## Chapter One

### Purpose and Plan of the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Justification for changes in the orthography of English</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Objectives of spelling reformers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Causes for the failure of several spelling reforms</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Scope and data</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Mode of conducting the research</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Scheme of presentation</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Justification for the research</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>Pedagogical implications</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter-One

PURPOSE AND PLAN OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the works of spelling reformers (Indian and foreign) and to analyze their works in the field of orthography. This study reveals the significant fact that scholars and eminent writers have been suggesting amendments in the orthography of English since 1200 A.D in different parts of the world, especially England, America and India, however, the results of all their efforts have been very negligible and nothing much was done to amend the orthography in order to make it simpler and easier to learn. The present orthography is not very easy to learn especially for non-native learners because of a number of irregularities, ambiguities and anomalies which exist in the present orthography. Amendments are required in the orthography to make it simpler. Hence, this study would also try to justify the need for learner-friendly spellings, and to explore the possibility of a universally accepted orthography. Problems in the English orthography prompted George Bernard Shaw to write several essays in support of spelling reforms. In the preface to R.A. Wilson, The Miraculous Birth of Language, he wrote,

It was as a reading and writing animal that Man achieved his human eminence above those who are called beasts. Well, it is I, and my like, who have to do the writing. I have done it professionally for the last sixty years as well as it can be done with a hopelessly inadequate alphabet devised centuries before the English language existed to record another and very different language. Even this alphabet is reduced to absurdity by a foolish orthography based on the notion that the business of spelling is to represent the origin and history of a word instead of its sound and meaning. Thus an intelligent child who is bidden to spell debt and very properly spells it d-e-t is caned for not spelling it with a b because Julius Caesar spelt the Latin word for it with a b.

Shaw in Tauber 1965:114
One of the hindrances in the teaching-learning process of English is its spelling. This becomes more obvious if one considers the difficulties non-native learners of English face when they are confronted with the present orthography of English. A simplified or a modified orthography can be of tremendous help. Benjamin Franklin in a letter titled ‘The Case for Spelling Reform’ wrote about the necessity of spelling reforms. He wrote,

The difficulty of learning to spell well in the old way is so great, that few attain it; thousands and thousands writing onto old age, without ever being able to attain it. 'Tis, besides, a difficulty continually increasing; as the sound varies more and more from the spelling: and to foreigners it makes the learning to spell and pronounce our language, as written in our books, almost impossible.

Franklin-1779:473-8

A good deal of work has been done by several spelling reformers all over the world. In Britain, the history of spelling reforms goes back to the year 1200, when Orm in his *Ormulum* wrote about the necessity and practicability of spelling reforms. Other eminent spelling reformers like John Hart, Thomas Smith, William Bullokar, Richard Mulcaster, Alexander Gill, Samuel Johnson, George Bernard Shaw and Isaac Pitman, to name a few, very strongly recommended amendments in the orthography of English. They wrote and published several books and some of their reforms were approved of and published by the Simplified Spelling Society, established in London in 1908.

In America changes were taking place not only in the orthography but also in the vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax and grammar of English. The Simplified Spelling Board was established in New York in 1906 and many booklets and pamphlets propagating reforms in spellings were published. Several reformers like Benjamin Franklin, Noah Webster, Melvil Dewey, Elias Molee, Joseph Rice, Paul and Jean Hanna, James Moore and Mark Twain suggested several reforms in the orthography of English. President Theodore Roosevelt took a keen interest in some of the projects and even endorsed the famous Twelve Words (catalog,
decalog, demagog, prolog, tho, altho, thoro, thorofare, thru, throughout, pedagog, program) and later on the ambitious list of 300 words which comprised the earliest list of recommended changes in spelling by the American Simplified Spelling Board. They also enjoyed considerable financial support from Andrew Carnegie. Many research projects were undertaken and several reforms were implemented and as a result American English varies from British English not only in the orthography but also at other levels of Linguistics. Americans have been largely supportive of reforms in orthography as compared to their counterparts in England.

English has always been very important as a means of communication in the Indian sub-continent. Many learners of English find it very difficult to learn the language, largely because of the differences in pronunciation, accent, stress, intonation and other features of language. Many people in this region pronounce words very differently from non-native speakers. Obviously, there will be difficulties in spelling the words correctly. In India, many attempts have been made to reform the language to suit the needs of learners in the Indian sub-continent. Spelling reformers like G.V. Phadke, G.N. Deodhekar and Dinkar Patil in India have proposed several reforms in the orthography. They have written books on the subject and the Simplified Spelling Society has even published the book written by Deodhekar. They have also shown a keen interest in the reforms proposed by Phadke.

This study takes a closer look at the various reform proposals suggested by eminent spelling reformers and explores the possibility of reforming the existing orthography so as to enable learners in all parts of the world to learn English more easily. Several reformers have worked on the problems of the English orthography, and have suggested various changes in the spelling system of English. A study of the works of several reformers reveals that most of them feel that the present orthography is rather complicated and many letters are quite superfluous.
John Hart has criticised the use of 'silent letters' in some words, which, he said, only used up a lot of space on paper. In his *An Orthographie* he wrote,

> A writing may be corrupted when any worde or sillable hath more letters, than are used of voyces in the pronunciation...This abuse is great: partly without profite or necessitie, and but only to fill up vp the paper in writing.

Hart 1569: 20-21

(The original spellings and punctuation have obvious value as linguistic evidence. Even the way capitals are used is important. These have all been preserved throughout this research)

1.2 Justification for changes in the orthography of English

Language is constantly evolving, whereas writing tends to remain stable. The result is that a point is reached where writing no longer corresponds to what it is supposed to record. A transcription that is accurate at a particular moment will be absurd a century later. At this point, the question of spelling reform is quite pertinent. Would it not be better to replace the present inconsistent, confusing, and wasteful spelling of English by a rational, phonemically based orthography?

Such a spelling reform it is argued, would save even more years of school-children’s lives, would remove most of our spelling problems and eliminate the anxiety which besets many children and adults. Ferdinand de Saussure believed that one of the reasons for the discrepancy between writing and pronunciation was that language was constantly evolving while writing tended to remain stable. He wrote,

> Until about the thirteenth century changes in pronunciation were recorded. Each step in the history of the language was matched by a correspondent step in the history of writing. But after the fourteenth century the written forms of the words remained unchanged while the evolution of the language continued; from that moment the discrepancy between the language and its orthography increased progressively.

