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Writing in Creole Contexts: A Study of Jamaican Primary School Students and Teachers

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Abstract

The poor writing outcomes of Jamaican students across all levels of education have been a subject of lament for educators and policymakers for several years. Despite such concerns, very little research has explored the challenges experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language when writing in English. While Jamaican Creole is the first language of most speakers, only Standard Jamaican English (English) is afforded official status and therefore is the language of instruction. Within this context, many children are educated through the medium of English while their first language is often disregarded and denigrated in the classroom. Given the differences between the languages, particularly in the areas of morphosyntax and phonology, as well as the importance of these skills in writing — it is worth exploring the nature of writing among learners in the Jamaican context. The present study therefore explores the characteristics of writing among learners with Jamaican Creole as their home language relative to their English dominant peers and investigates whether there are specific writing challenges experienced by these learners. The wider ecology of the writing classroom (instruction, curriculum, and language education policy) is also taken into consideration to gain a fuller understanding of student writing outcomes.

A sequential mixed methods design consisting of three phases of gradually increasing focus was employed. In the first phase, a systematic review of the research on writing development among learners more typically identified as EAL was conducted to provide some insight on the nature of writing among learners whose home language differs from English — the language of schooling. This was followed by the content analyses of the Jamaican curriculum and policy documents guiding writing instruction. In the final stages, semi-structured interviews

were carried out with classroom teachers and language and literacy measures were administered to 90 Jamaican primary school students in Grade Six.

Statistically significant differences were found in the overall writing outcomes of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language and their peers with English as a home language ($p < .001$), with the former group performing more poorly on all writing subskills. In terms of the ecology of the writing classroom — instructional approaches more in line with English immersion were dominant in both the classroom and the policy and curriculum documents, with teachers reporting feeling ill-equipped to teach writing in the Jamaican creole context. Findings from each phase of the study are integrated and discussed with reference to the simple view of writing and wider research to create a fuller account of the writing outcomes of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. Implications for second language writing theory as well as for writing pedagogy and policy in creole-speaking contexts are also discussed.

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1. Introduction

"We write a language we do not speak. We speak a language we do not write".

(Mutabaruka as cited in Cooper, 2013, p.3)

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Writing plays a pivotal role in student success in the primary years, being the key means through which students demonstrate their understanding and knowledge of curriculum content (Murphy, 2018). In addition to being a central competency for education, writing represents one of the most complex skills that a student will need to master given its reliance on the coordination of linguistic, secretarial, and cognitive skills, as well as content knowledge (Genesee et al., 2006; Schoonen et al., 2003). While numerous students tend to struggle in writing globally (EQAO, 2020; DfE, 2018; MoEY, 2001; NCES, 2019), students learning English as an additional language (EAL) face unique writing challenges as they are tasked with simultaneously developing proficiency in the language of instruction and learning curriculum content (Murphy et al., 2015; Silverman et al., 2015).

Despite the central role of writing in education, comparatively less research has explored writing development relative to its sister skill of reading (Babayiğit, 2014; Chall, 1983; Lesaux et al., 2006a; Murphy, 2014, 2018; Murphy et al., 2015), and even less research has explored the writing challenges experienced by learners with EAL (Murphy et al., 2015, Mackenzie et al., 2015; Woolpert, 2016). However, even more underrepresented in writing research, and applied linguistics literature more generally, are the numerous learners in the Caribbean and elsewhere with creoles as home languages. Caribbean creole languages constitute a mixture of African

languages forming grammatical base (i.e., the substrate) and European languages (i.e., the lexifier) contributing most of the lexicon. Creole speakers therefore represent a unique population in language research, being classified as "neither first nor foreign language learners of English" (Nero & Stevens, 2018 p. 14) and have been found to experience significant challenges in writing (de Klein, 2006; McCourtie, 1998; Winer, 1989). In previous years, limited research attention and resources have been dedicated to understanding literacy development among speakers of creoles and other non-standardized and/ or racialized language varieties. However, racial unrest in recent years which sparked movements such as the famed Black Lives Matter protests, has prompted calls for linguistic justice and for research considering the language education of racialized linguistic populations (Canadian Modern Language Review, 2021). This study therefore seeks to bring such populations into focus through exploring the characteristics of writing among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home and dominant language relative to their English dominant peers and to explore whether there are specific challenges associated with writing for Jamaican Creole dominant learners.

1.1.1 Writing in the Jamaican Context

In his oft cited words, popular Jamaican poet, Mutabaruka, succinctly sums up the Jamaican language situation and the resulting literacy plight: "We write a language we do not speak. We speak a language we do not write" (Mutabaruka as cited in Cooper, 2013, p.3). This linguistic mismatch, which is characteristic of the wider Caribbean, is a remnant of years of European conquest and colonization, wherein most islands afford official status to a European language while an oral creole of generally low perceived status is spoken by the masses. In the case of Jamaica, Standard Jamaican English, the official language of the island and hereafter referred to as English, coexists with Jamaican Creole, the native language of the people. While

Jamaican Creole is the home language for the majority of Jamaicans (Devonish & Carpenter, 2007), upon entering school, children are educated in English. The resulting linguistic mismatch experienced by many children has been reflected in evidence of consistent academic underperformance of creole-dominant students in national assessments (Craig, 1983; Christie, 2003; Siegel, 2007). Given the relationship between creoles and their lexifier languages which provide the bulk of the language's lexicon and are generally the medium of education, learners tend to have greater receptive knowledge of English (comprehension) than learners more typically deemed as EAL in the Global North (Clachar, 2005). However, this has not been the case with the productive skill of writing. Since the colonial era, writing has been identified as one of the greatest educational challenges facing Jamaican students and as one of the greatest failures of the Jamaican educational system (McCourtie, 1998). As a result, educational researchers and linguists on the island have consistently identified the mismatch between the home and school language as a key factor in the poor writing outcomes observed across all levels of education (Bryan, 1998, 2010; Carpenter & Devonish, 2010; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007; McCourtie, 1998).

