

English Spelling Society

Personal Views

Pinglish

by Paul Gough

The Author

I am the author/ creator of the Pinglish project. I was born in Wales 64 years ago. I have lived in Holland for the last 34. In the winter I would go to Thailand where I found somewhere suitable to live and I would return there every year. I got to know the Thai staff very well but, there was a problem. They couldn't speak English very well. So I decided to spend some time teaching them the language. It became obvious, quickly that it was not going to be easy. The way we spelt made no sense to them or me. If only this could be improved. I propose the Pinglish Project as a possible solution.
Email me the pinglishproject@yahoo.com

Scheme proposal

Pinglish is a scheme for simplifying and regularising current English spelling designed to assist students of English as a second language and those whose maternal language is English. It permits one to spell in the way one speaks regardless of dialect or accents. Although it is in the radical category, it makes fewer changes than do some other schemes. It is LOGICAL, SIMPLE AND QUICK TO LEARN.

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Introduction

Pinglish is a radical scheme that seeks two-way phonemicity – ie the ability to predict the spelling from the sound as well as the sound from the spelling. It is radical rather than conservative in that it changes a substantial number of current English spellings. However, it does not use diacritics (accents) and it does not introduce new letters. Its main distinguishing mark is that it uses capitals to represent long vowels. It also does away with punctuation apart from the full stop. It retains hardly any irregular spellings from current usage.

2. Tables of Phonemes

(a) Vowels)

Scheme characters	SAMPA ¹ symbol	IPA symbol	Typical current English Spelling example	Scheme equivalent
a	{	æ	pat	pat
e	e	e	pet	pet
i	I	I	pit	pit
o	² Q or A:	ɒ or ɑ:	pot	pot
u	V	ʌ	pun	pun
A	eI	eI	spade, maid, lay	spAd, mAd, lA
E	i:	i:	speed	spEd
I	aI	aI	divide, die, why	divId, dI, wI
O@U or oU	@U or oU	əʊ or ɔʊ	foe, load	fO, lOd
U	ju:	ʊə	few, hue	fU hU
ar	A:(r)	ɑ:(r)	farm	farm
ar, a	A:	ɑ:	father, palm	father, palm
ur	3: or 3`	3: or 3:`	nurse	nurs
or	O:(r)	ɔ:(r)	store	stor
or	O:	ɔ:	fraud, saw, all	frord, sor, orl
er	e@ or e@(r)	e ə or e ə(r)	fair, bare,	fer, ber
Eer	i@ or i(r)	I ə or I ə(r)	beer	bEer
ou	U	ʊ	full, pudding	foul, pouding
oo	u:	u:	spoon	spoon
ow	aU	a ʊ	loud, cow	lowd, cow
oy	OI	ɔ I	loin, boy	loyn, boy
E	i	i	fairy	ferE
varies	@	ə	³ (Schwa)	upon, apel

¹ SAMPA is the set of phonetic symbols specially adapted for English from IPA. It follows the IPA symbols but is designed to be used on an ordinary QWERTY keyboard.

² Where two pronunciation symbols are shown, the left hand one indicates Received Pronunciation ('BBC English') and the right hand 'GenAM' (American) or in some instances more general rhotic pronunciation.

³ Schwa is the term for the indeterminate sound arising from the pronunciation of many unaccented English syllables (e.g. appel, parlous, nation etc). Some reformers have an all-purpose syllable for this sound, usually <u>; others leave the original spelling, sometimes abbreviated).

(b) Consonants

Scheme Character(s)	SAMPA Symbol	IPA symbol	Typical current English Spelling example	Scheme equivalent
b	b	b	bat	bat
ch	tʃ	tʃ	chart	chart
d	d	d	dog	dog
f	f	f	frog	frog
g	g	g	go	gO
h	h	h	hard	hard
j	dʒ	dʒ	jam	jam
c	k	k	cat, kettle	cat, cetl
l	l	l	lamb	lam
m	m	m	man	man
n	n	n	nap	nap
ng	ŋ	ŋ	ring	ring
p	p	p	pun	pun
q	kʷ	kʷ	queen	qEn
r	r	r	run	run
s	s	s	sun	sun
sh	ʃ	ʃ	sheep	shEp
t	t	t	tap	tap
th	ð	ð	that	that
th	θ	θ	thin	thin
v	v	v	vast	vast
w	w	w	win	win
x	ks, gz	ks, gz	exit, exactly ⁴	exit, exactlE
y	j	j	yes	yes
z, s	z	z	zoo, his	zoo, hiz, planets
sh	ʒ	ʒ	pleasure	plesher

⁴ In current spelling <x> is pronounced /ks/ generally but as /gz/ when the second syllable is stressed.

