

English • Spelling • Society

Personal View

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The self-expression medium
for Society members

The views expressed here are the author's and are not necessarily shared by the Society, or a majority of its members.

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The Simplified Spelling Society

The aim of the Society is to bring about a reform of the spelling of English in the interests of ease of learning and economy in writing.

To this end, it:

- encourages the idea that reform is possible;
- fosters debate on reform methods;
- devises, publishes and promotes potential reform schemes;
- persuades and campaigns;
- has a role as an expert organisation on the subject;
- aims to be of benefit to future generations by introducing a consistent spelling.

ENGLISH, THE NOU ABC'S (1998)

by George Lahey

This pamphlet is one of a series of publications on ways to simplify English spelling that are being published by the Simplified Spelling Society (SSS). The system described herein has been developed by Dr. Lahey, working independently over a period of seven years, yet it has much in common with the New Spelling system (SSS publication dated 1991). Only a few key decisions are different from those made in developing the NS system, yet those decisions make a world of difference in the end product.

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INTRODUCTION

In a world in which the number of people using English as a primary language is well beyond 300,000,000, and in which the number of people for whom it is a secondary language is considerably greater, a large part of the adult population is functionally illiterate. Data from a survey conducted for the U. S. National Department of Education in 1992 tell us that the number of adults of working age in the United States who are unable to read and write is well over 26,500,000, and those unable to read and write at functional levels number another 42,000,000; a total of 68,500,000, more than two out of five of the adults in the United States. The percentages of functionally illiterate working age adults are 16% and 26%, slightly higher than the figures cited for Canada by the National Adult Literacy DataBase Inc. of Canada, who indicate that 16% of their working age adults are unable to handle any reading tasks, and another 22% are able to handle only the simplest reading tasks. Great Britain is slightly better off, but, like all English-speaking countries, ranks below countries in which the native tongue is other than English. We have to ask ourselves why this should be so. The answer has to be the way we spell.

English has undergone many changes since the invading Jutes, Angles, and Saxons brought their language from the mainland to Great Britain. We have formally recognized three forms, Old English, Middle English, and Modern English, each representing changes in spelling and pronunciation. The language has grown in stature from the dialect of a few thousand illiterate souls to become the native tongue of hundreds of millions of persons, and the second language of added hundreds of millions.

Almost from the outset of its literary phase centuries ago, scholars have been clamoring for reform of its inconsistencies, which include the use of more than one symbol for the same speech sounds, the representation of more than one speech sound by the same symbol, and the use of silent letters.

Ideally, the written form of the language would include unique characters for each of its speech sounds. However, we have established a history of literary excellence using only the present 26 characters, most of which are recognized in the rest of the western world, so that an alphabet which did not use those same 26 characters would not be well received either at home or abroad.

DESIGNING A NEW SYSTEM

The design of a new system must be based on clearly stated parameters. Those for the English system are:

- The system must be alphabetic, with each symbol uniquely representing a single speech sound (phoneme).
- The symbols must consist solely of characters in current use, or digraphs derived from those characters. There must be no diacritical marks, no symbols borrowed from other symbol sets, no new designs.
- The juxtaposition of two symbols shall not affect the sound value of either, except as the two are parts of a digraph.
- The structure of the language, its syntax and grammar, must remain intact. The word structure must be similar enough to the existing word structure that the transition from the

old to the new spellings is evident to users of the old system (the Traditional Orthography; TO).

- The spelling rules must be simple, straightforward, and unencumbered by exceptions.
- The system must be easy to learn, the spellings easy to both read and write.

These precepts will have two outcomes that will make English significantly simpler than its predecessor; no silent letters, and no doubled consonants.

THE PRESENT ALPHABET

There is no shortage of symbols to represent English speech sounds in the current alphabet. The symbols in use today are, the a, aa, ae, ai, ao, au, ay, b, bh, c, ch, ck, d, dh, e, ea, ee, ei, eu, ey, f, g, gh, h, i, ie, j, k, kh, kn, l, lh, ll, m, mn, n, ng, o, oa, oe, oi, oo, ou, oy, p, ph, ps, q, r, rh, s, sc, sh, t, th, u, ua, ue, ui, uy, v, w, wh, x, y, and z. As used in current texts, the a represents at least seven different speech sounds, the ai three, the c two, the ch two, the e two, etc. We could cut the number of symbols in half without losing a single speech sound.

More than half of the symbols in current use redundantly represent the same speech sounds, and at least a fourth represent more than one speech sound, so that rather than concern ourselves with having too few characters to do the job, we should concern ourselves with having too many symbols; 26 characters, plus 40 digraphs. Our first concern ought therefore to be to eliminate the surplus symbols.

