In the Name of God

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Specialized methods to Teach Spelling: Comparing Three Methods

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Faculty of Humanities

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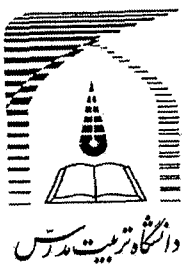

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آیین‌نامه حق مالکیت مادی و معنوی در مورد نتایج پژوهشهای علمی دانشگاه تربیت مدرس

مقدمه: با عنایت به سیاست های دانشگاه در راستای تحقق عدالت و کرامت انسانها که لازمه شکوفایی علمی و فنی است و رعایت حقوق مادی و معنوی دانشگاه و پژوهشگران ، لازم است اعضای هیأت علمی، دانشجویان ، دانش آموختگان و دیگر همکاران طرح، درمورد نتایج پژوهشهای علمی که تحت عناوین پایان نامه‌ها ، رساله و طرحهای تحقیقاتی با هماهنگی دانشگاه انجام شده است ، موارد زیر را رعایت نمایند:

ماده ۱- حق نشر و تکثیر پایان نامه /رساله و در آمدهای حاصل از آنها متعلق به دانشگاه می باشد ولی حقوق مادی و معنوی پدید آورندگان محفوظ خواهدبود.

ماده۲- انتشار مقاله یا مقالات مستخرج از پایان نامه/رساله به صورت چاپ در نشریات علمی و یا ارئه در مجامع علمی باید به نام دانشگاه بوده و با تائید استاد راهنمای اصلی ،یکی از اساتید راهنما ، مشاور ویا دانشجوی مسئول علمی مستخرج از پایان نامه ورساله به عهده اساتید راهنما و دانشجو می باشد.

تبصره : در مقالاتی که پس از دانش آموختگی بصورت ترکیبی از اطلاعات جدید و نتایج حاصل از پایان نامه/رساله نیز منتشر می‌شود باید نام دانشگاه درج شود.

ماده۳- انتشارکتاب ویا نرم افزار ویا آثار ویژه حاصل از نتایج پایان نامه/ رساله وتمامی طرحهای تحقیقاتی کلیه واحدهای دانشگاه اعم از دانشکده‌ها ، مراکز تحقیقاتی ، پژوهشکده‌ها ،پارک علم و فناوری و دیگر واحدها باید با مجوز کتبی صادره از معاونت دانشگاه وبراساس آئین نامه‌های مصوب انجام شود.

ماده۴- ثبت اختراع و تدوین دانش فنی و یا ارائه‌یافته‌ها در جشنواره ملی ، منطقه ای وبین المللی که حاصل نتایج مستخرج از پایان نامه/ رساله

و تمامی طرح های تحقیقاتی دانشگاه باید با هماهنگی استاد راهنما یا مجری طرح از طریق معاونت پژوهشی دانشگاه انجام گیرد.

ماده۵- این آیین نامه در ۵ماده و یک تبصره در تاریخ ۸۷/٤/۱ در شورای پژوهشی و در تاریخ ۸۷/٤/۲۳ در هیأت رئیسه دانشگاه به تایید رسیدودر جلسه مورخ ۸۷/۷/۱۵ شورای دانشگاه به تصویب رسیده و از تاریخ تصویب در شورای دانشگاه لازم الاجرا است.

بسمه تعالی

آیین‌نامهٔ چاپ پایان‌نامه (رساله)های دانشجویان دانشگاه تربیت مدرّس

نظر به اینکه چاپ و انتشار پایان‌نامه (رساله)های تحصیلی دانشجویان دانشگاه تربیت مدرّس، مبیّن بخشی از فعالیتهای علمی - پژوهشی دانشگاه است بنابراین به منظور آگاهی و رعایت حقوق دانشگاه، دانش‌آموختگان این دانشگاه نسبت به رعایت موارد ذیل متعهد می‌شوند:

مادّهٔ ۱ در صورت اقدام به چاپ پایان‌نامه (رساله)ی خود، مراتب را قبلاً به طور کتبی به «دفتر نشر آثار علمی» دانشگاه اطلاع دهد.

