

Investigating some Important Strategies for Developing EFL Learners' Spelling at Basic Level

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Abstract

The study aims to investigate some important strategies for developing EFL learners' spelling at basic level. It also aims to achieve certain objectives, firstly to determine why the pupils at basic levels have spelling difficulties. It is also looking for the strategies that make learning spelling easier for basic level pupils. The study followed the descriptive analytical method. The sample consisted of twenty (20) EFL teachers from both basic and secondary level. A questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection and was analyzed by using (SPSS) statistical packages for social sciences programme. The study reached many important results: Most EFL learners neglect the importance of spelling at basic level. Also following certain strategies teaching spelling to EFL learners at basic level is considered very difficult task. Based on the findings the study recommended the following: EFL learners should pay attention to the importance of spelling. Also, EFL teachers should follow certain strategies in teaching spelling. Moreover, teachers should motivate EFL learners to pay more attention to learning spelling because it very difficult task if not learnt from the beginning.

Key words: Spelling, task, difficulties, developing, strategies.

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I. BACKGROUND

Learning to spell is very important in terms of learning English language learning how to spell is important for reading and writing. Many people say that the English language is the most difficult of all languages in terms of spelling and grammar. Pupils must be taught how to spell correctly. Though children learn about spelling to some extent as encounter words while reading, this is not usually enough to make them good spellers. Pupils need systematic spelling instruction to learn how the writing system works and not just memorize how words are spelled.

1.1 Statement of the problem:

It has been noticed that and from most teachers' observations that a lot of pupils at basic level cannot perform the spelling task properly or perform it with difficulty which has a negative impact on their abilities to deal with English language in terms of reading and writing skills. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to investigate some important strategies for developing EFL learners spelling and to highlight the importance of learning spelling to beginners at basic level.

1.2 Objectives of the study:

The study has the following objectives:

- 1- Casting some light on the importance of spelling.
- 2- Looking for strategies that make learning spelling at the basic level easy.
- 3- Determining why pupils at basic level have spelling difficulties.

1.3 Questions of the study:

The study tends to answers the following questions:

- 1- Is learning spelling considered as an important task?
- 2- What are the strategies that make the spelling task easier?
- 3- Why is learning spelling seem difficult to basic level pupils?

1.4 Hypotheses of the study:

The study hypothesizes the followings:

- 1- Learning spelling is considered as very important at basic level.
- 2- There is possibility to make spelling easier by following certain strategies.
- 3- Pupils at basic level have some spelling difficulties.

1.5 Significance of the study:

The study will be helpful for both EFL teachers at basic level and syllabus designers. It gives them some guiding points to teach spelling in a better way. However the researcher looking for word to contributing some good change in learning the spelling at basic level through this study.

1.6 Methodology of the study:

The study adopted the descriptive analytical method the population of the study includes EFL teachers from both basic schools and secondary schools at Hasheisa locality. A sample of twenty (20) teachers will be chosen randomly from the study population and a questionnaire will be used as a stool for data collection.

1.7 Limits of the study:

The study is limited to instigating some important strategies for teaching spelling at basic level at Hasheisa locality basic level schools 2024.

II. INTRODUCTION

Spelling is usually considered as the state of literacy. There are many strategies to be employed by the teachers in the classrooms so as to enable their students to spell properly. This part will include some information about what is spelling. Spelling standard and convents, learning spelling. Why teaching spelling is difficult, the stages of spelling development and strategies for teaching spelling.

2.1 Definition of spelling:

Chomsky (1976) states that spelling is forming of words from letters according to accepted usage (orthography), or a sequence of letters composing a word or it is the way in which a word is spelled.

According to Cambridge Dictionary, spelling means forming words in the correct order words in English are not always spelled as they are pronounced. Spelling in English follow some basic rules and the majority of English words (around 75%) follow these rules and there are exceptions to those rules which need to be learned too.

2.2 Learning spelling:

Learning proper spelling by rote is a traditional element of elementary education and divergence from standard spelling is often perceived as an indicator of low intelligence or lower class standing. Spelling tests are commonly used to assess a student's mastery over words in the spelling lessons the students have received so for.

