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## THE ORTHOGRAPHIC NORM IN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper presents the results of research conducted with the primary objective to determine in which areas secondary school students usually make orthographic mistakes when writing (official) written assignments. Starting from the hypothesis that the punctuation writing of whole and split words are areas in which secondary school students (regardless of age and school orientation) achieved the weakest achievements an (exploratory) research was conducted on a corpus of 3,135 written assignments written in the school year of 2010/11. The research sample was intentional, descriptive and analytical methods were used for the description and the analysis of the results. The results showed the following (1) secondary school students usually make mistakes in punctuation of written assignments - we recorded 4,487 errors in the use of signs to denote intonation and meaning of a text (errors of this type make 53.93% of the total number of spelling errors reported in the corpus of research); by frequency of errors the second are errors related to writing whole and split words (11.02%), the third error is in the use of the capital letter (9.34%); (2) most problems in orthography have second grade students, quantum of mistakes is almost the same with first graders and seniors, but in all grades the most frequent errors are in punctuation, writing of whole and split words and the use of capital letters; (3) Although school orientation affects the spelling skills of pupils, the weakest orthographic achievements are also recorded in punctuation, writing of whole and split words and capitalization, so those are areas that need to be thoroughly addressed in teaching and methodology literature. The results are, on the one hand, a picture of the current status of teaching orthography and grammar knowledge of secondary school students. On the other hand, the research results can be applied in all phases of methodical practical work in teaching orthography, the upgrading the curriculum, in defining the goals and tasks of teaching languages, as well as in the selection of orthographic contents. At the same time, they constitute a strong impetus for further research on the path of modernization of teaching orthography.

**Keywords:** orthography, secondary school, teaching methods, the Serbian language, written assignments.

### 1. Introduction

A very important segment of general culture is the knowledge of the standard language, which is set by and uniform with explicit standard. This standard deals with the prescriptive grammar, and orthoepy - Orthography). "Orthography is a set of language rules requiring a

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<sup>1</sup> The article is formatted excerpt of dissertations Djordjević "Orthographic standards in written assignments of secondary school students as a guideline of modern teaching of orthography", which she defended at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, 26th November in 2015. Years in the presence of the committee including professor D. Veljković Stanković (mentor), prof. V. Brborić, prof. Lj. Petrovacki.

uniform way of writing, but it is also a convention which prescribes identical writing of words and punctuation signs of a language" (Brboric, 2011: 70).

Serbian orthography is phonological, partly morph-phonological, and as such is applied from the time of Vuk Karadzic. The respect of orthographic norms is mandatory for all who use the language and "a school should have a decisive role in fostering norms"(Desic, 2001: 19).

One of the parameters used to evaluate compliance with the orthographic norms in teaching practice is the orthographic accuracy of students' written assignments. Written assignments include all written models where students are trained to present personal opinions, observations and conclusions, to extend existing knowledge from literature, languages and orthography and through the patient work to enable their own individuality and beauty of expression '(Smiljkovic & Milinkovic, 2010: 143). According to the location they are written and the impact of teachers on profiling the written work, different school exams can be distinguished school written assignments (including the subject of interest of this work – the official exams), home written assignments and written exercises.

Official school-written assignments are representative compositions that periodically check the success of teaching culture of expression, particularly the teaching of literacy (Ilic, 1998: 616). They have - unlike other students' essays that are mostly in the service of systematic training –mostly a control purpose (Nikolic, 2009: 716) and frame the extensive curriculum cycles. Petar Ilic comments school-written assignments as a particularly significant pedagogical element, in the Methodology of Teaching Serbian Language and Literature (Ilic, 1999: 616–658). In The Methodology of Creative Teaching of Serbian Language and Literature written assignments are considered "a crown of systematic works on the development of written culture" (Marinkovic, 2000: 128). The whole teaching is reflected in school-written assignments, they are the only authentic trace of adjusting and innovating practices, in a word - every assignment a self-portrait of a student who writes it and teachers that lead him along the way to literacy.

