



Translated from the original in Spanish

Strategy for the development of spelling skills in the students of the degree in Primary Education

Estrategia para el desarrollo de habilidades ortográficas en los estudiantes de la carrera Licenciatura en Educación Primaria

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Received: September 12th, 2018.

Approved: January 11th, 2019.

ABSTRACT

The development of spelling skills as part of the comprehensive training of the primary teacher, is today one of the main challenges in initial training, in particular, becomes a learning problem. The present work aims to present the results of the study carried out on the current state of the process of development of spelling

skills in the career Degree in Primary Education at the University of Pinar del Río. To do this, the following methods were used: historical-logical, documentary analysis, teacher interviews, teacher-in-training surveys and observation of classes, which allowed us to verify the status of this process in the initial training of the primary teacher. The dialectical-materialist method was taken as a methodological basis. From the systematization carried out it was possible to know that the topic has been little addressed in the particular context expressed. In the historical evolution of the training of graduates in this career has not been achieved the appropriation of the internal structure of this skill by students, which significantly limits the learning and practice of correct writing of the mother tongue.

Keywords: mother tongue; spelling; spelling skills; strategy.

RESUMEN

El desarrollo de habilidades ortográficas como parte de la formación integral del maestro primario, es hoy uno de los principales retos en la formación inicial, en particular, deviene como un problema de aprendizaje. El presente trabajo tiene como objetivo exponer los resultados del estudio realizado sobre el estado actual del proceso de desarrollo de habilidades ortográficas en los estudiantes de la carrera Licenciatura en Educación Primaria en la Universidad de Pinar del Río (UPR). Para ello se utilizaron como métodos el histórico-lógico, el análisis documental, la entrevista a profesores, la encuesta a maestros en formación y la observación a clases, los que permitieron constatar el estado actual de dicho proceso en la formación inicial del maestro primario. Se tomó como base metodológica el método dialéctico-materialista. De la

sistematización realizada fue posible conocer que el tema ha sido poco abordado en el contexto particular expresado. Lo que permitió determinar que en el devenir histórico de la formación de egresados de esta carrera no se ha logrado la apropiación de la estructura interna de esta habilidad por los estudiantes, lo que limita de modo significativo el aprendizaje y la práctica de la escritura correcta de la lengua materna.

Palabras clave: estrategia; habilidades ortográficas; lengua materna; ortografía.

INTRODUCTION

Spelling, with the passing of time, has been a serious problem to solve. Specialists in the field of language and literature and of the teachings in general, see with deep concern the alarming growth of spelling problems in the writings, not only of students of different educational levels, but also in people of the most varied professions and sociocultural backgrounds.

In the current context a series of problems affect the entire world, accompanied by a crisis of knowledge, related to a very poor experience in the practice of reading and writing, showing attitudes towards language and good ways of saying and communicating permeated by the laziness, disinterest, contempt, inappropriate language and bad taste that denote the presence of unsatisfied basic academic needs in students, that is, the improvement of their spelling. Balmaseda Neyra (2013) quotes M. Seco, who asserts that «the spelling not only includes the correct writing of the words, but the use of a series of signs that reflect aspects of the meaning of the words (capital letters), the intensity

(accents), intonation (punctuation); or that respond to material needs of the written expression (script, abbreviations).»

The current concern of governments and institutions for the teaching of spelling has generated awareness in Spanish-speaking countries. Taking into account the instrumental nature of language as a means of cognition and communication, as an expression of culture and identity, as a tool for intellectual work and ideological struggle, as it is the irreplaceable language to achieve higher learning. In this sense, attention to the development of communication skills becomes truly relevant as part of the improvement of society.

Contrary to what perhaps many people think, since its foundation, the Royal Spanish Academy has developed a plausible work of spelling simplification. In its successive editions of the Dictionary, new spelling rules and bulletins, the Academy has not only incorporated new words, but has also modified the writing of many of them. Throughout its existence, especially in the present century, amid heated debates, the orthographic norms we know today have been dictated. In that sense they inform the websites (<http://www.rae.es/dictionary-de-la-lengua-espanola/la-23a-edicion-2014>), (<http://www.1globaltranslators.com/news/la-rae-publica-las-nueva-normatos-de-spegrafia-2015/>), (<https://arquetipoeducativo.blogspot.com/2016/11/pdf-manual-de-normas-ortograficas-y.html>) and (<https://doi.org/10.3989/rfe.2016.05>).

