TO KNOCK THE EYE OUT OF A FRIEND

Assessment of an Orthographic Reform Upon the English Language

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Linguistics Essay

ÆBSTRÆKT

ABSTRACT

This essay is a theoretical qualitative study, which examines the possibility for a spelling reform into English. The history of orthographical changes into British English, as well as Brown's categorisation of spelling reforms, is reviewed. Four spelling reform proposals are analysed and compared. Additionally, the social discourses of Eira, which are relevant to a spelling reform, are analysed and discussed with regard to English.

There is only speculation as to why no modern day spelling reform has been implemented in British English, but it is connected to its historical events, the social discourses and the implementation process. Spelling reform into English is theoretically feasible, but it depends on the implementation strategies and support from those who wish to perform such a change.

KEYWORDS: Sociolinguistics, Spelling reform, English orthography, Discourse analysis

Æ K N A L ɪ D ʒ M Ə N T
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABBREVIATIONS

BE	British English
OE	Old English
ME	Middle English
ModE	Modern English
ON	Old Norse
GVS	Great Vowel Shift
TO	Traditional Orthography
SR1	Spelling Reform 1
NS	New Spelling
CS	Cut Spelling
RP	Received Pronunciation

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ɪ N T R ə D ə K Σ ə N

When I began to learn English in my early primary school years, I learnt that Englishmen have a wicked sense of humour. When learning *know* and *knee*, the first letter to pronounce was *n*, even if *k* is pronounced in *bark* and *spike*. A list of irregularities was drilled into my head, with *read read read* and *eat ate eaten*, with no reason given as to why these forms existed. We have all learnt these things one way or another but, with time, people have forgotten the struggles and unfathomable variants and come to regard them as natural, while those who ask questions receive no satisfactory answer.

Those who have wondered how such forms have arisen, or have experienced difficulties in trying to spell or pronounce a word just discovered, may also wonder why these apparently unreasonable patterns still exist. The struggle of my childhood inspired me to write this theoretical study on spelling reform proposals. For this study, spelling reform proposals suggested for BE and subjects which are relevant to orthographical changes is examined and analysed in detail. The thesis questions I will attempt to answer are:

Why has no modern day spelling reform been implemented in order to reduce the types of spelling in British English?

How feasible would it be to implement a spelling reform into the current British English orthography?

In the first chapter of this essay, the history of English with regard to orthographic developments will be reviewed. The time periods before recordings of English orthography are evident will not be included. After this chapter, a methodology will outline the qualitative research that will follow in greater detail. The second chapter will review the different approaches and methods of spelling reformers and their proposals. The proposals will be categorized into different groups, in correlation to the categorization system made by Brown (1988).

This will be followed by an analysis on the social discourses which are relevant to changing English orthography and an in-depth examination of four spelling proposals for British English orthography. The implementation strategies of these spelling reformers will also be included. In addition, strategies which have been used for implementing a spelling reform into German are analysed. This is compared to the situation of implementing a spelling reform into English. In the fifth chapter of this essay, the information gathered from the analysis and the historical background, will be discussed in greater depth. In an attempt to answer the thesis questions of this essay, they will be included once more and discussed further. Some concluding arguments will be made on the possibilities and constraints of spelling reform proposals. This will be followed by a concluding chapter.

III HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

III.I History of English orthography

III.I.I *Overview of English Language History*

The English language has developed immensely throughout history and with these extensive language developments, spelling changes have naturally occurred. Throughout English language history, there have been some very distinct historical events (such as the Norman invasion and the Great Vowel Shift) that have resulted in some substantial changes to the English lexicon. These distinct historical events and their relevance to the orthography of English will be considered briefly in this essay and will be divided into Old English, Middle English and Modern English.

III.I.I.I Old English

Old English originates from the time Angles, Jutes and Saxons (collectively referred to as Anglo-Saxons) settled in the British Isles. These settlers spoke the language referred to as *Englisc* (Old English), which originates from Germanic (Burnley, 2000, p. 1).

Early records show that OE writing was based on the runic alphabet which was commonly used by Northern Germanic people (Freeborn, 1998, p. 21). However, most of the literature preserved from this language period was written with the Roman alphabet which arrived in England in 597 AD, with Christianity (Burnley, 2000, p. 1). With the limited number of letters in the Roman alphabet for the specific sounds of OE, the issue of distinguishing the English phonemes from each other arose, which led to the addition of letters from other sources such as the writing system *ogam*[1]. OE adopted the letters *yogh* Ʒ, *ash* Æ, *ethel*[2] Œ and *eth* Ð, as well as *thorn*[3] Þ and *wynn* Ƿ (Freeborn, 1998, pp. 24-26).

Old English spelling lacked consistency because there was no standard way of spelling; this led to variations influenced by dialectal pronunciation (Davidson & Upward, C, 2011, pp. 19-20). The dialects Kentish, Northumbrian, Mercian and West-Saxon have been distinguishable from OE scripts (Burnley, 2000, p. 2). The borders between these are shown below.

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[1] *Ogam* is a writing system that originates in Ireland (Davidson & Upward, 2011, companion material 4)
[2] From the Anglo-Saxon word eðel – name of the rune for œ (Hall,1960, p.108)
[3] Interchangable with the letter *eth* (Freeborn, 1988, p.24)

In the tenth and eleventh centuries, the dialect of West-Saxon had developed as the basis for a standard way of spelling OE (Burnley, 2000, p.2; Davidson & Upward, 2011, p.20). However, English of today is not foundered upon the dialect spoken in West-Saxon, but from Mercian, one of the dialects of Anglian that was spoken in the London area (Crystal, 2002, p. 173).

Moreover, Old English sustained influence from Latin, due to the arrival of the Roman alphabet and Christianity, and assimilated about 450 words. OE was also subject to influences from Norse by the invasion of Norsemen (Vikings) that begun in the eighth century. About 900 words have been distinguished as deriving from Old Norse. The ON loanwords were not notable in OE writing, but were absorbed into Middle English (Davidson & Upward, C, 2011, pp. 27-30).

III.I.I.II **Middle English**

In 1066, Normans invaded England. Norman rule affected the English language by assimilating foreign vocabulary and orthography. Norman French became established as the prestige language and was influential in culture and in higher social classes in England[4]. About 10,000 words of French origin entered English in the ME period, which significantly altered the language (Davidson & Upward, C, 2011, pp. 65-67).

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[4] It is important to note that the main French dialect that was influential during the beginning of the ME period was Norman French, which in later centuries was replaced with standard French; called central or Parisian French (Davidson & Upward, 2011, pp. 68-69).

The transition from OE to ME did not become manifest in writing until 1154[5], with the discontinuation of the convention to use West-Saxon as the standard spelling (Crystal, 2002, p.186; Freeborn, 1998, p.77; Davidson & Upward, 2011, p. 68). With the deprivation of a standard spelling, language changes that had not been seen in scripts written in OE standard spelling began to appear in writing.

With the lack of a national standard orthography, English words were spelled in various forms. The dialectal pronunciation of English became the basis for various spellings in ME, as was common practice before the wider use of West-Saxon spelling conventions (Davidson & Upward, C, 2011, pp. 75-76). With this development, some orthographic symbols utilized in OE writing were applied inconsistently and fell out of use. These symbols included the letter *thorn* (Þ) (Crystal, 2002, pp. 189-190).

 In the fourteenth century, the London area had developed three standard ways of spelling[6]. These were heavily influenced by the East Midland and Northern dialects of ME, because of the influx of literate settlers from these regions. The current English standard spelling, which was first adopted around 1415, is based upon what was called the 'Chancery standard'. The Chancery standard was the spelling of the royal chancery scribes, which replaced the use of Latin for legal documents (Scragg, 1974, pp. 34-35). Therefore, legal documents issued by the royal clerks spread the Chancery spelling throughout the country. This standard orthography is both influenced by other dialects in Britain, as well as Franco-Latin derivations (Burnley, 2000, pp. 141-142).

Writing practices from French and Latin had extensive influence upon the orthography of Middle English. Norman scribes represented ME phonetically in scripts, and also integrated French conventions of orthography, which contributed to the large contrast between OE and ME orthography (Burchfield, 1985, p. 17). Through this development, some spelling combinations which were common in OE, as *hw* and *cw*, came to be spelled in a more French manner; in this case *qu* (as the word *cwēne – quene*, which later came to be spelled *queen*) (Burnley, 2000, p. 142; Crystal, 2002, pp. 196-197; Oxford University Press, 2013). Owing to the introduction of Norman French, English has ultimately evolved into an amalgam of Germanic and Romanic.

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[5] Final entry of the Peterbourgh chronicle in OE (Davidson & Upward, 2011, p. 68).
[6] Another standard arose in the East-Midlands, which was devised by the *Lollards* (more information in Davidson & Upward, 2011, pp. 78-79).

Aside from French, Latin continued to be a major source of vocabulary and grammar, with the assimilation of more than 1,000 words in the ME period, and with the utilization of Latin for official documents and laws, before the Chancery standard came into practice (Crystal, 2002, p. 194). A large number of words that derive from Latin were imported via French in the ME period. Latin vocabulary, which had previously assimilated into English, could be imported anew via French (or other languages), and therefore it would be imported twice, or even thrice (Davidson & Upward, C, 2011, pp. 86-87).

A great change in vowel pronunciation began in the late fourteenth century. However, these changes had no rapid development, but evolved through the centuries (Freeborn, 1998, p.293; Davidson & Upward, 2011, pp.81-83). Because Chancery standard spelling scribes did not adjust to the new phonetic standard, the sound-symbol correspondence of Modern English has been greatly affected by this change (Davidson & Upward, 2011, p. 85).

III.I.I.III **Modern English**

In 1476, the printing press was introduced in England by William Caxton (Crystal, 2002, pp. 205-206). With this new invention, a greater number of books written in English were produced. The increase in literature called for a more rigid spelling than was required in earlier centuries (Burnley, 2000, p. 142; Crystal, 2002, p.208). Concerns with regard to a standard language and orthography emerged with the introduction of printed material. The possibility of founding a language academy in English was considered with this development, and this was due to the success of the Italian academy which was founded in 1582. Even though it was highly recommended by scholars and linguists, no academy has ever been founded to define and regulate the English language (Crystal, 2002, pp. 221-223).

The Great Vowel Shift, briefly mentioned as beginning in the ME period, continued until the eighteenth century. The GVS consisted of a number of pronunciation changes, which especially altered the long vowels of English without corresponding changes upon short vowels. Because English already had a standard and more rigid spelling when the GVS began to occur, a large number of spelling combinations did not alter. Therefore, these spelling combinations became a less phonetic representation of English. Consonants were not unaffected by this change, as many letters that had been pronounced, as initial *k-* or *g-* or final *–h* fell silent in some spellings, as for example in *knight*, *gnat* and *high*[7] (Davidson & Upward, C, 2011, pp. 176-179).

In the sixteenth century, classical language and literature began to be studied extensively, with the emergence of the English Renaissance (Crystal, 2002, pp. 209-210). With this, some etymological orthographic conventions were introduced or re-established into English spelling. Some of these spelling conventions were incorrectly applied, as with the *s* in *island*, from the French word *isle*, which has its actual etymological source from OE *iȝland* (Davidson & Upward, C, 2011, pp. 190-193; Lounsbury, 1909, pp. 289-290).

With the emerging school system, a standardized spelling became a necessity for teaching (Burnley, 2000, pp. 315-316). Lexicographers and grammarians' concerns about the fluidity of English led to the production of numerous dictionaries, textbooks and spelling reform suggestions (Crystal, 2002, pp. 222-223). These spelling reform suggestions will be examined later in this essay.

