Teaching Challenges: Elementary Educators' Experiences on Learners with Spelling Difficulties

Catherine N. Siguan[1,*]

[1]Department of Graduate School, Eastern Samar State University, Guiuan Campus, Eastern Samar, Philippines.
catherinesiguan25@gmail.com[1]

Abstract: This qualitative study explored the spelling experiences of elementary learners and the strategies employed by teachers in the Salcedo District to address spelling difficulties. It aimed to (1) identify common spelling challenges encountered by pupils, (2) analyse teachers' approaches in managing these difficulties, and (3) determine the impact of spelling issues on learners' academic performance and experiences. Using a phenomenological design, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with purposively selected teachers. Thematic analysis revealed that spelling difficulties among learners manifested in letter reversals, sequencing errors, and confusion with phonetically similar words, often linked to foundational orthographic and memory deficits. Teachers responded with various strategies, including phonological instruction, repetitive drills, contextualised learning, and multisensory approaches. The importance of collaboration with parents and school administrators was also emphasised. Spelling challenges were found to negatively affect academic achievement, self-confidence, and classroom participation, highlighting the need for holistic, context-responsive instructional practices. This study addresses a research gap in rural-based, experience-driven investigations and offers implications for policy, pedagogy, and future research aimed at improving literacy outcomes in similar educational settings.

1. Introduction

Spelling is universally recognised as a critical aspect of language learning that forms the foundation for effective communication, particularly in written form. It plays a central role in supporting grammar, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and overall writing proficiency. According to Costa and Arias [24] and Boltron and Ramos [21], proficiency in spelling is essential for learners to express themselves clearly and accurately, as it ensures the correct formation and usage of words within a sentence. A strong grasp of spelling also enhances a learner's ability to comprehend text and construct meaning, making it an indispensable component of literacy development, especially in the elementary years when language skills are still being formed. Despite its importance, many elementary learners continue to experience significant spelling difficulties. These challenges are often rooted in limited vocabulary exposure, insufficient reading experiences, and confusion over complex and

---

*Corresponding author.

inconsistent language rules. For young learners, especially those in multilingual settings, mastering English spelling can be particularly demanding.

Research by Nor and Rashid [23] and Zuriyani and Mohamed [22] highlights how learners often transfer phonetic and structural rules from their first language when attempting to spell in English, resulting in frequent and patterned errors. This phenomenon is commonly observed in second-language learning environments, such as the Philippines, where English is taught alongside Filipino and local dialects, further complicating the acquisition of accurate spelling. Teachers play a crucial and transformative role in helping students navigate these challenges. Through intentional instruction and targeted interventions, educators can build learners' spelling skills using a variety of strategies—ranging from interactive games, spelling drills, and word walls to collaborative peer work and differentiated activities tailored to diverse learning needs. Doyle et al. [2] assert that these strategies are most effective when they are consistent, engaging, and inclusive. However, research also shows that not all teachers feel adequately prepared to implement effective spelling instruction, particularly when faced with classrooms of varying ability levels.

Oakley [8] and Treiman [25] note that some educators lack specialised training or resources to address spelling difficulties, which makes it challenging to meet the individual needs of students who struggle with spelling. In the Philippine context, several studies have emphasised that spelling remains a persistent issue among elementary learners, continuing to hinder their overall writing performance. Mendoza [11] found that many students produce written outputs riddled with spelling errors, often caused by a limited grasp of vocabulary and unfamiliarity with the meanings and structures of new or borrowed words. The role of the home environment is also significant. Gaytos [17] emphasised that early literacy activities such as being read to, engaging in writing tasks at home, or being exposed to rich and varied language input have a lasting influence on a child's spelling development. In communities where these activities are lacking, children are at a greater risk of falling behind.

1.1. Research Objectives

This study primarily aimed to explore the spelling experiences of elementary learners and examine how teachers in the Salcedo District addressed these challenges. Specifically, it sought to:

- To identify the common spelling difficulties encountered by elementary learners in the Salcedo District.
- To analyse the strategies employed by elementary teachers in managing learners' spelling challenges.
- To determine the impact of spelling difficulties on the academic performance and learning experiences of elementary learners.

1.2. Research Gap

While numerous studies have explored the causes of spelling difficulties among elementary learners and suggested various instructional strategies to address them, most of these investigations have focused on general trends, urban settings, or theoretical frameworks without deeply examining the practical experiences of classroom teachers. In particular, there is a noticeable lack of research that captures the firsthand challenges, coping mechanisms, and pedagogical insights of educators working in rural or resource-constrained environments such as the Salcedo 1 District in Eastern Samar. The absence of localised and experience-based studies leaves a critical gap in understanding how teachers adapt their instruction to meet the diverse spelling needs of learners. This study aims to fill that gap by examining the lived experiences of elementary educators as they confront and manage spelling difficulties in their classrooms, offering context-specific insights that can inform more responsive and effective spelling instruction in similar educational settings [3].