Saussure 1959: 27
Several academicians, scholars and writers were staunch critics of the existing spelling system. Prominent among them was the great British author and critic George Bernard Shaw who was a strong advocate of English spelling reform. In fact when he died in 1950 he willed part of his estate for the development of a corporation that would promote changes in English spelling. Samuel Johnson brought out several dictionaries and his dictionaries were very significant especially at that period as it helped to stabilize the spellings to a certain extent. In the United States too, President Theodore Roosevelt had plans to use the Government Printing Office as the impetus for changes in the spelling of certain English words.

The English spelling system consists of many anomalies and inconsistencies. There are several other reasons too as to why there is a need for a spelling reform. Some of the reasons are as follows:

a  In English there are many sounds which have the same written symbol but they are pronounced differently, for example the vowel letter u in cut /ket/ and put /put/ is pronounced differently in both the words. Thus one symbol stands for two different sounds. Many words have irregular spellings. Thus, the words cough, and though have the same letters ‘ough’ at the end of the word yet the words are pronounced differently. In fact there are so many anomalous spellings that it is quite confusing and illogical to many learners of the language. Such spelling habits inspired Robert N. Feinstein to compose a poem entitled Gnormal Pspelling. The following is a stanza from this poem:

Beware of heard, a dreadful word,
That looks like beard and sounds like bird,
and dead: its said, like bed, not like bead
For goodness sake don’t call it deed!
Watch out for meat and great and threat
They rhyme with suite, and straight and debt!

Feinstein in Rodman 1993:381
There is hardly a letter or a combination of two or three letters in the alphabet that cannot be pronounced in two or three different ways and many of them have half a dozen different pronunciations. More often we find a great many different symbols for one and the same sound especially in the case of the vowel sounds and there are many anomalous spellings which are unnecessary and it would be very convenient to discard them. Certain irregularities need to be eliminated. Some of them are as follows:

i  the use of the vowel letter a to denote the short sound /e/ in any /eni/ and /ə/ as in account /ə'kaunt/
ii the vowel letter u for the short sounds /ə/ and /u/ in bury - /'berl/ and busy - /'bəzi/ respectively
iii the diphthong /əu/ for the long vowel sound in break - /breik/ and great - /grɛt/
iv the long /i:/ sound in key - /ki:/ and in the second syllable in receive - /ri'si:v/
iv the diphthong /ɔu/ in soul - /'sɔul/ and blow - /'blɔu/.

b There is a lack of correspondence between sound and sign. William Bullokar in his Booke at Large [1580] has remarked thus upon the lack of concord between sound and symbol:

Of which default, complaine we may, in the old A.B.C: wherein be letters twentie fower, whereof but sixe agree, In pwefect vse, of name, and sound, besides misplacing some, Other are written vnsounded, wherein concord in none.

Bullokar 1580:27

There is a very imperfect degree of correspondence between sound and sign owing to such factors as:

i  historical spellings which have been retained (cough, plough)
ii  etymological spellings (doubt, subtle)
iii  the variety of foreign borrowings (entrepreneur, bhang)
Thomas Dyche in his essay titled "Comments from an eighteenth century spelling book in his *A Guide to the English Tongue, in Two Parts*, written in the year 1729, wrote,

> It's plain, tho' this Borrowing from foreign Language is, for the most part, both an Ornament and Enrichment to our own; yet it renders our Spelling the more difficult, inasmuch as many of those Words are now politely sounded after the foreign way, which is very different from that harsh and uncertain Method, whereby the English is pronounced.

Dyche in Tucker 1961: 63

The consonants are quite complicated. In many cases there is no fixed correspondence between spellings and sounds. For example, *k* in *knife*, *b* in *comb*, *th* in *then* and *think*, *ch* in *church*, *character* etc. This is compounded by silent letters as *p* in *psychology*, and the ambiguous pronunciation of the letter *c* in words like *character*, *charade*, *cheap*, *cease*, *cut* and *façade*.

Discussing quantity in his book *Regularized English* Wijk shows concern about the use of double consonants in the final position, in the existing orthography. On the whole it is only four or five consonant symbols which are doubled in this position, namely *f*, *l* and *s* and possibly also *z* as in *bluff*, *sell* and *fuss*. He wrote,

> While in the medial position consonant symbols are frequently doubled to indicate the short quantity of the preceding vowel, doubling in the final position cannot be said to have any function whatever in this respect.

Wijk 1959:251

The idea is that a symbol stands for the normal, standard pronunciation of that letter. This goes for sequences of letters as well—thus *ch* stands for the affricate */ʧ/ as in *church* - */ʧæʧ/*. However, the digraph *ch* in *character* is pronounced with a */k/ sound - */kæ'ɾʊktə/.*
Vowels are a constant source of worry to learners of English. Almost every vowel has more than one pronunciation. It keeps changing according to the linguistic environment it is in. When one of the vowel letters (a, e, i/y, o, u) occurs singly i.e. neither doubled nor together with another vowel letter, (as in ee, ie, ea) its phonemic interpretation varies according to the graphemic environment. When a single vowel letter is followed by a single consonant letter and then another vowel letter sometimes it has the phonemic value of the alphabet name of the vowel letter.

Thus,

- a is pronounced as \(/e\) in made - /'med/
- e as \(/i:/\) in supreme in /su'pri:m/
- i as \(/ai/\) in align - /'aɪlɪn/
- o as \(/oʊ/\) in ago - /'əgoʊ/ 
- u as \(/ju:/\) in value - /'vælju:/

In a number of words the letter u is not pronounced as \(/u:/\), the elongated vowel sound, but \(/u/\) for example in bush, pull and bullet In one final set of circumstances when r follows the vowel letter a whole new system of correspondence is applied. One type involves r followed by vowel letters e.g., the letters 'iou' in various or a single vowel sound at word end as /u/ in Mary. A second type provides for r followed by a vowel letter plus a consonant letter (arid) or double rr (marry) and a third type has r followed by a consonant letter or a space (part, mar).

