

Sentence Writing and Spelling Difficulties Among Grade 3 Pupils in San Fernando District Schools

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Abstract

This study assessed the sentence writing and spelling difficulties of Grade 3 pupils in San Fernando District schools as observed by their teachers. It was anchored on the Multiple-Components Model of Writing, Stage Theories of Spelling Development, and Dual-Route Theory, which explain writing and spelling as interconnected cognitive, linguistic, phonological, and orthographic processes. The study used a descriptive-survey research design involving thirty Grade 3 teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered using a researcher-developed questionnaire and analyzed through frequency count, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. Findings showed that most teacher-respondents were female, married, aged 31–40 years old, bachelor's degree graduates, Teacher III in position, and had 11–15 years of teaching experience. Grade 3 pupils exhibited sentence writing difficulties in sentence structure, grammar and usage, punctuation, and coherence, particularly in word order, sentence completeness, pronoun use, verb tense, capitalization, and logical flow. Spelling difficulties were also observed, especially in phonetic spelling errors, visual and memory-related spelling errors, and irregular word spelling. The correlation result showed a moderate positive and significant relationship between pupils' sentence writing skills and spelling performance, indicating that stronger sentence writing ability is associated with better spelling accuracy. The study recommends guided writing exercises, sentence correction activities, spelling drills, regular feedback, peer-review tasks, interactive tools, parental support, and small-group or one-on-one support. The study supports SDG 4, SDG 10, and SDG 17 by promoting quality education, reducing literacy gaps, and strengthening school-home-community collaboration. Its sustainability impact lies in supporting educational, institutional, and community-based literacy improvement.

Keywords: Early Literacy Development, Phonetic Spelling Errors, San Fernando District, Sentence Writing Difficulties, Spelling Difficulties, Teacher Observations, Writing Proficiency

1. Introduction

Sentence writing and spelling are foundational literacy skills that influence pupils' ability to communicate ideas clearly, participate meaningfully in classroom tasks, and develop confidence in academic writing. Difficulties in these areas affect not only written accuracy but also broader literacy development, particularly among young learners who are still developing sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, phonological awareness, orthographic knowledge, and word-recognition skills. This study focuses on the sentence writing and spelling difficulties of Grade 3 pupils in San Fernando District schools, as observed by their teachers, and examines how these two areas are related in order to identify practical measures for strengthening pupils' literacy development.

Reading and writing difficulties (RWD) refer to a group of learning challenges that affect learners' ability to recognize, decode, and encode words accurately and fluently, often arising from deficits in phonological knowledge that hinder writing development (Veerabudren, Kritzing, Graham, Geertsema, & Le Roux, 2023). Spelling difficulties are not limited to isolated spelling mistakes; they can complicate the entire writing process and make written composition more challenging for learners (Wengelin et al., 2024). Learners with reading and writing difficulties often identify spelling as one of their most significant barriers to producing coherent written work (Sumner & Connelly, 2020). Empirical findings show that spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence mechanics are common areas of difficulty among elementary learners. Nisak et al. (2023) found that spelling was the most frequent writing error among elementary students, while Salsabillah et al. (2024) emphasized that both intralingual and interlingual errors contribute to writing difficulties. Similarly, Zulfaa and Nurjanah (2025) reported that third-grade students commonly struggle with spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar. These findings indicate the need for focused instruction, sustained practice, and targeted interventions in sentence writing and spelling.

The literature consistently shows that sentence writing and spelling are interconnected components of early literacy. Deficits in reading, writing, and spelling may affect one or more language domains (American Speech-Language-Hearing

Association, n.d.). Akmalia et al. (2022) noted that elementary students often struggle with vocabulary and sentence structure because they continue to apply mother-tongue rules when writing in English. Kohnen, Nickels, and Castles (2020) emphasized the role of spelling assessments in monitoring development and identifying learners who require further support. Effective writing assessment should also consider the social, recursive, and purpose-driven nature of writing, using multiple measures to evaluate writing ability (State of Rhode Island Department of Education, 2024). Writing skills are essential for academic and professional communication, critical thinking, and the clear expression of ideas (Taye & Mengesha, 2024). In alphabetic writing systems, spelling requires knowledge of phoneme-to-grapheme relationships, spelling rules, and orthographic constraints (Cidrim, Batista, Madeiro, & Capellini, 2024). Spelling difficulties are closely associated with weak reading skills because learners who struggle with decoding and word recognition may also have difficulty encoding words accurately in writing (Roncoli & Masterson, 2020). Foreign literature further supports the view that early writing proficiency contributes to later academic success (Mandia, Sukra, & Hudiananingsih, 2021), while reading, spelling, and handwriting difficulties interact with writing development (Barnett, Connelly, & Miller, 2020). Students who struggle with writing may also experience related difficulties in spelling, reading, and oral language, which can affect their responsiveness to instruction (Walter, Dockrell, & Connelly, 2021).

