition.

A research is only as good as its measuring instruments. The following quotation from the Report (p. 166) is relevant:

> "3. The reading tests currently used, even when they purport to measure the very earliest stages of reading, are extremely blunt instruments for the task."

and a passage on p. 168 supports the view that the research findings were not reliable in terms of "functional reading" at the transition. So universally rejected by teachers has been this most properly made reservation that it may safely be regarded as having been negatived in the report by the evidence from the Interviews and by the consequent conclusion under *G. The Transition* on pp. 168-169.

It would seem that the term "linguistic inadequacy" is likely to be found more appropriate than "dullness", "slow learning" and "low I.Q.". As will be mentioned later under Caveat D (Research), it is to be hoped that greater awareness of the part played by linguistic adequacy in learning to read, will lead to quite fresh conclusions on this subject of the performances of the children who are here called, "brighter" and "duller." For the moment this reservation affords no reason why the head teacher and the administrator should not feel obligated to employ i.t.a. for all classes of child.

**4. After the transition the advantage is lost (pp. 164, 275, 276, 282, 283).**
It should be noted that in all cases the authors write of the 'advantage' not the 'benefit.' They themselves draw attention to the difference between these two concepts.

The section *E. The advantages of i.t.a. do not last* is worth reading, particularly the last paragraph on p. 165, which is worth also quoting:

> "It should be emphasised that an acceptance of the view that the reading and writing of i.t.a. and T.O. children are approximately the same at the age of eight, does not discredit the use of i.t.a. for the initial stages of reading and writing. No claim was originally made to the effect that i.t.a. would produce better readers in the long run. The aim was to simplify the initial task of learning. Thus, even if i.t.a. children are only at the same level of attainment as T.O. children after 3 or 4 years, if learning to read has been easier and more pleasant for them, if fewer children have experienced frustrations and failures, and if many have known the enjoyment and value of

reading a year or so earlier than they would have done, it can fairly be claimed that its use has been justified."

It is desirable also to recognize that it can be only of that section of the infant population who learn to read, *what ever the medium,* of which it may be said "they catch up later." Those who fail in T.O. cannot be said to catch up later. A longitudinal follow-through of that 45% of the T.O.-taught population (above the line) who were still, even after 2-1/3 years in Book III or below (see *An Appreciation of the i.t.a. Symposium,* Table E.1, p.2) would show to what extent the group who were least ready for reading (I suggest who were least linguistically adequate) are able to catch up later. The fact is that of the corresponding carefully matched i.t.a. population, as few as 15.1% were still in Book III or below, and the presumption is a strong one that while a proportion of the 15.1% i.t.a.-taught children will fail even if taught in the simpler medium, a very much bigger absolute number of the T.O., the 45% group, will remain failing – unless a later attempt at remedial teaching is made, probably by using i.t.a.

**5. The good results are the product of enthusiasm, not of the medium (p. 275).**
Clearly enthusiasm and success are inter-related: it will be difficult in the short run to tell whether the reverse is not the truth, namely that enthusiasm has been the product of success. It is at least possible that this reservation ought to be turned about and the claim made that i.t.a. not only is a better medium in itself, but *the cause* of more enthusiastic and better teaching.

The Report itself casts doubt on the validity of this reservation (p. 276), calling attention to the experience "where the full school population has demonstrably used i.t.a. long enough for the effect of novelty to wear off, *results are still markedly in favour of i.t.a."*

Finallv there has been no evidence (and no research) to justify the assumption that little children (aged 5 to 6) behave in the some way as adults (from whose behaviour the presence of a "Hawthorne effect"' has been deduced).

Again the reservation is properly made in research terms, but is properly shrugged off in terms of the obligation on the head teacher and administrator to make a decision.

**6. T.O., if properly taught, would achieve as good or better results (pp. 155, 170, 276, 283, 284).**
This now very ancient "pie in the sky" has been the motivating idea behind all the earlier efforts to achieve greater success and less failure. *The Torch Lighters* by Mary Austin (Harvard Univ. Press, 1961), for instance, assumed that the medium (T.O.) is sacrosanct, and that it plays no part in the problems of the teachers of reading. Thus she blames Colleges of Education, the teachers, the children, the methods, the materials. Literally thousands of researches into hundreds of variables (every possible variable, save only that of the medium!) have been carried out during the last half century alone, and all with no advance in results comparable in degree to that here reported by Warburton and Southgate.

