An İŋgliş Orþografē Réform

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Honors/Graphic Design Thesis 2024
ABSTRACT

Writing is our most effective method of communication, yet English has many complex and contradictory rules for doing so. This thesis project aims to make a case for standardizing English spellings for words based on current and common pronunciations for words by using letters from the extended Latin script.

“An Îŋgliš Orþografē Rēform,” concerns a hypothetical restructuring of the way English is written. The project uses a combination of print medias, including posters, packets, and 3D-printed magnets to advocate for the addition of the letters “Ð, Ñ, Ì” and the adoption of the “caron” and “macron” diacritic marks to help standardize English spelling.

KEYWORDS

Graphic Design, Spelling Reform, Typography, Orthography, Phonetics, IPA, 3D-Printing, Unicode, SoundSpel, English, Language, Writing
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Project Breakdown

Writing is our most effective method of communication, yet English has many complex and contradictory rules for doing so. This thesis project aims to make a case for standardizing English spellings for words based on current, common pronunciations for words by using letters from the extended Latin alphabet. By creating speculative artifacts (alphabet magnets and spelling posters) based on common learning tools for early childhood spelling, “An İŋgliš Orþografē Rēform” seeks to persuade audiences to take on the else-world scenario on display, and possibly try to learn for themselves a new way of writing the language they already know.

The intended audience of this project is the current generation of college-age
adults, which I am a part of at present. These people are, from my viewpoint, young enough to be naturally curious, yet are old enough to put their thoughts into serious action. I see many redefinitions of old systems coming from my generation, and taking the principle of spelling reform into consideration could likewise shape their perspective in teaching spelling to generations to come. They may realize it could greatly improve literacy and lead to orthography reforms superior to those I will be presenting. I hope that they can at least internalize the impermanent nature of things we internalize as forever static. I hope to get to this audience by designing my branding in ways they will find appealing and engaging them in this topic on their level.
Researching my thesis was hit-or-miss from early on. Considering how niche my topic was overall, I encountered many sketchy sources, but most were merely under the radar, yet sparked some ideation, such as lettering for reproduction by David Gates.
Two invaluable resources: Ed Rondthaler’s *Life with Letters* and my thesis party: both greatly aided in guiding my project’s directive on audience-capture.
While I did not make any significant breakthroughs in discussing my thesis-subject with any notable experts beyond my peers in class and the department, the woman to the far left of the thesis party image, my cousin Jonathan’s fiancé, Aman (they’re to be wed this July), is an elementary school teacher for a private school in the learning heartland of posh New England; her insights on the new standard of teaching math to kids acted as a bit of a catalyst toward narrowing down my thesis outcomes, helping me to realize the feasibility of my project in a true-to-life setting.
Johanna Drucker’s *Inventing the Alphabet* and my PechaKucha presentation were also invaluable to my early formations, serving to get me to really think about lettering.
The process of writing out my thesis statement was laborious, yet rewarding. Compiling a semester’s worth of research into one spot was difficult, as synthesis on my end has always been somewhat shaky. Rondthaler and Drucker served as my two guiding lights for how I’d approach the project from here.
Sketching

I went through many iterations of what exactly I sought to cover in my final designs, ideating across various mediums and in varied styles of approach: new character creation, AR modeling, process lettering, and phonetic aligning all came into play.
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<tr>
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<th>Alphabet (vowel)</th>
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<tr>
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Z, Z

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Δ, Δ
The Pits
The midterm review yielded a diverse range of responses to the work shown above. Some of the feedback was positive, particularly in the recognition of my tone for audience-capture with each piece, successfully recognizing the posters and magnet were for children while the tutorial and crossword were intended for the viewing audience of the project. I did get some constructive criticism too, such as on the layout of the posters needing to be streamlined and some notes that the overall cohesion of the project needed to come together more: the tone was unclear, and the visual hierarchy of the elements here needed to flow more in unison.

I took all of this feedback into deep consideration as I moved forward with the roughs and iterate on them toward their show-ready forms.
This week, I made the above test-page for streamlined vowel orthography after focusing so long on consonants.

