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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. i/t/a in the School year 1965

Editor's note - Every one of these reports (spanning the continent from New York to California) testifies not only to i.t.a.'s achievement in early and easy reading but to the joy and self-realization of its little neophytes in the process, and to the creativity it released in them. Ardently the S.P.B. editors join in Mrs. Thomas' moving comment "It really made my heart ache to see how handicapped the other children were by the inhibiting difficulty of T.O. spelling compared to my fancy-free children."

i.t.a. Remedial Group in Clallam Bay, Washington.
An i.t.a. project using the *Early-to-Read* materials began in 1964 with a small group of second graders needing special help. Two had serious speech problems. In fact, one little boy was practically unintelligible. One was seriously retarded, and the other two had fallen far behind mainly because of immaturity and a slower than average rate of development.

All participants benefited from the program. Half-hour sessions were held in the regular classroom four times a week, while a high school assistant supervised the rest of the children in assigned work. The i.t.a. children were not excluded from any classroom learning situations, and participated in regular T.O. reading sessions, which included T.O. phonics, word analysis, and spelling. They all realized that there were two separate alphabets, and that their work in i.t.a. was intended to help them with their regular work. My experience with this group has convinced me that there is *not* the big 'state of confusion' that so many people worry about, even when children are using the two alphabets simultaneously. But there *is* considerable transfer of skills from the i.t.a. sound-symbol

approach to T.O. word analysis skills. The children showed steady improvement in their regular reading classes.

Positive results of the program fall into three main areas. In the first place, sound discrimination improvement resulted in improved confidence and accuracy in recognizing and reproducing sounds, both orally and on paper. I believe that the boy with the very serious speech problem benefited most of all. His improvement was amazing.

In the second place, altho I know that everyone who tries this approach reports the same phenomenon, I must mention again the amazing freedom of written expression. In their 'creative writing' this little group of remedial children far surpassed the brightest, most gifted children in the class!

The third result, also reported by teachers using these wonderful materials, was the joy and enthusiasm of the children. Every day was exciting and rewarding. Every session spelled 'success' for each and every one of them. And this result, I believe, was the most important of all!
Mrs. Marie Thomas, Ciallam Bay, Washington.

'On the whole, this group of children seemed to get more joy and satisfaction out of reading and writing on their own than any groups of first graders I have worked with in my 12 years of teaching.'
Mrs. Bessie Wallace, Oak Park, Mich.

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2. A Critical Examination of the Psychology of the Whole Word Technique, by Raymond E. Laurita*

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The presence of much confusion and disagreement about the best way to teach reading is an evident fact, undeniable after even a cursory perusal of the literature in the field. There appears a veritable constellation of approaches, each of which can claim success by their advocates either in carefully controlled laboratory experiments or in the widespread application of the respective techniques. The truth that many children learn to read eventually, needs no elaboration. It is however an indisputable fact that literally millions of children have not and are not learning to read and can be classified as functionally illiterates or semi-literates.

Some educators hold that those who fail to learn are the "slow learners," the culturally deprived, the unmotivated, the children with specific reading disability. These attempts to rationalize are only vaguely disguised efforts to justify our failure to seek out and find solutions to a human problem of gravest proportions and consequences; the failure of millions of Americans to learn to read adequately or at all.

The problems observed in daily association with retarded readers, whose growth is stunted in the school oriented society in which we live, are problems that cry out for solution. The effect of school failure on millions of human beings is having a cumulative effect upon the social economic and

cultural structure of our country that is difficult to assess. The cataclysmic effects evident because of illiteracy and ignorance cannot conceivably be the result of a single specific cause. Nevertheless, reading retardation, with its resultant school failure, is a significant contributory factor in the whole spectrum of current social upheaval.

Education has made substantial contributions in the struggle to cope with the realities of life as it has evolved in this century. But the field of reading instruction has persistently resisted efforts to develop a consistent, unified approach truly agreed upon as the most satisfactory method for the majority of children.

The current approach to the teaching of reading is generally thought of as being a synthesis of the best features of the phonetic and the whole word methods. This is a false assumption, for phonetic elements are not introduced until an initial sight vocabulary has been firmly established. A stimulus-response pattern has been established during the child's first exposure to printed symbols which will certainly exert a strong if not dominant influence on all further teaching.

In a recently published text on reading instruction, Heilman [1] (pg. 104) writes that "Basal readers in wide use today embrace two major premises: (1) that the child should learn a number of words as `sight recognition words' before attempting any type of word analysis and (2) that the introduction of new sight words should be systematically controlled. At the present time, most children in American schools are taught by the 'word method,' sometimes called the sight method or the look-and-say method. They learn words as units even before they are deliberately taught the names and the sounds of the letters making up the words. The aim of instruction is to have the child learn a number of words as sight words before attention is paid to the analysis of words."

A. J. Harris [2], (pg. 83) (1959) in another and more widely used text states that "Every popular set of readers in America today uses a primary analytical or global approach in the teaching of word recognition, supplemented by instruction in word analysis techniques after the sight vocabulary has been started. This seems to be a psychologically sound and experimentally justified procedure." Harris [8] (1963 p. 50) writes elsewhere with regard to visual perception, "Current methodology in the teaching of reading assumes that it is easier and faster for a child to learn to respond correctly to the appearance of a word as a whole than to perceive part by part and put the parts together. This viewpoint originated from the pioneer work of Cattell, who demonstrated that, on the average, words could be recognized in a shorter time than single alphabet letters. This was reinforced by eye movement photography, which showed that in good reading, words are perceived as units or in groups, and was given a theoretical base by Gestalt psychology, which emphasizes the primacy of the whole over the parts."

Every text in the area of reading instruction that was investigated asserted confidence in the ability of the vast majority of children to learn sight words as wholes no matter which overall approach was emphasized. Even McKee [3] (p. 39) who stresses the need to develop an early understanding and ability to identify sounds and letters, advocates the early introduction of a sight vocabulary. He bases the need for identification of letters, not as an absolute prerequisite for understanding the component parts of the word, but rather to provide cues to be used in combination with contextual clues.

The basic premise underlying methods of instruction in the United States then is based principally upon a belief in the ability of the individual child to learn a basic core of sight words prior to or simultaneous with instruction in a variety of other analysis skills. Acceptance of this premise must

of necessity be predicated upon three basic assumptions, each of which must be operative if the approach is to succeed:

1. that the Gestalt theory of learning and perception is an acceptable base upon which to develop methods of reading instruction.
2. that the child has sufficient visual maturity to perceive language symbols accurately.
3. that the child has complete and unfailing directional control at the outset of reading instruction to permit consistent, undirected left-right viewing of the materials presented to him.

It is held here that there is sufficient doubt about the acceptability of each of these assumptions to warrant further intensified research. Only the first assumption will be discussed however, for it takes precedence and is decisive to the entire whole word approach.

The complete faith of educators in the look-say approach to reading indicates an incredible naiveté. They would have us believe the child, in his state of relative immaturity, is able to perceive both visually and aurally the minute differences in words such as: want-went, then-them, farm-from, etc. Further they assure us that the child possesses a visual and auditory memory capable of preserving and cataloging a great number of words of similar configuration without additional word attack skills. A statement by the late Dr. William S. Gray exemplifies an apparent willingness to accept a tentative conclusion as a proven fact. He [4] writes (p. 45) "The first time a child sees a printed symbol for a word he should establish a direct association of sound and meaning with the printed form. These associations are easily established if the printed form is shown to the child as the spoken word is used in a meaningful situation...." "For example, if in a discussion of how birds differ from other animals, the children suggest that 'they are covered with feathers,' the teacher who presents the printed word *feathers* at this point has insured associations of sound, meaning and form." Aside from any pedagogical criticism as to the impossibility of introducing vocabulary in this slow and artificial manner, the statement can only be true if we are absolutely certain that what the child sees and hears as "feathers" and what the teacher sees and hears as "feathers" are one and the same. To assume that the sensory experiences of the teacher and those of the child are exactly the same is an extremely untenable position to hold, in view of the immensely complex number of variables present in every perceptual experience.

Acceptance of the sight method is predicated almost entirely upon the theoretical evidence provided by Gestalt psychology which "emphasizes the primacy of the whole over the parts." The existence of any contrary theory of learning appears to have been overlooked or relegated to the junk pile. Gestalt psychologists propose a belief in the idea that perception is "that function of the organism whereby it responds to a given constellation of stimuli as a whole; the response itself being a constellation, or a pattern, or gestalt." (Bender [5] p. 3) The ability to perceive wholes immediately rather than as a result of gradual recognition of the parts provides the "raison d'etre" for the whole word approach. Consequently, initial instruction is primarily concerned with the larger unit, the word, rather than with the smaller unit, the letter.

If the premise that the child learns words at sight solely as the result of a direct apprehension of the whole or "gestalt" is true, then the approach is logical and those who do not learn may be explained in terms of faulty perceptual skill. The acceptance of this premise and its conclusion as the only ones possible however, remains an unproven thesis.

One of the most prevalent errors of children suffering from both moderate and severe reading

retardation is the inability to differentiate between words of similar configuration. Even normally proficient readers manifest occasional confusion with words of this type. Retarded readers consistently make errors of substitution and of word and letter confusion even after repeated and determined efforts at remediation. An immediate and apparent contradiction to the theory of "gestalt" becomes evident in view of the fact that the *most successful techniques which have been developed for the retarded reader are those that utilize a letter by letter approach.* These methods stress the individual parts of the words, either by name or sound, coupled with efforts to develop a consistent directional pattern. The end result of training is improved ability to apprehend the word as a whole because of a greater familiarity with the component parts.

The Fernald-Keller technique (Betts **[6]** p. 381) and the highly structured approaches advanced by Gillingham **[11]** and by Bloomfield and Barnhart **[12]** are typical of attempts to reorient disabled children with an improved and systematic letter by letter approach. Variations of this approach are evident in the Montessori sandpaper letters and a variety of tracing techniques being researched.

Gestalt psychology advances the theory that perception is dependent upon "a pattern of excitation whose locus is unimportant." (Hebb p. 17) Application of this principle as reading places prime concern with the overall configurational pattern of the word rather than with the individual characteristics of the separate letters. If this concept of immediate perception is true, it would appear then that there is present in the school population a significantly large number of otherwise normal individuals with faulty perceptual ability, ranging from moderate to severe. If we equate failure to learn to read with inadequate perceptual skill, we must then explain those who do learn as being endowed with average or superior perception.

The widespread use of the look-and-say method seems to have gained its tremendous momentum principally because of its quick initial success with large numbers of children. The kind of postfacto reasoning that points to successful results as proof of a particular theory is totally unscientific. Children do not mature in a vacuum, but rather have been exposed to multiple and uncontrolled external and internal influences. Using successful results as a measuring rod, might not statistics be advanced to show that experience, motivation, environment, intelligence or heredity are all essential agents for success?

To one engaged in the teaching of large numbers of disabled readers, there develops over a period an awareness of an indistinct pattern of disturbance which is evident in most reading disabilities. Their errors, tho not easily defined or limited, have a definite repetitiveness at all levels, from the primary school child to the adult non-reader. There are persistent indications of confusion which can best be described as being amorphic and unpredictable. The main point of this article is that many children who are becoming reading problems should not, would not become problems if exposed to a more logical, less confusing approach to reading.

Because of extreme dissatisfaction with the explanations of this confusion offered in reading texts, a dissent is hereby registered. It is humbly recognized as a dissent which is contrary to the position held by the vast majority of reading experts in the United States. Disagreement with prevailing opinion is based upon a belief in the possibility that the Gestaltists conceivably were mistaken in assuming that the innate capacity to perceive a "primitive unity" in figure-ground relationships was the *only* factor involved in perception and subsequent learning. This is not the lightly arrived at conclusion of a single teacher of reading, and practice. The existence of another and opposing theory of perception and learning is an established fact. It is based upon extensive research and reaches conclusions eminently logical and substantiated by the best available research. The

conclusions to be drawn from this theory appear to have significant application to current pedagogical conceptions regarding reading instruction.

Dr. Donald Hebb [7] of McGill University, is the principal exponent of a theory of learning that is diametrically opposed to the Gestalt theory and its presumption of "the primacy of the whole over the parts." He has advanced a neuropsychological theory of learning and perception which concludes that "the course of perceptual learning in man is gradual, proceeding from a dominance of color, through a period of separate attention to each part of the figure, to a gradually arrived at identification of the whole as a whole, an apparently simultaneous instead of a serial apprehension." (Hebb p. 33)

Hebb is asserting that learning occurs because of man's ability to *initially perceive integral parts* and *then* proceed serially to an identification of the whole. "It is possible that the normal human infant goes thru the same process (serial apprehension), and that we are able to see a square as such in a single glance only as a result of a complex learning. The notion seems unlikely, because of the utter simplicity of such perception to the normal adult." (Hebb p.33)

The idea that a simple cause, in this case the premature learning of whole words, could be an inhibiting factor of such monumental proportions is incredible, and yet that is exactly what is being proposed. Any structure built upon a faulty foundation is bound to have weaknesses distributed throughout which are seemingly unrelated to the basic defect. If, as Hebb contends, perception is gradual rather than immediate, the inculcation of a core of sight words at the outset of instruction is the wrong approach to adopt as an initial step in the accumulation of reading skills. This practice establishes a stimulus-response activity which tends to draw attention away from a recognition of the component parts and places it instead on the larger unit, the whole word. Initial learning experiences are extremely strong in their influence and the perceptual response pattern established at this time is difficult to reverse or modify.

A valid comparison can be made here by anyone who has ever been exposed to an auto expert who is able to identify any year or model automobile at sight. Surely, we recognize these same objects, but does the simple recognition of configuration enable us to perceive immediately the minor differences which distinguish one car from another? The child in like manner may perceive the configuration of a word. But is this mere experiencing of "gestalt" sufficient to enable him to perceive the identifiable traits that make a particular word unique among all others? Thousands may view a horse race but only the announcer has established sufficiently careful identification of the individual colors of the jockey's silks to permit an accurate description of the placement of the horses.

A serious objection to the entire thesis arises at once for it is evident that many children are able to identify words with varying degrees of excellence at the initial stage of instruction. The apparent ease with which some learn may be a misleading factor, for it has a two-fold effect. First, it tends to draw attention away from the fact that a large and as yet undetermined number of children experience difficulty at some stage of the performance of this act. Second, it distracts from the possibility of variable factors within the population and the existence of other possible causation.

An answer to the objection and an explanation to this apparent contradiction lies in another possibility. A prior knowledge of the letters of the alphabet, a factor of undetermined significance in the school population, would provide an obvious and adequate reason for their success. Many

teachers have long noted an apparent correlation between early reading success and exposure to alphabet training prior to or during initial reading instruction.

More to the point than the success of the method is the negative aspect of the existent situation in the schools and the country. Large numbers of the population have not learned to read adequately using present techniques. A method which enjoys almost universal acceptance, should contain within it a satisfactory explanation for this tragic inadequacy.

Those who experience the kind of difficulty being discussed can be classified in two general categories; first, children who are frustrated in their initial exposure to whole words and fail to develop a consistent vocabulary of more than a few words. Instruction for them has to be individualized and highly structured if any degree of success is to be forthcoming. Usually this help is not available or the extreme nature of the problem is not recognized. It is from this group of children that the most severe cases of reading disability develop.

A second category may be generally classified as including children that appear to develop an initial sight vocabulary but meet with extreme difficulty at a later stage of instruction. Their difficulty is manifested by an inability to remember with consistency, words of similar configuration such as the following: her-here-where-there, then-when, what-that-this-those, how-who-why, were-wore-wear, and of-off, for-far, from-farm, fire-fine-five, etc. Without specific help the condition deteriorates into varying degrees of confusion and a complete inability to cope with the increased load of reading tasks in the upper elementary and junior high schools.

To understand how this insidious confusion could develop and inhibit the ability to learn to read, it is necessary to explain briefly Hebb's belief in the independent factors of "unity" and "identity" in simple figures. Both the Gestalt psychologist and Hebb accept the existence of a ".primitive unity" in figure-ground relationships which can be defined as "that unity and segregation from the background which seem to be the direct product of a pattern of sensory excitation and the inherited characteristics of the nervous system on which it acts." "An area thus sensorily delimited is seen as one, unified and distinct from its surroundings, by any normal person." (Hebb p. 19) "There is a primitive or innate figure-ground mechanism," (Hebb p. 21) which permits the human organism to perceive and delineate foreground from background."