In addition to the selection and arrangement of material, syntactic-stylistic value of a sentence, aesthetic appearance of the composition, orthography is distinguished as one of the essential elements in the assessment and evaluation of written assignments (Ilic, 1999: 616-658); orthographic mistakes compromise the liveliest and best composed written assignment.

Until now, in the scientific literature there has not been a detailed insight into the orthography of written assignments for secondary school students. From the sixties to the present day the development of written expression of primary school students has sporadically been studied. In a study that dealt with the problem of literacy among primary school students (Markovic, 1965: 276-286) and the study which was aimed to determine the importance of exercise for the acquisition of knowledge in orthography (Salonski, 1969: 190-196) it was observed, for example, how students use a comma, question mark, colon, point, and in which cases elementary school students use a capital letter in the middle of a sentence, leaving out letters in words, how they write particle ne and li. In both cases properly formed sentences have been studied. It was found that in one class 6% of elementary school students are unable to form a sentence, while 7% of students do not use a full stop at the end of the sentence. The percentage of students who do not know how to use the other orthographic characters is 10%. It is observed that there are those who do not write negative particle ne

(not) properly, 20% (Markovic, 1965: 276-286 –, according to Petrovic, 1999: 26). Also, it was pointed out that the orthographic rules cannot be learnt without practice, and that they should be introduced in the educational process at the beginning of elementary school. Observations of Milan Sipka stood out in this period; he researched the linguistic culture of the high school students on the basis of school-written assignments (Sipka, 1959: 118-121). The author has found four types of errors in written assignments (orthography, grammar, style, content, or material errors) and noted that the most common problem in students is adopting the correct form of standard languages and basic orthographic norms. In the 1990s of the last century, functional literacy was studied in a sample of 1899 primary school students in Serbia (Vasic et al., 1993). It was found that students make mistakes in the use of capital letter in the names of the institution, in the names of celestial bodies and in terms of geography as well as in writing a negative particle ne (not) (Petrovic, 1999: 28). In an (unpublished) doctoral dissertation Language Characteristics of Students in Schools of Secondary Education, Aleksandra Petrovic (1999) examined the language competencies of the students in order to determine in which categories students do not respect the linguistic norm. The development of linguistic expression is evaluated, among other things, on the corpus of 288 students' written assignments from Third Belgrade Grammar School, Zemun Grammar School, Philological Grammar School and Mathematics Grammar School. Orthographic errors were identified in 50% of all examined the written assignments and it was concluded that the ignorance of orthography rules indicates insufficiently developed meta-linguistic awareness (Petrovic, 1999: 143) and language expression of students (Petrovic, 1999: 52).

The Orthography of Serbian Language in Teaching Practice, memoir written by V. Brboric, brought a review of the history of Serbian orthography in the past two centuries, but also the results and comments from extensive research about the Serbian orthography in the teaching process with students in elementary and secondary schools and students in Belgrade, Novi Sad and Nis, as well as a chapter on the history of Serbian school system. Interpretation of the results obtained in a survey conducted in 1997. Interpretation of the results obtained in a study conducted in 1997 which included 1,122 school students and university students has brought many significant data for teaching orthography. It should be emphasized that the students of primary schools gave a higher percentage of correct answers (61.3%) in the orthography tests and dictations in comparison to secondary school students (58.3%). This means that the orthographic proficiency of our students ends in primary schools, as confirmed by the fact that the percentage of correct answers in students (67.8%) does not differ a lot from elementary school students (Brboric, 2004: 222, 2011: 97–98). While at primary school level knowledge depended on age, in secondary school the weakest orthographic knowledge was recorded in the second grade students (Brboric, 2004: 224). In terms of (secondary) schools, the best orthographic knowledge was observed in Belgrade grammar schools as well as at grammar schools in Novi Sad and Nis, and the weakest achievements were at vocational school students from Belgrade. The least knowledge of it is shown in the transcription of names and words from foreign languages, and best when writing capital letters. In concluding consideration of the author of this memoir observes "that our students' knowledge in orthography is not good" (Brboric, 2004: 229). He also pointed out to the orthographic mistakes in written assignments of primary and secondary school students as well as in some compositions written in the students' demonstration classes. One of the authors' conclusions that, given the objectives of this paper, which are relevant to us, is that orthography was not an acquired knowledge, otherwise the number of mistakes in written exams and written assignments would be smaller (Brboric, 2004: 220). It has been brought to