3. The Scheme's Principles and Rules

The Scheme's principles and rules are largely self-evident from the two tables above. But note the following:

I use the same symbol <ar> for the sounds <A:> and <A:r>, also <or> for /O:/ and /O:r/ because I do not think the respective pairs of sounds are sufficiently different to merit separate symbols.

For the same reason, I use <th> for the sounds in <thin> and <that>.

Also <s> for the sounds in <sun> and <gives>. But <z> can also be used for the /z/ sound.

Also <sh> for the sounds in <station> and <pleasure>.

I do not put any vowel between the consonants in words such as kettle (thus <etl>).

4. Answers to the following Questions (to the extent not already answered)

(i) Is this a new original idea or is it adapted from one developed by the writer or someone else?

Pinglish is an original idea and any similarities to other suggestions are coincidental.

(ii) Is it an initial scheme for learning literacy, as a step to current English spelling or is it for permanent adult use?

Pinglish is designed to replace traditional English spelling

(iii) Are there any supplementary rules to cover exceptions to the proposed system? If so, please detail.

Only the matters mentioned at paragraph three above are needed to supplement the two tables.

(iv) Does your system cater for schwa. Does it indicate stress?

Essentially NO to both questions.

(v) Is the scheme based on any particular dialect of English? If so on which? Would you cater for other dialects? If so, how?

Pinglish is sound based the way people from different regions have their own way of pronouncing words and so should gain wide acceptance. Pinglish is written the way I hear it and I accept that others will hear it differently.

(vi) Is the scheme based on an assumed knowledge of English / current English spelling or is it independent, that is could people who had learned the spelling rules pronounce a text correctly even though they had no knowledge of English?

*Pinglish does not require the reader to have prior knowledge of English, in fact that could be a small disadvantage. They will have to learn the 40 sounds though. A video of these sounds is available on **thepinglishproject.com** website.*

(vii) How many characters does the scheme require when compared with a text in current English spelling?

Pinglish uses approximately 10% fewer characters than traditional spelling.

(viii) How big is the change from current English spelling? Give an estimate of the percentage of words whose spelling would need to be changed. How many sign words⁵ would be retained?

From the list of words translated above only 30 of the 134 words would remain unchanged.

(ix) Outline how the author envisages the scheme being used. How would it be introduced and existing publications be dealt with?

Pinglish is part of the Pinglish Project whose aim is to promote it as an alternative way to spell English. In pursuit of this goal a website has been set up (the pinglishproject.com). This web site will allow users access to a limited number of stories already written in pinglish. Till now I have more than 25 stories and this is growing. The introduction of Pinglish is available in 10 different languages and more will be added.

(x) Does the author regard homophones as a problem and does the system indicate them in any way?

Essentially NO to both questions

(xi) Could the system be used easily on most computers and word processors?

Yes Pinglish can be used on a Qwerty Keyboard. The Pinglish Project has an offline text to spe.ak app for use on a mobile phones which uses a keyboard with only about 40 characters plus numbers. This new layout means it can be contained on just one screen not 4 that my Android phone currently needs. It is almost ready for testing and will be aimed at people who are mute and would like to have a conversation with a person that they are with.

(xii) Is the system used in everyday life by the author and anyone else?

Pinglish is not used at this time but, it has proved in tests using Dutch people to be a much simpler way to read than TS. I am looking for people who don't have knowledge of English to test Pinglish.

Standard Texts

Please insert the scheme version under each text and show number of characters used⁶

The Star (H G Wells)

It was on the first day of the new year that the announcement was made, almost simultaneously from three observatories, that the motion of the planet Neptune, the outermost of all the planets that wheel about the sun, had become very erratic. A retardation in its velocity had been suspected in December. Then a faint, remote speck of light was discovered in the region of the perturbed planet. At first this did not cause any great excitement. Scientific people, however, found the intelligence remarkable enough even before it became known that the new body was rapidly growing larger and brighter, and that its motion was quite different from the orderly progress of the planets

The star h g welz

it woz on the furst dA ov the nU yur that the anownsmnt woz mAd olmost simultAnEuslE from thrE observatorEz that the mOshun ov the planet neptUn the owtermost ov orl the planets that wEl about the sun had bEcum verE erratic. a rEtardAshun in its velositE had bEn suspected in dEseember. then a fAnt rEmOt spec ov llt woz discoverd in the rEjon ov the perturbd planet. at furst this did not corz enE grAt exsItment. slentific pEpl however fownd the intelijens remarcabl enuf Even bEfor it bEcAm nOwn that the nU bodE woz rapidlE grOWing larjer and brlter and that its mOshun woz qwlIt diferent from the orderlE prOgres ov the planets.