Instructional discussions also emphasize whether sentence writing should be taught before longer compositions or developed alongside paragraph and essay writing (Coach from the Couch, 2025). The transition from letter formation to complete sentence construction remains challenging for young learners (Burkholder, 2025). Limited classroom time for grammar and sentence structure may result in weak writing habits, reduced confidence, and limited fluency (Hampton, 2025). Sentence writing instruction benefits learners by helping them communicate clearly, vary sentence patterns, and develop confidence as writers (Whittaker, 2023). Studies have identified specific early writing challenges, including letter recognition problems, slow writing, letter reversal, omitted letters, spacing errors, poor posture, low motivation, weak concentration, and limited parental support. Inayah, Kuntarto, and Khoirunnisa (2024) and Andriana, Rokhmanah, and Putri (2022) emphasized that these difficulties are shaped by learner ability, environmental factors, and instructional support. Derakhshan and Shirejini (2020) identified grammatical problems such as missing prepositions, incorrect determiners, subject-verb agreement errors, faulty verb forms, misplaced words, modal verb misuse, noun-number errors, tense-sequence errors, and conjunction errors. Terzioğlu and Bostanci (2020) reported punctuation difficulties, including comma misuse, incorrect sentence endings, errors in compound sentences, and semicolon misuse. Ahmad Ghulamuddin, Mohd Mohari, and Ariffin (2021) further identified poor vocabulary and spelling difficulties as major obstacles to writing development, while Brown and Miller (2020) emphasized that sentence identification and structure influence writing task completion. Strong sentence structure supports clear communication and logical organization of ideas (Demme Learning, 2025), and according to Tambunan, Andayani, Sari, and Lubis (2022), teachers can support struggling writers by focusing on grammar, sentence structure, clarity, and consistency.

Local literature shows that spelling remains a persistent challenge in Philippine education (Pandapatan, Macarimbang, & Mangondato, 2025). Effective language planning is necessary in addressing 21st-century literacy challenges (Alera, Paraon, Vergara, Adonis, & Fernandez, 2022). Despite teachers' efforts, many pupils in public schools continue to fall below expected spelling and writing proficiency levels (Saavedra, 2020). Spelling supports both reading and writing, and improving spelling ability can contribute to academic achievement (Viador, Carel, Sabenorio, & Agumbay, 2025). Spelling requires sound recognition, word-structure awareness, visual recall, meaning recognition, and application of spelling conventions (Magpatoc et al., 2024), making it essential to overall language proficiency (Escandallo & Baradillo, 2024). Irregular sound-letter relationships make spelling especially difficult for learners (Sobrepeña, 2022).

Phonologically based misspellings occur when learners incorrectly map sounds to written forms (Casupanan & Madriaga, 2024). Effective spelling instruction should include phonics, visual patterns, morphemic knowledge, sound-letter correspondence, compound words, prefixes, suffixes, and less common letter combinations (Noro Gallarde & Flores, 2024). Decoding strategies such as phoneme-grapheme mapping, syllable segmentation, pattern recognition, and visual aids can improve spelling proficiency when systematically implemented (Arecto et al., 2025). Visual memory also plays a role in spelling because learners with weak visual recall may struggle to remember correct word forms (Terry, 2025). Spelling errors may also result from limited vocabulary, incomplete grammar-rule mastery, weak listening skills, difficulty distinguishing vowels and semivowels, and limited visual memory (Ayu et al., 2020; Baguilat, 2024). Traditional visual memorization approaches may not fully address diverse learning styles (Caballero-Jaum, Paglinawan, Magtabog, & Paciente, 2024). Spelling errors provide teachers with evidence of learners' instructional needs (Coronado, 2024). Difficulties may arise from phonological, visual, morphological, and irregular word spelling challenges, particularly when pronunciation does not clearly indicate correct spelling (Nicolas & Critica, 2024; Lipranum, Loduvise, Espinosa, Muegna, & Paderes, 2025). Targeted writing interventions, spelling-error identification, and writing prompts may improve spelling and writing proficiency (Cabigao, 2021). Diary writing can also enhance spelling and writing abilities among Grade 3 pupils (Nejar, 2023). Spelling proficiency may be strengthened through spelling patterns, innovative strategies, varied spelling activities, and extended practice (Mendoza et al., 2021).

