



## **School of English Language Teaching**

**Final Investigation Paper, Tesina Modality to  
obtain Bachelor's Degree on English Teaching**

**Rule-based spelling strategy to improve  
spelling skills on irregular simple present  
verbs conjugation on seventh graders from  
Centro Educativo Nuestra Señora de  
Lourdes in the first quarter, 2019**

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## Dedication

To my family, friends and everybody who made this possible.

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To my parents who stayed with me during this process of obtaining my degree and giving me emotional support when going through tough times.

To Anthony Salazar who gave me inspiration and strength when there was not any and motivated me into finishing this research.

**CHAPTER I**  
**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

## **1.1 Antecedent of the problem**

The English language is a fascinating language that is gaining relevance every day. Because of its functionality around the world and the opportunities that could rise by its proper use, approximately more than 1.5 billion people are learning English worldwide. Beare (2018). Like any other language, English has certain aspects that are part of the necessary information required for its learning; out of the four primary skills (listening, speaking, reading and **writing**) the spelling area functions as the basis for writing and vocabulary learning process.

Spelling is connected with other aspects of English that are essential but also with communication. Sadly, the incorporation of spelling in English classes might take away the excitement of language learning or might frustrate the learners because of how confusing the vocabulary can be.

Stevenson (2017) implied that the lack of practice or the technological advances could affect the way that humans practice the language and that might reflect a downhill on the spelling skills. That is why the educational community realized a necessity on this topic and is creating innovative strategies that can help the students spelling skills; these strategies are included in this paper.

### **1.1.1 Justification of the problem:**

The techniques used for teaching the correct spelling of words could be not enough to help the students while learning basic vocabulary. That basic vocabulary will be present with the students almost their entire life, and it is relevant to establish an adequate English base. Also, spelling could be perceived as "tedious" or "difficult" because every time a student forgets a letter or arrange the letters



incorrectly loses a point; without realizing that spelling is more than that. Teachers have to find the way to implement a particular space to spelling exercises, some words in English are hard to spell on the first encounter with them and, with extra help and reasoning, the students can find themselves appreciating the rules and spelling of English words.

## **1.2 Problem Formulation**

This investigation intends to try or implement strategies that could help the students in the spelling area and present the results of the students after two months of application. Also, this paper aims to inquire the point of view of the students regarding their experience with the strategies; counting on the progress that they could show on the applied tests. The intention is to explore the various options of strategies for this topic and how one of those strategies could work out regarding the level up of students from seventh grade coming from different elementary schools. The research question of this investigation is: Could a specific strategy help the students on spelling skills deficiencies?

## **1.3 Objectives**

### **1.3.1 General objective:**

Implementing the rule-based spelling strategy to level up the student's spelling skills in English for seventh graders with mixed English levels.

### **1.3.1 Specific objectives:**

- Explaining the importance of spelling as a pillar of communication and on the English language learning process.
- Applying the rule-based spelling strategy to seventh graders for the similar improving means described with observations for each.
- Analyzing the impact of the strategy applied to the student's academic performance and personal growth through a questionnaire.

## **1.4 Limitations and Scope**

### **1.4.1 Limitations**

The limitations presented on this research paper were the lack of strategies for spelling purposes, involving just a specific intelligence (visual). Regarding the information founded, the majority of written works were written some time ago, that might differ with the actual reality.

### **1.4.2 Scope**

This paper wants to point out the benefits of using these spelling strategies and how to execute them on the classroom as a workable One of the points not included in this investigation are the specific possible reasons or antecedents why the student's spelling skills are deficient. These research results are exclusively the reality for the Seventh Grade group from the Centro Educativo Nuestra Señora de Lourdes high school located in Heredia, Costa Rica.

**CHAPTER II**  
**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

## **2.1 Contextual Framework:**

This investigation has been done in Centro Educativo Nuestra Señora de Lourdes. This institution is located in Santa Rosa of Santo Domingo, Heredia. This private education center was founded in 1991 by its principal Lic. Aracelly Leandro.

The main principle of this center is the teaching of values as peace and respect and sharing the faith for God. The main objective of the institution is to obtain a better human being from its students. It is a religious Catholic-Christian based institution founded with humanistic aspects.

This institution offers preschool, primary and secondary education on their services. They also have access to psychology services and the possibility of certifications (Cambridge exam...) in order to give the students a chance of progress on their academic and professional future.

The facilities have 14 classrooms, one classroom per group. They also have individual rooms for multimedia purposes, a Reading laboratory, a playing room, a teacher's room, one room to attend parents and another one to solve financial issues. It also has a reception room and a cafeteria.

The institution welcomes approximately more than one hundred students in their institution. Each grade has only one group.

The institution doesn't have any admission exam so every student that wants to enter this center could do it.

## **2.2 Definition of spelling:**

According to the Cambridge dictionary (n.d), spell could be defined as: "*To form a word or words with the letters in the correct order.*" Having this definition, we can inquire that the purpose of spelling is to state a word as it is; without changing anything about it. To spell correctly, the person has to know the letters, to identify them alone and in their predetermined order to make the spelling adequate.

## **2.3 Spelling as a way of communication:**

Communication is not limited to oral interchange, but it is often the base of the first contact with a language system. Humans start to communicate with gestures, sounds and, subsequently, get familiar with the language that surrounds them based on what Matthews (n.d) said. Humans are observers by nature, often repeat actions and attitudes from what they see frequently and adapt them for themselves.

Stating that the oral element of communication is just a little part of it, the written communication is as important as the verbal utterance; humans can express themselves in multiple ways. The oral and written communications have the finality of showing what one wants to say; the oral one being more natural and instinctive. Spelling, on the other hand, is a factor that is learned on the later educational process of human beings. Often, the alphabet is thought since the very beginning of education, functioning as a standard system of letters and sounds universally known. Based on that statement, Horobin (2013) feels that the alphabet

and various grammatical rules recognized by the people can enhance and facilitate communication because of his practical aim.

When someone spells, he/she is creating a word that could be understood by many people, opening the possibility to find new vocabulary and clarify foreign or unknown words for the speaker (unclear names or last names). Spelling can expand the way that humans communicate, pretty much allowing the possibilities of interaction and limitless understanding in the oral and written form.

#### **2.4 The importance of spelling on the English Language:**

As previously stated, spelling has a unique role in communication and writing. While learning a language, the students have to immerse themselves on phonetics, grammatical rules, reading comprehension, different English accents and finally: vocabulary. Spelling and vocabulary are strongly related. Baumann and Kameenui (2012, p. 116) mentioned that: "*From a teacher's point of view, morphology is important for two major reasons: spelling and vocabulary.*" The author introduced the term morphology, meaning the study of word's formation, and stated that the spelling of a vocabulary word could give context to the meaning of it for its future usage. A few examples of words with a plain meaning contain Latin origin: village coming from *villa* meaning house, aquarium coming from *aqua* meaning water; blend words as *earthquake*, *newspaper*, *paintbrush*, and *grandparents* to name a few.

Spelling is also connected to reading and writing. A study conducted by L.C Ehri appearing on Matthews (n.d) informative text informed that spelling is

associated with reading because it promotes the alphabetic system to the learners. From this statement, a possible conclusion of this theory is that the constant contact with texts could function as a practice for the students and could provide a more comprehensive knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical rules used on writing. The learner uses his/her spelling skills to identify or write a word in English, confirming that all skills are interconnected.

### **2.5 Spelling on the modern days:**

Without a doubt, technology has affected the way that humans communicate and interact. Nowadays, one of the standard practices by human beings involving spelling is texting. The relevance of spelling is more prominent now because the constant technology upgrades that allows people to write without any mistakes using an auto corrector on their electronic devices. This action is unintentionally fading the ability of spelling that humans have, depending on a third party or electronic device to write a text. According to a survey applied on the U.K included on Greenfield's article (2012): "*...more than 2,000 British people, one-third of the participants could not spell definitely, and two-thirds could not spell separate*".

On the other hand, the cell phone's auto corrector could help the learners and native speakers to be aware of their mistakes and confusion of words by misspelling. Actually, there are technological tools that people can use in order to spell or generate a text without errors as text-to-speech (reading the words out loud creating automatic text almost simultaneously) and contextual spell check (focusing on the spelling of the words used in context to check if the word is the

appropriate one) Cunningham (2016). These tools are open for everybody and are a valuable source on the acquisition of a new language orally or in a written way.

