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ENGLISH ORTHOGRAPHY

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Abstract

Onthology is different from typography. Onthology is largely concerned with matters of spelling and in particular the relationship between phonemes and graphemes in a language. Like many other alphabetic orthographies, English spelling does not represent non- contrastive sounds

Key Words

Word origin,Phonemic representation,Homophone Differentiation, Marking sound changes in other letters, Multiple functionality, Underlying representation, English terms with diacritical marks, Types of diacritical marks.

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ENGLISH ORTHOGRAPHY

An orthography is a set of conventions for writing a language. It includes rules of spelling, hyphenation, capitalization, word breaks,emphasis, and punctuation Orthography is distinct from grammar, which concerns the structure of languages and not their writing.

Most significant languages in the modern era are written down, and for most such languages a standard orthography has been developed, often based on a standard variety of the language, and thus exhibiting less dialect variation than the spoken language. Sometimes there may be variation in a language's orthography, as between American and British spelling in the case of English orthography. In some cases orthography is regulated by bodies such as language academies, although for many languages (including English) there are no such authorities, and orthography develops in a more organic way.

Orthography is distinct from typography, which is concerned with principles of typesetting.

The English word orthography dates from the 15th century It comes from the French orthographie, from Latin orthographia, which derives from Greek @nèuòorthos, "correct", and äñÜõãéígráphein, "to write".

Orthography is largely concerned with matters of spelling, and in particular the relationship between phonemes and graphemes in a language. Other elements that may be considered part of orthography include hyphenation, capitalization, word breaks, emphasis, and punctuation. Orthography thus describes or defines the set of symbols used in writing a language, and the rules about how to use those symbols.

Most natural languages developed as oral languages, and writing systems have usually been crafted or adapted as ways of representing the spoken language. The rules for doing this tend to become standardized for a given language, leading to the development of an orthography

that is generally considered correct". In linguistics the termorthography is often used to refer to any method of writing a language, without judgment as to right and wrong, with a scientific understanding that orthographic standardization exists on a spectrum of strength of convention. The original sense of the word, though implies a dichotomy of correct and incorrect, and the word is still most often used to refer specifically to a thoroughly standardized, prescriptively correct, way of writing a language. A distinction may be made here between etic and emic viewpoints the purely descriptive (etic) approach, which simply considers any system that is actually used-and the emic view, which takes account of language users' perceptions of correctness.

English orthography is the system of writing conventions used to represent spoken English in written form that allows readers to connect spelling to sound to meaning.

Like the orthography of most world languages, English has a broad degree of standardization. However, unlike most languages, there are multiple ways to spell nearly every phoneme (sound), and most letters have multiple pronunciations depending on their position in a word and the context. Some orthographic mistakes are common even among native speakers. This is mainly due to the large number of words that have been borrowed from a large number of other languages throughout the history of the English language without successful attempts at complete spelling reforms. Most of the spelling conventions in Modern English were derived from the phonetic spelling of Middle English and do not reflect the sound changes that have occurred since the late fifteenth century (such as the Great Vowel Shift).

Despite the various English dialects spoken from country to country and within different regions of the same country, there are only slight regional variations in English orthography, and its overall uniformity helps facilitate international communication. On the other hand, it also adds to the discrepancy between the way English is written and spoken in any given location.

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Phonemic Representation

Further information: Phonemic Orthography

Letters in English orthography usually represent a particular sound (phoneme). For example, the word cat /ÈÆkæt/ consists of three letters è'ce' e'aé' and e'te', in which e'cé represents the sound /k/, è'aé' the sound /æ/ and è'té' the sound /t/.

Sequences of letters may perform this role as well as single letters. Thus, in the word ship (pronounced), the digraph è'she' (two letters) represents the sound. In the word ditch, the three letters è'tché' represent the sound.

Less commonly, a single letter can represent multiple successive sounds The most common example is the letter èxé', which normally represents the consonant cluster /ks/ (for example, in the word six, pronounced / EÆSÆks/).