However, despite the consistent voicing of such concerns over the years, neither research exploring the particular challenges experienced by learners in the primary years, nor research focused on writing interventions at any level of education have been identified in the literature. Rather, the limited number of studies that have addressed writing in creole contexts have largely focused on academic writing at the university level (e.g., Bain, 2008; Burris-Melville, 2020; Elsasser & Irvine, 1985; Nero, 1997) and have consistently reported that students continue to struggle in acquiring English language proficiency and encounter significant challenges in

writing. Given such findings, it is worthwhile to explore the nature of writing among learners in the primary years to inform early interventions.

1.2 Thesis Aims and Outline

The present study explores the characteristics of writing among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language in the primary years relative to their English dominant peers and investigates whether there are specific challenges associated with writing for creole dominant learners. The study also considers the wider ecology of the writing classroom by exploring the instructional approaches and training experiences of teachers as well as the curriculum and policy mandates that guide writing instruction. A phased approach was taken to meeting the research aims, with each research phase progressively working towards greater understanding of the writing outcomes of learners. More distal data sources were explored first, starting with a systematic review of the research concerning EAL writing. The subsequent phases focused specifically on the Jamaican context, beginning with the content analysis of the curriculum and policy documents guiding writing instruction, followed by a series of teacher interviews and the collection and analysis of students' written texts. A more detailed outline of the thesis and the research stages is provided below.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

The thesis begins with an outline of the grounding theories of the study— the simple view of writing (SWV) and the ecological approach to writing, as well as a discussion of how both theories complement each other and frame the study. The overarching research design of the study is also outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Three: Narrative Literature Review

The narrative literature review is divided into two main sections. With a strong emphasis on first language research, the first section provides an overview of the learner and contextual variables that influence writing quality, in line with the theoretical framework. In the second section, the Jamaican language situation is considered. A detailed discussion of research in creole contexts regarding language education policy, writing instruction, and the nature of writing outcomes among learners with creoles as home languages is also outlined. Given the limited amount of research on writing in creole contexts and the relevance of both first and second language research for creole contexts (Bryan, 2010; Carpenter & Devonish, 2010; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007), research among learners with EAL proved instrumental for the study and was addressed in the first phase presented in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Systematic Review of EAL Writing

In the first phase of the study, a systematic review was carried out to provide insight into the writing development and language-related challenges of learners in the primary and secondary years with EAL. That is, learners whose home language differs from the language of schooling and who often need additional support in accessing the school curriculum in English.

The systematic review was limited in that all studies were carried out in the Global North (Canada, United States, UK, and Australia) and so a wholesale application of the findings to the Caribbean context is neither viable nor intended due to the contextual and typological differences in the cultures and languages. Nevertheless, this chapter is situated after the literature review which took a focused view on creole research, and thus the latter compliments the former. Taken together, the two chapters provide a broad scope of the issues in literacy development in creole contexts and more globally among learners with EAL.

Chapter Five: Content Analysis

The content analysis phase played a supplemental role in the research design to provide further insight into the ecology of the writing classroom. This chapter outlines the approach taken to the content analysis of the curriculum and policy documents that guide writing instruction in the Jamaican context. Findings are also discussed.

Chapter Six: Classroom Fieldwork Methodology

Chapter Six outlines the qualitative and quantitative methods adopted in the collection and analysis of student and teacher data. Details regarding sampling procedures, data collection instruments, methodological limitations, ethical considerations, and researcher positionality are outlined.

Chapters Seven to Nine: Findings

Chapters Seven, Eight, and Nine present findings concerning the study context, teachers' concerns, instructional approaches in the writing classroom, and student writing outcomes. Chapter Seven details the contextual findings that emerged from the home language and literacy survey that was completed by parents, including details on parental levels of education as well as home language and literacy environments. Other important trends noted in fieldnotes concerning student attitudes to writing are also addressed. Following the contextual findings, Chapter Eight presents findings from the qualitative teacher interviews concerning students' writing challenges and pedagogical approaches to writing instruction. Findings are discussed in line with results from the content analyses chapter and wider literature. In Chapter Nine, quantitative results in the form of student outcomes on measures of writing, language proficiency, and cognitive ability are presented. As a key point of integration, the findings from this chapter concerning student

writing outcomes are discussed and interpreted with reference to wider research literature and results from the earlier phases of the study.

Chapter Ten: Conclusions & Implications

Following on from the integrated discussion of findings, Chapter Ten presents the overall conclusions of the study alongside a discussion of the study's limitations and the implications for theory, research, and practice. Before moving forward, it is imperative to address the terminology adopted throughout the study.

1.3 Nomenclature and Definitions

Researchers have highlighted the fact that oftentimes, the terms or labels used by applied linguists to describe linguistic populations and languages are at odds with how these speakers identify (Bale, 2010; Wiley, 2005). This issue is particularly relevant to the present study, where the nomenclature of the Jamaican language and its speakers has always been a complex endeavour (Bryan, 2010). Careful consideration was therefore given to the terminology adopted in this study to ensure ecological validity and continuity with wider research.