Cuba has considered and assumes such norms, becoming prominent in the development of mother tongue learning at all levels of education, as it has been a constant and priority concern and

occupation of the Cuban school of all time. The teaching of language and spelling has traveled a very normative path, corrective and little stands out and reflects on its role in communication.

In that sense, the Ministry of Education has undertaken various actions and strategies for many years to improve students' spelling skills, but the results are still unsatisfactory. Its teaching needs to be attended quickly and for this it is necessary, from the application of various methods and procedures, to work them with a systematic, preventive, incidental and corrective nature. Hence, the authors of this work agree that «In Higher Education, the integral education of university students must result in graduates with a solid political-ideological development; endowed with a broad social, humanistic and economic culture; prepared to defend the Cuban Revolution in the field of ideas with its own arguments; competent for professional performance and socially committed to the interests of the nation » (Ministry of Higher Education, 2016).

Despite the demands of Cuban education to achieve a professional with a comprehensive general culture, not all students who study pedagogical skills have spelling skills according to the past year and are not even aware of the need to express themselves and write correctly as future professionals.

The difficulties of spelling itself and those that students usually present are two large groups that the school must face. The functionality of the programs, the stability of the teaching staff, the quality, the availability and the use of teaching materials (texts, dictionaries, files and other resources), the pedagogical mastery, the mastery and updating of the spelling and its teaching in particular by

the mother tongue teacher; as well as the probable contribution of the rest of the pedagogical group and the huge tendency to homogenize orthographic teaching, without attending to the heterogeneous nature of learning, constitute a third group of factors no less important related to the development of the teaching process itself.

On the upper level, work with spelling is planned. The student must develop their language, learn to write the words of their vocabulary and use the punctuation marks in accordance with current regulations, which allows them to decode and encode texts. Although teachers' concerns regarding spelling difficulties in young people are common, spelling does not take its rightful place, as there is not always an adequate conception of their teaching.

It must also have in mind that universities, in recent courses, have received young people of a generation who went through general education at a stage of low demand, so they show the deterioration and teaching needs of that period and when applied Written evaluative instruments, a group of orthographic difficulties can be observed or not, which can compromise their academic development in their professional training; such as:

- Misuse of upper and lower case.
- Errors of addition, omission and change of graphemes.
- Accentuation errors.
- Incorrect division of words into syllables.
- Poor calligraphy.
- Misuse of punctuation marks.
- Matching errors.

The role that spelling plays in learning as a reflection of the student's conscious intellectual activity, the manifestation of

skills for oral and written communication work and the interpretation of texts, reflects in these students weaknesses that must be addressed directly, Therefore, the need to carry out a methodological work related to one of the components of the mother tongue of vital importance for any of the pedagogical careers is identified.

Of course, the work of the teacher will be invaluable, because in the words of Alvero Francés, (2002), to guarantee success in the learning of spelling it is not enough to mention the rules: we must abound in examples and exercises, and dedicate the required time to the continuous review of the student's work.

Skills constitute a basic element in the learning of future Primary Education professionals, since there is no knowledge without a skill, without a know-how and teaching how to do it, this is strongly enhanced from the perspective of a developing didactics.

Several researchers have addressed the issue of spelling skills, including: Abello Cruz, (2007), Alvero Francés (2002), Arias Leyva & Pérez (1992), Balmaseda Neyra (2002), Callizo Gracia (2014), Fernández - Rufete (2015), Hernández Hernández (2017), among others. Therefore, the importance of treating this issue is evident. However, it has not yet been sufficient to treat it from work with the subjects of Plan E for 3rd year in the training of the Bachelor of Primary Education.

In an exploratory study, using empirical methods such as class observation, analysis of knowledge checks, interviews with students and teachers and document review, it was found that students in the third year of the degree in Primary

Education University of Pinar del Río «Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca» have inadequacies in the development of spelling skills, manifested in:

- Little mastery of the correct use of spelling rules.
- Poor linguistic preparation in general, and spelling in particular, of some students.
- Lack of systematic, sufficient and varied attention to spelling.

The daily and consistent practice demonstrates that this is one of the regularities of the bank of problems of the teaching institution, motivating the authors of this research to venture into the subject by putting into practice the knowledge system of scientific research and pose the following scientific problem:

How to contribute to the development of spelling skills in students in the 3rd year of the Bachelor's Degree in Primary Education of the UPR «Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca»?