THE ENGLISH SPELLING SYSTEM

We repeat here the list of the English symbols, with strikeouts indicating those symbols that we can eliminate for the reasons stated in the next paragraph: a, aa, ae, ai, ~~æ~~, au, ~~ay~~, b, ~~bh~~, c, ch, ~~ck~~, d, ~~dh~~, e, ea, ee, ei, eu, ~~ey~~, f, g, ~~gh~~, h, i, ie, j, k, ~~kh~~, ~~kn~~ l, ~~lh~~, ll, m, ~~mn~~, n, ng, o, oa, oe, oi, oo, ou, ~~oy~~, p, ~~ph~~, ~~ps~~, q, r, ~~rh~~, s, ~~sc~~, sh, t, th, u, ua, ue, ui, ~~uy~~, v, w, ~~wh~~, x, y, and z.

The ao was so rarely used that it will not be missed. The ay, ey, oy, and uy are only diphthongs if the y is a vowel symbol, which, because of the one sound, one symbol rule, it will no longer be. The bh, ck, dh, kh, kn, lh, ll, mn, ph, ps, rh, sc, and wh symbols are redundant. They represent sounds more appropriately represented by the b, c, d, c (see below), n, l, l, n, f, s, r, s or c, and w. And the gh has either been silent or has represented the same sound as the f, so it can be discarded.

This first step toward simplification eliminates 18 surplus symbols..

Among the consonant symbols, the aa, au, b, d, h, l, m, n, oi, p, r, sh, t, and w are now unique representations of a single speech sound, while the c, ch, f, g, j, k, ng, q, s, th, x, y, and z, either represent more than one speech sound, redundantly represent the same speech sounds, or do both. The c, ch, k, and q represent the same /kuh/ sound, the c is sometimes an s, the f sometimes a v, the g sometimes a j, the s sometimes a z, and the y sometimes a vowel, and the ch, ng, and th all represent closely related but distinguishable speech sounds. Right off, we can stop using the y as a vowel. (A departure from NS consistent with the rule that each symbol must represent only

one speech sound.] Then, we can replace those c's that have /s/ sounds with an s, f's that have /v/ sounds with a v, g's that have /j/ sounds with a j, and s's that have /z/ sounds with a z. We can also replace the x with the cs or gz, as in "focs," or "egzactly."

In choosing between the c, k, and q, consider that the uses of the c far outweigh the uses of the other two, and that the c is needed for the ch symbol. Besides, the words "katkh" and "qatqh" don't fit comfortably within the present word structure. So, let us consign the k and q to history. [A departure from the NS, which opted for the k because it was easier to see. The numbers inveigh against that decision, as does the fact that the k is more difficult to write cursively.]

The remaining conflict between the c and ch can be eliminated by confining the ch symbol to its role in "chip catch," et al. We will also rid ourselves of the incongruent ch in "chic," "machine," et al, which should be spelled "sheec" and "masheen."

The ng and th each currently represent two very close speech sounds, as in "singer," and "finger," and "this" and "thin" with no clear alternative symbols to fall back on in order to make a distinction. The problem with "finger" is akin to problems with many words in which a particular consonant sound is lengthened, as in "fourteen," wherein the t is doubled when spoken but not doubled when written, and "openness," wherein it is doubled, etc. To avoid the complication of wondering whether to double or not double, we do away with doubled consonants, thus "finger." As to the th, the most practical solution would seem to be to let it continue to serve a dual role; the only symbol in the English system permitted to do so. The use of the "dh" in place of either th goes very much against the grain.

There is one more consonant sound to define; the sound of the s in "leisure," "pleasure," et al. It is not the same sound as iz represented by the s, the sh, or the z. However, it is the sound of the zh, once used and then discarded, which we can now restore; thus "leizhure," "pleazhure," "vizhun," etc.

Let us now start using the consonant symbols appropriately. Keep in mind that until the vowels have been defined, some words will have neither English nor English spelling; for example, "wordz" and "spellingz" in this sentence, and "leizhure" and "pleazhure" in the previous paragraph.

In the process of defining the vowel symbols, we will begin to eliminate silent letters which do not affect the English pronunciation, and will replace the -sion and -tion endings with the phonetically correct -shun ending. Then, as soon as we have established the vowel symbols, we'll stop using doubled consonants.

Since no other symbols represent the short vowel speech sounds, the a, e, i, o, and u will be used. We then can use diacritics, punctuation marks, or diphthongs to identify the long vowel sounds. Diacritics make life miserable, since they are not part of the normal keyboard. Punctuation marks introduce a new kind of ambiguity: When is it punctuation, and when is it not? So we will use diphthongs.

English used the ae, ai, ea, ee, ei, ie, oa, oe, ou, ue, and ui to represent the long vowel sounds. The ae, ee, ie, oe, and ue have an attractive commonality that makes them the best candidates for representing the long vowel sounds from both a learning and recognition standpoint, so they will

bee uezd. [We do not have the objection to "fleeing" that led the NS to uez the y rather than the ie. Nor do we object to "goeing," "fleeing," et al, particulereerlees sins, among utherz, the "fleeing" spelling iz alredee in comun ues.] The ee or ie, wichever fits the sound, wil bee substituted for the y in English werd endingz. [Anuther deeparchur frum NS.]