The same letter (or sequence of letters) may be pronounced in different ways when it occurs in different positions within a word. For instance, the digraph ĕghĕ` represents the sound /f/ at the end of some words, such as rough. At the beginning of syllables (ie the syllable onset), the digraph e'ghĕ pronounced /aÆ/, as in the word ghost(pronounced /ÆÆa/EoSÆst/). Conversely, the digraph è'ghé is never pronounced /f/ in syllable onsets and is almost never pronounced /aE// in syllable codas (the proper name Pittsburgh Is an exception).

Some words contain silent letters, which do not represent any sound in modem English pronunciation. Examples include the è bé' in doubt, debt, dumb, etc., the è'pé' in psychology and pneumatic, and the commonly encountered silent è'ee' (discussed further below).

Word Origin

Another type of spelling characteristic is related to word origin For example, when representing a vowel, the letter è'yé' represents the sound /j/ in some words borrowed from Greek

(reflecting an original upsilon), whereas the letter Usually representing this sound in non-Greek words is the letter e'ié'. Thus, the word myth /Emjè/ is of Greek origin, whilepith /Epjè/ is a Germanic word. Other examples include è'phé' pronounced /f/ (which is usually spelt è'fé'), and e'ché' pronounced /k/ (which is usually spelt e'cé' or è'ké')- the use of these spellings for these sounds often mark words that have been borrowed from Greek.

Some researchers, such as Brengelman (1970), have suggested that, in addition to this marking of word origin, these spellings indicate a more formal level of style or register in a given text, although Rollings (2004) finds this point to be exaggerated as there would be many exceptions where a word with one of these spellings, such as è'phé' for /f/ (liketelephone), could occur in an informal text.

Homophone Differentiation

Spelling may also be useful to distinguish between homophones (wordswith the same pronunciation but different meanings), although in most cases the reason for the difference is historical and was not introduced for the purpose of making a distinction. For example, the words heir and air are pronounced identically in most dialects, but in writing they are distinguished from each other by their different spellings. Another example is the pair of homophones pain and pane, where both are pronounced /Epejn/ but have two different spellings of the vowel/ej/.Often this is because of the historical pronunciation a each word where, over time, two separate sounds become the same but the different spellings remain: pain used to be pronounced as /Epain/, with a diphthong, and pane as /EpeÐn/, but the diphthong /ai/ merged with the long vowel /eÐ/ in pane, makingpain and pane homophones (pane-pain merger). Later /eÐ/ became a diphthong /ej/.

In written language, this may help to resolve potential ambiguities that would arise otherwise (cf. He's breaking the car vs. He's braking the car). Nevertheless, many homophones remain that are unresolved by spelling (for example, the word bay has at least five fundamentally different meanings).

Marking Sound Changes in other Letters

Some letters in English provide information about the pronunciation of otherletters in the word.Rollings (2004) uses the term "markers" for such letters. Letters may mark different types of information. For instance, the letter ěeě`' in the word cottage /ÈkRt{"d'/ indicates that the preceding e'gé is pronounced /d'/, rather than the more common value of ě`ge' in word-final position as the sound /a/, such as in tag /Etæa/ The letter è'eé' also often marks an altered pronunciation of a preceding vowel. In the pair ban and bane, the e'aé' ofban has the value /æ/ whereas the è'ae of bane is marked by the e'eé' as having the value /ej/. In this context, the è'eé' is not pronounced, and is referred to as "silent e". A single letter may even fill multiple pronunciation-marking roles simultaneously. For example, in the word wage, the è'ee' marks not only the change of the è'aé' from /æ/ to /ej/, but also of the ě`'ge' from /a/ to /d'/.