2. Literature Review

Spelling is universally recognised as a foundational component of literacy and a pivotal element in a child's educational journey. As a core aspect of literacy, spelling transcends its traditional association with rote memorisation and simple word recognition. Instead, it forms the foundation of key language skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Apolog and Cayat [1] emphasise that spelling serves as a central pillar in a child's academic growth and is closely linked with broader educational outcomes. Without adequate spelling skills, a learner may struggle with fluency and coherence in both oral and written communication, thereby impeding overall academic success across subjects. The process of spelling is far from arbitrary; it is an intricate cognitive task that necessitates a well-integrated understanding of multiple linguistic domains. Puspandari [13] delineates spelling as the translation of spoken language into written symbols.

This process depends on the integration of phonological (sound patterns), morphological (word formation), syntactic (sentence structure), and semantic (meaning) knowledge. This multifaceted nature of spelling reflects the complexity involved in accurately representing language in written form. Altamimi and Rashid [6] reinforce this notion, arguing that correct spelling

depends on a learner's ability to follow specific orthographic rules and patterns, which vary significantly depending on language structure and exposure. Similarly, Doyle et al. [2] emphasise that spelling is not merely a surface-level skill, but rather a linguistic process deeply rooted in phonemic orthography, where sound-symbol correspondence plays a crucial role. Phonics-based instruction has emerged as a leading pedagogical approach in teaching spelling effectively. Kelly [12] asserts that teaching spelling should revolve around a systematic phonics approach, emphasising the direct relationship between phonemes (the smallest units of sound) and graphemes (the written representation of those sounds). Through consistent exposure and guided practice, students begin to understand the rules and exceptions inherent in language systems, thereby enhancing their ability to spell words independently and accurately.

These processes are instrumental in helping learners develop fluency, clarity, and confidence in their writing abilities—essential traits for academic and real-world communication. Beyond technical proficiency, spelling plays a pivotal role in fostering effective communication, instilling habits of precision, encouraging courtesy in written exchanges, and bolstering self-esteem among learners. Teach Pinas [26] notes that the correct use of spelling enables students to communicate their ideas more clearly and confidently, reducing ambiguity and misunderstandings. The role of spelling becomes even more pronounced in the intermediate grades, where writing tasks become more complex and demand higher cognitive engagement. Luna [9] notes that spelling accuracy significantly contributes to writing quality and is one of the key determinants of writing fluency at this stage of development. Proper spelling allows students to focus more on idea generation and organisation rather than getting bogged down by word formation, thereby promoting cognitive freedom in composition.

From a linguistic standpoint, spelling systems contribute to language cohesion and comprehension. Dadola et al. [5] argue that standardised spelling conventions reduce confusion in communication, especially when dealing with homophones, homonyms, and words of foreign origin. Spelling also supports the recognition of high-frequency words, an essential component of reading fluency, as emphasised by Casey [14]. Mastery of common spelling patterns not only accelerates word recognition but also enables learners to read and write more fluently, thereby contributing to overall literacy competence. Moreover, research by Nejar [18] reveals that targeted writing activities, such as diary writing and journaling, significantly improve spelling skills. These interventions foster engagement, encourage repeated exposure to vocabulary, and enhance learners' motivation to write accurately.

A crucial component of effective spelling instruction is regular and meaningful practice. Abrasado [15] and Dadola et al. [5] emphasise that daily exposure to words in varied contexts, along with the development of phonological awareness, is crucial for spelling proficiency. Effective instruction often involves deconstructing words, analysing their sound components, and reassembling them to reinforce retention and comprehension. Walls and Braid [10] advocate for instructional strategies that guide learners in analysing the sounds of words before attempting to spell them, particularly in cases where letter-sound relationships are inconsistent or complex. Programs that integrate word study and spelling pattern instruction have also proven effective in developing students' orthographic and phonemic knowledge. Luna [9] and De Vera [3] highlight that such approaches not only build vocabulary but also deepen learners' understanding of language structures, fostering both accuracy and independence in spelling. The support system surrounding the learner, including both school and home environments, plays a crucial role in the acquisition of spelling skills.

