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SPELLING DIFFICULTIES

Summary. The article analyzes the causes of the most common spelling mistakes and suggests the possible ways of their cure.

Key words: homophones, similar sounded words, spellings based on visual misperceptions of the words, frequent practice.

*To hold a pen is to be at war
Voltaire*

Problem formulation. Language acquisition doesn't comprise only speaking or reading but clear accurate and correct writing as well. And here proper spelling skills emerge both as the most important and the most difficult problem.

Recognizing the importance of spelling skills one should seek answers to three questions: How widespread are spelling problems? How concerned are educators and professionals about spelling skills? How can educators identify and help problem spellers?

Educators are still arguing whether the cause of spelling problems is in "error in thinking". Instead, some of them, following Vygotsky, suggest that bad spellers are merely "displaying a faulty translation of perfectly sensible inner speech" [5, p. 65–70]. Representing a great problem with misspelling in any language it has always been under thorough study of many scholars: philologists, linguists, languages teachers especially in FLT. I.A. Bim, N.I. Jeb, O.B. Biguch, T.B. Rogova, C.B. Roman, J.D. Shchykina, B.B. Satonova, E.B. Musntska, P. Davis, M. Rinvolutri, J. Conors Robert, A. Andrea, A. Lunsford, Ch. Martin, D. Ranson, A. Brown, E. Meyer, L. Smith, A. Dobie, G. Sloan, M. Shaughnessy etc.

The Aim of the Paper is to give a short outline of the spelling analysis showing the most commonly misspelled words, as well as to suggest some ways on tutoring spelling as soon as causes for spelling problems is realized.

We learn to spell from repeated experience with words in both reading and writing, but especially writing. Words have a look, a sound, and even feel to them as the hand move across the page. As we proofread we can probably tell if a word doesn't look quite right.

The presentation of the main research material. A large-scale spelling analysis shows that commonly misspelled words are homophones, spellings based on pronunciation, and spellings based on visual misperceptions of words.

Words that sound alike or nearly alike but have different meanings and spellings are called homophones. The following homophones are so commonly confused that a proof-reader will double-check their every use.

affect (verb: "to exert an influence")

effect (verb: "to accomplish"; noun: "result")

its (possessive pronoun: "of or belonging to it")

it's (contraction for "it is")

loose (adjective: "free, not securely attached")

lose (verb: "to fall, to keep, to be deprive of")

principal (adjective: "most important";

noun: "head of a school")

principle (noun: "a general or fundamental truth")

their (possessive pronoun: "belonging to them")

they're (contraction for "they are")

there (adverb: "that place or position")

who's (contraction for "who is")

whose (possessive form of "who")

your (possessive form of "you")

you're (contraction of "you are")

accept, except	cancel, censure
adapt, adopt	cite, site
adverse, averse	climactic, climatic
advice, advise	coarse, course
affect, effect	complement, compliment
all ready, already	conscience, conscious
all together, altogether	continual, continuous
allusion, illusion	disinterested, uninterested
amoral, immoral	elicit, illicit
anyone, any one	eminent, imminent
awhile, a while	everyone, every one
beside, besides	explicit, implicit
capital, capitol	farther, furthe
imply, infer	relation, relationship
ingenious, ingenuous	respectfully, respectively
its, it's	sensual, sensuous
lead, led	sometime, some time, sometimes
loose, lose	than, then
maybe, may be	there, their, they're
media, medium	to, two, too
nauseated, nauseous	weather, whether
passed, past	who's, whose
precede, proceed	your, you're
principal, principle	

After a careful study of student-writing educators conclude that as students become more oriented to oral (rather than written) culture, their ability to produce acceptable written English declines. Misspelling is the third most frequent problem among student writers, following "running words together" and confusing similar-sounding words. They should be especially alert to the following commonly misspelled words.