From the above, the objective of this work is revealed, which consists in developing methodological actions that contribute to the correct use of Spanish language spelling from the different teaching activities of the 3rd year of the Bachelor's Degree in Primary Education, as an essential part of the initial training in the undergraduate, from the verification of the current state of this process in the aforementioned context.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A development research with a qualitative approach was carried out that took the stage of the degree in Primary Education

at the University of Pinar del Río «Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca» during the period from September 2015 to September 2017. To execute this Work was taken as the object of study the teaching-learning process in the 3rd year of the degree Degree in Primary Education and as a field of action the difficulties in the development of spelling skills.

The study population was made up of 3rd year teachers involved in the teaching-learning process, linked to the subjects indicated by the Study Plan of this career; In total 8 professionals. All expressed their willingness to participate in the investigation.

The method used as a guide for this work was the dialectical materialist who conducted the methodological orientation to explore in depth the problem situation, delimit the problem and its relationships objectively, which made it possible to approach it with scientific foundation from the rest of the methods used for the diagnosis, in which compliance with the ethical requirements of the investigative processes regarding the informed consent of the participants was taken into account. Theoretical methods were used: analysis-synthesis, induction-deduction and generalization to better understand the phenomenon studied, and allowed the authors to deepen the circumstances that gravitate on the orthographic weaknesses of the students that the university receives in this career.

The essentiality of the spelling study imposed the obligation to use a variety of empirical methods to find answers to the questions raised. A review of the documents related to the methodological plan, the proceedings of the year group, subjects and methodological meetings, the themes of the methodological and open classes and the preparation of the

subjects, as well as a survey and questionnaire for teachers.

To fulfill the objective of the investigation it was necessary to execute three phases:

Phase I. Diagnosis of the insufficiencies in methodological work in the 3rd year of the degree Degree in Primary Education in relation to the treatment of spelling.

Phase II Design of methodological actions.

Phase III Evaluation of the proposal by specialists.

18 specialists were selected to assess the proposal of methodological activities for the development of spelling skills in students of Primary Education, taking into account: knowledge in the subject matter, mastery of the methodological elements for their treatment and teaching experience. Regarding the self-assessment of each of the specialists participating in this activity and the knowledge they have of these, in their teaching activities, it can be ensured that the level to give an assessment of the proposed material was adequate. The indicators presented were necessity, relevance, usefulness, methodological value and applicability. Each specialist had to respond to the presentation of the proposal of the actions in consideration of their knowledge, experience and professional work by offering one of the following categories: Successful, Fairly successful, Unsuccessful and Unsuccessful; to which were attached, in writing, their criteria in correspondence with the assessment given to the indicator.

Gathering the assessments given by the specialists consulted, the authors considered as the final measurement criteria the percentage of positive

responses, which are recognized with the criteria Successful and Fairly successful. The product was considered approved if it was equal to or greater than 90 %.

RESULTS

Through the documentary analysis, it was found that the training programs of the Bachelor in Primary Education do not contain sufficient content to develop practical skills for spelling treatment. In the rest of the documents, the topics presented with a pedagogical approach were: the relationship between teaching functions and the fundamental categories of the teaching-learning process as part of the methodological structure of the class, attention to students with academic and other difficulties nature, methodological orientations were offered for the classes of the next weeks, based on a discussion of contents to be treated and the way of presenting them; An assessment was made of the progress of the teaching-learning process, criteria were offered to prepare the partial exams and guidelines were drawn up to give educational treatment to the reinforcement of values in the training of the Primary Education professional.

The themes of the planned methodological and open classes were reviewed. This allowed us to know that the contents respond adequately to the different subject complexes of the subjects of the career; but there are no provisions in these methodological activities, aimed at

the preparation of teachers on the application of Instruction 1/09, or orthographic treatment, in general. In essence, the methodological work that was developed in the career was oriented towards general aspects of the teaching-learning process, typical of the content of the career, but specific tasks were not specified to work with the students' spelling difficulties.

In the interview with teachers, they recognized that an instruction has been approved (Instruction 1/09) referring to spelling, which should be applied in all assessments written to students for the amount of errors they have when writing and which establishes penalties that imply lowering the evaluation work score and even disapproving it. This orientation was related to the experience of the diagnosis applied during the 2014-2015 school year to the terminal years, where the career did not obtain favorable results in that regard.

With respect to this, it was found that the content of the instruction was not mastered exactly, and therefore, was not applied effectively. Some said that students should not disapprove of spelling problems, that it is more important to have mastery of the contents and skills of the career than to disapprove a subject or career because they do not know how to write a word correctly.

Regarding the answers offered in the survey, about the methodological procedure they use in the classes for the treatment of spelling, they are shown in Table 1.

Table 1- Steps for spelling treatment in classes.