1.3.1 The Language

The creole language spoken in Jamaica is generally referred to as 'Patois' or 'Patwa' by Jamaican locals. Though less common, Jamaican locals also use the term 'Jamaican Creole' to refer to their language and the term has also been widely adopted in the research literature. More recently, local linguists have rallied for the use of 'Jamaican' as the official name for the creole language spoken on the island. Such advocacy has neither had much traction with the government nor Jamaican locals. As a result, the term is used almost exclusively by a small

group of linguists. All options considered, the term Jamaican Creole will be used throughout the study as it is both consistent with how Jamaicans identify their language and with the existing body of research.

1.3.2 The Speakers

While many Jamaican students are, strictly speaking, learners with English as an additional language who may need additional support in accessing the language of instruction, Jamaicans generally do not identify as learners with English as a second (ESL) or additional language (EAL). Therefore, to ensure that the researched population feel adequately represented in this work, the terms ESL and EAL will not be used to refer to Jamaican learners, but rather to refer to learners in the Global North whose home language is not English and who are simultaneously learning the language of instruction (English) and curriculum content at school (Murphy, 2014).

While there are debates about what constitutes language dominance and how it is measured, within creole research literature the term 'creole dominant' has been used to refer to learners who use a greater amount of creole in speech than English and who, as a result, are less proficient in English than they are in creole (e.g., Nero, 1997, 2000, 2015; Whyte-Williams, 2008). At the same time, the Jamaican Ministry of Education uses 'home language' terminology to describe this group of learners as evidenced in the national curriculums. To ensure that this study has ecological validity in the Jamaican context and continuity with the existing body of creole research in the field of education, both terms will be used interchangeably. In this study, 'home language' is linked with the concept of dominance. That is, learners with English as a home language refers to those learners who are more dominant speakers of English – who more commonly use and are more proficient in English. Similarly, learners with Jamaican Creole as a

home language refers to those learners who are more dominant speakers of Jamaican Creole – who more commonly speak and are more proficient in Jamaican Creole relative to English. Beyond Jamaican language terminology, it is also worth defining a few broader terms used in the thesis:

1. **Vernacular:** Nero's and Ahmad's (2014) definition of (English) vernaculars is adopted in this study– "the varieties of English spoken as a mother tongue or second language in the US and around the world that are typically not sanctioned by the academy" (p. 4). While this definition certainly includes creole languages, the term vernacular will be used in this study to refer to non-creole languages that fit this definition such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE).
2. **L1:** First language (English)
3. **L2:** Second language (English)
4. **NES:** Native English Speaker

In summary, the current study aims to explore the characteristics of writing among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language relative to their English dominant peers and to investigate whether there are specific writing challenges experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. The study also considers the wider ecology of the writing classroom that serves to influence student writing outcomes. The upcoming chapter will outline the theoretical framework and research design of the study.

2. Theoretical Framework and Research Design

2.1 Theoretical Framework

While this study focuses on writing, it is situated in a scarcely researched context, both linguistically and geographically, where vestiges of colonialism and slavery remain and are inseparable from language development and usage. Within this context, it is imperative that the adopted theoretical framework takes into account both the 'how' of writing development as well as the possible impact of the learner's wider classroom and societal culture to gain a more holistic understanding of the writing challenges of students in Jamaican primary schools. To this end, two theories will be used to form the framework of this study— the Simple View of Writing (Berninger, 2000; Berninger et al., 2002) which provides a model of writing development for both novice and expert writers, and the ecological approach to writing (Barton, 2007; Fleckenstien et al., 2008; Syverson 1999) which situates writing and instruction within a wider contextual frame.

2.1.1 The Simple View of Writing

According to the simple view of writing (SVW), in its original formulation, writing consists of two component processes of spelling and of ideation, which involves the development and organisation of ideas (Juel et al., 1986). Berninger (2000) and Berninger and Winn (2006) further elaborated and developed the SVW through the addition cognitive processes in a model that has come to be known as the Not-so-Simple View of Writing (NSVW). Within this framework, text production consists of three component processes operating within a system of working memory: transcription, text generation, and executive functions. Transcription involves the translation of sounds into symbols through the lower-level skills of handwriting and spelling, which are

generally acquired before other skills, while text generation involves the higher-level skills of developing and translating ideas into text through language. Oral language knowledge at the word, sentence, and text levels is implicated at this stage. The transcription and text generation processes are, in turn, guided by self-regulation strategies such as goal setting and revision. Within this model, any deficits, or a lack of automaticity in the lower-level skills of spelling and handwriting place a greater burden on working memory and thus curtail efficient execution of higher-level processes of developing and translating ideas into text (McCutchen, 2006). As the later iteration of the NSVW builds on the premises of the SVW with greater emphasis on cognitive processes, both simple view models have often been collectively referred to as the SVW in the literature and this approach will also be adopted in the present study.

The SVW will be adopted in the present thesis as it accounts for differences between skilled and novice writers, sheds light on the component processes of writing and though based on first language learners, has been found to be predictive of second language writing (Babayiğit, 2014; Graham & Eslami, 2020; Ndlovu, 2010). These factors make the SVW more holistic in its approach (Danzak, 2009) and easily applicable to educational settings (Dockrell et al., 2015).