### **2.6 Spelling relevance on this educational system:**

In Costa Rica, the MEP (Ministerio de Educación Pública) organizes an Annual Spelling Bee contest in which students from different parts of the country and different levels can participate and expand their vocabulary. According to the MEP page (2018), the students are given a list of words that could appear on the contest and the students can look for the meaning and contextualization. The winner of each area can participate in the national competition and win a special prize.

In this contest, the students practice the alphabet and the vocabulary usage, as well, the pronunciation of the words and letters required on the words selected. These events can open doors to students that feel encouraged to learn English and for those that are still struggling with it.

### **2.7 Strategies to improve the spelling skills in English:**

Multiple strategies were born for the necessity that students present while spelling a word, especially for ESL students. Some of the strategies founded on diverse literature were:

- Rule-Based Spelling Strategy:

This strategy relies on the existent English spelling rules that many words share.

HowToSpell (n.d) summarized this strategy on the importance of the teacher's explanation to understand the regulations and the benefits that it could



give as use the rules for multiple words in an adequate way and remember patterns due to these rules.

These rules can apply to verbs, nouns, and vocabulary; some of the rules are:

the "i before e except after c" rule, Changing "y" to "ies", Adding -es to words ending in -s, -ss, -z -ch -sh -x, Changing the "y" to "i" when adding suffix endings and Most words ending in "-f" or "-fe" change their plurals to "-ves"  
HowToSpell (n.d)

The use of this methodology is often preferred because it is claimed to be the best or most useful in special needs students or students that need extra help in spelling or learning process in general because it develops the creation of patterns in order to make up a word. Tomlin (2005).

This could give the student a more significant insight into the world that could cause a reading encouragement so that the learners could expand their vocabulary and the discovery of arrangements in words. These actions could open new possibilities of understanding towards the words that the learner consistently uses and the ones that the learner is not yet to use.

- Dual-Route Approach:

The Dual-Route approach first proposed in 1922 by De Sassure implies that: *“Written language processing is accomplished by two distinct but interactive procedures that are referred to as the lexical and non-lexical.”* This approaches reading and spelling on the retention of orthographic and phonological

representations regarding the lexical part. In other words, the authors of this approach rely on the familiarity of the vocabulary and the contextualization of the word, letting the learners being visual with the whole word rather than interpreting it in little parts. On the other hand, the non-lexical route preaches the relation of phoneme-grapheme and concentrates in words that are spelled as their sound.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d), phoneme means: "*Any of the abstract units of the phonetic system of a language that correspond to a set of similar speech sounds which are perceived to be a single distinctive sound in the language*" and grapheme corresponds to the unit on the written system.

Both routes have to work together in order for success. The lexical route works perfectly with random words, those that can present special rules in their spelling if the reading aspect is imperative as the way of memorizing the spelling of the words. The non-lexical route works perfectly on dictations or oral representation and short words that easily comply with basic phoneme-grapheme rules. In this approach, the listening and reading skills are simultaneously getting stimulated, and it seems that their use functions on spelling prediction could improve or work on students that could present difficulties or neurological conditions as demonstrated on an investigation conducted by Beeson ET all (2007).

- Morphemic Spelling Strategies.

This series of activities focus on morphology; also stated by Ripple (2015) as knowing the meaning of a word. As seen previously many words on the English language come from other languages (etymology) meaning, as Westwood (2016, p. 55) analyzed, the morphology and etymology give the comprehension of the word to the learner and could help to the spelling of it. The learning of prefixes (word before a word) and suffixes (word after a word) can easy the spelling process.

Besides, the compound words (two words combined with new meaning) under study can provide an extensive vocabulary to the student and can allow them to spell words that could be challenging for them.

The presentation of a word from a vocabulary group can be used to unfold new words related to the “principal word” and can be used in texts or activities that promote the application and creation of them.

- Mnemonics Strategy:

The following educational tactic involves the use of memory and close attention to color, notes, and phrases. It was stated by Westwood (2016, p. 29) that this technique uses the accurate consecution of words to create an expression that learners can easily recall. The repetition of the phrase can indicate the use of the creativity of the learner to develop an aid that can allow him/her to remember difficult words with an unusual combination of consonants or complicated spelling rules.

Campos (2017, p. 37) opined that: "*The human mind tends to remember relatable information, meaning information that can be related to a feeling, a physical sensation, a humorous situation or a place. Mnemonics are a great asset to education leveraging the functionality of the human brain*". The author praises how this strategy can be meaningful to the students and can end the stereotypical stress and yawning from spelling classes.

Westwood (2016, p.29) added that mnemonics could be oral; however, this author suggested the use of pictures, banners or other visual aid to remember the sequence and pronunciation of the words.

- Kinesthetic Strategy:

Kinesthetic intelligence involves movement. The most important aspect that this strategy looks for is the use of hands-on activities and the active participation of students. Lewis (2014, p.24). This author wrote about different experiments made with children in which the body movement and dynamic activities where the kids cheer lead words, spelling them with chanting and preparing a little choreography produced a significance in the students, helping them in the acquisition of spelling skills.

The repetition of words formation can also help. One activity that might help kinesthetic students is the formation of words with cards, repetitive writing, and games involving body movement. These activities could raise awareness of possible mistakes done by the learners and opens an opportunity of learning new

ways of spelling through productive activities; catching a broader learning audience.

- **Phonetic Spelling Strategy:**

This specific strategy relies on sounds and their matching representation translated in letters. The theory for this strategy stated that this spelling strategy develops phonetic awareness, leading to an exploration of letter and how they are arranged on words and their relationship with the sound or pronunciation of them.

Snowball (n.d) wrote that for her there are three strategies for the phonetic way of spelling. The first one is develop phonetic awareness, the second is exploring the sounds and the third one is discovering spelling patterns.

For phonetic awareness, she wrote that:

I find that children develop the ability to hear sounds in words when I involve them in lots of shared reading of poems, chants, songs, and big books with repetitive refrains and rhyme. I ask children to listen for and identify rhyming words, and clap when they hear them.

Taking into account the students' known words, she created a discovery class in which the students accompanied with the teacher, analyzed words that were pronounced alike and looked up for the written word to establish a relationship with the sounds and letters.

When exploring sounds, the teacher has to identify how many sounds could be written and help the students find patterns to search structures in common. The encouragement of students in this strategy is really important.

This strategy is known to be applied on children population since the written and writing aspect is not that present.

**CHAPTER III**  
**METHODOLOGIC FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1 Type of investigation:**

The nature of this investigation is qualitative due to the intention of inquiring the possible improve (either mental or academic) of the students while applying the rule-based strategy on the conjugation of verbs in simple present.

#### **3.1.1 Purpose:**

The purpose of the investigation is to show the possible results for the application of the rule-based spelling strategy and how it can affect the students (positively or negatively).

#### **3.1.2 Temporal Dimension**

This transversal research will be divided into three weeks: on one week the spelling review will contain rule-based activities focusing on teamwork and association with previous info studied; on the second week, the individual rule-based activities will be applied on the spelling activities and on the final week the questionnaire will be administered to the students. The observations will be done during the application of the activities.

#### **3.1.3 Framework**

The framework for this investigation is micro. The objects of inquiry are the group of seventh graders from the Centro Educativo Nuestra Señora de Lourdes, students that, this year, are getting involved with more complex grammar and spelling topics



### **3.1.4 Nature:**

This investigation contains qualitative descriptions of student's improvement, attitude, and results from practices through the implementation of a specific methodology. Also, the questionnaire includes questions that involve the students' opinion on spelling and their personal growth involving their learning process on words spelling, corresponding to a qualitative nature.

### **3.1.5 Character:**

The character for this research is retrospective. This paper describes different methodologies to teach spelling, previously written by other authors, already applied to diverse populations that, somehow, helped the students to overcome common difficulties on spelling during their learning process.

## **3.2 Subjects and information sources:**

### **3.2.1 First Hand:**

Results of both practices, observations did through the application of the methodologies; questionnaires applied to the participants on the activities.

### **3.2.2 Second hand:**

*Principled Grammar teaching* by Rob Batstone and Rod Ellis (2009)

### **3.3 Sample selection:**

#### **3.3.1 Population:**

The selected audience was the seventh-grade group (7-A) from the Centro Educativo Nuestra Señora de Lourdes. These nine students were in a range from 12 to 13 years old.