Oder	Aspects investigated	Usually	Sometimes	Not done
1	In the methodological preparation of a subject or unit of the subject, the new words of the content to be treated are identified, to offer students the necessary tools and thus learn to write them correctly.		2	6
2	In the teaching of a class, the board is used to write correctly those new words whose spelling can be difficult for the student to understand.		3	5
3	With the use of the textbook in the class, the student is instructed to observe the spelling of some particular words and, as an independent study, look for their meaning in the dictionary.		1	7
4	With the delivery of a content the correct spelling of the specific technical words of each subject is highlighted.		2	6
5	In spelling activities, spelling is corrected as per Instruction 1/09.		3	5

Source: The authors

From the answers offered by the 8 teachers, it can be concluded that attention to spelling presents weaknesses in the methodological procedure, which indicates a lack of systematic approach to face, collectively, a problem detected in student learning, related to spelling.

A large part of the answers indicates that a collective criterion is not established to deal with this difficulty from the classroom with follow-up and systematicity. Under these conditions, the presence of collaborative learning is recommended, which may constitute a projected strategy towards meaningful understanding of spelling knowledge as an activity carried out with all students or with small groups, under the guidance of the teacher, where information that is taxed is exchanged to all students, by demonstrating the

presence of a socialization with participatory responsibility and with an essential edge for group communication that has the purpose of solving difficulties and favoring individual and collective development in different subject complexes, as part of an established orientation, not as a finished product that constitutes, therefore, an adequate way for the assimilation of school material.

Through collaborative learning, the teacher selects what spelling situation to address and provides guidance from the word or the selected words to be treated. It is necessary that before making a conclusion, the teacher lead the students to the formulation of sentences where the word is used so that its meaning acquires a greater connotation. If you work with the text of the subject, then it is convenient to

read it in the context where it appears so that it is related to the content of your career and your personal experiences.

From another point of view, it is necessary to take into account that for the presentation of a spelling rule a series of steps must be followed, in that sense it coincides with those proposed by Balmaseda Neyra (2002):

- Presentation of words that have an identical spelling situation. These should appear included in a text, guaranteeing their understanding. They can be presented on the board, on a poster, in a selected textbook or in another form that is used.
- Observation and reading of the text, with emphasis on the words under study. These will be pronounced several times by observing their phonetic- graphematic characteristics.
- Extraction of the words from the text and placement in columns to facilitate the observation of regularity.
- Comparisons will be made between words to determine what is common in all, how they look alike, what makes them different from others that may occur.
- Determination of similarities from the orthographic point of view. Analysis of the letter or letters that are repeated in them.
- Formulation of the spelling rule by students.
- Reading and analysis of the rule that appears in the textbook to specify the successes or errors in the formulation made by the students.
- Performing various exercise activities, including copies,

preventive dictations, and spelling work, signage of the letters or syllables that may be incurred in the error, writing of texts, among others.

All careers should intend to use the dictionary; this is the most suitable means to search for the meaning of any word and its spelling.

Through the collaborative work, guaranteed under the direction of the teacher, from the class, the student can be taken to the formulation of the spelling rule that in many cases is known, and that is obtained after the observation and analysis of the word.

In the opinion of the authors of this research, systematic work in the development of spelling skills is closely linked to the role of interdisciplinarity as a guarantee of participation, responsibility and collective dedication of teachers and as a solid element to competently train the student.

Some scholars on the subject such as Balmaseda Neyra (1996) and Ruiz Iglesias (1997) recognize that it has a negative impact on orthographic treatment, the work of teachers who understand that the solution of the problem corresponds only to the specialists of Spanish-Literature, for being those who possess the tools and methodological skills for this performance, when it is clear that mastery of the mother tongue, in addition to being an instrument of communication and apprehension of all knowledge, is a feature of culture.

Description of the methodological actions

At the time of preparing the methodological actions, it was important to take into consideration a series of pedagogical concepts on methodological work that guided the ways of proceeding at the different moments of the research. Among them:

- The methodological work is the set of activities, which using scientific means is designed, executed and valued, with the aim of promoting the improvement of the professional performance of the pedagogical staff in order to optimize the educational teaching process, within the specific possibilities of a pedagogical group.
- It is a complex process since it is about modeling, changing and transforming the modes of action of teachers for the attention of their students.
- It must provide teachers with the contents, methods, means, procedures, characterization and diagnostic tools, as well as knowledge for the optimal use of new communication and information resources.
- An activity is planned and should be dynamic.
- It has a collective nature: it allows the exchange of experiences among teachers, while stimulating the initiative and creativity of each one of them.