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[7] Examples from Davidson & Upward, 2011, p.173.

IV M<small>ɛ θ ə D ɑ L ə D ʒ ɪ</small> METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative study, which covers the history of spelling in British English and previous attempts at spelling reformation of the TO, and identifies the obstacles in implementing a spelling reform upon society. In order to analyse the methods of spelling reformers, I will collect some of the proposals concerning British English. These will be divided into various categories, by referring to the work of Brown (1998).

In this essay, an analysis and discussion on the implementation of a spelling reform upon the current spelling of British English will be included. Spelling reformers are required to consider aspects apart from orthography, such as social, economic, educational and political views, and such aspects have to be fully explored if a spelling reform is to be successful. Therefore discourses, which are relevant to the implications of a spelling reform of British English, will be identified, described and assessed. The orthographic discourses by Eira (cited in Sebba, p.138; Johnson, p. 162-168) will form the framework for this section.

This will be followed by evaluating various spelling reform proposals and their specific approaches to the initial assimilation into English. There is a substantial number of proposals to revise British English spelling, with a large variety of methods to do so. Providing a detailed description of each and every spelling reform proposal for English would not be feasible, nor would it be considered relevant, because many are strikingly similar. Therefore, a limited selection of spelling reform proposals will be analysed and discussed in this essay. These are *New Spelling (NS)* and *Cut Spelling (CS),* both by the English spelling society as well as *Shavian* by G.B Shaw and *Spelling Reform 1 (SR1)* by Lindgren.

Then, by utilizing the work by Carter (2006) and Johnson (2005), further deliberations as to how a reform could best be initiated and applied in society will be included. This concerns the social discourses, and further light will be shed on this subject. Politics, education and global aspects will be investigated and will be considered more in depth. The results will be cross-referenced to the methods proposed in *NS, CS, Shavian* and *SR1*, in an attempt to explain why no spelling reform has been successfully implemented in modern times with regard to English.

V SPELLING REFORMS AND REFORMERS

Spelling reform proposals emerged with the stagnation of English spelling. Until the present day, no spelling reform has been applied into British English, which is one reason behind the 185 spelling combinations of English spelling that exist today. This great number is highly irregular, as other languages with an equal number of sounds have about 50 spelling combinations in total (the English Spelling Society, 2012).

V.I *Approaches to Spelling Reform*

A wide range of approaches have been considered regarding spelling reform proposals for English. A systematic list and categorization of these methods has been developed by Bob Brown, in the work Spelling Reform in Context (later revised by Upward in 1998). The categorization is a general guideline: it is intended to enumerate different methods of spelling reform proposals. In light of this, some methods extend beyond the specifications of one category and could be referred to as "mixed method" schemes.

V.I.I **Phonetic/Phonemic Spelling Proposals**

Spelling proposals in the phonetic/phonemic category consider, to some extent, altering English spelling to accurately represent the sounds of English. Because English has 44 sounds[8], additional letters would be required for a complete sound-symbol correspondence. When adding new spellings, or additional letters, into the existing Roman alphabet as it is used in modern English, a likely consequence will be that many or all readers would find these additions to be alien. There have been many attempts to decrease this feeling of alienation without compromising the sound-symbol correspondence of the reformed spelling. Phonetic[9] spelling proposals can be divided into further categories, which will be assessed briefly below.

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[8] Or more specifically 43½ (the English Spelling Society, 2012).
[9] Phonetic is used as a 'loose' term in this essay, because phonetic was the standard term before any distinction was made between phonetic and phonemic.

Digraphic spelling proposals

Digraphic spelling proposals aim to use the Roman alphabet and existing spellings of English, but consistently. These proposals are made such as to apply consistency in spelling, while preserving some orthographical familiarity. This would utilize digraphs for the existing additional sounds, such as *sh* or *ea*. Some examples of such proposals are *New spelling*[10] and *Anglic*.

An example of *New Spelling*[11]:

"Dhaer iz noe aanser to such kwestyonz; dhae ar absoluetly fuetiel…" (Archer, 1941a)

In TO: "There is no answer to such questions; they are absolutely futile…[12]".

Diacritic Spelling Proposals & Mixed Diacritic/Digraphic Proposals

There have been few diacritic spelling proposals, which might be because of the general British and American distaste for such methods. Diacritics would indicate pronunciation of words with regard to length and stress without additional letters. This is the case with the proposed *Phonetic B* by Lindgren, which includes three common diacritics; the circumflex (â), acute (á) and grave (à)[13]. Moreover, there also exist mixed methods involving digraphs and diacritics, as with Lindgren's second proposal, *Phonetic A*. Moreover, there have been suggestions to further include diacritics which already exist in English, such as the hyphen or the dot. In addition, there are a few proposals which have considered the diacritics used in pronunciation guides for English dictionaries (Brown, 1998).

An example of such reform is *Phonetic B*:

"Itpàsz fr´mmì, týû, f´rhim". (Lindgren, 1969, p. 81)

In TO: It passes from me, to you, for him.

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[10] Reform suggestions, such as *New Spelling,* often apply two names, one in the TO and one in the reformed spelling (in this case: *Nue Speling*). Throughout this essay, I will use the TO names and if no corresponding name exists, I will change the spelling into the standard form for purpose of consistency.

[11] This is an example from one of the earlier stages of *New Spelling* and might not correspond to the newer versions.

[12] Translations of the reformed spellings are made by the author of this essay.

[13] The letter "a" is used to demonstrate the correlation between the letters and the diacritics.

Augmented Alphabet & New Alphabet

Augmented alphabets have been considered to various extents. Some reformers in this category only propose one additional letter for the sound *schwa*, while some propose extending the alphabet from 25 to 34 letters. All of these suggestions are a part of the category of augmented alphabets (Brown, 1998). Augmented alphabets often retain Roman letters, but introduce new letters for the additional sounds of English. An example of such an augmented alphabet is *I.T.A* by Pitman, which was partly successful in the 1960-1970's (Ives, 1979, p. 11).

Instead of modifying the Roman alphabet with additional letters or diagraphs, a few reformers have created new alphabets, which are specifically created for the sounds of English. New alphabets are more alien than other proposed methods, but would not require further changes, if implemented. An example of such an alphabet is Shavian (Brown, 1998).

An example of *Shavian* characters:

𐑦𐑜𐑟𐑫𐑤𐑮𐑒 𐑮𐑓 𐑒𐑦𐑮𐑩 𐑛𐑣𐑛𐑐𐑒𐑑𐑮𐑟

In TO: Example of Shavian characters.

V.I.II **Normative Spelling Proposals**

Normative spelling proposals are defined by Brown as being focused on predictability and consistency of spelling prior to phonemic unity (1998). An assessment on normative proposals will be included below.

Cut redundancy

Some spelling reformers suggest cutting out letters which are not pronounced in order to produce a more consistent spelling. Cut redundancy reformers propose that the final silent –*e* or the initial silent letter, as in *knot*, should be removed from English spelling. These suggestions could be extended further as reformers propose that all silent letters should be cut. The objective of cutting out some of the redundant letters in English spelling is that:

> *"It makes writing faster, uses less space, and is easier to learn and use accurately than Traditional Orthography (TO). Redundant letters are an exceptionally troublesome feature of TO, accounting for much of its irregularity and for many of the problems people currently experience in trying to master the system". (Upward, 1996, p. 16)*

An example of such proposal is *Cut Spelling*:

"...ther difrnt spelngs do not apear to cause jenrl users especial dificlty, howevr irationl ther variety and use may apear". *(Upward, 1996, p. 183)*

In TO: "…their different spellings do not appear to cause general users especial difficulty, however irrational their variety and use may appear".

Consistent rules

Spelling proposals which focus on consistent rules are developed to remove the highly irregular spellings of English. This will be accomplished by applying rules which already exist in English (Wijk, 1977; Brown, 1998). The main objective is to sustain as much familiarity as possible in the spelling, while removing the irregular spellings.

An example such a proposal is *SR1*:

I did not have eny frends before I became welthy[14].

In TO: I did not have any friends before I became wealthy.

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[14] Made up sentence with referring to the list of words affected by SR1 in (Lindgren, 1969)

Partial rectification

In this category, Brown (1998) includes proposals which are difficult to categorize. These proposals aim for improvement of spelling, more than to revolutionize. These improvements are made by removing inconsistencies in smaller amounts. A method often used to do so is referred to as the "step-by-step approach", explained as a gradual progression to a reformed spelling. In this category, there are schemes which stem from the reform of Noah Webster and aim for American spelling simplification. Furthermore, partial rectification is closely connected to the opportunistic approach, mentioned below.

An example of a partial rectification reform is *Economy Spelling*, by Ives. In *Economy Spelling 4*, only two things are introduced, **h** for *the* and the derivation *n* for the word *and* (Ives, 1979, p. 2).

Opportunistic

The opportunistic approach proposes that the existing alternative spellings of words should be accepted as standard. These changes are, for example, standardising words such as *tho*, *thru*, which are used in informal writing. These proposals are intended to introduce the alternative forms in dictionaries.

Reading aid

A few spelling proposals have focused on enhancing the traditional orthography as opposed to reforming spelling. The main focus is to add some features which will aid the reader, such as diacritics, various colours as well as lightly coloured type for silent letters. These are usually only applied for the early school years and when learnt, a transition back to TO is made from the 'reformed spelling'.

An example of such a proposal is *Jolly Phonics Extra*:

"Miss bɛɛch unpacks sume books..." (Jolly, 2008, p. 55)
In TO: Miss Beech unpacks some books…"

VI ANALYSIS

For the analysis of this essay, I will analyse two phonemic/phonetic spelling reforms as well as two normative ones. Before doing so, the social discourses which are relevant to the discussion of implementing a reform upon British English will be included to further explore why a modern day spelling reform has not been implemented.

VI.I Aspects of a Spelling Reform

The importance of social aspect with regard to spelling reforms should not be underestimated. Orthographic changes are meant to be implemented in society and become conventional and accepted spellings. If there are major social objections, an otherwise accepted spelling reform could face rejection by the relevant parties. Therefore, it is crucial for spelling reformers to consider the social objections that may arise and how to prevent these objections undermining the implementation of the proposed changes. In fact, major objections occur frequently with regard to spelling reforms, as with the attempt upon English in America in 1906, which faced a public outcry and was abandoned later that year. However, the proposed descriptive changes to spellings already in use, such as *honor* and *catalog*, were accepted as American variants, while further prescriptive suggestions, as *pur* and *dript*, was considered too radical (Mitton, 1996, p. 27).

Implementing a spelling reform would require a huge amount of effort by many different sectors within the society. When considering a proposed reform, not only should it include a reformed system of spelling, but it would need to consider the practical aspect of implementing the reform upon society. This, as explained by Fennelly:

> *"…is a subject that reformers have tended to avoid, perhaps because it presents particular problems for English. There have been spelling reforms in the majority of European languages, but in none of them have the need changes [sic] been so wide-ranging as they would have to be in English". (1991 n.p)*

Before introducing specific spelling reforms and their methods, social discourses which are of great relevance when implementing a reform upon society will be analysed in more depth. These discourses were specified by Eira (as cited in Sebba, 2007, p. 138; Johnson, p. 162-168). Eira examined choices and debates that surround orthographical changes, and mentions six discourses which are common in spelling reforms. These discourses are not separated from each other, but they do correlate in many respects. They are divided into categories referred to as: religious, political, technological, scientific, historical and pedagogical. These discourses will be included in this essay, with some slight alteration with regard to the spread of English. Each section will be analysed as objectively as possible, but there might be some bias towards spelling reform, as most of the research carried out are by advocates for spelling reform.