I can definitively say that, at this point, that this project has hit a wall. For the first time last week, I missed a week it with work in my other classes that were and are weighing just as much. This pecha-kucha is little more than 2 w need to get to work on that as well as more of my thesis as that’s going to be due in so little time at this rate. It’s b passion that I only do for the sake of having done as with all other work I must do. What is the drive in this if the n in all directions, that the compartmentalization of 5 separate workers must be compounded upon one another sim hydra of work produces an ouroboros of disinterest in the love of the craft, and the pursuit for compassion is bred bureaucratic malaise. Where from here can one’s innermost geist find a possibility to realign with hopeful outlook

The only time this week I had to talk/get feedback with my project this week was the peer-reviews done earlier, an was quite interesting. Aeneas gave feedback on my project research so far in my group, and he seemed to be pretty goals. He linked this interesting article which I read this week, which seems somewhat interesting. It reads much l attested other languages taught in their preschools to dodge having a dedicated spelling class, breaking English do written sounds and the variants of their spelled combinations. While this “Spelfabet” is interesting, it was not as i of a book I read on African writing systems, which I neither have the name or screenshots of.

I hope to finally make contact with an academic on this topic and get my presentation drafted for this week. What

Even in the first semester of my project, I found myself in these slumps of malaise, worrying about the daunting work to be done ahead. I was fearful and hopeless in the torrent of work ahead and behind me, constantly waiting for the time when I may falter completely. It was, to say the least, disheartening and disenchainting.
Further issues would arise from my troubles in trying to 3D print one part of my final design, as the letters I needed wouldn’t round out and the 3D printers were not printing my revised files. In the run-up to the Thesis show, this wasted time and money.
One saving grace to this whole process was my blog: a useful outlet to let out my frustrations and be somewhat snide about my failings in the lead-up to grading. I’ll devote this section to smattering every weekly post I’ve made in chronological order.

19.
Mi Węcle Log #3 – Parallel Ways of Pińkų

After the feedback from my mom last week, I discussed with Amy in class where I should go from there. She brought up a point that seemed interesting, that being my project is likely more about making people aware of the English spelling and less about proposing a spelling reform. It’s a conversation that has greatly shifted my outlook on this project and is starting to send me down a new path in terms of what my research will be focused on going forward.

After this discussion, I decided to watch “Breaking the Villain” (2018), which was based on the idea of changing the script of the original. I found this to be very interesting, especially seeing how instruments and intangibles were presented in the English language.

Next, I found this video by YouTube’s K escalation on two brothers in West Africa who invented an entire writing system for their people’s language of Pińkų. The script, Adine, was composed as a more comprehensive system to unite speakers of the language, as they used an adapted Arabic script that was imperfect at conveying the unique sounds of the language.

These two brothers only created this script back in the late 1980s, and the change they propose seems simple, needed, and radical to have undertaken in such a short time. I feel that looking further into this story in the coming week, as well as others like it, will help to steady my focus for this project going forward.

Who should I talk to next if my project is to shift away from proposing a spelling reform and go more toward educating others on the fluidity of language?

Mi Węcle Log #5 – Another Week Gone

I’ve been hearing a lot of this week with all the work I’ve been having to do, but I’ve managed to come up with some progress on my thesis project here.

Following last week’s lessons in Czart, I decided to try out a new word of the language, really testing its practicalities in what it knew about phonetics. To my shock, it was able to write full sentences in the International Phonetic alphabet seemingly but it was unable to properly add my character’s suggestions. I ended up spinning it into a set-up-style to my thesis, but ultimately, I’m thinking my time using AI to test things ends here.

I discussed my explorations with my friend the other day, and as a writer, he seemed somewhat intrigued by using it as a tool. Ultimately, he put my suspicions to work when he said that relying on AI as anything more than a starting point would lack any direction or meaning. I think he’s correct, and going into this week, I’ll finally begin to pursue academic resources as consultants, looking for professionals in the subject of etymology on campus.