Sins wee intend NOT to chaenj the soundz uv enee English werdz, az wel az to avoid reedundent simbols, the ferst and secund persun proenownz ought to bee the ie and ue. However, eeven if we capitalized the I and the U, the chaenj would be distracting to thoez uv us alredee familyer with the I and you. A better wae would seem to be to maec an ecsepshun and reetaen the I and you. New lernerz wil probablee not care, and the rest uv us wil apreesheeaet the continouitee.

Goeing on with the vowel selecshun, let us consider the several soundz that the a reprezents in English, as in "abut," "age," "all," "and," "are," "care," and "father:" The sound uv the a in "abut" aand the sound uv the a in "age" are the short and long vowel soundz, soe thae are not a problem. The sound uv the a in "all" iz the sound of the au in "haul," a diphthong that haz alwaez had that particular sound, so the spelling beecumz "aul." Then, the a in "are" haz the vowel sound uv the aa in "aardvark," soe the aa wd bee uezd for that sound, and the "are" beecumz "aar," and the "aardvark" beecumz "aardvaarc."

The sound the a represents in the English "as," "and," "at," "bass" (the fish), "has," et al, iz aulsoe the /aa/ sound, thus "aaz," "aand," "aat," "baas," "haaz," etc. in English. [Anuther deepaarchur frum NS, wich alowd the a to represent mor than wun speech sound, soe thaet it wuud continue to bee aambiguous.]

The a in "care" haaz the sound uv the ai in "air," soe the ai wil bee uezd for that sound. Thus, "care" beecumz "cair," taecing its plaes with "fair," "lair," et al. In aadishun, thoez spellingz thaet riem with "cair," such aaz the werdz "bear," "dare," et al, wil now bee speld "bair," "dair," etc. The polisee uv wun sound, wun simbol leedz directlee tou congrueent spellingz, a defniit plus for the English spellingz.

The reemaening a sound izn't aan a sound aat aul. The a in "father" haaz the short vowel o sownd, aaz in "bother," soe the proper spelling iz "fother." Then, wee noet thaet "uther," and "mother," wer rnispeld, aand must beecum "uther" and "muther," maecing the riten werd agree with the spoecen werd.

Thoez hou aar hezitent about acsepting the chaenj to "muther" and "fother," need oenlee thingc wut the goel iz - to spel werdz the wae thae sound, soe thaet the riten werd wil represent the spoecen werd. Doen't thingc for a moement thaet theez werdz wer ever corectlee speld ("spelt" if you'r English). Tou dou soe wuud bee a form uv aansestor wershup. Wee cenot aford such self-induljens in owr efert to maec seareeus inroeds on funcshunuul iliterasee.

The ea diphthong haaz bin uezd tou represent the vowel sownd in "apear," "dear," "ear," "hear," etc., aand wil continue tou be uezd in thaet capaasitee. It wil noe longer represent the long vowel sound.

The oi haaz aulwaez represented a single sound, aaz in "oil," "coil," " join," etc., soe it wil continue to represent thaet sownd.

In English, the oo symbol represented three different sounds, as in "cool" and "fool," "cook" and "look" "good" and "wood." The vowel sound in "cool" and "fool" is the same sound as the ou in "you," how spelling we have chosen to retain, so the English spelling became "coul" and "foul." The vowel sounds in "cook" and "look" and in "good" and "wood" differ. Neither will meet the need for the oo symbol. However, we note that the vowel sound in "good," will meet the need represented by the uu, as the NS had considered doing. This would vary much simpler things, so the uu will meet the need for "guud," "wuud," et al and the oo will meet the need for the vowel sound in "cooc," "looc," et al.

Use the uu also to solve the problem with the spelling of "pull," in which the ul is obviously different from the ul in ultimate. The new spelling will be "puul." Moreover, "full" becomes "fuul," and the "-ful" suffix will become "-fuul," with the spelling of "dull" becoming "dul."

In staying with the ou of "you" and using it in "coul" et al, we have deviated from the NS, which chose to use the ou for the /ow/ sound, a decision with which we totally disagree. The pronunciation drill, "How now brown cow," should have impressed upon all of us the fact that the proper spelling for the /ow/ sound; which is a morpheme rather than a phoneme, is ow.

We now need to define the 'obscure vowel,' a vowel sound that lacks the quality of a short vowel. Dictionaries represent this sound with the schwa, a symbol which is not now and should not become a part of the alphabet.

The NS established a number of rules for dealing with the obscure vowel. We prefer to avoid rules whenever possible, particularly if they are or are complex and those suggested. Memorizing rules which have several conditions is difficult for some individuals, impossible for others, and should be avoided where it is unnecessary, as it seems to be in this case.

English will use the short vowel symbol that is closest to the sound heard whenever possible. More often than not, that will mean using the e, which has the least distinct sound. However, if even the e seems not to fit, English will use the uu, which represents a more subdued or muffled sound. You'll note we've been using e's wherever we felt the sound could be there, and have used the uu for the more obscure vowel sound ever since it was defined.

