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TEACHING SPELLING TECHNIQUES AS AN EFFICIENT TOOL IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Formulation and justification of the relevance of the problem. Language is a living thing – ever changing, ever adapting and indispensable for human activity. Today there is hardly a teacher or learner of the English language who would not say that, along with pronunciation, English spelling is one of the hardest things to master. For historical reasons, English has adopted

many different pronunciation-to-spelling rules (or their lack, for that matter), which makes learning the spellings of individual words a real challenge.

Analysis of previous studies and publications. Problems devoted to introducing the new technologies in teaching spelling of foreign language are the issues of the research of many foreign researchers as Sheila Waller G., Ruth

Gairns and Stuart Redman. As a Canadian researcher Sheila Waller neatly puts it, «much of the blame for this inhumanity to spellers of English may be laid directly at the feet of history» [6, p. 14]. She points out that early invasions and settlements left, their linguistic prints all over the language – Celts, Romans, early Christian missionaries spreading Latin and Greek, Angles, Jutes, Saxons with their Germanic tongues, Vikings, and then the French. Even with the publication of the first dictionary in 1623 there was still no consensus on pronunciation.

To compound the problem, there are also regional spelling variants, first and foremost British and American, formal and informal variations, professional jargon spelling variants, advertisement spellings, etc.

Good English spelling is of critical importance for secondary and higher school students in Ukraine, especially those within the arts track, and more specifically, the ones with language majors, whose courses are usually geared towards passing written exams. No matter how good students' vocabulary usage, grammar, punctuation and organizational skills are, if their spelling is weak, they will be marked down in an exam. To help them to develop good spelling skills, we, teachers, need to understand what the spelling process in English involves.

The purpose of the article is to highlight the principal concepts of studying the background of some of the major problems (linguistic and psychological) in teaching English spelling at different levels and offer practical classroom activities aimed at overcoming those problems.

The main material of the study. Twenty-nine years ago, a book by U. Frith entitled «Cognitive Process in Spelling» was published, and highlighted the fact that there actually exist two ways to spell words in English: by ear and by eye [4]. Since then many publications have emphasized the necessity of teaching students to spell via phonic (sound-to-letter) and orthographic (visual) routes. Present-day research indicates (e.g. see the article by Helen Emery [3]) that while good spellers use mainly the visual route, they may resort to the phonic route, coupled with their knowledge of English spelling rules when writing words they are not sure how to spell. The important message is that teachers should try to use tasks that stimulate both ways of spelling if their students are to become proficient spellers.

British authors Ruth Gairns and Stuart Redman summarize the problem in the following quotation: «To many students the complex relationship between sound and spelling in English seems nothing short of a conspiracy to make the language inexplicable to foreign learners» [5, p. 56]. The inconsistency of the English spelling, its irregularity and chaotic nature make-it too complex and time-consuming to

teach.

This view is shared by Mario Pei, who describes the English language as «rational», «inhuman» and «an awful mess». Basically, this is because there are only 26 letters, used singly or in combination, to represent 44-48 sounds of the language. This can lead to a «nightmare» situation, says M. Pei, and gives an example of the sound *sh*, which can be spelled 14 different ways: **shoe, sugar, issue, mansion, mission, nation, suspicion, ocean, nauseous, chaperone, schist, fuchsia, pshaw.**

Such views are contested by a whole number of linguists and methodologists. Thus, Maria Luisa Perez Canado from Spain argues that while «the English spelling system presents considerable sources of difficulty, at the same time its multilayered nature equally endows it with the systematicity which enables us to teach it and our students to grasp its logic» [1, p. 18].

She underlines the problems that stand in the way to spelling competence. Echoing M. Pei, she marks insufficient number of letters in the alphabet. If there were one for every sound, spelling would be easy, but there are about 40 sounds in English (depending of dialect) and only 26 letters. Thus, different sounds may be represented by the same letter or letter combinations. This often happens with vowels and diphthonds (e.g. u can be pronounced as /i/ in busy, as /ʌ/ in must, as /u/ in put or as /u:/ in supermarket). Similarly, the same sound may be represented by different letters or letter combinations (e.g. /i:/ can be written as e (me), ee (see), i (kilo), ea (leave), ie (field), ey (key) or ay (quay).

On top of this, many words contain silent letters which are not sounded in the spoken words contain silent letters which are not sounded in the spoken word (e.g. write, half, island) and that there are some arbitrary rules not directly connected to pronunciation, as in the case with double vowels and consonants (egg, food).

Spelling difficulties present a challenge not only for the learners of English, but for native speakers as well. A study by R. Cramer and J. F. Cipielewski of spelling errors found in over 18000 native-speaker student compositions showed that the leading source for spelling errors was vowel errors followed by: consonant errors; errors when applying affixed (e.g. y to I before adding -ed); compound words; errors of usage conventions (e.g. capitalization); and finally a group of errors they termed «the twilight zone» (which included added and omitted letters).

To address these difficulties, Sheila Waller examines some of the language processing skills one needs in order to be a good speller. She points out in [1] that a good speller must be able to:

- Hear sounds correctly
- Pronounce words correctly

- Remember the correct orders of a word's phonemes (e.g. regularly, not regularly)
- Recognize letters of the alphabet and know the sounds they represent
- Remember the correct orders of the letters in the word (e.g. with, not with)
- Recognize, understand and use affixed (e.g. de-, re-, -tion, -ing)
- Differentiate between letters that are visually similar (e.g. m and w; d and p; b and q)
- Copy words correctly from another source, such as from the blackboard or a book
- Learn new words since spelling an unknown word is more difficult.

