the **simplified spelling** society

Spelling Reform in Context

A Typology, List & Bibliography of English Spelling Reform Proposals

Bob Brown

Spelling Reform

in Context

A Typology, List & Bibliography

of

English Spelling Reform Proposals

Bob Brown

revised by Christopher Upward

the **simplified spelling** society

Spelling Reform in Context:

a typology, list & bibliography of English spelling reform proposals

by Bob (A.R.) Brown,

third edition revised by Christopher Upward

published October 1998 by the Simplified Spelling Society

The Simplified Spelling Society's Editor-in-Chief would be pleased to receive corrections and suggestions for subsequent editions.

Contents

Figures

Preface to the third edition

When he compiled the first (1991) edition of his pamphlet *Spelling Reform in Context*, Bob Brown intended that it should be improved and updated at intervals to incorporate further information and take account of new developments, and with the second (1992) edition he was able to initiate the process. His sudden death in 1996 curtailed that plan — and deprived the cause of simplified spelling in English of one of its most able protagonists.

In that pamphlet we have perhaps his most valuable legacy. It provides a perspective on spelling reform schemes in both their historical and their systemic context. It records attempts at reform in English over a period of nearly 450 years and the way past reformers conceived their task. The story thus gives modern reformers a sense of where they stand as the latest activists in a tradition that is, ultimately, as old as history itself (history being by definition only as old as writing). Yet *Spelling Reform in Context* also has practical value, as a guide to reformers of today and tomorrow, helping them to avoid reworking ground that has been exhaustively worked before, and raising basic questions about purpose and method that every reform proposal needs to answer.

Among the qualities that Bob Brown brought to *Spelling Reform in Context*, two in particular stand out. One is his insight into how the various spelling reform proposals relate systemically to each other, as illustrated by his diagrams. The other is his extensive knowledge of spelling reform schemes and their authors, gathered over twenty years and more of involvement with the subject. Some of the schemes are centuries old and now difficult to access directly, others more recent but obscure and known to Bob Brown through personal contact and correspondence. This insight and knowledge are combined in this pamphlet to create an analysis and bibliographical listings that newcomers in the field should find usefully illuminating.

The first and second editions were able to list most of the spelling reform proposals known up to the mid-20th century (some interesting 18th century Scottish schemes must await further study) and the most important developments thereafter. However, recent interest in the subject has grown steadily, and new schemes have proliferated. Newell Tune, that most active publicist for reform in America in the 1960s and 70s, for instance published some 30 differently spelt versions of part of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. The spate has if anything increased in the 1990s, with a series of 12-page *Personal View*s (another of Bob Brown's initiatives) circulated within the Simplified Spelling Society setting out new proposals devised by individual members of the Society, and in the past two years the Internet has allowed independent publication of new schemes around the world (see the SSS website at http://www.les.aston.ac.uk/sss/ for links to some of them). Partly for lack of time, it has become impossible to catalogue them all.

Criteria were therefore needed for selecting those to be mentioned in the third edition. Tentatively it was decided to restrict inclusion to those that had been formally printed (with ISBN number or journal reference), and/or incorporated some concept for implementation, and/or could claim some original feature or rationale; value judgements are thus implied that some schemes are in some sense 'better' than others. In addition

those *Personal Views* that had appeared by the time of going to press are listed (without being categorized) at the end of the 'List' section. Proponents of schemes not mentioned in this third edition are invited to present their arguments for future inclusion if they feel they have a strong case by the above criteria, so perhaps generating a fruitful debate as to the best way to advance spelling reform. Those criteria will, however, undoubtedly evolve, as conditions and possibilities for reforming English spelling themselves evolve. What was possible (or thought possible) four hundred (or even one hundred) years ago cannot apply today, and as the role of English in the world and the associated language-processing technologies rapidly develop, so what is thought possible and desirable today will very likely need rethinking for tomorrow.

This third edition is still predominantly Bob Brown's work: the structure, analysis and most of the information remain unchanged. The main changes from the second edition (beside the listing of 'Personal Views') are: Govind Deodhekar's *LOJIKON* (1995) is now included; the *initial teaching alphabet* is no longer described as in active use; Carney's *A Survey of English Spelling* (1994) finds a place in the bibliography, as do some references to Valerie Yule's research; a new concept of 'opportunistic' reform proposals is introduced; some slight shifts of emphasis have been made in accordance with current (1998) thinking on the Simplified Spelling Society committee; the phrase 'the author' has been altered to 'Bob Brown'; a few minor corrections and clarifications have been made; and the pamphlet has been reset.

Thanks must finally be expressed to Valerie Yule (Melbourne) for contributing much from her wealth of specialist knowledge and experience.

Christopher Upward, Birmingham UK, October 1998

Introduction

This booklet provides a brief introduction to the many schemes advanced over the last several hundred years intended to improve the spelling of the English language. A **typology** of reform schemes is developed, enabling specific proposals to be seen in a broader perspective, and an annotated **bibliography** of the more accessible books is provided for those wanting further detail. A **scheme list** of all reform proposals mentioned in the text, and of some others beside, is arranged in the sequence of the typology, and provides cross-references to the bibliography.

It is not the intention here to justify the need for reform, nor to discuss the history of reform attempts (for English or other languages) or specific schemes in detail, nor to review how reform might be brought about. Plenty of other reading matter on these topics can be found in the bibliography.

The primary aim is to provide *context*. Reformed spelling systems are sometimes presented in a unilateral or even partizan way, often without reference to other, similar schemes. This short review should help readers toward a more balanced judgment in those cases, and to see all potential reform schemes against their peers.