the attention of that it would be useful to separately process the topic on orthography in school written assignments of students (Brboric 2004: 218, fn 99).

## **2. The methodological framework of the research**

The subject of this paper is spelling mistakes (in the particular orthographic areas) in written assignments for secondary school students. The basic research problem can be expressed as the following questions: In which areas of orthography secondary school students usually make mistakes when writing official school- written assignments?

Research goals were:

1. analysis of spelling accuracy, orthographic characteristics of secondary school students' written school assignments;
2. to determine an average and total number of orthographic mistakes by individual areas of orthography in official school- written assignments with secondary school students (regardless of the age of students and the school they attend);
3. determine the average representation of and the total number of orthographic errors (according to orthographic areas) in written assignments of secondary school students with regard to the age of students;
4. determine the average and total number of orthographic errors (according to orthography areas) in written assignments with secondary school students considering the schools that students attend.

The basic hypothesis of which we started off in the analysis after determining the goals of the paper:

H1 Orthography areas in which secondary school students make mistakes in written assignments (regardless of age students and school orientation) are: punctuation and writing of whole and split words.

H2 Knowledge of orthography depends on the age of students.

H3 School orientation affects the orthography skills of students.<sup>22</sup>

The studied corpus - in order to get accurate and valid result - was comprehensive and it included 3,135 of written tasks of secondary school students. Tasks are excerpted out of 1,000 exercise notebooks for students' written assignments in the school subject Serbian Language and Literature in the school year of 2010/2011. The secondary level of education has been chosen for many reasons: a) in secondary school orthographic material which is acquired in elementary education and secondary school students would have to have a good knowledge of orthographic norm and apply it in writing tasks; b) secondary school students, because of their age, have already a developed linguistic expression; c) completion of secondary school for some students represents the end of formal education and effort on the formation of written and linguistic expression; d) students who continue their education should be able to accept the demands of higher education knowing the functional capabilities of the language.

In this study (explorative character) descriptive and analytical methods have been used as well as the method of systemic (non-experimental) observations. In addition to experiential

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<sup>2</sup> The curricula of schools of different profiles, and the number of hours of introducing the matter, systematization in the area of orthography, as well as the frequency and types written examination influence the outcomes of teaching.

method, the quantity is used with the aim to turn into quality to find a connection of this data with the theoretical framework. Therefore, by the synthesis of research data a systematic approach has been used to some extent. The main reason for this as a preferred approach was in the complexity of the studied area. The sample is deliberate – when choosing a school we took into consideration their territorial affiliations and educational profile, i.e. the area of work and orientation of the school that students attend- the works of students from Belgrade, Novi Sad, Vrsac and Bela Crkva were analyzed. The examination included the classes of grammar schools, general type, and grammar schools with two orientation courses (socio-linguistic and natural science), classes of specialized grammar schools, vocational schools and various educational profiles (education of pharmacists, physiotherapists, technicians, economists and patrolmen; v. Table 1). Since the written assignments of individual students were exclusively observed within their groups (students of a school comprise one set) the sample group was also observed.