Doubled consonants usually indicate that the preceding vowel is pronounced short. For example, the doubled è'té in latter indicates that the 'ae is pronounced /æ/, while the single è'té' of later gives /ej/. Doubled consonants only indicate any lengthening or gemination of the consonant sound itself when they come from different morphemes, as with the e'nné' in unnatural=un+natural.

Multiple Functionality

A given letter or (letters) may have dual functions. For example, the letterě`ie in the word cinema has a sound-representing function (representing the sound /j/) and a pronunciation-marking function (marking the è'cé' as having the value /s/ opposed to the value /k/).

Underlying Representation

Like many other alphabetic orthographies, English spelling does not represent non-contrastive phonetic sounds (that is, minor differences in pronunciation which are not used to distinguish between different words). Although the letter è'té is pronounced by some speakers

with aspiration [t°] at the beginning of words, this is never indicated in the spelling, and, indeed, this phonetic detail is probably not noticeable to the average native speakernot trained in phonetics. However, unlike some orthographies, English orthography often represents a very abstract underlying representation (or morphophonemic form) of English words.

[T]he postulated underlying forms are systematically related to the conventional orthography… and are, as is well known, related to the underlying forms of a much earlier historical stage of the language There has, in other words, been little change in lexical representation since Middle English, and consequently, we would expect that lexical representation would differ very little from dialect to dialect in Modern English…[and] that conventional orthography is probably fairly close to optimal for all modern English dialect as well as for the attested dialects of the past several hundred years.

In these cases, a given morpheme (i.e. a component of a word) has a fixed spelling even though it is pronounced differently in different words. An example tensesuffix -è'edé', which may be pronounced variously as /t/, /d/,or { "d/ (for example, dip/Ědjp/, dipped /Ědjpt/,boom /ĚbuÐm/,boomed EbuÐmd/, loot/ĚluÐt/, looted /ĚluÐt{"d/). As it happens, these different pronunciations of -è'edé' can be predicted by a few phonological rules, but hut is not the reason why its spelling is fixed.

Another example involves the vowel differences (with accompanying stress pattern changes) in several related words. For instance, the word photographer derived from the word photograph by adding the derivational suffix-d'eré, When this suffix is added, the vowel pronunciations change largely owing tothe moveable stress:

Spelling	Pronunciation
photograph	/ˈfəʊ.tə.ˌgɹɑːf/, or /ˈfəʊ.tʰə̠.ˌgɹ̱ɑːf/
Photographer	/fəˈtɑːgrəfər/
Photographical	/ˌfəʊtəˈgrafɪkl/

Other examples of this type are the -è'ityé' suffix (as in agile vs agility, acid vs acidity, divine vs divinity, sane vs sanity).

Another such class of words includes sign/Ěsajn/ and bomb /ĖbRm/with "silent" letters è'gé' andèbé', respectively. However, in the related words signature and bombard these letters are pronounced /ĚsjanYtfYr/ and /bRmĚbQĐrd/, respectively. Here it could be argued that the underlying representation of sign and bomb islsajan l andlbRmb|, in which the underlying |a| and l b l are only pronounced in the surface forms when followed by certain suffixes (-è'atureé', -è'ardé''). Otherwise, the |a l and l b l are not realized in the surface pronunciation (e.g. when standing alone, or when Followed by suffixes like -è'ingé' or -è'eré'). In these cases, the orthography indicates the underlying consonants that are present in certain words but are absent in other related words. Other examples include the è'té in fast /ÈfQĐst/ and fasten /ĖfQDsYn/, and the è'hé' in heir /Ě[Yr/ and inherit /jnĒh[ri"t/.

Another example includes words like mean / ĚmiĐn/and meant / Émi[nt/.Here the vowel spelling è'eaé' is pronounced differently in the two related words. Thus, again the orthography uses only a single spelling that corresponds to the single morphemic form rather than to the surface phonological form.