Corresponding to the foregoing, the methodological actions were written based on the current situation of the mastery of spelling skills by the student and their relationship with the statement in Instruction 1/09. In addition, they aim to improve the use of the mother tongue in terms of the spelling component. Its themes are linked to the findings dictated by the diagnosis regarding the mastery of

the methodology that teachers must master to perform a systematic work in their treatment, without converting the exposure of the content of the subject into a spelling class. Finally, they emphasize the appropriate attention to learning from a developing position that involves everyone with responsibility.

The presentation of the range of contents that should be treated by teachers is related to methodological actions in which the matter is presented based on necessary suggestions to attend to the student; in this way, the main orthographic contents that should shape these activities were determined and the following were thematic nuclei:

- Accentuation rules.
- Correct use of upper and lower case.
- Accentuation of interrogative and exclamatory pronouns.
- Changes, omission or addition of graphemes.

It is proposed to carry out the actions through the different forms of methodological teaching work:

- Collective of the year.
- Methodological meetings
- Subject groups.
- Methodological classes (demonstrative and instructional) and open classes.
- Self-preparation.

The methodological actions developed were:

1. Periodic workshops in the 3rd year group of the Degree in Primary Education for the analysis of the methodological work related to spelling and the guidance

contained in the digital self- preparation material for treatment.

2. Systematic sampling of spelling in the written exams of the students in the groups of the different subjects of the year, to delimit the main errors and their frequency, as an update of the initial diagnosis applied.

3. Study in the methodological meetings of the 3rd year teaching department of the Spelling Brochure and the Manual for the evaluation of oral and written text.

4. Inclusion of methodological, instructional, demonstrative classes and open classes in the Methodological Plan of the Department of Primary Education, by specialists of the mother tongue in order to provide the necessary teaching for the treatment of spelling.

5. Offer guidance for the work with the digital material for self- preparation that contains methodological suggestions for treating spelling.

DISCUSSION

The strategy contains an introduction in which the starting situation is highlighted from the knowledge of the needs that must be met. In each action, the statement related to one of the fundamental types of methodological teaching work, its objective and general guidelines for the development of the activity.

According to the assessment of the specialists, the answers given to each of the proposed indicators were grouped into only three of the five categories to be assessed; 60% of the criteria was

Successful, 31.8% corresponds to a valuation of Fairly Successful and only 8 % is in the opinion of Little Successful; As a prevailing criterion, a percentage of 91.8% was obtained, a value greater than 90%, so it is conclusive that these resulted in an assessment of "correct" for its application.

Making a qualitative assessment of the criteria given to each of the indicators, it can be summarized that:

There is a need to address, on the basis of methodological actions, the orthographic deficiencies of the students of the Bachelor's Degree in Primary Education, as it constitutes a need that requires support from the teaching group, the authorities of the faculty and the institution itself, to give it to problems that gravitate on academic results and that show weaknesses in previous training.

Spelling difficulties reflect a real problem in students, which requires teachers to be prepared to continually address the correct writing, not only of the words linked to their profession, but those of practical communication. Made for its realization, it needs help, monitoring and a space to exchange points of view and establish a way of working that becomes a professional habit that leaves traces of its importance in the students who are trained.

The utility is given in the presence of the methodological actions elaborated in this inquiry offers the benefit, not only to the teacher, but also to the student because it guides the use of the simplest resources to address their spelling problems, intentionally, when proposing the use of the textbook as an essential point for the student's academic training and the potential of the class to learn to learn,

without leaving aside the blackboard, the murals and others.

It has great relevance, because it is revealed in a relevant way showing the true purpose of addressing the student's spelling weaknesses, but with the knowledge of the teacher's methodological needs to meet those of the student.

With respect to the methodological value, it offers the mode of action in each of the proposed actions based on an explicitly stated objective and in its suggestions it becomes a guide for the activity that must be carried out by each process manager, so that It deals with the real problems of the student since his curricular training.

Its applicability is appropriate, since the way in which the actions have been conceived makes it possible to be applied without any difficulty in the activities of each subject of the curriculum of the degree in Primary Education, not only of 3rd year, they can even be generalized by all the teachers of the subjects, since they propose methods of methodological improvement for the systematic orthographic treatment of any of their careers.

By way of conclusion, the work carried out shows that the elaborated actions constitute a starting point to offer treatment to spelling from methodological work as a way to prepare the teacher in his particular didactics. It is a contribution to the continuous perfection of the teaching-learning process of the Degree in Primary Education, particularly, to strengthen the correct use of the Spanish language, from the different teaching activities of the 3rd year of the degree in Primary Education.

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