Table 1 The total number of written assignments from each school participating in the survey

School	Total number of written assignments
Grammar School Borislav Petrov Braca ,Vrsac	752
Grammar School Isidora Sekulic, Novi Sad	227
Philological Grammar School, Belgrade	430
School Center Nikola Tesla, Vrsac	794
Pharmaceutical-physiotherapy School, Belgrade	541
Technical School Sava Muncan, Bela Crkva	391
Total: 6 schools	3.135 written assignments

*Preparation and research progress* – The survey was preceded by a serious and extensive preparation. There were more informal discussions with teachers of schools that were included in the survey. It was decided to collect school practice notebooks at the end of the 2010/11 in order to get an insight into the more written assignments and to avoid disturbing the teaching process.

Tasks were collected quickly thanks to the willingness of teachers to collaborate. Although the teachers tried to submit practice notebooks of all grades, 1327 of first graders<sup>3</sup>, 667 of the second year students' notebooks, 687 of the third grade and 454 tasks of the final year students were collected. The number of written assignments in one practice notebook was 1-4, depending on the type of school, but also of the presence of students in classes dedicated to written assignments.<sup>4</sup>

For systematization of grammatical themes the division orthography matter was taken from the Orthography of Serbian Language (manual for schools), Milorad Desic (1995), which is seemed best suited for the planned research; some changes have also been introduced, mainly in adding specialized orthographic topics, where there was a need on the trial on a sample of approximately 167 exercise books. Errors are classified into ten orthographic areas:

<sup>3</sup> Twice the number of first graders' practice notebooks was taken into account, since they mirror the knowledge students acquired in elementary schools, and can make a basis for future research. Also, when collected, it was not specified how many will practice notebooks would be available, what justifies an unequal number of practice notebooks taken from different schools.

<sup>4</sup> When the assembled Corpus was reviewed, it has been found out that in 22 practice notebooks there was only one written assignment, and there was only 7 notebooks with the cover signed only.

1. The use of letters; 2. pronunciation; 3. voice changes and phonemic relations; 4. capitalization; 5. composed and separated word writing; 6. punctuation; 7. abbreviations; 8. hyphenation at the end of the line; 9. the combination of punctuation signs and forms of text or style; 10. names and words in foreign languages.

Since all written assignments were done during the school year 2010/2011, it was decided to respect orthographic standards in them according to the norms prescribed in Orthography of Serbian Language of the Matica Srpska from 1993 year, with special notes where the Orthography of Serbian Language of Matica Srpska in 2010 year the noted particular orthographic entries are differently defined (Djordjević, 2011: 120-136, 2012b 91-117). Currently, the revised edition of the Orthography of Serbian Language (Pesikan, Jerković & Pizurica, 2010) came at the end of 2010 when the school year of 2010/2011 was already in progress. The use of this amended edition practically has been used since the beginning of the school year 2011/2012.

The most operative for systematization and monitoring orthographic errors were tables composed in Excel (Eng. Microsoft Office Excel 2007). This program allows the insertion of results (orthographic mistakes in written tasks) classified by schools, age and the success of students. Excel allows summarizing of all the results of research. Some customizations of software were made to fit the research goals.

*Limitations of the research –* This research can provide a complete and valid picture of the areas in which areas of orthography students of schools that participated in the survey in the school year of 2010/2011 usually made mistakes in written assignments written in that school year whereas, on the second corpus (e.g. excerpted written assignments from other parts of our country, in the another period) somewhat different results are likely to be found. Nevertheless, given the scope of the Corpus, it is thought that this research can be a good guideline to modern orthography teaching and the basis for further (parallel, etc.) research from orthographic and methodical standpoint, which would, if carried out in certain intervals, show the direction the teaching orthography in our country is going to. Finally, we are aware that for some orthographic problems it is difficult to find materials in written assignments, which is primarily dictated by the type of writing that has been explored.

### **3. Results and discussion**

In 3135 written assignments written in the school year of 2010/2011 within the school subject the Serbian language and Literature there was a total of 8320 orthographic mistakes. So, every secondary school student makes 3 orthographic mistakes when writing the written assignment. And in addition to orthographic mistakes, students make other grammatical, stylistic, and technical errors in their compositions.