Despite its popularity, the SVW has been criticized for a lack of specificity concerning the skills included in text generation and the relationships between the component skills of writing (Kim & Schatschneider, 2017). To address these issues, Kim and Schatschneider (2017) explored the relationships between the component skills of writing among elementary school learners and expanded on the simple view model to account for both the direct and indirect effects of the component skills on writing outcomes. The resulting framework is now known as the direct and indirect effects model of developmental writing (DIEW). As Zhang et al. (2022) maintain, the simple view models and the DIEW all address the component skills of writing and

therefore share a foundational framework with the key area of difference being the level of elaboration of the component skills and the relationships amongst them. The theories are therefore not in conflict and are both supported in the research literature as will be observed in later sections of this chapter.

It must be noted that though the SVW has been widely adopted in both first and second language writing research, to the researcher's knowledge, it has not been examined within a creole context involving the use of non-standard varieties, and in this way, findings may serve to expand theoretical applications. However, while the SVW provides descriptive power for, and insight into the writing outcomes of learners, given the complexity of writing as a skill (Olive, 2004) and the particularly unique sociolinguistic context of Jamaica, on it its own it will not suffice to provide a rich understanding of writing attainment among Jamaican learners. Therefore, in conjunction with the SVW, the ecological approach to writing which takes into consideration wider contextual factors that come to bear on writing attainment will form the theoretical framework of the study.

2.1.2 An Ecological Approach to Writing

In Jamaica, language and literacy are inseparable from the historical and social effects of slavery and British colonialism. As a postcolonial society that in many ways still reveres British ideals and language, teachers' goals, opinions, and beliefs concerning literacy and language are largely shaped by societal values and ideals, as are government policies. These social and structural influences are in turn brought to bear in the language arts classroom. To this end, Nero & Stevens (2018) point out that in Jamaican society, where language use is tied up with sociolinguistic stratification and status, a child's language usage can mediate their experience of the school classroom both socially and academically. Accordingly, Nero and Stevens (2018)

argue that literacy practices in Jamaica are best investigated and understood through a theoretical lens that considers the role of wider contextual factors that impact attainment. In light of this, in addition to the simple view of writing, the ecological approach underpins the present research as the study aims to explore the writing in the Jamaican creole context as a function of and response to the ecology of the writing classroom.

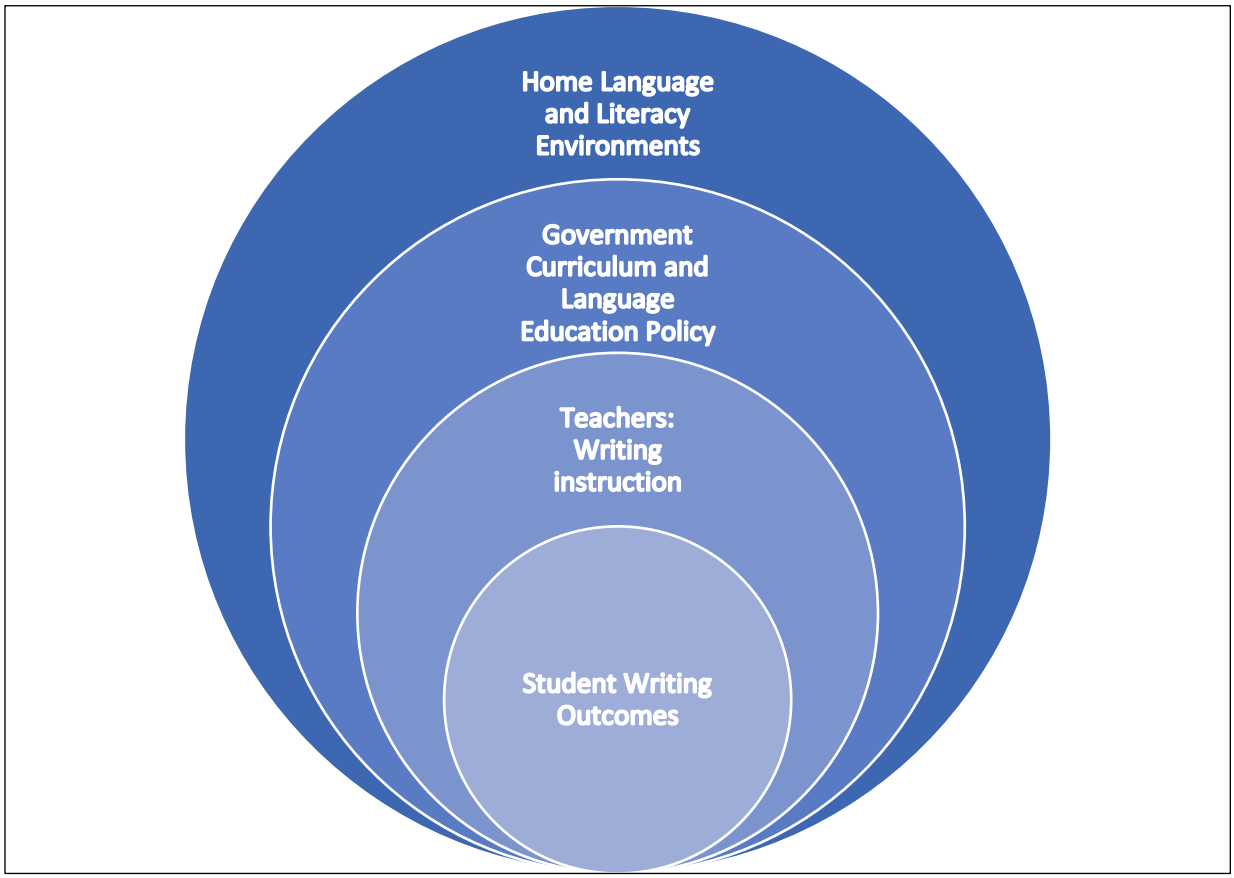
Grounded in socio-cultural research tradition, an ecological research framework considers the dynamic nature of relationships between individuals and wider societal structures as well as the impact of these structures on individual behaviour and perceptions (Nero & Stevens, 2018). With particular reference to writing, Syverson (1999) pointed out that "we cannot hope to understand [writing] by studying individuals in isolation", but rather, we need an ecological approach that considers the social and material dynamics of the wider surrounding contexts that impact writers (p. xv). Nero & Stevens (2018) later echoed Syverson in arguing that that an ecological approach to writing considers both "text" (students' written expressions) and "context" (environment) to gain a more holistic understanding of students writing outcomes (p. 14). From this perspective, the ecological approach to writing allows for the consideration of external factors that come to bear on student writing outcomes as opposed to simply treating writing as a "decontextualized cognitive skill" (Barton, 1994, p.52).