#### **3.4 Instruments and techniques to recollect the information.**

**Observation:** The observations are going to be applied during the application of the activities that could measure improvement. The observations will be descriptive, and notes will be taken if necessary. The aspects that are relevant for this investigation and that will be described are teamwork, expansion of knowledge, functionality, weaknesses, and improvement.

**Questionnaire:** The questionnaire is going to be applied to the population once the activities are done. That questionnaire will contain questions regarding the student's personal experience with spelling and preference of activities when learning English. Every student is going to have the opportunity to express their concerns on the questionnaire.

**Techniques:** The ruled based activities are going to be applied in a specific order. The first activity will involve the students on an "explanatory scenario," in groups they will present the rules to their classmates using visual aids and completing a little chart with conjugated verbs to its later analysis on this paper.

The second activity to collect information will correspond to the students conjugating "unusual" verbs or verbs that the learners don't know about. The

teacher previously chose the verbs and created a PowerPoint presentation to explain the students the respective meaning while the students conjugated each verb using the –S spelling rules in a little piece of paper. After that, the students and teacher checked the answers on the board.

The results obtained from both activities will be analyzed academically on first hand. Later, the results of the questionnaire will be combined with the academic results and observations; leading to the conclusions drawing.

It is pertinent to mention that more spelling activities were done during the investigation time; however the ones described previously are the chosen ones to be used for investigation and evaluation purposes only.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**DATA ANALYSIS**

## **4.1 Diagnostic of the current situation**

### **4.1.1 Description of data collected**

This chapter contains the results of the instruments applied and the possible principal findings taking into account the current learning position from the students.

The students were on the process of learning and applying the simple present rules, leading to a likely explanation of rules to add the special ending on third-person verbs.

While the data was collected, there were academic evaluations for the simple present tense before, and the data collection intended to measure improvement in a clear way.

The observations were divided and described meticulously to give the complete insight into the class possible, and the results of the questionnaire were displayed on charts to notice the contrast of answers.

#### 4.1.2 Description and analysis of data

##### See Annex 1

##### Descriptive Observation #1

Activity applied: Exposition about rules applied on verbs in simple present referring to third person form.

Instructions: The students were asked to get in groups in order to explain the rules applied to simple present verbs when using the third person. After that, they had to complete a chart with verbs.

Aspects observed:

**Teamwork:** The students worked efficiently and created their visual aid to explain the rules. They also helped each other and solve problems.

**Expansion of knowledge:** The students surely got a broader understanding in verb conjugation regarding the simple present tense. There was no introduction of new vocabulary.

**Functionality:** The activity functioned as a consolidation activity. The activity was made to vouch for student's previous knowledge of the topic and operated as a way to "fresh up" items previously seen.

**Weaknesses:** This activity worked overall well, even though, due to the groups established some students didn't answer the charts alone and copied information. Also, some students had a preference to work alone or decided to function on their own.

**Improvement:** The students seemed to improve on the application of these rules. The –ES rule was the most correct used rule on the chart, having presence five times. However, 3 of 9 learners overused the rules studied, applying them on verbs that didn't comply with the rules specifications. Some examples: Faint / Faintes, Sell / Selles and Borrow / Borrowes.

The students seemed to make a relation with the rules and the verbs that they usually use. However, the students were clear and confessed that the rules were confusing (especially –es and –ies).

All the students finished the activity. Some students were commenting that they were sure that they "had everything wrong" and that they "were not sure about it."

## Descriptive Observation #2

Activity applied: Simple present verbs conjugation using the weirdest verbs in English.

Instructions: The teacher presented some weird verbs in English that the students might not know about. While the teacher explained the meaning, the students had to conjugate the verbs using the –S rules studied.

Aspects observed:

**Teamwork:** The students worked individually on this activity.

**Expansion of knowledge:** The students, besides the conjugation rules, learned or had contact with verbs that they never heard of before. Also, they have presented synonyms for these verbs for their use.

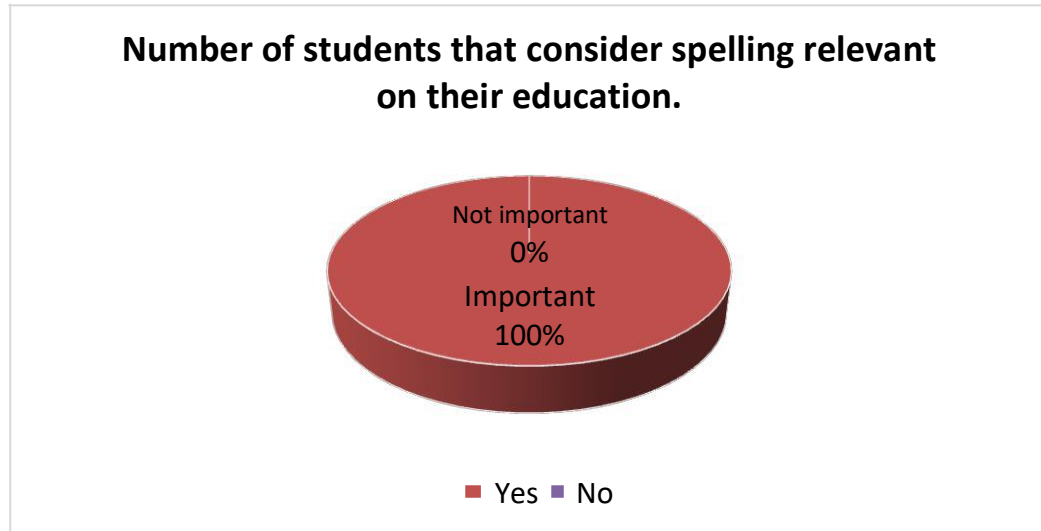
**Functionality:** The activity functioned as a presentation/practice activity. The aim of the exercise was to make sure if the students can use the rules studied in class on any verb presented (not necessarily on known verbs).

**Weaknesses:** This activity created a sense of concern among the students because they thought that the definition of the verbs was part of their knowledge for the upcoming exam.

**Improvement:** The majority of students improved on the application of the –IES rule. The students seemed to understand that it was not necessary to know the definition of a verb to conjugate it correctly.

On the other hand, the students used some rules on verbs that didn't require it or required another rule. Some examples are Bid / Bidies, Interlay / Interlaies, and Sow / Soves.

All the students finished the activity.

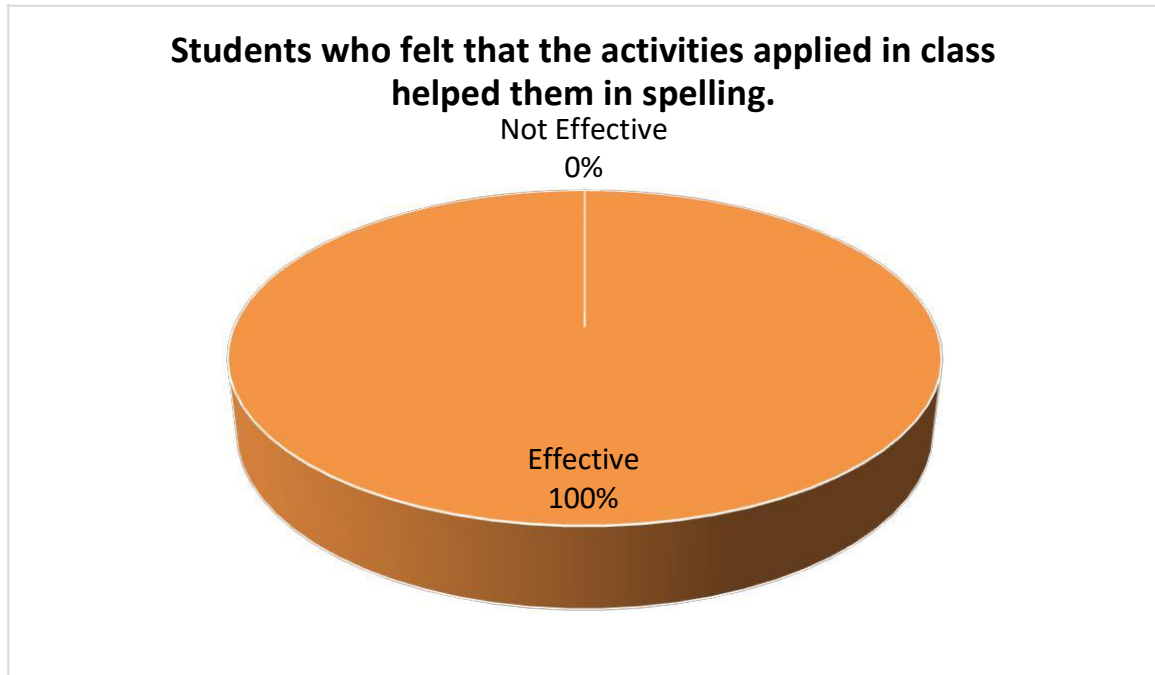
**Questionnaire Results: See Annex #2 for questionnaire****Graphic #1**

*Source: Data collected in a questionnaire applied to students by Castro (April 2019)*

On this question, all the students considered necessary for the learning process of spelling while learning English. We could find that the students know that what they are going to learn is essential to consolidate or incorporate a new language to their knowledge.