The orthography can have a negative effect on reading and writing. Reading is an important skill, but learners of English find that the spelling system of English is the chief stumbling block in acquiring reading proficiency in terms of speed and comprehension. This is because when a reader is confronted with a word of foreign origin, for example, rendezvous, or a word he is seeing for the first time he tends to slow down. Writing is another important skill. However even adults need to frequently refer to a dictionary when they are not confident of a spelling of a word. The present orthography discourages students, who are reluctant to write out any new ideas, as they are not sure of spellings of certain words.
One of the pedagogically significant findings of this study is that one of the causes for the low literacy level at the exit level is the orthography of English. A learner cannot be said to be proficient in a particular language unless he has mastered the language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. However at the exit level of their education several students in India and in other countries where English is a foreign language, have a very low literacy level especially in reading and writing, and one of the reasons could be the orthography of English. A simpler orthography would facilitate easier, more efficient and quicker learning. It would also ensure uniformity in spelling and pronunciation. From the practical and economical point of view, amendments in the orthography would result in the decreased cost of printing. This would be due to the fact that the number of silent and superfluous letters, etc would diminish.

George Bernard Shaw had a very interesting example to show how a reformed orthography could be more economical. He analysed the number of letters used in the leading article in The Times and found that it consisted of 2761 letters. He also found that these letters represented only 2311 sounds. Thus, according to him 450 letters were superfluous. He believed that this wastage of time, space and ink could have been avoided if the printers used a British alphabet obviously the result of a reformed alphabet, rather than the current Roman alphabet. Shaw advocated an alphabetic reform on several grounds. During the World War, he observed,

Battles may be lost by the waste in writing army orders and dispatches with multitudes of superfluous letters. How many wars will it take to call our attention to the fact that there are shorter ways of spelling e-n-u-f than e-n-o-u-g-h?

Shaw in Tauber 1965:66
1.3 Objectives of spelling reformers

During the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, several spelling reforms were proposed. There was a regular flow of reform projects which could be divided into two groups. In one group one can find projects by reformers who wanted to make good for the obvious deficiency of the Latin alphabet used by the English by adding new symbols to it or by adding diacritical marks to the symbols already in use. In the other group one can find projects by those who saw the difficulties connected with such a procedure, and so preferred to adopt a different course, based on established usage, but making this usage more systematic by abolishing as many of its irregularities as possible. Specimens of these two approaches are to be found represented all through the centuries during which the problem was tackled till date. The objectives of spelling reformers were as follows:

i to replace the existing orthography by a more or less completely phonemic system in which letters of the present Roman alphabet or combinations of these letters would be used to represent various speech sounds.

ii to devise a suitable system of orthography, which would satisfy the demands of language experts and stand a reasonable chance of being accepted by the majority of educated people or at least by a sufficient number to permit it being put to the test on a comprehensive scale.

iii to devise a method for overcoming the resistance of the adult population in general towards spelling reforms and to make sure that there was a minimum of various transitional inconveniences.

iv to throw out superfluous, silent letters and introduce a new set of letters and devise an orthography, which will obviate most of the present difficulties, which occur in learning English.

v to recommend and further simpler spellings of English words than those in use now.
vi to devise a new spelling system that is systematic so as to reduce the existing chaos to something like order. The aim should be to effect economy of time and labour of the learners.

vii to depart as little as possible from the current spelling, appropriating, where possible, to each sound the symbol now most commonly used to represent it. This ‘principle of least disturbance’ is important in two aspects; not only to make the change as easy as possible for a generation which has learnt the old spelling, but to enable the new generations to read old books with the least possible trouble. This would also prevent books written in the older orthography from becoming redundant and inaccessible to those who are educated in the new orthography.

William Bullokar in his doggerel verse *Prologue* has suggested amendments which he believed would be easily accepted by everyone because he has suggested changes in the orthography without introducing any new letters. He writes,

> For no new letter is brought in, nor any old left out
> The double sounded haue a strike, to put you out of doubt.

*Bullokar 1580:27*

viii to make allowance for existing divergences in pronunciation and by abolishing as many irregularities as possible.

ix to enable the sound of letters and the spelling of words to have one to one correspondence i.e., there should be as many letters as there are sounds.

x to make the spelling simple, easy, phonetic and represent as accurately as possible by means of letters or symbols, the sounds of the spoken language. The more phonetic a letter is the better it will serve its purpose.
Several reformers in England, America and even India as well as other countries have suggested various reforms, many of which were too radical for the conservative to accept. Some of the radical spelling reformers had the extreme opposite view and argued that the best spelling was that, which preserved the greatest number of radical letters. The more conservative among those interested in retaining the Roman alphabet as the base for English orthography, were against all the reforms suggested by the reformers. They believed that one must accept inconsistencies for the sake of stability. Some believed that despite its shortcomings, inconsistencies and irregularities, and quirks most people had come to accept the English orthography as it is.

If English spelling has not been reformed, it isn’t for lack of effort. Reforms in orthography have not been accepted very easily because of several reasons. One of the reasons is that it would be very difficult for people to adapt themselves to the new orthography. William Holder was against spelling reforms which advocated a change on a very large scale in the alphabet. He expressed his fears about valuable books being destroyed or becoming redundant in the process of amending the orthography. He wrote,

This were to imply, that all Books in being should be destroyed and abolished, being first new Printed after such rectified Alphabets; and that all the Age should be prevailed with, to take new pains to unlearn those habits, which have cost them so much labour.

Holder 1669:107-9

The spelling reform movement, which began with Orm in about AD 1200, continued through the years but with little success. Noah Webster did manage to make a few changes in English spelling such as dropping the vowel letter u in colour and honour; having one consonant instead of double in words such as travelled, labelled (traveled, labeled), and replacing the letters re with er in theatre and metre which were written as theater and meter respectively, etc.
The most highly organized attempt at revising English spelling occurred toward the end of the nineteenth century, when spelling reform associations were formed in both England and America. In 1906, the Simplified Spelling Board in America and in 1908, the Simplified Spelling Society in England were established. In America, despite the board being supported by a grant from Arnold Carnegie and endorsed by prominent people including Theodore Roosevelt, the spelling reform movement could not make many significant changes in the orthography. The results of its projects, which were undertaken over several years, were negligible.