VI.I.I *Social Discourses*

VI.I.I.I **Historical and cultural discourses**

Historical and cultural discourses, *"according to Eira (1998: 175), typically manifests itself as a conservative, perhaps even nativist, movement dedicated to the resistance of change, and is therefore likely to be of greater relevance in debates over the revision as opposed to selection of orthographic systems"*. (Johnson, 2005, p. 164) The concern behind these discourses is that change will induce cultural and historical loss. Some arguments are brought forward by 'opponents' [15] frequently when discussing implementing orthographic changes. The list of arguments is divided into two categories, emotional arguments and objective arguments. Emotional arguments are all made against reformed spelling. These are divided into 5 common objections.

- *Habituation* – change is not required.
- *Aesthetic* – it would not appear visually pleasing.
- *Corruption* – changes would corrupt the language.
- *Laziness* – changes are made because one is too lazy to learn the TO.
- *Frequent change* – changes are applied too frequently upon the spelling (Sebba, 2007, pp. 135-136).

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[15] The term 'opponents' will be used to describe people that state or endorse the mentioned argument(s).

Objective arguments concern the practical aspects of a spelling reformation. The objective arguments are further divided into positive and conservative. Six[16] arguments are mentioned as conservative:

- *Older Culture*- One will not be able to read earlier literature. The connection with past culture will vanish.
- *Homograph* – An increased number of homographs will increase misunderstandings.
- *Financial* – reprinting into the new reformed spelling will be too expensive.
- *Etymological* – the historical connection will be undetectable.
- *Dialect* – New spelling based upon standard language would bring disadvantage to speakers whose dialect differs markedly from the Received Pronunciation associated with that standard (Sebba, 2007, pp. 135-136).
- *Optimality* - English spelling is a 'near optimal' orthographic system for English.

Four arguments which are common with regard to English will be analysed below. These are etymology, aesthetics, habituation and optimality of English.

Etymological

Etymology, the historical origin of a word, can in a few instances, be seen through orthography. As explained by Archer (1941b), the etymology of a word is argued as offering a means of acquiring more accuracy in usage, which will be lost with reformation. This argument can, to some degree, be validated, because imposing a reformation upon the spelling would, in most probability, remove the etymological orthographic connection. However, this does not obstruct the historical origin of the word(s), or the ability to acquire the same depth of knowledge as before. In opposing the basis of the etymological argument, Archer advocates that change is what keeps etymology alive (1941b). It is the present fossilized state of the orthography which extinguishes the passing sound patterns of the present generation, for example with no indication of the current pronunciation /najt/, in the orthography, for the word knight (Lounsbury, 1909, pp. 296-297).

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[16] Sebba mentions five objective arguments, but for this essay, a sixth argument has been added.

The etymological antecedents manifest in TO confer, at best, only a minor benefit for highly educated people in the subject and have no connection to a common knowledge of the language. Archer explains that this connection is what the 'opponents' express concerns about, namely that the etymological antecedents manifest in TO have a major role in the process of learning English. Therefore, they apply value to something which, in all probability, has no role in the process of acquiring words. As exemplified by Archer, one would not think of the origin word *nox* (from Latin) or *νυξ* (from Greek) when writing the word *night* (Harper, 2014) . Moreover, Archer continues by mentioning that removing etymological orthographic superfluous letters has an emotional connection, more than any etymological significance (1941b).

Habituation

The habituation argument posits that change is not required. However, it is a fact that English traditional orthography possesses irregularities in spelling and there have been numerous studies that have proved that a more phonemic spelling of English could significantly reduce difficulties in reading and writing (Wijk, 1977, pp. 8-10; Ives, p. 10). Habitation is very broad argument, which is argued against in the same broad terms. Therefore, for further in-depth analysis on the claim that change is not required, two additional objective arguments will be analysed. These are homographs and dialects (more information on their definitions can be located in the section above).

Homographs

This objection refers to words which currently differentiate in their respective spellings, but not in pronunciation. In a reform proposal with digraphs, a large number of homographs would, in most probability, be utilized and would replace current spelling patterns. In an attempt to explain this problem, the spelling pattern of *waste* will be analysed. A digraphic spelling reform could propose additional vowel digraphs for this combination of letters, such as *ae,* which would create a new spelling pattern, *waest*[17]. Then, *waest* could be confused with the word *waist*. However, such phonemic combinations with words that only differentiate in spelling (homophones) would arguably cause greater misunderstandings, as with the pairs *too/two/to* and *one/won* (Upward, 1987). However, even if some slight confusion were to occur, the context would help to determine which meaning to apply, as illustrated by already

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[17] The exemplified words are from (Archer, 1911)

existing homonyms, such as *bank*. This distinction would also help in situations where the difference between the homophones is a silent letter, such as *gnaw* and *nor* or *knight* and *night* (Essinger, 2006).

Gehman (1962) composed a prose to exemplify the fact that a text would be understandable through context, by using existing homophones incorrectly:

> *"A write suite little bouy ... flue up the rode swift as a dear. After a thyme he had stopt at a gnu house and wrung the belle. His tow hurt him and he kneaded wrest. The made who herd the belle was about to pair a pare, but she through it down and ran with awl her mite for fear her guessed wood know weight". (Gehman, 1962)*

Homophones that exist in TO with distinctive spellings are useful when reading, but they are arguably not necessary for comprehension (Lindgren, 1971). English has a high number of homophones which, if a phonetic spelling reform were to be implemented, would become homographs. Figures by Cookson (1996) show that a book can contain from 5-6 percent up to 18-25 percent of homophones which would result as homographs if this were to occur.

> "There is a problem. English has an exceptionally large number of homophones and this will create an exceptionally large number of homographs - words with different meanings that are spelt the same. This might make reading more difficult than it is now; even perhaps make spelling reform counter-productive". *(Cookson, 1996)*

Therefore, some suggest keeping the distinctions that exist in TO between homophones because of the large number of homographs that would be created (Cookson, 1996). However, Archer explains that by rendering spelling more phonetically accurate would help resolve some misunderstandings which exists in the TO, as the infinitive and past particle of *read* (Archer, 1911). These misunderstandings also include words such as *wind*, *tear* and *row* and *minute* which pose a greater problem than homographs implemented from a spelling reform, because these words are spelled the same but pronounced differently (Okensen, 1980).

Dialect

In some dialects, unpronounced superfluous letters, such as the *h* in *what*, are assumed in pronunciation. Retaining the superfluous letters for purposes of dialectal pronunciation is part of the *dialect* objective argument. Lounsbury (1909, pp. 306-307) states that, even if such dialectal pronunciation exists, it is not an argument that validates preserving all existing superfluous letters. It would not be feasible to consider all variations of pronunciation in English when implementing a reformed spelling, because English is spoken as a first language in numerous countries. Lindgren (1969, p. 7) explains that a system of 100 percent accuracy will not be acquired, but that is not an argument that should prevent change from being implemented. Other languages, such as Swedish, have not retained dialectal pronunciation of words, but the spelling derives from the standard pronunciation. However, spellings which are superfluous to the 'standard pronunciation', but utilized in dialectal pronunciation, should be considered to be preserved, at least for the foreseeable future.

Aesthetic

The aesthetic argument, as presented by Archer (1941a), is divided into two aspects which he refers to as 'pure beauty' and 'expressiveness'. The argument of pure beauty is considered as unreasonable and 'opponents' claiming English posits such beauty do so based on their emotions, which creates difficulties in arguing against such claims as it is not based on anything other than subjective like and dislike. Pure beauty is explained as portraying an orthographic unit as to be something of visual beauty. Archer mentions the word *arabesque*, which was argued by his friend to possess such beauty. I would propose the word *knight* as possessing this quality, or the word *queen.* That the orthography possesses subjective beauty is highly probable, but this is possible of any orthography and language and, refers to the psychological connection, the relationship between form and sound; the sensations and connotations which the TO evokes are where the beauty lies, not in the orthography itself. In light of this, I would not be able to explain why the word *knight* possesses this beauty, beyond the norms of subjective like. Therefore, even if an older generation associates the TO with beauty and new spelling with vulgarity, the successive generation would discover beauty in the reformed spelling if it were to be implemented.

The other aesthetic argument is that TO brings expressiveness for poets and writers. Eastman (cited in Archer 1941a), claims that expressing the unpronounced *h* in *ghost* brings associations to other words with similar combinations of letters, such as *aghast*, which would be lost without the superfluous letter. Moreover, numerous words in the traditional orthography are arguably picturesque, such as the word *laughter*. However, even though the word *laughter* has a symbolic value to the action, the picturesque quality is limited, only notable in a small number of contexts. As with the *h* in *aghast*, even if this association might exist, it is not on a large scale and is not considered as extensive enough to vindicate preserving irregular spellings (Archer, 1941a).

Optimality

According to Upward (1988, p. 4), the views of Noam and Carol Chomsky regarding English orthography as being a 'near-optimal' system have been very influential in the USA. The view of English as 'near-optimal' derives from results of Chomsky and Halle's study in *The Sound Pattern of English*. In this study, English spelling was determined as 95 percent optimal through a 'morphographemic' study of 100 bases of English word families, considering the patterns in words such as *electric, electricity*[18]. Therefore, the 'near-optimality' of English does not concern the phonemic correspondence of letters, but upon the representation for each lexical entity. 'Opponents', who argue against spelling reform on the basis of this, contend that a more phonemic correspondence of spelling would remove this connection. In addition, they argue that a more phonetic orthography would be less understood and that children learning such a system would achieve less. However, there is no evidence to substantiate such claims (Upward, 1988, pp. 4-5). Other studies have been carried out on the grapheme-phoneme correspondence of English and these suggest that English is about 50-70 percent optimal (Little, 2001). Yule states (as cited in Upward, 1988) that the lexical consistency behind *courage, courageous* is more an exception than a rule in English.

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[18] The exemplified words are from Upward (1998, p. 7).

The relationship of words as *definite*, *definition* and *considerate*, *consideration* are not clear until it is pointed out to the learner/user. In these words, there is an indication of the relationship between the vowel sound and symbol. Therefore, it would be reasonable to regard *considerAte* as pronounced the same as *considerAtion*, because they have the same word stem. However, it does not seem to have any function in direct use of the language (Wells, 2008, p. 32).

English is a mixed system, with spelling patterns being determined by both morphemes and phonemics. Upward argues that the perception that TO is a regular system containing irregularities is a question of attitude, as with a glass being half-full or half-empty (Upward, 1988, p. 7). The fact is that Chomsky aspired to acquire evidence in English for the theory of Universal Grammar, a theory of the innate capacity in L1 learners to learn a language through a universal set of grammatical principles. He claims that all children have the capacity to learn a language through their "language facility" which selectively chooses from among the limited parameters of UG. Through exposure of a language such as English (which is head-initial), the parameters of a mostly "head-initial" language would unconsciously be selected in the learner's mind (Saville-Troike, 2012, pp. 49-51). Because of this, Chomsky analysed the patterns that exist in English with a 'half-full' attitude. Therefore, if a spelling reformer were to analyse the same patterns with another perception or goal, it would have an impact upon the result of the study (Upward, 1988, p. 7). Upward explains this difference by stating *"... Chomsky emphasises patterns of lexical stability, while Yule showed in just how many related words there is no stability, as with pairs such as **fire: fiery**, **high: height**, **speak: speech**, where spelling varies even when pronunciation does not"*. (Upward, 1988, p. 13) Moreover, Little (2001) argues that, if English were near optimal, spelling would not be considered as an obstacle in learning.