مادّهٔ ۲ در صفحهٔ سوم کتاب (پس از برگ شناسنامه)، عبارت ذیل را چاپ کند:

«کتاب حاضر، حاصل پایان‌نامهٔ کارشناسی ارشد/رسالهٔ دکتری نگارنده در رشتهٔ ..... است که در سال ..... در دانشکدهٔ ..... دانشگاه تربیت مدرّس به راهنمایی سرکار خانم/جناب آقای دکتر ..... ، مشاورهٔ سرکار خانم/جناب آقای دکتر ..... و مشاورهٔ سرکار خانم/جناب آقای دکتر ..... از آن دفاع شده است.»

مادّهٔ ۳ به منظور جبران بخشی از هزینه‌های انتشارات دانشگاه، تعداد یک درصد شمارگان کتاب (در هر نوبت چاپ) را به «دفتر نشر آثار علمی» دانشگاه اهدا کند. دانشگاه می‌تواند مازاد نیاز خود را به نفع مرکز نشر در معرض فروش قرار دهد.

مادّهٔ ۴ در صورت عدم رعایت مادّهٔ ۳، ۵۰٪ بهای شمارگان چاپ‌شده را به عنوان خسارت به دانشگاه تربیت مدرّس، تأدیه کند.

مادّهٔ ۵ دانشجو تعهد و قبول می‌کند در صورت خودداری از پرداخت بهای خسارت، دانشگاه می‌تواند خسارت مذکور را از طریق مراجع قضایی مطالبه و وصول کند؛ به علاوه به دانشگاه حق می‌دهد به منظور استیفای حقوق خود، از طریق دادگاه، معادل وجه مذکور در مادّهٔ ۴ را از محلّ توقیف کتابهای عرضه‌شدهٔ نگارنده برای فروش، تأمین نماید.

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نام و نام‌خانوادگی: ناصح قلی پور

تاریخ و امضا:

۱۳۸۸/۴/۱

To My Family

And

To Zara

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Abstract

This research was an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of using Specialized Methods to teach spelling to Iranian third grade junior high school EFL learners. The subjects were three classes each with 31 male learners within the age range of 14-16. All students came from the same linguistic background and the teacher and teaching materials were the same for the classes. The homogeneity of the classes was determined through a general English test. A devised spelling test with established measures of reliability and validity was used to assess the students' knowledge in English spelling before and after the course of instruction. The treatment took 10 sessions. The classes received different treatments. In class A, which was considered as the control group, spelling of the words was taught through traditional method using techniques such as writing the words, arranging words in alphabetical order, dividing words into syllables, using a dictionary to locate word meaning, and pronouncing the words the way they were written. In class B, the correct spelling of the words was taught through Semi-Independent Method and in class C, Teacher-directed Method was employed. Self-questioning and Self-correction were the representative techniques of Semi-Independent Method, and Modeling and Spelling Rules represented Teacher-Directed Method. The posttest was administered at the end of the sessions. The data were collected and analyzed using statistical procedures including a series of Paired Samples T-

tests and one-way ANOVAs. The results of within-group comparisons indicated that all groups improved significantly after the course of instruction, showing the effectiveness of the methods. Also, between-group comparisons showed that there was a significant difference between the performance of the students in Classes B and C compared to Class A. Classes B and C did not differ significantly in improving students' ability in English spelling.

Hence, the results suggest that all three methods contributed significantly to the improvement of the students' ability to write the correct form of English words, but Semi-Independent Method and the Teacher-Directed Method had a greater contribution in enhancing students' ability in spelling than the Traditional Method. It is recommended that a combination of these techniques be employed in the classroom, since other methods had also a significant effect in improving the students' spelling ability.

Key words: Spelling, Specialized Methods, Teacher-Directed Method, Semi-Independent Method, Self-Correction, Modeling, Self-questioning

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Chapter One:

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Learning how to read and write can be one of the biggest challenges for any second language learner. Pollo, Treiman, and Kessler (1990) believe that spelling is one of the most important components of writing at a single-word level. It is one of those subjects that few teachers like to teach, and there is little agreement about the best way to teach it. However, most instructors, they states, would agree that a certain amount of practice is required in any total spelling program.

Spelling is defined by Heron, Okyere, and Miller (1991) as "the ability to produce in written or oral form the correct arrangement of letters. It is an important language arts skill, and it has been incorporated into the primary educational programs since school begins formally" (p. 3).