Phonemic and phonetic aspects of writing systems

Some languages, typically those having a simple sound (and especially vowel) range and simple intonation, have near-perfect correspondence between written and spoken forms. Examples might be Spanish, Finnish or even Japanese when written in the *kana* syllabaries as is common for children or foreign learners.[1] For the Spanish and Finnish use of the roman alphabet, or the Japanese syllabaries, 'spelling' almost does not exist. With modest instruction, learners — whether native-speakers or not — can accurately reproduce the sound from the written form, and can notate in writing what they hear. These writing systems are said to be almost completely *phonemic*, that is with one-to-one correspondence, in both coding and decoding directions, between each meaningful sound of the language (phoneme) and a single symbol used to represent it. Despite the good match between symbol system and speech, languages like these do still need the concept of *orthography* — the correct way to spell words — in order to cope with regional accents and other variations in speech production. This is a convenient point to distinguish the associated term *phonetic*. When used of a writing system, this describes a perfect correspondence between sounds and symbols used to notate them. A phonetic writing system would require every person's speech idiosyncrasies to be recorded. Although this is useful in some kinds of linguistic study (using the International

_____

[1] In a normal Japanese running text *kanji* (Chinese) ideographs actually predominate but they provide no indication of pronunciation.

Phonetic Alphabet rather than the roman alphabet), it would not be at all useful or practical in an everyday communications medium. Accurate phonetic transcription also requires much training for the ear. It should be noted that the term 'phonetic' is often used loosely when 'phonemic' is actually meant.

For a language like English, with complex sounds and historically committed to an alphabetic writing system, a perfectly phonetic alphabet would be as useless as it would be idealistic. Children from Newcastle and Surrey and America, would need to be taught quite different orthographies, for example. A more or less phonemic spelling system is, however, possible, though it would entail a significant departure from the *traditional orthography (TO)* that is the current medium. To use some useful linguistic jargon, both L_I and L_2 learners[2] benefit considerably when a language has a phonemic writing system, because the need to learn complex rules for sound-symbol correspondences is reduced.

The TO of English is not an arbitrary system, and it does indeed have 'rules' or at least spelling patterns, a great mass of them,[3] but also many words which need to be learned individually outside such rules. English has become the pre-eminent medium of international communication despite its notorious orthography, and the Japanese achieve literacy rates that most countries can only dream of, despite having an exceptionally complicated and mostly unphonemic writing system, but these only show what can be achieved in literacy through commercial or cultural predominance, even using an exceptionally difficult writing system. The main argument of spelling reformers is that achievements could be greater with better writing systems, and certainly English literacy rates could be improved.

At first sight, trying to develop a better tool in the form of a *perfectly* phonemic alphabetic scheme for English may seem impossible on the grounds of wide variance in accents. The sounds of the language (phonemes) number a little over 40 according to current analyses, but are subject to enormous variation in speech. Some L_I speech communities vary widely in pronunciation within themselves — London from Newcastle, Boston from Dallas — and the populous countries where English is a key L_2 (India, Singapore, as examples) also have a natural right to be considered. The pronunciation variations are, however, fairly *consistent*, so that an orthography that is phonemic for someone from SE England will also broadly suit a Glaswegian, or any other user of a marked accent that has the same phoneme set. Some adjustment may, however, be needed in teaching according to slight differences in the phoneme set used in one location or another. By definition, a phonemic orthography is much more consistent than TO and thus benefits all groups of learners, wherever they are. The experience of other languages that already have a phonemic orthography shows that widely varying regional pronunciations can be tolerated within the system, at the expense of occasional

_____

[2] Here L_1 means a person's first, native or mother language, and L_2 means a language learned later. L_1 learners usually find reading easier than L_2 learners because they have more familiarity with the words and context.

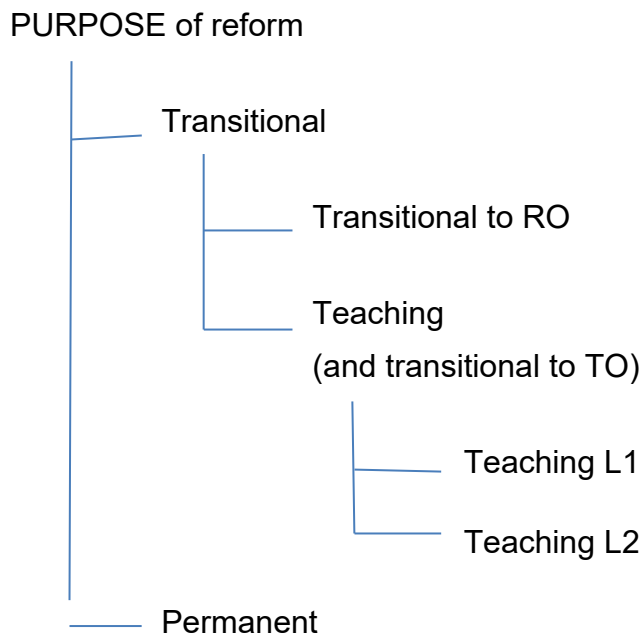[3] Wijk (1959) shows 10 closely printed pages of rules!

ambiguity in a small number of (mostly) vowels. Much English spelling reform activity has therefore been concentrated on phonemic schemes, the widest-known[4] having been intended for temporary use with L$_I$ children until they acquire basic literacy and can then begin a gradual transition to TO. In recent decades interest has grown in other approaches to spelling reform, what we can call *normative* schemes that try to improve the efficiency, regularity and consistency of spelling without striving for a perfect phonemic fit. In the process they often make the spelling more phonetic, at least in one direction (eg, from writing to speech). This distinction between *normative* and *phonemic* is useful for classifying the range of spelling reform schemes.

Typology

In the following discussion the names of individual reform schemes, or their originators, are shown in bold type. A cross-reference list is provided at the end to guide the reader to publications where details can be found for each of them. The names of types of systems appear always <u>underlined</u>. It is quite common for one scheme to show characteristics of several categories, due to its hybrid nature or multiple purposes. The term *revised orthography (RO)* is used for any kind of proposed scheme differing from TO.

Two parallel typologies presented are here, applying to all schemes, the first by its *purpose* (see *Figure 1*), and the second by its *nature* (see *Figure 2*). Most of the discussion of typical schemes will be concerned with their nature.

Figure 1.