As depicted in Figure 2.1, this study situates student writing outcomes within the broader ecology of the writing classroom while considering the impact of government curriculum and policy mandates that come to bear on writing instruction. Other contextual factors such as home language and literacy practices are also likely to have an impact on student writing outcomes. However due to resource constraints and the limits imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, home language and literacy environments are considered only on a small scale in this study and as

such, no causation can be implied. These and other methodological matters are discussed throughout the study.

Figure 2.1

Ecological Approach to Understanding Student Writing Outcomes in the Jamaican Context



Together, the SVW and the ecological approach to writing form the theoretical framework of the study and guide the research design and methodological decisions taken throughout the study.

2.2 Research Design

The research design adopted in this study was based on fitness for purpose in addressing the research questions (Cohen et al., 2017; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005) in line with the theoretical framework. The study primarily aimed to explore the characteristics of writing among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language relative to their English dominant peers and to investigate whether there are specific areas of difficulty in writing experienced by the former group of learners. To meet these aims, a sequential mixed method design drawing on both positivist and interpretivist traditions of data collection and analysis was employed. Sequential mixed designs address confirmatory and exploratory questions chronologically within a single study (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) and quantitative and qualitative questions and methods are connected and integrated at various phases of the study (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). As in the case of the present study, in sequential designs, qualitative data are largely used to help explain and interpret quantitative findings (Creswell, 2003).

To gain a fuller understanding of the writing challenges experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as their home language, in line with the theoretical framework, it was important to consider both the learner and contextual factors that come to bear on writing quality outcomes. Using the sequential mixed methods design, each phase of the study progressively narrowed in focus on the writing outcomes among learners, starting with the most distal data sources. A key feature of mixed methods designs is integration. As will be seen throughout the study, integration took place at the levels of research questions, sampling, and in the discussion of findings.

In the first phase of the study, a systematic review was carried out to provide insight into the writing development and language-related challenges of learners in the primary years with English as an additional language (EAL), that is, learners whose home language differs from the

language of schooling and who often need additional support in accessing the school curriculum in English. Though there are important differences between learners with EAL in the Jamaican context and the learners to whom this label is more typically applied in the Global North (e.g., the distinctiveness between the first language and English), key similarities, such as the classroom often being the dominant source of English language exposure, make research on the latter group relevant to understanding writing development among creole-dominant speakers. While the use of the term EAL and literacy research from this population in the Jamaican context may seem disputable, Jamaican scholars have weighed in on the issue by highlighting some practical similarities of EAL learners across the contexts and the importance of connecting local research with wider international literature. While acknowledging that these terms may not capture the full picture of the Jamaican language learning context, Bryan (2010) points out that such terms describe the language situation in meaningful ways, particularly in the pragmatic sense in that "English is the language to be learnt; it is the official language of the country, but not necessarily the language of the student" (pp. 66). From this perspective, Devonish (2016) calls for homegrown solutions based not only on local but also international scholarship in guiding language education in Jamaica. This is particularly necessary at this time given the limited amount of research of this nature in the Caribbean and the fact that many creole speaking students are classified as EAL in the Global North (Clachar, 2005; Nero, 1997; Bryan, 2010). Findings from more widely studied EAL contexts concerning writing are therefore relevant for Jamaican learners who enter school with lower oral language proficiency in English. In this study, the systematic review provided a springboard for deeper research in the understudied context of Jamaica and will enrich the discussion of findings wherein convergences and

discrepancies in writing outcomes among Jamaican learners and those more typically deemed as EAL will be explored.

Following on from Phase One, Phase Two took a more focused look at the Jamaican context through the qualitative content analyses of curriculum and policy documents that guide literacy instruction in Jamaican primary schools. This phase served to provide greater insight into the factors that may have distal effects in shaping writing pedagogy and student outcomes and provide a source of supplementary findings in the present study.

Following the content analysis of curriculum and policy documents, data collection was carried out in the (online) classroom in the final two phases of the study with teachers and students. Teacher interviews served to provide greater insight into the ecology of the writing classroom, particularly at the level of instruction, and its resulting effect on student outcomes. As a key point of integration, the student sample determined and the teacher sample for the qualitative interviews. That is, teachers were selected on the basis of being the classroom teachers of the student participants.