Spelling is often only briefly discussed in language courses and, though separate and distinct in the curriculum, it is a subject which receives little attention. Matz (1994) suggests that teachers do not really teach spelling as much as they test it and the weekly cycle is so pre-established in educational practice that even pre-service teachers can describe the weekly "pretest-study-posttest" approach.

Spelling has witnessed interesting stances and perspectives during the history of second language learning and there has been a controversy over its importance in the field. Belloc (2006) is a more recent example of a hostile stance

toward spelling, who goes so far as to say that English, of all languages, ought to be most indifferent to spelling, since the sense of its words and phrases hardly ever depends upon spelling. He refers to spelling as a great breeder of hatred among the nations and of divisions, misapprehensions, wars. In spite of these rare extreme oppositions, the bulk of earlier research, some of which are mentioned below, attributes a great degree of importance to spelling as a crucial component of the language learning process.

Mercer & Mercer (1989) believe that spelling is one of the important tool skills in written communication, and it is an essential component of a total language arts curriculum. According to these researchers, children who receive effective spelling instruction are more likely to focus on clarity, logic, and the substance of their writing during written language exercises, not just on the arrangement of words. In contrast, poor spellers may have negative experiences in written expression, and their communication skills may have an unfavorable impression (Okyere, Heron, and Miller, 1991). DeStefano (1978) points to the fact that society usually considers poor spellers as "uneducated or careless", while the individual who spells correctly is perceived to be educated.

For Gentry and Gillet (1993) the purpose of learning to spell is to make learners' writings easier, more fluent, more expensive, and more easily read and comprehended by others. Thus, they believe, spelling instruction should be

included in the writing programs and active daily writing for real purposes and real audience is necessary for spelling development in all grades.

Gentry (1987) believes that too much that is known about how to teach spelling isn't put into practice. He regards spelling as a subject which we teach more poorly than any other subject and about which we harbor more myths. There is a lot of research concerning effective spelling instruction, and many of the traditional approaches have consistently shown themselves to be of questionable effectiveness for helping students become proficient spellers (Matz, 1994), but in spite of volumes of research teaching spelling is still a matter of intuition and the same traditional strategies and lessons are used.

This thesis is an attempt to introduce some of the more recent approaches entitled "Specialized Approaches" (Heron, Okyere, and Miller, 1991) and to evaluate their effectiveness in teaching English spelling to Iranian third grade junior high school EFL learners.

1.2. Statement of the problem and justification of the study

As we discussed in the introduction, spelling is an important but neglected component in the educational curricula developed for language teaching. Being fundamental for writing skill, spelling plays a vital role in boosting learner's self-confidence and self-image as a talented and educated social identity. Therefore, it seems reasonable for teachers to allocate some time to teach it through proper direct instruction. To determine the status of spelling in the current educational curricula, the author interviewed some English teachers and students along with studying the related literature published inside the country. Many English teachers complained about not having enough time to teach spelling just because they had to cover each lesson in a specific period of time and they must prioritize other 'more important skills' and doing exercise over spelling. Some teachers were proud to claim that they would concern about students' spelling and give their students spelling quizzes every other session to check their spelling ability. This last group would break long words into syllables and have their students look the words up in the dictionary.

Typical activities for spelling in high school teachers' guide handbook were as follow:

1. Complete the incomplete word with the missing letters *using pictures*; and
2. Complete the incomplete words *in the text* with the missing letters.

When asked about spelling, students responded that their teachers do pay attention to it by giving quizzes in the way that they were given a text in which some of the words had one or two missing letters. In some cases, the words were presented in isolation with or without pictures. Students would rely on their prior knowledge of the words' structures and letters' arrangement to guess the missing letters. All answers to the questions indicate that spelling is 'tested' not 'taught'. Students were also asked about the way they deal with the spelling of new words they came across. Most of the students would pronounce the words the way they were written or in a funny way, e.g. because was pronounced as /bi:kaju:si:/. This way they could *memorize* the spelling. A low percentage of the students knew about the spelling rule of making nouns plurals by adding 's'. A handful of students had learnt to develop their own learning strategies. Students keep complaining about the irregularities in English spelling. Many students relied on the teacher's pronunciation of the words and to a great extent on their intuition to write the words, resulting in an unsatisfactory level of ability in spelling.