2.3 Spelling Standard and convention:

Standardization of spelling is connected the development of writing According nursering.org Staff Writers (2022) glossary of terms relating to using conventions of standard English spelling include:

1. Vowels: The letters A.E.I.O.U and sometimes W and Y.
2. Semivowels: W and Y, they are referred to as semivowels because they can serve as consonants as well as vowels.
3. Consonants: All the letters of the 26-letter alphabet other than the vowels which are A. E, I, O. U and sometimes W and Y. The I before E spelling Rule or Guideline. I before E except after C or When sounding like A as in neighbor and weigh.
4. The drop the final vowel when the word Ends with a vowel and the suffix begins with a vowel spelling rule or guideline: This rule eliminates double vowels in words that have a suffix.
5. The change the Final Y to I spelling rule or Guideline: Addresses the need to change a Y to an I when a root of a word ends in a Y preceded by or follows a consonant EXCEPT when the suffix begins with an I. like the suffix ING.
6. The Double the Final Consonant Spelling Rule or Guideline: You double the final consonant in single syllable words that have a single vowel before that consonant and that are also followed by a suffix.
7. The Singular to the plural spelling Rules or Guideline: Most singular forms of words are transformed into plural form of words by simply adding an "S".
8. The singular to the plural spelling Rules or Guideline by Adding "ES". You must add ES when the singular form of the words ends in a S. CH. SH. Z. or X.
The Singular to the plural spelling Rules or Guidelines by Adding "VES": You must change the F or FE at the end of a word to VES when transforming a singular word into its plural form.
9. Homophones: Words that sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings.
10. Homophones: Words that look the same and are spelled the same (homo) but have two distinctly different meanings and that are pronounced differently.

11. Digraphs: A combination of two letters that take on a unique and different sound than would be expected that is.

2.4 Strategies for developing EFL learners spelling:

EFL teachers can improve the spelling of students by following these clear and simple ideas and tips in their classes. Andrew (2022) suggests spelling word correctly is crucial and reflects an accurate grasp of the language, which is not 100% phonetic as it is already known.

1. In your classroom put up posters, leaflets, pictures and captions with clearly printed words to help reinforce correct spelling. Each time your students are in class they'll see correct spelling.
2. Have regular reading sessions with your students and focus on exceptional or difficult words. Reading allows students to see how words relate in sentences.
3. Give the class spelling tests every so often. These will allow you to assess strengths and weaknesses. You'll find helpful lists of words later on in the article.
4. Follow four basic approaches to improve spelling they are:
 - a. Phonetic Development:** encourage your students to listen to the sounds of words. Break words up into syllables, split letters up so that the class is able to connect a particular sound with a particular letter or morpheme eg flush can be broken up into fl, u, sh.
 - b. Visual Development:** if your students can see words, they'll become used to memorizing (memorizing) them. Read books, posters and other material at frequent intervals. Regular exposure to unfamiliar words will help them overcome any mental barriers they might have to learning.
 - c. Rule-Based Learning:** some words follow rules, other don't! For example, the word repeat becomes repeated, the word admit becomes admitted. Why is that? The rule is that if there are 2 vowels in the last syllable (repeat) the extra t isn't necessary, whilst in admit there are 2 consonants so the extra t is necessary.
 - d. Morphemic Development:** this is having knowledge of the origin of words, whether they're from Latin or Greek for example. Some of your students may be keen to learn about origins in connection with the terms prefix and suffix.

2.5 Why is Teaching Spelling Difficult?

According to Lutaz (1989) there is no programme, no book, no speller that alone will build language competence in a child.

Gentry (1987) and Wilde (1992) claimed that learning to spell is not simply through memorization but it is a complex cognitive activity where by increased knowledge of the orthographic system is incorporated into a child's current understanding.

According to Chomsky (1976); there are some English words which are not spelled right. There are long complicated words to spell in English so teaching spelling is not an easy task for the following reasons:

1. Common letter Combination are confusing:

There are combinations of letters such ch, ei, ie and others.

These confuse the learners because they are pronounced differently in different words e.g. accomplish, achieve.

2. Many English words have long strings of vowels:

Here the words are difficult because the vowels form sound that are normally represented by just one or two letters so some vowels get lost in the spelling.

3. Double Consonants:

The words in this group are difficult to spell

e.g. accessible, address, accommodate.

4. A word may change its meaning according to how you spell it:

Here the words sound the same but they are spelled differently depending on their meanings.

e.g. lose, loose, are, eight, weather, whether.

5. Some words are just difficult:

Some words are combining difficult consonants with lots of vowels, pronounced one way and spelled the other.

e.g. psychology! Rhythm.