According to Teach Pinas [26], early and sustained collaboration between teachers and parents ensures that children develop basic spelling competence before formal schooling and continue to strengthen it throughout their academic journey. Through consistent reinforcement, encouragement, and modelling of correct spelling usage, adults can significantly influence a child's motivation and spelling proficiency. However, despite its recognised importance, spelling remains a persistent challenge for many students. The COVID-19 pandemic's disruption further magnified these challenges by reducing direct instructional time and limiting opportunities for reading and writing practice. De Vera [3] reported that the sudden shift to remote learning during the pandemic led to substantial declines in students' literacy performance, with spelling being one of the most affected areas. In addition, Mendoza [11] identifies limited vocabulary and unfamiliarity with word usage as key contributors to spelling difficulties. When students lack exposure to a rich variety of words in both oral and written contexts, their ability to internalise spelling rules and conventions is diminished.

Doyle et al. [2] further link frequent spelling errors to lower writing confidence, which can negatively affect students' willingness to engage in writing tasks and can even influence how teachers perceive their academic competence. The irregularities of English spelling make it particularly challenging to master. Unlike phonetic languages, where spelling is closely tied to pronunciation, English features numerous silent letters, unpredictable phoneme-grapheme relationships, and exceptions to common rules. Terry [4] attributes many of these difficulties to deficiencies in auditory and visual processing, which affect a student's ability to distinguish sounds and letter sequences. Sénéchal et al. [20] note that learners often commit errors such as omission (leaving out letters), insertion (adding unnecessary letters), substitution (replacing one letter with another), and phonetic approximations, especially when instruction lacks consistency and reinforcement. These types of errors are often exacerbated in non-native English speakers, who may rely on their first language's phonological systems. Alhaisoni et al. [7]

observed that insertion errors, in particular, are prevalent among learners whose native languages have different syllabic structures or sound inventories.

Systemic and instructional barriers further complicate teaching spelling. Ankucic [16] points out several obstacles to effective spelling instruction, including insufficient time allocated within the curriculum, low teacher confidence in phonics instruction, and student disengagement. When teachers lack adequate training or feel uncertain about the most effective strategies for teaching spelling, learners are at risk of developing persistent inaccuracies that are hard to remediate. Additionally, without engaging in context-rich activities, students may perceive spelling as monotonous and irrelevant, leading to reduced motivation and effort. Failure to address these challenges has long-term implications for learners. Students who struggle with spelling often avoid using complex or unfamiliar vocabulary, which limits the depth and richness of their writing. This avoidance can stifle creativity and hinder academic progress across subjects.

Rossi et al. [19] argue that spelling cannot be taught in isolation but must be integrated into a broader framework of writing instruction that also considers handwriting, punctuation, sentence structure, and composition. A comprehensive and holistic approach to literacy instruction ensures that spelling is seen not as a stand-alone skill but as an integral part of effective written expression. In conclusion, spelling is an indispensable element of literacy that warrants deliberate and sustained instructional focus. Its importance lies not only in its technical correctness but in its broader influence on communication, academic performance, and learner confidence. To ensure that all students acquire strong spelling skills, educators and policymakers must commit to evidence-based practices, invest in teacher training, promote home-school collaboration, and create learning environments that value language development in its fullest sense.

3. Research Methodology

This study used a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of English teachers in handling spelling difficulties. The study employed purposive sampling to select participants who met specific criteria: being currently employed in the Department of Education, teaching in the Salcedo District, with at least four years of teaching experience, and currently handling pupils with spelling difficulties. Data were collected through one-on-one semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants to reflect on their experiences. Experts validated the interview guide, and all sessions were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy and reliability. Data were analysed using Boltron and Ramos [21] thematic analysis, following six steps: familiarisation, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and reporting findings. Ethical considerations were strictly observed. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their rights, and the confidentiality of their responses. Names were coded to protect identities, and participation was voluntary. The study was conducted without any external funding or conflict of interest.

4. Analysis and Discussion

This section presents an in-depth analysis and discussion of the lived experiences shared by teachers in the Salcedo District, with a focus on the spelling difficulties encountered by elementary learners. Through comprehensive thematic coding and interpretation of the qualitative data gathered from participant interviews, several significant and interrelated themes emerged. These themes offer critical insights into the nature of spelling challenges among young learners, the strategies teachers employ to address them, and the broader academic and emotional impacts these difficulties may have on students. The analysis is structured to align with the research questions and is organised according to the major themes that surfaced from the data. Each theme is substantiated by participants' observations and supported by relevant pedagogical perspectives.