Also, they seemed to be willing to improve their writing skills and all the elements that form a tremendous English base. One student commented that he thought that writing and spelling "was the most important part of the English subject."



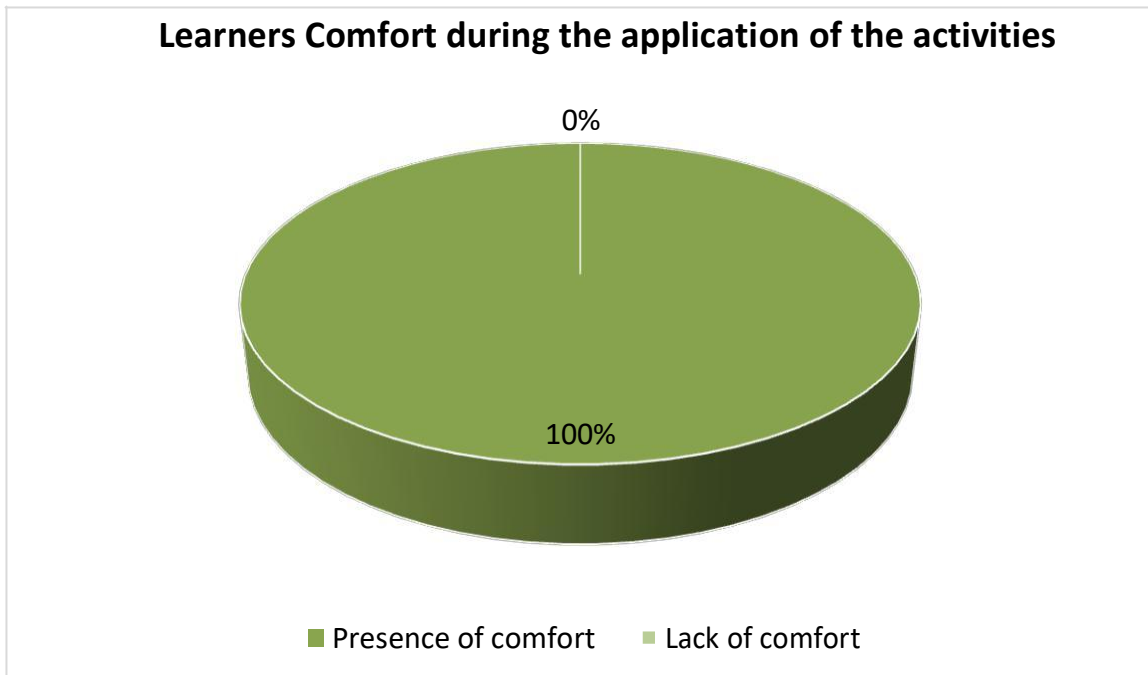
**Graphic #2**

*Source: Data collected by J, Castro (April 2019).*

The students affirmed that they felt a positive difference when these activities were applied. A possible interpretation is that the constant practice of spelling and the incorporation of a strategy to practice spelling on this kind of verbs has gradually worked positively on students that did know about the simple present tense and the ones that didn't know.

It is essential to mention that the students' English level in this specific group isn't the same (some students don't come from bilingual primary schools), though all of the students believe that their spelling skills presented an improvement equally.

Graph #3

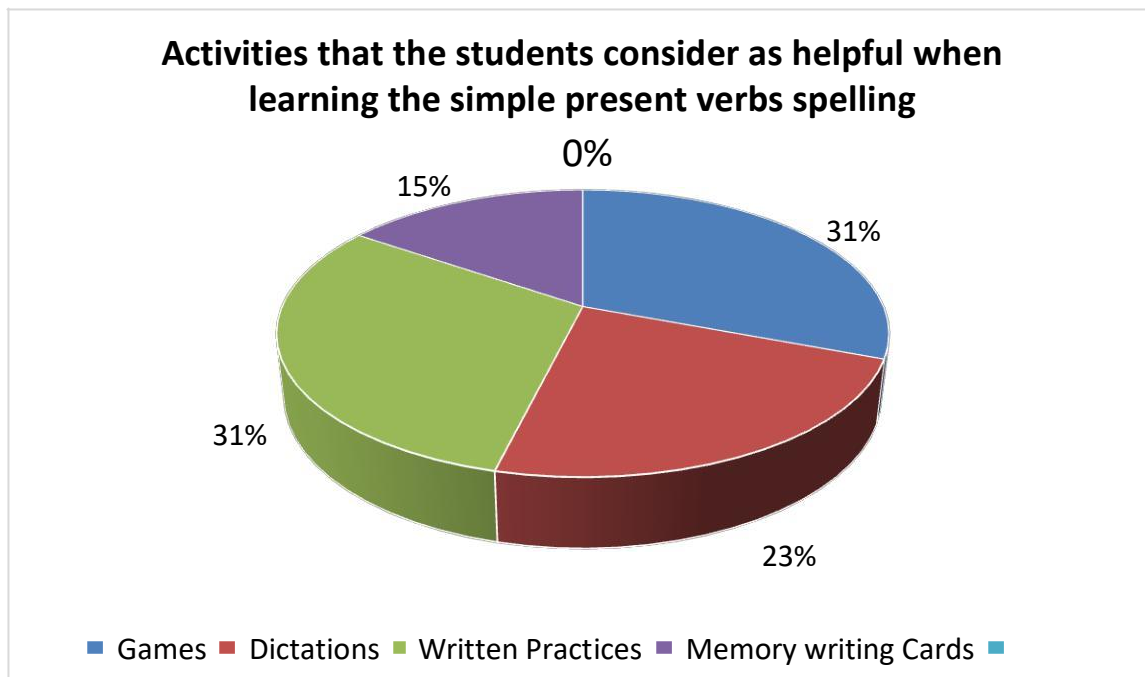


*Source: Data collected by J, Castro (April, 2019).*

The students stated that they felt that the environment while practicing spelling using the activities applied was adequate to learn and, for instance, they felt comfortable.

Based on their opinion, the activities were "complete" and did not create an uncertainty whether the activity is relevant to their needs or doubts regarding spelling in simple present verbs.

Graph #4

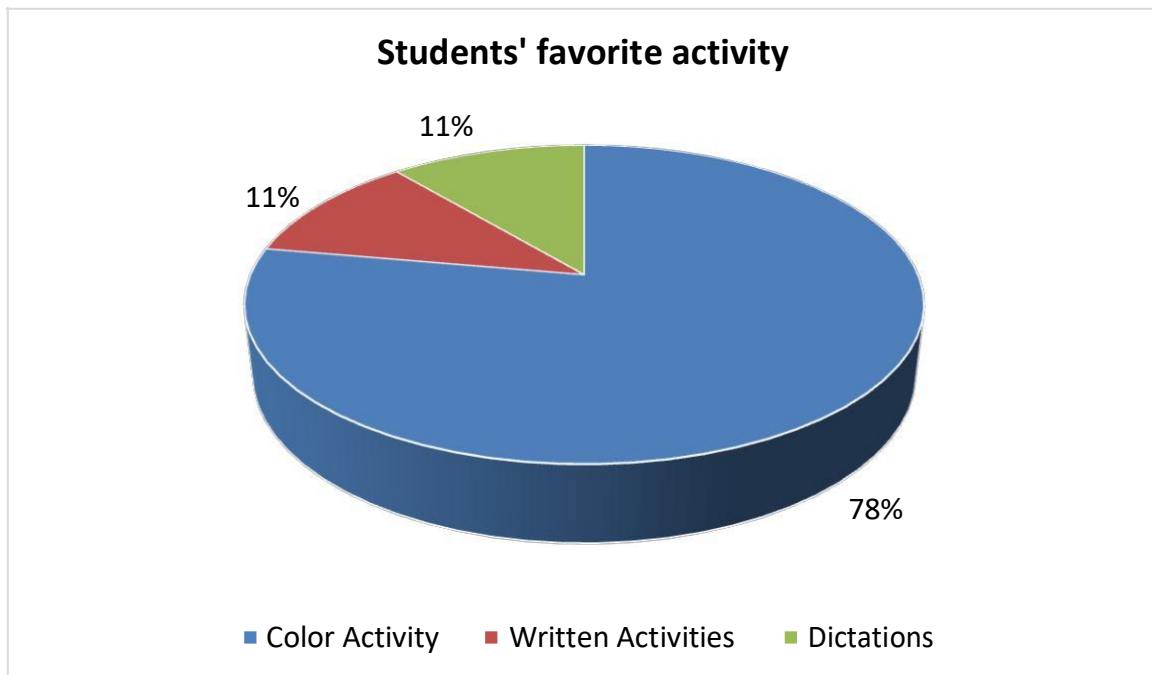


Other Source: Data collected by J, Castro (April, 2019).