Finally, quantitative student data in the form of a writing task and measures of language proficiency and cognitive ability were collected to gain insight into the nature of writing among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. Findings and inferences from each phase of the study are integrated across the discussion chapters, with the greatest level of integration occurring in the discussion of student writing outcomes in Chapter Nine. As depicted in Figure 2.1, the research design of the study is reflective of the theoretical framework as it considers the possible relationships between writing outcomes in the form of quantitative data and the wider ecology of the writing classroom (e.g., teaching approaches, writing

activities, texts, and teacher beliefs), the wider educational system (e.g., policy and curriculum), and home literacy environments.

Mixed methods approaches have been found to provide useful insight when studying complex phenomena that would benefit from the convergence of those different approaches (Rose et al, 2020). Given the complexity of language use, attitudes, and policy in Jamaica, and the ecological orientation to writing espoused in the present study, a mixed methods approach was deemed most appropriate, indeed necessary, to gain a holistic understanding of writing outcomes and instruction. Each form of data serves to complement the other (Dörnyei, 2007) as quantitative findings concerning students' writing challenges will be discussed in reference to findings from qualitative teacher interviews and the content analysis of curriculum and policy documents. Though classroom observations would have provided useful insight and were planned as part of the initial research design, this aspect of the study could not be carried out due to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. This, and other contextual factors are addressed in the classroom methodology chapter (Chapter Six).

3. Narrative Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This study explores the nature of writing among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language and investigates whether there are specific writing challenges experienced by this group of learners. As the first of two literature chapters, the current chapter presents an overview of first language (L1) research on writing development in the primary years with a particular focus on both learner and contextual factors that contribute to writing quality, including transcription and text generation skills as well as writing instruction, socio-economic status, and home literacy environments. The role of the L1 in language and literacy development is also discussed. The second half of the chapter takes a more pointed approach with a specific focus on the Jamaican context, while drawing on research from similar linguistic settings to understand writing in creole contexts. The Jamaican language situation is discussed alongside issues in and approaches to language education. The chapter ends with an overview of research on writing quality outcomes in the Caribbean, which ultimately motivates the subsequent literature chapter focused on a broader EAL context.

3.2 Language and Literacy Skills in Writing

As outlined in the previous chapter and according to the SVW, writing is a complex task implicating both lower-level transcription skills and higher-level text-generation skills at the word, phrase, and sentence levels (Berninger 2000; Berninger et al., 2002). The upcoming sections outline the role of transcription and text generation skills in writing quality outcomes.

3.2.1 Transcription Skills

Transcription involves the translation of oral language into print through handwriting and spelling (Berninger, 2000). Spelling and handwriting skills are pivotal for successful writing across the school years and have been consistently identified as significant predictors of writing quality for both L1 and L2 English speakers, particularly in the earlier elementary grades (Babayiğit, 2015; Feng et al., 2019; Graham et al., 1997; Graham & Eslami, 2020; Kent & Wanzek, 2016; Kim & Schatschneider, 2017).

Handwriting has been operationalized in terms of quality and fluency in the literature — the former focusing on text legibility and the latter on the speed with which letters are produced accurately (Berninger, 1999), and has been found to be a significant predictor of writing fluency (text length) and quality (Ahmed et al., 2022; Connelly & Hurst, 2001; Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004; Feng et al., 2019; Graham et al., 1997; Kent & Wanzek, 2016; Santangelo & Graham, 2016; Zhang et al., 2021). In a study of 600 primary school learners, Graham et al. (1997) found that transcription skills continued to account for a large portion of variance in writing fluency (text length) and quality (content and organization) outcomes for primary school learners in Grades Four to Six even when measures were taken to control handwriting and spelling bias. Interestingly, handwriting, which was measured both for legibility and fluency, exerted a more substantial direct impact on writing quality and fluency than spelling for both beginner (Grades Ones to Three) and older learners (Grades Four to Six), a finding replicated by Berninger (2000). Graham et al. (1997) explained this finding by pointing to the tendency of older primary learners to restrict their vocabulary to words they can spell, thus moderating the impact of spelling on quality ratings. More recently, in the largest study to date exploring the role of handwriting on

writing quality of primary grade learners (n = 4950) in Norway[1], Skar et al., (2022) reported similar findings. After controlling for attitudes to writing, language background, grade, gender, and nesting within schools and classrooms, handwriting fluency emerged as a statistically significant and unique predictor of writing quality, explaining 7.4% of variance. However, the authors point out that the variance accounted for by handwriting could have been overestimated due to its relationship with spelling, topic knowledge, and planning. Despite such limitations, the findings are consistent with numerous studies showing the critical role of handwriting in writing quality and fluency, and underline the importance of supporting learners in handwriting not only in the elementary years but through the primary years and beyond.

Though related, spelling and handwriting represent discrete skills that have differential impacts on writing outcomes (Abbot & Berninger, 1993). Spelling is a complex task drawing on phonological, morphological, and orthographic skills (Berninger et al., 2002; Connelly et al., 2012; Harrison et al., 2016) and has been identified as a stable predictor of writing outcomes across the primary years (Abbot et al., 2010), predicting both text length (Juel, 1988; Gansle et al., 2002) and quality (Ahmed et al., 2020; Graham et al, 1997; Kent & Wanzek, 2016; Olinghouse & Leaird, 2009; Tindal & Parker, 1991; Zhang et al., 2019).