VI.I.I.II **Literary and Economic discourses**

There would be financial implications in the implementation of a spelling reform, from re-training teachers to dictionaries etc. There may also be some additional financial aspects, such as handling objections and complaints (Johnson, 2005). These could become very substantial in the formative stages of a spelling reform, even with minor changes. This could be anticipated by referring back to the spelling reform of German in 1996, where the reformed orthography only changed about 0.5 percent of spellings in a typical written text, but had considerable financial cost (Johnson, 2005, pp. 82-83). In a large number of spelling proposals, there have been estimates on the economic impact of TO. However, the results vary significantly. Numbers stated in such proposals should be cautiously examined with a suspicion of a bias in favour of change.

Sebba (2007, pp. 148-149) mentions that the costs of publishing in the reformed spelling will be quite significant, as a large scale project of reprinting would be required to be able to sell any books. Some spelling reformers have considered "cutting" out characters as something that would significantly bring down the costs of printing (Sebba, 2007). Leigh's pronunciation print (cited in Bett, 2008, p. 85) estimates that about 16 percent savings of characters would be possible through implementing a phonemic spelling without diagraphs. Such high figures would not be reached with digraphic spelling reforms or similar approaches, but these have been estimated to yield a 4 percent decrease of printing costs (Bett, 2008).

Dictionary producers could possibly gain from implementing a reformed spelling, as there would be a demand for dictionaries' guidance for the new spelling conventions, which would increase publication numbers (Sebba, 2007, p.149). However, if a more phonemic spelling were to be implemented upon English, it could be assumed that the need for a pronunciation dictionary would become almost non-existent (2008, p. 35). *"If our spelling system were not so opaque and inconsistent we really would not have much need for a dictionary whose main concern is pronunciation"*. (Wells, 2008, p. 31) At present, the market for English pronunciation dictionaries is so strong and large that three dictionary publisher companies (Longman, Oxford and Cambridge Dictionaries) all have sufficient buyers to keep publishing their works. Furthermore, Oxford Dictionary can afford to publish an additional specialist pronunciation guide (Wells, 2008, p. 34).

Research conducted by the publishers of Longman dictionaries (as cited in Wells, 2008, p. 31) show that the most frequent use of dictionaries is checking spelling. The opposite can be

observed with regard to foreign learners, who use dictionaries as a pronunciation guide (2008, p. 31). Wells argues that some problems with encoding English would continue even if a reformed spelling were to be implemented and, because of this, the market for dictionaries would not completely diminish (p. 48). Moreover, dictionary publishers are required to republish every few years, similar to the process of popular books (p. 40).

Besides the costs of publishing, another consideration is the cost of teaching. Kotercová (2008, pp. 27-28) conducted a survey upon primary-school teachers in Coventry which estimated that the aggregated costs involved in the teaching of spelling and spelling error correction in schools averages at £556 a year per teacher. Applying such figures to the number of teachers in England, the estimated costs amount to £102 million. In addition, Citron (1981) states that the expenditures of re-teaching new spelling would not exceed the cost allotted at present to teaching spelling. However, he also mentions the attitude towards the costs:

> *"Some, or later every book, pamphlet, and piece of printed material in the school system would have to be replaced. [I]f one speaks of the wastes of the present system and the great sums to be saved in the future, administrators and taxpayers are unmoved, for they regard such savings as pie in the sky. They see materials for which they paid good money going on the scrap heap. They see the high cost of replacement. They feel they must face costs of re-training teachers". (Citron, 1981)*

Therefore, the attitude towards the costs in the formative stages of the spelling reform should be regarded as an important aspect on the success of reforming English TO. Spelling reformers would benefit from bringing awareness to the profits from implementing a reformed spelling, because *"... English writing will likely not be reformed because of the public's insistence but because of the pressure for profit created by commerce and industry"*. (Bonnema Bisgard, 1979)

VI.I.I.III **Pedagogical Discourses**

Spelling reformers often state that the main prospect that would follow a reformed spelling would be literacy improvements. Installing current spellings in the memory is vastly time consuming for young learners of English (it takes about 3 years) while in languages spelled more phonemic, such as Finnish, spelling only takes about 3 months to learn (Bell, 2008). Lindgren (1969, p. 2) estimates that an English student spends 500 hours learning spelling throughout his/her school career. However, if English spelling were phonemic, it would only take 100 hours to learn, which would 'save' 400 hours of time per student (Ives, 1979, p. 10).

TO is considered to have a negative effect on young learners, because there is seemingly a lack of logic behind the irregular spellings and the spelling of some words with regard to their current pronunciation. Therefore, the child will not be able to draw reasonable conclusions as to why any particular word is spelled as it is, which could be deflating and discouraging (Lindgren, 1969, p. 3; Archer, 1911). Spelling reformers focusing on reading aid[19], which provides learners with additional material constructed for optimal learning ability, has published results which show that the rationality of the spelling (the consistency of rules) is connected to the ability and confidence of the learner. The learners became more encouraged when provided with reading aid removing the inconsistencies in spelling (Jolly, 2008, p. 57). A study published in the New York Times (Nagourney, 2001) has linked dyslexia with spelling, where English speakers had many more instances of dyslexia than either Italian or French speakers. It has been claimed that the number of irregular spellings affects the severity of the disability, with more irregular spellings being the reason for more people suffering from this disability. According to Paulesu (cited in Zurinskas, 2008), a phonetic spelling of English would possibly decrease dyslexia by 50 percent.

Another major aspect to consider, in the case of a mixed method language as English, is prescriptivism against descriptivism. Prescriptivism advocates that a particular variety of orthography should be imposed on the speech community as standard, which often corresponds to the orthography of great classics. As explained by Wu & Cao, prescriptive spelling does not correspond to *"...the realities of everyday usages of language..."* (2007, p. 93). At present, English schools follow a prescriptive curriculum, where the traditional orthographic conventions are valued. In contrast, a descriptive curriculum does not condemn usage that does not follow the standardized rules of language, but describes variations found

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[19] More information on *reading aid* in Spelling Reforms and Reformers, section Normative Spelling Proposals on page 18.

in language use and explains the reasons for this variation (Cao & Wu, 2007, pp. 93-94). The lack of a spelling system which is consistent makes the difference between the prescriptive and descriptive varieties of the English orthography even larger. Therefore, both teaching and learning is more difficult with regard to English than if the descriptive spelling were to correspond more to the everyday use of English at present (Reed, 1960).

VI.I.I.IV **Technology, Globalisation and Modernisation Discourses**

In the 20th and 21st centuries, the English language has developed into a very widespread language, if not the most widespread, with over 1,400 million speakers worldwide. English is the first language in many countries across the globe and further a second language, national language and a *lingua franca* for an extensive number of languages and countries (Crystal, 2003, p. 141). With this immense number of speakers, English is *"…the language in which, more than any other today, the knowledge of the human race is recorded, the politics of the human race is negotiated, the trade of the human race is conducted"*. (Upward, 1988, p. 9) This poses opportunities, constraints and obligations on the nations involved.

Crystal states that English is used by 85 percent of international organizations, 85 percent of the world's film market and 90 percent of research articles, in areas such as linguistics (as cited in Cao & Wu, 2007, p. 92). Bilingual policies are costly, which might lead to fewer countries being able to adopt an official second language if costs are too large (Crystal, 2003). Where English is to be adopted as an official second language, considerable costs are likely to be incurred owing to the necessity to teach the complex spellings. This could be a crucial aspect for further global influence. Globalisation as an ideology is perceived as highly profitable and it may act as a catalyst for spelling reform to continue and possibly increase the perception of English as a global language.

The Internet has had a major impact on language in the limited time it has been present as a medium of international communication. With it, users and learners can communicate instantly and inexpensively with speakers of English across the globe (Cao & Wu, 2007, p. 92). Therefore, the standard of English and the 'correct' use have been influenced by new forms of words and with shortened sentences (Cao & Wu, 2007, p. 93). With the global influence of the Internet, a reform upon the orthography could give English a slight advantage in this market. A reformed simplified spelling *"… would facilitate world trade, increase traveling, help eradicate race hatred, make it easier to understand world problems, and to*

help maintain order". (Fiumedoro, 1971). Moreover, Upward states that*"...the benefits of applying some design and motivation to TO as a world communication system are self-evident, both for the convenience of foreign learners and for international understanding in general"*. (1988, p. 10)

With the increase in technology and the modernisation of teaching, learning and using languages, changes in spelling will be perceived differently and, arguably, be unaffected by traditions, habit or emotion (Little & Rondthaler, 1995).

VI.I.I.V **Political and philosophical discourses**

Through the economic dominance of English speaking countries around the world in the 1990's, English has evolved as a clear choice for communication purposes (Crystal, 2003, pp. 83-84). English has become a widespread language of high status, but is also a language associated with oppression in post-colonial countries. Therefore, its current status has been extensively questioned but also, to some extent, become accepted (Crystal, 2003, pp. 83-85).

"[S]tandardisation becomes a useful means with which to shore up the privileges of already powerful social, regional, and economic groups, thereby legitimising inequality". (Johnson, 2005, p. 121)

There are two discrete perspectives by which such reforms may be approached, namely the top-to-bottom approach, and the bottom-up approach. Top-bottom reform is initiated via the state or another very high standing organisation. It can be applied for economic reasons and without consideration of the demand of the social discourses. In Romania, a high educational reform was resisted because it did not correspond to such demands, as it was initiated without consultation with people at the lower levels within the academic hierarchy (staff, students etc.) (Fairclough, 2006, p. 76). This was also the case in Germany in 1876, where there were *"...complaints regarding the purported lack of public consultation and generally low level of publicity surrounding the [orthographic reform] conference itself"*. (Johnson, 2005, p. 21)

On the other hand, bottom-up reform is a reform initiated through the 'community', the 'people' and through means of revolution and protests. These changes are not always brought to the state's attention and can thus pose a significant risk to the establishment or to certain interests within society. A reform of this kind could, to some extent, undermine the hierarchical structure, which could lead to opposition from higher status organisations or people (Fairclough, 2006, pp. 76-77). *"[The reform] may be delayed due to the strong*

resistance from some conservative leaders and vested interest groups…" (Li, 2013, p. 47)
Johnson (2005, p. 23) explains that changes made upon German in 1901 were not the product
of a 'top-bottom' reform, but changes developed in spite of objections from the state. By the
'community' being *"…given the voluntary adoption of the various school orthographies by
the printing trade, the press, and book publishers … the situation was such that, by the end of
the century, a high degree of **de facto** standardisation in German orthography had already
been achieved" (Johnson, 2005, p. 23).* The political perspective could be summarized as a
dilemma between what the 'community' needs against what others see the 'community' as
needing (Fairclough, 2006, p. 76).

VI.II <u>Phonetic/Phonemic Spelling Reforms</u>

VI.II.I *New Spelling*

New Spelling was originally developed in 1910 and later proposed by Professors Daniel Jones
and Harold Orton in the 1940's (Wijk, 1977; Brown, 1998). This spelling reform was
proposed by the English Spelling Society, founded in 1908. It was presented to the British
parliament in 1949, nearly passing with eighty-four votes against eighty-seven. *NS* has been
revised several times and is at present referred to as *NS90*[20].