On this question, the students gave their opinion about some activities that were applied in the period of this investigation and activities that are being used since the beginning of the school year.

Two students (#1 & #2) chose more than one option; the rest of the group of students picked just one. The results showed that four students (**31%**) considered that games were sufficient to improve in spelling. Other three students (**23%**) (including #1) think that dictations are useful for them. Written practices were chosen by four students (**31%**). Also, two students (**15%**) chose memory writing cards as a practical aid for spelling. No student suggested any other activity that, in their opinion, could help them to improve on spelling.

Graph #5



Source: Data collected by J, Castro (April, 2019).

According to the students' viewpoint, the favorite activity for the majority of students was the color spelling game, surpassing the other options with seven votes (**78%**).

One student (**11%**) stated that written practices were his favorite because they were easier to learn. The last option written was dictations, with one student (**11%**).

Based on the data collected, we could say that students have an affinity with games or productive activities as the *Colors Activity* because they were more entertaining for them. The activities left have a different approach involving other skills (writing and listening) that were more adequate in their opinion.

**Table #1**

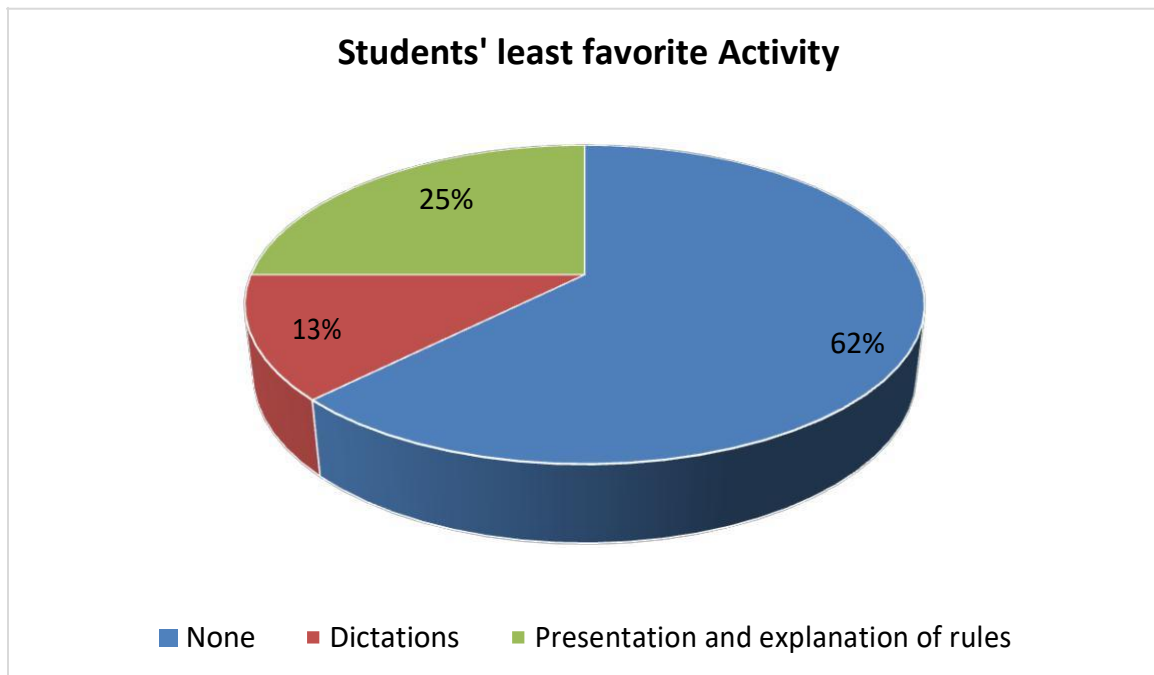
Comments and opinion provided by the students on question #5 from the questionnaire: *Which was your favorite activity? Why?*

Activity	Number of students	Comments provided by the students
<b>Colors Activity</b>	7	"They are fun and are entertaining." "Very fun." "The colors activity because when it depends in which color you chose you have to say the word". "We know all of the letter, it was so good". "it was vey good".
<b>Written practices</b>	1	"They are easy to learn"
<b>Dictations</b>	1	No comments

*Source: Data collected by J, Castro (April 2019)*

As previously said, each activity has a different approach, and it seems, based on the data collected in the questionnaire, that the ludic, dynamic and spontaneous activity was acclaimed as the more successful among this specific group of students.

Graph #6

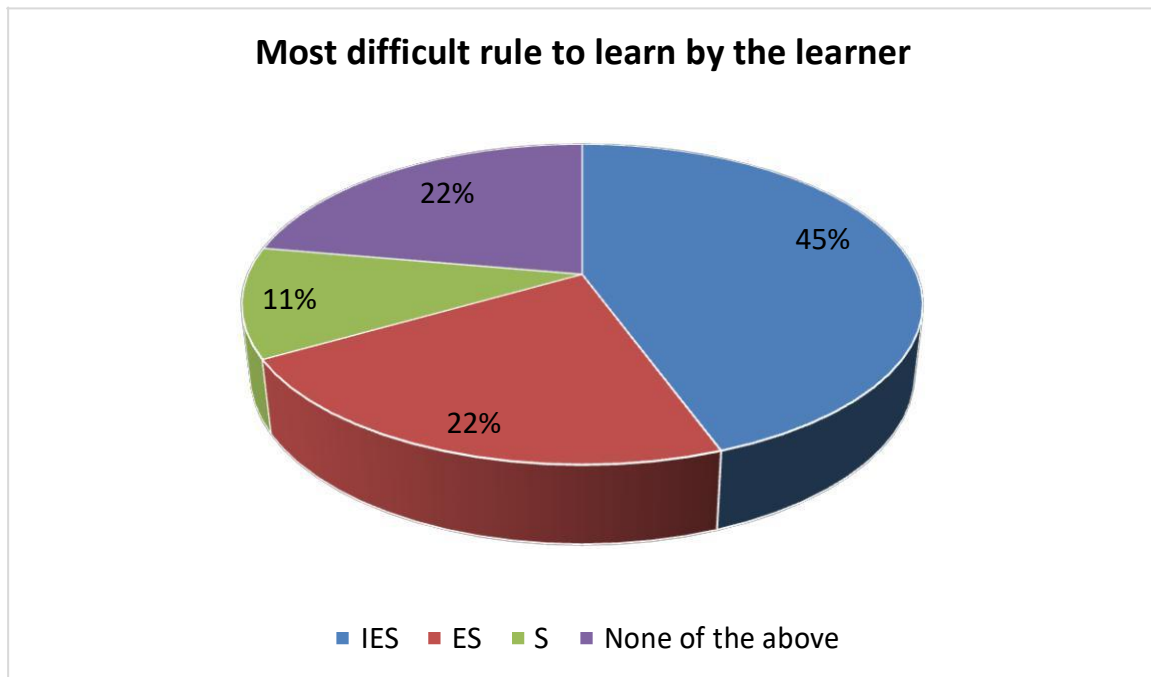


*Source: Data collected by J, Castro (April, 2019).*

The majority of students (**62%**) opined that they enjoyed all the activities and didn't think that one of them caused displeasure. However, two students (**25%**) agreed that the presentation of rules was not the best and considered it as "boring"; based on the only comment provided on this question. Finally, one student (**13%**) seemed to despise dictations because "they are very difficult."