<i>absence</i>	<i>committee</i>	<i>harass</i>	<i>preparation</i>
<i>academic</i>	<i>comparative</i>	<i>height</i>	<i>prevalent</i>
<i>accidentally</i>	<i>competitive</i>	<i>humorous</i>	<i>primitive</i>
<i>accommodate</i>	<i>conceivable</i>	<i>illiterate</i>	<i>privilege</i>
<i>accomplish</i>	<i>conference</i>	<i>imaginary</i>	<i>probably</i>
<i>accumulate</i>	<i>conferred</i>	<i>imagination</i>	<i>proceed</i>
<i>achievement</i>	<i>conqueror</i>	<i>immediately</i>	<i>professor</i>
<i>acknowledge</i>	<i>conscience</i>	<i>incidentally</i>	<i>prominent</i>
<i>acquaintance</i>	<i>conscientious</i>	<i>incredible</i>	<i>pronunciation</i>
<i>acquire</i>	<i>conscious</i>	<i>indefinitely</i>	<i>quantity</i>
<i>across</i>	<i>convenient</i>	<i>indispensable</i>	<i>quiet</i>
<i>address</i>	<i>courteous</i>	<i>inevitable</i>	<i>quite</i>
<i>aggravate</i>	<i>criticism</i>	<i>infinite</i>	<i>quizzes</i>
<i>all right</i>	<i>criticize</i>	<i>intelligence</i>	<i>receive</i>
<i>almost</i>	<i>curiosity</i>	<i>interesting</i>	<i>recognize</i>
<i>although</i>	<i>dealt</i>	<i>irrelevant</i>	<i>recommend</i>
<i>altogether</i>	<i>decision</i>	<i>irresistible</i>	<i>reference</i>
<i>always</i>	<i>definitely</i>	<i>knowledge</i>	<i>referred</i>
<i>amateur</i>	<i>descendant</i>	<i>laboratory</i>	<i>regard</i>
<i>among</i>	<i>describe</i>	<i>legitimate</i>	<i>religion</i>
<i>analyze</i>	<i>description</i>	<i>license</i>	<i>repetition</i>
<i>annual</i>	<i>despair</i>	<i>lightning</i>	<i>restaurant</i>
<i>answer</i>	<i>desperate</i>	<i>literature</i>	<i>rhythm</i>
<i>apology</i>	<i>develop</i>	<i>loneliness</i>	<i>rhythmical</i>
<i>apparently</i>	<i>dictionary</i>	<i>maintenance</i>	<i>ridiculous</i>
<i>appearance</i>	<i>dining</i>	<i>maneuver</i>	<i>roommate</i>
<i>appropriate</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>marriage</i>	<i>sandwich</i>
<i>arctic</i>	<i>disappear</i>	<i>mathematics</i>	<i>schedule</i>
<i>argument</i>	<i>disappoint</i>	<i>mischievous</i>	<i>secretary</i>
<i>arising</i>	<i>disastrous</i>	<i>necessary</i>	<i>seize</i>
<i>arithmetic</i>	<i>dissatisfied</i>	<i>nevertheless</i>	<i>separate</i>
<i>arrangement</i>	<i>eighth</i>	<i>noticeable</i>	<i>sergeant</i>
<i>ascend</i>	<i>eligible</i>	<i>obstacle</i>	<i>several</i>
<i>association</i>	<i>eliminate</i>	<i>occasion</i>	<i>siege</i>
<i>athlete</i>	<i>embarrass</i>	<i>occasionally</i>	<i>similar</i>
<i>athletics</i>	<i>eminent</i>	<i>occur</i>	<i>sincerely</i>
<i>attendance</i>	<i>emphasize</i>	<i>occurrence</i>	<i>soliloquy</i>
<i>audience</i>	<i>entirely</i>	<i>optimistic</i>	<i>sophomore</i>
<i>bachelor</i>	<i>entrance</i>	<i>original</i>	<i>specimen</i>
<i>basically</i>	<i>environment</i>	<i>outrageous</i>	<i>strictly</i>
<i>beginning</i>	<i>equivalent</i>	<i>pamphlet</i>	<i>subtly</i>
<i>believe</i>	<i>especially</i>	<i>parallel</i>	<i>succeed</i>
<i>benefited</i>	<i>exaggerated</i>	<i>particularly</i>	<i>surprise</i>
<i>brilliant</i>	<i>exhaust</i>	<i>pastime</i>	<i>temperature</i>
<i>Britain</i>	<i>existence</i>	<i>perform</i>	<i>thorough</i>
<i>bureau</i>	<i>experience</i>	<i>performance</i>	<i>tragedy</i>
<i>business</i>	<i>explanation</i>	<i>permissible</i>	<i>transferred</i>
<i>cafeteria</i>	<i>extraordinary</i>	<i>perseverance</i>	<i>tries</i>
<i>calendar</i>	<i>extremely</i>	<i>perspiration</i>	<i>truly</i>
<i>candidate</i>	<i>familiar</i>	<i>phenomenon</i>	<i>unanimous</i>
<i>category</i>	<i>fascinate</i>	<i>physically</i>	<i>unnecessarily</i>
<i>cemetery</i>	<i>February</i>	<i>picnicking</i>	<i>until</i>
<i>changeable</i>	<i>foreign</i>	<i>playwright</i>	<i>usually</i>
<i>changing</i>	<i>forty</i>	<i>politics</i>	<i>vacuum</i>
<i>characteristic</i>	<i>fourth</i>	<i>practically</i>	<i>vengeance</i>
<i>chosen</i>	<i>friend</i>	<i>precede</i>	<i>villain</i>
<i>column</i>	<i>government</i>	<i>precedence</i>	<i>weird</i>
<i>coming</i>	<i>grammar</i>	<i>preference</i>	<i>whether</i>
<i>commitment</i>	<i>guard</i>	<i>preferred</i>	<i>writing</i>
<i>committed</i>	<i>guidance</i>	<i>prejudice</i>	