4.1. Common Spelling Difficulties Encountered by Elementary Learners

In response to the research question regarding the most common spelling difficulties experienced by elementary school students, teacher participants described a variety of recurring errors and patterns. These challenges are not only persistent but are also varied in nature, suggesting a complex interplay of cognitive, linguistic, and developmental factors. The following themes represent the core issues observed by the teachers.

4.1.1. Theme 1: Nature of Spelling Difficulties

Teachers consistently observed that the spelling difficulties among elementary learners are not just occasional mistakes but rather recurring patterns rooted in deeper literacy challenges. Common issues include letter reversals, such as confusing "b" and "d," which are often attributed to underdeveloped visual discrimination skills. Students also frequently omit, add, or transpose letters in words, resulting in misspellings like "frend" for "friend" or "beleive" for "believe." These errors suggest that learners struggle with both phonological processing and memorising standard spelling patterns. Furthermore, many students exhibit phonological confusions, often spelling words based on their sound rather than their correct orthographic form.

For example, they may write "ther" instead of "their" or "sed" instead of "said," indicating difficulties in mapping sounds to their corresponding letter patterns.

Teachers noted that such issues are particularly common among early readers or those with limited exposure to print-rich environments. These learners often rely heavily on auditory cues and may not yet have developed strong orthographic recognition. In addition to these mechanical errors, teachers emphasised that students often fail to transfer correct spellings from visual memory into written form, even for high-frequency words they encounter daily. This suggests potential deficits in orthographic mapping, where learners struggle to form permanent mental representations of words. Despite repeated instruction and practice, students may continue to misspell familiar terms, highlighting that spelling development is a complex cognitive task that requires more than rote memorisation—it necessitates the integration of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning systems.

4.1.2. Theme 2: Teacher Observations and Instructional Challenges

Teachers in the study revealed that spelling difficulties are most apparent during routine writing activities such as journal writing, classroom exercises, and formal assessments. These tasks offer a window into learners' literacy skills and make spelling issues easier to detect. However, they also highlight the daily challenges teachers face in supporting students with persistent spelling struggles. Because these learners often make numerous errors across various writing tasks, they require frequent corrections, modelling, and guided practice, which can be time-consuming in large classroom settings. Providing individual support becomes a critical part of the teacher's responsibility, but the lack of adequate time and resources often hinders this process. Teachers expressed frustration over the need to address spelling issues while simultaneously managing the broader demands of classroom instruction. Moreover, some students develop a dependency on their teacher for spelling assistance, often asking for confirmation or correction instead of attempting to spell independently.

This reliance slows their development of autonomy in writing and contributes to reduced confidence when attempting new or complex words. Additionally, the lack of uniformity in how spelling is taught across grade levels or classrooms exacerbates the issue. Teachers pointed out that inconsistent use of strategies and limited follow-through from year to year contribute to students' ongoing difficulties. Without a structured and sustained approach, many learners fall through the cracks, especially those with learning disabilities or those from non-literate home environments. These observations highlight the need for systemic instructional reforms that prioritise spelling as a key component of literacy education.

4.2. Strategies Employed by Teachers to Manage Spelling Challenges

To address these challenges, educators employ a range of strategies tailored to their students' needs. From direct instruction and repetitive practice to engaging, multisensory techniques, teachers demonstrate creativity and commitment in supporting learners' spelling development. The data revealed several strategic approaches, as discussed below.

4.2.1. Theme 1: Instructional Strategies and Interventions

Teachers employ a range of instructional methods to assist learners who struggle with spelling. Commonly used strategies include explicit instruction, such as using spelling lists, practice worksheets, and dictation exercises. Visual aids such as flashcards, labelled word charts, and classroom word walls support visual memory and help students recognise word patterns. In addition, teachers often provide contextualised practice through storytelling and sentence writing, enabling students to see words in action and understand their meaning and usage. To foster engagement and reduce the monotony of repetitive spelling practice, educators often integrate games, puzzles, and friendly competitions, such as spelling bees. These activities turn spelling practice into an enjoyable experience that stimulates learners' interest and enthusiasm.

Teachers report that these playful approaches promote active participation and increase student motivation, especially among those who may otherwise be disinterested or discouraged by frequent spelling errors. A standout technique among the reported strategies is the use of multisensory instruction. This involves engaging multiple senses to reinforce spelling learning—writing letters in sand for tactile feedback, using colour-coded syllables for visual clarity, and chanting or singing spelling patterns to enhance auditory memory. Teachers also use rewards, such as praise, stickers, and behaviour charts, to reinforce positive progress. These methods not only cater to diverse learning styles but also contribute to greater retention and a more inclusive classroom environment.