Globally, writing development is influenced by age, grade level, syntactic complexity, motivation, persistence, and exposure to alphabetic systems (Wang, 2024; Butler, 2020; Keehl, 2023). Teachers report that limited foundational writing

skills hinder the use of advanced instructional strategies, while authentic writing tasks and learner engagement support writing development (Robertson, 2025; Calhoun, 2024). Teachers are expected to teach writing across content areas (Givler, 2022), but many report limited preparation and professional development in writing pedagogy (Cohen, 2023). Spelling supports clear communication between writers and readers (Noprianti, 2023), and while Wong (2021) found no statistically significant difference in writing outcomes between high- and low-spelling-skilled students, explicit phonics and phonological-awareness instruction remains important in strengthening spelling and writing development (Leutzinger, 2022). In the Philippine context, learners use educational tools such as games, dictionaries, books, and assistance from family members, teachers, and peers to support spelling development (Rosales, 2024). Spelling skills contribute to writing conventions and overall writing proficiency (Quinto, 2020). Local studies indicate that spelling accuracy influences composition quality, clarity, and coherence (Vivar, 2020), and that structured spelling instruction with interactive activities improves mastery of high-frequency words and application of spelling rules (Borneo, 2021). Omission and substitution errors indicate gaps in phoneme-grapheme correspondence and patterned spelling instruction (Nicolas, 2022). Contextualized spelling exercises and word-usage tasks can improve spelling and sentence-writing accuracy (Del Rosario, 2023). De Guzman (2021) reported a strong positive relationship between spelling proficiency and sentence-writing performance, while Santos (2022) showed that spelling interventions can lead to clearer and more accurate sentence construction. The local setting of this study is San Fernando District in Masbate Province. Masbate is located in the Bicol Region and consists of Masbate Island, Ticao Island, and Burias Island (Wikipedia, 2025). The province has a land area of approximately 4,151.78 square kilometers and a population of around 910,813 as of 2024 (CityPopulation.de., n.d.). It is administratively composed of Masbate City, twenty municipalities, and 550 barangays (PhilAtlas, 2025), including Aroroy, Baleno, Balud, Batuan, Cataingan, Cawayan, Claveria, Dimasalang, Esperanza, Mandaon, Milagros, Mobo, Monreal, Palanas, Pio V. Corpuz, Placer, San Fernando, San Jacinto, San Pascual, and Uson (Rappler, 2025). The province is associated with livestock raising, agriculture, fishing, aquaculture, and a distinct sociocultural heritage (Department of Agriculture, 2025). San Fernando is a 5th-class coastal municipality on Ticao Island with a population of 22,006 according to the 2024 census (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2025). Its economy is shaped by fishing, farming, and small-scale trade. Historically, several barrios were separated from San Fernando in 1951 to form the municipality of Batuan (LawPH.com, 2011). The municipality consists of 26 barangays that serve as centers of local governance and basic services (Wikipedia, n.d.). San Fernando also has cultural and ecological significance because of its location on Ticao Island, which contains archaeological and heritage resources (Wikipedia contributors, 2025). Its schools provide the educational setting for this study, including Altavista Elementary School, Benitinan Elementary School, Buenasuerte Elementary School, Buenos Aires Elementary School, Buyo Elementary School, Cabug Elementary School, Canelas Elementary School, Dapli-an Elementary School, Ipil Elementary School, Lahong Elementary School, Lumbia Elementary School, Minio Elementary School, P. Basas Elementary School, Progreso Elementary School, Resurreccion Elementary School, Salvacion Elementary School, San Fernando Central School, San Fernando East Elementary School, Sowa Elementary School, Talisay Elementary School, Valparaiso Elementary School, Corbada Elementary School, Magkaipit Elementary School, and Buenavista Elementary School.