I’ve also read a bit further into “Czart” in its subtitle, autograph, with letters, and found this section on page 153 to be poignant in regard to what I’m trying to accomplish. “Many will pick up a new spelling from the printed page. If it makes sense, we’ll adopt it, as fast or as slowly as we wish. Others will continue to spell traditionally. No one should ever be urged to adopt this spelling, those who from childhood have spelled traditionally will always be able to read both ways, and to write traditionally—until our current orthography dies a natural death.” In regard to my project, no matter what form the method ends up taking by the semester’s end, I will consider this passage a sort of creed at the back of my mind.

The feature image above is a potential evolutionary symbol I’ve stumbled upon while note-taking in my reform: an uppercase and lowercase letter to stand for the word “czart” made combining “Cz” and “Cz” I consciously came up on this one day and realized it had very similar characteristics to the evolution of “z” from the Latin word for “zeal” - “Ze.

What other strategies should I consider? What new things should I try marking?

Mi Węcle Log #4 – Big Break

Another week passes, and now I finally find myself with Ed Rodhule’s typographic book, 140 with letters (picture below). I am very fortunate with my copy, as the first edition happens to be signed by the author, albeit addressed to a previous owner. Regardless, given the man passed back in 2009, any direct acknowledgment from him posthumously is exceptional in my book. I broke into the first 5 sections “140X. Rect.:” “1400”, seeking the basis of the letters’ letterform from the earliest characters to the innovation of the century.

Mi Węcle Log #6 – Pjesis Party

On October 8th, I undertook the task of attempting to describe the subject of my thesis research to my family. Now, I was well-aware going into this that my subject of spelling reform would be quite abstract to them, given that it’s a non-visual, non-spectator, non-visual process, so I tried to simplify it. Taking some cues from Joshua Kushner’s thinking exercises, I decided to simulate the compositions of letterforms and their evolution to where they were at current, attempting to make this process as streamlined and simple as possible so my family could better understand my topic from my viewpoint.

The way the activity was structured was as follows:

1. Participants first chose a sound that was spoken in English, but was not represented by a single letter.
2. Participants would then doodle several drawings around their chosen sound, not focusing so much on the finer details and keeping it rudimentary.
3. They would then "glue" one of these doodles, attempting to turn it into something resembling a letter form that could fit in an alphabet.

Having the steps done, I commenced the event. Immediately, my family was asking what it was as they were less used to being doing something I was trying to teach them. I tried helping them along in their individual processes. Some asked questions about how they could move from Figure 2 to 3, and I showed them ways to reduce the doodles back to basic shapes. After much deliberation, all 8 participants were able to complete the task, but they mostly seemed confused by what exactly it was they were all supposed to learn.

After the activity, however, I did receive some insight on a parallel matter from my cousin’s fiancé, who happens to be a teacher. She’d mentioned that she was teaching her new Grammar Come system of math, using long vertical proofs to solve equations opposed to vertical algorithmic methods of solving equations. She’d claimed that, in spite of this system being better at showing the relations between numbers for kids to understand, their parents were instilling on using the old method and confusing their kids. I found this story to be somewhat aligned with the quote from Ed Rodhule in my previous post about the nature of forcing these new systems on people working in older ways of thinking, and it gave me some new frame of reference to proceed into the next stages of my research and creation.
Mi Wéclé Log #7 – Disenchantment

This week, I made the above text page for pronunciation orthography after focusing so long on consonants.

I can definitively say that, at this point, that this project has hit a wall. For the first time last week, I missed a weekly post as I was getting into a really tough week. I was without classes about seven times over the past two weeks. While I normally do not like to take time off, I do need time to focus on my work.

Mi Wéclé Log #8 – An Experiment In Orpaufragee Reform

If you divided the first segment into more manageable chunks, you will have more consistent results. It’s not immediately evident or practical, but the first time truly witty, as this past, is available to you. Without a doubt, the second reform is more important. But the first time truly witty, as this past, is available to you. Without a doubt, the second reform is more important.