Both schools of psychological thought accept the existence of this mechanism which enables the organism to perceive "primitive unity" in a figure. It is at the next step in the perceptual process that the point of maximum divergency appears. Hebb disagrees with the theory that perception is wholly innate and unaffected by learning and experience. He postulates the existence of "non-sensory" figures which are influenced by learning and experience. "Non-sensory" figure-ground organization is defined "as one in which the boundaries of the figure are not fixed by gradients of luminosity in the visual field. It is affected by experience and other non-sensory factors and it is not inevitable in any perception. "(Hebb p. 21) The introduction of the idea of non-sensory organization paves the way for associative learning based on experience. Thus we are able to "see" a phantom house rising amidst a nonexistent grove of trees as we stand before a newly acquired, barren plot of earth. There is no direct sensory stimulation or delimitation of figure from ground, but we are able to visualize as a result of prior learning from experiences.

The development of the capacity to act upon learning is further advanced in the concept of "identity," which is defined as "referring to the properties of association inherent in perception." (Hebb p. 26) "There is always the possibility that perception has a partly innate, partly learned

organization; and that besides the figure that has 'primitive unity' there are 'non-sensory figures' in which experience has an important role." "It is also important to see that the argument against any effect of experience on perception often requires the assumption that *any* perceived figure is perceived as a whole, in all respects." (Hebb p.24)

By "identity" then is meant the ability of an organism to profit from experience and make the associations necessary in the acquisition of independent learning. It differs from the concept of "unity" in that "unity" denotes primitive sensory recognition, while "identity" of component parts is *necessary* in acts of synthesis, analysis and judgement. Thus when a child is exposed to more elaborate variations of language, if he has perceived at the outset only a primitive sensory unity in a sight word rather than a true identification of the whole through a recognition of its serial parts, he would be unable to differentiate later between words of similar configuration.

For example, the child referred to in the second category may perceive the word "fire" initially as a primitive sensory configuration, while an understanding of its component parts is not present. No difficulty would be experienced as long as the new words introduced did not have a similar outline, or shape. But when a word such as "fine" or "five" was introduced, the organism could be confused without an ability to "identify" the serial parts and notice the real differences which exist. To the theoretician, this may not be an insurmountable obstacle to overcome. But to anyone who has ever struggled to reverse a strongly embedded stimulus-response pattern, complicated by a large number of similar confusions, it is a formidable and inhibiting factor that effectively prevents the acquisition of new learning.

A look at the list of vocabulary in any basic sight list will indicate the great number of words which lend themselves to possible confusion. The problem becomes even more insidious and divisive in its effect when we remember that the basic words which cause the most confusion are the service words. If enough of these essential "cue" words become confused, a condition results which is positively debilitating and can best be described in the medic sense as being "massive."

For the visually immature child referred to in the first category, the premature introduction of sight words is a traumatic experience of tragic consequences. These unfortunates are introduced to a series of meaningless figures that have neither consistency nor pattern. The resultant confusion and psychic damage accruing to this child by continued attempts at whole word instruction is possibly irreversible. Unless the damage were undone by retraining at such time when maturity became stabilized, he would never be able to profit from associative learnings ordinarily arising out of a proper identification of the parts. Mosse **[9]** in the *Reading Teacher* writes, "The whole word method does its greatest harm by being applied too early." (Mosse p. 94)

There are other parallels to be made that are in keeping with the theories of Hebb and which seem to contradict the idea of ".gestalt." Munn **[10]** in his text on psychology, refers to speaking as a ".complex motor skill as well as a symbolic or verbal one. It is acquired partly on the basis of reflex vocalizations which appear during early infancy and through their conditioning, but also on the basis of imitation and trial and error activity. Ability to make combinations of sounds which closely approximate those of adults (namely, "doll" instead of "da", the original vocalization) develops gradually. There is no doubt that maturational factors are involved in this development. Vocalizations produced by adults cannot be copied by the child until auditory-vocal mechanisms, including their cerebral connections, have sufficiently developed. Nevertheless, it is obvious that children learn to speak, just as they learn other manipulative habits. Saying the word, "doll," for

example, calls for a complex integration of lung, throat, mouth and tongue movements in properly timed succession." (p. 212)

The learned skill of speaking is not then based necessarily on the immediate perception of words in their entirety but occurs as the result of a long and involved process of experimentation by the developing child which eventually results in the reproduction of wholes composed of individually learned sound elements. The process of speech seems to depend upon a process that Hebb refers to as "serial apprehension."

Munn **[10]** also refers to "habit hierarchies," and he states that "many complex skills, both motor and verbal, involve integration of simpler skills." "Take typing, for example. One first learns to hit the correct keys. These learned responses may be designated letter habits. Letters like *t,h,* and *e,* instead of eliciting noticeably separate responses, arouse a single response. The individual looks at the word "the" or thinks it, and the separate responses seem to take care of themselves. After a while, phrase habits appear. Common phrases like "Very sincerely yours" are typed without the typist having to pay any attention to either the separate letters or the separate words:' (p.213)

If one speculates about the significance of the process involved in learning to type, the parallel is immediately evident. The process develops gradually from letter response, to word response, to phrase response. The progressive stages observed may conceivably be a recapitulation of the serial process which ultimately results in the acquisition of reading skills. The actions are gradual and integrative, with each step dependent on the applications which the organism makes of the complex interrelationships learned by practice, and the influence of an infinite number of possible variables within the individual.

The hypothetical questions arising as a consequence of the proposals made are legion. Is the existence of large numbers of adequate readers proof of the efficacy of the whole word method, or could it be equally speculated that their level of performance might have been higher with a different instructional approach? Are the problems of emotional upset, dropout and the increased need for high school and college remedial classes correlated with unsatisfactory initial instruction? How large is the proportion of the school population which has not acquired sufficient maturity to enable them to perceive "unity" and "identity" in initial sight words? Are the number of children who have had prior experience with the individual letters of the alphabet significant enough to justify the use of a method that is absolutely dependent upon the complete identification of the individual letters? Is the inability of large numbers of children to differentiate between words of similar visual and auditory configuration the consequence of a stimulus-response activity which has been reinforced by continuous faulty perceptions? Are the maturational factors operative in visual perception the same as those for auditory perception? Is the ability to hear words as wholes only an apparently immediate apprehension, or is auditory perception based instead upon perceptual experiences with the individual sounds of the syllabic components? Is the difficulty which many children experience with phonics due to an exposure to the whole word before an adequate auditory and visual identification of the parts was established?

The crux of the problem revolves around the inability of the mature adult mind to comprehend the complexity involved in the various processes of perception, an act which appears to be essentially simple and immediate. The dearth of laboratory subjects who are in the initial stages of perceptual growth and still able to describe the process is an inhibiting factor of no small consequences. The resolution of the problem can only be arrived at through the administration of a controlled experiment which would test the validity of both approaches to initial reading instruction. Any

experiment such as suggested must involve large numbers of testees if the results are to be conclusive.

Nevertheless, if there is the slightest hint of uncertainty about the ability of children to perceive whole words prior to learning the alphabet, the basic component of our system of language, then we must find out and find out as quickly as possible. The problem should not be a question of "if" but rather "when" and "how." If there is any doubt in an area as sensitive and crucial as the basic techniques used in the initial exposure to the printed word, the course of action should be evident. The search for truth will never be served by vacillation and indecision. Education must never be allowed to become a static, dead thing, satisfied only with past ideas and concepts. It must strive persistently to be objective and honest in accepting the possibility of change when change is mandated. The worst possible evil that could befall education is the stagnation that is the inevitable result of self-satisfaction. If we are to continue to grow socially, economically and culturally, education must remain a dynamic, living force, true to the ideals of those curious, questioning minds that helped to shape the structure of democratic education as it exists today.

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3. It *Should* Look Right, by John E. Chappell*

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In answer to Louis Foley, the author of "It Doesn't *Look* Right," in the Summer, 1966 SPB, I would like to clarify the position of spelling reformers in general on the problem of spelling homophones in a revised English orthography. Mr. Foley bemoans as "too narrow and pedantic" the opinion of the reformers that all homophones should be spelled alike, even those which are now distinguished by different spellings. His mistake is in identifying *some* reformers (although probably a majority) with *all* reformers. There are in fact several proposed new spelling systems which maintain a wide variety of alternate spellings to distinguish homophones. Were I to put forth a complete new system, I would incorporate this feature myself. It seems to me, as to Mr. Foley, that it is indeed very important how a word *looks.* The look of a printed word is all we have to tell us of its meaning, whereas in speech, we have many gestures and intonations, with which we can distinguish homophones; and in general, we can by these devices render the context much more unambiguous than can be done in print. On this score, I disagree with both our indefatigable editor, Mr. Tune, and notable spelling reformer, Benjamin Franklin.

Mr. Tune, in his published reply to Mr. Foley, points out that thousands of English words now have more than one meaning and yet only one spelling; and we manage to distinguish these meanings .without differences in spelling. I would answer that it is not always easy to make such a distinction. Even in the sample sentence he used, with different meanings of "bay," it was not readily apparent that the third instance of the word meant "bay window" rather than "inlet" once again. We could well do with *additional* distinctive spellings to distinguish some multiple meaning words not now distinguished. Mr. Tune also maintains that of two homophones, the one which is least needed gradually fades out of use, in order to avoid confusion; and he cites the example of "boy" replacing "son" in order to avoid confusion with "sun." I do not find this example convincing. I recognize no such tendency, and if it does exist, it is a good argument in itself why we *should* be able to distinguish "son" from "sun" without doubt, at least in print. For we need "son" as well as "boy"; they are not exact synonyms no matter how much they overlap. The purists among phonemic ("phonetic") reformers worry over exact symbol-sound correspondence too much. They forget that each phoneme contains many phones, or sounds, and that different speakers and different dialects use different ones of these phones without being misunderstood, because there is no case where different phones within the same phoneme distinguish different meanings. (If they did, they would be grouped into another phoneme, by definition of the word "phoneme"). This means that since phonemes themselves are not precise and single valued, it is foolish to pretend that symbols can be so, either.

What is more, the variations within even standard dialects are such that in some cases even more than one phoneme is included within the acceptable pronunciations. This is especially true of diphthongs, such as the diphthong now spelled often by the letter "i" (long). Some speakers begin this with the vowel in c*a*t, and others with the vowel in c*o*t. Some speakers end it with the vowel in

s*i*t, and others with the vowel in s*ea*t. This is all within conventional usage, and no one pretends to dictate which of the 4 possible ways of pronouncing 'i' is *the* standard pronunciation; it is very difficult to distinguish one from the other anyway, to ears which are not well trained to note the differences. Then if, for example, we had a spelling system in which *cat, cot*, *sit,* and *seat*, were spelled (as in I.P.A.) as kæt, kɒt, sɪt, sit, respectively, we could spell the diphthong "i" four ways: æɪ, æi, ɒɪ, ɒi. Thus the three homophones "I", "eye", and "aye" would have four available spellings, of which only three would be needed. None of the spellings would do violence to the phonetic principle, because each one would reflect the pronunciation of at least part of the population which speaks the standard dialect.

Now of course, not all homophones can be handled so satisfactorily. There is less variation in the single vowel in s*ea*t than in the diphthong "i:' But eve" here, we have a difference of opinion among phonetic experts: some think this vowel is a separate phoneme, and others think it consists of the vowel in sit plus the semi-vowel y. If even the experts cannot agree on this matter, what harm would it be in terms of phonetic principles to have two alternate spellings for this vowel? In terms of the symbols used above, we could then spell "peek" as "pɪk", and "peak" as "piyk," retaining the distinction in written language which now exists, without violating any sacred principle.

In some cases, we might be forced to use double letters in order to get a pair or trio of spellings for homophone sets. Why not? What is unphonetic about double letters - especially consonants? They might suggest a slightly longer hold on the given phoneme, but scarcely enough to confuse us as to the true sound. The main problem with double letters would arise where they might be confused with other, different letters in handwriting; thus two successive "u" symbols might be mistaken for "w" plus "i" with careless omission of the dot. In this case we would try to avoid "uu" in our spelling, on the basis that it should *look right.* Which is where all this began.

Comments on the above, by Newell W. Tune.

I think Mr. Chappell missed the *importance* of the point that thousands of words have from 10 to 101 meanings, yet are each spelled in only one way. Would you think it necessary to have 5 or more ways of spelling *bay* or *spring* in order to distinguish the meanings? If so, 1000 words times 10 to 101 meanings would make a prodigious number of unnecessary spelling exceptions to burden our already overworked children. If you start changing a few words, which shall they be and where do you draw the line and say this is not necessary to be respelled, etc.?

The main point I was trying to make is that two or more spellings for the same sounding word is an unnecessary luxury we do not need and cannot afford when we are trying to make the learning and teaching of English the easiest possible by a phonetic spelling. Anything that greatly increases the difficulty of teaching lessens its chances of acceptance.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1966 p7 in the printed version]

4. Oh, (P)shaw! , by Godfrey Dewey, Ed.D.

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To state the conclusion before the premises, I regard the Shaw alphabet bequest as the greatest missed opportunity in the 400-year history of English spelling reform. Had the competition for a "Proposed British Alphabet" produced a notation sufficiently compatible with our present "Dr. Johnson's Alphabet" to be measurably self-reading by one who had never studied the key, the enormous publicity value of Shaw's prestige might have made it the shot heard 'round the world. When, however, the Public Trustee decided to interpret Shaw's instructions to exclude all alphabets which *supplemented* the Roman alphabet and consider only those which *supplanted* it, the resounding shot was inevitably reduced to a damp firecracker.

Shaw's intention for the new alphabet was to "use it side by side with the present lettering until the better ousts the worse." For this, the decision of the Public Trustee was completely self-defeating, for whereas a notation which was at least intelligible to a reader who knew nothing of the code employed might conceivably make headway by virtue of the time and space savings which Shaw stressed to the exclusion of all else, as well as the no less important educational advantages which he ignored, it is inconceivable that anyone would use for purposes of written communication, let alone print, a medium which to the person who had not previously studied the key would be a wholly unintelligible cipher. Furthermore, for the English-speaking peoples to cut themselves off from the Roman alphabet common to most of the Western world and much of the East would be to erect a new and formidable barrier to fluent international communication, whereas the adoption of a phonemic notation, which was essentially a compatible extension of the familiar Roman alphabet would greatly strengthen the already marked trend toward English as the international auxiliary language of the world.

Mr. Kingsley Read has done a brilliant job within the limitation imposed by the Public Trustee, but those limitations involve a fallacy or contradiction, apparently overlooked or ignored by Shaw himself: the idea that one set of letter forms could be at the same time the most suitable for writing and for printing. For *any* written or printed communication, a one sign, one sound phonemic notation will save just about one character in six, or about 17%. For the whole English-speaking world this primary saving runs to stupendous figures, tho by no means as large as Shaw's hyperbole implied. For individual letter forms, however, the chief factor for handwriting, whether longhand or shorthand (Kingsley Read's Shaw alphabet falls between the two), which is written once and read in general only once or twice, is in the hand; whereas, for printing, which is set once and read 10,000 or 10,000,000 times, it is in the eye. In handwriting, a 6-stroke letter, such as *m* takes 3 times as long to write as a 2-stroke letter, such as *e;* in printing, or typing (which is so rapidly displacing handwriting), one is set or struck just as quickly as the other. New letters congruent with the present Roman alphabet should, of course, be susceptible of equally fluent manual execution, but the effort to effect further secondary savings of time or space, beyond the 17% inherent in any phonemic notation, by designing wholly new letters must constantly sacrifice that maximum legibility which should be the paramount consideration, since it affects not just one writer, but a million readers. For those writers for whom saving time and effort is a major consideration, a simple legible shorthand with a roughly one to one correspondence to the phonemic alphabet offers far more than any makeshift compromise with print forms.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1966 pp8–12,7 in the printed version]
[i.t.a. letter pairs marked in green, e.g. ee should be joined. The base of t of th in that curls to the left and the crosspiece touches the h; the base of t in th as in thread curls to the right as in T.O.]

5. Culturally Disadvantaged Children's Difficulties in Learning to Read Using T.O. & i.t.a. by Mrs. Doreen M. Lewis, Honour B.A.*

*Research Assistant, Board of Education, Toronto, Canada. Copies of the complete report may be obtained from the Research Dept, Toronto Board of Education, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. ($1.00 per copy) This 78-page report documents the difficulties with extensive illustrative material.

Introduction.

In the month of September, 1963, a two year study was initiated under the direction of Dr. E. N. Wright of the Toronto Board of Education to observe beginning reading difficulties of 39 kindergarten primary children. With a few exceptions, the children chosen were of below-average ability. They had just completed all or part of a kindergarten year and none could read when the study began. Their progress in reading was expected to be slow. They had been placed in two classes (each in a proximal downtown school) because of any or all of the following disadvantages: differing ethnic origin (primarily Italian), limited experiences, lower mental ability, or immaturity.