This study is anchored on the view that spelling and sentence writing are interrelated, multicomponent literacy processes influenced by cognitive, linguistic, phonological, orthographic, and instructional factors. Error refers to any inaccurate written output involving spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, or sentence construction (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). Intervention refers to intentional strategies or instructional programs designed to improve or remediate pupils' writing and spelling skills (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). Orthographic Knowledge / Orthographic Awareness involves recognizing, storing, and retrieving correct written word forms and spelling conventions (Ehri, 2005). Phonological Awareness refers to the ability to recognize and manipulate the sound structure of spoken language (Anthony & Lonigan, 2004). Sentence Writing refers to constructing grammatically correct and meaningful sentences using appropriate vocabulary, punctuation, and syntax (Graham & Perin, 2007). Spelling Difficulties refer to challenges in forming words according to standard orthographic conventions (Treiman & Kessler, 2014). Writing Competency refers to proficiency in organizing ideas, applying grammar rules, spelling accurately, and producing coherent written texts (Berninger & Graham, 2009). The theoretical framework draws from Virginia Berninger's Multiple-Components Model of Writing (2000), Frith, Henderson, Gentry's Stage Theories of Spelling Development (1985), and Max Coltheart's Dual-Route Theory (1978). Berninger's model explains writing as a process involving transcription skills, text generation, and executive functions, with spelling and handwriting serving as foundational transcription skills that influence sentence writing and higher-level composition (Berninger & Winn, 2006). Frith, Henderson, Gentry's Stage Theories of Spelling Development (1985) explain that children acquire spelling through progressive stages, moving from early sound-letter awareness to more consolidated orthographic knowledge (Gentry & Frith, 1985). Max Coltheart's Dual-Route Theory (1978) explains spelling and reading through lexical and sublexical routes, helping clarify why learners may spell familiar words correctly but struggle with unfamiliar or irregular words (Coltheart et al., 2001). Conceptually, the study follows an input-process-output approach. The inputs include teachers' demographic profiles, observed Grade 3 pupils' sentence writing difficulties, observed spelling difficulties, the relationship between sentence writing and spelling performance, and suggested measures for improvement. The process includes survey administration, observation, presentation, data gathering, analysis, and interpretation. The output includes summarized teacher profiles, identified sentence writing and spelling difficulties,

analysis of the relationship between the two skills, and recommended measures to help Grade 3 pupils improve their writing proficiency.

Although previous studies have examined writing and spelling difficulties among elementary learners, limited research focuses specifically on the combined assessment of sentence writing performance and spelling challenges among Grade 3 pupils in San Fernando District schools. Existing literature often addresses broader grade levels or isolated writing components, such as vocabulary, grammar, spelling accuracy, or writing conventions, without sufficiently examining how spelling proficiency relates to sentence construction. This study addresses that gap by assessing sentence writing difficulties in terms of sentence structure, grammar and usage, punctuation, and coherence, and spelling difficulties in terms of phonetic spelling errors, visual/memory spelling errors, and irregular word spelling errors. The study also considers the demographic profile of Grade 3 teachers in terms of age, sex, civil status, years of teaching experience, educational attainment, and present position. Since teachers directly observe pupils' classroom writing performance, their insights are important in identifying common literacy difficulties and recommending practical measures. The study is limited to Grade 3 pupils and teachers in San Fernando District schools and does not cover other grade levels, subject areas, creative writing, longer compositions beyond sentence-level writing, or factors outside the classroom context. Its rationale lies in providing localized evidence that can support targeted literacy instruction and improve pupils' sentence writing and spelling performance.

This study is primarily aligned with SDG 4 – Quality Education because it focuses on early literacy development, particularly the improvement of sentence writing and spelling skills among Grade 3 pupils. By identifying specific writing and spelling difficulties and recommending instructional measures, the study supports inclusive and equitable quality education through evidence-based literacy interventions. The study also relates to SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities because it addresses the needs of pupils who experience literacy difficulties and may require targeted support to participate more effectively in classroom learning. By helping teachers identify and respond to sentence writing and spelling challenges, the study contributes to reducing learning gaps among elementary pupils. It further supports SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals through its emphasis on the roles of teachers, school administrators, policymakers, parents, community stakeholders, and future researchers in strengthening literacy support systems.

