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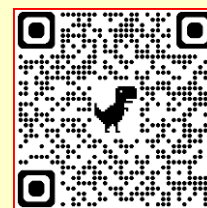
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## RESEARCH ON MONGOLIAN SPELLING COMPETENCE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*In today's globalized society, the phenomenon of writing with Cyrillic spelling errors has become widespread. Problems related to spelling in written language, especially in online environments, have exceeded acceptable norms, and writing without following spelling rules has become common.*

*Therefore, in this study, we addressed these issues and examined the possibilities of improving the knowledge of students studying the spelling rules included in the content of the "Mongolian Language and Composition" course at universities.*

**KEY WORDS:** Technological development, spelling rules, educational reform, change

### Introduction

According to the "Law on the Mongolian Language" (2015):

- 8.1. There shall be unified rules for Cyrillic and traditional Mongolian script spelling across Mongolia, which all citizens and legal entities must follow.
- 19.1.1. The rules of Mongolian spelling and modern literary language norms must be strictly observed.
- 20.2.1. Observance of Mongolian language norms is required.
- 15.1.3. Authorized institutions shall facilitate mutual conversion between Cyrillic and traditional scripts, monitor spelling errors, promote related software use, and implement them in digital environments.

In 2018, the National Council on Language Policy under the President of Mongolia published the *Regulated Dictionary of Mongolian Spelling Rules*, which is used nationwide.

However, in recent years, errors in writing have become increasingly

common among students, employees, and the general population. Problems with spelling, especially in online communication, have exceeded acceptable limits, and writing without adhering to spelling rules is widespread. This study addresses these issues and explores methods to improve students' knowledge of spelling rules within the "Mongolian Language and Composition" course.

### Research Methodology

The study employed experimental, observational, analytical, and comparative methods. Data were collected through observation and analyzed systematically.

### Main Body

Spelling rules are fundamental for ensuring the clarity, coherence, and consistency of written Mongolian. Mastery of these rules is essential for using the language correctly and systematically. For university students, the ability to write correctly is not only a linguistic skill but also directly linked to cognitive processes and information-processing abilities.

Our study of over 100 students enrolled in the course during the 2024–2025 academic year revealed insufficient application of spelling rules. Common errors included those related to phonology (distinguishing –ы and –х, writing of suffixes “л” and “х”), word formation, vowel differentiation, and the use of the separating letters ъ and ь. Some students were entirely unfamiliar with certain rules or had misunderstood them, reflecting gaps in primary and secondary education approaches.

Test results indicated that while students made many errors initially, noticeable improvement occurred after 2–3 repetitions, demonstrating that understanding and internalizing rules requires time and practice. Additional factors contributing to errors included spoken language influence, online shorthand communication, and lack of reading habits. Phrases like “яадын,” “хэлчээд,” and “байнуу” were frequently written inappropriately in formal writing. Reduced reading habits negatively impacted mastery of spelling rules, as constant engagement with correctly written text is necessary for internalizing rules.

Thus, improving spelling knowledge requires creating an environment that promotes correct language use, implementing structured, sequential training, and providing repeated practice.

Spelling rules are critical not only for clarity and coherence but also for upholding linguistic culture, education quality, and social development. Errors in Cyrillic spelling are observed not only among students but also in official documents, publications, and government communications, undermining professional credibility.

According to the 2023 *Media Writing Quality Report* by the Press Council of Mongolia, 38% of 300 sampled articles contained spelling or stylistic errors, which hindered accurate understanding of information. Therefore, fostering proper spelling habits is influenced by both educational and societal attitudes.

A survey conducted among 195 university students aged 18–21 who were enrolled in the “Mongolian Language and Composition” course revealed that:

- 47.4% wrote moderately frequently (2–3 times a week),
- 39.2% wrote daily,
- 13.4% wrote rarely.

Regarding the purpose of learning spelling rules, 56.7% indicated that it was necessary for official document preparation, while 27.3% cited its importance for educational activities such as teaching, research, and evaluation.