4.2.2. Theme 2: Phonological Awareness and Systematic Instruction

Teachers unanimously emphasised the foundational role of phonological awareness in the development of spelling. To build this skill, they implement activities such as rhyming games, syllable clapping, and sound-matching exercises that help learners

distinguish and manipulate the sounds in words. These tasks are crucial for helping children connect spoken language with written symbols, a skill particularly essential for beginning readers and writers. In addition to phonological awareness activities, teachers implement systematic phonics instruction. This includes introducing letter-sound relationships in a carefully sequenced and progressive manner, starting with simple consonant-vowel-consonant words and gradually moving to more complex word forms involving blends, digraphs, and irregular spellings. The structured nature of phonics instruction enables learners to internalise spelling conventions and develop decoding and encoding skills over time. Teachers also noted that this systematic approach is especially helpful for learners who have limited print exposure at home or those who exhibit signs of learning difficulties. By repeatedly practising phonics rules and applying them across reading and writing tasks, students gain confidence in their ability to spell accurately. Educators emphasised the importance of consistency and continuity in phonics instruction across grade levels to ensure that foundational skills are retained and built upon as students progress.

4.2.3. Theme 3: Daily Practice and Reinforcement

Teachers cited daily and consistent spelling practice as one of the most effective strategies to enhance spelling retention. Many educators implement spelling journals, morning drills, and daily word practice routines to encourage repeated exposure and practice. Dictation activities and weekly spelling quizzes provide opportunities for assessment and immediate feedback, which helps students identify and correct their own errors. Teachers also emphasise the importance of integrating spelling into broader academic contexts. They incorporate subject-specific vocabulary into spelling lessons, using terms from Science, Araling Panlipunan, and English to provide relevant and authentic practice. This approach not only reinforces spelling patterns but also enhances students' understanding of content-area vocabulary, thereby promoting both literacy and subject-matter mastery. Moreover, the use of learning tools such as word walls, mini word books, and personalised word lists supports ongoing reinforcement. These materials provide students with quick reference points, helping them track their own progress. By embedding spelling practice into everyday classroom routines and across subjects, teachers ensure that spelling instruction is not isolated but becomes an integral part of students' learning experiences.

4.2.4. Theme 4: Supportive and Engaging Learning Environment

Creating a positive and non-threatening learning environment is essential for encouraging students to take risks in spelling and writing. Teachers noted that learners are more willing to attempt difficult words and self-correct when they feel emotionally safe and supported. By fostering a classroom culture that values effort over perfection, teachers help students view mistakes as learning opportunities rather than failures. Engagement is further enhanced through the use of interactive and age-appropriate activities. Spelling relays, partner dictation, and collaborative word-building games encourage social interaction and peer learning. These group activities promote teamwork and accountability while reinforcing spelling knowledge. Teachers are mindful to tailor tasks to the developmental levels of their students, ensuring that each child is both challenged and capable of participating meaningfully. Digital tools and visual media also play a role in sustaining interest and reducing spelling anxiety. Teachers integrate spelling apps, videos, and interactive whiteboard activities to diversify instruction and cater to the needs of 21st-century learners. By maintaining a lively and responsive classroom environment, teachers make spelling an engaging and rewarding part of everyday learning, thus minimising the stress and fear often associated with writing tasks.

4.2.5. Theme 5: Collaboration with Stakeholders

Collaboration with parents, colleagues, and school administrators is regarded by teachers as essential in addressing persistent spelling difficulties. They often send word lists home, assign manageable practice tasks, and communicate regularly with parents about students' progress. This home-school connection reinforces classroom instruction and provides learners with consistent support, especially when caregivers participate in practising spelling with their children. Teachers also recognise the value of school-based initiatives in supporting spelling instruction. Programs such as parent literacy workshops, reading nights, and spelling-focused events foster a community-wide approach to literacy. These initiatives not only raise awareness among parents but also equip them with effective strategies to support their children at home. Additionally, professional collaboration among teachers and school leaders is essential for sharing resources, aligning instructional approaches, and identifying best practices. Regular in-service training, mentoring programs, and collaborative planning sessions empower teachers to refine their methods and stay updated on effective interventions. When all stakeholders work together, spelling instruction becomes a collective effort, resulting in more consistent support and better outcomes for learners.

4.3. Impact of Spelling Difficulties on the Academic Performance and Learning Experiences of Elementary Learners

The impact of spelling difficulties on elementary learners extends beyond mere errors on paper, influencing both their academic performance and their overall learning experiences in significant ways. The following themes highlight the key areas affected by these challenges.