In discussing the obscure vowel, the NS proposed to use -er endings to replace -ar, -ir, -or, -ur endings, and spellings to replace an, on, and ain, and a variety of changes to replace -al, -le, -il, and -ol endings. English will instead rely on the word sound, word symbol, which are more or less not, but more often than not will mean using -er endings, and spellings, and -ul endings. We agree with the NS, however, that the distinction between the singular -man and plural -men endings should be retained, even if they seem to sound the same, except that English will spell the singular -maan, On the other hand, we see no problem with the -buul and -ibuul endings. English will ignore the word's ancestry and use the -buul ending unless the /ib/ sound stands out clearly enough to call for its use.

That completes the alphabet. [Table 1](#), at the end of the text, lists each of the symbols used, along with sample words to illustrate the pronunciation.

With the representative value of the alphabetic symbols established, the next step is to describe how speech the new spellings will represent. Or, as we re-consider the various different spellings in

owr dicshunaireez tou reprezent the diferent accents in the US, in the UK, aand elswair? The aanser mae bee fownd in a reelaeted cweschun, "Tou wut ecstent aar owr diferensez atribuetabuul tou owr fizicuul separaeshun, aand tou wut ecstent aar thae dou tou the aambiqueiteez uv the English spelingz?" Cen the aambiqueiteez raather then the separaeshunz ecsplaen wie the i in "simultaneous" reprezents a long vowel on wun sied uv the pond, aand a short vowel on the other? I thingz soe. Wuud thaaf diferens egzist if the i haad bin unaambiqueus? Posiblee not.

Linguists ecspect laangwidjez tou chaenj oever tiem aand aaz a consecwens uv the separaeshun uv the speecers. But fizicuul separaeshun iz noe longer the linchpin uv chaenj thaaf it wuns wuz. Wee aar noe longer separaeted in the saem waez thaaf owr aansestors wer. Wee aar oenlee minuts awae frum eech uther on the foen, bie faacs, or ee-mael, oenlee owerz awae bie plaen. Wee mics aand minguuul tougether toedae in waes thaaf owr aansestors wuud haav thaut imposibuul, in waez thaaf for senchureez wer indeed ecstreemlee difficult. Aaz a consecwens, the world iz ecspeareeensing the fenominon wee in the Nou Werld ecspeareeensd throuwt the laast tou senchureez, a leveling proses braut abowt bie intermingling with boeth English-speecing aand non-English-speecing persunz on boeth a permanent (emigrants) aand temporairee (tourists aand biznes travelerz) baesis. Wun uv theez daez owr diferensez wil disapear aaz a reezult uv the leveling proses. Wee cuud bring thaaf dae a lot cloeser bie developing a simplified aalfabet thaaf uezez comun spelingz.

Wun uv the effects uv the English Spelingz wil bee tou chaenj the number uv inflecshunz. English wil eliminaet sum inflecshunz aand aad utherz. Wair English speld a werd diferentlee, but proenownsd it the same, as in "roe" aand "row," English wil haav oenlee wun speling, "roe.". Wair English speld a werd the saem but proenownsd it diferentlee, as in "row," a rieht, and "row," a lien uv objects, English wil haav tou werdz, thus "roe" and "row," the meaning uv "roe" beeing obtaend frum contecst.

English inflected the e in "the," maecing the e a long vowel wen the "the" preeseeded a werd beegining with a vowel sownd, els uezing the short e. That inflecshun wil bee caareed oever into English to avoid a conflict with the "thee" proenown, wich is stil uezd in menee plaesez.

The English spelingz aar cumpaatibuul with the lerning prinsipuul thaaf nou ecspeareeensez bild upon prieer ecspeareeensez. If the ecspeareeensez aar congrouent, the nou ecspeareeens reeinforsez the erleer ecspeareeens. If the nou ecspeareeens conflicts with the old, the nou ecspeareeens creeaets a staet uv disonens thaaf the lerner must reezolv bie, 1) reeviezing hiz/her erleer understanding, 2) disreegaarding wun or the uther insident, or 3) estaabliishing a roul tou cuver the ecsepshun, In English, the uezer haad tou ceep menee routs with menee ecsepshunz in miend. In English, the uezer duz not. Nou ecspeareeensez dou not conflict with prieer ecspeareeensez. Foeneemz reemaen the same in everee morfeern, aand morfeems bild upon wun anuther like brics in a bilding. Thair aar oenlee three ecsepshunz tou reemember; 1) the ues uv the I aand you for the persunuul proenownz, 2) the inflecshun uv the e in the "the," aand 3) the douuul ues uv the th. In everee uther instens, the speling uv a werd iz soe reelieablee a reeflecshun uv the sownd uv the werd thaaf eech ecspeareeens reeinforsez eech prieer ecspeareeens.