However, surveying the research on the most frequently misspelled in English experts listed the 50 words among them. Moreover, these words are usually misspelled the same way by everyone. The study took the form of the test on the correct spelling. Words are listed in order of difficulty.

1. (a) <i>grammer</i>	(b) <i>grammar</i>	26. (a) <i>liason</i>	(b) <i>liaison</i>
2. (a) <i>arguement</i>	(b) <i>argument</i>	27. (a) <i>proceed</i>	(b) <i>procede</i>
3. (a) <i>supprise</i>	(b) <i>surprise</i>	28. (a) <i>harrass</i>	(b) <i>harass</i>
4. (a) <i>achieve</i>	(b) <i>acheive</i>	29. (a) <i>perseverance</i>	(b) <i>perseverence</i>
5. (a) <i>annoint</i>	(b) <i>anoint</i>	30. (a) <i>ecstasy</i>	(b) <i>ecstasy</i>
6. (a) <i>definatly</i>	(b) <i>definitely</i>	31. (a) <i>antiquated</i>	(b) <i>antequated</i>
7. (a) <i>separate</i>	(b) <i>seperate</i>	32. (a) <i>insistent</i>	(b) <i>insistant</i>
8. (a) <i>desirable</i>	(b) <i>desireable</i>	33. (a) <i>exhilarate</i>	(b) <i>exhilarate</i>
9. (a) <i>developement</i>	(b) <i>development</i>	34. (a) <i>vacuum</i>	(b) <i>vacuum</i>
10. (a) <i>existence</i>	(b) <i>existance</i>	35. (a) <i>ridiculous</i>	(b) <i>rediuulous</i>
11. (a) <i>pronounciation</i>	(b) <i>pronunciation</i>	36. (a) <i>nickel</i>	(b) <i>nickle</i>
12. (a) <i>ocassion</i>	(b) <i>ocassion</i>	37. (a) <i>oscilate</i>	(b) <i>oscillate</i>
13. (a) <i>assistant</i>	(b) <i>assisstant</i>	38. (a) <i>tyrannous</i>	(b) <i>tyranous</i>
14. (a) <i>repitition</i>	(b) <i>repetition</i>	39. (a) <i>drunkenness</i>	(b) <i>drunkenness</i>
15. (a) <i>privilege</i>	(b) <i>priviledge</i>	40. (a) <i>dissention</i>	(b) <i>dissension</i>
16. (a) <i>dependant</i>	(b) <i>dependent</i>	41. (a) <i>connoisseur</i>	(b) <i>connoisseur</i>
17. (a) <i>irresistible</i>	(b) <i>irresistable</i>	42. (a) <i>sacreligious</i>	(b) <i>sacrilegious</i>
18. (a) <i>consensus</i>	(b) <i>concensus</i>	43. (a) <i>battalion</i>	(b) <i>battallion</i>
19. (a) <i>accommodate</i>	(b) <i>accomodate</i>	44. (a) <i>prerogative</i>	(b) <i>perogative</i>
20. (a) <i>conciencie</i>	(b) <i>conscience</i>	45. (a) <i>iridescent</i>	(b) <i>irridescnt</i>
21. (a) <i>occurence</i>	(b) <i>occurrence</i>	46. (a) <i>inadvertent</i>	(b) <i>inadvertant</i>
22. (a) <i>commitment</i>	(b) <i>committment</i>	47. (a) <i>geneology</i>	(b) <i>genealogy</i>
23. (a) <i>embarrass</i>	(b) <i>embarass</i>	48. (a) <i>villify</i>	(b) <i>vilify</i>
24. (a) <i>indispensible</i>	(b) <i>indispensable</i>	49. (a) <i>innoculate</i>	(b) <i>inoculate</i>
25. (a) <i>allotted</i>	(b) <i>alotted</i>	50. (a) <i>dilettante</i>	(b) <i>dilletante</i>