As spelling draws on phonological, morphological and orthographic knowledge, it is significantly correlated with other key language and transcription skills in writing, making its effect on writing quality difficult to tease apart (Kim et al. 2014). Studies using structural equation modelling and commonality analyses have provided insight into the nuanced nature of the impact of transcription skills on writing (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2022; Babayiğit, 2015; Graham

[1] Norwegian orthography, like English, is based on the Latin alphabet.

et al., 1997; Kim & Schatschneider, 2017; Olinghouse & Leaird, 2009) and shed further light on the role of spelling. Studies have shown that in addition to exerting strong direct effects on planning and revision processes (Ahmed et al., 2022) and overall writing quality (Kim & Schatschneider, 2017), spelling also exerts indirect effects on quality ratings through significant relationships with other key skills including compositional fluency, vocabulary knowledge, sentence structure, and morphosyntax for both L1 and L2 English speakers (Babayiğit, 2015; Berninger, 2000; Graham et al., 1997; Olinghouse & Leaird, 2009). That is, challenges with spelling tend to have a knock-on effect on text-generation skills at the word, phrase, and sentence levels as well as on the self-regulatory functions of editing and revisions, thus resulting in poorer performance on quality ratings. Such findings offer support to Kim and Schatschneider's (2017) elaboration on the SVW which emphasized relationships between component skills.

As Hayes and Olinghouse (2015) point out, transcription challenges affect writing quality and fluency not only through increased cognitive demands as predicted by the SVW, but also through decreasing learners' motivation to write. Intervention studies show that targeted instruction and practice in spelling and handwriting not only improve these skills but also result in significant improvement in overall writing quality and compositional length (Berninger, 2000; Berninger & Amtmann, 2003; Santangelo & Graham, 2016), thus offering support for the SVW. Accordingly, learners in the primary years stand to benefit from extensive practice and instruction in transcription skills.

3.2.2 Text Generation

Text generation relies on oral language skills at the word and sentence level in the form of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. While oral language skills are widely believed to be strong predictors of writing outcomes, very little research has explored the relationship between

oral language skills and writing in younger learners (Harrison et al., 2016; Kent & Wanzek, 2016; Kim et al., 2011; Shanahan, 2006; Silverman, 2015), particularly at the primary school level (Silverman et al., 2015). While some studies have shown significant relationships between oral language skills and writing quality in primary school learners (e.g., Abbott & Berninger, 1993; Kim et al., 2011), both primary research and meta-analyses have shown a trend of weak to moderate correlations between oral language and writing quality for native English speakers (e.g., Kent & Wanzek, 2016; Olinghouse & Graham, 2009). Such findings may be due in part to variation in oral language measures, the nature of writing assessments, as well as the age of learners across studies.

3.2.2.1 Vocabulary. Nation (2013) maintains that across the four language skills, the relationship between writing and vocabulary is the least understood. Accordingly, L1 research findings concerning the role of vocabulary knowledge in writing quality remain equivocal. As indicated earlier, this may be due at least in part to factors such as: the multidimensional nature of vocabulary knowledge (Nagy & Scott, 2000; Nation, 2013), the wide variety of measures for each dimension (Olinghouse & Wilson, 2013), variation in approaches to assessing writing (i.e., holistic vs analytic), and variation in learner age, which together limit the comparability of findings across studies (Babayiğit & Stainthorp, 2010). An important distinction in vocabulary knowledge is made between receptive and productive knowledge. Receptive vocabulary knowledge refers to the recognition of a word's form and meaning while reading or listening while productive vocabulary knowledge refers to the ability to use appropriate and correct word forms in speech and writing (Nation, 2013). Research has consistently shown that receptive vocabulary is acquired before, and is generally larger than, learners' productive vocabularies (Ellis & Beaton, 1993; Laufer, 1998; Nation, 2013).

Written vocabulary has been assessed using a variety of measures such as vocabulary diversity, vocabulary sophistication, lexical originality, and lexical density (Laufer & Nation, 1995). However, vocabulary diversity which refers to the breadth of appropriate lexical items in a text, is the most common measure used in the literature (Babayiğit, 2015; Grobe, 1981; Olinghouse & Wilson, 2013). Vocabulary diversity has been found to be a significant predictor of writing quality for both first (Olinghouse & Leaird, 2009; Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004; Grobe, 1981; Harrison et al., 2016) and second language users of English (Babayiğit, 2014, 2015; Enger, 1995), and according to Grobe (1981, p.85) is closely associated with what teachers consider 'good writing'. Additionally, research has shown statistically significant interactions between vocabulary diversity and genre, with primary school students tending to use more diverse vocabulary in story writing and narratives compared to more informational genres (Hiebert & Cervetti, 2011; Olinghouse & Wilson, 2013).

Olinghouse and Leaird (2009) found vocabulary diversity to be one of the strongest predictors of writing quality alongside compositional length in a study exploring the relationship between vocabulary and writing quality among primary school learners in Grades Two (n = 91) and Four (n =101). Students were administered two writing tasks: a standardized measure of overall story quality (plot, character development, and overall composition) and an experimenter-developed narrative task using an analytic assessment scale (organization, development of plot, ideation, and vocabulary). In addition to spelling and compositional length, scripts were scored for vocabulary diversity, the use of less frequent vocabulary, and the number of polysyllabic words. In the experimental task, which was assessed analytically, vocabulary diversity was the strongest unique predictor of writing quality for learners in Grade Two while compositional length was the strongest predictor for learners in Grade Four. In the story

construction task, mean syllable length of vocabulary was the strongest predictor of overall story quality scores for learners in Grade Two while compositional length was the strongest predictor for learners in Grade Four. Overall, communality analysis showed that the addition of vocabulary diversity scores alone was responsible for the largest increase in uniquely explained variance beyond spelling and compositional length across both grade levels and writing tasks, making it the most stable and significant predictor of writing quality among the vocabulary measures.