Aan egzaampuul uv the diferens beetween the ecspeareeens uv aan English stoudent aand aan English wun cen be fownd in derivativz uv the morfeem "or." In English it proevieds a fowndaeshun for "for," wich sets the staej for "fort," but then the proenunseeaeshun chaenjez in "fortune," and

the spelling chaenjez in "foretell." Thaat duzn't haapen in English, "Forchun" uezez a diferent foeneem tou reeflect the diferent sownd, aand "fortel" uezez the saem speling.

Consistensee beetween morfeemz wercs boeth up the laader aand down. If in English "beeluvd" iz a corect speling, then "luv" and "uv" aar aulsoe corect spelingz. Fonetic consistensee boeth up aan down the lien iz sentruul tou the English orthografee, aand maecs speling eeze.

Tradishunuulists mae fiend it haard tou abaandon the mith thaat werdz with diferent meeningz must be speld diferentlee, as in "cent," "sent," and "scent". Thae forget thaat meening iz not a funcshun uv speling. Wee gaather meening frum the contecst in wich the werd iz uesd. Wee dou it in speech. Wee cen dou it in tecsts. Menee English werdz haaving oenlee wun speling haad mor then wun meening. The aadishun uv a fue mor werdz thaat haav mor then wun meening in the English spelingz wil bee ofset bie the faact thaat English wil seperaet werdz thaat in English haad mor then wun proenunseeaeshun for the saem speling.

DISCUSHUN

Aat this point, let us diegres for a moement: The Soesieetee haaz estaablisht a number uv paasejez for traanscripshun intou the nou sceem aaz a mezhur uv its soutabilitee. Theez aar prezented hear in English:

1. The Staar (H.G. Welz). It wuz on the ferst dae uv the nou year thaat the anownsment wuz maed, aulmoest siemultaeneeuslee frum three observatoreez, thaat the moeshun uv the planet Neptoun, the owtermoest uv aul the planets thaat weel abowt the Sun, haad beecum vairee earaatic. A reetaardaeshun in its velositee haad bin suspected in Deesember. Then, a faent, reemoet spec uv liet wuz discoverd in the reejun uv the perturbd planet. At ferst this did not cauz enee vairee graet ecsietment. Sientific peepuul, however, fownd the intelijens reemaarcabuul eenuf, eeven beefor it beecaem noen thaat the nou bodee wuz raapidlee groeing laarjer aand brieter, aand thaat its moeshun wuz cwiet diferent frum the orderlee progres uv the planets.

2. Briten wen yung (Fraanc Cermod)

Wee mae nowadaez bee chaaree abowt uezing the werd 'jeenyus,' but wee stil haav a guud iedeea wut iz ment bie it. For ecsaampuul, thair aar graet numberz uv vairee gifted muezishunz hou aar aadmieerd but not cauld jeenyusez. But thair aar uthertz, maanifestlee proedijus, performing aat ecstrordinairilee erlee aejez a varieetee uv feets soe complecs thaat the muesicuul laemaan cuud hardlee imaajin, eeven with the moest desperet laebor, acomplishing enee uv them, wiel eeven muezishunz aar astonishd, aand wee then reech for the guud, haandee, vaeg Enlietenment werd aand caul them jeenyusez. The list incloudz Moezaat aand Mendelson, aand dispiet aul the limiting judjments, it inclouds Benjamin Briten.

3. Oed tou a Nietingael (Jon Ceets)

Mie haart aecs, aand a drowzee numbnes paens
Mie sens, aaz thoe uv hemloch I haad drunc,
Or emteed sum dul oepeeet tou the draens
Wun minit paast, aand Leth-wuurdz haad sunc;
'Tiz not throu envee uv thie haapee lot,
But beeing tou haapee in thair haapeenes,
Thaat thow, liet-winged Drieaad uv the treez,
In sum meloedeeus plot
Uv beechen green, aand shaadoes numberless,
Singest uv sumer in fuul throated eez.

4. Fuzee-oepaec Orthograaficuul Vizhunz (C. Upwerd)

Thair wuz a por boi hou cuudn't spel
Haaf the werdz in ovr laangwidj tou wel.
Hiz teecherz thaut: 'Braen-sic!'
Mum aand Daad hoepd: 'Dislecsic!'
Yet the chield raashlee jeard;
'Wut the hel!' [Wut the hel indeed, Cris.]

The Soesieetee aulsoe publishd in 1991 a propoesuul for a nou sistem of speling called the New Speling (NS), which has proevieded a staanderd uv cumpaarisen for eevaalueaeting nou propoesuulz. Let us ecsamin the diferensez beetween the NS and English:

The moest important diferens beetween NS aand English iz thaata the preepairerz uv NS choez not tou establish a fonetic aalfabet, preefuring tou uez the Internaashunuul Fonetic Aalfabet (IFA) tou estaabliish pronunseeaeshunz. The problem with deefuring tou the IFA simbuul set for pronunseeaeshun iz thaata the IFA uezez a diferent set uv simbuulz thaan aar uezd in tecsts; simbuulz thaata the NS conseedz aar unsoutabuul for ordinairee ues. The dificultee iz thaata thaata desizhun reecwieerz thaata reederz beecum familyer with tou sets uv simbuulz, wun for speling, anuther for proenunseeaeshun. Thaata's toetalee unesesairee. Wee cen spair the lerner the nesesitee tou lern tou aalfabets bie uezing fonetic reprezentaeshun in the aalfabet wee intend tou uez, aaz English duz.