PURPOSE of reform

- Transitional
  - Transitional to RO
  - Teaching
    (and transitional to TO)
    - Teaching L1
    - Teaching L2
- Permanent

_____

4 Pitman's initial teaching alphabet or i.t.a., although not actually proposed as a general reform.

The majority of reform schemes devised have the *purpose* of being permanent ROs, replacing TO completely. Although their authors often suggest introduction in several stages, the scheme itself is in no sense transitional to something else. A small number of schemes (for example the Australian **SRI**) are deliberately transitional, and usually transitional to (a more radical) RO.
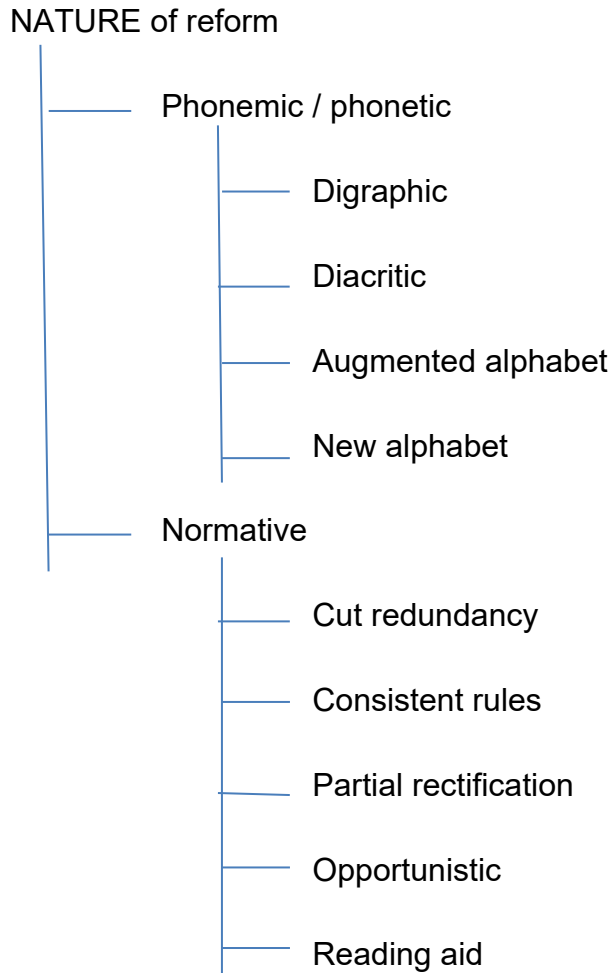
In that case, it is envisaged that **SR1**, which only involves changing TO in one minor way,[5] will be allowed to operate for maybe 10 years before progress is made *via* **SR2**, etc, to an eventual **SR50**. Its author proposes two phonetic schemes which could be the eventual target.

Most transitional schemes are intended for use in teaching, and are transitional to TO, once the learner has gained adequate fluency and confidence using the RO. Any of these can be used for any type of learner, of course, but some are biased in favour of teaching L_1 children (for example Pitman's i.t.a.) or teaching L_2 foreign (often adult) learners. Hofmann's **English Teaching Alphabet** or **ETA** is an example of the latter. Both Hofmann's and Pitman's schemes are described later.

Regarding the *nature* of reform schemes (*Figure 2*), the broad division between phonemic/phonetic (mostly phonemic) and normative schemes needs explanation. Phonemic schemes are defined as those which try to map sound to symbol in a unitary and unambiguous way, although they are of varying degrees of phonemic strictness. Normative ones do not usually have phonetics as their first consideration, or do not strive towards the phonemic ideal, although, as a by-product of other changes, they usually improve phoneticity. The term 'normative' relates to their common property of increasing the predictability or consistency of the spelling rules they enshrine.

_____

[5] always using E for the short /e/ sound, thus *eny*, *sed*

Figure 2

NATURE of reform

    ——— Phonemic / phonetic

          ——— Digraphic

          ——— Diacritic

          ——— Augmented alphabet

          ——— New alphabet

    ——— Normative

          ——— Cut redundancy

          ——— Consistent rules

          ——— Partial rectification

          ——— Opportunistic

          ——— Reading aid

Digraphic schemes use the present alphabet, without diacritics or additional letters but sometimes with fewer than 26 letters, in a consistent way to represent sound by symbol. The letter-set is 'extended' by a standardized use of *digraphs*, such as those common in TO (CH, SH, OO, etc) plus some others, such as AE for the sound of A in its letter-name. Occasionally trigraphs are included. The best known example of this type is **New Spelling** (or **Nue Speling**) which for many years had 'official' status as the only scheme proposed by the Simplified Spelling Society. It was originally developed in 1910, tested in schools over the next fourteen years, harmonized with the similar proposal of the analogous organization in the United States in 1955 and subjected to some 'final adjustments' in the early 1970s. A summary and slightly updated version was edited by Laurie Fennelly in 1991 under the name **New Spelling 90**. This kynd ov skeem tipikali leeds to a hy levl ov chaenj in the apeeranss ov werds, about 50% oever a larj sampl. Many other similar schemes have been put forward, notable among them being LOJIKON by Govind Deodhekar (1995) which restricts changes largely to consonants (it may thus also be considered under the 'Normative — Partial Rectification' heading below) and is targeted at users in the Indian subcontinent.

The general British and American distaste for diacritics or 'accents' — despite their presence in most other languages using the roman alphabet — has meant that few diacritic schemes have been launched for English. The earliest example to use diacritics dates from 1568, that of **Sir Thomas Smith**, but it is in fact a hybrid, also using extra letters. Many reformers have suggested using common punctuation symbols such as apostrophe or hyphen to extend the range of diacritics, presumably because these already appear on typewriter keyboards, etc. Thus we must extend the definition to include such schemes as **Okakura's,** which suggests *ga-t* for *gate* and *fa:th'r* for *father*, the apostrophe indicating schwa (post-accentual indistinct vowel). The same use is found for the apostrophe in Harry Lindgren's **Phonetic B** which also brings in the three common Romance-language diacritics usually called acute, grave and circumflex. Thus it suggests *pàm* (*palm*), *dá* (*die*), *mûn* (*moon*), and *dét'* (*data*). Lindgren's **Phonetic A** is a hybrid digraphic/diacritic system.

It perhaps should be noted that one use of diacritics, namely ‾ and ˎ for long and short vowels respectively, is so common in the pronunciation guides of English dictionaries as to be widely understood. Oddly, relatively few reformers (Hofmann being an exception) have built on this familiarity.