It may well be, indeed it certainly is true, that the variables other than of medium can yield improvement, but that consideration affords no justification for denying the desirability of changing to a medium in which it has been shown that those other variables will now more advantageously operate.

The very essence of the i.t.a. proposition and of the findings of the Report has been that "medium" is just *non sui generis* with approaches, methods, procedures, materials, the teacher's competence and enthusiasm, the child's linguistic competence, etc., but is something quite separate by which all the others may become even more effective.

**Caveats:**

**A. i.t.a. is not a universal panacea (p. 276).**

No one who has experienced i.t.a., least of all I, has ever claimed that i.t.a. was a panacea, much less a universal panacea. It has been the opponents who have mis-supposed that the objective intended was that of a "cure-all" for every beginner and for every reading problem. It has been only from the lips and pens of opponents that the word has been used at all – as a dirty word to discredit the motives of others, a motive which has been just simply to raise the standards of achievement as high as possible in a situation in which, while the results of the past have been deplorable, there was no expectation that perfection would *ever* be attainable.

**B. i.t.a. is not the final answer (pp. 169, 284).**

As may be inferred from A. above, there never has been the suggestion that in 1969, 1979 or 2079 perfection will have been attained.

Thus, if a caveat, this one leaves open all options for improvement, while leaving the head teacher and administrator (who clearly can no longer justify retention of a seat on the fence) to go forward with hope, taking advantage of the high degree of improvement which i.t.a. offers, while awaiting the occurence of a next "break-through" or of a gradual development in the more effective use of i.t.a. and of a growing understanding of the principles which have underlain the improvement in the learning of reading which i.t.a. has brought about.

The fact that this particular break-through has taken some 500 years of efforts by scholars and educators in thus varying the medium during the learning process, makes the hope of an immediate further break-through somewhat remote, and correspondingly makes it very desirable not to wait, but at the earliest practicable date to capitalize upon what has been clearly demonstrated.

**C. i.t.a. needs improvement (pp. 278, 284) and there are alternative simplifications (155, 278, 284).**

It is difficult for me to deal (with the desirable credibility) with the first of these, but after all I am a rare bird, possibly the only bird, with the background and knowledge to do so.

I have heard of only three persons who have made proposals, covering changes for no more than 11 out of the 44 characters. Every single one of these proposals can be shown to fail on the criterion that, in any alphabet, the factor of greatest importance to the learner is that each character shall differ significantly from each other of the characters. There are already too many characters in T.O. lower case which differ insufficiently (e.g. c,e,o; b,d; p,b; n,h; v,y; etc.) for it to be other than unwise to make the i.t.a. "augmentations" more like the T.O. digraphs than they are already. Yet it has been in that (wrong) direction that all three well-wishers to i.t.a. have moved.

It may well be that there will be a few (minor) variations which may be *considered* to be improvements in the interests of the learner, (which nevertheless do not damage his interests when he has begun the transition) but it needs to be recognized that

1. No definite proposals have yet been made which appear to merit testing.
2. It is highly likely that the big surge forward has been due to the departure from T.O. to a medium deliberately designed as an initial teaching alphabet, and that the advantages (or losses) by reason of changes in the details of the medium can be no more than irrelevantly significant.
3. That the over 80 publishers and suppliers over the world who have made available a choice from over 1,200 different items, in which i.t.a. is employed in its present form, will be unlikely to cooperate a second time in providing materials in a slightly different medium, and that the thousands of teachers who have obtained experience and come to repose a faith in i.t.a. will take almost as hardly to learning how to use yet another alphabet as do the teachers of T.O. to learning any new medium. They will need persuading that the advantage to be expected from the change will be more than marginal. After all, the advantages of i.t.a. have been to a very high degree, and yet persuasion was far from easy.