III. THE PROCEDURE

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the sample of the study and received all of them back and began the data processing; forming frequency tables and graphs to display the information for discussions.

3.1 The Validity of the questionnaire:

For the statements of the questionnaire to be relevant questionnaire was distributed to some specialist to be judged and then it was adjusted according to their directions.

3.2 The reliability of the questionnaire:

To know the reliability of the questionnaire for three sections, Cronbach, Alpha has been completed for each section and this is the result.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Validity} = 0.98 \\ \text{Reliability} = 97 \end{array}$$

Table (3.1) Cronbach Alpha for the three sections:

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Learning to spell is a complex activity:

Table 1: S1

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Agree	50	100.0

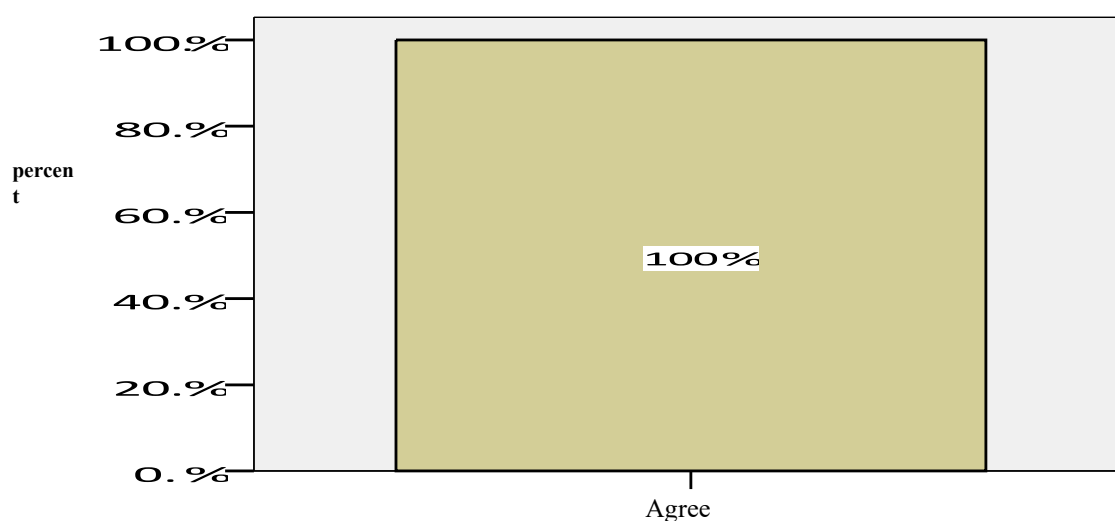


Figure 1: S1

According to the statistical analysis of the above table (4.1) the whole respondents (100%) agree that learning to spell is a complex activity. Therefore, this statement is accepted.

4.2 Practicing spelling is very important for EFL learners.

Table 2: S2

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Neutral	5	10.0
	Agree	45	90.0
	Total	50	100.0

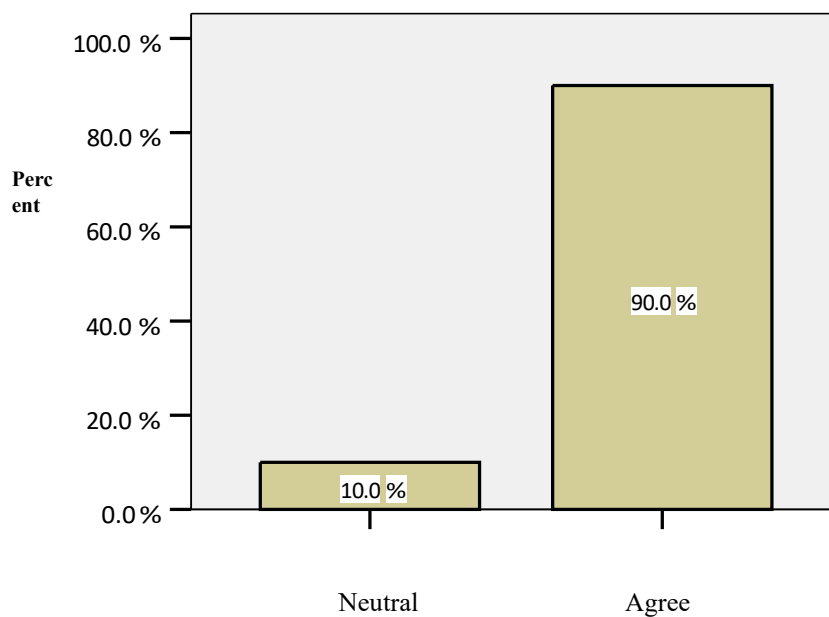


Figure 2: S2

Table and diagram (4.2) show that only (10%) are neutral, whereas, (90%) agree with the statement. This shows that the highest number of the respondents agree with the statement. So, this statement is accepted.