The study contributes to educational sustainability by strengthening the evidence base for early literacy interventions, particularly in sentence writing and spelling. Its findings may help teachers design remedial programs, individualized exercises, structured writing activities, and classroom strategies that improve pupils' writing fluency, spelling accuracy, and confidence. For school administrators and policymakers, the study may inform curriculum development, literacy programming, resource allocation, and teacher professional development. The study also supports institutional and community sustainability by encouraging collaboration among schools, parents, guardians, local education councils, and community stakeholders. Parents and communities can use the findings to better support children's learning at home and participate in literacy initiatives. For researchers, the study contributes to the body of knowledge on early literacy development and provides a foundation for comparative studies, program evaluations, and further research on effective strategies for addressing sentence writing and spelling difficulties among elementary pupils.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study used a descriptive-survey research design to assess the sentence writing and spelling difficulties experienced by Grade 3 pupils in schools within the San Fernando District. This design enabled the researcher to gather first-hand information from teachers who regularly interact with the pupils and observe their classroom writing performance. The collected data were analyzed, tabulated, and interpreted using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, and weighted means, to identify patterns and trends in pupils' sentence writing and spelling difficulties. Correlation analysis was also used to determine the relationship between pupils' sentence writing skills and spelling performance.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in public elementary schools in the San Fernando District, Municipality of San Fernando, Masbate. San Fernando is a 5th-class coastal municipality located on Ticao Island, with a population of 22,006 according to the 2024 census (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2025). The municipality is shaped by fishing, farming, and small-scale livelihood activities, and it is composed of 26 barangays that serve as local centers for governance and basic services (Wikipedia, n.d.). The schools included in the study were Altavista Elementary School, Benitinan Elementary School, Buenasuerte Elementary School, Buenos Aires Elementary School, Buyo Elementary School, Cabug Elementary School, Canelas Elementary School, Dapli-an Elementary School, Ipil Elementary School, Lahong Elementary School, Lumbia Elementary School, Minio Elementary School, P. Basas Elementary School, Progreso Elementary School, Resurreccion Elementary School, Salvacion Elementary School, San Fernando Central School, San Fernando East Elementary School,

Sowa Elementary School, Talisay Elementary School, Valparaiso Elementary School, Corbada Elementary School, Magkaipit Elementary School, and Buenavista Elementary School.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were thirty Grade 3 teachers from the public elementary schools in San Fernando District. They were selected because of their direct classroom experience and their ability to provide informed observations on pupils' sentence writing and spelling difficulties. The respondents supplied information on their demographic profile, including age, sex, civil status, years of teaching experience, educational attainment, and present position, to provide context for their observations.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study used purposive sampling to select thirty Grade 3 teachers who were accessible, willing to participate, and directly involved in teaching Grade 3 pupils. This sampling technique was appropriate because the study required respondents who had firsthand knowledge of pupils' writing and spelling performance. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the respondents during their available time to ensure proper administration and clarity of instructions. All respondents completed and returned the questionnaires, resulting in a 100 percent response rate.

2.5 Research Instrument

A researcher-developed survey instrument was used to gather data on the sentence writing and spelling difficulties of Grade 3 pupils. The first part of the instrument gathered the teachers' demographic information, including age, sex, civil status, years of teaching experience, educational attainment, and present position. The second part consisted of twenty-eight indicators assessing pupils' sentence writing difficulties in terms of sentence structure, grammar and usage, and punctuation and coherence, as well as spelling difficulties in terms of phonetic spelling errors, visual or memory-based spelling errors, and irregular word spelling errors. The instrument also gathered teachers' suggested measures to help pupils overcome difficulties in sentence writing and spelling. The items were rated using a four-point Likert scale with the following interpretation: 3.26–4.00 as Strongly Agree, 2.51–3.25 as Agree, 1.76–2.50 as Disagree, and 1.00–1.75 as Strongly Disagree.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher followed a systematic procedure in conducting the study. First, the research title, statement of the problem, theoretical background, respondents and sampling, research design, and sources were submitted to the thesis adviser for validation, and the adviser's suggestions were incorporated to finalize the research title. Second, the survey instrument was developed and validated to ensure that it covered the scope of the study and met the criteria for clarity and relevance. Third, a formal permission letter noted by the thesis adviser was submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent of Masbate Province and then forwarded to the school heads to secure approval for administering the survey. Fourth, the questionnaires were administered to the thirty teacher-respondents, who were given clear instructions and sufficient time to answer. All completed questionnaires were successfully retrieved. Finally, the collected data were recorded, tabulated, and analyzed with the assistance of an expert statistician. The findings were interpreted, conclusions were drawn, recommendations were formulated, and the manuscript was submitted to the thesis adviser for review before preparation for oral defense.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The study used frequency count and percentage to describe the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, years of teaching experience, educational attainment, and present position. Weighted mean was used to determine the extent of sentence writing difficulties in terms of sentence structure, grammar and usage, and punctuation and coherence; spelling difficulties in terms of phonetic spelling errors, visual or memory-based spelling errors, and irregular word spelling errors; and the suggested measures recommended by teachers. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the significant relationship between pupils' sentence writing skills and spelling performance as observed by teachers. The correlation results were interpreted to determine whether the relationship between the two variables was very weak, weak, moderate, strong, or very strong.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher secured formal permission from the Schools Division Superintendent, Public Schools District Supervisor, and school heads before administering the questionnaire. The respondents were informed that their participation was part of the data-gathering process for the study and that all information gathered would be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic and research purposes.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile of the Teachers

3.1.1 Age

Among the 30 teacher-respondents, the largest group belonged to the 31–40 age bracket, with fifteen teachers or 50.00%. This was followed by six teachers or 20.00% aged 20–25 years old, five teachers or 16.67% aged 26–30 years old, three teachers or 10.00% aged 41–50 years old, and one teacher or 3.33% aged 51 years old and above. This result indicates that the respondents were mostly in early to middle adulthood, suggesting a teaching workforce with sufficient professional maturity and classroom exposure. The presence of younger teachers also indicates participation from early-career educators, while the smaller number of older teachers shows limited representation from late-career teachers.