It is notable that a below-average speller will get only 6 of the 50 right. The average speller will feel certain about the first 15 but have an even chance of being right on the rest. The superior speller will do well on the first 40 and often that will be wrong half the time. The perfect or near-perfect speller will know how to speak all 50 words [2, p. 16].

The ability to spell grows slowly out of number of different kinds of encounters with words – with sounds of words (phonological encounters), the looks of words on paper (visual encounters), the feel of words as the hand moves to form them in writing (kinesthetic encounters) and the meaning of words as they take their places in the contexts of sentences (semantic encounters).

All these aspects of moulding proper spelling skills resulted to various more or less effective editing strategies, methods to help poor spellers, familiarity with spelling aids, opportunities for multiple revisions, frequent short periods of practice, uses word processors and spelling checkers.

Some educators even claim that “experience with misspellings can be detrimental to subsequent performance” [1, p. 488–494]. They suggest that students may remember both the correct and incorrect versions of a word. Thus, teaching and testing techniques that use incorrect spellings.

Instead, others suggest that instructors help students recognize patterns of error and introduce them to “a few basic principles of phonics and syllabication that underlie spelling rules” [4, p. 286–296].

Other tutors offer a teaching technique like spelling quizzes – dictations. They can be an effective way to address grammatical errors in writing that may be the result of erroneous aural perception of English. For instance, the writing exhibits frequent omission of bound morphemes such as -s plural, -s’ possessive, -s third person singular, and -ed for regular verbs. Omission of articles and prepositions may also result to the fact that these

words are generally unstressed in spoken English. In addition, students’ writing may include words or phrases that are incorrect or unidiomatic but phonologically similar to correct forms e.g. “firsteval” for “first of all”, “would of” for “would have”, “under contrary” for “on the contrary”. Dictations can help students to diagnose and correct these kinds of errors as well as others [3, p. 268–269].

Nevertheless, a poor speller may follow some useful advice based on the opinions of many experts and on actual usage of commonly-spread spelling strategies. If spelling is a problem, one should consider possible sources of difficulties. Here are some causes and cures.

Cause: There is a trouble with a few commonly misspelled words as they occur so often.

Cure: Write to smb’s dictations words from the list of commonly misspelled words (the list above). Once indentified “spelling demons” is a practice writing correctly.

Cause: Confusing words that sound alike.

Cure: Keep a list of the commonly confused words that give trouble.

Cause: Handwriting prevents from following words smoothly onto the paper.

Cure: Try frequent typing. Words may flow more smoothly while typing, reducing your misspellings. Another advantage – using word processor, i.e. access to a spelling checker.

Cause: Learning disability: trouble distinguishing between sounds, visual scrambling or reversing letters.

Cure: Type the writing on a word processor equipped with a spelling checker.

Conclusion. Acknowledging that spelling problems are serious, affecting readability and conveying negative impressions is the initial but utterly crucial step to solving these problems. Pursuing perfect spelling any writer strives for high literacy and culture displaying sufficient education, intellect and erudition.

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Коваленко В. П. Труднощі англійського правопису

Анотація. Стаття аналізує причини найбільш типових помилок англійського правопису, запропоновано можливі шляхи їх усунення.

Ключові слова: помилки з правопису, омофони, співзвучні слова, невірно сприйняті на слух слова, повторюване вправляння.

Коваленко В. П. Сложности английского правописания

Аннотация. Статья анализирует причины наиболее типичных ошибок английского правописания, предлагаются возможные способы их устранения.

Ключевые слова: ошибки правописания, омофоны, созвучные слова, неверно воспринятые на слух слова, многократность практики.