4.3.1. Theme 1: Academic Performance Challenges Due to Spelling Difficulties

Spelling difficulties significantly affect elementary learners' overall academic performance, often extending beyond language arts into other subject areas. Teachers and students alike report that frequent spelling errors lower students' grades on written assignments, tests, and papers, as teachers may deduct points for incorrect spelling or unclear writing. This can lead to a skewed representation of the learner's actual knowledge and understanding of the content, resulting in frustration and a decline in academic self-esteem. In subjects such as Science and Social Studies, where written reports and vocabulary use are essential, students with spelling struggles may struggle to express their ideas clearly and accurately. Moreover, the impact on academic performance is compounded by the increased cognitive load that spelling difficulties impose. Students may spend disproportionate amounts of time attempting to spell words correctly, which detracts from their focus on the content and ideas they want to convey.

This time-consuming effort often hinders writing fluency, affecting both the quantity and quality of their work. As a result, learners may produce shorter responses or incomplete tasks, which further contribute to lower performance evaluations and decreased opportunities for academic success. Teachers also note that spelling difficulties can hinder progress in reading and comprehension skills, which are closely linked to writing competence. Struggling with spelling often correlates with weak phonological awareness and decoding skills, which in turn affect reading fluency. This interrelation creates a cycle in which learners face challenges in multiple literacy domains, thereby amplifying the negative impact on academic achievement. Thus, spelling difficulties represent not just isolated errors but a broader obstacle impacting the learner's holistic educational development.

4.3.2. Theme 2: Emotional and Experiential Impact on Learning

Beyond academic grades, spelling difficulties have a profound effect on the learning experiences and emotional well-being of elementary students. Many learners report feelings of embarrassment, anxiety, and diminished confidence when faced with writing tasks that expose their spelling weaknesses. This emotional burden often leads to reluctance in participating in writing activities, decreased motivation to complete assignments, and a general avoidance of tasks that require extended written expression. The fear of making mistakes and being judged by peers or teachers can create a negative association with literacy learning. This emotional impact also influences classroom dynamics and social interactions. Students who struggle with spelling may hesitate to share their ideas orally or contribute to group activities, fearing correction or ridicule. This reticence can limit their opportunities for peer learning and collaboration, which are vital components of an engaging and supportive educational environment.

Teachers observe that these students sometimes develop learned helplessness, where they believe they cannot improve despite effort, which further diminishes their engagement and persistence. Furthermore, the negative experiences related to spelling difficulties can affect learners' attitudes toward school in general. When students consistently encounter challenges and receive little positive reinforcement, their overall enthusiasm for learning may wane. This can lead to increased absenteeism, behavioural issues, or a lack of interest in literacy development. Therefore, the emotional and experiential consequences of spelling challenges underscore the need for supportive instructional practices and a nurturing classroom climate that fosters resilience, confidence, and a positive learning identity.

5. Research Future Opportunities

Based on the analysis and discussion of the spelling difficulties faced by elementary learners in the Salcedo District, several avenues for future research arise, each focusing on further understanding and addressing the challenges outlined. These future research opportunities aim to build on the findings of this study, extend the understanding of spelling difficulties, and explore innovative solutions to address these challenges.

- Longitudinal Study on Spelling Development. A longitudinal study could track the progress of students over time, exploring how spelling difficulties evolve throughout their elementary years and into secondary education. This would provide insights into whether early interventions lead to sustained improvement or if there are critical periods during which support is most needed.
- Investigating the Role of Technology in Spelling Instruction. As digital tools are increasingly incorporated into classrooms, future research could explore the effectiveness of technology-based spelling programs. Studies could focus on how apps, online games, and virtual classrooms support spelling development, particularly in providing personalised and interactive learning experiences for students with diverse learning styles.
- Examining Teacher Professional Development and Training on Spelling Instruction. Further research could investigate the impact of specialised professional development programs on teachers' ability to address spelling difficulties. By examining the effectiveness of training in phonological awareness, spelling strategies, and the use of

assistive technology, future studies can inform the development of teacher training programs that enhance spelling instruction in elementary schools.