The next layer is the one of so-called *visual clues*, which involves understanding that spelling does not always function in a strictly left-to-right fashion: groups or patterns of letters work together to represent sound. There are a number of common visual patterns:

- *blends or clusters*: two or more consonants appear together and each of their sounds is heard, e.g. *bl*.
- *digraphs*: two or more adjacent consonants which represent one unique phoneme not rendered by either letter alone, e.g. *sh, th, ch*
- double consonants and vowels, e.g. *ss, oo*
- *the diverse graphemic realizations of vowels*, e.g. *see, key, quay*
- *diphthongs*: complex vowel sounds which have two distinct parts with a slide or shift in the middle, e.g. *toy*
- *phonograms, word families*: a *phonogram* or a word family is a graphic sequence composed of a vowel grapheme and an ending consonant grapheme. It coincides with the rule, which is the last part of a syllable including the vowel and what follows it. [1, p. 19].

Awareness of common visual patterns helps enhance the regularity of the English orthography. Connected to it is the importance of position in the English spelling system: *wh-*, for instance, generally occurs at the beginning of words, *-ng* at the end.

There is also the *morphological, syntactic or grammatical* dimension, where the structural processes of affixation and compounding conventions come into play. Having students understand that certain elements within the word, such as prefixes or suffixes of derivational or inflectional type (e.g. *-ed, -ing, -er, -est, -s/es*), are spelled consistently is an important step in enhancing spelling regularity.

The *semantic or etymological* layer offers information through the unique spelling of meaning elements such as roots or bases (often Greek and Latin) found within words, even despite sound changes. For example, *sign*, a meaning unit, is always spelled the same even though it has four different sounds in *sign, signal,*

design and *designate*. This level works in helping students to recognize words with related meanings and to distinguish or keep apart those items which have no meaning connection (such as homophones). In this sense, the word's origin is also important; paralleling the semantic demand is the historical one because a word's spelling reflects its etymology.

Thus, the key task of an EFL teacher, as M.L.P. Canado points out, is to raise the students' awareness of the presence of these layers, make them conscious of these patterns, help them see the regularity of the English spelling and approach it as if there were a system to it, which is precisely what efficient spellers do [1].

It's important for students to learn and practice common spelling patterns. Once students learn these patterns, it will help them achieve spelling success. Explore patterns together by rereading a familiar book and asking students to look for the spelling pattern in the story. There are a million different activities that will help students recognize spelling patterns, one being spelling bingo. Teachers can create a bingo board that focuses on word families (map, cap, tap, nap). Here are a five more activities to help students learn spelling patterns.

Play word sort. Discuss the spelling pattern of the week and have students cut out words and sort them.

Put up a Boggle board. Each week create a Boggle board that reflects the spelling pattern for that week. The students' task is to create as many words as they can with the letters on the board.

Use a plastic egg. Take a plastic Easter egg and, on the left half of the egg, write a few letters, and the on the other half of the egg, write the ending of the word. For example, the left half would be the letters, *t,s,p*, then the right half would be the ending of the word *in*. So the students would be able to the turn the egg and see the pattern *tin, sin, pin*, etc.

Go on a word hunt. Have students search through familiar books to look for a particular pattern. For example, after reading the words *make, take, ate*, discuss the spelling pattern *a e*. The students' task is to search their text for this specific pattern. Create an analogy book. If students know that the *-at* is in the word *cat*, then they can spell and read *mat, fat, bat*, etc. Have students create their own analogy books each time they learn a new spelling pattern. Then they can use these books as a reference when reading or spelling unknown words.

Practice Spelling Words. The most effective way for students to develop spelling skills is to have students practice their spelling words. Each week have students write their spelling words at least five times each. Repeatedly writing these words help students build knowledge, enhance learning, and develop their

spelling skills. A fun way schools are helping students practice their weekly spelling lists is by having them visit the website (or app) **Vocabulary Spelling City**. Students can go to this site or app and practice their words by taking practice tests and playing a variety of spelling games. Here are a few more activities to help students practice their spelling words.

Spelling stairs. Have students write their spelling word one letter at a time like the example below.

S
Si
Sig
Sigh
Sight

Roll the dice. Have students write their spelling word once in pencil. Then they must roll a die to determine how many times they must trace the word with a different colored crayon.

Create a story. Students must use all of their spelling words to create a story.

Spelling scramble. Students must correctly unscramble all of their spelling words.

Newspaper spelling. Each week as part of their spelling practice, students must search a newspaper and highlight each spelling word they find.

The most efficient way for students to develop their spelling skills is to practice, practice, practice! Repetition is the key to achieving spelling accuracy.

Conclusions and prospects for further researches of direction. In conclusion, two important factors can be pointed out. The first one is that there are objective reasons to believe in the regularity and consistency of the English orthographic system. By raising our students' awareness of the existence of the multiple layers which characterize it – auditory, visual, morphological, semantic, etymological – we will make them realize that there is information available to help them conquer the English

spelling system.

Secondly, today spelling is no longer left to chance. The experts have agreed that «direct spelling instruction» is a must at all levels of EFL/ESL instruction. It should be done in an organized fashion and with logical progression.

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ФОРМУВАННЯ ГОТОВНОСТІ ДО САМОРОЗВИТКУ ІНФОРМАЦІЙНОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ У МАЙБУТНІХ ФАХІВЦІВ ЗВ'ЯЗКУ

Постановка та обґрунтування актуальності проблеми. Глобальні тенденції постійного збільшення інформаційного простору є приводом, щоб говорити про

необхідність формування нової інформаційної культури як ключового елементу загальної культури людства в цілому. Вона заснована на знанні інформаційного середовища, законів