There are very many augmented alphabet proposals in print, from **Sir Thomas Smith** in 1568 to **Gilbert Beale** in 1989. Designing a range of new letters seems particularly to have appealed to some famous figures. **Benjamin Franklin**, **Sir Isaac Pitman** and **Robert Bridges**, for example, all essayed schemes of this type.

Views on the extent of change judged necessary vary widely. Several examples, including one originating from Prof. **Vassilyev** of Moscow, only augment the alphabet in one regard: by providing an extra letter (commonly an upside-down 'e') for the schwa, or indistinct vowel, that is so common in English. In addition, Vassilyev provided a diacritical indication of the stressed syllable (by underlining, in his examples), as is common with schemes primarily intended for L_2 English users.[6] A very similar system called **CFR**, originating from Pwe-Linn Lihg of Ganzhou, China, uses the apostrophe as a stress-mark and comma for schwa. A group within the Simplified Spelling Society led by Sinclair Eustace proposed in 1977, under the title **System 2**, a scheme just involving a new letter for schwa — a cursive, reversed E or optionally a 3. By contrast, Arnold Rupert's long series of suggestions over the years from Canada are very well developed in what he calls **NS9** and **NSIO**, involving 15 or so extra letters, mostly adjustments or cut versions of existing letters.

The augmented alphabet scheme best known to the public today is undoubtedly Pitman's *i.t.a.* The system was deliberately intended as a transitional scheme for native child learners. It was proposed in the late 1950s and became extensively used as an experiment in initial literacy teaching in the main English-speaking countries in the 1960s and 70s. The results obtained were carefully evaluated by John Downing and showed dramatic short-term and some long-term benefits from initial literacy acquisition through that regularized orthography. Despite this, the use of the system declined

_____

[6] cf Hofmann's **ETA** and Lihg's **CFR** schemes.

through the 1980s and early 90s, and has now ceased entirely. The *i.t.a.* was based on **New Spelling**, but replaced the latter's digraphs with new joined-up letter forms.

Several inventors of <u>augmented alphabets</u> have suggested re-using otherwise redundant letters, especially C (not needed if the hard sound is represented by K) and X, which can be replaced by KS. An extreme case, by way of example, is **Robinson's** (1991) which uses C for present SH, and X for schwa, and produces such initially disconcerting forms as *tcampiyxn* 'champion' and *kxnvencxnl* 'conventional'.

It should be acknowledged that our use of an alphabet based on that of the Romans for writing English is a historical accident. It certainly was not designed for its present use, but was pressed into that service with the post-Roman introduction of Christianity to Britain. This has led many authors to propose <u>new alphabets</u> specifically designed for English. The earliest example noted is **John Wilkins'** of 1668. The most recent and best known today is the so-called **Shaw Alphabet** or **Shavian**, designed by Kingsley Read around 1960. The will of the dramatist George Bernard Shaw provided for a competition for a new alphabet, an extraordinary event that led almost 500 people to submit designs, and resulted in the publication by Penguin Books in 1962 of a parallel-text edition of Shaw's play *Androcles and the Lion*, using a final design by Kingsley Read. Kingsley Read then went on to develop his ideas for an elegant script for English, culminating in Quickscript.

Moving now to the <u>normative</u> category of reforms, we note several proposals that may be grouped together under the title <u>cut redundancy</u>. Possibly the first to recommend this explicit measure was John Hart, 1569, as part of an "Orthographie … to write or painte th image of manne's voice". A fairly simple one was **Drop Useless E (DUE)** which seems to have emanated (in that form anyway)[7] from Abraham Citron's Better Education thru Simplified Spelling organization in the USA in the early 1980s, and only involved shedding the final letter in words such as *give* and *have*. In 1984 the Simplified Spelling Society published a proposal comprising a package of five <u>cut redundancy</u> and <u>partial rectification</u> changes under the title **Stage 1**. This interesting exercise in pragmatics was designed to correct some of the more obviously nonsensical TO spellings without provoking too much opposition by the scale of change. Two of the five were mentioned above (**SR1** and **DUE**), and the complete list was as follows:

1 SR1/short E — use E always as in: *eny, meny, frend, hed*.

2 PH — replace by F as in: *foto, telefone*.

3 *augh* — either delete the GH as in *caut, dauter, nauty* or replace UGH with F as in *laf, draft*.

---

[7] Many people had earlier suggested dropping redundant final E. For example, Godfrey Dewey's seminal work on phoneme frequency in English has been around since 1923 with the title *Relativ Frequency of English Speech Sounds*. Citron's contribution was to 'market' this simple change.

4 *ough* — either (a) drop the GH as in *bou, drout, plou*, or (b) change to AU as in *baut, thaut, saut,* or (c) change to OF or UF as in *cof, trof; enuf, tuf;* or (d) cut to O as in *tho, altho*, or (e) cut to U as in *thru*.

5 DUE — as in *hav, giv, negativ, opposit*.

The main architect of **Stage 1** was Stanley Gibbs, a long-serving officer of the Society who went on to suggest his own package of further changes under the title **Stage 2**. They are mostly concerned with short vowels: A as in *plad, platted*; I as in *pritty, wimen, minit, surfit*, etc; O as in *swon, quodrant, quolified,* etc; U as in *cuver, wunder, uven*; and a final suggestion named DRIL (drop redundant initial letters) as in *nit, nolledge, ritten, hoo,* etc. These two schemes together were seen as tackling a number of 'popular' targets for reform, as well as attacking the problem of irregular short vowels. A later Stage 3 would go on to tackle the problematic long vowels. Text resulting from the application of Stages 1 and 2, like this sentence and the next, may show relativly littl change from TO. Mor irregularitis ar caut by uther reforms.

An important recent scheme called **Cut Spelling**, or **Cut Spelng**, is mostly the work of Christopher Upward in its present form, though inspired by Valerie Yule and assisted by a Simplified Spelling Society working party. It is based on a thorough-going assault on redundancy in English orthography, applying three cutting 'rules':

1 Cut letters irrelevant to pronunciation, such as the obvious *de<u>b</u>t, autum<u>n</u>, sa<u>l</u>mon*, etc.

2 Cut vowels which represent post-accentual schwa, which means any before trailing L, M, N and R (thus *doctor* becomes *doctr*, *problem* becomes *problm*, etc), and E before inflections (past tense forms normally just -D).