It is not hard to point out the weaknesses in our present spelling reform. The reformers have attacked the 'silent letters' as in night, there being more than one way of spelling the same sound as the /l/ sound in sugar, schist, issue, machine, racial, mention, session, and connection. They also bemoaned the years wasted in learning so illogical a system. If words are spelled as they are pronounced, English spelling would become regular and simple; therefore all that has to be done is to spell as we pronounce. The logic is unassailable.

However, even after the efforts made by reformers, societies, boards, governments, and other individuals, English spelling has remained largely unchanged for three centuries. Doubts do arise in one's mind as to whether the reformers were mistaken in some way, or perhaps English spelling is not very bad at all or maybe the reforms suggested were not very good. Several linguists have said that a spelling reform would be an utter disaster. But, all the reformers had no doubts about the fact that reform in spellings was a necessity. Many other academicians, scholars, and writers too believed the same but perhaps the amount of effort, time, and money involved in learning the new spellings especially when one has been using a particular orthography over a number of years must have been quite daunting and hence discouraging.

Noah Webster who wrote 'An Essay on the Necessity, Advantage and practicability of reforming the Mode of Spelling and of Rendering the Orthography of Words Correspondent to the Pronunciation' in Dissertations on
the English Language (1789) was quite critical about Samuel Johnson's spelling reform proposals and admitted that he initially believed that a reformation of the orthography would be unnecessary and impracticable. In the preface in his Dissertations on the English language, he admitted that the opinion was hasty. He also wrote that he agreed with Benjamin Franklin that such a reformation was practicable and necessary. According to Webster reformed spellings would be easier to learn, less ambiguously indicative of the pronunciation and thus result in a uniform and stable pronunciation throughout the world. He wrote,

Alterations are necessary to make the orthography sufficiently regular and easy. Would the alterations produce any inconvenience, any embarrassment or expense? By no means. On the other hand, it would lessen the trouble of writing, and much more, of learning the language; it would reduce the true pronunciation to a certainty; and while it would assist foreigners and our own children in acquiring the language, it would render the pronunciation uniform, in different parts of the country, and almost prevent the possibility of changes.

Webster 1789:394-395

1.4 Causes for the failure of several spelling reforms

There are various reasons as to why the spelling reforms were not accepted by the people and academicians. Many of the initial proposals were rather inconsistent, which resulted in the unresponsiveness of the general public and there was also a shortage of funds which were needed to carry out experiments and projects. Some of the obstacles to spelling reform were not linguistic in nature but political, economic and cultural and it was obvious that to put such a reform across, and reduce the transitional difficulties and dislocations to a minimum, a very centralized political system would be required. There are economic and cultural factors standing in the way of a really thoroughgoing spelling reform. Even aside from the existence of vested financial interests in journalism and the book trade, the trouble involved in reprinting all the books would be enormous and the expense (even with government subsidy) staggering. Such a complete change in the orthography would virtually wipe out the
continuity of the present-day culture with that of the past. A great many important, but not popular books might go unprinted and fall into undeserved oblivion. Within fifty years, everything that is now in print would be obsolete and unreadable as the English of Chaucer’s time is to us. The gain in convenience and efficiency may be fully balanced, but it may also be outweighed by the cultural loss which a radical spelling reform would entail.

Many educationists and reformers do accept the fact that there are some aspects of the current spelling system, which are quite positive. For example, ‘silent letters’ such as the letter n in condemn may waste time and space but in the derivative condemnatory the n is pronounced and would have to be restored even if taken away from condemn. There are many other words like this. The letters gh in night are not pronounced but neither is the final e in the popular reformed spelling nite. For this word the reformer drops two silent letters, picks up one that is equally silent and spells bright, sight and sigh without any thought of reform.

The present English system separates homonyms. This is one of the most popular arguments of the anti-reformers. It assumes that spelling three different words as pear, pair, and pare in the same way as ‘payr’ would lead to confusion in meaning. But many words in English, for example, plate have more than one meaning and these meanings are clear from the context. English orthography makes little use of punctuation for pronunciation. Another positive point about English is that it is almost completely free of such marks found in other languages as the acute, grave, and circumflex accents, the cedilla, tilde, macron, and many others. With a phonetic spelling words could be spelled the way they are pronounced and pronounced the way they are spelled. At first glance one might think this to be good. But a person may force his own habits of pronunciation if he were in a position of some authority on others.
On this subject Lord Chesterfield had remarked,

We have at present two very different orthographies, the PEDANTIC, and the POLITE: the one founded upon certain dry and crabbed rules of grammar and etymology, the other singly upon the justness and delicacy of the ear.

Chesterfield in Tucker 1961:92

George Bernard Shaw in his essay ‘Spelling Reform V. Phonetic Spelling’ wrote, “The fact is you must either let our spelling alone or reform it phonetically”. He believed that the English alphabet was a phonetic one and the established spelling is a phonetic spelling but partly out of date. He blamed the “overwhelming currency of modern mispronunciations” on the “phonetic suggestions of our half phonetic spelling” (Tauber 1963:11-12). He wrote,

If we, the literary men will not spell as we pronounce, the world will end by pronouncing as we spell. For instance, we spelt obblege as oblige, to show that we were French scholars; and now we are forced to say oblige.

Shaw in Tauber 1748:15

Previous reforms like dropping the letter e in judgement and the letter u from catalogue have never been fully accepted. There is resistance both based on elegance and the need to restore the u in cataloguing and cataloguer. Other examples are the spelling of picnic in which both the c’s are replaced by k’s, changing of re to er in metre, theatre etc. But again a particular letter has to be restored in their derivatives.