According to these opinions, the students appreciate the activities made in class for their improvement in spelling and find the best on all, of them.

Graph #7

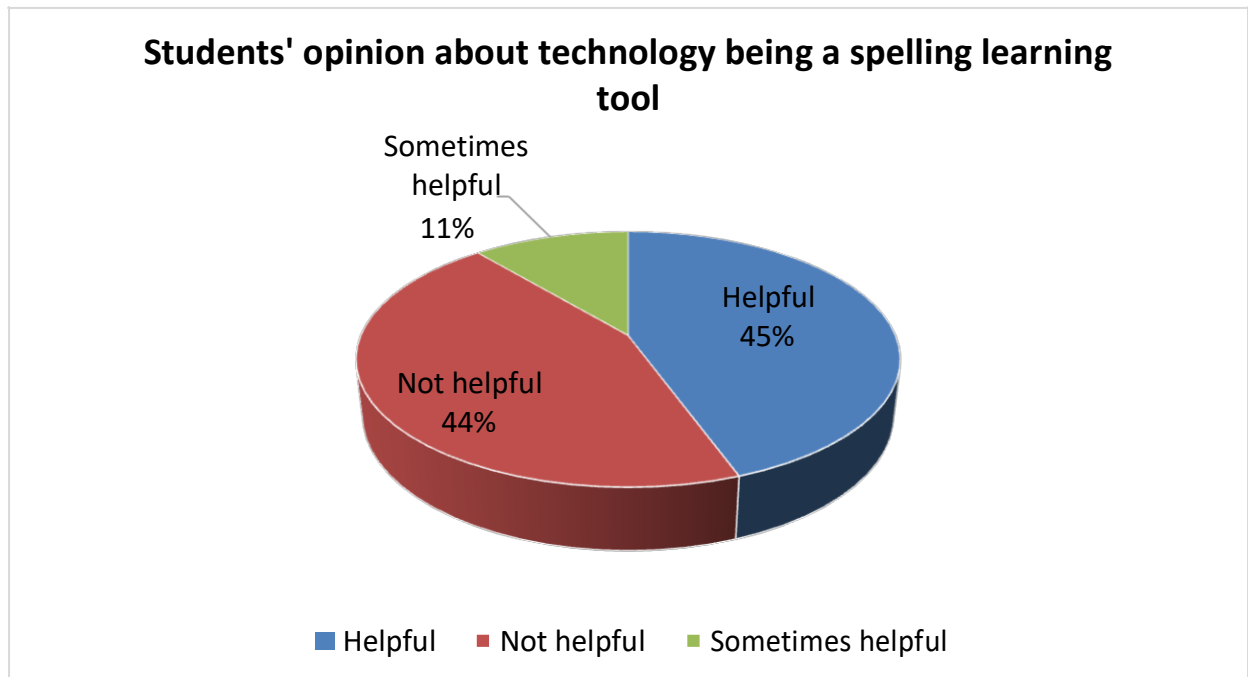


Source: Data collected by J, Castro ( April, 2019).

In their criteria, the students presented difficulty on the -IES rule (4 students, **45%**), while 2 (**22%**) students were honest and thought that they have a hard time applying the -ES spelling rule. Lastly, one student (**11%**) chose the -S rule as the most difficult. The two students left (**22%**) considered that they did not have any difficulty learning one of those rules.

We could interpret this information as the standard difficulty that the students have while facing a verb ending with the consonant "Y" as six students chose a rule that includes a special change on the verb depending on the letter before the letter "Y" (consonant or vowel), both could be confusing to distinguish.

Graph #8



*Source: Data collected by J, Castro (April 2019).*

According to the last graph, almost fifty percent of the students (4 students, **45%**) agreed that technology could help them with the spelling learning process. Forty-five percent of the learners (4 learners, **44%**) complained that technology is not an excellent tool for them. One student (**11%**) wrote that sometimes he uses technology to practice English in a written way.

Based on the comments of the students, technology is considered either a helpful tool or a "waste of time." The students that find technology as a valuable tool on spelling seem to enjoy activities that involve technology because it works differently than just explanation; the students mentioned games, chats and many more option as a valid promotion to spelling and English language learning in general.



**Table #2**

Description of students comments regarding question #8 on the questionnaire: *“Do you think that technology could help to improve your spelling?”*

Option	Number of students	Justifications
Helpful	4	<p><b>“Yes, because is more fun.”</b></p> <p><b>“Yes, because you can practice with people all over the world even British people.”</b></p> <p><b>“Yes, we learn faster.”</b></p>
Not helpful	4	<p><b>“No, because for that reason teachers exist.”</b></p> <p><b>“No, because the teachers teach me the rules and the spelling.”</b></p> <p><b>“No, I don't use technology.”</b></p> <p><b>“No, because it is easy.”</b></p>

The students that commented on the questionnaires were the students that considered that technology was helpful (**Yes on the questionnaire**) and not suitable (**Not on the questionnaire**) were included on the previous table. The student that stated “sometimes” did not do any comment.

## 4.2 Principal points analyzed by the data gathered

### a) **Students might feel unsure of their answers while spelling using the –S rules studied in class:**

According to the data collected, students might present insecurity or concern when applying the rules on known and unknown verbs. On this investigation, two different cases were found. Learners presented cases in which the rules were "overused." The examples in which this situation occurred were on verbs that ended on consonants (bid, faint, borrow, sow and sell); this case might occur because the students either confused the rules that contain a different termination in consonants (-ES) or the students feel the need for adding rules because of the uncertainty, insecurity and negative comments that they presented while doing the exercise.

Besides, the other cases correspond to verbs that needed a different spelling rule (interlay, flourish, cry and study).

Both cases previously specified could be a result of the "memoristic" nature of rule learning, and the students did confuse them during the learning process. This could mean that the way the rules were taught could affect the performance of the students when spelling.

Also, not every student is going to learn these rules in the same way, and some of them could require a unique way to distinguish each rule and use it correctly to spell effectively.

**b) The rule-based spelling methodology could not apply on “special” verbs:**

Based on the information found, the rule-based strategy may not help students with verbs that don't present a specific rule like the ones studied in class.

The clear example was the use of the verb "have," some students used "haves or haveis when the correct conjugation is “has.” The verbs that don't match with any of the rules studied were conjugated by previous memoristic knowledge by the rest of students; leading to a possible “blank space” of knowledge that the students couldn't fill on future spelling moments.

This methodology seemed to work with verbs that don't present any unique variation on conjugations (in this case simple present on the third person), contrasting the principle of having rules to follow on the spelling of words.

**c) The rule-based spelling methodology gave the students the possibility of spelling unusual verbs:**

According to the data collected, the rules did help the students on the conjugation of verbs, either on known but especially on unknown verbs for the learners.

These rules were applied correctly by the majority of the students, and it could be implied that the rules produced a "spelling awareness" among the students. The students explored the verb and the patterns that they could present, giving a

special meaning to the rules; also, it encouraged the students to verify or explain why X rule is correct.

This possibility of spelling unknown verbs seem to uplift their confidence and encouraged them to practice the rules; this could mean, based on these results, that the rule-based methodology might give the students confidence on possible spelling exercises using simple present verbs because of its extensive functionality.

One important aspect to remember is that the rule-based spelling methodology seems to be the most effective to teach students with special needs (defining that this methodology could work correctly in the population chosen since there are students with those characteristics), meaning that it focuses on patterns and relies on its universal use to give the student the possibility of success in spelling cases; these rules are almost always used, so the student knows that he/she won't fail.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## 5.1 Conclusions

On this investigation the objective was to implement the rule-based spelling methodology on the class to help seventh-grade students overcome difficulties while writing verbs on simple present tense, focusing on spelling merely due to its importance in communication as explained in another objective. In addition, this research aspired to know about students' personal experience in spelling and their personal growth while learning the English language.

After the methodology was applied, some essential aspects were observed. When the instruments were used, students gave their opinions about the activities, and these opinions were compared with the observations and the results of the activities, leading to some discoveries that complete this investigation.

According to the activities results, this spelling methodology cannot be applied when teaching "special verbs." Verbs like "have," "be," "can" that could have a particular function on the verb are not going to suit in the universal rules taught.