4.3 Teaching spelling to EFL learners is very difficult task.

Table 3: S3

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Disagree	3	6.0
	Neutral	44	6.0
	Agree	50	88.0
	Total		100.0

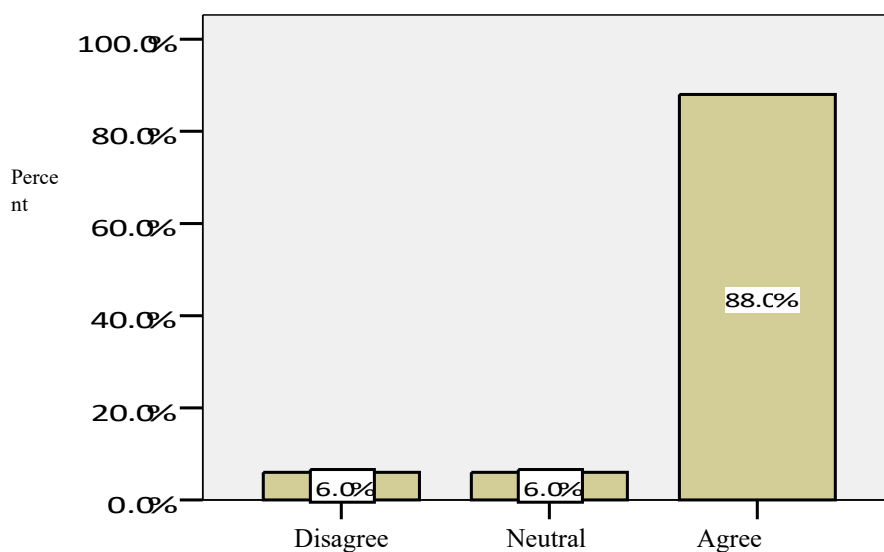


Figure 3: S3

It is clear from the above table that only (6%) are neutral and (6%) disagree with the statement whereas, (88%) the majority of the respondents agree with the statement. Thus, this student is accepted.

4.4 Following certain strategies in teaching spelling makes it an easy task.

Table 4: S4

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Disagree	6	12.0
	Neutral	39.5	10.0
	Agree	50	78.0
	Total		100.0

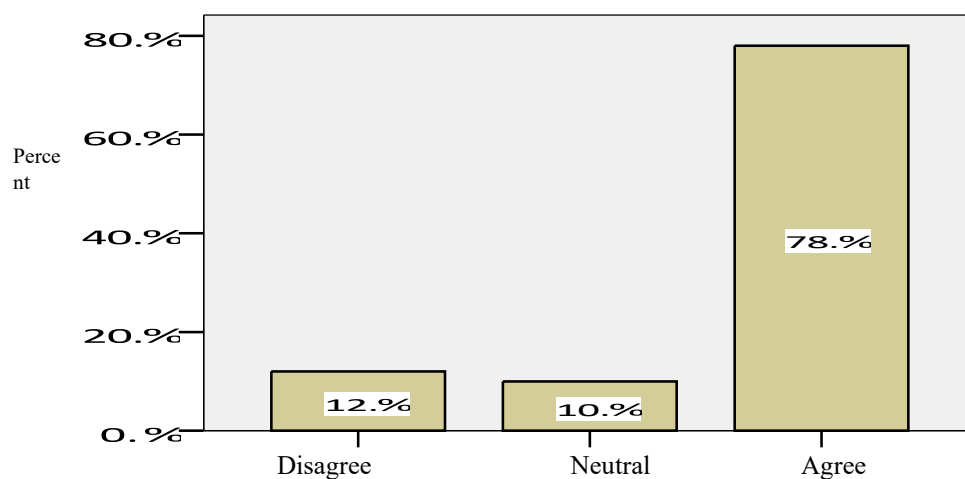


Figure 4: S4

The preceding table shows that only (22%) disagree that following certain strategies in teaching spelling makes it an easy task, whereas the majority (78%) of the respondents agree with the statement. Therefore, this statement is accepted.

