COMMON SPELLING MISTAKES IN STUDENTS' ESSAYS AND BLOGS

Summary

This article analyses spelling in two different genres of texts written by students during the State Lithuanian Language and Literature Exam 2014: a hundred of essays written during the State Lithuanian Language and Literature Exam and a hundred and sixty blog entries written by 15 to 18-year-old people within 2012 to 2014. The study aims at finding out what kind of spelling mistakes are typically found in the students' essays and blogs, as well as explain their reasons and compare them.

The study revealed that common spelling mistakes found in essays and blogs are different. This may be influenced by a number of factors, such as different text genres, methods of writing (essays are written by hand, while blogs are typed by computer), writing background (essays are written by all students, meanwhile blogs – only by the most active (and probably the most literate) part of students.

Essays mostly contain vowel and diphthong spelling mistakes, while diacritical vowel spelling mistakes are infrequent (most of which are diacritical vowel spelling mistakes made at the end of the word); another group of spelling mistakes is spelling a word jointly or separately. Mostly, mistakes are made when writing negatives, particles, and word combinations with a single meaning. In essays, capitalisation mistakes were found. Most frequent mistakes occur when writing denominations and proper nouns. Relatively, few consonant spelling mistakes were found. There were essays where almost all the letters were written without diacritical marks.

Blogs mostly contain the mistakes of writing words jointly and separately, while vowel and diphthong mistakes were not so common. Major part of diacritical mark spelling mistakes is writing of diacritical marks in the accusative singular and plural genitive, as well as at the end of pronominal words. As in essays, there were found least of consonant spelling mistakes.

It should be noted that all blog texts analysed were written in the Lithuanian letters (not merely "lisping" texts). Blogs, unlike the essays, contain mistakes specific to electronic texts.

This study shows that spelling still poses difficulties to many students. Students are not always able to write individual words correctly and sometimes they do not observe the rules systematically. The difficulties are apparently caused by a variety of reasons, such as the abundance of rules and their exceptions, teaching of spelling, information technologies, etc.

KEY WORDS: *essay, spelling, spelling mistake, literacy, blog.*

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