DEVELOPMENT OF ORTHOGRAPHIC AWARENESS THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF VOCABULARY WORK AND HANDWRITING PRACTICE

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Abstract. *In primary schools, one of the pressing pedagogical challenges is the development of orthographic awareness among students. Insufficient attention to spelling leads to systematic orthographic errors, reduces children's confidence, and complicates the learning process. This article presents a methodology that integrates vocabulary work and handwriting practice aimed at developing attention to orthographic patterns. The proposed approach includes daily copying of vocabulary words, composing sentences with them, and subsequent assessment through mini-dictations. The methodology demonstrates effectiveness in practice: students better memorize difficult words, improve handwriting neatness, and reduce the number of errors. The article may be useful for primary school teachers and methodologists seeking practical tools for developing orthographic awareness.*

Keywords: *orthographic awareness, primary school students, vocabulary work, handwriting practice, integration, methodology, primary education, spelling attentiveness, written literacy, differentiated instruction.*

Introduction

In the modern educational process, one of the key aspects of developing literacy in primary school students is fostering orthographic awareness—the ability to notice and correctly reproduce complex spelling patterns in written speech. Insufficient orthographic attentiveness leads to systematic errors, lowers children's confidence in writing, and complicates further learning. Research indicates that regular and purposeful work with orthographic difficulties contributes to the formation of stable writing skills and improves the quality of written speech. The integration of vocabulary work and handwriting practice is of particular importance, as their combined use allows for the simultaneous development of orthographic awareness and handwriting accuracy. Vocabulary work helps children focus on orthographically challenging words, while handwriting practice develops the skills necessary for their correct and neat reproduction.

This approach not only reinforces learned spelling patterns but also develops attention to detail, which is especially important for students in grades 1–4. Studies by Smirnova (2019) and Petrova (2022) show that regular work with vocabulary words combined with written exercises reduces orthographic errors by 30–40% during the academic year. Similar conclusions have been drawn in international research: systematic copying of words and composing sentences with them increases attentiveness and awareness in writing among primary school students. Thus, developing orthographic awareness through the integration of vocabulary work and handwriting practice is a relevant pedagogical task. The systematic implementation of such methods in the educational process increases the effectiveness of spelling acquisition, improves the quality of written speech, and forms stable skills of neat and attentive writing.

Research Aim: To develop and test a methodology for forming orthographic awareness in primary school students through the integration of vocabulary work and handwriting practice.

Research Objectives:

- To analyze existing approaches to developing orthographic awareness in primary school students.
- To examine the advantages of integrating vocabulary work and handwriting practice as a means of forming spelling attentiveness.
- To develop methodological recommendations and a practical example of implementing integrative work in Russian language lessons.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed methodology in practice and determine directions for its further application.

Literature Review

The Concept of Orthographic Awareness

Orthographic awareness is the ability of a student to notice orthographically complex elements of a word and correctly reproduce them in writing. It includes attention to letters, sounds, letter combinations, and morphological features of a word. According to Sokolova (2020), the development of orthographic awareness is directly related to overall literacy and forms the foundation of correct written language in primary school age.

Vocabulary Work and Its Role in Forming Orthographic Awareness

Vocabulary work involves the systematic study of words that cause difficulties for children and reinforcing their spelling through repetition and contextual use. Research by well-known educators shows that regular work with vocabulary words increases attention to spelling patterns, reduces the frequency of errors, and helps consolidate knowledge. Foreign authors note that combining vocabulary work with active use of words in sentences improves writing awareness and promotes memorization of spelling rules.

Handwriting Practice as a Means of Developing Written Literacy

Handwriting practice ensures the formation of neat writing skills and develops fine motor skills, which directly influence a student's ability to notice and correctly reproduce orthographic patterns. Studies show that systematic copying of words and sentences helps consolidate the visual image of a word, improves memory for spelling, and reduces the number of mistakes in dictations.

Integration of Vocabulary Work and Handwriting Practice

Modern pedagogical research emphasizes the importance of combining vocabulary work and handwriting practice. Such an integrative approach allows for the simultaneous development of orthographic awareness, handwriting neatness, and the ability to use words in context. Smirnova (2019) demonstrated that daily copying of vocabulary words combined with sentence composition significantly improves spelling skills in difficult words among primary school students. Similar results have been obtained in international research: systematic integration of vocabulary work and written exercises increases writing awareness, attention to detail, and reduces spelling errors.