New Spelling reformers attempt to preserve familiarity. This would be achieved by preserving
the Roman alphabet and trying to retain as many familiar spelling combinations as possible,
while reaching a phonemic standard of spelling. *New Spelling* does not introduce any new
letter or any new diacritics and takes English dialectal spellings into consideration (Ripman &
Archer, 1948, pp. 11-15).

Another main aspect is that only one sound value should be represented by one vowel. This
would be achieved by confining the letters *a,e,u,i,o* to the 'standard' sound values in *bat*, *bet*,
but, *pit*, *pot* and using diagraphs for the additional sound values of vowels. Five new
diagraphs would be introduced, *ae*, *ie*, *oe* and *ue*, which would be applied in a phonemic
fashion; where it corresponds to the speech sound. Some additional rules would be
implemented for the vowels *i* and *y*, without introducing new diagraphs.

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[20] This distinction will not be made in this essay and the reform will be referred to with the collective term *NS*.

Letters would be moved in a consistent fashion to keep indications of the pronunciation length that are present in TO, rendering words such as 'mate' as *maet*. In continuous form, they would remove one vowel, instead of adding consonants, to indicate shortened vowel length, as in *mating* (Fennelly, 1991). In situations where an already existing double vowel represents both the short and long sound value, as in *food* and *look*, one would remain the same (*look*), while the other would be changed, in this case *fuud* (Ripman & Archer, 1948, pp. 40-52). Moreover, the reduced and open vowel referred to as obscure vowel would be restricted, but not fully reformed[21]. The obscure vowel would be altered when it occurs in the final syllable of a word, as in *colour*, but would not be altered in the beginning or middle of a word as well as in the endings *–ory* and *–ary*. Moreover, if the final obscure vowel is represented with an *i* in TO, it would not be altered. The alterations would be to change *-an -en –on* and *-ain* to all be represented by *–en*. Another alteration is that *-ant* would become *-ent* and *-ance* would become *–ens*, for example *observance: observens*[22] The motivation for not regulating the obscure vowel in every position is that if it would be represented by one spelling, it would arguably cause enormous problems (Fennelly, 1991).

The proposition for consonants in *NS* is designed to remove all unnecessary consonants, as silent letters in *doubt* and *calm*. They would also reduce double consonants to single consonants, which is mentioned with the additional diagraphs for vowels above[23]. Additional diagraphs would also appear for consonants, such as *dh* as equivalent to the voiced sound of *th*. Moreover, the consonants that remain would be systematized by additional rules, for example, the voiced and unvoiced plural *-s* in dogs and cats[24]. A phonemic representation would replace spellings such as *c-, -ck*, with the sound equivalent (in this case *k*) and, with this, some letters deviate from the original orthographic values, such as sound /j/, which is represented by the letter *g* in TO. It would be changed to correspond to the sound, as for example with *age: aej* and *bridge: brij*[25].

NS has been modified to some extent from the first edition in 1910, the latest being referred to as *NS90* which was created in the 1990's. The modifications to *NS* throughout this time are exemplified below:

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[21] A complete recount of the vowel changes proposed by the reformers of New Spelling found in (Fennelly, 1991).

[22] The exemplified words are from (Fennelly, 1991).

[23] Not in cases where the double consonants have value in excess of determining vowel length, as in compound words or double pronunciation of the consonants (Ripman & Archer, 1948, p. 36).

[24] A complete recount of the consonant changes proposed by the New Spelling found in (Fennelly, 1991).

[25] The exemplified words are from (Fennelly, 1991).

"At ferst this did not kauz eni very graet eksytment".
"At first this did not cauz eni very graet ecsitement".
"At ferst this did not cause eni very graet ecsytment" (Fennelly, 1991).

In TO: At first this did not cause any very great excitement.

In the time period when *NS* was proposed to the British Parliament, a bill was published by the Simplified Spelling Society concerning the application of *New Spelling* in society. It was proposed that it should be introduced in three stages. First, it was to be introduced in primary schools. After a five years transition, *New Spelling* should be the only spelling used for instruction and be utilized in examinations. Secondly, in the five years following the first stage, *New Spelling* was to be compulsory in media, such as advertisement and films. The final stage concerns official- and legal documents as well as literature, in which the new orthography would be applied last. The social aspects are not considered, nor are any guidelines included for the general use of *New Spelling* conventions for newspapers etc. (Wijk, 1977, pp. 104-105).

Experiments conducted with teaching *NS* has provided positive results, where there has been a positive and reinforcing learning environment for the subjects. Proficiency in the new acquired spelling was reached within a few months and there were no indications of difficulties in acquiring the TO but, on the contrary, it required less time (Simplified Spelling Society, 1924). Hart has stated the reason a phonetic spelling system should be applied as *"It simplifies learning to read, improves pronunciation, saves printers' time and ink, and allows anyone to reproduce an unknown tongue phonetically"*. (Bradbrook, 1964, p. 131)¨

With the approach of a phonetic spelling fully regularized, 90 percent or more of the current spellings will be eradicated (Wijk, 1977, pp. 20-21). As English spelling has been fossilized for such an extensive period of time, a fully phonetic rendering of the sounds of English will be far from familiar, which *NS* advocates in their approach. As Green (n.d) so clearly puts it *"Such spelling might equate with pronunciation … but while it sound[s] right, once written down, it simply look[s] too bizarre to be accepted." (pp. 149-150)* Because pronunciation has deviated to such an extent from the stagnated TO, changing the orthography by the method of a phonetic reform which is proposed by *NS* has become far more difficult, even if it would be highly desirable.

VI.II.II *Shavian*

Shavian, which is named after George Bernard Shaw (G.B.S), is a new alphabet created for English. Shaw was a writer and is famous for his plays and musicals, as the "Pygmalion" and "My Fair Lady". Beyond his plays, Shaw was also interested in the pronunciation and spelling of English and proposed an alphabetic system of 48 phonographs for English. With his passing in 1950, Shaw left a great deal of money for the purpose of creating a new alphabet for these phonographs[26] (Smoker, 1970). The Public Trustee arranged a year-long competition for the design of a new alphabet for English with a price of £500 for the winner. A large number of designs were submitted and the final design was made by Kingsley Read. Shaw's alphabet has a distinct appearance, much unlike the Roman alphabet. It was one of the main intentions of Shaw, as he also did not intend to replace it. *Shavian* was designed to be as economical as possible in all aspects of communication (Read, 1966). An example of the characters, with their pronunciation (highlighted **red**) will be included below[27]:

٦	**p**eep	Ɩ	**b**ib	1	**t**ot
Ⱳ	**d**ead	�	**k**ick	ᒐ	**g**ag
)	**f**ee	ſ	**v**ow	ᕞ	**th**igh
ℓ	**th**ey	S	**s**o	Ϩ	**z**oo
ᘓ	**s**ure	ᗡ	mea**s**ure	ᘔ	**ch**urch
Ƨ	**j**udge	∖	**y**ea	/	**w**oe
ᘓ	hu**ng**	४	**h**a-ha	ᘓ	**l**oll
⊃	**r**oar	ſ	**m**ime	ᘭ	**n**one

ˈ	**I**f	Ϥ	**ea**t	˪	**e**gg			
ᴄ	**a**ge	)	**a**sh	⁊	**i**ce			
(	**a**do	⁊	**u**p	ˀ	**o**n			
O	**oa**k	V	w**oo**l	∧	**oo**ze			
⟨	**ou**t	⟩	**oi**l	Ϛ	**a**h			
⁊	**awe**	ꙅ	**ar**e	ꙅ	**or**			
ꙅ	**air**	Ɛ	**ur**ge	ᴖ	**arr**ay			
ᴖ	**ear**	ⱴ	**ia**n	ꙍ	**yew**			

Shavian is a system which consists of 48 phonographs. Out of these 48 phonographs, 36 are pure phonemes and 12 are combinations. Shaw reintroduced characters to correspond to the OE *thorn* and *eth* (mentioned in the literature review above), as well as characters for the frequently used words *and* ᒐ *the* ᴘ *of* ⸠ and *to* ᴛ. Moreover, the sounds of English which are unvoiced and voiced counterparts are mirrored in shape, as with the letters *t* ᴛ and *d* ⱡ (Bett, 2002). Furthermore, it is estimated that learning *Shavian* would take between 6 months to a year, and this compared favourably with the time required to learn other European languages that have phonemic systems (Bett, 2002).

Some practical advantages of *Shavian* have been listed by MacCarthy (1962). The advantages are less learning time, less space in printing (one third) and no distinction of capital, lower-case letters and italics. Estimates made by Pitman (2002) have shown that the increase in writing and reading speed would be considerable, with reading being 50-75 percent faster and writing being between 80 and 300 percent faster, if one has attained 'automatic' facility level of proficiency. The *Shavian* design could also be applied with other languages with similar issues of letter shortage. However, there is a significant disadvantage with a new alphabet, which is the alien 'feeling' of the system. There will also be practical issues, as it would be necessary to replace all typewriters and such devices. Moreover, existing connections between English vocabulary and other languages, such as Romance languages, would arguably diminish (Wijk, 1965, pp. 150-151; Pitman, 2002).

Shavian is a reform of the alphabet more than a spelling reform and is designed for the sounds of English. It is faster to write and read and the characters are compatible with one another with voiced and unvoiced letters being mirrored in shape. It is as easy to learn as other European languages with a phonemic system. However, it is very alien and would require enormous efforts to become socially accepted.

VI.III <u>Normative Spelling Reforms</u>

VI.III.I *Cut Spelling*

Cut Spelling (*CS*) is a normative system proposed by Yule and was later put forward by Upward as a part of a workgroup for the Simplified Spelling Society in 1988. *Cut Spelling*, as the name suggests, proposes cutting out redundant letters from the TO of English. Characters which provide no information or aid in spelling would be excluded through this reform. Cutting out the redundant letters would only slightly alter most words and would arguably not be as alien as other spelling reform suggestions.

Three categories have been distinguished as elements within writing that would be altered if *CS* were to be implemented (Upward, 1996, pp. 19-22). These alterations comprise:

1. Redundant letters – such as removing *b* in *debt.*
2. The vowels which are unstressed– such as removing the vowel in *(-er adapter), (-ing washing)* and *(-le principle).* These would become *adaptr washng* and *principl.*
3. Comprising of most double consonants – such as *accommodate* becoming *acomodate*[28].

Some substitution is also made for decreasing and limiting the use of some letters. The letters *ph* and *gh* would be substituted with *f* when pronounced /f/. Soft *dg* and *g* would be substituted for *j* and *ig* would be spelt *y* when pronounced as in *fly/flight* (Upward, 1996, pp. 19-20). Some examples of *Cut Spelling* are included below.

Pseudonym – sudonm
Rheumatism – rumatism
Synonym - synnm

These three categories will now be described in greater depth. The first category is proposed to remove redundant letters, in other words, silent letters, as the letter *a* in *head* and *tea*. This would, for example, have a positive effect upon the homophones *lead* and *led*, which would become homographs. However, some silent letters are kept, as the silent *b* in *climb*, because it has some value in distinguishing the word from others spelled but not pronounced the same. If the so called 'magic b' were not to be kept, it would create a false connection between words

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[28] The exemplified words are from (Upward, 1996, p. 19)

such as *climb* and *him.* There are also some consideration regarding whether some spelling patters are redundant or not and, if removing them would be more detrimental than beneficial, as with *ae* in *aeroplane* (Upward, 1996, pp. 61-66). These spelling patterns would be retained in the reformed spelling on that basis.