In anuther mouv aelyen tou the staeted perpus in English, the NS alowd a number uv simbuulz tou represent mor then wun speech sownd, perpechueaeting wun uv the faults upon wich the English spelingz fownderd in the ferst plaes. Eech simbuul needs tou staand on its oen feet. Ecsept for the th, aul English simbuulz dou.

In anuther diferens, English chouzez the c oever the k. The NS choez the k oever the c, aulthoe aadmitting it wuz posibuul tou reevers thaata deesizhun. The deesizhun shuud bee reeversd, sins ovr usej uv the c faar owtwaez ovr usej uv the k, and the c iz needed for the ch. The NS foecus on compaatibilitee with uther aalfabets thaata prompted their desizhun duz nuthing for the naetiv lerner, aand iz uv noe interest tou moest ueserz.

Uther respects in wich English diferz frum the NS incloud confiening the y tou its consonant vaalue, the ues uv cs aand gz tou reeplaes the x, plus the ues uv the z in pluuruuls. The laater diferens

avoids such problemz aaz distinguishing beetween prinsez and prinses, aand beetween wuns aand wunz.

In the selecshun uv the vowel simbuulz, NS choez the a, e, i, o, u for the short vowel, aaz English duz, then selected the ae, ee, y, oe, aand ue for the long vowel simbuulz. This iz boeth inconsistent with the wun sownd, wun simbuul rou, aand iz entieerlee unesesairee. Ues of the ie iz mor lojicuul, sirnpler, aand maecs this simbuul'z apearens compaatibuul with thaaf uv the uther long vowel simbuulz. The menea instinsez wairin English prezentelee substitoots the ie for the y in pluuruuls aand paartisipuuls estaabliish a uesfuul prsedent.

The NS corectlee reeplaesd "off" with of, but choez tou spel "of" ov, eeven thoe the vowel sownd is, for moest uv us, not the o sownd aat aul. The werd shuud bee speld uv.

The NS sugjeschun tou uez the ae to reeplaes the ai in pair is a gratouitus chaenj thaaf maecs lituul sens, sins the ai iz avaelabuul, fits the aaplicaeshun, aand haaz a histeree uv beeing uezd in air, fair, hair, et al. The sownd uv "air" is sertinlee not /ae/-/er/, nor shuud it bee.

With respect tou the usej uv the oo aand ou, NS agen maecs deesizhuns thaaf allow the simbuulz tou represent mor then wun speech sownd. The uu iz needed for guud, wuud, aand shuud, wiel the ou is needed for you, throu, aand tou. Noet agen thaaf this meens thaaf the ou is *not* aproepoe tou the /ow/ sound, wich in English iz tou bee speld ow, aaz in owt aand abowt.

In discusing the ues uv the au, the NS sed thaaf thair wuud not bee a problem with the paaralel ues uv the aw for the /au/ sownd. Not soe. This iz another vieoelaeshun uv the wun sownd, wun speling premis. The simplificaeshun thaaf reezults frum avoiding simbuul reedundensee haaz severuul benefits, not the leest uv wich iz tou klaarifie for nou lernerz the speech sowndz in werds like awae, awair, awaec, etc.

The NS erz agen bie staeting thaaf the polisee thaaf apliez tou the ues uv the aw aulsoe apliez tou the ues uv the ow. The ow iz a morfeem with noe fonemic aulternativ, aand shuud not bee nor shuud ever haav bin treeted aaz thoe it were a foeneem. The polisee iz cwiet diferent.

Raather then select a simbuul tou represent the obscuer vowel, aaz English duz, the NS estaablishez a complecs set uv rouls tou guvern vaireeus sichouaeshunz. Such a soeloushun tou the problem iz not oenlee unesesairee, but iz inconsistent with the dezieer tou simplifie the spelingz aaz much aaz posibuul. Lerning tou spel iz difficult enuf withowt adding tou the mics rouls thaaf cen bee avoided bie the simpuul ecspeedeent uv proevieding aan aproepreeet simbuul.

Ecstending the obscuer vowel definishun tou the oenlee vowel in the werd "cat" iz a caategoricuul mistaec. The a in cat haaz a distinct sownd wich English recogniezez with the speling caat. Aulsoe, the spelingz uv caarut and naeshun dou not caul for the obscuer vowel, wairaaaz, aaz the NS paamflet sez, the speling uv toetuul duz; toetuul beeing oenlee wun uv the menea instensez in wich the uu iz needed.

