Short lecture

Opinions of teachers on the use of the Wiris computer algebra system for teaching and learning mathematics

Sirje Pihlap, Estonia

Abstract

The previous academic year was the third year of implementation of the new curriculum in Estonia. An important element of the curriculum is the use of mathematics software – it is now mandatory and the curriculum also specifies some learning outcomes to be achieved using mathematics software. The requirements of the curriculum can be met, to a large extent, through three software systems: T-algebra for step-by-step solving of algebra problems, Geogebra dynamic geometry software, and Wiris computer algebra system. A number of training courses on these three software systems have been organised for teachers. GeoGebra has been the most popular application with 63% of mathematics teachers having used it for teaching, while the Wiris system has only been used by 35% of mathematics teachers (Prei, 2013). This study analyses the opinions of the 85 teachers, who participated in Wiris training, on the use of this system in mathematics education. The analysis also covers teachers’ opinions on some distinctive traits of Wiris. Like any computer application, Wiris has certain distinctive features that could prove to be either obstacles to learning or useful teaching tools.