Some redundant letters remain to be dealt with by categories 2 and 3, the second category being the unstressed vowels. Examples of these are the unstressed vowel sounds (schwa[29]) preceding *l*, *m*, *n* and *r* in words, such as *chapel* and *atom* (Upward, 1996, p. 104). By removing schwa in post-accentual position, a large number of consonant clusters would be produced. These consonant clusters would not be pronounceable, as *ntrl* in *centrl*, without intermitting with a schwa vowel sound. Because of this, Upward argues that it is not necessary for the vowel to be spelled (Upward, 1996, pp. 105-106). The third category focuses upon the double consonants of English. *CS* would, to some extent, simplify and remove double consonants, but makes exceptions in some cases where the short stressed vowel is used, as with *holly* (with a short o) not being spelled *holy* (Upward, 1996, pp. 132-133). Moreover, final *–ss* is not cut for reasons of distinguishing words such as *hiss/his* and to keep the etymological root of some suffixes, as *–less* and *–ness* (Upward, 1996, p. 136). However, if a word that ends with -*ss* takes a suffix, it will be spelled only with one –s, as *pass* being spelt *pasd* and *pasng* (Upward, 1996, p. 143).

CS is more economical than TO, with about 7-10 percent fewer characters, which would make it faster and easier to write in English. It is also believed to decrease the learning time, because *CS* would exclude some of the confusing spellings which exist in TO. This is considered in greater depth by Yule, who argues that young learners would have difficulty with the cutting of schwa, because of the large proportion of consonant clusters; that they will not be able to pronounce the vowel sound without an indication of its existence. *Cut Spelling* removes the CVC structure in such cases which, if retained, would make it visually and phonologically easier for learners (Yule, 1992).

Cut Spelling is more phonetically accurate than TO with regard to the sounds of English, which would lead to fewer misunderstandings and less mispronunciation of words (Upward, 1996, pp. 25-26). *CS* is a reformed system which is compatible with TO, as it retains some similarity in the spelling patterns; making it less alien. Therefore, older learners would not

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[29] In this case and throughout this section, schwa is used as a collective term for both the obscure vowel and other unstressed vowel sounds.

have as much difficulty learning and new generations would be able to read literature in TO. However, *Cut Spelling* has been criticized as being a reform that would not address the problem which most reforms would regard as critical, namely the pedagogical aspect. Rondthaler (1992) states that CS does not solve the problems of TO, but swaps confusing spellings for others, as with the numerous exceptions with keeping letters, as *b* in *comb*. Arguably, it does not always accord to the pronunciation where the possibility to do so exists, because it focuses on the already literate population in the spelling changes proposed (Rondthaler, 1992).

CS is considered as compatible with *SR1* (see section below for more information), which would apply *CS* upon TO in stages, as for example, by only applying *CS* category 1 (Upward, 1996, pp. 26-27). There have also been discussions on the compatibility between *NS* and *CS*, as both are reforms proposed by the Simplified Spelling Society. Category 1 of *CS* has been considered as a possible pre-stage to *NS*, but there are major differences in the following category, where *NS* keeps unstressed vowels in the reformed orthography (Upward, 1992).

Implementing *CS* has been considered through several of social aspects. They consider something which has not been discussed to a large extent in many spelling reform proposals, which is implementing the 'idea' of a spelling reform in the English society to create a positive perspective. Furthermore, the political discourse relating to the implementation of *CS* is considered in greater depth, where the optimal approach is perceived to be having an international body (such as UN) applying a reform simultaneously at an international level, instead of having regional application of *CS* (as in USA only) or (the least efficient option) application through individual governments. Literature, media, education as well as dictionaries are considered as important contributors to the success of the reformation, but are recognised as requiring additional support through the initiative of higher authorities, bodies or sponsors. Individual application of *CS* is also one of the aspects which are regarded as encouraging the spread and, to some extent, success of the reformation (Upward, 1996, pp. 31-33).

CS reformers take the public into account, trying to avoid as many negative developments as possible in the process of applying the reform. Leaflets would be distributed to the public, where the alphabetical rules and reasons behind the reform would be explained. It would be necessary to train adults who have a professional requirement for writing and prepare to brief teachers and produce beginners' books. 'Incoming' students would be taught in *Cut Spelling*,

while older students would have the option available to use TO. The second category of the reform would be introduced after the first of *CS* have been accepted among the older population, which is estimated to be about 10-20 years (Upward, 1996, pp. 33-37).

Cut Spelling has the advantage of being less alienating to the public, but has some disadvantages in the teaching and learning of English. The large number of consonant clusters would be harder to learn for young learners. *Cut Spelling* is economical, with estimates ranging from 7-10 percent of saved printing space from the omission of characters. It does remove a significant swath of potentially problematic features within written English, such as silent letters with exceptions where necessary.

VI.III.II *SR1*

SR1 was proposed as a spelling reform of English by Harry Lindgren in 1969. The method Lindgren applied in *SR1* is the stage-approach and is mentioned in the category of normative spelling proposals. This approach proposes that small changes should be implemented upon the orthography over an extensive period of time.

SR1 stands for *step-by-step reform 1*, which is the first stage of the reform. The first stage suggested by Lindgren concerns the vowel sound in words such as *bet* and *any*. The change would be to spell this phonemic value with an *e* (Lindgren, 1969, p. 19). This would only affect a small number of words and would not pose a large difficulty for readers or writers. Presuming that this change would become accepted, the next step of the reform (*SR2*) would be applied. Such progression would continue until a fully regularized spelling of English is reached. If this were to progress, changes would become more substantial, by proceeding to apply new rules for irregularities which affect a substantial part of the English orthography, such as the spellings of *-ary*/ *-ery*/ *-ory*/ *-ry* (Lindgren, 1969, pp. 26-29). However, Lindgren proposes that each change should have one simple rule and an accompanying list of words to minimize the difficulty of grasping the reformed spelling. Lindgren mentions reform stages up to *SR50*, but does not prescribe concrete rules to stages beyond the first, as not to confine successive stages of the reform from changing according to demand. However, he suggests that *SR2* should be implemented a year after introducing *SR1* (Lindgren, 1969, p. 22).

Because *SR* does not apply to a specific reformed orthography, other reformed spellings of English, such as *New Spelling*, are suggested as offering a basic guideline to follow. Lindgren

proposes two alternative phonetic spelling suggestions beyond *New Spelling*. These are called *Phonetic A* and *Phonetic B* and are both phonetic/phonemic spelling proposals. *Phonetic B* belongs to the category of diacritics while *Phonetic A* belongs to the mixed diagraphic/diacritic spelling proposals (Brown, 1998).

Lindgren considers the implementation of the reform in detail, reflecting upon all possibilities. *SR* is focused upon being a reform that is as unobtrusive to the public as possible, while still applying changes into the TO. One concern of *SR* is making sure the reformed spelling would become established in newspapers and other printed media. A list of the words affected by the new change would be distributed to such sources, to minimize the abstractness of the reformation. *SR1* would not be taught, but would be something that teachers could bring forward in class and to examination bodies as an alternative spelling in exams. As *SR1* is such a small change, countries, media and other aspects of society will be able to 'tag along' even if *SR2* were to be affective in others. (Lindgren, 1969, pp. 19-31).

SR1 has been tested and implemented over a period of time, but has not achieved any notable results. Just about 2 percent of the 200 most common nouns were altered, 1 percent of the same number of verbs and 5 percent of the 100 most common adjectives (Jimmieson, 1996). In total, 267 words are affected by *SR1*, only saving 0.1 percent of typing strokes (Ives, 1979, p. 21). It could be compared to the attempt by Noah Webster in reforming American English. Webster implemented minor changes to the orthography (removing the *u* in *honour*), but without additional changes becoming implemented or accepted. Therefore, with only being minor changes, it has no real effect upon the literacy in USA (the English Spelling Society, 2012; Ives, 1979, p.14). This aspect is what Carter (2006, p.91) considers when stating that stage approach reforms are impractical and ineffective. He explains it as:

> *"There would, under such a reform regime, be an on-going state of transition from one seriously defective version of English spelling to another, with hardly anybody clear about where the spelling system was currently supposed to be". (Carter, 2006, p. 91)*

SR1 has also been criticized for not having enough impact upon the difficult words used by children (1.7 percent of the core 2000 words between grade 1-6), even if the pedagogical gain from a spelling reform is what Lindgren and other spelling reformers regard as a main aspect (Jimmieson, 1996; Lindgren, 1969, p.2).

A spelling reform such as *SR1* would be less demanding upon the social discourses involved with spelling, but it would take a significant period of time before it would have any considerable benefits, which might lower the relevance of implementing *SR1*. However, it has a higher probability of becoming implemented than more radical reform proposals.

VI.IV <u>Applying a Reform</u>

Lounsbury refers to the public as being hostile to new spellings, more so if the new spelling proposals were to deviate far from the TO. Opposition from the public with regard to reforming spelling must be considered as an inevitable consequence. However, because of the existence of a large number of exceptions such as, for example, those with silent letters and with several ways of pronouncing the same spelling patterns, a spelling reform is argued to be necessary for English. Spelling reformers would be required to *"knock the eye out of a friend"* to remove the silent *i* (eye) from their friend (frend) (Lounsbury, 1909, p. 150).

The last section of this analysis concerns reform implementation specifically, how a spelling reform can be introduced into society. This will be done by examining the role of governments and media, as well as globalisation and technology.

VI.IV.I **Implementing an English spelling reform**

Implementing changes may be chaotic, contradictory and with coexistence between old and new discourses which, to some extent, creates social division (Fairclough, 2006, p. 72). The difference in perception between the general public and the implementing (proposing) linguists and government will increase the social division further. Looking beyond the political aspects, another difference between the views of the general public and the implementing linguists would be the different perspective on language itself. Johnson explains this difference as:

> *"For the linguists, working within a structural-theoretical paradigm, language constitutes an **a posteriori** means with which to represent a reality that is itself external to language: to alter the form of the language (here: its orthography) in no way impinges upon the nature of that reality. For the complainants, on the other hand, there is no access to reality without the internalised **a priori** knowledge that is constituted by language itself: to alter the form of the language is therefore to distort the perception of that reality". (Johnson, 2005, pp. 142-143)*

The difference between *a posteriori* perspective (not existing in the mind before having experience) and *a priori* (existing in the mind prior to experience) should be considered vital to the arguments and discussions with regard to changing the English orthography. From the opponents' perspective, linguists appear as wanting to manipulate the language in favour of expertise while they, in most probability, aim for the opposite (Johnson, 2005, p. 143). In light of this, *"…the most immediate lesson to be learned from the 1996 reform [in Germany] is that more attention should have been paid to the question of **publicity**"*. (Johnson, 2005, p. 156) Therefore, publicity should be regarded as a way to persuade the wider public of the necessity of a spelling reform as aid against expertise and social division (Johnson, 2005, p. 157).

In the case of the reform of German in 1996, the weakness from the lack of PR was a consequence of the limited time and resources (Johnson, 2005, p. 157). However, even with a lack of PR, there was a press release explaining how they would handle costs and other relevant factors. The press release was an important step in the implementation process, because the reform was criticized by the public and a 'momentum' of complaints were voiced against it. In most probability, such PR would also be necessary when implementing a reform upon English. *"Adequate research backing up the campaign would be needed in the areas of market research, motivational research, and media research"*. (Carter, 2006, p. 94) The role of media should be stressed even further, because of the fact that the English language is used globally and, because of the social arguments that have been raised could be raised from other countries beside Britain. Therefore, implementing a spelling reform would require considerable time and resources. Moreover, because spellings of English have both derived from the spoken and written form of English, it causes additional problems in reforming the TO (Johnson, 2005, p. 121).