The study was to be of a preliminary nature, recording through close and continual observation, the kinds of reading difficulties that arose and those that were perpetuated. Kinds of errors, rather than frequency was to be noted; no controlled study was intended.

Culture and Home Conditions of the i.t.a. children.

From the school nurse's reports and from information contained in teacher-parent correspondence, it was apparent that 14 of the children in this classroom came from homes in which one of the following conditions existed: over-crowding, lack of money, lack of food, noise, and in two cases, extreme dirtiness.

The 20 children included 7 children who had repeated kindergarten, as well as one child who was repeating grade one. Five children were from non-English speaking homes; three attended speech class, and one girl was blind in one eye. Except for a few, most could not speak in sentences, several had speech defects carried over from babyhood where no effort had been made to correct the speech pattern. Few had ever been off their street, and contact with the world around them was almost negligible. In a reading lesson (in the month of March) that involved a story about a train, few had ever seen one.

It is likely that this lack of experiences, accompanied by poor nutrition, and in some cases inadequate clothing and lack of sleep, all contributed to the slow pace of their learning.

Above all, it seemed that no one had ever talked to them to any extent or answered inquiring questions. Consequently when reading lessons began, they had no added advantage of having heard the words before they were required to read them. (If a child hears a word, and then recognizes it as a word he knows, i.e., one that is in his vocabulary, or one that he has heard in his family's speech, part of his problem is solved; he has only to learn to identify by sight what he already recognizes by ear.) Therefore, a great deal of time was spent in developing an ability to attach labels to objects. This deficiency, i.e., lack of labels for objects which are familiar to the middle-class child, must of

course not be confused with a mental lack on the part of the child. The things with which he was familiar would probably be just as foreign to the middle-class child. This lack did, however, slow the pace of beginning reading in the school environment for these i.t.a. children.

This lack of "labels" was obvious when the children were being instructed further in initial sounds. In April they were being shown a film strip of 'beginning sounds'. This consisted of six pictures of objects, four objects starting with the same sound, two objects different. Half the class did poorly, their problem compounded by the fact that they first had to puzzle over what the object was called, then say this unfamiliar word to themselves, and then make a decision as to what the first sound was. Examples of unfamiliar objects were a *radio,* a *tent,* a *feather,* a *snake.*

Cultural Problems of the T.O. Children.

All but two of the children in the T.O. classroom were from newly arrived Italian families. The language spoken at home was Italian. The children were well-clothed, and reasonably well-fed, but lived in a restricted atmosphere with little possibility for conversation except among themselves.

The first part of the school year had to be spent in teaching the children to speak English. Again much time was devoted to concepts and labels. The children were encouraged to talk in extended "talking-time" periods. They were also encouraged to bring things to school and these were examined and discussed at great length. Concepts about their daily school life were developed and enlarged. At the same time, much effort was spent in developing the senses, particularly the auditory sense-"repeat clapping," feeling the pressure of breath on the hands from different sounds, identifying sounds made behind a screen, etc. Tho all these reinforcements helped most of the children develop a phonetic ear, a few could not understand what they were supposed to hear. Because their initial language experiences were in Italian, many sounds were very difficult for the children to hear and vocalize, e.g., *th, wh, s.* A good deal of time was spent in looking at likes and differences in words, and uttering the words in "chorus" games.

Plural words were a problem; in their daily speech the children did not use plurals. Also the children normally placed the adjective after the noun in their speech. In "talking-time," it was always "seeds apple", and "in the book red." Despite the fact that the children's English speech was developing slowly, it was nevertheless encouraging to hear their earnest efforts.

Procedure.

After each class had two months of instruction in pre-reading skills and reading readiness, both began formal reading in November, using the Nisbet *Janet and John* Reading Series. The major difference in instruction was in the form of the print. One class used the series printed in traditional orthography (T.O.); the other class used the same series printed by Pitman in the Initial Teaching Alphabet (i.t.a.).

The two experienced teachers of the classes used their own accustomed methods of teaching. They did, however, meet with the research observer one afternoon per week during the first year to discuss their techniques, their programmes, and their problems.

The research observer spent a minimum of eight hours of the 25 hour school week in each classroom. Because of regular presence in the classrooms, familiarity with i.t.a., and complete co-operation of the teachers, the observer was readily accepted as part of the classroom routine, minimizing the effect of a visitor on the children's performance. Daily notes were kept on the children's reactions to aspects of the reading programme. The children were also given an

opportunity to work with the observer-reading to her, explaining pieces of work, and discussing their difficulties.

November and December were spent in observing the children learning their first words. From this period to the end of June, twelve informal reading samples were presented individually to the children in each class. These examples, along with a year's anecdotal record of each child's problems in daily reading lessons were used to analyze initial difficulties in learning to read.

The difference between the language used by the child (Italian) and that presented to him at school was a factor to be considered in each reading lesson. For the first year, *sparse oral vocabulary* and *lack* of *word concepts* were limiting factors in reading progress.

Problems of middle letter identification and plural endings were two of the major difficulties of both classes. Toward the end of the year, most of the T.O. children had mastered this type of word change. The problem of middle letter confusion seemed to stay with some of the i.t.a. children to the end of the year.

Capital letters posed a problem in the early part of the T.O. school year. This problem was overcome as the children encountered the capital letters repetitively in their readers, and in blackboard stories.

Visual as well as aural discrimination was a problem for the children no matter which print was being used. Both classes exhibited difficulties with words of similar configuration. As the reading vocabulary increased over the year, the incidence of substitution errors became more frequent. One factor compounding the difficulty was the presentation of material in the reader itself. The "Basic Whole-Word Series," rather than the "Basic Phonic Series," had been chosen for use by both teachers. The introduction in close succession of such words as: *want* and *went, red* and *ride, house* and *horse, are* and *were, will* and *with,* confused the slow readers. Tho the pace of introducing new words was slow, the confusion of similar words was most apparent. If the "Basic Phonic Series" had been used, possibly this difficulty might not have been so visible, as the word presentation is of a different order, and does not promote "like" word error. Also, with children who normally find the reading process easier to master, this type of "like" word error might not be a problem. With three children in the i.t.a. class, and four in the T.O. room, this was the case. For the remaining children, however, the problem remained thruout the first year.

Reverse Progression and Printing Reversals.

In the i.t.a. classes there were few observed instances of errors arising from reading reversals. The occasions of left to right progression errors were apparent were usually when a word game was being carried out. During the early months of reading in the T.O. class, there were frequent instances of children looking at a word or a sentence from right to left. There were also a few instances of children copying a word beginning at the last letter.

Hesitation Difficulties.

"Hesitation" refers to words children refused. These were words that they did not seem to be able to use any skill to solve to obtain pronunciation and context.

During the first half of the year's programme when the vocabulary load was small, the i.t.a. children did very well in their daily reading lessons. As the load increased, all but four found it increasingly

difficult to solve new words. Vocabulary retention for these children was minimal; continual lesson reinforcement was required.

In the T.O. class, words refused were usually those with no ready referent for the children, i.e., *and, the, are, there, is.*

During the last two months, the majority of the children applied the skills they had learned to solve unknown words. When context was missing, words were sometimes still refused. For example, one little boy sounded out the word *still* correctly. As he did not have a meaning for the word, nor understood the context of the sentence, the word was refused.

Plural Words.

As these Italian children in their early speech patterns had never used a plural s, they read plural words in the singular, for example: *kitten* for *kittens, boat* for *boats,* etc. The teacher spent much time indicating plural words to them. By the end of the year, the difficulty was apparent in the reading of only three children.

Different Printing.

A difficulty for three children arose involving a difference in print of the letters a and g. The children were taught these symbols as *a* and g. When they met these letters in a pre-primer as a and g, they did not recognize them as referring to any sounds they had been taught. As the year progressed, the children absorbed the identity of these strange letters and no further instance was observed of the letters a and g being refused.

Note: - As "Different Printing" difficulties were not observed in the i.t.a. room, this section was not included. In i.t.a. instruction, two forms of "a" are used, *a* and a, each with its own sound. The form g is used for g. If there was any difficulty, the observer was not present when errors occurred in the i.t.a. classroom.

Phonics.

Difficulties in phonic learning in both classes were compounded by such factors as speech defects, ethnic speech peculiar to the Italian children in each class, and the inability of the child to *hear* the sound. The difference between such sounds as *m* and *n, b* and *d, p* and *b* was particularly hard, and remained a problem thruout the year. The difficulty was completely divorced from the print medium.

Many errors in reading could be attributed to the child limiting himself to a minimal clue. It was obvious that one form of a clue was not enough; for example, knowing only the sound for the letter combination *sh* did not help the child solve the difference between *shall, ship,* or *shop.* Peculiar to both classrooms was the difficulty of being unable to *combine* such reading skills as: substitution, phonic clues, context, etc. to solve an unknown word. This could not be attributed to the teaching, as excellent lessons in reinforcement of word skills were continually being given at whatever reading level the child had reached.

It is recognized that no learning can be guaranteed. The observation of only two teaching attacks and a small number of unmatched children limits the amount of emphasis that can be placed on the difficulties encountered. An entirely different pattern may have emerged from different classroom environment. Other reasons for reading errors such as distraction, confusion, or disinterest, must not

be overlooked. Interpretation must remain open to question, tho the observations were as objective as possible.

Summary of the First Year of Reading Instruction.

Regardless of the alphabet that was used to teach beginning reading, certain difficulties encountered by the children were similar.

The main difficulties for the children in *both* classrooms observed were:

1. The inability of this type of child to retain skills to which he had been exposed. Added reinforcement by the teacher was needed constantly.
2. The inability of most of the children to use more than one skill in solving a reading problem. Each child tended to "give up" if the one skill he tried did not solve his reading problem.
3. Common difficulties were lack of visual and aural discrimination, plural endings, and confusion of words of similar configuration.
4. The major difficulty in reading was the difference between the language structure used by the child and that presented to him at school. This type of child arrives at school with sparse vocabulary, few concepts, and lacking many of the experiences known to other children. Consequently, the reading material that is presented to him, based on a middle-class environment, is an added handicap in mastering early reading. This type of child would possibly have more initial success if early reading material was geared closer to his own background.

Problems of reversals of such words as: *was* and *saw* (woz and sau) were more common in the standard print classroom than in the i.t.a. room.

Initial reading was easier for the i.t.a. children than for the T.O. children. There were, however, more non-English speaking children in the T.O. classroom. As both classes had competent teachers, however, the success in reading depended largely on each child's own ability and background.

No attempt was made to directly compare *progress* with the different reading media. As a matter of general observation, however, it appeared that i.t.a. offered a logical print which also eliminated the capital vs. lower case complexity of standard print. Further, i.t.a. alleviated problems of reading reversals observed in the standard print classroom. The i.t.a., however, did not appear to remedy the problem of words of like configuration,* nor could it compensate for a child's limited vocabulary.

(*Ed. note: this depends upon how reading is taught phonics vs. look-say.)

The results obtained within the limits of this study must be interpreted with care. No comparison between the two classes observed would be meaningful. As well as differences in age, language, background and mental ability, the children were in themselves subject to different time levels of development. There were observable developmental spurts and plateaux of learning within, as well as between, the classes. The teaching methods were not controlled, and this, combined with the differences already listed, make any type of comparison invalid.

It is important, however, to discuss exactly what i.t.a. can accomplish and how it can perhaps re-order the total philosophy of learning to read.

The i.t.a., by its changed orthography, has simplified the *initial* process of learning to read. It has taken into account, by as close a standard print correspondence as possible, the transfer back to traditional print. By the elimination of capitals and by the logical approach of only one sound for

each symbol, it has made the beginning task of learning to read easier. It is still, however, a simplification superimposed on a "method" used to teach children to read. Any method of teaching reading can be used with i.t.a. provided the books are available. In the basal readers used in this study, not i.t.a. alone, but such things as colour, illustration, vicarious enjoyment, etc., provided some of the initiative to learn to read. In an examination of the oral reading of the i.t.a. children in this study, it seemed that the simplification provided by i.t.a. made the reading task easier. However, the children did not all automatically learn to read well, at least over their first year of instruction. The fact remains that in many cases, more than i.t.a. is needed to make the type of child described in this report into a fluent reader. Oral language development must run ahead of reading development at all stages. When the child has little chance at home for verbal experiences, and when this type of experience is provided only in the school room, early progress in reading is bound to be slow.

Second Year of Study, 1964-1965. Introduction.

The second year of study involved the documentation of any continuing or new difficulties in the reading, writing, and spelling programmes *of the i.t.a. children only.* In this year, these children were to make the reading and writing transition to standard orthography. The current literature contained very little information concerning the nature of difficulties that a slow-learning child might have in making this transition. The intent, then, was to indicate, if possible, the types of problems that would be presented by a change in orthography.

During the two years of observation, four children transferred out of the i.t.a. classroom in the first year of instruction, and two children during the second year. Each of these children continued their schooling in a classroom in which traditional orthography was used. Their progress is reported separately.

The children in the original i.t.a. classroom were kept together for this second year of instruction, in the same school with the same teacher. The children were visited once a week from September to June. The research observer kept a running account of their year's reading, writing, and spelling programme, including the transition to T.O. at the end of January.

Programme in the i.t.a. classroom.

At the end of September, 1964, the i.t.a. children were divided into three groups, depending on ability. All instruction was given separately at the three levels. Each group was reading in a different i.t.a. reader. The supply of i.t.a. reading material was now greater; consequently the Janet and John transliterated series was dropped, and two new sets of i.t.a. readers used: the Downing i.t.a. series, and the *Early to Read Series.* Both series had great appeal for the children, the material in the latter series being much closer to the children's own environment. In this *Early to Read Series,* emphasis is on story content, and the vocabulary load is high. The authors contend that with the absence of traditional orthographic irregularities, new vocabulary can be introduced at a faster rate. Books 5 to 7 were too difficult for the children in this study, certainly in their first 12 months of reading instruction. This might not be the case for the average pupil.

The children in the three groups continued using the i.t.a. material until the end of January and completed the instructional reading to the following levels:

i.t.a. readers used	
Downing Series	Early to Read Series

	No. of	Primers	Revision Readers								
Groups	children	1 to 8	a	b	A	B	C	D	2	3	4
I	4	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	*	*	*
II	3	*	*	*	*	-	-	-	*	*(part	of)
III	9	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	*	-	-

As the children were all to be transferred to regular classrooms at the end of June, 1965, it was decided to make the reading transfer to traditional orthography at the end of January. As the teaching staff and the writer had had no previous experience with i.t.a., this decision was arbitrary. The i.t.a. books that were being used were replaced in the reading groups with standard print readers, at whatever reading level the children had reached. The *Nelson Series* and *Copp Clark Series* were used from the end of January until the end of June; in this period the pupils completed the following instructional reading materials - in standard print readers:

Groups	Surprises Off to School	Mr. Whiskers Come Along With Me	The Toy Box It's Story Time	Grade 2 level Magic and Make Believe
I	*	*	*	*
II	*	*	*	-
III	*	*	-	-

Factors Affecting Reading Progress.

In discussing continuing difficulties in reading, it is important to remember that the children were now a year older; they had had a year of language development, and because of the learning of many reading skills, few of the initial reading difficulties were evident. The two major types of reading errors recorded were substituting a "like" word for another, e.g. *then* for *when, will* for *woz*, *thæ* for *mæ, whær* for *thær,* and refusing a word after trying only one clue. For some of the children new words were hard to retain. This was particularly true as the reading vocabulary increased. For example, the word *hied* (hide) was not too difficult but when the story vocabulary extended to include *hieding* (hiding), and *hælding* (holding), they began to refuse words.

There were no observed instances of reversals, or progression from right to left, and only the odd instance of insertion of a word.

The main difference this year was in the children's patterns and attitudes to reading. They had developed a good listening ear for initial and final consonants. Few errors were made in oral reading, the difference between the three groups being more in speed and expression. The consistency of the i.t.a. vowel patterns seemed to aid these children in developing fluency in i.t.a. reading. The previous year had developed and established language patterns. This of course, aided the pupils both in understanding and enjoying what they read, as well as improving oral expression.

The children had not developed a large enough vocabulary in the previous year to produce much in the field of original writing. This term they all seemed to love to write. The writing was not always qualitatively excellent, but in all cases, the teacher commented that it was much better than she had experienced in previous years with the same type of child.