Finally, it needs to be pointed out how wrong it would have been, when Joseph Lister had proved that antiseptic surgery saved lives, to have refused to use his carbolic spray on the ground that better aseptic procedures would undoubtedly be evolved. No doubt evolution will take place in methods, materials, approaches, procedures, and teacher preparation; and may take place in one or more of the characters, but this consideration must not be allowed to delay the utilization of present benefits; albeit that methods, materials, etc. are not yet the very best, and a few of the characters possibly marginally improvable.

We now need to settle down, to use i.t.a., to gain proficiency in its use in classrooms on nation-wide scales in Britain and in all the English-speaking countries, and to make many of those other advances towards a fuller understanding of the learning processes which Warburton and Southgate have proposed.

The case for waiting for researches into the value of alternative simplifications (p. 155, 278, 284) is equally embarrassing. While the alternatives are good, their goodness has been shown relative only to T.O., not relative to i.t.a. Any (necessarily drastic) departure from T.O. in the direction of alphabeticism and a single alphabet is bound to yield a high degree of improvement in learning.

The other simplifications fall into 4 categories:

1. Augmented*
2. Digraphic
3. Diacritically marked
4. Colour marked

*An example of an Augmented Alphabet is the specimen of the International Phonetic Alphabet on pg. 296. Sir Cyril Burt rather curiously proposes on page XI "comparative trials with the I.P.A. though without its drastic changes in orthography."

The short answer to this is that when so changed, it ceases to be the I.P.A. and in becoming more orthographic ends up similar to i.t.a., which after all was designed to be just that very thing, a modification of the I.P.A., which might be not only easier to learn (because each character was very different from any of the others) but also *as easy as possible for the transition* because each new character, while yet being very different from any of the others and having "whiskers" to facilitate recognition, was sufficiently like the digraphic representation most frequently used in T.O. for that sound. (e.g. in the I.P.A. ʃ and juː represent the sounds which in i.t a. are represented by *sh and *ue or *yw. Thus I.P.A. ʃip, i.t.a. *ship, I.P.A. juːz, i.t.a. *ues, I.P.A. juːθ, i.t.a. y*oo*th. These few examples show how far I.P.A. is from T.O. and how much nearer is i.t.a. (Ed. note: One must not overlook the greatest faults of I.P.A. are that it follows the French pronunciation of i (as in marine), e (as in bete), j (our y-sound), and uses many digrafs for what we are accustomed to see as single units, such as j and the long vowels).

No *a priori* case can be made to show that the yield from simplifications Nos. 2, 3, and 4 is likely to be as high as that from No. 1. Indeed the *a priori* argument goes the other way.

Unifon is the only Augmented Alphabet in which there is, by any stretch of goodwill, an acceptable adequacy of materials both for judgement and for teaching. Compared, however, with i.t.a., the availability of materials is very meagre. Unifon moreover has only to be looked at to be rejected. No.4 Colour, is interesting in that it is a device which might be applied to i.t.a. as much as to T.O., and might yield most promising results. It has always surprised me that the Reading Research Unit, having discovered the great handicap to successful learning which T.O. presented, did not:

(a) Test Words in Colour (and the three other colour systems) against i.t.a. (not T.O.)
(b) Test i.t.a. in Colour against i.t.a. in black.

After all, (a) they knew well that the result would prove that Words in Colour would be better than T.O., and that such knowledge would be barren; after all, too, reading is a matter of *recognizing shapes,* and writing is by shape and cannot be by colour – so that if colour could be helpful it could have been worth trying it when applied to the shapes of i.t.a. – those shapes having been found to have been so very helpful when printed only in black.

Essentially, however, the problem should not be presented as one between trying or not trying other simplifications, but rather as one between delaying or not delaying the implementation of what the Warburton-Southgate Report has established as so greatly benefiting the child. Such exploration of alternatives (as of better characters for i.t.a.) should proceed pari passu with the adoption of i.t.a.

**D. More Research is Needed (p. 170).**
This is not really a caveat – it is a wide (and very accurate) generalized truism.