In written assigments that we have reviewed the most frequent mistakes were in orthographic area of punctuation (Table 2): we recorded 4,487 errors of this type, which is more than half the total number of orthographic mistakes that we found in the corpus of research (53.93%). Mistakes that are related to writing a whole and split words (11.02%) are at the second place, the third mistake is in the use of the capital letter (9.34%).

Mistakes in writing foreign words, particularly names (1.30%), and incorrectly abbreviated words and expressions (0.88%) are very rare. The minimum number of mistakes in (ekavian and ijekavian) pronunciation is present (0, 25%). This low number of these types of mistakes is

determined by, among other things, the type of written text that we observed, a small number of foreign words that are present, abbreviations (Djordjev, 2012: 179-195) and ijekavian forms in the assignments, so that should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

Table 2 The total number and percentage of different types of orthographic mistakes in written assignments in high school students

Studied spelling areas	Total number of spelling errors	Percentage
Scripts	571	6.86%
Pronunciation	21	0.25%
Voice changes and phonemic relations	681	8.19%
Capitalization	777	9.34%
Writing of whole and split words	917	11.02%
Punctuation	4.487	53.93%
Abbreviations	73	0.88%
Division of words at the end of a line	230	2.76%
Combining the characters and style	455	5.47%
Writing words, especially names from foreign languages	108	1.30%
Total	8.320	100%

Most spelling errors were noted in tasks of second grade in secondary schools (Table 3). On average, a student of this age makes almost three orthographic mistakes in a written assignment. This result is consistent with the results of previous studies - second grade students also had the worst achievement in orthography tests. (Brboric, 2004: 224)<sup>5</sup>. In the course of secondary school, as the table shows, the students have not made much progress in orthographic skills: in first graders' assignments there are on average almost three mistakes (2.77) and in the assignments of students at the end of secondary school just over two mistakes in the orthographic norm (2.15).

Table 3 The average and the total number of orthographic mistakes in written assignments with the respect to the age of secondary school students

The age of students	Total number of written assignments	Total number of orthographic mistakes	The average number of mistakes in one written assignment
First grade	1.327	3.674	2.77
Second grade	667	1.944	2.91
Third grade	687	1.724	2.51
Fourth grade	454	978	2.15
Total	3.135	8.320	2.6 in one written assignment

By reviewing the percentage of different types of orthographic mistakes in written assignments of secondary school age students (Table 4) it was found that in all grades the most frequent were mistakes in punctuation, and this field, according to the curriculum (PG

<sup>5</sup> Students of first grade showed equal ignorance of the orthographic norm as the students of the final year (Brboric, 2004: 224). However, when knowledge should be applied to the exams, students of first grade were much weaker than students of the final year. In tests, the best results are achieved by third-grade students (Brboric, 2004: 229), and in the exams they show a poorer knowledge of students of the final year

1990 – 2010 and PG 1990-2010 (secondary school)<sup>6</sup>, should be paid attention to only in the final year of secondary school. In addition, students from other grades made a considerable number of errors in the use of capitalization, although this topic is to be dealt with in the first grade. Writing whole and split of words is processed in second grade. However, in the third grade, when a student should have the knowledge about writing whole and split words already established, a lot of students make mistakes in this area as well. The same is true for written assignments of students in the first and fourth grades, in which – in addition to the frequency of mistakes in punctuation mistakes in writing whole and split words are also detected.