Instances of lack of necessary concepts still applied to approximately 50% of the children. As a consequence, much time had to be devoted to developing meaning for unfamiliar words and

phrases. Tho this learning was divorced from i.t.a., nevertheless the consistent pattern of i.t.a. made it easier to retain new words for which they now had meaning.

Transition to the Traditional Alphabet.

When discussing transitional difficulties, a differentiation must be made between reading transition, writing transition, and spelling transition. Each presents a different type of problem, the reading transition being the least of these.

Reading Transition.

Two weeks prior to the introduction of standard print readers, capital letters were introduced both in word games and in the use of a simple spelling workbook. A few of the capitals caused initial difficulty with a few of the children, especially when sound-symbol irregularity occurred, e.g. who (hω), away (awæ); I (ıe); q and x (new letters) etc. Generally speaking, after the first three weeks of transition, capitals were accepted, and were not a large factor in reading transfer difficulty.

Vowel symbol change, and changes in verb tense provided problems for some of the children, especially those with more limited ability. Such changes as blω to blue, cum to come, cæm to come, were frequently misread. This also applied to words that had no "sound to symbol" relationship. For the word once *(*wuns in i.t.a.), the children tended to call it *one.* Other words, such as *night, through, rough* (niet, thrω, ruf in i.t.a.) had to be solved from context clues. Generally speaking, however, there were no sustained difficulties in making the *reading* transfer.

Transitional Printing.

The transition to writing or printing traditional symbols naturally was not accomplished immediately. The children had spent several months writing their own stories in i.t.a. and using their own phrasing. When the reading transition was made, the printing transition was begun, first with capitals. The children were then taught to print families of words that involved the splitting of the i.t.a. vowel symbols, such as æ; in short, the learning of the long-a, e.g., mæk, tæk, cæk, to make, take, cake. These lessons continued through the long and short vowels, and the silent e. Other lessons included the change in the i.t.a. symbols ch, ʃh, th, th, to the digraphs ch, sh, and th.

Endings such as *ed* and *ing* were also taught in lesson form. Also, no opportunity was missed in any reading session to point out the differences exhibited in the traditional alphabet.

There was naturally a tendency toward phonetic spelling exhibited in the children's free writing. This tendency toward phonetic spelling is exhibited by most children in this stage of reading and writing development. Observations made and samples collected in a regular grade two classroom in which only the traditional alphabet had been taught, exhibited the same kind of spelling as that of the children in this study. From this regular (T.O.) grade 2 classroom, writings were collected containing the following spelling:

--She was walking hom.
--He was lost. He did not no were his Mother was.
--Miss Ikeda is a grade too teacher. She is very pretty.
--I like to play outsied.
--I like to go to Ab's hous.
--Mrs. Banks spok to us when the esble (assembly) was on.

The major difference in the writings of the children in this regular grade two classroom and the writings of the children in this study was in quality. There was abundant quantity of writing from all the i.t.a., T.O. children, but the quality depended on the individual ability of the child. Considering the abilities of the children being studied, their writings were very encouraging.

Spelling in Transition.

Normally for a kindergarten primary pupil, formal spelling would not be given until the child had reached a grade two reading level. As some of the children were going to a grade three programme the following year after this study, some formal spelling was given and was helpful in examining differences in i.t.a. and T.O. symbol changes. From an examination of their spelling efforts, it appeared that there was little trouble with word families, or consistent spelling patterns, but difficulties were largely with the traditional orthographic inconsistencies, for example, *knife* was spelled *nief, pear* was spelled *pare,* and *pencil* was spelled *pensil.* There was no trouble with such words as *cake, pump,* or *fork.*

By June, the spelling in original writing was almost entirely in the traditional alphabet, except for the four children in the class who had shown the least ability. They still retained vestiges of i.t.a. printing, and particularly resorted to i.t.a. when they could not visualize the T.O. word. This was different from the rest of the children who would, in the same situation, resort to phonetic spelling.

With reference to free writing, the question is asked: "Will the children retain an enthusiasm for writing?" The children did a great deal of free writing during their period with i.t.a. With the four slower children in the class, this enthusiasm for writing lessened when they began printing in T.O. The other children continued to enjoy free story writing periods, and spelled phonetically the words they did not know. If in their future programmes, writing is encouraged, with no undue emphasis on spelling, then the outlook for original stories from some of these children would be optimistic.

Academic Progress in the Second Year.

For the third year of instruction, the i.t.a. children observed in this study had advanced to the following stages:

five children were placed in a grade three programme;
nine children were placed in a grade two programme;
four children placed in a grade two programme on trial;
two children were placed in an opportunity class.

Three of the four children placed in grade two on trial were Italian New Canadians who needed a great deal of help in language before beginning to read. Considering their lack of English at the beginning of their kindergarten primary year, they had learned a great deal.

The above classification includes six children who transferred out of the i.t.a. class.

Transferred Children.

In the first year, none of the four children who transferred were at a reading level that would enable them to continue in a T.O. classroom without some additional instruction. Consequently all four children received reading instruction from the research observer in their new schools.

Generally, no serious problems arose with the transfer of any of these children. Each child's progress was followed, and instruction in transition provided. This was considered as essential as

personnel in the new schools were not always familiar with the initial teaching alphabet. In each case, the principal of the school was visited and the programme in which the child had been involved was explained.

Discussion of Transferred Children.

A child will only make an easy and successful transfer to traditional spelling *if* he has experienced a great deal of reading. Reference is made to reading at any level, not particularly advanced material. The i.t.a. affords this opportunity. It seems easier to master because of its reliability; the children appear to have more confidence in beginning reading; and the material is available. However, if the child has not had enough exposure to print in the form of reading, as opposed to words and word analysis, an early transfer is both confusing and difficult. The child then has difficulty understanding the concept of a group of printed words in proper sequence telling him something. With the added problem of symbol change at a time when the i.t.a. symbols have not been thoroly mastered, the transfer is not made with facility. Each child was moved to a classroom in which a traditional-type programme was being used. If the experience approach method of reading had been used the difficulties of transfer might have been lessened.

In answer to the question "Would each of these early-transferred children have been farther ahead if they had experienced their limited learning in traditional print?", the answer would appear to be negative, i.e., the i.t.a. made no difference to their position. This was predetermined by the type of class to which they had been exposed, namely a kindergarten primary where the accent was on activity and language experience.

One thing was apparent, each of these children attacked the new programme of traditional print without temerity. They had not seemed to experience much frustration in learning to read with this easier alphabet, and so adopted a bright outlook toward their new T.O. reading programme.

Summary.

This second year of study was concerned with reading difficulties encountered by slow-learning pupils using the initial teaching alphabet, during the transition from this alphabet to traditional orthography, and using traditional orthography. Because of the changed orthography in initial reading, it was not assumed that these children would all become fluent readers with no problems whatsoever. They had come to school with sparse vocabulary, and had not had all of the advantages of some middle-class children to aid them in beginning to read in the school environment. The proponents of the i.t.a. itself do not claim that the purpose of this alphabet is to show dramatic differences in reading achievement. It has been stated that "the purpose of this alphabet medium, approximating the traditional, is to insure that the beginning stages of reading are as natural as possible, that reading begins without frustration, that the child learns reading and writing easily, and that after he has developed his code-breaking skills to an efficient level, his transfer to traditional print be as simple and effective as possible." (Mazurkiewicz, 1965). [1]

In the light of this purpose of i.t.a., one must first consider the beginning stages of reading. For the i.t.a. children, this was a period of language and experience learning. No reading was possible until the following had been developed - listening, touching, feeling, and speaking. When the children began reading, they seemed to find the experience enjoyable. Part of the credit must be attributed to the enthusiasm of the teacher, as well as to i.t.a. The i.t.a. did make the earlier task easier, and there was no child who "did not want to read." This does not mean that they all read fluently, but rather than at whatever level they had attained, they did not consider their reading periods a chore.

This was partially due to the type of material that can be presented in i.t.a., both in original material and in readers. Because of the consistency of the i.t.a. symbol, the *Early-to-Read Series* made less use of repetition and vocabulary control, and placed more emphasis on the con*tent* of stories which were closer to the child's own vocabulary, language pattern and experience. The important factor would seem to be that this can be done where the impact of reading as an enjoyable experience should be the greatest, i.e., in the first pre-primer.

Because of the consistency of i.t.a., it was easier for the child to have his listening and speaking vocabulary become his reading vocabulary. This was a particular advantage considering the ability of the children in this study. At the same time, however, the transition, particularly in writing, presented the problem of learning, then partial unlearning. To overcome this problem, adequate time must be allowed to make the transition completely, especially with the slow-learning child. For the children in this study, writing and spelling transition certainly did not occur simply and easily. It was instead a gradual, transition becoming easier each day as the child familiarized himself with the standard alphabetic symbols in word and sentence patterns.

With reference to spelling and the below-average child, this again would seem to depend upon the time allowed for transition and the care employed in accounting for all the many intricacies of the inconsistent traditional alphabet.

Little has been published to use as a guide in this respect. Formal tests given in Britain and the United States tend to indicate that i.t.a. children have not been handicapped in later spelling. Greater insight might have been gained by examining spelling in reference to daily work and original writing rather than in terms of standardized tests.

Story writing in i.t.a. was enjoyed and practised voluntarily by the children. Again, considering their ability, this seemed to be an advantage in using this easier alphabet. This free writing diminished with the less able children when they began printing in traditional orthography. With the other children, continuation of writing would seem depend upon the degree of emphasis placed upon spelling and neatness, the teacher's enthusiasm for spontaneous writing regardless of mistakes, and enough time to absorb traditional orthographic patterns thoroughly.

In conclusion, observation did indicate that the small heterogeneous class who learned to read through the medium of i.t.a. enjoyed their two years of reading instruction. It is possible that i.t.a. of itself helped to foster this. The retention of this interest - an important goal in an early reading programme - may in turn be a function of i.t.a. It is too early, however, and a matter beyond the scope of this report, to weigh the value of this "interest" factor against the possible disadvantage of writing and spelling transition.

[1] Mazurkiewicz, A.J. *A Tiger by the Tail*, Toronto: Initial Teaching, 1965, pp. 11-12.

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6. An Introduction to Pronunciation of the English Language, by Axel Wijk, Docent.*

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It is a generally recognized fact that the English language presents far greater difficulties with regard to its pronunciation than any other European language. This does not mean that foreigners find it particularly hard to acquire a correct pronunciation of the various speech sounds of which English is made up. From this point of view, English is not harder to learn than many other languages. Instead the difficulties referred to are concerned solely with the fact that the confusing and irregular spelling of the language offers such a poor guidance as to its pronunciation. There is hardly a letter or a combination of two or three letters in the English alphabet which cannot be pronounced in two or three different ways, and a good many of them actually have from half a dozen to a dozen different pronunciations. Since the rules for the distribution of the sounds represented by the various letters and combinations of letters are fairly complicated, and since the exceptions to the rules are particularly numerous among the commonest words of the language, foreigners who wish to learn English have usually found it necessary to employ a special phonetic transcription in order to cope with these difficulties. A further proof of the exceptional difficulty of English pronunciation is afforded by the fact that English dictionaries, even those that are mainly intended for native speakers, always indicate the pronunciation of each individual word, whereas such information is not normally considered necessary in dictionaries for other European languages, for example for French, Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Russian, Polish, Finnish, Hungarian, etc. As far as French is concerned, we should note that its rules of pronunciation must on the whole be regarded as extremely reliable, whereas the correct writing of the language offers considerable difficulties even to native speakers. In English, on the other hand, it is both the pronunciation and the correct spelling of the language that are exceptionally difficult.

It may be of interest to state briefly the reasons why English spelling is so much less satisfactory than the spelling of other European languages. There are mainly two reasons for this. In the first place, the English spelling system arose during the late Middle Ages through a merger of two completely different languages, Anglo-Norman French and native English. It therefore represents a mixture of the principles of two very different orthographical systems, one of Romance and the other of Teutonic origin. Secondly, English spelling has remained essentially the same since the days of Caxton and the other early printers in spite of the fact that the language has undergone very sweeping changes in its pronunciation, especially in the case of the vowel sounds. As a result of these changes, English vowels have in a very large number of words assumed totally different values from those that are found in the corresponding words in the related languages on the Continent.

In spite of the impression of hopeless confusion that the English language at first makes on the foreign learner, its pronunciation is in fact not nearly as confused as most people' are apt to think. When we come to examine the question more closely, we shall indeed find that this impression is very largely wrong, for the vast majority of English words, about 90% of the total vocabulary, do in fact follow certain regular patterns in regard to their spelling and pronunciation. [1] It is therefore well worth while making oneself familiar with the general rules that govern English pronunciation.

Since for lack of space, it would not be possible to show in the present work how the above figure concerning the percentage of regularity in English spelling has been arrived at, I must refer the

reader who would like to study the question more thoroly, to the detailed investigation of this problem that I have made in my book, *Regularized English,* published by the Univ. of Stockholm in 1959.

When at first English spelling makes an impression of excessive irregularity, this is very largely due to the fact that so many of the irregular words are to be found among the commonest in the language. Thus, among the first thousand of the commonest words, as given for example in Thorndike and Lorge, *The Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words,* no less than 160, i.e. 16%, must be considered irregular with regard to the spelling of either vowel or consonant sounds. And since the first thousand of the commonest words usually make up about 85% of the number of running words on an average page (cf. H. Bongers, *The History and principles of Vocabulary Control,* Chapters XI and XII), one is easily misled into believing that English spelling is far more irregular than it actually is. If we examine the second and third thousand of the commonest words, which together make up about 95% of the number of running words on the average page, we shall find that they contain an additional 140 words, i.e. 7% of whose spellings are considered irregular in some respect. From these facts it may be calculated that from 15 to 20% of the words on an average page normally display irregular spellings, a calculation that may easily be confirmed by sampling. In the next following three thousands of the commonest words the percentage of irregularity remains at about 7% but then falls to about 6%.

It should perhaps be pointed out in this connection that in addition to the words which display distinctly irregular spellings, there are on the average page various other types of words which deviate with regard to their pronunciation of certain letters or combinations of letters from the normal sounds of the letters in question. Thus we have for example a fairly large group of words in which the letter *a* has its so-called 'broad' sound, as generally found for instance in 'father', instead of its regular long or short sounds as in 'make' and 'man.' It is especially common in British English before certain consonants or consonant combinations, for example in 'staff, after, dance, branch, demand, grant, ask, grasp, grass, master,' etc. Since the letter *a* is the only symbol that is used in present-day English to represent this sound, except for the combination *ar* in final and preconsonantal position, we cannot very well regard it as an irregular spelling. Another case in point is the final combination *-all,* which is always pronounced like 'aul' in 'haul,' except in the single word 'shall' and in one or two proper names. Similarly the final combination *-ow* in unstressed syllables always represents the long sound of *o,* as in 'follow, narrow,' where as its normal pronunciation in stressed syllables is the one found in such words as 'now, brown.' There are several more groups of words of this kind, which display irregular pronunciations rather than irregular spellings.

A different type of deviation is found in the case of the letter *s,* for which the commonest pronunciation is undoubtedly the voiceless s-sound. The corresponding voiced sound is, however, of such frequent occurence that its representation by *s* cannot very well be regarded as an irregular spelling, in spite of the fact that we have a special letter, *z*, which always stands for this sound. This use of *s* for the voiced sound is a serious defect in the spelling system which causes great difficulties to all foreigners who want to learn the language. There are many more similar cases where the present spelling of either vowel or consonant sounds cannot be said to provide satisfactory guidance as to the pronunciation.

In this connection, we may also mention the common irregular use of the final silent *e.* Normally it is used at the end of stressed and unstressed syllables after a simple vowel plus a single consonant to indicate the long pronunciation of the vowel, as for instance in 'make, these, life, hope, use, care, here, fire, cure, celebrate, concrete, appetite, anecdote, execute,' etc. In a very considerable number of words this final *e* is also found when the preceding vowel does not have its regular long pronunciation, as for instance in 'have, give, live, gone, dove, come, done, above, move, are,

accurate, definite, examine, active,' etc. For further information on these matters, I must refer the reader to the detailed statistics given in the Appendices of my book, *Regularized English.*

If it is argued that the above and similar cases should be included among the irregular spellings, as seems quite reasonable, the percentage of irregularity would go up to about 10% in the total vocabulary and to about 30% on an average page of prose.