One could also consider whether there should be a spelling reform at all and, if so, who is appropriate to govern such a change with such a globally administered language. In the reform of 1996-1998 in Germany, the individual states[30] decided whether or not to implement the new spelling conventions. Only one state did prefer the old spelling, which raised concerns from people in that state as to the future opportunities of the younger generation. Because of this, the state in question repealed the decision in 1999 and applied the new

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[30] To clarify, Germany is divided into different *länder,* which can be compared to states.

spelling (Johnson, 2005, pp. 113-115). This progression was somewhat forced upon that individual state, which could be considered as unethical. This situation could occur on a larger scale when implementing a reform upon English, with countries preferring the old spelling. This may be because change does *"…by no means guarantee[]… the wholesale acceptance of those views that have gained hegemony … its subsequent implementation continue[s] to be widely contested"*. (Johnson, 2005, p. 87) A decision made through individual governments or by individual counties could complicate the matter further than if a union or organisation were to make a unified decision.

> *"…it may be a product of policy-making bodies and handed down by central government, it may grow from a local decision-making process involving the users of the language, or it may be in practice the work of individuals or a small group working independently". (Sebba, 2007, p. 76)*

The future of English is argued to be bound to the future of America, because of the nation's great global influence as well as its military and economic power. The USA has been the main catalyst in the growth of English in the 20th century and onward, and 'Americanization' is a phenomenon across the globe (Crystal, 2003, pp. 127-128). Therefore, it would be beneficial if the change were to be initiated or endorsed by American organizations or political parties, as an act of modernizing English for social and economic gains across the globe. However, Upward states that there is no pressure upon society from larger organisations regarding spelling reform at present but, if they were to be made aware of the claimed advantages which could be gained from reforming English spelling, organisations beyond UK could raise public awareness (1988, p. 20).

> *"In view of the large number of countries which would be affected by English spelling reform, it is likely that the UN General Assembly would take a close interest in the [sic] the subject and instruct its relevant committees and agencies to make helpful contributions and cooperate with CHOGM[31] and the US in developing the initiative". (Carter, 2006, p. 97)*

The demand for a 'world language' is frequently voiced and English is the most likely candidate for such a position at present (Crystal, 2002, p. 280). To gain an advantage over other economic competitors, such as Japan or Germany, one may consider spelling as an unnecessary obstacle (Upward, 1988, p. 13). Upward postulates (1988, p. 9): *"…there is no global 'motivation' behind the forms used, merely a widespread but patchy and shifting*

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[31] Abbreviation of: Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

consensus among users, determined by tradition, education, fashion, geography, economics and spasmodic etymological insights and prejudices". It might be this lack of 'motivation' combined with the spread and varieties that have emerged with modernisation that impede the prescriptive and *status quo* of English (Cao & Wu, 2007, p. 94). Therefore, it might be beneficial to focus efforts on harmonizing inconsistencies in word groups with related morphological roots for a more unified spelling, which was the approach in the German spelling reform (Johnson, 2005, p. 55).

A study of spelling and CMC (computer-mediated communication) was carried out in 2010 by Jones. In this study, a sample of young English L1 speakers was selected and questioned on their attitude towards spelling as well as their use of TO and ability to spell on the Internet. Results from this study indicate that there are some negative attitude towards changes and misspellings online. A list was compiled which enumerated the main reasons misspellings occur more frequently on the Internet. The main reasons, according to the population of the study, were because writing unconventionally was considered faster than traditional writing and because of the uncertainty of the correct way to spell (Jones, 2010, p. 32). Speed is of considerable importance in writing on the Internet and more so if it is in real-time chats or in less formal situations (registers). Referring to the work of Crystal, Jones discusses a possible difference in the attitude towards errors in writing received through the Internet. Errors made in 'traditional writing'[32] practices are judged more stringently than errors through CMC (2010, pp. 36-37).

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[32] Discussed through observations of Crystal's personal experience of his less negative attitude towards errors in e-mails against his more negative attitude towards errors received through traditional letters (Jones, 2010, p. 37). For this essay, the 'traditional letters' will be referred as the collective term 'traditional writing'.

VII DISCUSSION

The aim of this essay is to answer two thesis questions through analyzing English spelling history, spelling reform proposals and common arguments people voice against orthographic changes. The four spelling reform proposals will be compared and discussed in an attempt to identify the most optimal approach for BE. Furthermore, for this section of the essay, the thesis questions will be discussed by referring to the results of the analysis. Firstly:

Why has no modern day spelling reform been implemented in order to reduce the types of spelling in British English?

There is no straightforward answer to give to the question as to why a modern day spelling reform has not been implemented in BE, because there have been times when a spelling reform could have been implemented, such as in the 15th century (with the introduction of the printing press), or in the 1700's forward (when lexicographers and spelling reformers analysed and put forward alternative spelling suggestions). However, the lack of change from the beginning of the ModE period and beyond with regard to spelling has had an immense impact upon the cultural and social perception of the TO. English spelling may require greater changes than other languages which have had frequent reforms implemented upon their respective spellings, which may cause further obstacles: if spelling were to correspond with the phonemics of English, it would be very alien. This is because there have not been any great changes upon the orthography of English for about 800 years. Moreover, the lack of an institution or academy to regulate the orthographic conventions has, arguably, made it more difficult to regularize and reform English spelling. One reason for this may be the negative perspective of the social discourses. These discourses have been analysed and will be discussed briefly below.

Etymology, the study which charts the origins of words, might be a positive aspect for foreign learners of English, for the reason that there are many loanwords from Norse, Latin and French (as well as other oriental languages). However, it has no relevance with regard to native speakers and arguably obstructs the pronunciation patterns of the present generation. Without any indication of the current pronunciation of British English in the spelling the present orthography will possibly be lost.

There is also a large number of homophones in English at present and, because of this, a digraphic phonetic spelling reform would generate an even larger number of homographs.

Therefore, homographs are a major issue in the case of English. Some homograph distinction should exist for the benefit of the learner (distinguishing the differences which exist in pronunciation), such as the forms of *read,* as well as the different stress of the two words spelled *minute*. However, there are some words which are homophones that may be disadvantageous, perhaps causing confusion, were they to become homographs, such as with *two/too/to*. However, the confusion that may arise would arguably not be an insurmountable problem, because the reader would, if necessary, utilize the context to recover the meaning of the word.

Because of the immense number of varieties of English that exist, it is impossible to have a reform which corresponds with 100 percent accuracy to all dialects. Therefore, it would be reasonable to follow a specific standard way of pronunciation for the new spelling conventions, as is done with other European languages. If one were to consider the regional varieties of British English in particular, it would be the RP standard that would be the most obvious contender. However, because of the global spread of English, it may be another standard pronunciation that would be the most preferred, as American or Australian English.

The aesthetic argument is a long established and contentious factor when considering imposing changes in English, because there have not been any substantial changes upon the spelling for such an extensive period of time. It is divided into 'expressiveness', which is aimed at the practical use and 'pure beauty', and which is more subjective. The 'pure beauty' aesthetic argument is based upon subjectivity and a psychological connection to an orthographic unit. It is possible to develop an acceptance for a new reformed spelling, which is why this argument is dismissed. 'Expressiveness' is a complaint made by poets and writers, who utilize the spelling of TO in their works. However, this use is limited to a few people and the vast majority of the population does not benefit from the current spellings, which is why this argument should not be considered as an overriding reason not to implement a spelling reform.

The 'morphographemic' study conducted by Chomsky and Halle analysed 100 bases of English word families and concluded that English was 95 percent accurate. The phonemic correspondence of English is argued to be less optimal**,** with 50-70 percent correspondence. Even if the bases of English word families are considered as 'near optimal', Wells (2008) argues that the 'morphographemic' bases are not something which is indicated to learners. Upward (1988) explains that this is a question of attitude towards the language: that the

studies conducted have different approaches to the information gathered. In contrast to Chomsky and Halle, Yule (as quoted in Upward, 1988) focuses upon the irregularities, such as *speak:speech*. Arguably, such irregularities would not exist if English orthography is an optimal system.

The economic cost of any spelling reform, no matter how extensive or otherwise, will be great. This may be seen through the German reform in 1996, where even though the change was limited to 0.5% of standard text, the implementation still had major cost implications. There might be great expenditure for book and dictionary publishers. Moreover, some additional short-term costs of re-training teachers and professional writers would be necessary. Therefore, it might be more financially appropriate to implement a reform which fully regulates English according to either the RP standard or with a regularized system. Implementing new spelling would, in the case of English, decrease the use and sales of pronunciation dictionaries. This would greatly affect dictionary publishers, as there is a large market for pronunciation dictionaries at present. An immense number of spelling combinations with silent or superfluous letters would also involve additional costs. These costs from such spellings in TO might be a crucial aspect in the further global influence of English. This influence could arguably be achieved by implementing a spelling reform which would minimise, or even eliminate, some of the costs involved in the teaching of spelling. With a decrease in learning time, costs would also decrease. A reduction in costs may facilitate English in many areas (Fiumedoro, 1971).

Improvements in literacy is the main advantage of a spelling reform. More phonetically spelled languages require much less learning time and effort. Moreover, without the irregularities in spelling, dyslexia would decrease, possibly by as much as 50 percent (Zurinkas, 2008). Studies on young learners have proved that a more phonemic spelling is encouraging to them and easier to learn. English would also gain from having a spelling which corresponds more closely to the prescriptive spelling.

The English language can be considered as a global language, because it is used by a great number of people, which is why it might be necessary to make a decision at an international, or possibly global, level. The converse could also occur, where organisations or countries other than those inhabited chiefly by native English speakers would be able to implement a spelling reform. Some commentators predict that, as the modernisation of spelling is implemented, the emotional connection to traditional orthography diminishes. However, as the study by Jones (2010) demonstrated, the attitude towards misspellings is negative. In spite of this, traditional orthography is not the only variation of English used, but there are new word forms and shortened sentences as well as a large number of misspellings in places such as the Internet.

It would be conceivable that a reform would be implemented for the prospects of economic growth and to expand the global spread of English. A 'top-bottom' reform would be more likely than a bottom-up reform, with the previously mentioned negative attitude of the public. I would argue that**,** because of the *a priori* thinking of the public, they might not consider a spelling reform necessary, while linguists with the *a posteriori* perspective would see the community as needing it. This is another reason why a 'top-bottom' reform would be likely to succeed.

These arguments against reform will, in most probability**,** be voiced and I would argue that it will be the task of media, the implementing political administration and linguists, to inform the public of the reason behind the reform and the positive aspects that would follow.