Table 4 Overview of the percentage of different types of orthographic mistakes in written assignments of secondary school students in respect to the age of secondary school students

Fields of the study	The age of secondary school students			
	First grade	Second grade	Third grade	Fourth grade
Scripts	6.89%	5.66%	7.60%	7.87%
Pronunciation	0.08%	0.72%	0.06%	0.31%
Voice changes and phonemic relations	8.25%	7.92%	7.60%	9.51%
Capitalization	9.88%	10.34%	8.00%	7.67%
Writing of whole and split words	11.89%	9.72%	10.27%	11.66%
Punctuation	53.29%	55.61%	55.86%	49.59%
Abbreviations	0.60%	1.34%	0.81%	1.12%
Division of words at the end of a line	3.27%	1.65%	2.55%	3.48%
Combining the characters and style	5.12%	4.88%	6.03%	6.95%
Writing words, especially names from foreign languages	0.73%	2.16%	1.22%	1.84%

Table 5 indicates the presence and frequency of mistakes with respect to the school the students attend. It has been found out that written assignments with a minimum of orthographic mistakes (on average 1.67 mistakes in a written assignment) were in the tasks the students from Philological Grammar School from Belgrade. The worst results were in students in the School Center "Nikola Tesla" from Vrsac. Students of this school are educated for electrical engineers (computers, automation and electronics and process control), electrician, economic, financial technicians and technicians for robotics, mechanics, etc., mainly in the fourth and third level of education. In a written assignment of a student of this school an average makes more than three orthographic mistakes.

<sup>6</sup> [PG 1990-2010] - Regulations on the curriculum for the secondary school in ( Sluzbeni glasnik "Official Gazette of RS" )( Prosvetni glasnik Education Gazette), No. 5/90 and in ( Prosvetni glasnik "Education Gazette"), no. 3/91, 3/92, 17/93, 2/94, 2/95, 8/95, 23/97, 2/02, 5/03, 10/03, 11/04, 18/04, 24 / 04, 3/05, 11/05, 2/06, 6/06, 12/06, 17/06, 1/08, 8/08, 1/09, 3/09, 10/09 and 5/2010. [PG 1990-2010 (ss)] - Regulations on the curriculum of education for common courses in vocational and art schools in the Official Gazette of RS

Table 5: The average of and the total number of orthographic mistakes in the written assignments of secondary school students with the respect to the schools that students attend

	Schools					
	Grammar School Borislav Petrov Braca Vrsac	Grammar School Novi Sad	Philological Grammar School	School Center Nikola Tesla Vrsac	Pharmaceutical and Physiotherapy School Belgrade	Technical School Sava Muncan Bela Crkva
Total number of written assignments	752	227	430	794	541	391
Total number of mistakes	1.783	663	717	2.680	1.698	779
Average number of mistakes in a written assignment	2.37	2.92	1.67	3.38	3.14	1.99

Regardless to what school they attend students in usually make mistakes in punctuation and connected and separate writing of words (Table 6). Written assignments of students from grammar schools from Belgrade have stood out. The most frequent are mistakes in punctuation (as well as in other schools), but at the second place are not mistakes in writing whole and split of words as in other the schools, but the capitalization (mistakes of this type make 21.48% of all mistakes identified in written assignments in Philological Grammar School in Belgrade). This result is surely influenced by the topics in written assignments in this school, where more complex and longer essays with high frequency of proper names are required.

Table 6 Overview of the percentage of different types of orthographic mistakes in written assignments of secondary school students in respect to the schools they attend

Fields of the study	Schools					
	Grammar School Borislav Petrov Braca Vrsac	Grammar School Novi Sad	Philological Grammar School	School Center Nikola Tesla Vrsac	Pharmaceutical and Physiotherapy School Belgrade	Technical School Sava Muncan Bela Crkva
Scripts	8.13%	5.88%	14.78%	5.60%	4.89%	6.16%
Pronunciation	0.73%	0.00%	0.00%	0.26%	0.06%	0.00%
Voice changes and phonemic relations	10.71%	8.30%	5.30%	9.07%	3.36%	12.45%
Capitalization	10.60%	4.98%	21.48%	8.96%	4.59%	10.65%
Writing of whole and split words	15.03%	12.82%	5.58%	10.45%	6.36%	19.64%
Punctuation	41.40%	63.50%	38.91%	56.79%	73.02%	36.84%
Abbreviations	0.79%	0.15%	0.14%	1.23%	0.77%	1.42%
Division of words at the end of a line	4.26%	0.90%	5.02%	1.75%	1.18%	5.78%
Combining the characters and style	6.56%	3.02%	7.95%	4.59%	5.18%	4.24%
Writing words, especially names from foreign languages	1.79%	0.45%	0.84%	1.30%	0.59%	2.82%

