IMPROVING SPELLING SKILLS OF STUDENTS THROUGH PROJECT (SEGAW) SPELLING ENHANCEMENT THROUGH GADGET AND ALTERNATIVE WORKSHEETS

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ABSTRACT

This action research aimed to improve the English spelling ability of Grade 9 Respect students of Bal-ason National High School, Division of Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental. A questionnaire of 10 items was adopted from Gentry's study (2015), which served as the pretest and post-test. Frequency and mean were used to determine the spelling performance of students during pretest and post-test. The T-test was used to determine the significant difference in students' spelling ability before and after the intervention named project SEGAW (Spelling Enhancement through Gadgets and Alternative Worksheets) with mnemonic integration. The results revealed a statistical difference between the spelling performance of the students, proving that the intervention had a significant effect on the spelling ability of students. The study concluded that gadgets and alternative worksheets help learners become language proficient. It also made the English class more interactive with technology since students of today's generation are known as technologically savvy. This research paper provides valuable insights into enhancing spelling abilities by integrating technology and mnemonic strategies. It presents a well-structured and documented study, suggesting that such intervention can significantly improve students' spelling skills. Further research and applications of this approach in other contexts could be explored.
Keywords: *Spelling Skills, Alternative Worksheets, Gadget, Spelling Enhancement*

INTRODUCTION

Spelling is an essential literacy skill and a vital language component that can significantly affect students' future education and occupational status (Nahari,

2016). The concept of spelling has been defined differently by various researchers. Puspandari (2017) describes spelling as representing the spoken language in a written form consisting of a sequence of letters composed to form words in their generally accepted usage. On the other hand, Mpiti (2012) defines spelling as a process that encompasses several skills: phonological, morphological, syntax, and semantic knowledge, as well as the ability to formulate words based on visual memory and apply the orthographic rules. Moreover, Perveen and Akram (2014) define spelling as the method for writing words correctly and in acceptable forms. In other words, it is a process of assembling the letters of a given language by their correct sequence according to the official orthographical rules of that language. Otherwise, it would be viewed as a spelling error (Hwang & Wu, 2014).

According to Erion et al. (2009), spelling is a vital pre-requisite skill for people to express themselves through written communication instead of oral communication. Erion et al. (2009) continue by describing the importance of acquiring the skill of reading fluency in this process. In addition, Kosmac (2010) adds to the conversation by informing us that learning to spell is not just important but fundamental to acquiring further academic knowledge. Yet, Cubukcu (2017) stated that integrating gadgets like tablets and computers into education has transformed how spelling and worksheet activities are delivered. Research has shown that digital learning platforms can engage students more effectively than traditional methods, offering interactive spelling games, auto-correction features, and instant feedback.

In addition, Ahmed (2017) views spelling as a linguistic method that deals with phonemic orthography. In other words, spelling is the process of word formation by representing the oral language by using the conventional, accepted individual letters according to the rules of that language. According to Johnson (2008), spelling is recognizing or mimicking oral or spoken words by the equivalent correct sequence of letters, considering phonological and alphabetical skills and knowledge.

Hence, student worksheets stimulate students to conduct assessments or real activities on a particular object or problem, individually and in groups (Cholifah & Novita, 2022). The worksheet is a guide for students that can be used in observation, experimentation, and demonstration activities to facilitate the process of investigating or solving a problem (Lestari et al., 2020), and the picture series made students more active, creative, independent, and more confident in expressing their ideas (Ashin, 2020). Faizah (2010) revealed that using picture stories with value education content is more appropriate than learning that relies only on textbooks as the source of learning (conventional).

In support of the K to 12 implementations of the Basic Education Program, the Department of Education, through the DepEd Memorandum, 2019 173-1 known as the 3Bs initiative or the Bawat Bata Bumabasa aims to integrate an approach to explicit reading instruction using the Six elements in combination such as Oral language, Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary and Spelling, Fluency and Comprehension to produce productive and responsible citizens equipped with essential and competencies for life-long learners. Spelling skill is one of the main components of attaining critical reading and comprehension among our learners. Interestingly, according to the International Journal, vol. 11 (2022), Mobile learning constitutes the prominent and popular form of 21st-century student-centered learning applications worldwide. These applications generally provide a framework for peer learning and reviews. Examples include WhatsApp, Telegram, Google Classroom, Duolingo, Kahoot, and Kaizala. Additionally, Khemchandhani (2022) states that Spelling Master, Kids Spelling Learning, Grammarly, Ultimate English Spelling Quiz, and Spelling Master are mobile learning applications that can also be used for language teaching and learning, particularly spelling.