The TO of English has some issues that are commonly discussed and analysed throughout the reform proposals in this essay. These are the letters which are unpronounced (silent letters), one of the most common vowel sound which is spelled in numerous ways, referred to as 'schwa' as well as the inconsistently applied double consonants which determine vowel length. The spelling proposals *CS* and *NS* analysed in this essay have different approaches as to how these three issues might be resolved. Silent consonant letters would not be retained in *NS,* while *CS* reformers contend that some silent consonant letters should be kept to indicate vowel length or to differentiate words. Neither *CS* nor *NS* apply a single rule for all positions of schwa, but rather they focus on reforming it in the post-accentual position. This might be because schwa occurs in so many different positions and with a large number of letter combinations. Double consonants in TO often function as an indication of vowel length; this is retained in *CS* while *NS* reformers would remove this function entirely. *Shavian* would

eliminate all of these issues, by having a new alphabet designed specifically for English sounds. Therefore, there would not be any necessity to keep silent letters or double consonants for vowel length or only partially reform schwa. Moreover, it is not possible to specify whether silent letters, double consonants or iterations of the schwa would be regulated or removed in *SR*, because *SR* could be applied to any reformed spelling proposal. Therefore, I would argue that, in a scenario without any possible social objections, *Shavian* would be the best option with regard to English. However, because of the social objections that are likely to occur, it would be nearly impossible to achieve. The less optimal approaches (*CS* and *NS*) would accordingly have a greater chance of being implemented in society. The approaches to these three issues in *NS* and *CS* have both beneficial and complicating aspects. It could then be argued that it is not a question of the way the reformers handle the issues that exist in TO, but instead the focus would be on the strategies employed and what would be gained through implementing the spelling reform in society.

Cutting of characters is considered as one of the gains of a spelling reform. *NS* is a digraphic spelling proposal and would not cut as many characters as many other spelling proposals. As analysed by Bett (2002), a digraphic spelling proposal would possibly decrease the characters used by about 4 percent. For *Cut Spelling*, the decrease would be larger than with a digraphic spelling proposal, with a 7-10 percent decrease. For *Shavian*, there would not be a decrease of characters, but there would be a large gain in reading and writing speed, because the characters used would correspond to the phonemes of the language. The "cutting" of characters relates to the reduction of printing costs which would follow if any reform were to be implemented. Therefore, the 7-10 percent reduction of characters is more likely to be favoured by publishers than a spelling proposal with a small percentage, such as a new alphabet or a digraphic proposal.

NS was proposed in the early 20th century, which could be the reason behind the lack of implementation strategies in the *New spelling* proposal against the detailed approach in *CS*. In the reform proposal of *CS,* the political aspect of implementing a spelling reform was analysed in greater depth. In this proposal, the reformers described the optimal approach as being implementation through an international body or organisation, which could apply the new spelling conventions simultaneously in a large number of countries. Politics is not given particular consideration in the spelling proposal by Lindgren, but the use of the media would be the preferred approach to bring about social acceptance. Therefore, Lindgren proposes that a list would be distributed to newspaper publishers and writers and that everyone able to write

in *SR1* should do so. Media was the second stage of implementation for *NS* and was also considered as an important factor to the success of *CS*. Moreover, Upward (1996) (an advocate of *CS*) contends that media as well as education and literature producers may require additional support from an organisation or body. The implementation of the new spelling conventions in education is considered as important for *NS*, where the first stage is to apply the new spelling in primary school. *NS* reformers have conducted a number of experiments where learners received education in the new spelling and these had positive results. On the other hand, *CS* has been criticized for being difficult for young learners because of the large number of consonant clusters. Young learners are the main beneficiaries of *SR*, according to Lindgren. Therefore, he contends that anyone could raise awareness of the spelling changes that would be implemented with *SR1* and that any possible implementation in the school system would be beneficial. Literature, as well as official documents would be the last step in implementing NS into society. The social advantage of a reform is only mentioned in the *CS* suggestion where they would implement the social 'idea' of a spelling reform in order to create a positive perspective towards implementing a reform.

 Shavian has been estimated to have a learning period of 6 months to a year, without any additional implementation time, because it would act as a replacement for the Roman alphabet. Lindgren did not consider a certain time period for implementing *SR*, but considered the end to be when the spelling is fully regularized. *CS* reformers contended that a 10-20 years transition from the first to the second category of the reform would be possible, while *NS* reformers considered the complete transition period to be fifteen years. Having a transition period from TO to *NS* could be considered as too optimistic, because of the radical changes that would be required with implementing a phonemic spelling after 800 years with TO conventions. Therefore, *CS* could be considered as a more realistic approach with regard to time. Having a transition period may be an advantage in a top-bottom reform and with *SR* and *Shavian* not being prescribed with a 'deadline', the implementing political administration and the public would have a more important role in deciding when and how the implementation should proceed. However, not establishing any deadline also has the advantage of flexibility, being able to make changes according to the level of opposition or particular demands of the public, to create a smoother transition.

Out of the four spelling reforms mentioned in this essay, three proposals consider implementing the reform in stages. NS has three implementation stages which are assigned within specific aspects and sectors within the society; Stage 1 relates to education, Stage 2 to

media while Stage 3 will concern official documents and also literature. *CS* has three stages (category 1,2,3), these are three different spelling changes, category 1 being silent letters, category 2 the unstressed vowels and category 3 double consonants. *SR* proposes fifty stages, but only one stage has a specific rule. Carter (2006) regards a staged approach to be ineffective, because of the on-going transition of different spelling conventions that would exist. Through this point of view, *NS* or *Shavian* would be the optimal approaches with regard to implementation time. However, I would claim that, out of the four spelling proposals analysed in this essay, *CS* is the optimal approach in this regard, because the transitions are large enough to have an effect upon the orthography, but not too severe as to alienate the older population to such an extent whereby they would have major difficulties with reading and/or writing. A reform which would be implemented in stages should be very extensive in order to avoid creating additional problems, such as larger costs than necessary. *SR* would, as argued by Jimmieson (1996), not change enough to have a negative social impact, while *NS* would have too great of an impact. *Shavian* would also have a large social impact and, because it is a fully regularized system from the beginning, it would require enormous efforts for the implementing government and society at large. However, if organisations such as UN, US and CHOGM would work together, any of these suggestions would offer a practicable alternative to TO and eventually become accepted within English speaking societies.

A reform of English spelling has not been implemented for the reasons already outlined in this essay. Moreover, the proposed ways to implement a spelling reform into BE have been critiqued through the social discourses and the spelling reform proposals, but it is impossible to offer a definitive reason for the lack of such a change, because implementing any of the reforms mentioned in this essay would be theoretically feasible. This will be discussed further, when attempting to answer the second thesis question, which is:

Is there a feasible way to implement a spelling reform into the current British English orthography?

As mentioned previously, it is theoretically possible to implement a spelling reform into English TO, but this would require a collective and global effort and a spelling reform which would need to operate in concordance with the publicity, political and social support or lack of support. The most effective way to implement a spelling reform would be by bringing awareness to the public and to 'opponents' through media, positive studies and political sources.

Because the prescriptive traditional orthography of English does not correspond to the current use of English, a more phonemic (descriptive) representation of the orthography might be favoured as a reform option. A descriptive, rather than prescriptive, reform might be easier to implement within English but, because of the great difference between RP and TO, it would not be nearly as achievable as a prescriptive reform. In other words, because of the large gap that exist between the TO and RP of English, a phonetic/phonemic reform would be very difficult to implement. Therefore, it would be more feasible to implement a spelling reform that slightly decreases this 'gap' between TO and RP, as a normative reform of 'consistent rules'. In spite of the large differences between RP and TO, if large organisations such as CHOGM and UN were to make a collective effort, any of the four spelling reforms suggested in this essay would have a chance of being implemented. However, I would argue that, if a spelling reform were to be implemented, it should be a very extensive change instead of a partial reform or something similar, because a small change would be as costly and, therefore, less beneficial. This is exemplified by the spelling reform upon German as well as the non-visible changes implemented with *SR1*.

There may be some negative aspects that have been overlooked in this study, as much of the information is compiled by spelling reform proponents. Moreover, a large number of the studies and a considerable amount of information on both the spelling reforms and the social discourses are supplied by the Simplified Spelling Society. Much of the research mentioned in the analysis of this study has been conducted by linguists and people who have great knowledge of English orthography.

 I would argue that the positive aspects of implementing a spelling reform outweigh the negative aspects. The main advantages are that they are likely to reduce printing costs, reading and writing difficulties while also inducing more global spread of English, political power, second language adoption in foreign countries and confidence for young learners. The greatest obstacle is the social objection and opposition against implementing a spelling reform as well as the lack of support from large organisations.

VIII Conclusion
<small>K ə N K L U ʒ ə N</small>

In the final paragraphs of this essay, I will review the theoretical research and the practical considerations with regard to spelling reformation into English. I will conclude with my own recommendations for the implementation of a spelling reform for the English language, by considering the spelling reforms and social discourses.

First, a review of English language history with regard to orthographic changes was made, with a collective description of spelling reform proposals. Second, those social discourses which are considered relevant in the process of implementing a spelling reform into society were analysed. Third, two suggestions each from the categories phonetic/phonemic proposals and normative proposals were analysed in greater depth, as well as the implementation strategies. In addition to this, the most relevant aspects of implementing a reform were analysed by examining a reform upon German and by gathering information of research on orthographic changes. Lastly, the discourses, spelling reform proposals as well as the implementation strategies were discussed in greater depth and followed by a concluding argument.

It is not possible to account with any certainty as to why no spelling reform has been implemented into BE in modern times, as there have been many instances when such a change could have happened. However, one reason behind it may be the lack of an academy with the authority to regulate and define the English language. At present, I would consider that the social discourses which are involved in the process of implementing a spelling reform are a cause for the lack of change. Moreover, the global spread of English, as well as the great differences that exist between the spoken and written forms of the language, are two major obstacles.

Through examining and evaluating four spelling proposals of British English, I have concluded that there are some positive and negative aspects in every proposal and that the most optimal proposal, in one aspect, might not be the optimal proposal for another. The lack of change within English causes greater complications than for other European languages where changes have been frequently implemented. Therefore, the process of implementing a spelling reform should be considered in great detail. With this in mind, I would argue that the most evident factors for a successful reform are social awareness and political support of a reform, which were the main factors in the German reform in 1996.

I would conclude that the most optimal approach, without considering the social aspect, would be a new alphabet, such as *Shavian*. Furthermore, the strategies suggested in *Cut Spelling* are optimal in the process of implementing new spelling conventions. With these implementation strategies and support by major political organisations, I would argue that it would be theoretically possible to implement a spelling reform into English.

The social aspects that were researched by Eira was analysed and discussed further. Through analysing these discourses, I would conclude that a more logical spelling than TO would bring major improvements in literacy, encouraging students as well as decreasing learning time and teaching costs. Moreover, it could also spread English further as a second language in countries across the globe and reduce printing costs. Through examining these discourses comprehensively, I conclude that it is essential to convince the English speaking public of the advantages in implementing a spelling change.

In light of this, the timespan in between the new and old spelling conventions is the most crucial and should be subjected to further studies to determine reasons for the lack of an accepted and successful policy for spelling reform. I have attempted to outline a variety of spelling proposals, by selecting two normative and two phonemic/phonetic spelling proposals. It could be an interesting addition to carry out a more in depth analysis on one of these subordinate categories. In this essay, discourses of relevance for implementing a spelling reform into English was analysed and discussed. In future studies, it may be relevant to focus more sharply upon a single one of these areas, such as the political or philosophical discourses.

The public might not be ready to let go of what is familiar, even with such a large number of irregularities as English TO possesses. A spelling reform would advance English into the 21st century and spare future generations of learners from difficulties that arise as a consequence of the distance in between English orthography and spoken language. Either way, spelling will change sooner or later: the only question is when and how. I would only hope that English learners in the future will be spared the burden of long and outdated spelling patterns, because of the wicked humour of Englishmen.

ʙ ɪ ʙ ʟ ɪ ᴀ ɢ ʀ ə ꜰ ɪ
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