3.1.2 Sex

The majority of the respondents were female, with twenty-five teachers or 83.33%, while five teachers or 16.67% were male. This indicates that the Grade 3 teaching workforce in the San Fernando District is predominantly female. The result reflects the common composition of elementary teaching, where female teachers often represent a larger proportion of the teaching population.

3.1.3 Civil Status

In terms of civil status, twenty-four teachers or 80.00% were married, while six teachers or 20.00% were single. No respondent was separated or widowed. This finding shows that most teacher-respondents were married, suggesting a largely family-oriented professional group. The absence of separated and widowed respondents also shows a relatively uniform civil status profile among the teachers included in the study.

3.1.4 Years of Teaching Experience

The largest group of respondents had 11–15 years of teaching experience, represented by twelve teachers or 40.00%. This was followed by ten teachers or 33.33% with 16 years and above, five teachers or 16.67% with 6–10 years, and three teachers or 10.00% with 1–5 years of experience. No teacher reported having less than one year of teaching experience. This result indicates that the respondents were largely experienced educators, with many having more than a decade of teaching service. Such experience strengthens the relevance of their observations regarding pupils' sentence writing and spelling difficulties. Their experiences with strategies designed to enhance students' writing proficiency suggest that understanding teachers' perspectives can help identify more effective methods for teaching writing, promote positive educational change, improve professional development, and ultimately increase students' writing abilities (Calhoun, 2024).

3.1.5 Educational Attainment

Most respondents were bachelor's degree graduates, with eighteen teachers or 60.00%. Ten teachers or 33.33% had earned units in a master's program, while two teachers or 6.67% were master's degree graduates. None had earned doctoral units or completed a doctoral degree. This finding shows that while most teachers met the basic professional qualification for teaching, a considerable number had begun graduate studies. However, the absence of doctorate-level qualifications suggests an opportunity for further academic advancement among the respondents.

3.1.6 Present Position

In terms of present position, fifteen teachers or 50.00% were Teacher III, thirteen teachers or 43.33% were Teacher I, and two teachers or 6.67% were Master Teacher I. No respondent held the position of Teacher II, Master Teacher II, or Master Teacher III. This result indicates that most respondents occupied entry-level to mid-level teaching positions, with the largest group at the Teacher III level. The limited number of master teachers suggests that higher-rank instructional leadership positions were minimally represented in the respondent group.

3.2 Sentence Writing Difficulties Observed Among Grade 3 Pupils

3.2.1 Sentence Structure

The findings showed that pupils' difficulty in arranging words in the correct order when writing sentences obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.50, interpreted as "strongly agree." Pupils' inability to write complete sentences with a subject and verb and improper combination of words to form meaningful sentences both obtained a weighted mean of 3.33, also interpreted as "strongly agree." The overall weighted mean of 3.39 indicates that sentence structure difficulties were consistently observed among Grade 3 pupils. This result suggests the need for focused instruction on correct word order, sentence completeness, and proper word combination. Guided writing exercises, peer-review activities, regular feedback, and modeling of effective sentence patterns may help pupils construct clearer and more meaningful sentences. Emphasizing sentence writing benefits all students by enabling them to communicate clearly, vary sentence structures, and gradually become more competent and confident writers (Whittaker, 2023).

3.2.2 Grammar and Usage

For grammar and usage, incorrect use of pronouns obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.00, interpreted as “strongly agree.” Difficulty in using correct verb tenses followed with a weighted mean of 3.67, also interpreted as “strongly agree,” while inappropriate or incorrect word choice obtained a weighted mean of 3.17, interpreted as “agree.” The overall weighted mean of 3.61 indicates that grammar and usage difficulties were consistently observed among Grade 3 pupils. These findings highlight the need for targeted grammar instruction, particularly in pronoun use, verb tense application, and appropriate word choice. Regular grammar exercises, sentence correction activities, and constructive feedback may help pupils internalize grammar rules and improve sentence accuracy. Strong sentence formulation skills are closely tied to both writing and spelling proficiency, as constructing grammatically correct sentences requires accurate word usage and orthography (Butler, 2020).