(words: 119; characters current English spelling: 702; characters Penglish 649; words changed: 64

Britten when young (Frank Kermode)

We may nowadays be chary about using the word 'genius', but we still have a good idea what is meant by it. For example, there are great numbers of very gifted musicians who are admired but not called geniuses. But there are others, manifestly prodigious, performing often at extraordinary ages, a variety of feats so complex that the layman could hardly imagine, even with the most desperate labour, accomplishing any of them, while even musicians are astonished: and we then reach for the good, handy, vague, Enlightenment word and call them geniuses. The list includes Mozart and Mendelssohn; and despite all the limiting judgements, it includes Benjamin Britten.

briten wen yung franc cermOd wE mA nowadAz bE cherE abowt Uzing the wurd jEnEus but wE stil hav a goud lDEa wot iz ment bl it. for exampl ther ar grAt numberz ov verE gifted mUsishunz hoo ar admIerd but not corld jEnEusez. but ther ar uthertz manifestlE prodidshus performing often at extraordinarE Ajez a varlEtE ov fEts sO complex that the lAman coud hardlE imajin Even with the mOst desperAt lAhor acomplishing enE ov them wll Even mUsishunz ar astonishd and wE then rEch for the goud handE vAg enlltenment wurd and corl them jEnEusez. the list incloodz mOtsart and mendelson and desplt orl the limiting judjments it incloodz benjamin britten.

(words: 113; characters current English spelling: 700; characters Penglish: 644. Words changed: 71.

Ode to a nightingale (John Keats)

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
but being so happy in thine happiness.
that thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees
in some melodious plot
of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
singest of summer in full-throated ease.

Od too a nItingAl jon cEts

tiz not throo envE ov thI hapE lot
but bEing sO hapE in thIn hapEnes.
that thow lItwingd drlad ov the trEz
in sum melOdEos plot
ov bEchen grEn and shadOz numberless
singest ov sumer in fulthrOted Ez.

(words: 44; characters current English spelling: 336; characters PInglish: 225; words changed:27)

Fuzzy-opaque orthographical visions (C Upward)

There was a poor boy couldn't spell
Half the words in our language too well.
His teachers thought: "Brain-sick!"
Mum and Dad hoped: "Dyslexic?"
Yet the child rashly jeered:
"What the hell!"

fuzE opAc orthOgrafical vishunz c upword.

ther woz a pooer boy coudnt spel
haf the words in ower langwidj too wel.
hiz tEcherz thort brAn sic.
mum and dad hOpd dislexic
yet the chIld rashlE jEerd
wot the hell.

(words: 37; characters current English spelling 234; characters PInglish: 207; words changed: 22)

Word List

Current English Spelling	PV Scheme	Current English Spelling	PV Scheme
pen, copy, happen	pen, copE, hapen	lot, odd, wash	lot, od, wosh
back, bubble, job	bac, bubl, job	strut, bud, love	strut, but, luv
tea, tight, button	tE, tIt, buton	foot, good, put	fout, goud, pout
city, better	sitE, beter	fleece, day, streak	flEs dA strEc
day, ladder, odd	dA, lader, od	price, high, try	prIs, hI, trI
key, cock, school	cE, coc, scool	choice, boy	choys, boy
get, giggle, ghost	get, gigl, gOst	goose, two, blue	goos, too, bloo
church. match, nature	church, match, nAchur	goat, show, no, cold	gOt, shO, nO, cOld
judge, age, soldier	judg, Aj, soldEer	mouth, now	mowth, now
fat, coffee, rough, move	fat, cofE, ruf, moov	near, here, serious	nEr, hEer, sErEos
thing, author, path	thing, orther, path	square, fair, various	sqer, fer. verEos
this, other, smooth	this, uther, smooth	start, father	start, father
soon, cease sister	soon, sEs, sister	thought, law	thort, lor
zero, zone, roses	zErO, zOn, rOzez	north, war	north,, wor
ship, sure, station	ship, shur, stAshun	cure, poor, jury	qUer, poor, jurE
pleasure, vision	pleshur, vishun	nurse, stir	nurs, stur
hot, whole, behind	hot, hOl, behInd	courage	couraj
more, hammer, some	mor, hamer, sum	happy, radiation, glorious	hapE, rAdEAshun, glorEos
nice, know, funny, sun	nIs, nO, funE, sun	about, comma, common	abowt, coma, comon
ring, long, thanks, sung	ring, long, thancs, sung	influence, situation, annual	inflooens, sitUAshun, anUal
light, valley, feel	lIt, valE, fEl	intend, basic	intend, bAsic
yet, use, beauty	yet, yooz, bUtE	stimulus, educate	stimUlus, edUcAt
wet, one, when, queen	wet, wun, wen, qEn	lit, bid, hymn	lit, bid, him
dress, bed	dres, bed	trap, bad	trap., bad

total number of words: 134
total number of characters current English spelling: 809
total number of characters PINGlish: 738
total number of words changed: 83