3 Simplify double consonants, thus *acomodate*, and *dinner* becomes *dinr*, though *diner* is unchanged.

Cut Spelng also introduces three substitution rules:

4 Respell PH, GH as *f* when so pronounced (as *laf; filosofy*).

5 Spell soft G with J, as *brij, juj* 'judge'.

6 Substitute Y for -IG- as in *flyt, syn* 'sign'.

Text resulting from th aplication of Cut Spelng rules chanjes th apearance of ritn english noticebly, but less frequently and less radicly than **Nue Speling**, altho mor so than **Stages 1/2**.

A predecessor to Cut Spelling was Australian Valerie Yule's **Surplus-Cut** spelling, defined as deleting letters surplus to representation of pronunciation and meaning. Yule's work (publications from the 1970s onward) emphasizes experimental investigation to ensure that spelling changes meet the needs and abilities of all users of English. Its more flexible approach complements Upward's more rigorous systematization.

It has occurred to a few researchers to capitalize on the existing rules of TO, but apply them consistently. The best known of these <u>consistent rules</u> schemes is Axel Wijk's **Regularized English**, published in 1959. He argued for preserving existing rules

where they provide valid guidance but was much concerned with minimizing changes from TO in resultant text, and his list of rules runs to 10 printed pages. His work was continued along more pragmatic lines by Denzel Carr, whose **Semiregularized English** takes the trade-off between rules and degree of change much further towards fewer rules (half a page or so), but at the expense of more change. In both of these cases the consistency is mostly one-way, symbol to sound, and therefore serves the non-native-speaking reader much better than the writer (Wijk was a Swede).

Partial rectification is rather a loose term, used as a catch-all for schemes difficult to categorize elsewhere that seem only to have a desire to improve rather than to revolutionize English spelling. The present differences between British and American TO — *theater* versus *theatre*, *honor* versus *honour*, etc. — are an example. These stem mostly from proposals first made by Noah Webster and much discussed in 19th century America. Two further American reform proposals were President Theodore Roosevelt's 300 simplified spellings of 1906 (which foundered immediately on the opposition of Congress) and the *Chicago Tribune*'s varying lists of simplifications used between 1934 and 1975, but these amounted only to a tinkering to remove some of the inconsistencies of TO rather than an attack on its basic problems. Whilst today's American spellings obviously have some value, several writers[8] have been vehemently critical of them for introducing such a noticeable difference between the written English used in the two largest L$_l$ speech communities for so little benefit.

Kenneth Ives' **Economy Spelling** is a family of step-by-step reforms — similar in concept to Lindgren's **SR1-50** — which progressively removes irregularities from TO in 30 stages. It is notable for its early introduction of word-signs for *and* (just *n*) and *the* (an *h* with a horizontal bar, similar to Noah Webster's suggestion).

Another kind of partial rectification might also be called opportunistic, in that it does not start by defining categories of words to be respelt, but proposes simplification only of those words that happen already to exist in alternative, simplified forms. As proposed by Cornell Kimball, such forms as *tho, thru, donut, gage, surprize*, which are widely used in informal writing, should then be accepted as standard spellings. A variant on this approach is to list all those words given with alternative forms in dictionaries (one dictionary has a list of 5,000 such words), and urge that in each case the simpler/simplest, more/most systematic spelling be recommended as the preferred form.

Called reading aids here are those schemes intended mostly to help learners decipher written text, *without changing its TO form*. By definition, these schemes therefore need to add something to the presentation of the text as an aid to the reader. There have been some based on an ingenious use of colour, but most involve diacritics. **Hodges**' 1644 scheme was the earliest of this nature but has been classified as a phonemic diacritical/digraphic system because it goes much further than just a reading aid. In mid-19th century America, **Edwin Leigh** had much success with a system using light type for silent letters and modified forms of others. It was used experimentally for more than 20 years.

_____

8   for example Pitman & St John (1969) p106

A well thought out modern scheme is Hofmann's **English Teaching Alphabet (ETA)**, based on the author's extensive research in multi-dialectal phonetics. It is claimed to be uniquely valid across both main varieties of L₁ English speech, and variations within them. **ETA** is based on the use of diacritics for the long, short and continental pronunciations of vowel letters, plus some rules for foreigners trying to master L₁ pronunciation.

This category of ROs leads naturally to the following observation: while <u>phonemic</u> schemes are usually intended to be of equal value for learning both reading and writing (ie, symbol-sound and sound-symbol translation), <u>normative</u> schemes tend to assist the reader more. Because of the many-to-one relationships between sound and symbol in <u>normative</u> schemes, literacy learners find writing in them more difficult than in <u>phonemic</u> ones, though still generally easier than in TO.

A List of Spelling Reform Schemes

This list of schemes known to the late Bob Brown (with one post-1992 addition for this third edition) is grouped by the categories defined above, with cross-references to the Annotated Bibliography below, where more details of sources can be found. The list is roughly chronological within each group. It is necessarily incomplete, and information on other schemes that might qualify by the criteria set out in the Preface will be gratefully received by the editor, so that the list can be extended in later editions.

A list of schemes that had appeared by October 1998 in the Simplified Spelling Society's 'Personal View' series is added at the end of this section.

Phonemic/phonetic — Digraphic

Glossic (Ellis 1870), see Pitman & St John (1969).

Analogical Spelling (Jones l875), see Pitman & St John (1969).

Pitman (1897), see Pitman & St John (1969).

New Spelling (Simplified Spelling Society 1910 on), see Ripman & Archer (1948), Wilkinson (1974).

Sound Speling (Rowland Barrett 1922), pamflet in the late Bob Brown's collection.

Anglic (prev. **Easy Spelling**) (**Zachrisson** 1932), see Zachrisson (1932), Wijk (1959), Pitman & St John (1969), Coulmas (1989).

Fonetik crthqgrafi (Wingfield 1942), also re-uses redundant letters, see Pitman & St John (1969).

Consistent Spelling (Walter Gassner 1950s), pamflet and example sheet in the late Bob Brown's collection.