- Exploring the Impact of Home-Based Spelling Interventions. Building on the theme of collaboration with stakeholders, future research could explore the role of parents in reinforcing spelling at home. Research could focus on identifying the most effective strategies for parents to use, including activities, resources, and techniques that support spelling practice outside the classroom.
- Comparative Study of Spelling Difficulties Across Districts or Regions. Expanding the research to compare spelling difficulties in other districts or regions could provide valuable insights into whether the issues observed in the Salcedo District are widespread or unique to this particular area. This could help to identify regional trends and tailor interventions to specific needs.
- Incorporating Multisensory Approaches to Spelling Instruction. Given the identified importance of regular practice and phonological awareness, future studies could explore the efficacy of multisensory approaches (such as combining visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning) in spelling instruction. Research could examine whether these approaches enhance retention and accuracy in spelling, particularly for students who struggle with traditional methods.
- Assessing the Emotional and Psychological Effects of Spelling Difficulties. A deeper investigation into the social and emotional impacts of spelling difficulties could shed light on how these challenges influence students' overall school experience. Research could investigate the role of emotional support strategies, such as mentorship programs and counselling, in helping students develop confidence and resilience in the face of academic challenges.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the multifaceted nature of spelling difficulties among elementary learners in the Salcedo District. Teachers observed that these challenges manifest in various ways, including letter reversals, misidentification of similar letters, and poor sequencing. These persistent issues, even with simple words, point to deeper problems in learners' orthographic and memory development. Moreover, the instructional challenges faced by teachers in addressing these difficulties emphasise the need for early identification and tailored interventions to support struggling learners effectively. In response to these difficulties, teachers have adopted a range of strategies that address both cognitive and emotional aspects of spelling instruction. These include repetitive drills, visual and contextual learning, phonological awareness development, and creating a supportive and engaging classroom environment. Regular practice and consistent reinforcement are crucial in strengthening spelling skills, while collaboration with parents and school administrators enhances the overall effectiveness of instructional efforts.

The emphasis on multisensory and interactive teaching methods demonstrates the importance of motivation and learner engagement in overcoming spelling difficulties. Lastly, the impact of spelling difficulties extends beyond academics, affecting students' participation, test performance, and overall self-confidence. Learners with persistent spelling problems often experience emotional distress and social withdrawal, highlighting the importance of holistic support. Addressing these challenges requires not only targeted instruction but also emotional and psychological encouragement to rebuild learners' confidence and foster a positive attitude toward learning. The study emphasises the importance of comprehensive, collaborative approaches in addressing spelling difficulties to ensure both academic success and emotional well-being among elementary learners.

6.1. Recommendations

In light of the study's findings, it is strongly recommended that schools adopt a comprehensive, sustained, and collaborative approach to addressing the spelling difficulties encountered by elementary learners. A key priority should be the implementation of a multisensory spelling program that integrates visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile strategies to accommodate diverse learning styles and reinforce memory retention. Activities such as letter tracing, manipulative-based word construction, movement-based spelling, and sound-symbol matching should be regularly incorporated into instruction to strengthen phonological awareness and orthographic processing. To support this initiative, school administrators must ensure the provision of targeted and ongoing professional development for teachers, focusing on the science of reading, including phonemic awareness, systematic phonics instruction, and diagnostic assessment for responsive intervention. Teachers should be equipped not only with theoretical knowledge but also with practical strategies for differentiating instruction and addressing the individual needs of students.

Furthermore, spelling instruction must be meaningfully integrated across all subject areas to provide context-rich opportunities for learners to apply and reinforce their skills, thereby promoting a deeper understanding and more functional language use. Regular and engaging reinforcement practices, such as spelling notebooks, dictation exercises, word walls, and the use of educational technology, should become part of the daily classroom routine to build consistency and fluency. Equally important is the cultivation of strong school-home partnerships; parents should be engaged through regular communication, home-based

activities aligned with classroom instruction, and workshops that empower them to support their children's literacy journey. Ultimately, it is crucial to cultivate a supportive and emotionally safe learning environment where students feel empowered to take risks, learn from their mistakes, and celebrate their achievements.