Since such a large number of irregular spellings are found among the *commonest words in the language,* it is obvious that there would *not be much sense in foreigners making any systematic study of the rules of pronunciation* when they begin their study of the language. At this stage the best method - if it can be called a method - will undoubtedly be *to learn the pronunciation of each new word* that they come across, by itself, either from a teacher or with the help of some kind of phonetic transcription, but without much reference to any rules for the pronunciation of the various letters or combinations of letters of which the words are made up. Not until they have acquired a fairly large basic vocabulary, does it become worth while making a more detailed study of the general rules and principles which are inherent in the English spelling system. It follows from this that the present work is only intended for advanced students.

As this is not a handbook of English phonetics, no attempt is made to describe the formation of the various English speech sounds. Since our main purpose is instead to give a detailed account of the relationship between spelling and pronunciation, we shall only occasionally need to employ phonetic transcriptions. In these we will use the notation generally found in modern textbooks and dictionaries. Among the latter we should particularly mention Daniel Jones' *Pronouncing Dictionary* for British English, and Kenyon and Knott's for American English.

Owing to the comparatively large number of exceptions to the rules of pronunciation, especially among the commonest words, it will be essential to supply lists of all the more important of these exceptions. Generally speaking, it will be attempted to include at least all those exceptions that are found among the twenty thousand commonest words in the language, as given in Thorndike and Lorge.

As for the difference in pronunciation between the two principal varieties of English, cultivated British and cultivated American English, it should first be noted that this difference is not reflected in the spelling. Those minor deviations in spelling which we now find in American English and which were introduced by Noah Webster a little over a hundred years ago, the replacement of *-our, -re, -ce* and *ll* by *-or, -er, -se* and single *l* in certain words, cannot be said to have any phonetic significance whatever. As is well known, American English differs mainly from British in three respects: with regard to the pronunciation of the letter *a* in such words as 'after, dance, demand, grant, ask, grass, fast, bath, half,' etc., with regard to the short sound of the letter *o* in such words as 'common, doctor, folly, hot,' etc., and with regard to the pronunciation of the letter *r* in final and preconsonantal position. But in none of these respects does the difference in pronunciation find expression in the spelling. The general rules for the relationship between spelling and pronunciation which are given in the present work, may therefore, on the whole, be said to apply to an equal degree to both British and American English. As it is sometimes necessary, however, to indicate the pronunciation of various symbols more exactly, i.e. by the use of phonetic transcription, I have found it more practical to base my account of the general rules on British English in the first place. I have then pointed out American deviations whenever they seemed important, but have not been able to pay attention to various minor details.

On account of the numerous irregularities and anomalies of English spelling, it would seem that many people have got exaggerated ideas as to the number of symbols that are used to render the various existing speech sounds. It may therefore be appropriate to conclude this introduction by

giving a brief survey of the speech sounds or phonemes that are found in present-day Standard English and of the various symbols that are used to represent them in the written form of the language.

We find in British Standard English 46 different speech sounds, 21 vowels and diphthongs and 25 consonants:

Simple vowels and diphthongs

[æ] as in 'land'
[ɑ] as in 'calm, car'
[e] as in 'bed'
[ɪ as in 'did, happy'
[ɪ:] as in 'see'
[ɔ] as in 'stop'
[ɔ:] as in 'law, for'
[ʌ] as in 'run'
[u] as in 'good, full'
[u:] as in 'do, true, cube' [kju:b]
[ə:] as in 'serve, bird, turn'
[ə] as in '*a*way, sof*a*'
[ei] as in 'name'
[ai] as in 'fine'
[au] as in 'now'
[oi] as in 'boy'
[ou] as in 'go'
[ɛa] as in 'care'
[iə] as in 'here'
[ɔə] as in 'more'
[uə] as in 'poor, pure' [pjuə]

(Note also the tripthongs [aiə, auə, eiə. ouə] as in 'fire, our, layer, mower.')

The following 60 symbols are normally used to represent the above vowels and diphthongs in the written language:
a, e, i, y, o, u; ar, er, ir, yr, or, ur; aa, ae, æ, ai, ay, au, aw; ea, ee, ei, ey, eu, ew; ie, ye; oa, oe, œ, oi, oy, oo, ou, ow; ue, ui, uy; aer, air, ayr; ear, eer, eir, eyr, eur, ew(e)r; iar, ier, yer; oar, oor, our, ow(e)r; uer; igh, aigh, augh, eigh, ough.

The consonants

b, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, ŋ, p, r, s, z, t, v, w, hw, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, ʤ, þ, ð - 25.
(Note that here the letters only stand for their phonetic values.)

In the written language, the above 25 consonant sounds are normally represented by the following 44 symbols:
b, c, ch, d, dg, f, g, gh, gn, gu, h, j, k, l, m, n, ng, p, ph, q, qu, r, s, sc, sch, sh, si, ssi, sci, ti, ci, ce, t, tch, th, u, v, w, wh, x, xc, y, z, zi -44.

We should further note that many of the above symbols occur double, namely the following 15: bb, cc, dd, ff, gg, ck or cq (instead of 'kk'), ll, mm, nn, pp, rr, ss, tt, vv, zz.

If we add up the vowel and consonant symbols, we find that apart from the double consonants, the 46 sounds of the spoken language are normally represented by 102 symbols in the written language (60 plus 44 minus 2, since *u* and *y* stand for both vowel and consonant sounds, as in: cup, persuade, pity, yes.)

For many of the consonant symbols their normal sound agrees closely with the values of the same letters in the ordinary phonetic alphabet. This holds good for the following 13 symbols: b, d, f, h, k, 1, m, n, p, r, t, v, w. For these there is consequently no need to give any further rules concerning their pronunciation, unless they stand for more than one sound in the written language, as happens to be the case with four of them: *d, f, n,* and *t*. It should further be emphasized that the mere fact that the above letters are also normally used in the phonetic alphabet, does not imply that their sounds in English are always completely identical with the corresponding sounds in other languages.

For the remaining 31 consonant symbols, we shall have to indicate the pronunciation by the use of the appropriate phonetic symbol or symbols. Though more than half of them actually stand for two or more sounds in the written language, it cannot be said that they present such great difficulties as we are confronted with for the simple vowels and the vowel digraphs. The main reason for this is the fact that the consonants have been the stable element in the English sound system and have hardly undergone any changes at all since the spelling of the language became fixed in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries. Of the notable exceptions, we may mention the loss of *g, k* and w in the initial combinations: *gn, kn* and *wr* and the weakening or disappearance of the letter *r* in final and preconsonantal position. (Southern British pronunciation.)

As for the above-mentioned occurence of double consonants, we should note that they are found in both medial and final position and that they never indicate any difference in the quality or the length of the consonant sound in question. They are always pronounced as one sound except in a few words with *cc* before *e* or *i*, as in 'accent, accept, succeed, accident,' etc., and occasionally in American English in one word with *gg,* in 'suggest.' In the medial position they generally serve to indicate the short sound of the previous stressed vowel, as in 'rabbit, beggar, dinner, follow, puppet,' etc., but in the final position they cannot be said to have any function whatever in this respect, since the preceding vowel is here usually short both before a single and a double consonant. Compare for example, 'ebb-web, odd-nod, cliff-if, egg-beg, fuss-bus,' etc. We may further note that on the whole it is only four or five consonants that are doubled in this position, namely *f*, *k* (as *ck), l, s* and sometimes also *z*, but that the former are doubled almost regularly. For the remaining consonants doubling is quite exceptional in this position,

Before passing on to the account of the individual consonant symbols, we should finally point out that there are quite a few words in present-day English in which we find silent consonant letters and all consonant symbols can occur as silent letters in some words.

Spelling Reform Proposals

From the numerous and sometimes very long lists of exceptions to the General Rules of Pronunciation that were given in the chapters of this book, the reader will have gained an overwhelming impression of the anomalous state of affairs in English orthography. In the introduction it was emphasized, however, that this impression is very largely wrong, for the *vast majority of English words do in fact follow certain regular patterns in their spelling.* It is important to stress this fact, since we often meet with exaggerated notions in regard to the lack of correspondence between spelling and pronunciation. Thus, for example, the American Simplified Spelling Board were guilty of such exaggeration when they stated in their *Handbook of Simplified Spelling* (part 2, p. 9) that 'the current English orthography bears no relation to the present pronunciation, that it is at best an imperfect attempt to represent that of the Elisabethan period, and that English pronunciation has become almost entirely a matter of oral tradition.'

But even though English orthography is by no means as irregular as might first appear, when one considers the long lists of more or less anomalous spellings, it is nevertheless obvious that it must be *extremely difficult* to learn to read and write a language which displays such a large number of common words with 2, 3, 4 or more pronunciations for the same letter or for the same combination of letters. That foreigners find it difficult, is not surprising, but it is almost equally difficult for native speakers of English. It has been estimated that it takes an English-speaking child from one to two years longer to learn to read and write his language than it takes the children of other nations to achieve similar results in their languages (cf. *Handbook of Simplified Spelling,* part 2, p. 18). Consequently, if an orthographical system for English could be devised which would be just as simple, regular and logical as those found in most other European languages, it would be possible for all English-speaking children to save at least one year's work.

But this tremendous saving of time and labour would not be the only important aspect of the question. Perhaps even more important would be the fact that such a reform of English spelling would make it possible for English-speaking children to learn to read and write *in the same way as the children of other nations,* i.e. by using and *training their sense of logic* instead of training and relying mainly on their eye-memory, learning words by heart without much reference to the sounds of the letters of which they are composed. That the present system of orthography, or rather the apparent lack of system, constitutes a very serious obstacle to the development of the child's reasoning powers is a fact that cannot be denied.

The reasons advanced above are of course more than sufficient to prove the need for a reform of English spelling and to indicate the enormous benefits to be gained thereby. There are, however, a number of other reasons as well and at least one of them ought to be specially emphasized in this connection. Owing to the exceptional difficulty of the present English spelling system, a certain not inconsiderable proportion of the population of the English-speaking countries are now unable to achieve real literacy in their mother tongue. This was clearly shown by an official investigation into reading ability carried out in 1948 by a small committee of experts at the request of the then Minister of Education in Great Britain, Mr. George Tomlinson. In this investigation, reported in the Ministry of Education Pamphlet # 18, entitled *Reading Ability,* no less than 30% of all 15-year-olds were classified as backward readers, i.e. as having reading ages more than 20% below their chronological ages. Furthermore 1.4% of these were illiterate and 4.3% semi-literate, with reading ages of below 7 years and between 7 and 9 years respectively. In a similar sample of adult males, the proportion of backward readers was found to be 16%, including 1.0% illiterates and 2.6% semi-literates respectively. Since the vast majority of children in Great Britain only attend elementary schools up to the age of 15, it is obvious that there is not sufficient time for many of them to acquire a tolerably sure command of the written language. Very similar conditions prevail in America, as may be seen from Dr. Rudolph Flesch's book *Why Johnny Can't Read,* which was published in 1955 and became a best seller, evidently because so many parents had found that their children had great difficulties in learning to read. This wide-spread partial illiteracy will have many ill effects. It is bound to cause a great deal of unhappiness and a sense of frustration for many young children, particularly for those who fall in the illiterate and semi-literate groups. It may further seriously hamper many young people in their careers and will largely contribute to dividing the nation into different social classes. In so far as such class barriers are due to the present exceedingly undemocratic system of spelling, it must be of vital importance to try to find a remedy.

The crying need for a reform of English spelling and the enormous benefits for the English-speaking peoples as well as for mankind in general that a solution of the problem would entail, have caused large numbers of scholars and laymen to devote energetic efforts to the working out of proposals for a satisfactory new system of orthography. Such attempts were started as early as Shakespeare's time when learned works advocating comprehensive reform were published by statesmen and scholars, such as Sir Thomas Smith, Secretary of State to Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth (*De recta et emendata linguae anglicae scriptione,* 1568), John Hart, Chester Herald *(An Orthographie,* 1569, *A Methode to read English,* 1579), William Bullokar, schoolmaster, *(Booke at large for the Amendment of English Orthographie,* 1580), Dr. Alexander Gill, headmaster of St. Paul's School in London (*Logonomia Anglica,* 1621), and others. Nothing came of these attempts, however, very largely because the proposals made were of too radical a nature, involving the introduction of many new characters or of numerous diacritical marks, but partly also because they were not always based on a sufficiently thoro and accurate analysis of the sounds of the language.

A second period of intense interest in reform began towards the middle of the 19th century in connection with the rise of the new science of phonetics, which seemed to offer such splendid opportunities for a solution to this long-standing problem. This period may be said to have lasted till

well on into the present century. Among the early pioneers we may particularly note Sir Isaac Pitman, the inventor of the shorthand system which bears his name, and Alexander Ellis, the celebrated English scholar, author of the *History of English Pronunciation.* Together they created a phonetic alphabet which contained 16 additional new letters and which was used in various journals, primers and textbooks and in phonetic versions of such works as *The New Testament, the Pilgrim's Progress, Macbeth,* etc. The two reformers also organized a phonetic society, which in 1851 numbered 4000 members. To begin with, the new alphabet enjoyed great popularity among the members, but after a time people began to grow tired of the many new letters, and Ellis realized that there were no prospects of achieving a spelling reform on the basis of a phonetic alphabet of this kind. He therefore abandoned the project and tried instead to devise a system of spelling in which only the ordinary characters of the Roman alphabet were employed, and in which combinations of letters rather than new special letters were used to denote various speech sounds. In spite of his prolonged experimenting and enthusiastic devotion to the cause of spelling reform, he failed to produce a satisfactory new system of orthography. Yet he succeeded in awakening widespread interest in the question, and by the 1870's the time had arrived for the national philological societies of Great Britain and America to take the matter in hand. After an International Convention for the Amendment of English Orthography, held at Philadelphia in 1876, special societies were organized to deal with the problem, the British and the American Spelling Reform Associations.

During the last quarter of the 19th century the activities of the reform associations were mainly devoted to discussions of the reform problems, to experimenting with different systems of orthography and to making the general public aware of the defectiveness of the existing system and of the necessity for reform. It was during this period that linguistics developed into a modern science proper, and the scholars who from now on took part in the reform movement had all been trained in the new school.

The most intense period in the history of spelling reform began in 1906, when Andrew Carnegie offered to support the movement financially. From that year until his death in 1919, he made annual grants which in all amounted to nearly $300,000. Thanks to this support it now became possible for the first time to organize really wide-spread propaganda for reform. The Simplified Spelling Board was set up to conduct the campaign and included among its members many of the principal scholars in English philology and literature at both British and American universities.

The Board set to work at once issuing lists of recommended changes in spelling and distributing pamphlets and circulars, in which the arguments for reform were set forth and objections to it were answered. The various proposals were later revised and assembled in the *Handbook of Simplified Spelling* which the Board published in 1920.

The campaign in America revived and stimulated interest in the spelling reform problem in Great Britain, where the Simplified Spelling Society was formed in 1908 in order to carry on propaganda. Among the early publications of the Society we should particularly note a booklet called *Proposals. for* a *Simplified Spelling of the English Language,* written by Walter Ripman and William Archer containing a detailed tho not entirely complete plan for the respelling of the English language. But the campaigns in Great Britain and America, which had started with such great enthusiasm and energy, soon had to be abandoned temporarily owing to the outbreak of the first World War.

Tho the two sister organizations in Great Britain and America worked for the same ultimate goal, they were of widely different opinions as to the methods for achieving this goal. The Simplified Spelling Society believed that the existing orthografy ought to be replaced by a more or less completely phonetic system of spelling, in which the letters of the present Roman alphabet or combinations of these letters should be used to represent the various speech sounds. They did not

state expressly in what way the new system was to be introduced, but the general idea was evidently to start with the textbooks for the lower classes in the elementary schools and then to extend the new spelling gradually to ever wider fields of printed publications.

The Simplified Spelling Board in America did not think it possible to persuade the general public to accept such a complete change of spelling as would be caused by the adoption of the Simplified Spelling Society's proposals, and suggested instead that the spelling should be reformed gradually and progressively.

The first step was to be the introduction of limited lists of recommended changes in spelling, by which the public would learn to appreciate the advantages of the new spellings and get familiar with the idea of a more thoro reform of the whole spelling system. Actually, however, the American Simplified Spelling Board had no definite plan at all for the future system of orthography, as appears on a closer analysis of their long lists of rules for a simplified spelling. What they offered was nothing more than some suggestions for certain partial reforms of the spelling, most of which must, on the whole, be considered very incomplete and rather unimportant. With regard to the vowel sounds, particularly the long vowels and the diphthongs, the Board did not make any suggestions or recommendations whatever for the future system of orthography, but contented themselves with saying that these sounds present such great difficulties that their regulation must wait until scholars can come to more general agreement on the subject. Thus the Board admitted themselves that they had no definite plan for the notation of these sounds.