4.5 Uncourting children to read is of great help in improving spelling.

Table 5: S5

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Disagree	5	10.0
	Neutral	42 3	6.0
	Agree	50	84.0
	Total		100.0

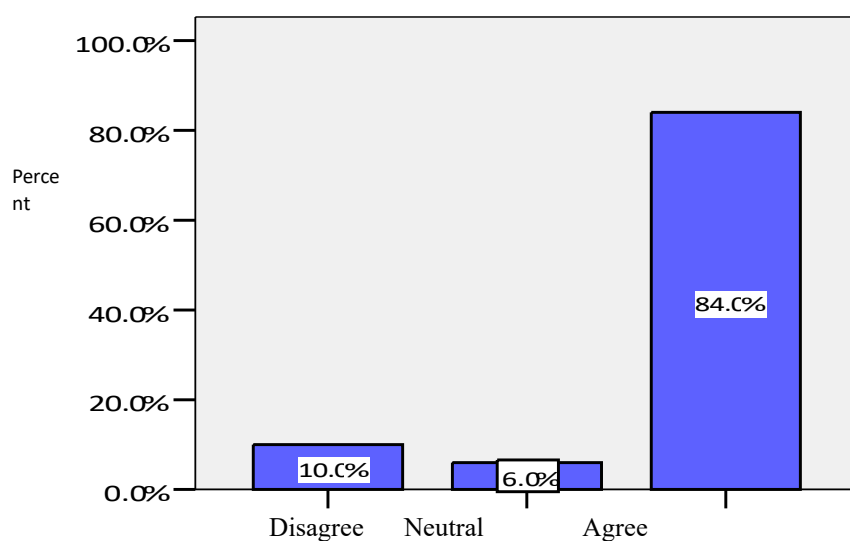


Figure 4: S5

Table and diagram (4.5) show that most respondents (84%) agree with statement, while, only (16%) disagree and neutral. Therefore, this statement is accepted.

4.6 Most EFL learners neglect the importance of spelling

Table 6: S6

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Disagree	2	4.0
	Neutral	46 2	4.0
	Agree	50	92.0
	Total		100.0

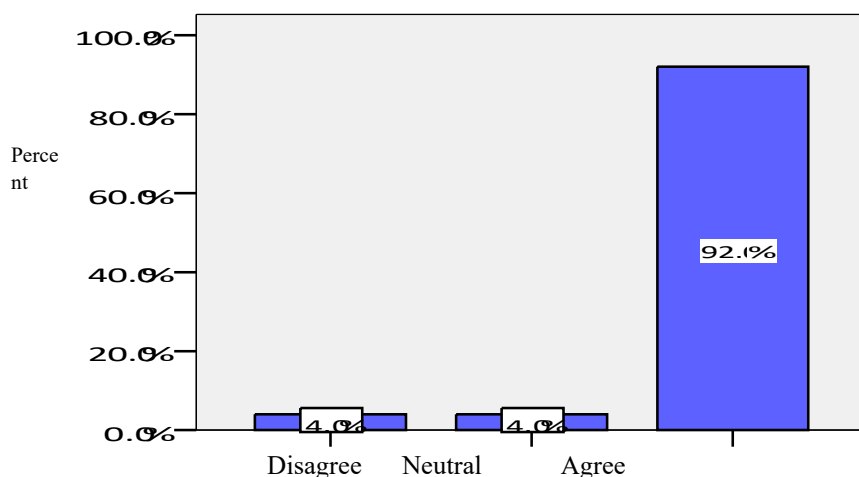


Figure 6: S6

The above table (4.6) shows that only (8%) disagree and neutral, whereas (92%) the highest number agree with the statement. Thus, this statement is accepted.

