Writing on screen for improving German orthography

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The IDeRBlog-Project

Individuell Differenziert Rechtschreiben mit Blogs =
Individually differentiated spelling with blogs www.iderblog.eu

Developing and providing an internet platform where
- the development of text writing skills
- the acquisition of German orthographic competence and
- the use of modern means of communication and digital instruments
are combined (cf. Edtstadler, Ebner, Ebner 2015)

Interdisciplinary team from 6 institutions in Germany, the German-speaking part of Belgium and Austria supported by the European Commission

Erasmus+
Background

German orthography:
- not as transparent as Finnish, but also not as opaque as English
- correct spelling in German very important/prestigious, but comprehensive concepts of instruction are still needed

Qualitative analysis of orthographic mistakes:
- considering type of mistakes for providing specific exercises is highly efficient, but also very costly (cf. Edtstadler 2016)

Use of modern means of communication and digital tools:
- attractive for children, but advantages are not (extensively) used, e.g. voice output (cf. Edtstadler & Gabriel 2016)
- motivation for writing and re-writing by providing relevant reasons and audience (cf. Gov. of South Australia 2011)
The Platform for Students

- user-friendly development of cooperation among students
- Target group: German-speaking students aged between 8 and 12

Students Workflow

- Starting a new text
- access to written texts
Students Workflow

Starting a new text
→ Student writes text
→ text is checked

→ use of intelligent dictionary – the core of the platform

The Intelligent Dictionary

In case of a (coded) orthographic mistakes, specific feedback for correcting is provided

1. Standard Feedback

"Pronounce the words clearly. If you hear a long vowel, then use only consonant"

2. „Fresch“-Systems
### The Intelligent Dictionary

#### Category: Spelling of `<i>`/`<ie>`

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Phenomena</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pronounce the word and think about the spelling of the <code>i</code>-sound.</td>
<td><code>&lt;i&gt;</code> instead of <code>&lt;ie&gt;</code> for <code>/i:/</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although you can hear a long <code>i</code>, you do not spell it.</td>
<td><code>&lt;ie&gt;</code> instead of <code>&lt;e&gt;</code> for <code>/i/</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>&lt;i&gt;</code> instead of <code>&lt;e&gt;</code> for <code>/i:/</code></td>
<td><code>&lt;e&gt;</code> instead of <code>&lt;ie&gt;</code> for <code>/i/</code></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- feedback is neutral and patient
- encourages the development and application of spelling strategies
- forces to think about own spelling (metalinguistic awareness)
- autonomous correction in a motivating context (Klicpera et al. 2003)

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### The Intelligent Dictionary

28 categories of the qualitative analysis are divided into 143 phenomena of orthographic mistakes in order to provide 58 different feedbacks for correcting the mistakes

- Student gets feedback in written form or via audio files
- Teacher gets an overview of the type of mistakes
- based on this analysis: appropriate selection of exercises and courses

Not all possible mistakes of all words coded (yet):
- Use of Language Tool
- Teachers assign
Teachers Workflow

Publishing Texts

After teachers’ revision, students can publish their text

= Existence of a real audience within class/school or even world-wide

Other users can read and comment on the text

→ higher motivation for correcting and reading texts
→ development of media competence

Anonymity ensured

- by the use of nicknames
- teachers have to revise texts before (e.g. mentioning personal data)
Training database

- Contains online and offline exercises
- Preselection and recommendations are made by the system
- Congruently ordered in categories of spelling mistakes

Furthermore:
online courses with explanations of orthographic phenomena

Online Courses

15 online courses
explanations with examples
online exercises
worksheets with solutions
interactive glossary

Conclusion

The platform aims at combining text writing and sharing with improving German orthographic competence by using computers and tablets.

Advantages for students:
- Motivating context for writing and correcting texts

Advantages for teachers:
- Insight in problematic areas of orthography of their students
- Huge amount of exercises and age-appropriate online courses
- Easy management of text corrections

Advantages for researchers:
- Better understanding of the process of spelling acquisition

Literature


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