Bonnema (1961), see Pitman & St John (1969).

Follick, see Follick (1965), Pitman & St John (1969).

Laubach (1966), see Pitman & St John (1969).

World English Spelling (Dewey), name given to American adaptation of **Anglo-American co-ordinated version of New Spelling after 1955 conference**, see bibliography notes to Wilkinson (1974) and Pitman & St John (1969); see also Ives (1979).

American Spelling, successor to World English Spelling in USA, see Rondthaler & Lias (1986).

Basic English Speling (1989), see Rohner (1989).

LOJIKON (1995), see **Deodhekar**.

Phonemic/phonetic — Diacritic

Okakura, see Okakura (1932).

Phonetic B, see Lindgren (1969).

Phonemic/phonetic — Mixed Digraphic/Diacritic

Hodges (1644), see Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981), also Pitman & St John (1969).

Dimid'iun Spel'ing (Ellis 1880), see Zachrisson (1932).

The Speler (Pitman 1895), see Zachrisson (1932).

Änjelika (Hallner 1929), see Zachrisson (1932).

Bischoff, see Bischoff (1954).

Phonetic A, see Lindgren (1969).

Phonemic/phonetic — Augmented Alphabet

Sir T Smith (1568), see Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981); Pitman & St John (1969).

Bullokar (1580), see Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981); Pitman & St John (1969).

John Hart (16th c.), see Howatt (1984); Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981); Pitman & St John (1969).

Gill (1619), see Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981); Pitman & St John (1969).

Butler (1633), see Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981); Pitman & St John (1969).

Johnston (1764), see also includes diacritics; Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981).

Ben. Franklin (1779), see Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981); Pitman & St John (1969).

Thornton (1793), see Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981); Pitman & St John (1969).

Anti-Absurd Alphabet (Beniowski 1845), see Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981).

Fonotypy (I Pitman mid 19th c.), see Pitman & St John (1969).

Leigh (1866), see Scragg (1974).

Bridges, see Bridges (1927).

SRA Phonemic Alphabet (1930), see Ives (1979).

Arncliffe, see Arncliffe (1935).

i.t.a. (1958), see Pitman & St John (1969), Downing (1967), Downing & Leong (1982). [See **Bulletin topics**]

UNIFON (Malone 1959), see Coulmas (1989); Pitman & St John (1969).

SSA Fonetic Alfabet (1962), see Pitman & St John (1969).

TORSKRIPT, see Paulsen (1971). [See **Bulletin March 1964**]

Vassilyev (1970s?), see ed. Yule, V. 'An account of "English Maximally Simplified Writing"' in *Spelling Progress Bulletin*, Winter 1982, pp7–10.

System 2 (Eustace 1977), papers in the late Bob Brown's collection.

CFR (Lihg 1980s?), some papers in the late Bob Brown's collection.

Advanced English Orthografy, see Beale (1989).

NS9 & 10 (1991), see Rupert (1991).

Robinson (1991), see also digraphic; papers in the late Bob Brown's collection.

Phonemic/phonetic — New Alphabet

Robinson (1617), see Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981).

Wilkins (1668), see Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981).

Lodwick (1686), see Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (198l).

Pitman (1843), see Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981), also Pitman & St John (1969).

Bell (1867), see Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981), also Pitman & St John (1969).

Jones/Passy (1907), see Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981), also Pitman & St John (1969).

Shaw/Read, see Shaw (1962), Haas (1969), Pitman & St John (1969).

Normative — Cut redundancy

DUE (Drop Useless Es), see Citron (1983), **Simplified Spelling Society** (1984).

Stage 1, see Simplified Spelling Society (1984).

Stage 2, see Gibbs (1984).

Cut Spelng, see Upward (1992).

Surplus-Cut Spelling, see Yule (1981 onwards, including 1992 experimental research thesis, where it is called 'Clipd Spelling').

Normative — Consistent rules

Regularized English, see Wijk (1959, 1977).

SRI, see Lindgren (1969).

Semiregularized English (Carr 1969), see Coulmas (1989).

Normative — Partial rectification

Webster (1789-l829), early radical schemes toned down later; see Coulmas (1989), Pitman & St John (1969).

American reforms (1906), advocated by Simplified Spelling Board, National Education Association, and US President Theodore Roosevelt; see Pitman & St John (1969).

Economy Spelling, see Ives (1979).

Stage 1, see Simplified Spelling Society (1984).

Stage 2, see Gibbs (1984).

LOJIKON (1995), see Deodhekar.

Normative — Reading aid

Hodges (1644), see Abercrombie in Asher & Henderson (1981).

Leigh (1866), see Pitman & St John (1969); Scragg (1974).

Craigie (1917), see Pitman & St John (1969).

Diacritical Marks System (Fry), see Pitman & St John (1969).

Writing to Read (Martin 1986), see Rondthaler (1986).

English Teaching Alphabet (ETA), see Hofmann (1988).

Opportunistic

Cornell Kimball, see 'Pragmatic Strategies for Promoting Spelling Reform' in *Journal of the Simplified Spelling Society* 23—1998/1, pp16–19.

'Personal View' (PV) spelling reform proposals produced within the

Simplified Spelling Society by October 1998

PV2 Fletcher, Paul — *Yurospel .*

PV3 Eustace, Sinclair — *Sistɜm 2 .*

PV4 Burns, Anthony — An Aʟfɛʙɛt **for** ʄɛ Miʟenxɛm **.**

PV5 Goodwin, Ken — *Yurabet .*

PV6 Lahey, George — *Inglish, the nou ABC's .*

Annotated Bibliography

Arncliffe, T (1935) *The Spelling of English*, **Wakefield: Eagle Press.**

A beautifully produced and elegantly argued case for an <u>augmented alphabet</u> scheme.

Asher, R E & Henderson, J A (eds.) (1981) *Towards a History of Phonetics*, Edinburgh: University Press.

This is a *Festschrift* for David Abercrombie, "doyen of British phoneticians", and a Vice-President of the Simplified Spelling Society (d. 1992). It is a wide-ranging collection of papers and usefully includes Prof Abercrombie's *Some Orthographic Experiments of the Last Four Centuries*, in which he unearths a wide range of historical <u>new alphabet</u> and <u>diacritical</u> schemes There is also an interesting paper on Isaac Pitman's mid-19th century work on <u>new</u> and <u>augmented alphabet</u> schemes.