Soon after the end of the Great War the Simplified Spelling Society resumed its campaign with great vigor. A petition for a Royal Commission to examine the question of English spelling was signed by 15,000 people, including a considerable number of eminent scholars and educationists. In 1924 a Memorial on Spelling Reform was presented to the Rt. Hon. C. P. Trevelyan, M. P., President of the Board of Education. In replying to the deputation, Mr. Trevelyan stated that he approached the problem with an open mind. No one could have any doubt about the difficulties of the present system. The problem was how to improve upon it. He felt that no Royal Commission could be expected to find a scientific solution, unless the supporters of spelling reform were able, as a preliminary, to decide upon an agreed and to this support it now became possible for the first time to or definite scheme.

In his answer, I think Mr. Trevelyan pointed out one of the principal reasons why all attempts at reforming English spelling had so far failed. Altho many may think that the deep-rooted conservatism of the English-speaking peoples and the force of inertia are in themselves enough to account for these failures there have been other, at least equally important reasons as well. In order to achieve a reform of English spelling, it is essential that the following two conditions should be first be fulfilled.

Primarily, a suitable new system of orthography for English must be devised, a system which, on the one hand, will satisfy demands of philological experts, and which, on the other, will stand a reasonable chance of being accepted by the majority of educated people, after some propaganda, or at least by a sufficient number to permit of its being put to the test on a fairly comprehensive scale. Before such a plan has been worked out in detail and has been approved by competent experts and by a fairly large number of representatives of the educated classes, we have no real alternative to offer to the existing system of spelling. There can be no point in trying to persuade the general public to accept any partial, perhaps more or less insignificant reform proposals.

But it will not be enough merely to devise a satisfactory new system of orthography. Since the question of spelling reform is one which intimately concerns all classes of society, it will be equally essential to devise a method for overcoming the resist to spelling reform among the adult population

in general. This implies, among other things, that the method adopted must be such as to reduce to a minimum the various transitional inconveniences that will necessarily attend the reform.

The former of the two problems, that of devising a suitable new system of orthography for English, would at first seem to be a comparatively simple one, but anyone who endeavors to penetrate more deeply into the question, will soon find out that it is fraught with formidable difficulties. The mere fact that the numerous attempts which have been made to solve it, both by eminent individual scholars and by societies specially founded fob the purpose, have all failed to produce an acceptable solution, is in itself a sufficient indication of the intricate nature of the problem.

Theoretically there are two principal ways in which the problem may be tackled. Either we may attempt to construct a proper phonetic alphabet for English by adding a sufficient number of new symbols to the present one to enable us to render the 40 odd different speech sounds of which English is made up, or else we shall have to content ourselves with utilizing the resources of the present alphabet only. The first of these two alternatives would imply the addition of some 15 to 20 new symbols to the existing alphabet. A reform of English spelling on these lines would meet with such enormous practical difficulties that the case against if must be held to be absolutely irrefutable. It would, among other things, entail the re-equipment and enlargement of every printing establishment in all English-speaking countries, at a tremendous cost, and would further necessitate the replacing of all typewriters and typesetting machines by larger and more cumbrous, and of course also more costly, machines. For these reasons alone any solution which is based on the addition of a number of new symbols to the present alphabet must be rejected from the outset. Besides these purely practical difficulties, there are a number of theoretical considerations as well. A strictly phonetic spelling would mean such a complete *break with the existing orthography* and with the various Romance and Teutonic languages, with which English, after all, shares the bulk of its vocabulary, that it would not have the slightest prospect of being accepted by the powers that be. It would also be open to all those objections which have been raised to more moderate phonetic systems of spelling, such for instance as that proposed in 1930 by the Swedish scholar Professor R. E. Zachrisson, called *Anglic* or 'English is Easy Spelling'; or the one proposed in 1940 by the Simplified Spelling Soc. called *New Spelling,* which was based on an extensive statistical investigation of the present spelling.

Since a strictly phonetic system of spelling is consequently out of the question, it only remains for us to explore the possibility of solving the problem by falling back on the resources of the existing alphabet. As has already been mentioned, Ellis was the first to come to this conclusion and to make attempts at constructing new schemes for the consistent use of the existing letters of the alphabet to represent the various speech sounds. Since his day numerous attempts have been made to work out suitable systems of this kind, many of them sensible enough, while others must be looked upon as mere freaks.

The solution of the problem that most immediately presents itself to the mind is to try to create a new phonetic alphabet for English by selecting the most suitable symbol for each of its 40 odd speech sounds. These symbols are then to be used as consistently as possible for the spelling of all words. Two of the best and most carefully thought out systems of this kind are undoubtedly the *New Spelling* of the Simplified Spelling Society and Prof. Zachrisson's *Anglic.* Actually these two systems agree pretty closely with one another, particularly with regard to the treatment of the stressed vowels and the consonants. Thus both of them introduce the same special new symbols for the so-called long sounds of the 5 simple vowels, namely the digraphs, *ae, ee, ie, oe, ue.* These symbols are to be used in all words in which the speech sounds in question are found, whether now represented by the simple vowels or by combinations of vowel letters or by combinations of vowel letters with certain consonants. In view of the frequent occurence of these sounds, it is obvious that this feature is bound to cause an extremely violent break in continuity between the traditional and

the suggested new system of spelling. Other features which were common to *New Spelling* and *Anglic* and which would contribute to causing similar violent breaks in continuity were the regular replacing of *c* and *q* by *k* when they stood for the *k*-sound, of *c* by *s* whenever it stood for the voiceless *s*-sound, and of *g* by *j* when it represented the regular *j*-sound. The following is a brief specimen of The Simplified Spelling Society's proposed *New Spelling:*

Objekshonz to a chaenj in dhe prezent speling

We instinktivly shrink from eny chaenj in whot iz familyar; and whot kan be mor familyar dhan dhe form ov wurdz dhat we hav seen and riten mor tiemz dhan we kan posibly estimaet? We taek up a book printed in Amerika, and *honor* and *center* jar upon us every tiem we kum akros dhem; nae, eeven to see *forever* in plaes ov *for ever* atrakts our atenshon in an unplezant wae. But dheez ar iesolaeted kaesez; think ov dhe meny wurdz dhat wood hav to be chaenjd if eny real impruuvment wer to rezult. At dhe furst glaans a paej in eny reformd speling looks 'kweer' or 'ugly.' Dhis objekshon iz aulwaez dhe furst to be maed; it iz purfektly natueral; it iz dhe hardest to remuuv. Indeed, ifs efekt iz not weekend until dhe nue speling iz noe longger nue, until it haz been seen ofen enuf to be familyar. [2]

In spite of extensive propaganda this proposal for a reformed spelling has never succeeded in arousing any wide-spread interest among the general public, which is not particularly surprising in view of the fact that if entails a complete transformation in the appearance of the language. There is nothing very wrong with the system as such, but when we come to examine it more closely, we shall find that it leads to a change in spelling in 90% or more of the vocabulary. The same applies to all similar attempts to create a phonetic alphabet for English on the basis of the existing alphabet. For lack of space, I must refer those who would like to verify the truth of this statement, to the detailed analysis of this problem that I have made in my book, *Regularized English* (Chapter III).

Since the phonetic principle leads to such extensive changes in the spelling and since a solution of this kind obviously does not stand the slightest chance of ever being accepted, we shall have to examine whether there may not be other methods of achieving a systematic reform. The only alternative then, that offers the possibility of a general revision of the whole spelling system, is to start out instead by *examining the various existing symbols* and try to determine how they should best be used in a reformed orthography. What we have to do, exactly, is first to examine in detail how these symbols are now used, and then to decide which use or uses may conveniently be retained and which should be discarded. Generally speaking, all the regular, i.e. the most frequent, uses of the various sound symbols should be preserved, whereas all irregular spellings should be discarded and replaced by regular ones. If in the application of the above general rules, we give up the idea of strict adherence to the phonetic principle and allow, on the one hand, certain symbols *to represent more than one sound*, and on the other, certain *sounds, to he represented by more than one symbol*, when this can be done without causing undue confusion, we shall find that it becomes possible to work out a spelling system for English which on the whole may be said to satisfy all *reasonable* requirements with regard to order and regularity and which will enable us to establish definite rules of pronunciation for the English language. Since the fundamental idea of this 'new' system of spelling is to preserve all the various sound symbols of the present orthography in their regular, i.e. in their most frequent usage or usages, it may be suitably called *Regularized Inglish.* On a closer examination, it will be found that the principles of Regularized Inglish enables us to retain the present spelling in over 90% of the vocabulary, whereas the New Spelling of the Simplified Spelling Society only preserves it in about 10% or less of the words. The following three specimens will give the reader a general impression of the proposed Regularized Inglish spelling. The second specimen is a rendering of the same text as was given in the New Spelling above. The third specimen is from Shakespeare. The reader may notice that several of the spellings are the same as used by the great bard in his manuscripts. Hence they were in current use at that time.

1. By the adoption ov such a system ov spelling az Regularized Inglish, it wood be possible to lay down definit rules ov pronunciation for the Inglish language, which wood make it considerably eazier for children to lern to read and write. In aul probability it wood lead to a saving ov at least won year's work for aul scoolechildren. It wood aulso contribute very largely towordz abolition ov the existing amount ov illiteracy and backwardness in reading. Finally, it wood remoove the principal obstacle that prevents Inglish from becumming a truly international language.

2. Objections to a chainge in the prezent spelling.
We instinctivly shrink from eny chainge in whot iz familiar; and whot can be more familiar than the form ov wurds that we hav seen and written more times than we can possibly estimate? We take up a book printed in America, and *honor* and *center* jar upon us every time we cum across them; nay, even to see *forever* in place ov *for ever* attracts our attention in an unplezant way. But theze ar isolated cases; think ov the meny wurds that wood hav to be chainged if eny real improovement wer to rezult. At the first glaance a passage in eny reformd spelling looks 'queer' and 'ugly.' This objection iz aulwayz the first to be made; it iz the hardest to remoove. Indeed, its effect iz not weekend until the new spelling iz no longer new, until it haz been seen offen enuff to be familiar.

3. From *Hamlet, Act III, Scene I.*

> To be, or not to be: that iz the question:
> Whedher 'tiz nobler in the minde to suffer
> The slings and arroes ov outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea ov trubbles,
> And by oppozing end them ? To die; to sleep;
> No more; and by a sleep to say we end
> The hart-ake and the thouzand natural shocks
> That flesh iz eir to, 'tiz a comsummation
> Devoutly to be wisht. To die, to sleep;
> To sleep! perchance to dream: ie, thare'z the rub;
> For in that sleep ov deth whot dreams may cum,
> When we hav suffled off this mortal coil,
> Must giv us pauze: thare'z the respect
> That makes calamity ov so long life.

As a curiosity, it may be pointed out that the spelling *hart-ake* which occurs above, is actually the spelling used in the Second Quarto of 1604-1605. In many other cases, too, we find that the new spellings of Regularized Inglish were of frequent occurence at Chaucer's or Shakespeare's time, for example spellings such as 'doo, moove, proove, cullour, cuntry, luver, cum, cumming, cupple, dubble, word, work, worry, eny, meny, teddy, sed, world, clerk, hart, sault, thare, where, Ingland, Inglish, finde, aultar, wilde, moste, wisht, lookt,' etc.

Having dealt with the various proposals for the creation of a satisfactory new system of spelling for English, it now remains for us to discuss the methods to be used if we wish to carry the suggested spelling reform into effect. As was emphasized above, the principal obstacles to reform, besides the lack of a suitable new system of orthography, are the conservatism and inertia of the adult population and the general unwillingness to accept any changes whatever in their spelling habits, even tho it has been proved beyond all doubt that a suitable reform would bring immense advantages to all English-speaking peoples and indeed to the whole world.

Are there then any prospects of overcoming this resistance to reform on the part of the older generation? Since Great Britain and America are both countries with democratic forms of government, there seems to be no way of directly or rapidly breaking down this resistance, for example by a government decree. It might, however, be possible to circumvent the difficulties, as it

were, and in this way wear down the resistance gradually. Since it is obvious that the older generation cannot be expected to adopt a new system of spelling for their own part, we must abandon the idea of trying to make them change their deep-rooted habits and concentrate our efforts on the coming generation instead. It is on the young people of the coming generation or generations that the main burden of the reform will have to be placed. All that we should ask of the older generation is to allow their children to be taught new and better habits in regard to spelling so as to set them free from prejudices and obsessions. Before any decisive steps can be taken in this matter, will be necessary to secure the consent and support of very wide circles of the population.

The best way to prepare the ground for a future reform will undoubtedly be to start experiments in schools on a fairly extensive scale in order to show that English reading and writing can be taught far more easily, rapidly and successfully than is now the case by first teaching it in the form of Regularized Inglish and transfering afterwards, say after a year or so, to ordinary English. Since the spelling of Regularized Inglish is almost 100% regular in the application of its rules of pronunciation, it will be considerably easier to learn to read and write than ordinary English. Very probably all children of normal intelligence will learn to read it tolerably well in about a year. But once children have learnt to read Regularized Inglish, they will immediately be able to read ordinary English as well, in spite of the many irregularities of the latter spelling. For once a child has learnt to read according to one system of orthography, there is no great difficulty about reading according to another which employs the same characters. **[3]** Thus, for example, all foreign children who have learnt to read their own language and who belong to nations that use the Roman alphabet, will be able to read most English words at first sight, though of course, without the proper pronunciation and without understanding them.

Since the spelling of Regularized Inglish agrees in over 90% of the words with that of ordinary English, and since the new spelling retains nearly all the *regular* features of traditional English, the children would, if this new medium for teaching reading were adopted, have a chance to make themselves thoroly familiar with all these regular features of the language before starting to learn all the numerous exceptions. This will undoubtedly prove to be a better and more gratifying way of learning to read than the usual present methods, which either aim at teaching children each regularly or irregularly pronounced word as a whole, the so-called 'whole word method,' or else are based on a combination of 'phonics,' i.e. the old time-honoured method of sounding out the various letters, and the 'new' whole word method, which was of course always employed in the case of words with anomalous spellings.

Owing to the prevailing methods of teaching reading, it seems, indeed, highly probable that most English-speaking children now grow up under the entirely false impression that there are no reliable rules concerning the relation between spelling and pronunciation in their language.

As appears from the above, it would be possible to use the proposed regularized spelling of English simply as a new, more efficient method for teaching children to read. Though this purpose is in itself sufficiently important to justify experiments with the new system of spelling, we should bear in mind that it was devised in the first place with a view to bringing about a reform of English spelling. It will therefore be convenient to try to indicate in a general way how this goal might perhaps eventually be attained.

I would first suggest that children in the first and second grades, from about six years of age, should be taught to read and write only Regularized Inglish. Altho nearly all children would probably learn to read fairly well in about a year, it would be suitable to allow them sufficient time to become thoroly versed in reading and writing the new spelling, before they started to familiarize themselves with the spelling of traditional English. In addition to the textbooks used in the first and second forms, all kinds of children's books suitable for this age level should be rewritten in the new

spelling so as to provide them with plenty of reading material for 'outside' reading.

From the third year on children should begin to make themselves familiar with the spelling of traditional English as well, so that they would learn to read with ease the books, newspapers, magazines, etc., that would for a long time continue to be published in the traditional form of English for the benefit of the older generation. A suitable program for the third year might perhaps be to teach children the general differences between Regularized Inglish and traditional English and further the exceptions that occur to the rules of Regularized Inglish among the first thousand, or the first two thousand, of the commonest words in the language. Since they had now learnt to read and were about two years older, it would be easier to explain to them why there were two different ways of writing their language.

Many people may perhaps think that it will be very difficult for children to learn to write traditional English correctly, if they must first learn to read and write words in the spelling of Regularized Inglish. But the case may very well turn out to be the opposite, to judge by certain previous experiments. The fact that in Regularized Inglish they have a regular system of orthography with which to contrast all the exceptional spellings of traditional English, will make it much easier for them to learn these exceptions. When young beginners have only the present system of orthography to learn, it is practically impossible to lay down any useful rules for the relation between spelling and pronunciation. For each rule they would usually find a number of important exceptions, and among the exceptions there would often be special groups which displayed additional deviations, etc. This is of course the reason why one of the prevalent methods of teaching infants to read consists in teaching them each word by itself as a whole, without attempting to make them infer the pronunciation from the spelling.