4.7 Beginners must be taught to spell phonetically.

Table 7: S7

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Disagree	6	12.0
	Neutral	40	8.0
	Agree	50	80.0
	Total		100.0

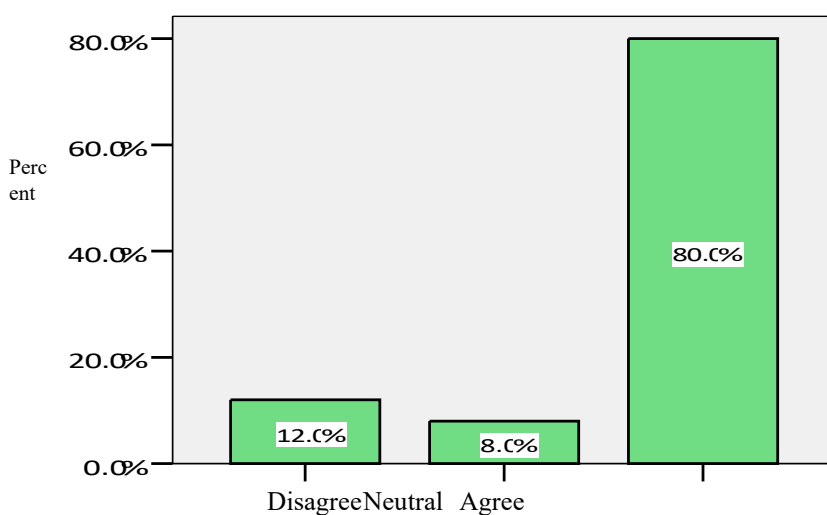


Figure 7: S7

According to the above table the majority of the respondents (80%) agree with the statement, while, only (20%) disagree and neutral. So, this statement is accepted.

4.8 Most EFL teachers do not follow the suitable strategies in teaching spelling.

Table 8: S8

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Disagree	10	20.0
	Neutral	35.5	10.0
	Agree	50	70.0
	Total		100.0

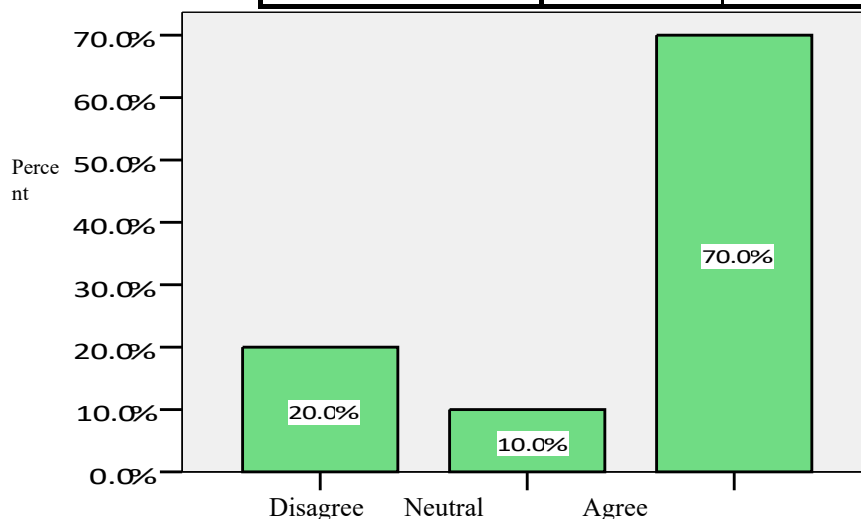


Figure 8: S8

It is clear from the above table that the highest number of the respondents agree with the statement, whereas, (30%) are neutral and disagree with the statement. Therefore, this statement is accepted.

V. CONCLUSION

Learning to spell takes time, and even as adults. We have to admit that some words continue to bamboozle us. Encouraging your pupils to develop a system for learning to spell instead of focusing on memorization alone will ensure that they will always approach this task meaningfully. For a start, make a list of challenging spelling words and prioritize the learning of these words. The rewards from doing this will far outweigh testing all the other words on your spelling list.

5.1 Findings of the study:

The study found the following:

1. Most EFL learners neglect the importance of spelling.
2. EFL teachers Encouraging children to read is of great help in improving spelling.
3. Teaching spelling to EFL learners at basic level is very difficult task.
4. Following certain strategies in teaching spelling makes it an easy task.
5. Most EFL teachers do not follow the suitable strategies in teaching spelling.

5.3 Recommendations of the study:

Based on the findings the study recommended the following:

1. EFL learners should pay more attention to the importance of spelling.
2. Teachers should encourage children to read so as to improve their spelling.
3. Teachers should motivate learners to learn spelling because it is very difficult.
4. EFL teachers should follow certain strategies in teaching spelling so as to make it easy.
5. EFL teachers should follow certain strategies in teaching spelling.

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