Beale, G A (1989) *Items: The First Printing in Advanced English Orthography*, London Cadenza Press.

Elegantly presents explanation of, and sample texts in, an <u>augmented alphabet</u> scheme.

Bischoff, G A (1954) *1975 — Improved Spelling & the Metric System*, London: St Catherine Press/Pitman.

Argues for a mixed <u>digraphic/diacritic</u> system.

Bridges, R (1927...) *Collected Essays & Papers, Vols. 1–10*, Oxford University Press.

Robert Bridges was Poet Laureate and founder in 1919 of the Society for Pure English, which published several papers touching on spelling relorm in its *SPE Tracts*, prior to its demise just after the Second World War. Bridges personally favoured an <u>augmented alphabet</u> approach, and this edition of his collected papers, starting publication towards the end of his life and continued posthumously, gradually introduces more and more of his ideas volume by volume until the system reaches completion in volume 6. Bridges wanted to provide samples so that interested parties could form their own judgments ahout how far to go towards complete phoneticity. Abercrombie (see notes under Asher & Henderson [1981]) assisted with the phonetics.

Carney, E (1994) *A Survey of English Spelling*, London/New York: Routledge.

A massive (though not quite complete) catalogue of English sound-symbol and symbol-sound correspondences, derived from a computerized database with frequency statistics. A useful reference work on spelling patterns, but perpetuates some myths, fails to explain why English is so spelt, and shows little understanding of the psychology of literacy.

Citron, A F (1983) *Let's DUE it!*, Focus 7:4, also reprinted by BEtSS.

Lively article encouraging dropping of useless (final) *e* by founder of Better Education thru Simplified Spelling. Citron explored the idea of 'pasigraphs' of single letters for common words, eg, O for *of*, B for *but* and N for *and*.

Coulmas, F (1989) *The Writing Systems of the World*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Presents a modern and unusually broad socio-linguistic background to the problems of devising writing systems. An eye-opening 'global view' for those only familiar with the problems of English or European languages. Two useful chapters deal with the special difficulties of creating alphabets, and with reforms in language usage.

Deodhekar, G N (1995) *LOJIKON*, Mumbai (Bombay), India: Laxmibai Deodhekar Charitable Trust, and London: Simplified Spelling Society.

This variant on *New Spelling* considerably reduces the latter's radical impact by confining itself in principle to the easier task of regularizing consonants — except that for words like *sign, sight* removing the silent consonants involves indicating the long I by the NS digraph IE.

Downing, J (1967) *Evaluating the Initial Teaching Alphabet*, London: Cassell.

The classic review of the *ita* scheme. Downing was President of the Simplified Spelling Society from 1972 to 1987.

Downing, J & Leong, C K (1982) *Psychology of Reading*, New York: Macmillan.

A key work on the topic, which includes an extensive bibliography for those wishing to pursue the subject further.

Fennelly, L R (1991) *New Spelling 90*, Southampton: Simplified Spelling Society.

The first revised edition of this scheme to be published since Ripman & Archer (1948) (qv).

Follick, M (1965) *The Case for Spelling Reform*, London: Pitman.

Posthumously published statement of position by Follick, who was one of the two MPs (along with Sir James Pitman) championing spelling reform in the British Parliament during the 1950s. It provides full detail of their campaign (described also by Pitman in Haas [1969] and in Pitman [1969]) and describes Follick's own <u>digraphic</u> proposal.

Gibbs, S (1984) *Stage 2*, unpublished correspondence with Bob Brown.

See text for an explanation of this scheme.

Haas, W (1969) *Alphabets for English*, Manchester: University Press.

A key collection of five papers: Haas' introduction to spelling and reform; Sir James Pitman's side of the Parliamentary campaign and appraisal of Follick (qv); Wijk (qv) summarizing his approach; and two papers by phonetician Peter MacCarthy on

digraphic **New Spelling** (see Ripman & Archer [1948]) and the **Shaw (New) Alphabet** Competition.

Hofmann, Th R (1989) 'Showing Pronunciation in EFL Teaching' in *Journal of the Simplified Spelling Society* 1989:1.

Lays the linguistic and phonetic basis for the author's **ETA**. Further **ETA** descriptions in various unpublished papers.

Howatt, A P R (1984) *A History of English Language Teaching*, Oxford: University Press.

The definitive work on teaching English as a foreign language over the ages. Discusses two 16th century spelling reform proposals (Hart and Mulcaster) but otherwise only touches on orthographical issues.

Ives, Kenneth H (1979) *Written Dialects n Spelling Reform*, Chicago: Progresiv Publishr.

A summary history of the spelling reform movement with useful detail on American reformers. It innovatively presents alternative spellings as dialects of the written language. Uses Ives' **Economy Spelling 4**.

Lindgren, H (1969) *Spelling Reform — A New Approach*, Sydney: Alpha Books.

Detailed proposals of the **SR1...50** approach. Starting with **SR1**, which spelt every short /e/ as E, it led on to two possible target schemes, **Phonetic A** and **Phonetic B**.

Okakura, Y (1932) *Studies in English Literature* Tokyo: Kenkyusha.

Rambling review of spelling and reform attempts, concluding with the author's diacritic proposal.

Paulsen, V (1971) *Improved Orthography — An Aid to Reading*, San Francisco: Torskript Publications.

Describes the author's augmented alphabet approach called TORSKRIPT, which has a most attractive typography.

Pitman, Sir J & St John, J (1969) *Alphabets & Reading*, London: Pitman.

A very well-researched book, the main objectives of which are to provide background on problems of literacy teaching in British schools, and then present Pitman's **initial teaching alphabet (i.t.a.)** as the solution. On the way, it presents a huge amount of information on other schemes, from the 16th century to the present day, including an extensive analysis of TO spelling patterns. It presents a typology similar to, but not as extensive as, that developed here. A very useful appendix compares many schemes in tabular form.

Ripman, W & Archer, W (6th ed., 1948) *New Spelling*, London: Pitman.

