
Handwriting in the Czech schools (the influence of the script on handwriting acquisition)

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Abstract

This abstract addresses the issue of handwriting acquisition during the first grade of the elementary school. Goal of our presented project is to describe the typical written expression development of pupils from 1st to the 5th class. In our study we differentiate between two dimensions of handwriting: formal presentation and content value.

Formal presentation is the quality of graphomotor skills in the examined handwriting. Tilt unification, shape, size of letters, legibility, etc., were rated in this dimension. In Content value we measure how much pupil is able to use orthographic rules - we examine the structure of errors made in writing and ability of pupil to correct their errors.

Our project describes the procedure of dynamic handwriting acquisition on two different alphabetic scripts used in Czech elementary schools. We compare formal cursive script and the Comenia Script, which is presented in Czech elementary school since year 2012 as one of the alternative script.

The assessing scale from authors Veverková and Kucharská was modified and used for evaluation purposes. This scale originates from Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague 2012.

Our study is cross-sectional, designed as a field research. Pupils did the handwriting exams at the beginning and at the end of school year 2015/2016 (October/November 2015 and May 2016). Research sample group counted 600 pupils of primary school in different schools across the Czech Republic. In every grade were 120 pupils - half of these pupils use Comenia Script, while the other half of pupils use common script. Assessment included handwritten exams: dictated sentence writing and graphomotor tests - namely Draw-a-person Test. Administration was done in a groups, so these results could be used for Educational diagnostic in the future.

Three main factors were used in statistical evaluation: age, gender and script used. We currently have data-analysis from the first assessment and the results are indicating that script influences the development of orthographic skills in children. This finding is highly

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significant for us and we would like to finish the data-analysis of our second assessment of research on handwriting acquisition to be presented at SILE/ISEL conference.

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