Soo, I read 

Mi Wéclé Log #9 – A Ti ñu Reflect

Welp, mi ñeun's project completed. I also begin to realize that people for the worse that there is no way to get this done to the same manner. Possibly not. So, welp, this is mind. Let’s go! We don’t know this, but beyond that, we provide.

I attended 30% of the past 30% of the first time truly witty, as this past, is available to you. However, this is a problem. I discussed with her and her friend. Her friend, his language is the language with the first time truly witty, as this past, is available to you. Even if the first time truly witty, as this past, is available to you, this is a problem. I discussed with her and her friend. Her friend, his language is the language with the first time truly witty, as this past, is available to you. However, this is a problem. I discussed with her and her friend. Her friend, his language is the language with the first time truly witty, as this past, is available to you. However, this is a problem. I discussed with her and her friend. Her friend, his language is the language with the first time truly witty, as this past, is available to you. However, this is a problem.

After the week, I decided to work on the internet on the letter “C,” as I had been trying since for some time to try to get it right. So, let’s try again.

Mi Wéclé Log #10 – P Ènd uw an Āra

And, welp, that, this semester, all prep for the first time totally goes over. As I’m really doing all this prep for the first time totally goes over. As I’m really doing all this prep for the first time totally goes over. As I’m really doing all this prep for the first time totally goes over. As I’m really doing all this prep for the first time totally goes over. As I’m really doing all this prep for the first time totally goes over. As I’m really doing all this prep for the first time totally goes over.

This week, I also started out to a Dmond server for have, figure out the perspective with my friend. We met for a warm in a practical application. I had 1 conversation with an individual for her, at first, was completely of him for something about a topic, but were I realized, my discovery is far deeper. As this server, this one looks like the letters in our language, the ones around the letters. Aha, we didn’t have to face the project to meet up with his friends in the Athenian temple and, Laurel we’re elsewhere, as we can have been generally interested in it. Welp, this is our contact in regard to our project. I can definitively say that I’m still confident in my current situation.

21.
**Mi Wëcëlog #11 – Ê Bëginëv ën ë tí**

Well, stuff has been am, and no final semester her at Mi Pots in rosy up in r tip de al on. Not be war de very first log? I made by jest de this semester, but I'll start contacting de 3D-printers de on, consulting print and material requirements for de magnets at mi current projections. If y'll have and been to free de go tips? I kaf do, ple be free out.

Now is an intav to somethin’ to be on mi flag de bi se six hard scors to khinë. I composed it to be an "Alphasy Componit." I'm helpin’ out in his comos, will, I'll be abal tu get mi last kë an et de 3D printers on campus tu start printin’ on mi first iterations on de magnets. Also in preparation mi ned bëginëv tu print, I would kë mi will but show sum tips that’ll make a stronger print job.

**Rëvëzd Timfin:**
- **January**
  - begin to reach out to printing services on campus to test our various rolled-out ideas.
  - begin crude prototyping and rotation of implants to be added/removed.
- **February**
  - begin hand-planning of my ideas with better prototypes
  - reach out to production places on/off campus & negotiate costs/timing.
- **March**
  - begin out on if/then ideas with withers. A thief between the Rhinos tu de

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**Mi Wëcëlog #12 – Now in Plain English**

**De Alphasy Révëzd!**

No Yor Vawvelz!

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**Mi Wëcëlog #13 – Roughing It Out**

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**Log #14 – A Third Dimension**

This week, I made the above rough draft of the educational poster that I sketched out last week. This was bad for this aspect of the project, when color and appropriate type. I plan to, tomorrow, start working on it finally after I have a chat with the 3D printers themselves about pricing and material allocation.