In another diferens with the posishun uv the NS, it iz owr premis thaaf thair aar werdz for wich the ar, ir, or, and ur are preferabuul tou the er aand shuud bee uezd, aand thair aar werdz in wich the an aand on aar preferabuul tou the en aand shuud bee uezd. Speech sowndz raather than maandaets shuud guvern speling.

The -le, -al, -el, -il, -ol, and the -ul endings, plus the -ile, the -able, and -ible endings are indeed often pronounced very much alike. When they have the obscure vowel sound, the English ending will therefore be either the -uul, or, as applicable, the -abuul. But when the vowel sound is distinguishable, as in "taanjibuul," the proper vowel sound should be used.

The function of the right word is to represent the spoken word. That means the practice of omitting the vowel when it is a vowel sound, as NS proposes for "cupl" et al, unacceptable. Spelling must distinguish between the short vowel and the obscure vowel sound in order to tell the reader how a word is pronounced.

The public is not unaware that there is a spelling problem, but it's hard for people who are literate to believe that there are people who actually cannot learn to read and write. It's easier to believe the untruths, that they're ignorant, lazy, or don't care. The public has to be made aware that functional literacy is a reality, that it is not a function of sex, age, class, or race, and that it affects millions. It is not just something that happens to other people. It can affect anyone, and anyone's children.

The other thing people have to be told is that functional literacy is having a devastating effect on the economy. It is costing billions annually in lost revenue, is creating labor shortages in industry, and is keeping many otherwise capable people in a state of constant poverty. Until the public acknowledges the importance of a literate society, we may be wasting our time trying to get public sympathy for spelling reform.

It's important to remember that the switch from English to English spelling is about changing the language for future generations and the literate, rather than changing it for our conveniences. The obvious advantages of phonetic spelling to future generations and to people struggling to escape illiteracy should be enough to convince us to go ahead with the change to English spelling.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

Along with informing the public of the need and the opportunity, we need to prove that English really works. At this point it is a concept on paper, and has not been evaluated in a learning setting. We need to demonstrate that it really works by teaching a representative group to use English; to read it, and to write it. We can go several ways to provide this indication of English superiority. One way would be to present it to kindergarten-aged children at a university experiment school. In this mode, English would be used for a full semester as a first language to later English learners.

A second way to demonstrate the language would be to present it to adults who are having trouble learning to read English, again as an intermediate step to learning the English spelling. We would use basically the same approach as for the experiment school, but with a more extended vocabulary.

A third approach would be to present English as an elective course to students at an appropriate level of higher education for at least a full semester. The aim would be to collect performance data, then have the students critique the system at the end of the semester.

A reeserch dezien cumpairing the ecspairementuul group tou a group uezing English tou studee the swne cors mateareeulz wuud bee needed.

A forth aproech wuud bee tou prezent the laangwidj tou graadueet stoudents studeeing langwidj aarts, aand haav them uez it, ecsplor its depth, aand criteec it with respect tou its poetenshuul.

The owtcum uv the prouf of consept peareeud wuud not oenlee demunstraet the feezibilitee uv uezing the Inglish spelingz, it wuud proevied a test bed tou confirm the spelingz uv indivijueuul werdz.

IMPLEMENTAESHUN

It iz feesibuul tou introedues the criticuul caaraacteristics uv Inglish on a step-bie-step baesis, aaz Harry Lindgren suggested severuul decaeds agoe, withowt waeting on the prouf uv consept.. The steps owtliend beeloe cen bee inisheeaeted reegaardles uv the owtcumz uv the prouf uv consept, beecuz the ferst tou steps aand tou a maejer ecstent the therd step dou not deepend on the speling sistem adopted for the fienuul step.

The cee tou the step-bie-step proegraam iz tou present the speling chaenjez in a seecwens thaet boeth nouspaeper editors aand elementaree scoul teechers cen accept, aand frum wich wee wuud not haav tou baac-traac. A posibl aproech is suggested

In the step-bie-step proses, it wuud bee wel tou goe aat thingz a lituul mor agresivlee thaan Lindgren recumended, tou select a claas uv objects for chaenj, raather then individual objects. Not oenlee wuud ataacing individueuul objects taec tou long, it miet introedous mor confueshun then it eeliminaeted.

The leest introusiv speling chaenj wuud bee to reeplaes the reedundent consonants with thair proper aulternativz; reeplaesing the k with the c, the q(u) with the c or cw, aand the x with the cs or gz. [This wuud uv cors reecwieer setuuling the c versus k aarguement ferst. If the aarguement iz setuuld on the baesis uv wich simbuul the public wuud bee moest lieclee tou accept, the aanser haaz tou bee the c.] In thoez instinsez wair this reezults in two c's tougether, aaz in "back" beecuming "baacc," it wil not bee aat aul difficult tou drop the ecstra c.