**Table 1. Students’ preferred methods for learning spelling rules**

| Method                | Percentage | Number of Students | Note                                                                    |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Books, exercises      | 35.4%      | 69                 | Preferred traditional approach: reading rules and practicing exercises. |
| Writing tasks, essays | 27.2%      | 53                 | Practiced writing considered effective.                                 |
| Online courses, apps  | 20.0%      | 39                 | Interested in digital learning opportunities.                           |
| Teacher guidance      | 17.4%      | 34                 | Personal guidance from instructors considered important.                |

**Table 2. Students’ perceived importance of learning spelling rules**

| Importance           | Percentage | Number of Students | Note                                                               |
|----------------------|------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Very important       | 68.9%      | 133                | Considered a critical skill for personal and professional success. |
| Relatively important | 25.9%      | 50                 | Important in specific contexts such as formal communication.       |
| Not very important   | 3.1%       | 6                  | Seen as non-practical by some.                                     |
| Not important at all | 2.1%       | 4                  | Few students assigned low importance.                              |

Survey results indicate a high demand for mastering spelling rules, with 68.9% viewing it as essential for personal and professional development. Cyrillic spelling in Mongolian encompasses phonology, morphology, syntax, and logic, requiring early and systematic training to develop both writing skills and broader cognitive and cultural competencies.

In the context of rapid technological and informational changes, learning habits and information-processing abilities have shifted, contributing to widespread spelling errors in both online and formal documents, negatively affecting writing culture.

International experience shows that early and systematic instruction in spelling yields better outcomes. Educational and psychological theories, such as B.F. Skinner’s *Reinforcement Theory* and Thorndike’s *Law of Effect*, confirm that repeated practice with feedback helps children internalize correct habits.

### Recommendations for Developing Spelling Skills:

#### At Primary and Secondary Education Levels:

- Integrate spelling exercises within curricula.
- Include structured spelling practice in Mongolian language textbooks.
- Modernize teaching methods using national and international best practices.
- Utilize AI-based diagnostic tools.
- Employ digital learning resources.
- Promote spelling culture through media and online platforms.

**At University Level:** Analysis of students’ written work revealed weak knowledge of spelling rules and inability to integrate phonology, morphology, and syntax. Recommended approaches include:

1. **Systematic theoretical knowledge:** Teach spelling rules at phonological, morphological, and syntactic levels, emphasizing interconnections.
2. **Metacognitive (reflexive) learning:** Develop students' ability to analyze and correct their own errors through "cause-analysis-correction" logic.
  - Annotate errors
  - Maintain correction logs
  - Classify errors by type, cause, and correction
3. **Practice-based integrated instruction:** Apply rules in essays, reports, official letters, and publications to show practical relevance.
4. **Diagnostic and formative assessment:** Track individual error patterns, maintain personal error charts, and use repeated exercises to correct mistakes.
  - AI tools can support automated error analysis.
5. **Interactive and collaborative methods:**
  - Digital collaborative platforms (Google Docs, Padlet) for peer review
  - AI-assisted feedback (ChatGPT, Grammarly)
  - Gamified interactive quizzes (Kahoot, Quizizz)
  - Group essay writing, peer editing, and error exhibitions
  - Creative group projects, posters, and visual representations

Combining these methods with AI enhances personalized learning outcomes and promotes active engagement.

## Conclusion

- Students frequently make spelling errors due to misunderstanding rules, lack of reading habits, oversimplification, or punctuation mistakes. Dedicated classroom time for spelling rules is needed.
- Errors in specific areas, such as the use of soft vowels, require engaging teaching methods to capture students' interest.
- Self-assessment and reflection are crucial for motivation and active learning; gamified online assessment tools can support this.
- Preparing engaging online lessons, interactive assignments, and self-evaluation exercises is critical, and such tools are accessible in modern educational settings.

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