

TEACHING CHALLENGES: ELEMENTARY EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCES ON LEARNERS WITH SPELLING DIFFICULTIES

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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) analyze 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, contextualized learning, and multisensory approaches. The importance of collaboration with parents and school administrators was also emphasized. 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.

INTRODUCTION

Spelling is universally recognized 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 (2021) and Bolton and Ramos (2021), 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 inconsistent language rules. For young learners, especially those in multilingual settings, mastering English spelling can be particularly demanding. Research by Nor and Rashid (2018) and Zuriyani and Mohamed (2019) 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 like 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. (2015) 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 (2018) and Trieman (2017) point out that some educators lack specialized training or resources to address spelling difficulties, making it challenging to meet the individual needs of struggling spellers.

In the Philippine context, several studies have emphasized that spelling remains a persistent issue among elementary learners and continues to hinder their overall writing performance. Mendoza (2019) 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 (2018) emphasized 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:

1. To identify the common spelling difficulties encountered by elementary learners in the Salcedo District.
2. To analyze the strategies employed by elementary teachers in managing learners' spelling challenges.
3. 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 localized 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 seeks to fill that gap by exploring the lived experiences of elementary educators as they confront and manage spelling difficulties in their classrooms, providing context-specific insights that can inform more responsive and effective spelling instruction in similar educational settings.

2. Literature Review

Spelling is universally recognized 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 memorization and simple word recognition. Instead, it forms the backbone of key language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Apolog et al. (2017) emphasize 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 (2017) delineates spelling as the translation of spoken language into written symbols, a process that 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 (2019) 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, Ahmed (2017) highlights 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 vital role. Phonics-based instruction has emerged as a leading pedagogical approach in teaching spelling effectively. Kelly (2023) asserts that teaching spelling should revolve around a systematic phonics approach, emphasizing 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. Banfi et al. (2017) note 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. Berninger (2016) points out that spelling accuracy significantly contributes to writing quality and is one of the key determinants of writing fluency at this stage of learning. Proper spelling allows students to focus more on idea generation and organization 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. Tavárez et al. (2021) argue that standardized 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 emphasized by Casey (2022). Mastery of common spelling patterns not only accelerates word recognition but also allows learners to read and write more fluidly, contributing to overall literacy competence. Moreover, research by Nejar (2023) 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.

An essential component of successful spelling instruction is regular and meaningful practice. Abrasado (2019) and Dadola et al. (2020) stress that daily exposure to words in varied contexts and the development of phonological awareness are critical for spelling proficiency. Effective instruction often involves deconstructing words, analyzing their sound components, and building them back up to reinforce retention. Walls and Braid (2023) advocate for instructional strategies that guide learners in analyzing 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 (2022) highlights 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 (2020), 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 modeling of correct spelling usage, adults can significantly influence a child's motivation and proficiency in spelling.

However, despite its recognized importance, spelling remains a persistent challenge for many students. The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic further magnified these challenges by reducing direct instructional time and limiting opportunities for reading and writing practice. UNICEF (2020) 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 (2019) 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 internalize spelling rules and conventions is diminished. Stone (2021) further links 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 (2023) 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. (2016) 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. (2016) observed that insertion errors, in particular, are prevalent among learners whose native languages have different syllabic structures or sound inventories.

Teaching spelling is further complicated by systemic and instructional barriers. Ankucic (2019) 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 and 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. (2018) 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. It involved purposive sampling to select participants who met specific criteria: currently employed in the Department of Education, teaching in 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. The interview guide was validated by experts, and all sessions were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy.

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis, following six steps: familiarization, 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, focusing 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 organized according to the major themes that surfaced from the data. Each theme is substantiated by participants' observations and supported by relevant pedagogical perspectives.

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.

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 the memorization of standard spelling patterns.

Furthermore, many students display phonological confusions, often spelling words based on how they 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 emphasized that students often fail to transfer correct spellings from visual memory into written form, even for high-frequency words they encounter daily. This points to potential deficits in orthographic mapping, where learners struggle to create 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 requiring more than rote memorization—it requires the integration of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning systems.

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 bring to light the daily challenges teachers face in supporting students with consistent spelling struggles. Because these learners often make numerous errors across various writing tasks, they require frequent corrections, modeling, 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 prioritize spelling as a key component of literacy education.

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.

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 using spelling lists, practice worksheets, and dictated writing tasks. Visual aids such as flashcards, labeled word charts, and classroom word walls support visual memory and help students recognize word patterns. In addition, teachers often provide contextualized 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 frequently integrate games, puzzles, and friendly competitions like 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 color-coded syllables for visual clarity, and chanting or singing spelling patterns to enhance auditory memory. Teachers also employ rewards like praise, stickers, and behavior charts to positively reinforce progress. These methods not only cater to diverse learning styles but also contribute to greater retention and a more inclusive classroom environment.

Theme 2: Phonological Awareness and Systematic Instruction

Teachers unanimously emphasized the foundational role of phonological awareness in spelling development. 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 supports learners in internalizing spelling conventions and developing 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 practicing phonics rules and applying them across reading and writing tasks, students gain confidence in their ability to spell accurately. Educators further stressed the importance of consistency and continuity in phonics instruction across grade levels to ensure that foundational skills are retained and expanded upon as students' progress.

Theme 3: Daily Practice and Reinforcement

Daily and consistent spelling practice was cited by teachers 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 emphasize 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 personalized word lists supports ongoing reinforcement. These materials give students quick reference points and help them track their own learning. By embedding spelling practice into everyday classroom routines and across subjects, teachers ensure that spelling instruction is not isolated but instead becomes a natural part of students' learning experiences.

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 21st-century learners. By maintaining a lively and responsive classroom environment, teachers make spelling an engaging and rewarding part of everyday learning, thus minimizing the stress and fear often associated with writing tasks.

Theme 5: Collaboration with Stakeholders

Collaboration with parents, colleagues, and school administrator 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 helps learners receive consistent support, especially when caregivers are involved in practicing spelling with their children.

Teachers also recognize 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 strategies to assist their children effectively at home.

In addition, professional collaboration among teachers and school leaders is crucial 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.

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

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 projects, 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 content, causing frustration and reduced academic self-esteem. In subjects such as Science and Social Studies, where written reports and vocabulary use are essential, students with spelling struggles may find it harder 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 reduces their focus on the content and ideas they want to communicate. This time-consuming effort often slows down writing fluency, affecting the quantity and quality of their work. As a result, learners may produce shorter responses or incomplete tasks, which further contributes 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 where learners face challenges in multiple literacy domains, amplifying the negative effect on academic achievement. Thus, spelling difficulties represent not just isolated errors but a broader obstacle impacting the learner's holistic educational development.

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 for fear of being corrected or ridiculed. 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, behavioral issues, or disinterest 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.

- *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 personalized, interactive learning experiences for students with different learning styles.

- *Examining Teacher Professional Development and Training on Spelling Instruction.* Further research could investigate the impact of specialized 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 could guide the development of teacher training programs that improve 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 explore the role of emotional support strategies, including mentorship programs and counseling, in helping students build confidence and resilience in the face of academic difficulties.

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 emphasize 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 emphasizes the importance of comprehensive, collaborative approaches in addressing spelling difficulties to ensure both academic success and emotional well-being among elementary learners.

Recommendations

In light of the findings from the study, 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 individual student needs. Furthermore, spelling instruction must be meaningfully integrated across all subject areas to provide context-rich opportunities for learners to apply and reinforce their skills, promoting deeper understanding and 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. Finally, it is essential to foster a supportive and emotionally safe learning environment where students feel confident to take risks, learn from their mistakes, and celebrate their progress.

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