Also, it was observed that the answers on the following activity applied and analyzed for this paper were slightly better than the first activity, meaning that the rules could be useful with practice and consistency. Both activities had a drill factor, meaning that the students fill the information needed and, shortly, is checked. When this kind of exercises is applied, the students could develop a sense of prediction that Miller (2019) commented as a relation between a cognitive

process and memory. This means that students could memorize the –S rules and the spelling of words due to the constant practice and spelling sequence of verbs.

Also, as stated in the questionnaires answered by the students, games and dynamic activities could increase the interest and spelling awareness in the students. The most chosen activity by the students as compelling was the "Colors Activity." This activity was not even a technique to collect information for this research but was another activity implementing the rule-based spelling strategy. The students preferred this activity because it was dynamic but also, because it raised spelling awareness among them. In this activity, the teacher showed the students the changes from infinitive verbs to conjugated verbs on simple present and noticed other spelling mistakes (oral confusion of letters a-e-i). Taking into account the needs and likes of the students in activities boosts up the learning process and makes the spelling rules less irritating to enroll.

The following finding was spotted on the activities results, stating that the rule-based spelling methodology functions as a strong base on the students' spelling skills. This could be said because the students conjugated and pronounced some unknown verbs successfully, proving that the rules explained can overcome future uncertainties on language usage. As ReadNaturally (n.d) wrote: "*Students benefit from direct, systematic instruction that moves them along a continuum from the easiest sound/spelling patterns to the most difficult.*" The students showed that the rules explained could be applied to tricky verbs as they applied them on known and frequently used verbs.

Furthermore, the data analysis affirmed that students doubted of their answers when applying the –S spelling rules. Including all the data, this could have happened because the students were not sure about the rules applied or they got confused with them. In this investigation, students confirmed that the rules involving a final “Y” consonant were the most difficult.

In addition to the last statement, the presentation of the rules on this specific spelling scenario has to be concise and inclusive to work. The way that the rules were presented affected the students’ results. As the rules demand students’ memory skills, they could be confusing and underwhelming for them for the learners that do not have that memory factor. On important thing that Watson mentioned quoted by Nordquist (2018) was that:

"Students with learning difficulties have the greatest problem remembering and applying spelling rules. It is best instead to teach these students effective strategies for learning new target words and for proofreading, rather than attempting to teach obscure rules that are unlikely to be remembered or understood."

With that statement in mind, the students' opinion and results came together to express that the way the information is presented could affect the future results and processes; most importantly when consolidating the base of spelling and writing skills.



We have usually believed that teaching a topic only has a predetermined way but the pass of the years showed that the teacher has to adapt to the student, not the other way around.

On spelling, students could present hundreds of struggles, and that is the reason why it would be critical to consider different methods and approaches to encourage the students on the spelling area and the English language teaching in general; without forgetting their improvement and confidence gain.

## **5.2 Recommendations:**

The following recommendations are suggested according to the conclusions and possible gap of change for the classroom environment. As the students lie on a grade that may be difficult adapting to, it is important to consider all these aspects on the planning and development of activities to help the students in the process of learning a new language.

The classes would be more enjoyable and successful if ten or fifteen minutes in the class were dedicated to spelling. It is not necessary to review the same vocabulary or rules; a simple activity to check the unit of spelling (the alphabet) is enough to practice spelling constantly and encourage the pupils.

Including activities that stimulate the students' creativity and movement brings a different energy to the class. Teachers could implement these kinds of activities as warm-ups or common practices for the students, that way they could include every student in the learning process. It is important to take into account

the many intelligences that the students could present (Musical, kinesthetic, intrapersonal...) to enhance every class and expand the learner' spelling skills.

It is recommendable to encourage the students during the application of activities and evaluations. Students may be struggling with shyness, lack of confidence and negativism. Besides that, students may be struggling in the spelling area itself.

Students are aware of their learning process; they know what they are learning and why so teachers could take advantage of their trust including them on the planning of spelling activities. They, together, could organize collaborative classes to learn in a "personal" way and get involved in their curriculum.

It is relevant to include technology to spelling classes or topics related to written communication but let the students know the importance of knowing how to spell without relying on technology all the time; students might appreciate spelling as a way of effective communication and its spontaneous value.

Lastly, the teacher might consider the implementation of group activities as a way of group integration. However, he/she should negotiate with the students about the benefits of working with classmates as learning different points of perspectives and the cons, for example, discussions.

Regarding future investigations, there are different suggestions that could be applied to future populations as a way to complete and enrich this research paper.

The future investigator might consider that the process of improvement on an area in particular, in this case, spelling, takes time; that means that the more activities you apply, the bigger results you are going to get. If the investigator has enough material to analyze, the results are going to be more complete.

In addition, the possible future investigator could include activities from other methodology to complement the students spelling learning process and open a possibility for a future comparison between methodologies that exist for the same reason: help the students.

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## **ANNEXES**



Annex #1

**Observation sheet**

Observation # \_\_\_\_\_

Activity:

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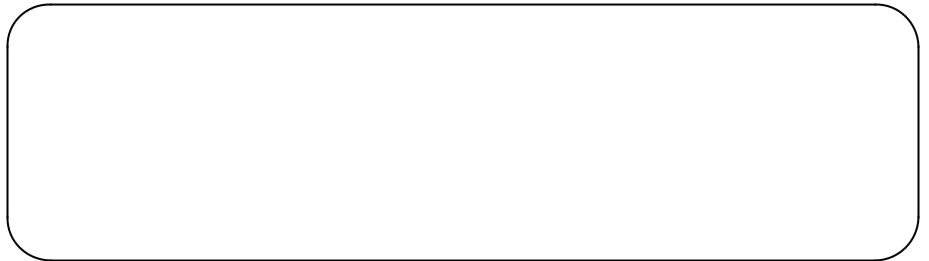
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The following aspects will be observed and described for the proper research.

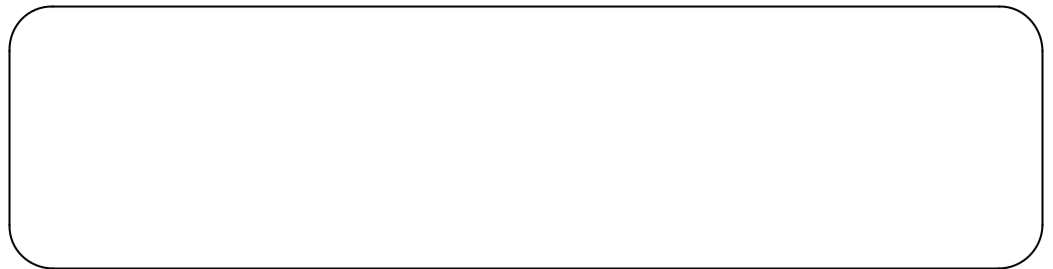
**Presence of Teamwork**



**Expansion of Knowledge**



**Functionality**



**Weaknesses and Improvements**



**Control of results**

<b>Common Misspellings</b>	<b>Others</b>

**Comments:**

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## Annex #2 Questionnaire applied to the students

Universidad Hispanoamericana Research paper by Joselin Castro T.

Questionnaire:

Answer these questions according to your opinion.

1. Is spelling relevant to you?

Yes ( ) No ( )

2. Do you consider that your spelling skills got better with the activities made in class? (Exposiciones de las reglas de la -S, uso de verbos inusuales, completar el cuadro con verbos) ?

Yes ( ) No ( )

3. Did you fell comfortable during the activities?

Yes ( ) No ( )

4. Which activities do you think could help you to get better in spelling? Choose more than one if you want.

Games ( ) Dictations ( ) Written Practices ( )  
Memory writing Cards ( ) Other \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

5. Which was your favorite activity? Why?

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6. Which was your least favorite activity? Why?

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7. For you, which is the most difficult rule to learn?