The last full edition describing the digraphic system that was first developed within the Simplified Spelling Society around l910. For several decades it was the only

system promoted by the Society. **New Spelling** was aligned with similar American proposals in l955 and changed in some minor ways in the early 1970s. An edition incorporating changes after 1948 was prepared as **New Spelling/Wurld Inglish**, but never published: see Wilkinson (1974). A new summary edition was produced with minor changes as **New Spelling 90** in 1991: see Fennelly (1991).

Rohner, T (1989) *Basic English Speling*, Winnetka, Illinois: Basic English Speling.

The system and the organization have the same name. The organization is (was?) a non-profit educational trust.

Rondthaler, E & Lias, E J (eds.) (1985) *Dictionary of American Spelling*, New York: American Language Academy.

The American Language Academy (subsequently renamed American Literacy Council) was the successor to the Phonemic Spelling Council, in turn renamed from the Simpler Spelling Association. This remarkable dictionary, with much explanatory information fore and aft, presents the American <u>digraphic</u> system descended, with very minor changes, from the joint system agreed with the British SIMPLIFIED SPELLING SOCIETY in 1955. The computerized database of the dictionary has considerable potential research value in collating phoneme/grapheme relationships.

Rupert, Arnold (1991) *NS9/NS10 — Less School Tax & Better Education*, Canada: published by the author.

The latest augmented alphabet schemes, very well argued and presented, from Arnold Rupert, a lifetime worker in this field. Booklet available from the author at Lunenburg, Ontario K0C 1R0.

Sampson, G (1985) *Writing Systems*, London: Hutchinson.

This general work on writing systems claims to be "the first to use descriptive linguistics". A lively chapter on English spelling reviews the problems and a selection of reform proposals, and then goes on to analyse the need for change and its likelihood.

Scragg, D G (1974) *A History of English Spelling*, Manchester University Press.

Definitive work on the subject by the current Simplified Spelling Society President.

Shaw, G B (1962) *Androcles and The Lion (Shaw Alphabet Edition)*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

A parallel text on facing pages contrasting TO and the Shaw Alphabet designed by Kingsley Read, one of the winners of the competition sponsored by Shaw's Will. Judges included Sir James Pitman, who held various offices in the Simplified Spelling Society over the years, and Peter MacCarthy: see Haas (1969). Phonetic transliteration for this edition was undertaken by MacCarthy. Read also went on to design further more streamlined script for English, including Quikscript.

Simplified Spelling Society (1984) *Tough Though Thought — and we call it correct spelling!*

Simplified Spelling Society leaflet explaining the Stage 1 collection of <u>cut redundancy</u> and <u>partial rectification</u> changes.

Tauber, A (ed.) (1963) *Shaw on Language*, London: Peter Owen.

A collection of texts and extracts, mostly by Shaw, on language and spelling topics. Reprints much documentation, from the (in)famous Will onwards, surrounding the Alphabet Competition.

Upward, C (1992, 2nd ed. 1996) *Cut Spelling: A Handbook*, Birmingham, UK: Simplified Spelling Society.

This "handbook to the simplification of written English by omission of redundant letters" sets out a detailed analysis of the highly problematic feature of redundancy in TO, and thereby represents an important <u>normative</u> proposal. Enormously well argued, it includes extensive exercises for learning to write Cut Spelling, a TO to Cut Spelling dictionary and a bibliography.

Venezky, R L (1970) *The Structure of English Orthography*, The Hague: Mouton.

A very detailed analysis aiming to "show the patterning which exists in the present orthography" and arguing that TO is not a "system riddled with imperfections, but instead a more complex and more regular relationship…" Dismisses as unachievable reform attempts on any other basis than <u>consistent rules</u>.

Wijk, A (1959) *Regularized English*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell.

A substantial work, packed with scholarship and ideas, representing Wijk's lifetime commitment to the problems of English orthography. It takes almost 100 pages to describe the problems and the various "official" (ie, Simplified Spelling Society and American SSA) schemes proposed to solve them, then going on to present Wijk's <u>consistent rules</u> approach.

Wijk, A (1977) *Regularized English: A Proposal for an Effective Solution of the Reading Problem in the English-speaking Countries*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell.

A companion volume to **Regularized English**, flowing from the author's efforts through the Bullock Committee and the UK Reading Association to influence British teaching methods during the early 1970s. It mostly deals with the practicalities of using his scheme in teaching.

Wilkinson, H S (1974) *New Spelling — Wurld Inglish* (7th edition), privately printed.

Intended to update Ripman & Archer's Sixth Edition of 1948 (qv) with the Anglo-American joint changes agreed in 1955 and various Simplified Spelling Society adjustments agreed in the early 1970s, this work was typeset, but never published. A few proof copies only are extant. Beside Wilkinson's infirmity, the reason for its non-appearance seems to have been that that opinion in the Simplified Spelling Society

was shifting away from official promotion of only one scheme towards encouraging discussion of a plurality of proposals.

Yule, V C (1986) 'The design of spelling to meet needs and abilities' in *Harvard Educational Review*, 56:3, pp 278 - 297.

How research must guide improvement of English spelling: research on the cognitive, social and educational needs and abilities of readers, writers and learners; cross-cultural studies; trends in changes in spelling today; how users adapt to changes in writing systems; and empirical testing of linguistic and psychological theories and assumptions.

Yule, V C (1991) *Orthography and Reading: Spelling and Society*, doctoral thesis, Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia. UMI Dissertation Services, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48106. 1992.1416. Order No.9231850.

Part 1. A comparative survey of world writing systems and their reforms, the nature of English spelling and its changes and attempts at change, research findings on the abilities and needs of readers, writers and learners. Part 2. Multiple experiments testing responses to Surplus-Cut spelling (under the name of 'clipd spelling')

Zachrisson, R E (1932) *Anglic*, Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University Press.

Also published in the USA by McGrath Publishing, College Park, Maryland, in 1970. A full statement of Zachrisson's scheme which came very close to being accepted as the 'official' Simplified Spelling Society scheme, in place of New Spelling, around 1930. Contains an informative history of spelling reform up to 1932.

♦ ♦ ♦