English orthography does not always provide an underlying representation; sometimes it provides an intermediate representation between the underlying form and the surface pronunciation. This is the case with the spelling of the regular plural morpheme, which is written as either -è'sé' (as in tick, ticks and mite, mites) or-e'esé (as in box, boxes). Here the spelling -è'sé' is pronounced either /s/ or /z/ (depending on the environment, e.g. ticks /Etjks/ and pigs /Epjaz/) while-t'esé' is usually pronounced /{I"z/ (e.g. boxes /ĚbRks{"z/). Thus, thereare two different spellings that correspond to the single underlying representation|z| of the plural suffix and the three surface forms. The spelling indicates the insertion of /1"/ before the /z/ in the spelling -d'esé', but does not indicate the devoiced /s/ distinctly from the unaffected /z/ in the spelling –ě`'sě.

The abstract representation of words as indicated by the orthography can be considered advantageous since it makes etymological relationships more apparent to English readers. This makes writing English more complex, but arguably makes reading English more efficient. However, very abstract underlying representations, such as that of Chomsky & Halle (1968) or of underspecification theories, are sometimes considered too abstract to accurately reflect the communicative competence of native speakers. Followers of these arguments believe the less abstract surface forms are more "psychologically real" and thus more useful in terms of pedagogy.

English terms with diacritical marks

Some English language terms have letters with diacritical marks. Most of the words are loanwords from French, with others coming fromSpanish,German, or other languages. Some are however originally English, orat least their diacritics are.

Proper nouns are not generally counted as English terms except when accepted into the language asan eponym - such as Geiger-Müller tube, or theEnglish terms roentgen after Wilhelm Röntgen, and biro after LászlóBíró, inwhich case any diacritical mark is often lost.

Types of Diacritical Marks

Though limited, the following diacritical marks in English may be encountered, particularly for marking in poetry

- the acute accent (née) and grave accent (English poetry marking, changèd),modifying vowels or marking stresses
- the circumflex (entrepôt), indicating omitted "S"
- the diaeresis (Zoe), indicating a second syllable in two consecutive vowels the tittle, the dot found on the regular small i and small j, are removedwhen another diacritic is required

- the macron (English poetry marking, Içad pronounced 'leed', not 'led') lengthening vowels, or indicating omitted n or m (in pre-Modern English, both in print and in handwriting). The macron is also sometimes encountered to indicate a lengthened vowel in loanwords from Maori
- the breve (English poetry marking, drOll pronounced 'drol', not 'drowle'), shortening vowels
- the umlaut (über), altering Germanic vowels
- the cedilla (soupçon), in French and in Portuguese softening c, indicating 's not 'k' pronunciation
- the tilde (Senor), in Spanish indicating palatalised n (although in Spanish and most source languages, it is not considered a diacritic over the letter n but rather as an integral part of the distinct letters ñ)

In representing European personal names, anthroponyms, and place names, toponyms, the following are often encountered:

- the caron (as in Karel Capek), often also called the haèek in English (adapted from "háèek", the Czech name [meaning "little hook"]), as È/è, Š/š, Ø/ø(only in Czech), •/• broadly turns "c" "s" "" "z" into English "ch" "sh" "rzh" "zh" sounds respectively, and Ï/i, ¼ ¾ (only in Slovak), O/ò and / •turn "d" "1" "n" and "t" into palatal "dy" "ly" "ny" and "ty" sounds. In most fonts the caron looks like an apostrophe sitting inside the Slovak capital L, as "4", but in fact is only another form of carbon.
- the Polish crossed £ and nasal ogonek (as in Lech Waêsa) a "dark L", neareran English "W", and a nasal "e", nearer English "en" (in Polish called"crossed £" and [TÈATN[k], "little tail")
- the Croatian and Serbian crossed Đ (as in FranjoTuđman or ZoranĐinđiæ),halfway between D and Dj
- the Maltese crossed & (as in the &al-town prefix, hal Far Industrial Estate),a hard H
- the Swedish over-ring Å (as in the Åland Islands), the å vowel sound

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