**-IES( ) -ES ( ) -S( )**

8. Do you think that technology could help to improve your spelling?  
Why?

---

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**Thank you!!!!**

## Annex #3

## Results from activity number 1

## Adding -S Practice

Add the -S ending to the following verbs:

Mix	Mixes
Reply	Replies
Wash	Washes
Ride	Rides
Write	writes
Study	Studies
Tidy	Tidies
Do	Does

Hope	Hopes
Borrow	Borrowss
Faint	Faints
Go	Goes
Cry	Cries
Spend	spends
Sell	Sells
Have	Hasse

## Adding -S Practice

Add the -S ending to the following verbs:

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Ride	Rides
Write	Writes
Study	Studies
Tidy	Tidies
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Spend	spends
Sell	Sells
Have	has

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Borrow	Borrowes
Faint	Faints
Go	Goes
Cry	Cries
Spend	Spends
Sell	Sells
Have	Has

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Study	Studies
Tidy	Tidies
Do	Does

Hope	Hopes
Borrow	Borrowes
Faint	Faints
Go	Goes
Cry	Cries
Spend	Spends
Sell	Sells
Have	Has

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Study	studies
Tidy	tidies
Do	Does

Hope	Hopes
Borrow	Borrowes
Faint	Faintes
Go	Goes
Cry	crys
Spend	spends
Sell	selles
Have	Have <del>s</del>

### Adding -S Practice

Add the -S ending to the following verbs:

Mix	mixes
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Wash	washes
Ride	rides
Write	writes
Study	studies
Tidy	tidies
Do	does

Hope	hopes
Borrow	borrowes
Faint	faintes
Go	goes
Cry	cries
Spend	spend
Sell	selles
Have	have <del>s</del>



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Go	Goes
Cry	Cries
Spend	Spends
Sell	sells
Have	has

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Add the -S ending to the following verbs:

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Wash	Washes
Ride	Rides
Write	Writes
Study	Studies
Tidy	tidies
Do	Does

Hope	hopes
Borrow	Borrowes
Faint	Faintes
Go	goes
Cry	Cries
Spend	Spends
Sell	sells
Have	havees



**Adding -S Practice**

Add the -S ending to the following verbs:

<b>Mix</b>	Mixes
<b>Reply</b>	Replies
<b>Wash</b>	Washes
<b>Ride</b>	Rides
<b>Write</b>	Writes
<b>Study</b>	Studies
<b>Tidy</b>	Tidies
<b>Do</b>	Does

<b>Hope</b>	Hopes
<b>Borrow</b>	Borrows
<b>Faint</b>	Faints
<b>Go</b>	Goes
<b>Cry</b>	Cries
<b>Spend</b>	Spends
<b>Sell</b>	Sells
<b>Have</b>	Has

## Annex #4

Visual aids made by the students to explain the -S spelling rules.

VOWEL + Y

I  
YOU  
WE  
THEY

(+) Infinitive verb  
(-) Don't + infinitive verb

HE  
SHE  
IT

(+) Verb with S  
(-) Doesn't + infinitive verb

Examples:

(+) My sister plays with my dad.  
(-) My sister doesn't play with my dad.

That we have a vowel + Y, we just add -S

## Present Simple Tense

10-4-19

-ES

We just use "ES" with the verbs ending in  
O-CH-SH-SS-X or Z.

Examples:

Boxes

Punches

Washes

goes

Kisses

Buzzes

H=hello

A= we are going to ~~presented~~ <sup>talk about</sup> the rules  
for the S

J= when we have he, she or it we add  
in the verb in positive for example she plays  
fortnite

2s= When have vowel and Y, we  
just add -s

For example:

- play + s
- lives + s
- eat + s
- help + s

A= this are some rules for the s  
and that's it

consonant + y, we remove the y and add -ies

example  
Fly - Flies

cry - cries

Try - Tries



## Annex #5

## Results from activity n.2

1. Interlies X
2. Dwells /
3. Undergoes /
4. Sows /
5. vouchers /
6. Flees /
7. Flourishes X
8. bids /
9. deifies ✓
10. jettisons ✓
11. ambles ✓
12. harangues ✓

1. interlays ✓
2. Dwells ✓
3. undergoes ✓
4. sows ✓
5. vouchers ✓
6. Flees ✓
7. Flourishes ✓
8. bids ✓
9. deifies ✓
10. jettisons ✓
11. ambles ✓
12. harangues ✓

1. Interlays ✓
2. dwells ✓
3. undergoes ✓
4. ~~sowls~~ ✓
5. ~~vouch~~ X ~~vouches~~
6. flees ✓
7. ~~flawishes~~ X ~~flawishes~~
8. bids ✓
9. daupies ✓
10. jettisons ✓
11. ambles ✓
12. Harangues ✓

1. Flourishes ✓ ✓
2. bids ✓
3. daupies ✓
4. Jettisons ✓
5. ambles ✓
6. Harangues ✓
7. interduces X Intulays
8. DWELLS ✓
9. UN DER GOES ✓
10. ~~sowls~~ X SOWS
11. ~~vouches~~ ✓
12. flees ✓

- |     |                          |   |
|-----|--------------------------|---|
| 1.  | INTERLAYS                | ✓ |
| 2.  | DWELLS                   | ✓ |
| 3.  | UNDERGOES                | ✓ |
| 4.  | SOWS                     | ✓ |
| 5.  | VOUCHES                  | ✓ |
| 6.  | FLEES                    | ✓ |
| 7.  | FLOURISHES               | ✓ |
| 8.  | BIDIES <del>X</del> Bids | ✓ |
| 9.  | DEFIES                   | ✓ |
| 10. | JETTISONS                | ✓ |
| 11. | AMBLES                   | ✓ |
| 12. | HIRANGUES                | ✓ |



- |     |                                    |
|-----|------------------------------------|
| 1.  | Interlays ✓                        |
| 2.  | Dwells <del>X</del> Dwells         |
| 3.  | Undergoes <del>X</del> Undergoes   |
| 4.  | Sows ✓                             |
| 5.  | Vouches <del>X</del> Vouches       |
| 6.  | Flees ✓                            |
| 7.  | Flourishes <del>X</del> Flourishes |
| 8.  | Bids ✓                             |
| 9.  | Defies ✓                           |
| 10. | Jettisons <del>X</del> Jettisons   |
| 11. | Amble ✓                            |
| 12. | Hirangues ✓                        |



1. Interlays ✓
2. Dwells ✓
3. Undergoes ✓
4. sows ✓
5. Vouches ✓
6. Flees ✓
7. Flourishes ✓
8. Bids ✓
9. Deifies ✓
10. Jettisons ✓
11. Ambles ✓
12. Harangues ✓

1. Interlays ✓
2. Dwells ✓
3. Undergoes ✓
4. sows ✓
5. Vouches ✓
6. Flees ✓
7. Flourishes ✓
8. Bids ✓
9. Deifies ✓
10. Jettisons ✓
11. Ambles ✓
12. Harangues ✓

1. Interlays. /
2. Dwells. /
3. undergoes. /
4. sows. /
5. Vauchers. /
6. Elms. /
7. Flowrishes. /
8. Bies. /
9. Deifies. /
10. Jeffersons. /
11. Amble. /
12. Harangues. /

## Annex #6

## Random samples of students questionnaire answers

#2

Universidad Hispanoamericana Research paper by Joselin Castro T.

Questionnaire:

Answer these questions according to your opinion.

1. Is spelling relevant to you?

Yes  No ( )

2. Do you consider that your spelling skills got better with the activities made in class? (Exposiciones de las reglas de la -S, uso de verbos inusuales, completar el cuadro con verbos) ?

Yes  No ( )

3. Did you felt comfortable during the activities?

Yes  No ( )

4. Which activities do you think could help you to get better in spelling? Choose more than one if you want.

Games  Dictations ( ) Written Practices   
Memory writing Cards  Other \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

5. Which was your favorite activity? Why?

The colors activity, because when it depends in which color you chose you have to say the word.

6. Which was your least favorite activity? Why?

I like them all

7. For you, which is the most difficult rule to learn?

-IES ( ) -ES ( ) -S ( ) For me is too easy.

8. Do you think that technology could help to improve your spelling? Why?

Yes, because you can practice with people all over the world, even british people.

Thank you!!!!



## Questionnaire:

Answer these questions according to your opinion.

1. Is spelling relevant to you?

Yes (✓)      No ( )

2. Do you consider that your spelling skills got better with the activities made in class? (Exposiciones de las reglas de la -S, uso de verbos inusuales, completar el cuadro con verbos) ?

Yes (✓)      No ( )

3. Did you felt comfortable during the activities?

Yes (✓)      No ( )

4. Which activities do you think could help you to get better in spelling? Choose more than one if you want.

Games ( ) Dictations (✓) Written Practices (✓)  
Memory writing Cards (✓) Other \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

5. Which was your favorite activity? Why?

Color Activities

6. Which was your least favorite activity? Why?

none

7. For you, which is the most difficult rule to learn?

-IES ( ) -ES ( ) -S (✓)

8. Do you think that technology could help to improve your spelling?

Why? No why teacher Yos and teacher  
didna they teachas myx the rules and  
the spelling-

Thank you!!!!