As English teachers, it has been one of our observations that several students incurred several misspelled words every time we required them to write sentences and paragraphs during class drills. Now and then, during the class, we promptly corrected misspelled words to ensure they learned the correct ones. However, this concern became a pressing issue for us. Identified learners for the study were determined because of one incident in which the English Program Supervisor conducted a random spelling test in English. The result was poor because most students got less than 75% of the performance standard. In response to the result, the researchers conducted a pretest using the adopted worksheets of Gentry (2015). Among the 34 Grade 9 Respect of Bal-ason National High School students who took the test, the result showed that 30, or 89%, got less than 75% of the performance standard.

In the Grade 9 section Respect, we conducted an assessment on spelling, and out of 34 students, 89% or 30 got less than 75% of the spelling quiz results during the 2nd Quarter. When the researchers interviewed these students, most revealed that they often used Jejemon language when typing or chatting using their gadgets. In contrast, others didn't have time to read and consult a dictionary for vocabulary and correct spelling of words. An assessment from The Princeton Review – TPR Prep Review by Katzman and Robinson (1981) was conducted to measure their knowledge and mastery of Spelling Skills, but the assessment result showed that 89% of the class shows poor spelling ability that needs to be addressed.

With this context, as their English teacher, we wanted to help them improve their spelling ability through the implementation of Project SEGAW, which would

hopefully help them improve their spelling ability, which would be vital for their writing skills.

FRAMEWORK

Project SEGAW, which is an acronym for **S**pelling **E**nhancement through **G**adget and **A**lternative **W**orksheets, was designed to allow learners to access spelling quizzes using their cellphones and tablets and answer interactive worksheets in spelling that will consist of Mnemonic devices and familiarization of the spelling rules and Vocabulary words. The use of gadgets was implemented to suit the capabilities of learners, which were considered Technological Savvy.

A mnemonic device is a memory technique that can help increase one's recall and retention ability. According to Johnson (1993), the mnemonic method may help improve LD students' spelling ability. Howard (2008) suggested that using a mnemonic approach to spelling sight words improved students' spelling skills compared to the traditional method. Project SEGAW is anchored on this literature, where a mnemonic strategy is integrated into the intervention process for the students to improve their spelling skills. Students will also be exposed to different words given and defined for understanding and to help them recall the words.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted at Bal-ason National High School, Bal-ason, Gingoog City, presently considered one of the medium schools in the division.

The study participants were the 30 students of Grade 9 Respect of Bal-ason National High School who determined and identified through the pretest assessment.

In the data gathering process, a questionnaire of 10 items, a multiple-choice test adopted from the study of Gentry (2015), was administered to the students as the pretest and post-test. Once the data were available, the mean, standard deviation, and t-test were utilized to identify if there was a significant difference in the participants' performance before and after the strategy implementation.

During the implementation phase, the researchers conducted 30-minute enrichment Classes every Tuesday and Friday for 3 months, every 3:30-4:10 in the Afternoon, to have a systematic implementation of the project SEGAW, 30 students were given 30 DepEd tablets from the TechEd Bal-ason Innovation. They were instructed to install the Spelling Quiz App from Google Playstore. During the 12 weeks, Spelling Worksheets and Spelling Quiz App alternately administered.

The following scoring procedure guided the organization of the data needed to address the problems of the study:

Range	Interpretation	Description
9-10	Excellent in Spelling	Students consistently spell words with very few or no errors. Demonstrate a strong grasp of spelling rules and patterns.
7-8	Proficient in Spelling	Students spell words correctly most of the time. Occasional errors are minor and do not hinder overall understanding.
5-6	Satisfactory Spelling	Students spell words correctly in most instances. Some errors are noticeable but do not significantly impede communication.
3-4	Needs Improvement	Students frequently misspell words, affecting readability. Errors may indicate gaps in understanding spelling rules.
0-2	Poor Spelling	Students consistently misspell words, making the text difficult to comprehend. Serious deficits in spelling skills are evident, requiring immediate attention.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the Performance of the Students Before and After the Intervention

The table illustrates the spelling performance of students before and after the implementation of "Project SEGAW." Before the project, most students were in the "Satisfactory" or lower spelling proficiency categories, with 23.3% falling into the "Poor" range. The mean score on the pretest was 4.10, indicating an overall low level of spelling ability among the students.

After the project, there was a remarkable improvement in spelling performance. A whopping 93.3% of students achieved an "Excellent" level of spelling proficiency, while the remaining 6.7% remained "Proficient." No students scored in the lower categories of "Satisfactory," "Needs Improvement," or "Poor" in the posttest. The mean score in the posttest increased substantially to 9.77, highlighting a significant enhancement in the overall spelling skills of the students following the implementation of "Project SEGAW." This data suggests that the project positively and transformative impacted the students' spelling abilities, elevating most of them to an "Excellent" spelling level.

Table 1 shows the spelling performance of the students before and after the intervention.