The results showed the following:

- 1) The current situation in terms of respect of orthographic standards in written assignments of secondary school students is not encouraging – each student makes an average of three orthographic mistakes in one written assignment. The comparison of what is in the field of teaching orthography have (according to plan and program) to be taught in a particular class and students' achievements in written assignments (when acquired knowledge should be applied) showed that orthographic skills that students acquire in school are unreliable, not enough revised; orthographic rules students often learn by heart and apply them to a limited number of examples, which is why the material is acquired during a school year quickly forgotten and hence the kind of knowledge, that have not achieved a high degree of applicability and automatic application - superficial and dysfunctional.
- 2) In written assignments, students usually make mistakes in punctuation, writing of whole and split words (confirmation H1), followed by mistakes in capitalization, and these results suggest the direction of improving teaching orthography in high school should go, in order to more effectively improve students' knowledge, the above mentioned orthography topics should be a more thoroughly taught in classes and in the methodology literature.
- 3) The weakest achievements in the field of orthography (both in orthography tests and in written assignments) have second grade students (certificate H2), a quantum of mistakes made by first graders and secondary school seniors is almost the same which shows that orthographic knowledge in secondary school has stagnated, and that teaching orthography has been ignored. In all secondary school grades mistakes in punctuation, writing whole and split words and use capital letters are most common.
- 4) The curricula for schools of different profiles, the number of hours of processing, systematization of the material in the area of orthography, as well as the frequency and forms of application of the written examinations, in a word, school orientation, affects how the results of research, except in exceptional cases, presented the orthography skills of students (certificate H3). Orthographic mistakes in punctuation, writing of whole and split words and the use of capital letter dominated in the written assignments of all schools that participated in the survey.

The causes of observed states are numerous and complex a) insufficient attention is being given to these orthographic issues in teaching practice, b) lack of knowledge and lack of understanding orthographic rules, c) the impact of foreign languages and electronic communication in students' written expression, d) teaching practice which does not insist on the development of functional literacy of students, e) lack of textbooks, f) the lack of connection between the teaching of language and literature with teaching orthography, g) poor nourishing of speech and other reasons. A combination of all the factors mentioned greatly hampers the teaching of spelling; It seems that there's a least inventiveness, and too many stereotypes.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In order to improve written expression of students and improve the pre-existing situation, rebuilding and extending knowledge of punctuation, which has been identified as an area with the most frequent orthographic mistakes in written assignments in secondary schools, the process should start as early as the first year of secondary school. Teachers should systematically and gradually apply practice in orthography which would be created according to the needs of classes in which they teach. This means that teachers need to carry out an analysis of orthographic mistakes after each assignment, and that - in line with the observed (the most frequent) mistakes - create exercises for specific classes. Orthographic exercise

could be linked to the teaching of grammar and literature. Teachers had another serious and responsible task ahead of them: they should persist in correcting bad habits in using some punctuation (e.g. apostrophe in the usual expressions of expressing respect). When encountered in written assignments, these orthographic mistakes should be pointed out to, and also insist on exercises in teaching practice until proper application is not a habit. More attention should be paid to teaching practice and the writing of whole and split words (especially changes and amendments to the norms regarding this orthography field) as well as the use of capital letter. This means that we should modernize and enrich textbooks, orthographic and methodical literature; particular attention should be paid to the creation of interesting, valuable motivational teaching models aimed at correcting the frequency of mistakes. In addition to the theoretical benefits, the results of ongoing research should be taken into account as well as the empirical material on the way of improving the quality of teaching approaches; focus on the analysis and classification of mistakes, as well as to discover the causes of their appearance and long-term presence.

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