There are some who consider English spelling to be sanctified. They resist all change because phonetic spelling looks very queer. They rage against such spellings as thru, tho, and nite, because they are innovations. Another objection to spelling reforms is that reformed spelling would obscure etymology, hence the relation of English to other languages. There is no doubt that reformed spellings would obscure the relationships of English words to each other. There are quite a
series of words of like meaning now connected by their spellings that would be widely separated if they were spelled phonetically. The present spelling system is of some use for vocabulary building and recognition (as well as for listings in dictionaries). The spelling of the differently pronounced Greek prefix ‘tele’ in telepathy and telegram keeps these words together in a way that reformed spelling would not. But this argument overlooks the fact that the meaning of these borrowed words have often changed also perhaps as much as the pronunciation. Objections have also been raised on the grounds of which standards of pronunciation and as a result, the spelling system should be followed. If spelling is to be reformed to reflect pronunciation, there are so many regions, which have their own pronunciations, and within a country itself there are so many dialects. Obviously many people would not be willing to change their pronunciation for the sake of uniformity in spellings.

It appears then that the only way to ultimate reform— if that is what we must have— will be the acceptance of a gradual infiltration of new spellings, as the demand for them becomes overwhelming. However, there can be no doubt about the fact that there is an urgent need for amending the orthography of English and making it more simple and easy to learn, for all the learners of English irrespective of their age and nationality. There are bound to be difficulties associated with the carrying out of such reforms but then with time the problems would decrease, maybe disappear and there would be uniformity in spellings. Webster very strongly believed that a reform in the orthography of English would have several advantages. He wrote,

A CORRECT orthography would render the pronunciation of the language, as uniform as the spelling in books. A general uniformity thro the United States, would be the event of such a reformation as I am here recommending.

Webster 1748:396
1.5 Scope and data

The main focus of the study, as has already been pointed out is to examine the works of spelling reformers (Indian and foreign), to analyze them from the point of view of the need for reforms in the orthography and to justify the need for learner-friendly spellings. Several reformers have worked very hard in trying to reform the orthography of English. All their efforts have been in vain in the sense that their reform proposals did not have any official recognition. Several reform proposals have been forgotten though there may have been suggestions, which merit special attention. However one positive outcome is that more and more people are showing an interest in amending the English orthography and getting rid of spellings which reduce the efficiency of the teaching-learning process especially among foreign learners of English.

The purpose of this project is to explore the possibility of a universally acceptable orthography. Many eminent writers and reformers have suggested reforms in the English spellings since the year 1200. This research therefore undertakes to probe into the reforms that have been proposed by eminent reformers, analyse their suggestions, try to reach a conclusion and to make some suggestions for the amendment of the English orthography. This research does not include all the spelling reformers of different countries. It has studied only some of the prominent reformers in England, America and India. This research has examined the works of only two well known Indians as very little work has been carried out in this field in India.

Another delimiting factor of this research refers to suggestions made by the researcher to amend the orthography of English. The suggestions are based on the reform proposals suggested by spelling reformers. Some of the spelling changes have already taken place e.g., \( \text{programme} = \text{program}, \text{colour} = \text{color} \). The researcher has also made suggestions based on the interaction and the discussions she had with her students and colleagues over a period of fifteen years of teaching English to a wide range of students of different age groups different levels and faculties.
This study is confined to spelling reforms and changes and amendments in the orthography of English over centuries. Phonetics and morphology have been taken into consideration only where it was necessary to explain the changes in the spelling of a particular word.

The research does not consist of the work of a particular reformer as a whole. The data used is from the works of spelling reformers spanning several hundred years with a view to providing context to the study. In using this data for the research, the researcher has been able to get an insight into the works by the spelling reformers and other eminent writers on the English language.

The study is synchronic and diachronic, hence the selection of items has not been confined to only one particular time period. Examples have been chosen through different historical stages of English to account for the historical and social changes for the changes in spellings.

The data in this research consists of:

i. the history of the English language and various factors responsible for the changes that have taken place in the orthography
ii. the reasons for the changes in the orthography and the effect of the changes on the orthography of English
iii. problems in the existing orthography
iv. the works of spelling reformers in England, America and India
v. an analysis and comparative study of the suggestions of the spelling reformers
vi. the results of the study and its pedagogical implications

1.6 Mode of conducting the research

The method employed to carry out this research was as follows:

i. compilation of data with respect to the history of the English language,
ii. a detailed and in depth study of the works of prominent reformers in England, America and India,
iii. analysis of their suggestions and a comparative study of some of their prominent works and spelling reforms,
iv. analysis of the difference between the British and the American orthographies,
v. interview of students, teachers, writers, printers, academicians, administrators and scholars as well those working on computers,
vi. analysis of the pedagogical implications of the reforms.

1.7 Scheme of presentation
The researcher has arranged the data in the following chapters in such a way as to trace the history of the orthography of English. The various factors which are responsible for the changes in the orthography over the years and the reasons for the changes are very important to know because one can get a better insight into 'why the orthography of English is in the state it is today'.

This presentation does not adhere to any particular linguistic model or the theory of any particular spelling reformer. It has however tried to make use of some of the insights of some of the reformers in addition to other studies in the field of linguistics. In other words the method or presentation adopted is eclectic. As its objective has a more pragmatic concern it makes use of some of the recent changes and developments in the fields of orthography and linguistics and has considered the implications of orthographical reforms in the Indian and the global context.

The present chapter, Chapter one, which is a comprehensive introduction to the work undertaken, presents the plan and purpose of the research, aims and objectives of the spelling reformers, and reasons for the lack of interest shown in spelling reforms. The researcher has shown justification for the changes in spellings and has also discussed the pedagogical implications, its nature, scope and limitations. After presenting the mode of conducting research, the scheme of presentation chapter wise has been offered at the end. This chapter has also offered justification for the use of data from the works of a few prominent reformers.
Chapter two presents the history of the English language and the changes that have taken place in the language with specific reference to its orthography. It traces the changes that have occurred in every period of English history and the differences between orthographies at different periods, and discusses some of the old scripts that were then in existence. The various synchronic and diachronic changes that have taken place and the causes of the changes in the orthography have been dealt with in detail. Various spelling conventions and the influence of pronunciation, the impact of various invaders of England, etymological reasons for changes in English orthography and loan words from various foreign languages have also been discussed. The standardization of spellings and the role of English in the global context have been discussed in order to link it to the present orthography which was evolved several centuries ago.