3.2.3 Punctuation and Coherence

In punctuation and coherence, incorrect use of punctuation marks and failure to capitalize the first letter of each sentence both obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.00, interpreted as “strongly agree.” Lack of clarity and coherence in sentence construction obtained a weighted mean of 2.83, interpreted as “agree.” The overall weighted mean of 3.61 indicates that difficulties in punctuation and coherence were generally observed among Grade 3 pupils. These findings suggest the need for instruction that reinforces correct punctuation, capitalization, and logical sentence construction. Guided writing activities and peer-review exercises may help pupils connect ideas more clearly and express thoughts more effectively. Supporting these observations, Derakhshan and Shirejini (2020) identified linguistic and structural challenges in students’ writing, including missing prepositions, incorrect determiners, faulty subject-verb agreement, improper verb forms, misplaced words, misused modal verbs, incorrect noun numbers, and errors in tense sequences and conjunction use. Similarly, Terzioğlu and Bostanci (2020) reported additional punctuation problems, such as comma misuse, incorrect sentence closures, errors in compound sentences, and improper use of semicolons.

3.3 Spelling Difficulties Observed Among Grade 3 Pupils

3.3.1 Phonetic Spelling Errors

For phonetic spelling errors, pupils spelling words based on how they sound, even when incorrect, and pupils attempting to sound out unfamiliar words when writing both obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.00, interpreted as “strongly agree.” Confusion of similar sounds, such as b/p and d/t, obtained a weighted mean of 3.00, interpreted as “agree.” The overall weighted mean of 3.67 indicates that phonetic spelling errors were a common difficulty among Grade 3 pupils. This finding shows the need to strengthen pupils’ phoneme recognition, sound-letter correspondence, and correct spelling patterns. Spelling exercises, word games, and guided writing activities may help improve spelling accuracy and reduce confusion between similar sounds. Addressing these challenges requires explicit instruction, repeated exposure to atypical words, and targeted writing interventions, such as writing prompts and the identification of spelling errors, which have been shown to improve spelling skills and overall writing proficiency (Cabigao, 2021).

3.3.2 Visual and Memory Spelling Errors

For visual and memory spelling errors, pupils’ inability to remember correct spellings of familiar or common words obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.00, interpreted as “strongly agree.” Forgetting the correct spelling of words even if previously taught obtained a weighted mean of 2.83, interpreted as “agree,” while reversing or mixing up letters in words obtained a weighted mean of 1.87, interpreted as “disagree.” The overall weighted mean of 2.90 indicates that visual and memory-related spelling difficulties were observed, although less strongly than phonetic spelling errors. These findings suggest the need for strategies that improve spelling retention, such as repeated practice, visual aids, mnemonic techniques, spelling drills, and word recognition activities. Challenges such as poor listening skills, difficulty distinguishing vowels and semivowels, and weaknesses in visual memory can further exacerbate spelling problems (Baguilat, 2024). Moreover, traditional spelling instruction that emphasizes visual memorization may not effectively address the diverse learning styles of all students (Caballero-Jaum, Paglinawan, Magtabog, & Paciente, 2024). A balanced approach combining phonetic, visual, and memory-based strategies is therefore important in improving spelling accuracy and writing proficiency.

3.3.3 Irregular Word Spelling Errors

For irregular word spelling errors, pupils’ need for teacher assistance when spelling irregular or unusual words obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.00, interpreted as “strongly agree.” Pupils guessing the spelling of difficult or tricky words obtained a weighted mean of 1.80, interpreted as “disagree,” while struggling to spell irregular words that do not follow common rules obtained the lowest weighted mean of 1.00, interpreted as “strongly disagree.” The overall weighted mean of 2.27 indicates that irregular word spelling errors were less commonly observed among Grade 3 pupils. This result suggests that pupils may occasionally need guidance when dealing with tricky or unusual words, but they are generally able to spell irregular words independently. However, targeted support remains useful because spelling difficulties may arise from phonological, visual, and morphological challenges, including irregular word spellings that do not follow standard sound-letter patterns. These irregularities are particularly challenging because a word’s pronunciation does not

always indicate its correct spelling, increasing cognitive load and contributing to persistent difficulties across different learner profiles (Nicolas & Critica, 2024; Lipranum, Loduvic, Espinosa, Muegna, & Paderes, 2025).