By allowing our children to be taught to read and write Regularized Inglish before they pass on to learn to read ordinary English, we shall to a great extent set them free from prejudices and obsessions in regard to spelling. If we adopt this method of teaching reading for a sufficiently long transitional period, say for 30 or 40 years, it does not seem unlikely that the generation of adults which will by then have grown up, will be prepared to take the necessary steps to carry out the reform.

When the children come to the third grade, the following two important questions arise. First: In which spelling should the various textbooks that are used in the third and following grades right up to the end of the secondary school be written, in regularized or in traditional English? And secondly: Should the children be taught not only to read, but also to write the traditional form of English?

As was pointed out above, the new regularized spelling could be used solely as a new method for teaching children to read, and one might think it convenient to do this temporarily for a number of years so as to make the transition from the old to the new spelling still smoother. If we choose to proceed in this way, there is obviously some danger that the final general introduction of the new spelling will be postponed considerably, and since too little would be gained, unless the new spelling came eventually into general use, such a policy is hardly to be favored.

If, on the other hand, we want to make sure that the suggested spelling reform will be carried into effect within the reasonably near future, we should not hesitate in this matter. We should then decide that all the principal textbooks must be written in Regularized Inglish only, and that the majority of the children must only be taught to read, but not write traditional English. If such a policy is adopted, children will definitely come to regard Regularized Inglish as the future form of their language, and we shall make absolutely certain that the desired spelling reform will come within 30 or 40 years at the latest. In addition to textbooks, all kinds of other books that are mainly

intended for young people, should also be transcribed into Regularized Inglish. As children then grew up and left school, private enterprise would undoubtedly see to it that there were newspapers, books and magazines for them to read in the new spelling.

Before experiments of the kind suggested above can be carried out, it will be necessary to prepare a suitable textbook or perhaps rather a series of short textbooks. These should be carefully graded and proceed at a very slow pace form the simple to more difficult things. It is important, too, that they should be attractive in appearance and amply illustrated. The general plan to be followed in such textbooks would not be very different from the course that is usually followed in reading schemes for beginners.

[1] Ed. note: Wijk differs with other authorities on what constitutes a regular spelling. In the case of some sounds (long e) he allows 5 different ways to be considered as regular spellings.

[2] Ed. note: This system has since been modernized to look more closely like conventional spelling, by the following changes: the-the, thin-thinn, good-guud, food-food. This makes about 6% more words unchanged in running text. It is now called World English.

[3] Editor's comment: Spelling is not important?!

Editors' comments: Our answer to the above is from the old biblical quotation: How does the removal of one thorn out of many ease the pain? Or in repeating the modern advertizing goof - Our team has 34% fewer cavities - so what? They still get plenty of unnecessary cavities!

How can a system that has almost as many deviations from a truly phonetic system as Regularized Inglish, be easy to learn and to teach? What is logical and sensible of having 5 spellings for one sound and 3 sounds for one symbol?

It appears that Wijk has pointed his work at the wrong audience - the oldsters who have already learned our many anomalies, and made a system that would please them, without considering the new pupils and foreigners who must learn by sound how to spell a word. And by associating sounds with symbols, to read the printed words as they do in Turkey, Finland, Czecho-Slovakia, and other countries with reasonably phonetic systems.

Wijk's rejoinder to Editor's comments: If you want to make sure never to achieve any results at all in this matter, you should advocate such Utopian schemes as a completely phonetic spelling for English. Those who embrace such schemes become in fact the best supporters of the opponents to reform and may therefore in a way be regarded as fifth columnists.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1966 p19 in the printed version]

Book Review

7. Rules of Pronunciation for the English Language, by Axel Wijk, Oxford Univ. Press, 1966.

Most students of English receive the impression that English spelling is grossly irregular and that there is little relation between spelling and pronunciation. However, when the subject is explored more fully by studying the phonemes in groups of words instead of looking at the spelling of a smaller number of irregular words, it is found that there exists a fairly reliable relationship between most letter clusters. Only in a relatively few cases of words imported from the lesser used foreign languages do we find some conflicting letter clusters. In his book *Regularized English* Dr. Wijk demonstrated that over 90% of English words do follow certain regular patterns in regard to their spelling and pronunciation. In his new book, rules are given for the vast majority of English words, with numerous examples and lists of exceptions. Important American deviations are pointed out. The subject of vowels is handled in a logical way, starting with the short vowels. Also is noted the effect it has on vowels by being followed by *r*. Exceptions to the general rules are listed following each rule. This arrangement makes it easier to find things than in other books on this subject.

The consonants, being more regular than the vowels, need less explaining. They are classified in alphabetical order, making it easy to find what you want. The use of the final silent *e* and what happens to it when suffixes are added, is the basis of a chapter. Stress and quality (quantity?) each occupy a chapter.

The book concludes with a chapter on spelling reform and a presentation of the author's ideas on a minimal change system of simplified spelling. He ends by suggesting tests to determine the usefulness of such a system in teaching pronunciation of English to children and foreign learners.

This book shows an excellent insight into the intricate nature of both British and American pronunciation. It is an invaluable guide for teachers of phonetics and speech training.
N.W.T.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1966 pp21–23 in the printed version]

8. 3 Book Reviews, by Helen Bowyer

Among the many books, pamphlets, leaflets on spelling reform to reach the *Bulletin* of late, this reviewer has found the following three outstanding in their knowledge of the subject, their readability and their sense of the urgency of action now-not in some indefinite future. They are:

We Cuud Havv Guud Speling, by Dr. Frank C. Laubach, New Readers Press, Syracuse, N.Y.
Instant Spelling, by Lucien Bernhard, reprinted from the Printer's Magazine, Oradell, N. J.
Fonetic English Spelling, by Traugott Rohner, President Fonetic English Spelling Assoc., Evanston.

All three writers offer his own particular alphabet as the best solution of the reading problem bedeviling our schools. Apart from the fact that all three stay within the limits of our present Roman letters and that all three use diacritics to a greater or lesser extent, they are very different from one another, and this reviewer will not attempt to describe or evaluate them. They bear out the contention of the *Bulletin* that any one of a score of good alphabets would serve about as well as

any of the other nineteen-the great desideratum is to get a good alphabet out of its pamphlet and into the primers and readers of our school children.

To date, i.t.a. is the only one of recent decades to make any hopeful showing in this respect. The last news of it to reach the *Bulletin is* a project to test its efficiency in the teaching of English in the schools of some thousand Urubuspeaking villages of Western Nigeria.

In his little pamphlet, the world renowned missionary, Dr. Frank C. Laubach, brings his trenchant pen to bear on the blindness with which we English-speaking people cling to our present spelling. "We ought to be ashamed," he tells us, "It is intolerable-maddening to a foreigner and a disgrace for us who boast about our progressiveness. We make progress in cars, typewriters, refrigerators, airplanes, television, bombs, arithmetic, fountain pens, plastics, but ire barbarians in spelling. Yet spelling is more used than any other thing save speech itself. What is our alibi? We have none. Our reason is that we continue to spell as our ignorant ancestors began, because we are too selfish to change our old habits. Dont blame our ancestors; they had no phonetic experts to consult. That is why they left our spelling as jumbled as hash. But we have no excuse for we know what is right."

"But now," Dr. Laubach continues, "We are forced to reform by the threat of Communist competition. The rivalry of Communism in every scientific field is compelling us to examine our weak flanks. For example, it has aroused our consciences about poverty and hunger because we see that poverty leads to revolt and communism. Now many people are examining our spelling, too, for we see that our bad spelling gives Russia an enormous advantage in education. It is beginning to hurt us to be told that a Russian child learns more than twice as fast as an American child, not because the Russian child is smatter, nor because he is in a Communist state, but because our spelling creaks like an ox-cart while his moves along on ball-bearings."

"Some of us, too, are beginning to figure out on computors how many billions of dollars and how many billions of man-hours we waste learning this illiterate spelling. If we want to save money, time and even our freedom, we can begin by declaring our freedom from ancestral spelling. The first freedom we need is freedom to spell right. Did it ever occur to you that we are liars every time we write a letter, for we do not write the language we speak. Misspelling our spoken language is the commonest sin of us all-even the saints."

Of Lucien Bernhard, the editor of Printing Magazine says: "Not only is he renowned as the *versatile* creator of many type designes to be found in printed presses throughout the world,...being foreign born, he is more aware of the intricities of his adopted tongue than the uncritical native-born. Educated in Switzerland, he knows many languages.

The conclusions he presents on these pages represent years spent in studying the origins and development of the English language, its spelling, its pronunciation and what it needs to speed its utilization as the world language."

What follows constitute just some conjoined selections from Mr. Bernhard's own statement of his position on our English spelling. The whole statement is so thoroly worth reading - and such a pleasure to read - this reviewer hopes that many *Bulletin* readers will avail themselves of the invitation of the editors of *Printing Magazine* to send comments and inquiries to them.

"Our petrified spelling has not been in cahoots with our pronunciation for centuries... Let's look at the gruesome facts. Everybody knows that too many otherwise normal children are unable to make the grade in reading and spelling. The blame is put variously on overcrowded classrooms, shortage of teachers, ineffective teaching methods or on television. But very few voices put the blame squarely where it belongs, namely, on the lack of a consistent, simplified spelling system which would enable children to read by sight instead of by memory."

Here are some ticklish questions to embarass the teacher:
Hwy must we pronounce the h *outside* the word but spell it *inside,* as in why, when, where, which?
Hwy does *foul* rhyme with *fowl* but not with *soul* - *cow* with *bough* but not with *cough?*
Hwy does *ball* rhyme with *hall* but not with *shall* - *ate* with *eight* but not with *height?*
Hwy does *care* rhyme with *bare* but not with *are* - *hint* with *print* but not with *pint?*
Hwy does *shoes* rhyme with *cruise* but not with *toes* - *though* with *snow* but not with *tough?*
Hwy does *limb* rhyme with *hymn* but not with *climb* - *slave* with *shave* but not with *have?*
Hwy does *dew* rhyme with *new* but not with *sew* - *south* with *mouth* but not with *youth?*

We English-speaking people are so preoccupied with our spellingitis and pronunciosis affliction that we lose sight of the fact that there are 39 other nations from Spain to Finland, comprising some 450 million people, who are also using the good old Roman alphabet, yet have no spelling trouble worth mentioning. They can read by eye and spell by ear, and when theur rhymes look like rhymes, they always rhyme. They don't need a million dollar spelling industry, and never heard of remedial reading. How come?

First of all, these other nations - unlike old England took early in their history, the precaution of not letting themselves be overrun every couple of centuries by various foreign hordes who would foist their foreign vocabulary, plus spelling, on the amazed natives. Consequently, theirs is a homegrown, homogeneous language with a minimum of foreign words to injest, while our English 650,000 word vocabulary is burdened to 3/4 with foreign incongruous elements, the pronunciation of which became Anglicized in the course of centuries-but never their medieval spelling.

Secondly, they consistently hung on to the original phonetic values of the Roman vowels - and no nonsense like using the same vowel-symbols for a half dozen sounds. As for instance:

> Watch that batty baseball fan.
> Where were we ere we were here?

But whatever means these foreigners use to be independent of a dictionary, they are consistent about it. And what's more, they adjust their spelling periodically to match changes in their pronunciation. (The Brazilians have simplified their spelling again only recently and the French are at it right now - 1963).

While the continental Europeans are by nature, inclined to learn an auxiliary language, preferably English, we cannot expect their students to waste as much time on our unspeakable ancient orthography as we have been condemning our own children to do. To fit English for the status of a world language, we will have to establish a standard spelling based upon a standard pronunciation... Undoubtedly, the ever-increasing distribution of English records, radio broadcasts, movies and television will accelerate the standardization of English pronunciation.

Thousands of dead letters clutter up our printed pages. They obstruct speed like barnacles on an old ship's bottom. We may save 10 to 20% on labor, space and time by eliminating them - and save the student a lot of confusion: answer, Wednesday, muscle, yolk, sword, yacht, wrong, doubt, friend, lieutenant, phlegm, thought, and thousands more.

Let's look, especially at those parasitical final e's in: have, automobile, feminine, exquisite, climate, futile, maritime, active, versatile, imbecile, definite, etc. Their only function is to mislead the innocent; so why not drop those tag-end e's and reserve them strictly for the functional uses that make far into fare, trip into tripe, win into wine, cut into cute - and for the words in which they are pronounced, like recipe, calliope, *anemone,* simile, catastrophy and so on? And what's wrong with: littl, marbl, dazzl, bottl, scrambl, waffl, etc. Does the loss of the final e change the meaning or the pronunciation?Piffl.

Benjamin Franklin once wrote, "Those who don't know how to spell, spell best." Why? Because they spell as they speak, in other words - phonetically, while our so-called correct spelling is not spelling at all, but translating our spoken words into Latin, Greek, French, Anglo-Saxon, etc. We say *"kreecher, sykik, kurnel, laf* ' but write it as "creature, psychic, colonel, laugh." It is too much to expect of children and foreigners to fathom the sense to this!

In the third pamphlet under review, *Fonetic English spelling*, the writer wastes little time in coming to the heart of our reading problem. "Most English-speaking people," he says, "have been reading and writing C.E. (conventional English) so long that they are not aware of its many absurd, inconsistent and difficult-to-learn spellings. We take our native tongue for granted without trying to find out what makes it difficult to learn."

For example, how many of us realize that there are 43 ways of spelling our 5 short vowels?
a as in: *hat, have, plaid, laugh, guarantee* 5
e as in: *any, easthetic, said, head, says, ebb, ledge, heifer, leopard, foetid, bury, guess* 13
i as in: *it, image, mountain, been, college, marriage, give, England, sieve, women, busy, hymn, minute, any,* 15
o as in: *bob, wander, honor, lough, catalogue* 5
u as in: *cup, son, does, flood, couple* 5

Even worse is the showing of our long vowels; their spellings run to 83!
A as in: *making, ate, maelstrom, rain, raise, gaol, gauge, ray, steak, matinee, eh, veil, weigh, ballet, obey, boquet* 16
E as in: *Caesar, quay, be, team, leave, league, see these deceive, receipt, key, keyed, people, machine, field, debris, amoeba, suite, antique, mosquito* 20
I as in: *aisle, ay, aye, height, eye, kind, ice, tie, high, guide, by, buy, lye, type* 14
O as in: *mauve, beau, yeoman, sew, no, note, road, coarse, toe, oh, brooch, depot, soul, flow, rogue, course, though, owe* 18
U as in: *beauty, feod, feud, duce, queue, few, adieu, use, view, cue, yule, you, suit, fugue* 15

As for the consonants, the 19 speech sounds they voice are written in a total of 91 ways:
b - *bed, hobby* 2
c(k) - *car, account, bacchanal, school, saque, acquaint, back, biscuit, lough, kill, licquor* 11
d - *do, ladder, pulled* 3
f - *feed, muffin, tough, physics* 4

g - *give, egg, ghost, guard, demagogue* 5
h - *hit, who* 2
j - *graduate, judgment, bridge, soldier, magic, exaggerate, just, charge, Greenwich* 9
l - *live, call* 2
m - *drachm, paradigm, calm, more, limb, hammer, hymn* 7
n - *gnat, knife, not, runner, pneumatic* 5
p - *pen, stopper* 2
r - *red, rhythm, carrot* 3
s - *city, mice, see, scene, schism, lose* 6
t - *talked, walked, bought, toe, thyme, bottom, phthisic* 7
v - *of, Stephen, visit, flivver* 4
w - *choir, quiet, well* 3
x - *extra, accent, except, exhaust, socks, fox* 6
y - *lorgnette, union, hallelujah, yet, few* 5
z - *has, discern, scissors, Xerxes, zone, dazzle* 6

But besides its vowels and single letter consonants, English print must piece out its encoding with 7 one-sound digraphs and two diphthongs. They run as wild in their conventional spellings as do the single letters. Here are 48 spellings for just 9 sounds:
ch - *chief, catch, righteous, question, natural* 5
sh - *ocean, machine, special, pshaw, sugar, schist, ship, conscience, nauseus, mansion, tissue, mission, mention, fuchsia* 14
th - *thin* 1
th - *then, bathe* 2
zh - *garage, measure, division, azure, brazier* 5
aw - *tall, Utah, talk, fault, raw, order, broad, fought* 8
oo - *wolf, look, should, pull* 4
oi - *oil, noise, turquoise, buoy, toy* 5
ou - out, *house, bough, brow* 4

Nor does the needless proliferation of our spelling units stop here. The vowels followed by r add their confusion to our mess;
C.E. uses 7 different spellings for the ir-sound: *ir-thirst, er-term, ear-learn, or-worm, ur-hurt, our-courage, yr-myrtle.*
C.E. has 6 ways of spelling the long-ar sound: *air-chair, ayer-prayer, are-dare, ere-there, eir-their, ear-wear.*

As for our plague of double consonants, what a nuisance not only to school children, but to their parents and even their teachers. For instance, does one write occasional or ocassional? - are there two c's or two s's? The dictionary votes for two c's, but why? - what need is there for the second of these? Worse yet is our more troublesome plague of wholly silent consonants - as in *honor*, *know, gnat, pneumonia, psalm, whole, wrist*. These you couldn't even look up in the dictionary - unless you already knew how to get started.