Chapter three deals with the works of several prominent spelling reformers of England. The origin of the reformist movements, the need for spelling reforms and the problems in carrying out the reforms have also been discussed. The spelling proposals of prominent spelling reformers have been analysed and their contributions and suggestions for amendments in the orthography of English have also been examined. The most significant and widely popularised reform proposals have been Pitman’s Initial Teaching Alphabet, Zachrisson’s Anglic, Wijk’s Regularized English, Ripman-Archer’s New Spellings, Shaw’s Shavian Alphabet and Isaac Pitman’s shorthand system. Of these the last two were quite radical and deviated from the Roman alphabet as compared to the other reform proposals which made amendments like adding or dropping a few characters etc., within the existing orthography itself. The features, advantages and disadvantages of the proposed reforms, the plans for carrying out the reforms and the reasons for the failure of the proposed reforms have also been discussed in this chapter. The chapter also examines the important role of the Simplified Spelling Society which was established in London in England in 1908. The society’s aims and objectives and its reform proposals and significant publications on spelling reforms have also been discussed.
Chapter four examines the work of American spelling reformers. America has had a vigorous and active history of attempts at spelling reforms. Among its proponents have been men and organizations of considerable influence. This chapter examines the reform proposals of several spelling reformers like Benjamin Franklin, Noah Webster, Melvil Dewey, Elias Molee, and the role played by eminent personalities like Theodore Roosevelt and Mark Twain in the amendment of the orthography. The American Philological, Spelling Reforms and National Educational Associations, the Simplified Spelling Board and the Simpler Spelling Association have been very instrumental in bringing about changes in the orthography of English. This chapter studies the aims and objectives of the Simplified Spelling Board which was established in New York in 1906 and its suggestions for spelling reform. It endorsed the views of the spelling reformers and was greatly influential in popularising the idea of spelling reforms in the country. The chapter also examines the results and implications of the research work conducted by Molee on English phonemes, and the graphemes used to represent them. Several research projects were undertaken by many scholars, academicians and research workers. Notable among them was the project undertaken by Paul and Jean Hanna and James Thomas Moore to find out the regularity of American spellings. It was undertaken on a vocabulary of 17,000 plus words. Most Americans have been receptive to the changes suggested by several spelling reformers. There have been changes in the grammar, syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation and to a certain extent in the orthography too. The origin of the reformist movement in America, the various reformers and their works and the difference between British and American spelling have also been discussed in detail in this chapter.

Chapter five examines the works of two Indian spelling reformers Govind Deodhekar and G.V. Phadke. An internationally known Indian spelling reformer, Deodhekar has proposed that the LOJIKON system of simplified English spelling by the LOJIKAL use of KONSONANTS be used which will simplify the learning of English especially for non-native speakers. He has also suggested that it should replace the existing spelling system, as this would simplify the learning of English. According to him an alternative optional writing system for
international use should be devised, employing logical and reasonably consistent symbols for consonant sounds. He joined the Simplified Spelling Society, of which he had been a member since the early 1980s, a committee member since 1985 and the vice-chairman for five years. In 1995, the Simplified Spelling Society of England published a booklet written by Mr. Deodhekar; *The LOJIKON System of Simplified English Spelling by the Lojikal Use of Konsonants: Simplifying the Learning of English for the Non-Native Speakers of English*. His contribution to spelling reform has been supported by the Simplified Spelling Society, London. Bob Brown, secretary, Simplified Spelling Society, in his preface to the LOJIKON, the booklet written by Deodhekar, has mentioned that the society supported the dissemination of LOJIKON as a useful contribution to spelling reform.

Phadke another internally recognized spelling reformer has worked on spelling reforms for more than twenty years. He has proposed an amended script and has also conveyed his views to the Simplified Spelling Society in London. He has been maintaining contact with them all these years and has kept himself informed about all the changes and developments that are taking place in the field. Currently, at the time of writing this, Phadke is residing in Bombay and is very much pleased at the interest that spelling reforms has generated. He is eager to know all that is happening in this field in spite of being almost 88 years old! He has recently published a book titled *Revised English spelling: A new Proposal* (November 2002).

When the researcher met him to discuss his works on spelling reforms he was very happy to pass on all the information and ideas he had about spelling reforms. Discussions with him on spelling reforms especially in the Indian context proved to be quite enlightening and interesting. Even in India, where there was not much interest shown in this subject Phadke was able to generate some amount of interest among academicians because of the radical nature of his spelling reforms. He has proposed some radical changes and yet retained certain features for the sake of the style of the language. He has introduced some new characters and has suggested that we do away with some of the characters in the
existing alphabet. Phadke has suggested these reforms keeping in mind the needs of non-native speakers. He has kept the Simplified Spelling Society, London, informed about his proposed spelling reforms especially in the Indian context. The researcher has analysed the works of both reformers and has made a comparative study of their works.

In Chapter six, the concluding chapter, an attempt has been made to summarize the findings of the research with a view to highlight the necessity of a spelling reform and the establishment of a universally accepted orthography. This research has examined the orthography of English and the spelling reforms with specific reference to its pedagogical implications. It has looked into this aspect especially in the context of globalization and the fact that Indian English has been accepted as one of the widely-spoken varieties of English. So many features of Indian English make it typically 'Indian' and the variations in language have been very positively exploited by Indian writers in English to portray the culture of their country in a realistic manner. Many changes have already taken place at the syntactic, semantic, phonetic, lexical and grammatical levels in Indian English so why should there not be changes at the orthographical level? Changes at the orthographical level can be of great pedagogical value. The researcher believes that it is a very important aspect that has been ignored and needs to be looked into with a sense of priority. Hence this chapter also discusses the importance of amendments in the orthography which would greatly benefit learners of English in the Indian subcontinent.

1.8 Justification for the research

A study of this kind is bound to have a good deal of applied value. The points of its practical significance may be stated as follows:

This research has tremendous scope especially in those fields where a lot of reading and writing has to be done. Many learners of the language are not able to write without making spelling mistakes. They are not able to read fluently because they hesitate when they come across a word which is new or has an unfamiliar spelling. Many adults have to frequently refer to a dictionary when
they are unsure of the spelling of a word. An amendment in the orthography which would result in getting rid of anomalous and ambiguous spellings, silent letters, etc., would have very positive repercussions on the teaching and learning of English.