Also this week, I talked with Nick and the other Anthony in class about my project, primarily regarding magnets, and my plans going forward. They seemed, if memory serves correct, pretty interested in the did was pretty cool. What was a substitute for Rhino may just serve as a potential future lead into a new aspect for now. But if I should go down this path, what potential AR goodies could I make with orthography refl...
Mǐ Wēclē Log #15 – Leaping Forward

My rough print of the letter magnets through the iVAMC was successful, costing about $3 in diacritics. Assuming hollowing the letters will save me from using a third of the materials separate magnets, I could be looking to spend $12 for the final set before I purchase them.

I worked with my neighbors this week on managing productivity in class, which pushed next iterations of my posters; I’m trying to create a hexagonal visual style for my letter tiles.

As I go into next week revising the magnet designs and preparing for the midterm review as though they were in situ?

Mǐ Wēclē Log #9 – A Ti m tū Reflect

Wēclē Log #10 – Ā End uv an Āra

I submitted my second round of magnet-design for printing after designing this week. We’ll do the full review after the weekend. I’ll be working on the 2 posters and tutorial packet di

As I’ve been a bit focused on getting my work ready or feedback this coming Monday, I ha I did finally get to watch an interview with Ed Rendhalah provided by Professor Chris An What other things should I consider for the Midterm Review?
**Mi Wëclë Log #17 – Rough Assets & Design Week**

**Assets**

![Image of assets and design elements]

**Title:** An Iglo Oyegofrd Reform

1-Sentence: A hypothetical change to how we spell in English.

Description: Writing is our most effective method of communication, yet English has many complex and contradictory rules for doing so. This thesis project aims to make a case for standardising English spellings for words based on current, common pronunciations for word using letters from the extended Latin alphabet.

By creating speculative artifacts based on common learning tools for early childhood spelling, "An Iglo Oyegofrd Reform" seeks to provide audiences to take an active role in reworking the existing scenario on display, and possibly try to learn for themselves a new way of writing the language they already know.

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**Mi Wëclë Log #19 – A True Honor**

![Image of a cat and dog]

Today, I earned my paws.

This week’s post has been delayed a bit, admittedly, but not for lack of reason. This week, just as the whole of my time at New Punks had a promising start, a defied middle, and an end that feels as though it’s a new beginning.

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**Mi Wëclë Log #18 – “PSE”**

![Image of a red PSG text]

This week, I’ve begun submitting my files out to print, and immediately realized the process will be far more complex than expected. The letters above came from the first batch of magnets, and I’ve been dealing half the week with the HVAMC trying to sort them in their proper forms. I did submit my two posters to print services as well, and I pray that process goes far more smoothly.

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**Mi Wëclë Log #20 – Q.E.D.**

![Image of a hand holding a rope]

Today, I earned my bow.

This is my final weekly post. Included is my feedback for peers and a final reflection on my progress before the show.

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**Për Fëdbac**


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24.
Final Reflections
With the thesis show now in the proverbial rear-view, I can’t help but be relieved that this whole ordeal is done [for now]. It was an emotional day, as I knew it’d be the last time I’d see most of my classmates, as well as the last time a work of
mine would realistically be celebrated to that degree. I got a lot of positive affirmation from onlookers, many impressed by the level of detail I’d put into the work. I do recall 2 bits of feedback in particular: one from an elementary teacher who was at the show,
the other from Dr. Patricia Sullivan of the Honors Center prior to the show. Both shared the sentiment that my work on the project was not done—in a good way, that is. They both saw the potential for this to be used practically and be expounded upon
for an elementary setting. That definitely sticks with me to this day.

Now, If I were to do anything differently within this process, my only change would’ve been to have printed the magnets much sooner than I did, as the screwups in
relation to those added unnecessary baggage to my process right before the design show. Alas, that is a mistake to learn from, not one that can be undone.
Now, I can file this project away into my portfolio at last, but not without me saying
the following:
Tū ḍe prōspectiv dēzīner rēding ōis prōses būuc bēond Mā uv 2024, dū not fret in ōis, yor trīiŋ tīm, Ī’v ben ēār and wil continyū tū rēturn to ōis, yor lāt stūper. Naū lad, gō! Concer ḍe don ahed. Yū got ōis!
Q.E.D.