Among the many valuable features of this Rohner pamphlet is a list of the commonest 500 words from the Thorndike and Lorge *Teacher's Word Book of 10,000 Words*. Of these 500, the Rohner alphabet spelling leaves only 93 unchanged. That is to say, only 19% are reasonably phonetic. True, there are some reform systems which would give a somewhat less drastic showing. But at best, the

situation is appalling. Are we really willing to leave our children at such enormous disadvantage with their school mates in those 39 other nations which, as Mr. Bernhard points out, "also use the good old Roman alphabet, yet have no spelling trouble worth mentioning." 39 nations totaling 450 million people as against our 300 million English speakers. Add to that 450 million the 235 million Soviet citizens whose Cyrillic alphabet gives them no trouble worth mentioning either, and - yet more formidably - add the 700 million Chinese whose Mandarin word-signs are soon to be superseded by a phonemic spelling based on the Roman alphabet.

And this in the face of an explosion of knowledge - real knowledge - which our children must acquire if we are to hold our world status against these two giants - and even, perhaps, against that Western European Confederacy which seems to be shaping up.

What is the matter with us? Is the answer to this basic question to be found in the opening paragraphs of a recent pamphlet by Sir James Pitman entitled, "As Difficult as ABC?" In this reviewer's opinion, THEY DO!

"You and I may be proud of ourselves. We learned to read! We must indeed be good, because we succeeded and that notwithstanding a most difficult medium!

If we had considered the matter at all, we would have realized that we were using that medium *only* because our teacher had been made to use it when he or she was a child, and his or her teacher had used it because his or her teacher had used it, and his or her.... way back for 400, J0, even 600 years. One and all, at an age too early to consider what was happening, we were made to accept that mediaeval medium without question or even thought, as the best-and indeed as the only-possible medium from which reading could be learned.

My purpose is therefore to show how old (and how difficult) a learning medium has been perpetuated - and without thought or even question-and how explicable have been, now are, and will continue to be, the frustrations and the tears which accompany the learning of reading for the great majority of children-and the failures of so many others!"

"Why then do we persist with an out-of-date *learning* medium? There are many reasons, all of them connected with man's innate conservatism and his distrust of anything new. We tend to forget how the first automobiles were not only mistrusted but loathed by the vast majority. We forget that surgeons resisted, many for up to fifty years, the lifesaving discovery, by Joseph Lister, of the means of preventing so many deaths from post-operational gangrene. They went, without even washing their hands, from dressing the septic wounds of the patients of earlier operations to perform operations on the new intake.

Is it not an abuse of our power as adults, and unfair to young children, to refuse such educational progress? Was it fair to the patient on the operating table to have stubbornly continued in the practices of the Middle Ages, and, in preferring ancient ignorance, to have rejected knowledge discovered with the progress of science? Do we owe it to the six million English-speaking small children who *every year* reach the age of going to school, to make school as easy, as happy, and as successful an experience as possible?

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1966 p23 in the printed version]

9. Can and May in Present-day English, by Yvan Lebrun, Ph.D.*

*chargé de reserches, FNRS, Bruxelles.

Published 1965 by Presses Universitaires de Bruxelles, 50, av. F. D. Roosevelt, Bruxelles, Belgium. 94 pp.

Here is another book written by a foreigner who knows a great deal about our language and has taken a lot of trouble to research deeply into the subject. Just why should a book be devoted to the use of these two words? Since it is expressed so well, we will quote from the author's introduction, "It may, at first, seem extravagant to devote a monograph to the auxiliary verbs *can* and *may,* as there is no English dictionary but defines these words, no English grammar but comments on the use of them."

"These numerous definitions and explanations, however, are far from being concordant." He quotes several examples of opinions from other authors. "In view of such contradictory opinions, it seems to be worthwhile examining the lexical meanings, the use, and the frequency of the auxiliary verb forms *can, may, could,* and *might* in present-day written British and American English."

His research covered
31 short stories by British writers first published in 1961,
17 short stories by American writers appearing for the first time in 1958-60;
2 novels,
4 plays by British writers,
8 short plays by American writers,
2 political texts,
3 newspapers and
4 scientific texts.

All these texts and sources were published between 1955 and 1962, so as to be sure the data is up to date.

The meaning in each case, carefully determined from the context, was tabulated under the following headings:

1. Physical possibility,
2. Moral possibility,
3. Logical possibility,
4. Wish. This latter meaning is often overlooked in considering the use of the word "may."

All in all, this is a very well organized and presented documentation of the controversial use of these permissive or possibilitive words. We think it will be of interest to advanced students of English grammar, and to teachers of English.
N.W.T.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1966 p23 in the printed version]

Eye Rhymes, by Helen Bowyer

Bear and dear
Share, I fear
The pointless deceptivness
Of there and here.

Some and home
Tomb and comb,
Sin against the tongue
Like from and whom.

Howl and bowl
Foul and soul,
Mislead the ear
Like doll and toll.

Give and dive
Live and thrive,
Bewilder the moppet
Of six or five.

Love and hove
Dove and strove
Sound no more alike
Than glove and cove.

Pew and sew
Do and go
Fail expectation
Like Now and slow.

Laid and said
Must be read
As if they rhymed
With neighed and Ned.

And so one could go on and on. How would some of our readers like to continue this eye-rhyme doggeral and send us their verses. They'd be in good company. Many a famous poet has ended his lines with words that pleased the eye but fell short of satisfying the ear. Phonemic spelling would play ducks and drakes with this easy expedient. In World English, for instance, *tomb* and *comb* would be spelld as *toom* and *koem,* and *glove* and *cove* as *gluv* and *koev,* and bow out completely as eye rhymes.

My Bonnie
My Bonnie lives over the ocean
My Bonnie flies over the sea
My Bonnie has perpetual mocean
She has St. Vitus's dance, you sea.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1966 p20 in the printed version]

10. Research in Reading, by Leo G. Davis.

It is this writer's humble deduction that few researchers have clear-cut ideas of just what they are trying to investigate, or what they may do with the statistics they may compile. Most projects are outlined(?) in ambiguous terms. Seldom is there any bona fide suggestions for concrete action. Reports generally end with something like: "This report should be interpreted with caution." thus indicating the author's indecision. Others indicate only that more research is needed.

It is also our deduction that there is but one truly academic factor contributing to reading failure, - our misleading, erratic spelling, - and that is aggravated by the diabolical "whole-word" approach(?) and subsequent premature promotions.

Most factors under investigation seem to be outside the academic field, - well beyond the control by educators. Many researchers compile statistics based on age, sex and/or race, - despite the fact that each group has it's average quota of dumb-clucks and whizz-kids, a condition that automatically vitiates such research. Likewise, some compile statistics on I Q ratings, altho there is no logical reason to think that a given innovation wouldn't benefit any-and-all children according to their respective abilities - no reason to think that the child with an I Q of 75 should achieve any more, or any less, than 75% as much as the one with an I Q of 100, under any common condition.

Apparently there has been little or no real research in methodology of reading. Such tetras as "basal, linguistics, programmed, individualized, axis-loading, structured, etc." don't seem to identify any specific theory that lends itself to comparison. Without comparison, there is no research as to methods or materials.

For the most part, investigations have been in the form of solitary projects, unrelated to, and without direct comparison with other projects and/or theories. Apparently no two theories have been projected via a common lesson narrative with a common vocabulary, under identical teaching practices! Obviously, Johnny's reaction to one theory cannot be compared with Mary's reaction to some other theory.

Altho some schools are using the Pitman i.t.a., apparently none has compared it with any other revolutionary notation. Nor have we heard of any i.t.a. text being transliterated into any other revolutionary notation. Thus, there has been no comprehensive comparison of revolutionary proposals. For these reasons, the i.t.a. projects seem to be without real meaning-because everybody should know that a stable orthography, -whether truly phonetic or only approximately, would be far better than the erratic TX, with which we have been struggling unsuccessfully for generations.

In order to compare systems and/or theories, "ginnypig" students should be divided into two or more groups for testing as many propositions, simultaneously, under comparable teaching practices, and with word-for-word transliterations of a common narrative. Thus the "spelling" approach to initial reading, can be compared with the "whole-word" approach, only by using the same lesson materials. Likewise, those two approaches can be compared to the i.t.a. approach, only by having the common text transliterated into i.t.a. orthography, for use by the third group.

> (***Ed. note**: The reason this has not been done is that methodology is largely dependent upon the kind of words selected. In order for some theories to be used successfully, the beginning vocabulary must be carefully controlled. The controlled words in one method may not be appropriate in another method. And obviously teaching practices cannot be identical if you are using different methods.)

And, altho there is no question about the basic value of Pitman's reasonably stable orthography, there is no way to choose the *best* "S.P.O."(Systematic Primary Orthografy) - except to transliterate a common text into two or more reasonably stable notations. But apparently no such comparative research has been reported.

Thus, inasmuch as we have absolute control over the orthography we teach - and there is no question about the basic value of a stable orthography in primary instruction - it is suggested that researchers concentrate on simplified spelling, - looking toward a standard "S.P.O.," which would be most practical for a general reform. The point is just this:- When any S.P.O. does come into general use, the simpler spellings will, quite naturally, become standard thru "common usage," which is the final authority in this field. Thus, any S.P.O. is also a blueprint for general orthografik reform, and should be so judged. Obviously, the adoption of a standard S.P.O. would, eventually, eliminate most of our so-called reading problems-by rendering traditional irregularities obsolete with the passing of succeeding generations.

Furthermore, inasmuch as public cooperation is vital to any crusade, public opinion is more important, in this field, than is academic perfection. Thus, the first logical step toward a standard S.P.O. would be to lay specimens of several comparable revolutionary notations before a substantial group of parents and teachers for comparative study. It is quite probable that they would, subsequently, "elect" a favorite by popular vote-without resorting to comparative testing. But if the choice should seem to be in doubt, the two "candidates" with the highest number of votes could be tested in the classroom with transliterations of a common text.

There are a number of rather comparable proposals, based on the current alfabet, any one of which would be a major improvement over T.O. Some proposals merely coordinate compatible traditional patterns and general rules; some use conventional digrafs; others use ligatures based on digrafs; some use diacritical marks; and some use different "faces" of type. There is little reason to think that proponents of these various systems wouldn't cooperate in transliterating a common text for comparative research.

The pertinent point is just this:- IF we are not progressive enough to stabilize our orthography, there is little point in any academic research. People who hold more respect for traditional irregularity, than for potential stability, are not apt to heed research in any field.

For the above reasons, it is humbly suggested that we have more bona fide research in orthografy, and less ambiguous discussion of abstract theories.

Palm Springs, Calif.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1966 p20 in the printed version]

From Rimes Without Reason.

What a Commocean
A young lady crossing the ocean
Grew ill from the ship's dizzy mocean.
She said with a sigh
And a tear in her eigh,
'To life I have no more devocean.'

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Fall 1966 p24]

11. Final Newsletter, by i/t/a Studies Center, Lehigh Univ.

The completion of the three year demonstration-evaluation project sponsored by the Fund for the Advancement of Education marks the termination of newsletters and reports from this office. While the summary of the findings of the three-year evaluation given below indicates positive values to the use of i/t/a-to-T.O. procedure, no indication of the extent and depth of rewarding period of activity can be reported in words. Even under the most trying of circumstances, where critics and nay-sayers abounded, the achievements of children were such that these offset to a large degree on any minority comment.

Summary.

An examination of the American educational milieu has permitted an easy recognition of the unfortunate compartmentalization of the curriculum that has evolved, noting the disparate views held about the most desirable methods for teaching reading and writing, the establishment of the extensive need for remediation toward the end of attaining literacy, and caused the observer to feel total discouragement about possible success in making significant changes. The three-year evaluation of the demonstration of the use of i/t/a in making a contribution to the reading and writing behavior of children has permitted a similarly easy recognition of the ease with which curriculum compartments come apart and the curriculum become integrated, an observation of the flexibility with which approaches to learning, methodologies for teaching and the variant sense-modes and rates of learning can be called into play toward the end of achieving skill in the reading-writing process, and the observation of a major diminishment of illiteracy among the first grade children.

The use of the i/t/a medium has been of significant value in eliminating those frustrations found in teaching teachers means to the ends of meeting educational needs of children. At the same time it has permitted the observation of effective and rapid development of reading and writing skill.

Using two disparate populations in one school system, the evaluation of an i/t/a to T.O. learning model used identical methodology, controlled teacher-behavior, curriculum and time spent on teaching the language arts, and met individual differences by using a variety of printed materials. The three-year comparison of i/t/a and T.O. populations also permitted a two-year replication study.

A. The three-year evaluation shows that children in i/t/a materials:

1. learn more readily, achieve significantly superior skill at an earlier time, read more widely, write more prolifically, extensively, and with a higher degree of proficiency than their T.O. counterparts, and have no difficulty in making a reading transition to T.O. materials when they are allowed to develop the appropriate confidence and efficiency levels.
2. spelling skill in i/t/a (better described as encoding) approaches perfection fairly early. The transition to spelling in T.O. is relatively easy *when directed instruction and guidance is given* in subsequent years, and achievement in spelling on standardized tests and in creative writing significantly better than the achievement of T.O.-taught children at the end of the second and third years.
3. word recognition achievement in T.O. at the end of the first and second years is significantly better for i/t/a-taught children but no differences are found at the end of the third year from the T.O.-taught population.
4. the lack of inhibition in writing for i/t/a-caught children noted early in the first year continues unabated into the second and third years and significant differences are found in these children's creative writings in terms of the number of running words and the number of

polysyllabic words used. No differences in the use the mechanics of reading were found between the populations.

5. comprehension as measured by instructional levels and reader level achievement in all years favor the i/t/a population, while standardized test achievement in comprehension shows no differences from the T.O. population.
6. no inferior results on such measures as rate of reading or accuracy of reading are found, suggesting that the i/t/a to T.O. procedure establishes no negative characteristics, no hindrances on later achievement.

B. The two-year replication study reproduced almost all of the above findings. The standardized test instrument used to measure word meaning, being different from the first year's test of vocabulary, it is perhaps not surprising to find no significant differences between the second year populations of the replication study on this subtest. Measures of word recognition such as the Fry list show significant achievement differences, however, in favor of the i/t/a population.

Since we can reasonably expect that most achievement differences will diminish in time when no unique post i/t/a procedures are used, a lack of positive longitudinal effects of i/t/a at some future period does not negate its use, nor diminish its values as established for use. i/t/a has been demonstrated to provide an effective means for the solution of a variety of educational problems.

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Further reports on post-i/t/a activity, a three-year funding ($225,000) by the Office of Education to examine, establish and evaluate curriculum change necessary and valuable post-i/t/a results, will be available from Miss Rita McNerney, Project Coordinator, Bethlehem Area School District, Higbee School, Bethlehem, Penna. Dr. Mazurkiewicz will serve as Project Director though he has chosen to make a change in his status. After eleven years at Lehigh Univ., he has accepted a position as Chairman of the Department of Education at Newark State College, Union, New Jersey. In addition to the Chairmanship of the 62 man department, Dr. Mazurkiewicz will serve as Professor of Reading. His many consultant, writing, and professional activities - including the i/t/a Project - will be continued in his new position. Colleagues are invited to address him there.

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The many and varied reports emanating from schools and colleges across the country have proven interesting reading. Much of the early research reported at the Second International Conference on i/t/a, available in the Proceedings from the i/t/a Foundation (c/o Dr. Richard Block, Hofstra Univ., Hemstead, New York) at $4.50, has been added to in the past year by a large number of people. i/t/a has been researched to a larger extent than any other single idea in reading and no end is in sight since the medium offers all sorts of avenues for exploration. However, i/t/a itself is no longer experimental in value. Its many uses may be.

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The i/t/a Foundation Report for Fall, 1966, which is available now from Hofstra Univ., carries a bibliography of length but also details the wide variety of published materials available, in that it represents a nearly complete up-to-date listing of all materials known. Some 40 publishers are represented.

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Creativity

Few folks can create
New ideas ar heven sent.
All our life we plod,
And with the trite ar content.

Leslie De Mar