This research can help teachers, phoneticians, researchers, native users as well as foreign speakers of English. It can also help printers, publishers, writers, dictionary makers and computer professionals. From the pedagogical point of view therefore this research will have a good deal of bearing upon the teaching and learning of English. Some of the problems faced by foreign learners of English will be eliminated and hopefully more and more people would be encouraged to learn English in a more effective and efficient manner. Insights obtained from a research like this may be useful in starting a large-scale movement to reform the orthography of English and to have a reformed orthography which would be universally accepted.

Currently English has attained a very important status especially in the global context. English has become very important as it is the medium of instruction and communication at schools, colleges and universities in India as well as in several Asian countries not to mention those countries where English is the native language. Indian English has gained popularity and recognition not only in India but also in other countries. The nativisation of English has resulted in dramatic and tremendous changes in its usage at least in the Indian context. Many words which are 'Indian' are written as they are pronounced in the regional language. However, the spellings in English cannot accurately give one an idea as to how a word in one of the regional languages is pronounced, as the Roman alphabet does not have the necessary symbols to represent some of the sounds of some Indian languages. And it is quite difficult to represent all the nuances of pronunciation. A lot of prominence is given to writings in English by non-native writers. Obviously these writers who live in a multicultural and multilingual society would be influenced by the culture and conventions of the society they live in. Most of the events and characters portrayed in their work would be portrayed against the backdrop of their own culture.
It is quite natural to expect that many of the words used would belong to their regional language. It would be very difficult to spell the word exactly as it is pronounced. One way out would be to arm the writer with the liberty to use the spelling that reflects the local pronunciation as far as possible. Consider for example the French word *rendezvous*, which has been incorporated into English. The French pronounce it as /rɔ̃dɛivuː/ but many people who do not know French or who come across the word for the first time would not know how to pronounce it correctly. The ideal spelling would be *rondeivu*. Many Indian words are used in Indian writings in English. If they were spelt exactly according to their pronunciation, or as close as possible to the correct pronunciation it would make more sense. It will hopefully draw the attention of the 'right' people towards the need of non-native learners and writers. The researcher through this research would like to draw the academician's and other people's attention towards certain issues related to English orthography.

Changes are taking place in the lexicology, phonology and syntax of English hence it would not be too illogical to have changes in the orthography too. When Indian English has been accepted with all its 'strange pronunciation et al', to keep pace there has to be a change in the orthography as well. Americans have already incorporated changes in the orthography of English, so why should Indians lag behind? Several changes in the orthography are being implemented especially in the I.T industry and books printed in America. Many people are already using the Americanised spellings. This shows that people are not averse to the idea of amendments in the orthography of English. There could be a revolutionary movement for spelling reforms in India where English is learnt as a second language and in the other Asian countries, where a majority of foreign learners learn English. There could be other significant changes to pave the way for the learning of the English language without having to learn by heart the intricate, ambiguous and confusing orthography.

It is obvious that English has obtained a status that few languages have. More and more people are learning and communicating in English because they have realized its importance but are able to reach only average levels in terms of the
mastery of the language. In India, for example, some students learn English in schools for a very short period of time, from between three to five years. When they go to college to study they have to study English, as it is a compulsory subjects in some streams like Arts, Commerce, Science and Computer Science. The students of the science stream in fact have to answer several exams in English. Many get disheartened because of their lack of mastery over the language skills. They join classes for spoken English but due to several reasons, most of them are unable to learn to speak or write English fluently. As a result they get frustrated in their attempts to better their communication skills in English and give up. They become acutely aware of their inadequacy in the language during interviews and group discussions. The researcher spoke to a large number of teachers and students from different schools colleges and universities. They were asked the following questions:

i. What do you think about the spelling system of English?
ii. Do you think there should be any changes in its orthography?
iii. What type of changes would you suggest?
iv. Do you think it would be difficult to implement the changes?
v. At what level do you think the changes must be introduced?

To the first question regarding the spelling system, most of them expressed their reservations over certain features of the orthography. They felt that it needed to undergo a change and they also wondered why unlike the Americans the British were so conservative and rigid in their views regarding reforms in spellings. Most of them felt that there should be reforms in English spellings, and they expressed their views on the changes in a very detailed manner.

The changes they have suggested were:

i. removing doubled consonants in words like embarrassed, committee etc.
ii. removing silent consonant letters like the letter b in comb, debt and doubt, the letter p in psychology and psalm, the letter l in palm, calm etc.
making the spelling system more phonetic without making the letters look strange or awkward. For example, the word card could be spelled as kard, pluck as pluk, age as aje, would as wud etc.

Regarding the difficulty in implementing the changes, many felt that it would take time for most people to get used to the changes, and in fact there might even be a reluctance to accept the changes but there should certainly be changes. Their suggestion was that changes could be gradually brought about and they could take place in words that are easier for people to accept change in, for example in words which have a doubled consonant or where a particular letter is silent. They believed that most people would possibly accept the word programme without the doubled m i.e., program rather than a word like ateinshun (attention)

When they were asked about what level the changes could be introduced, there was a difference of opinion among the teachers. They were divided on this issue. Some felt that it could be introduced at the primary level itself, some at both the primary and secondary levels. A few believed that the changes could be brought to the notice of the general public and they could be given the option of choosing whichever spelling they wanted. They believed that gradually there would be uniformity. A very small minority was in favour of an opinion poll among teachers and students at the primary and secondary levels of education respectively. The teachers the researcher spoke to, mentioned that they had come across students who were not able to read with speed and fluency or write effectively on a variety of topics. According to them one of the reasons was the orthography of English. They believed that it could be one of the reasons because the students made many spellings mistakes while writing, and when they read any passage, they were very slow, mispronounced the words and stammered over the 'difficult' words.

The teachers also mentioned that when they asked the students the reason for their slow reading and other errors, like mispronouncing a word, the students told them that many of the spellings were 'strange' and irregular. They also said that many a time they come across words, which deviate from the generally accepted
spelling rule, for example, the words **though** and **cough** and so they hesitate over the word. According to some students, they are not able to pronounce a particular word because of the strange spelling and other factors such as silent letters, new and foreign words etc. This results in a very slow speed of reading which is accompanied by hesitation over strange spellings, stammering and stuttering, repetition of the word etc. Obviously it will have a negative effect on the reading as well as the confidence of the students. Students will be very reluctant to read aloud and as a result they will not have good reading skills.