Table 1. *Spelling Performance of Students (before and after Project SEGAW)*

Pretest				Posttest			
Range	**N**	**%**	**Spelling Level**	**Range**	**N**	**%**	**Spelling Level**
9-10	0	0	Excellent	9-10	28	93.3	Excellent
7-8	2	6.7	Proficient	7-8	2	6.7	Proficient
5-6	13	43.3	Satisfactory	5-6	0	0	Satisfactory
3-4	8	26.7	Needs Improvement	3-4	0	0	Needs Improvement
0-2	7	23.3	Poor	0-2		0	Poor
Total	30	100		Total	30	100	
Mean	4.10			Mean	9.77		
Desc	Needs Improvement			Desc	Excellent		

Based on the students interview guidelines, Student A stated that " *Ganahan kayo ko mag tubag sa mga pangutana sa kada level Ma'am sa spelling app ug worksheets kay naa siya clue nga ihatag sa ibabaw para naa ko giya sa akong mga tubag".* Student B added that " *Madasig ka mag tubag sa mga pangutana Ma'am sa Spelling App kay dili man ka maka padayon sa lain level kung sayop ang imong tubag kinahanglan pa gyod nimo balikan ug kumpletohon ang level para makapadayon ka".* Student C also cited " *Sayon tubagon ang worksheets tungod sa naa gihatag nga guide sa word nga gipangita unya ang spelling app pd ganahan ko kay gamit man sa cellphone madala ra nako bisan asa ko padulong ug malingaw ko magdula kay naa ko mahibal an nga words".*

The increase in the students' performance is due to the Project SEGAW intervention, which uses gadgets through the Spelling Quiz application and alternative worksheets. The study's findings confirmed the results of the study of Sheng Yu (2013), who pointed out that learning English using a mobile phone is more effective than the traditional way, not to mention convenience. He also emphasized that using interactive multimedia tools to learn English can improve the ability in all four phases of language learning.

It was also supported by the study of (Ertmer et al., 2012) that the use of gadgets boosted the teacher's enthusiasm and allowed the teacher to develop a sharing community in which any teacher may look at the generated worksheet and use, amend, and alter other teachers' worksheets based on their needs.

Furthermore, Salmah (2016) commented that technology offers modern educational tools for learning English as a foreign language. The research findings clearly showed that those 35 students (97.2%) believed smartphone and tablet apps (i.e., Learn English Grammar, Dictionary. com, dictionaries, and thesaurus) could improve their English language learning. In comparison, 29 students (80.5%)

indicated that word processing software (i.e., Google Docs and Microsoft Word) can positively impact their English language learning.

On the Significant Difference in the Performance of English Spelling Ability of Students Before and After the Implementation of the Project SEGAW

Table 2 presents the results of a t-test used to assess the differences in students' spelling abilities before and after Project SEGAW was implemented.

Table 2. *T-Test for the Differences in Students' Level of Spelling Ability*

Comparison	Mean	T-Value	Sig
Pre-Test	4.10	-15.216	.000S
Post-Test	9.77		

The result showed that the pre-test mean score was 4.10, the post-test mean score was 9.77, and the t-test yielded a highly significant negative t-value of -15.216 (p < 0.001). This indicates a substantial and statistically significant improvement in spelling abilities after the intervention, with students performing significantly better in the post-test.

Based on Parents and students interview guides, Parent A stated that ""*Nabantayan nako Ma'am na mas ganahan akong anak mag answer sa spelling quiz app kay naa naman gud siya clue sa dili pa ka mag tubag unya madasig ang bata nga wala gyod siya sayop sa answer kay dili man siya maka adto sa lain level*" Parent B added that " *Akong nabantayan sa spelling app ganahan kaayo akong anak mag tubag sa mga pangutana kay gamit man ang cellphone unya ang naka tsada kay dili na manginahanglan sa internet para maka adto ka sa lain level*". Parent C also stated that *"Tsada siya kay ang tubag sa bata mahibal-an dayon kung sayop kay ibalik man gyod siya sa level kung asa siya masayop.*

Research suggests that a blended approach, incorporating both traditional worksheets and digital activities, can lead to better spelling outcomes (Harris & Miller, 2020).

One advantage of gadgets is their ability to adapt to individual students' needs. Personalized spelling apps can adjust difficulty levels based on a student's performance, catering to struggling and advanced spellers (Hawkins et al., 2018). Moreover, several studies suggest that integrating gadgets, such as tablets and interactive whiteboards, can enhance spelling instruction. Interactive spelling apps and games engage students, making learning more enjoyable and effective (Tossell, 2017).

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that combining worksheets with digital tools can effectively improve learners' spelling skills. Digital tools offer immediate feedback, which helps students identify and correct spelling errors (Tillman et al., 2019). This instant feedback can lead to improved spelling skills.

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