It has been included largely because the references to research will probably be interpreted as a caveat, or even as a reservation, and because it is important to be clear that acceptance of this truism must not lead to delay in implementing the findings of the Report.

Moreover by all means let research abound, but let there be discretion in priorities and judgement as to what is worth researching. There have been a number of researches conducted, and a great number proposed, which show that very lack of knowledge of how children learn to read and of how i.t.a. helps, the lack of which the two authors deplore when they call for an investigation into "how children learn to read." I suspect that the investigation they propose will be able to yield knowledge of the supreme importance in teaming to read of an adequate language competence, and that in all future researches this variable between children will take priority over even the I.Q. and. the "socioeconomic group" of the parent, and will come to be the chief variable needing to be matched whenever hereafter researches are planned.

**E. Parents move home (p. 161); moreover i.t.a. ought to be taught only if the Junior School is able to continue i.t.a. with those found to have been least ready for reading (p. 158, 161).**
The task of a child, only partly able to read in i.t.a. on prematurely leaving his Infant School, may be said to be less difficult on transferring from an i.t.a. Infant School to a T.O. Infant School than on transferring from a T.O. Infant class in one school to a T.O. Infant class in another school after the same length of time and with comparable other conditions. In so far as the i.t.a. child has made progress, it will be *greater progress* than he would have made in the far more difficult medium. He will be able to make a transition, one at that level which he has then reached. The less the time he has been able to spend in i.t.a. or the less the progress he has made in it, the less will be his ability to read at any rate some of the words he meets in T.O.

There seems to have been no attempt made to follow up children who have been faced with the necessity of making a premature transition from i.t.a. to T.O. because their parents have moved home. Thus we need for the present to base our conclusions on what evidence there may be.

In this respect, the great Air Force Base at Dover, Delaware, U.S.A. and the schools in Dover, are perhaps the outstanding sources for evidence. The Superintendent of Schools (Dr. Melville Warren) assured me that notwithstanding that the incidence of mobility between schools was great, the problem

was small, indeed not significant. Owing to the frequent postings of airmen (and thus of their families) there were both types of transfer – children partly taught in T.O. arrived in the Dover schools (where only i.t.a. is taught) and children partly taught in i.t.a. left the Dover schools for schools elsewhere where only T.O. is taught. Those of the first condition made strides of great progress when introduced to the very simple medium, and benefited greatly from the change; those of the second were not specially prepared in Dover for such a premature transition. They left for the new school and very soon found their own appropriate (but necessarily lower) levels, when introduced to the much more difficult medium. They inevitably suffered a set-back (unless the new school was prepared to use i.t.a. intelligently for them), but the setback was not serious or long. Their future progress would be slower, but in the final result, so he assured me, the child was more advanced, and become more successful sooner in T.O., by reason of the fact of the good start made in the simpler medium – one which after all bore a great resemblance to T.O.

The second part of this caveat is surely wrong. The figures in *The i.t.a. Symposium* **[1]** indicate that some 78% of the i.t.a. children (as against only 38% of the T.O.-taught children) will be reading fluently in T.O. With proportions of this order, it is clearly wrong for the head of the junior School to put back the millstone around the necks of the upcoming infants who have not yet learned to read even in i.t.a., (I suspect because of the hitherto unrecognized and hitherto untested inadequacy of the English language), and have not yet made the transition even after 2-1/3 years, but it is surely much worse of the Head of an Infant School to keep the millstone around the necks of *all* of the children when 85% have demonstrably done so much better by reason of its removal, and the remaining 15% are likely to have also done better, if not to the point of demonstrating their progress in a measurement which is yet acceptable to the Head of the junior School.

There can surely be no gainsaying the proposition that if, as appears, i.t.a. benefits the 15% linguistically inadequate as well as, but not as greatly as, the 85% linguistically adequate, the policy of any Infant School Head must in conscience be one to help those most in need when in doing so he will be giving an admittedly great benefit to the more linguistic majority.

[1] An Appreciation of the i.t.a. Symposium, by Sir James Pitman KBE, pub. 1967, The i.t.a. Foundation, London.

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*[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1969 p20 in the printed version]*

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