Another skill, which is affected as a result of the irregular orthography of English, is writing. In fact a lot of research could be done in this area. When students are very uncertain about spellings they are a bit reluctant to use new words or words whose spellings they are not sure of. They would rather stick to words whose spellings they are certain of. As a result their writing become rather dull, lacks variety, and is monotonous, unimaginative, repetitive, ambiguous and ineffective. Several students have expressed the fact that they get discouraged while learning English as they find the English orthography rather formidable. It could be one of the hindrances in their learning. While using technical and foreign words they make mistakes in the spellings. As a result frustration and discouragement sets in and they are unable to assimilate the illogical and impractical orthography in a logical and practical way.

Throughout the world several varieties of English are spoken today. Indian English has its own identity. Several words of Indian origin are incorporated into English. It would be logical to make changes in the orthography to keep up with the changes which have taken place in the pronunciation, but not in the spellings. This is one of the major reasons why there is a lack of correspondence between sound and spelling. Better sense should prevail and lessons should be learnt from history, so that the same mistakes do not occur again. Spellings should undergo a change so that the pronunciation is correct and vice versa of course. Hence this research would look very seriously at some of the reforms suggested and analyse these suggestions. It also recommends amendments in the orthography and an
implementation of these changes and examines the pedagogical implications of the proposed changes in the Indian context as well at the global level.

1.9 Pedagogical implications

A very important requirement in any orthography is that the orthography should be such that one who knows the pronunciation of a word should be able to spell it correctly. A reading problem as that caused by the English orthography, puts an intolerable and traumatic burden on learners. The pedagogical implications of an imperfect orthography for children and non-native learners are very significant. Learners of English are discouraged by the ambiguous spellings and are not able to learn the spellings due to the anomalies in spellings. Many foreign words are pronounced according to the language they belong to. Naturally one cannot expect the foreign learners of the language to know the pronunciation of all the foreign words. Many teachers too are not able to pronounce foreign words correctly.

Reforms in spellings would solve most of the problems faced by students and teachers. Speaking the language, and using certain words whose pronunciation one was not sure of due to its ambiguous spelling would certainly become easier. Reading poses problems to many because of the same reason. Writing, especially creative writing, is a very difficult proposition for many because they are rather diffident about using words which could be considered to be a part of their passive vocabulary.

English spelling has a bad reputation because numerous words have more than one spelling, partly because many phonemes can be represented by a whole series of different graphemes (units of spellings consisting of a letter or sequence of letters) and partly because one and the same grapheme may represent various phonemes. Spelling has always been at least partially morphophonemic, etymological, morphological, heuristic or a combination of factors. In English the spelling of the past tense morpheme -ed in kissed, plagued and faded can be transcribed phonemically in three different ways, /t/ /d/ and /d/. The possessive morpheme has four different shapes phonemically: /s/ in pat's, /z/ in
Ted's, /iz/ in George's and zero morpheme in boys'. So in some ways a combined phonemic and morphemic or 'morphophonemic' spelling is preferred to a purely phonemic one. The suffixes -ible and -able in credible and believable mean the same and sound the same but are spelled differently. However these morphophonemic aspects of the English orthography can cause various errors on the part of the learners while reading or writing a particular word. Hence there is a need for making changes in the spelling system so that there is a proper correspondence between phoneme and grapheme.

There always arises the question of spelling reform: would it not be better to replace the present inconsistent, confusing, and wasteful spelling of English by a rational, phonemically-based orthography? Such a spelling reform it is argued would save even more years of school children's lives, would remove most of our spelling-problems and would eliminate the anxiety which now besets many people because even many adults, cannot spell correctly. This is an old proposal and has attracted the attention of many. A thoroughgoing reform would involve making English spellings completely phonemic. This could be done by using the IPA symbols or any other set of characters which are found useful and acceptable. But such a radical reform has aroused intense hostility in many people who have painfully and with great difficulty acquired the habits of traditional spelling. But later generations, once they had acquired it from the outset and without any emotional attachment to an older system, may take to it like ducks to water and the whole spelling problem would have disappeared.

The present orthography does not make it possible to predict the spelling of a given phonemic string. There should be a regularised orthography characterized by minimal ambiguity viz. it can be read aloud with at least an acceptable pronunciation, without difficulty and by minimal unconventionality, i.e. it comes as close as possible to normal spellings. Thus every deviation from the phonemic principle must be carefully calculated. There may be an advantage in having the same vowel grapheme in write and written but what about spellings like profound - profundity, hale-health, lead-led, delude-delusion.
In the course of its historical development English has today become the most widely spoken and the most widely taught of all the languages in existence. To all intents and purpose it is indeed the principal language in the world. Owing to its wide diffusion and to the great cultural, political and financial importance of the peoples whose mother tongue it is, it seems likely that it will continue to hold this position and become ever increasingly important as time goes on.

The researcher believes that one would be doing grave injustice to the foreign learners of English, if one does not address this problem of an antiquated and illogical orthography. It is hoped that there would be a gradual transition in the orthography and the existing, traditional orthography would be replaced by an orthography which does not contain silent letters, and ambiguous spellings. Students would show a keen interest in learning the rules of spelling and they would after mastering it be very willing to use language that is not only creative but also of a very high quality. The standards of writing, speech, pronunciation and of course spelling would improve to a very great extent. It would make learning of a language a very enjoyable activity for both teachers as well as students. Hence the researcher believes that if so many advantages could be gained by amending the orthography of English, and the grammarians and the language experts follow it up, this research work would certainly have some value and justification.

This research takes into account some of the findings of the research done in orthography. Although it is not claimed to be representative. It is hoped that it will serve to illustrate that a lot of orthographical changes and developments have taken place, yet the English orthography retains many of its anomalies and ambiguities in spellings. The researcher has made a few suggestions for the reforming of the orthography of English, and if the English Spelling Society of England and the Simplified Spelling Board of America approve of, accept and implement the suggestions which have been made by so many reformers it would go a long way in making the orthography of English and the English language an easy language to learn and understand.