References

1. A. Apolog and R. Cayat, "Letter flip: On the spelling ability of the Grade III pupils," 2017. Available: https://e-saliksik.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/XI_2019_Asuque_Spelling-Pattern-in-Sequence-Strategy-SPSS-for-Learners-with-Spelling-Difficulty.pdf [Accessed by 11/06/2023].
2. A. Doyle, J. Zhang, and C. Mattatall, "Spelling instruction in the primary grades: Teachers' beliefs, practices, and concerns," *Reading Horizons:* A *Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, vol. 54, no. 2, pp. 1–34, 2015.
3. B. O. De Vera, "Lockdown's impact: UNICEF cites poor reading skills among PH kids," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 2022. Available: https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1576573/lockdowns-impact-unicef-cites-poor-reading-skills-among-ph-kids [Accessed by 11/06/2023].
4. B. Terry, "What causes problems with spelling?" *Scholar Within*, 2025. Available: https://scholarwithin.com/spelling-problems [Accessed by 25/03/2024].
5. C. M. Dadola, W. Arcelo, C. Austria, R. Lipata, A. Sanidad, and R. Bayaborda, "Improving vocabulary learning by using daily spelling with meanings among Grade 12 ABM students in Bestlink College of the Philippines, S.Y. 2019–2020," *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, vol. 2, no. 1, p. 108, 2020.
6. D. Altamimi and R. Ab Rashid, "Spelling problems and causes among Saudi English language undergraduates," *Arab World Engl. J.,* vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 178–191, 2019.
7. E. M. Alhaisoni, K. M. Al-Zuoud, and D. R. Gaudel, "Analysis of spelling errors of beginner learners of English in the English Foreign Language context in Saudi Arabia," *English Language Teaching,* vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 185–192, 2015.
8. G. Oakley, "Early career teachers' knowledge and practice in spelling instruction: Insights for teacher educators," *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, vol. 43, no. 12, pp. 59–75, 2018.
9. H. Luna, "Word study and spelling patterns: A proposed intervention in teaching Grade 5 pupils with spelling difficulties," *General Mariano Alvarez*, Cavite, Philippines, 2016.
10. H. Walls and C. Braid, "Teaching writing, spelling, and grammar: From research to practice," *Essential Resources*, Wellington, New Zealand, 2023.
11. J. T. Mendoza, "Improving the spelling skills of Grade Four pupils in Tulay Elementary School through word recognition," *Ascendens Asia Journal of Multidisciplinary Research Abstracts,* vol. 3, no. 2E, pp. 110–111, 2019.
12. K. Kelly, "Spelling regular words: An evidence-based literacy strategy," *Understood.org*, 2023. Available: https://www.understood.org/en/articles/evidence-based-literacy-strategy-spelling-regular-words [Accessed by 11/06/2023].
13. K. Puspandari, "An analysis on spelling of inflectional nouns made by the seventh grade students of SMPN 1 Loa Kulu," *Journal Intelegensia*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 19–31, 2017.
14. L. Casey, "8 strategies for teaching spelling in primary school," *Bedrock Learning*, 2022. Available: https://bedrocklearning.org/literacy-blogs/teaching-spelling-in-primary-school/ [Accessed by 11/06/2023].
15. M. Abrasado, "Effect of daily spelling in Filipino," *Ascendens Asia Journal of Multidisciplinary Research Abstracts*, vol. 3, no. 2B, pp. 19-25, 2019.
16. M. Ankucic, "The complete and exhaustive guide on how to teach spelling," *3P Learning Blog*, 2019. Available: https://www.3plearning.com/blog/how-to-teach-spelling/ [Accessed by 11/06/2023].
17. M. G. Gaytos, "Exploring the early literacy practices and experiences of mothers," *In International Forum Journal,* vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 93-113, 2018.

18. M. Nejar, "Pupils' writing and spelling abilities through diary writing," *International Research Journal of Modernization in Engineering Technology and Science,* vol. 5, no. 10, pp. 1092–1104, 2023.
19. M. Rossi, S. Martin-Chang, and G. Ouellette, "Exploring the space between good and poor spelling: Orthographic quality and reading speed," *Sci. Stud. Read.,* vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 192–201, 2019.
20. M. Sénéchal, M. Gingras, and L. L'Heureux, "Modeling spelling acquisition: The effect of orthographic regularities on silent-letter representations," *Sci. Stud. Read.,* vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 155–162, 2016.
21. M. T. Boltron and A. L. Ramos, "Improving beginning reading literacy through marungko approach," *ASEAN Journal of Basic and Higher Education*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 1–12, 2021.
22. M. Y. Zuriyani and A. S. Mohamed, "The interactive roles of lexical knowledge and reading strategies on reading comprehension performance," *Journal of Nusantara Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 273–299, 2019.
23. N. Nor and R. A. Rashid, "A review of theoretical perspectives on language learning," *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 161–167, 2018.
24. P. T. D. Costa and F. R. Arias, "A case study on the use of spelling as a determining factor in teaching English grammar in Dominican schools," *ERIC*, 2021. Available: https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED610509 [Accessed by 11/06/2023].
25. R. Treiman, "Learning to spell: Phonology and beyond," *Cogn. Neuropsychol.*, vol. 34, no. 3–4, pp. 83–93, 2017.
26. Teach Pinas, "English spelling practice workbooks for Grades 1–6," *Teach Pinas*, 2020. Available: https://www.teachpinas.com/english-spelling-practice-workbooks-for-grades-1-6/ [Accessed by 11/06/2023].