3.4 Relationship Between Sentence Writing Skills and Spelling Performance

The Pearson correlation result showed a computed r -value of 0.57, interpreted as a moderate positive linear relationship between pupils' sentence writing skills and spelling performance as observed by teachers. The computed r -value was greater than the critical r -value of ± 0.3610 at the 0.05 level of significance with 28 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. This finding implies that pupils with stronger sentence writing skills also tend to demonstrate better spelling performance. It highlights the interconnectedness of sentence construction and spelling accuracy and supports the need for integrated literacy instruction. Supporting this, a study of Vivar (2020) found that spelling accuracy significantly influenced overall composition quality, particularly the clarity and coherence of written work. Similarly, De Guzman (2021) reported a strong positive correlation between pupils' sentence-writing skills and their spelling performance, noting that higher spelling proficiency was associated with greater accuracy, clarity, and structural quality in learners' written output.

3.5 Suggested Measures to Improve Sentence Writing and Spelling

Teachers strongly agreed on all suggested measures for improving pupils' sentence writing and spelling skills, with each strategy obtaining a weighted mean of 4.00. These measures included daily sentence writing, regular spelling practice at school or at home, use of pictures or story prompts, explicit teaching of spelling rules and patterns, small-group or one-on-one writing support, word or spelling games, sentence starters or writing guides, classroom vocabulary and spelling lists, parental support for home practice, and regular feedback and correction of pupils' writing. The overall weighted mean of 4.00 indicates strong agreement on the usefulness of these strategies. This result emphasizes the importance of consistent practice, targeted support, active engagement, and collaboration between school and home. Regular feedback, interactive tools, guided writing, and structured spelling practice can improve pupils' writing confidence, accuracy, and overall literacy development. Instruction should also emphasize decoding strategies, such as phoneme-grapheme mapping, syllable segmentation, and pattern recognition, often supported by visual aids like phonics charts, which have been shown to improve spelling proficiency when implemented systematically (Arecto et al., 2025). Diary writing has likewise been identified as an effective method for enhancing both spelling and writing abilities among Grade 3 pupils (Nejar, 2023). Furthermore, spelling proficiency can be strengthened by highlighting spelling patterns in the curriculum, incorporating innovative instructional approaches, providing varied spelling activities, and offering extended practice opportunities (Mendoza et al., 2021).

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that the teacher-respondents were mostly female, married, 31–40 years old, bachelor's degree graduates, Teacher III in position, and had 11–15 years of teaching experience. Grade 3 pupils in San Fernando District exhibited notable sentence writing difficulties in sentence structure, grammar and usage, punctuation, and coherence, particularly in correct word order, sentence completeness, pronoun use, verb tense application, word choice, capitalization, and logical flow. Spelling difficulties were also evident in phonetic, visual/memory, and irregular word spelling, requiring reinforcement of sound-letter correspondence, spelling patterns, visual recall, and guided spelling support. The study further found a significant relationship between pupils' sentence writing skills and spelling performance, indicating that stronger sentence writing ability is associated with better spelling accuracy. Overall, the findings emphasize the need for consistent practice, targeted support, active engagement, guided writing exercises, spelling drills, feedback, peer-review tasks, interactive tools, and home-based practice to improve pupils' literacy development and written communication.

Teachers should implement guided writing exercises, sentence correction activities, and spelling drills to strengthen pupils' sentence writing and spelling skills, while also providing regular feedback, peer-review tasks, and interactive tools to reinforce learning and engagement. Parents are encouraged to support home-based practice, review spelling patterns, and monitor their children's progress. School administrators should provide resources, training, and collaborative opportunities that assist teachers in improving literacy instruction. Small-group or one-on-one support should also be provided to pupils with persistent writing and spelling difficulties, while future researchers should examine the effectiveness of integrated sentence writing and spelling interventions across different grade levels and contexts.

The study was limited to sentence writing and spelling difficulties among Grade 3 pupils in San Fernando District schools, as observed by Grade 3 teachers. It focused only on sentence structure, grammar and usage, punctuation and coherence, phonetic spelling errors, visual/memory spelling errors, irregular word spelling errors, and the relationship between sentence writing skills and spelling performance. It did not cover other aspects of writing, such as creative writing or compositions beyond sentence-level skills, and it excluded teachers from other grade levels or subject areas, pupils from other grades or schools outside the district, and factors beyond the classroom context, including community or policy influences.

Compliance with ethical standards

The study was conducted in accordance with institutional ethical standards, with proper permission secured before data gathering. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and all information was treated with confidentiality and used only for academic purposes. The authors declare no conflict of interest, acknowledge all contributions to the study, and affirm responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and copyright ownership of the manuscript.

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