

CSE6390 3.0 Special Topics in AI & Interactive Systems II
Introduction to Computational Linguistics
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Tuesdays, Thursdays 10:00-11:30 – South Ross 104
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Communication

Having chosen English as the preferred language in the EEC, the European Parliament has commissioned a feasibility study in ways of improving efficiency in communications between Government departments.

European officials have often pointed out that **English spelling is unnecessary difficult**; for example: cough, plough, rough, through and thorough. What is clearly needed is a **phased programme of changes** to iron out these anomalies. The programme would, of course, be administered by a committee staff at top level by participating nations.

In the first year, for example, the committee would suggest **using 's' instead of the soft 'c'**. Certainly, civil servants in all cities would receive this news with joy. **Then the hard 'c' could be replaced by 'k'** since both letters are pronounced alike. Not only would this clear up confusion in the minds of clerical workers, but **typewriters could be made with one less letter**.

There would be growing enthusiasm when in the second year, it was announced that **the troublesome 'ph' would henceforth be written 'f'**. This would make words like 'fotograf' twenty per cent shorter in print.

In the third year, public acceptance of the new spelling can be expected to reach the stage where more complicated changes are possible. Governments would encourage the **removal of double letters** which have always been a deterrent to accurate spelling.

We would all agree that the horrible mess of **silent 'e's in the language is disgraceful**. Therefore we could drop these and continue to read and write as though nothing had happened. By this time it would be four years since the scheme began and people would be receptive to steps such as **replacing 'th' by 'z'**. Perhaps even **the function of 'w' could be taken on by 'v'**, which is, after all, half a 'w'. Shortly after this, the **unnecessary 'o' could be dropped** from words containing 'ou'. Similar arguments could of course be applied to other combinations of letters.

Continuing this process year after year, we would eventually have a really sensible written style. After twenty years there would be no more troubles, difficulties and evasions and finally it would be easy to understand each other. The dreams of the Government would finally have come true.