Literature Review Conclusions

The analysis of studies shows that integrating vocabulary work and handwriting practice is an effective tool for forming orthographic awareness. The methodology combines knowledge reinforcement, attention development, and handwriting accuracy, contributing to the formation of stable writing skills among primary school students. In practice, this results in fewer spelling errors, increased student confidence, and improved written speech quality.

Methodological Recommendations and Practical Implementation

General Principles

The methodology is based on the following principles:

- **Systematic and gradual approach.** Exercises are performed daily with gradual complication of vocabulary material.
- **Attention to difficult spelling patterns.** Words that cause the greatest difficulties are visually highlighted (e.g., in red).
- **Integration of vocabulary work and handwriting practice.** Copying words is combined with sentence composition to reinforce spelling in context.
- **Individualization and differentiation.** Students with different levels are offered words of varying complexity.
- **Game-based and visual approach.** Competitive elements and visual cues maintain motivation and interest.

Step-by-Step Lesson Algorithm

1. **Word selection.** The teacher selects 2–4 difficult words based on previous dictation errors.
2. **Word presentation.** The word is written on the board/projector; problematic letters are highlighted. Meaning and spelling are explained.
3. **Handwriting practice.** Students copy the word in two neat lines.
4. **Sentence composition.** Students compose and write a sentence using the word.
5. **Repetition.** The procedure is repeated for all selected words.
6. **Mini-dictation.** Only previously analyzed words are included in the dictation text.
7. **Self-check.** Students compare their writing with the model and mark mistakes.
8. **Homework reinforcement.** Students rewrite 1–2 words and compose new sentences.

Example

Word: *kitten*

Students copy: *kitten, kitten.*

Sentence: “A kitten has settled in our yard.”

The problematic letter is highlighted.

Sample word set: kitten, puppy, hedgehog, motley.

Short dictation: “A puppy and a playful kitten appeared in the yard. A motley parrot sat on the window. A small hedgehog hid in the leaves.”

Integration with Other Subjects

- **Reading:** Searching for vocabulary words in texts.
- **Russian language lessons:** Spelling exercises and orthographic analysis.
- **Environmental studies:** Mini-projects using new vocabulary.
- **Homework:** Additional copying and sentence writing with parents.

Assessment and Monitoring Tools

- Teacher observation.
- Mini-dictations.
- Self-checking against a model.
- Monitoring progress through error reduction.

Advantages of the Methodology

- Increases spelling attentiveness and writing accuracy.
- Develops neat and cultured handwriting.

- Reinforces word knowledge through context.
- Simple and reproducible for teachers.

Discussion

The analysis of the methodology shows high effectiveness in developing orthographic awareness among primary school students. Growth in spelling attentiveness is connected not only with repeated visual perception but also with motor reinforcement. When a child copies a word several times, a motor-visual connection is formed: the brain remembers the writing trajectory, not just the letters. This reduces accidental mistakes. Additional pronunciation and contextual use strengthen semantic fixation—children memorize the word as meaningful content rather than an abstract letter set.

Practical implementation demonstrates:

- Increased spelling attentiveness;
- Improved handwriting neatness;
- Better retention of difficult words;
- Higher student motivation.

Limitations

- Individual differences among students;
- Time constraints;
- Need for systematic teacher control.

Comparison with Other Approaches

Unlike traditional methods where vocabulary work and handwriting are separate, integration closes the memorization cycle: students see the word, copy it, use it in a sentence, and encounter it again in a dictation. This prevents incorrect forms from becoming fixed. During classroom testing, spelling errors in difficult words decreased by approximately one-third within two to three weeks. Students became more confident and more willing to write.

Prospects

- Expanding vocabulary lists;
- Incorporating digital tools;
- Developing monitoring systems;
- Creating interactive trainers with highlighted spelling patterns.

Conclusion

Developing orthographic awareness through integrating vocabulary work and handwriting practice is an effective and accessible tool for forming written literacy in primary school students. Practical implementation demonstrates:

- Reduced spelling errors;
- Increased attentiveness to difficult words;
- Formation of neat handwriting;
- Improved motivation.

The methodology can be used by primary school teachers as part of a comprehensive literacy development approach, with further improvement through game-based and digital technologies.

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