The necst teest introusiv chaenj wuud bee tou eeliminaet the sielent leterz, ecsepting the silent e in the vowel-consonent-e seecwens, aand ecsepting consonants thaet aar dubld tou indicaet the preeseeding short vowel. The laater chaenjez wuud haav tou waet on the laast step, replaesing the vowel simbuulz, aaz wuud the reespeling uv werdz wairin the vowel-consonent-e seecwens duz not in faact indicaet the long vowel sownd.

Amung the chaenjez maed duering this secund step wuud bee deefeeting the h's frum werdz thaet included the bh, dh, gh, lh and rh, the secund l uv ll, the second b in "abbreviation," the second a in "abreast," the c's in "abscess," "abscise," aand "abscissa," etc., aand chaenjing the ch tou c wen it haaz the /c/ sownd. The chaenjez wuud bee substaanshuul, but wuud not impair eneewun'z abilitee tou reed or riet the emended tecsts or egzisting TO tecsts.

The third step would be to replace the ambiguous consonants with their proper symbols; the c with s, the ch with c, the f with v, the g with j, and the y with either ic or ee. Replacing the y with the ie and ee in this step would be consistent with the way sound, way symbol premises, and would provide a natural transition to the vowel replacement step, the last step in the process.

The final step would be replacement of the long vowel symbols, updating the other vowel symbols as well.

Adherence to the suggested order is that, should we change our minds as to the end goal during Steps 1 and 2, nothing would have to be done over. Also, should we be in doubt about the replacement of the y during Step 3, that change could be put off until Step 4, with the other changes could be made without impacting the final outcome.

Steps 1, 2, and 3 depend only on settling the c versus k and ee, ie versus y disputes. In every other respect, Steps 1 through 3 are common to all systems under consideration, so that proceeding with them is feasible. It is also proposed that the Proof of Concept and Steps 1 and 2 of the Implementation be proceeded together.

SUMMARY

The English spelling system needs only one way spelling rule: Spell it like it sounds. Because what the reader sees in print represents what he or she hears in speech, English is readable at every stage of literary achievement, whether the reader is a new learner, or older student. Their are no ambiguities to stumble over, and no redundant symbols to introduce confusion and create dissonance among learners.

The spell-it-like-it-sounds rule has only three exceptions, the ues of the I and you, the double ues of the th, and the inflection of the "the." All other words are spelled exactly as they are pronounced.

In English, the written word is wedded to the spoken word, giving the written form of the most powerful language in the world the opportunity to become the lingua franca of the 21st century.

English spellings lend themselves to every form of written communication, including handwriting, typing, and various forms of composition. English is especially suited to computer use, having no gimmicks or special symbols to create. The straightforward correspondence between speech symbols and speech sounds makes it particularly suited for use in voice recognition systems.

TAEBUUL 1. The English Symbol Set

Sim.	Saampl werdz
a	a, abut, apear, coema
aa	aand, baad, haapen, haav, traap
ae	abaet, aet, daeliet, naeshun, selebraet
ai	air, bair, cair, chair, fair, thair
au	audeeens, audeeoe, auger, aul
b	bair, beegin, big, boischurus, buetee
c	aecom, caar, luc, scoul, topic
ch	caatch, chaar, chear, chaastiez, chow
d	adorn aed, ductuul, dul, dunjun
e	bed, bet, end, maaden, maeden
ea	clear, ear, endear, fear, spear
ee	asee, Eester, eezee, pleez, shorlee
f	aaft, fizics, foe, frum, if, of, stuf
g	aagreget, agen, gaardner, glaad
h	ahaa, haapen, hael, heloe, hoe, huree
l	bin, bit, chit, drip, in, it, iz, lsreeel
ie	bie, flieing, multiplie, suplie, trie
j	aej, join, joi, jurnee, just, soeljer
l	aliev, aloft, alow, aelyen, alien, loe
m	aampear, amownt, mum, mideeeevil
n	aand, in, noe, noeing, menea
ng	finger, ring, raang, runing, singer
o	cot, cow, oposit, opshunz, owt
oe	aulthoe, boet, cloez, oepen, roep
oi	boi, cod, cloister, emploi, oister, toi
oo	cooc, booclet, foot, poot
ou	blou, coup, clou, flouent, throu
p	aep, apaart, aapuul, pair, plaaster
r	aar, ariev, chaart, ear, rid, riden, ried
s	aes, baes, beast, best, beeset, wercs
sh	aash, aacshun, ashor, shooger, shuud
t	aet, baet, beet, it, laet, touth, tint
th	baether, boeth, seeth, thaat, thin, this
u	but, chum, cup, fur, muther, utherz
ue	amuez, cue, fue, fuez, uesfuul, uezd
uu	aapuul, fuul, guud, pluuruul, shuud
v	aavenue, avaelabuul, vaalue, vaalyent
w	awaec, awair, wen, werd, wuud
y	bieyou, yaac, yearling, yes, yonder, you
z	breez, bridjez, eezee, zou, zouoloojee
zh	aazhur, leezhur, trezhur, vizhun