The researchers highlight the likely influence of prompts across tasks on learners' vocabulary usage in the study as well as the impact of the assessment approach on findings. That is, the analytic assessment which explicitly included measures of vocabulary would more likely underline the role of vocabulary compared to overall story quality assessment. Accordingly, in addition to highlighting the importance of vocabulary diversity for writing in the primary years – a finding consistent with wider research (e.g., Grobe 1991), the study highlights the influence of learner age, task requirements, and assessment approaches on vocabulary usage and its role in writing outcomes for learners in the primary years.

3.2.2.1 Grammar. Less is known about the role of grammatical knowledge on overall writing outcomes as much of the research that has considered the role of grammar has focused on learners with language impairments (e.g., Dockrell et al, 2019; Gillam & Johnston, 1992; Scott & Windsor, 2000; Windsor et al., 2000) relative to typically developing learner populations. Grammatical knowledge in writing has been most assessed in terms of grammatical correctness (e.g., tense usage, subject-verb agreement) and complexity in the literature, with the latter referring to the variation and sophistication of grammatical features or sentence structures used by a writer to convey ideas (Ortega, 2003). Significant relationships between grammatical

complexity and writing quality have been reported in the literature (Abbott & Berninger, 1993; Beers & Nagy, 2009; Harrison et al., 2016; Kim et al, 2011; Olinghouse, 2008) with researchers highlighting the facilitative effect of more mature grammar on the articulation of complex ideas and the relationships between them in writing (Beers & Nagy, 2009). However, consistent with findings reported in a meta-analysis carried out by Kent and Wanzek (2016), few studies report findings showing grammar to be a particularly strong and unique predictor of writing quality for L1 English speakers and positive effects of grammatical instruction on writing quality have not been widely supported in the literature (Graham et al., 2012). As with vocabulary, such findings may be influenced by both learner and task effects.

In a study of 120 primary school students in Grade Three, Olinghouse (2008) found differential effects of grammatical knowledge across two dimensions of writing quality. Students were administered a narrative writing task which was scored for compositional fluency (length) and overall compositional quality (ideation, organization, grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary choice). Grammatical knowledge was assessed using the Grammatic Comprehension subset of the Test of Language Development (TOLD) which requires learners to make grammaticality judgements. Additionally, Olinghouse (2008) explored the role of gender, spelling, handwriting, pre-planning, learner IQ, and writing instruction. Findings showed that grammar was a significant predictor of overall compositional quality alongside gender, compositional fluency, IQ, and word reading. However, grammatical knowledge did not explain a statistically significant amount of variance in compositional fluency scores which were instead predicted by gender, handwriting, and pre-planning. A similar pattern was observed in an earlier study by Grobe (1981) who explored the role of syntactic maturity, mechanics, and vocabulary in writing among 337 students in Grades Five, Eight, and Eleven. Fourteen measures were entered

stepwise into a regression model with holistic (impression-based) ratings of writing quality as the dependent variable. Twelve measures were related to grammar (e.g., verb tense, clauses per T-unit) alongside measures of spelling and compositional length. At each grade level, the model explained a statistically significant amount of the variance in quality scores, particularly for learners in Year Five (45.4%). However, despite the comparatively large number of grammatical measures included in the model, over half of the variance was explained by spelling and compositional length alone for all year groups. These findings may be linked to the nature of assessment as written narratives were assessed using a holistic 'impression-marking' approach as opposed to an analytic rubric assessing each component skill. As grammar was not directly assessed as is generally the case in analytic rubrics (i.e., it is considered in concert with other skills), it is possible that specific grammatical issues in writing may have been more likely to be overlooked. Nevertheless, such findings are consistent with those from Kent and Wanzek's (2016) meta-analytic study showing low to moderate effect sizes for the effects of oral language skills on writing quality and fluency for L1 English speakers.

3.3 Contextual Factors Contributing to Writing Quality

While the SVW focuses on the role of learners' language and literacy skills in writing, the ecological approach to writing espoused in the present study underlines the importance of wider contextual variables on student writing outcomes. As such, the following sections address the role of the key contextual variables of socioeconomic status, home literacy environments, and writing instruction in student writing quality.

3.3.1 Socioeconomic Status, Home Literacy Environments, and Child Literacy

Research has long shown that socioeconomic status (SES) (Arriaga et al.,1998; Fernald et al., 2013; Hoff & Tian, 2005; Sen & Blatchford, 2001; Strand, 2014) and home literacy

environments (HLE) (Butler & Le, 2018; Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Sénéchal et al., 1998) have significant impacts on child literacy development. SES and HLE have been operationalized widely through the use of varied indices in the literature. In the present study, SES refers to factors that are indicative of wealth, such as parental education, income, employment, and resources in the home (Butler et al., 2018; Smith & Barrett, 2011), while HLE refers to home-related practices and beliefs that are predictive of literacy outcomes such as parental involvement in literacy activities, literary materials in the home, and adult beliefs about and attitudes towards literacy (Nag et al., 2019; Puglisi et al., 2017).

3.3.1.1 SES and Literacy.

SES has most commonly been indexed by maternal education (Hoff, 2006) with a considerable amount of research demonstrating strong positive correlations between maternal education and literacy outcomes in both developing (Jariene & Razmantiene, 2006; McCormac, 2012; Roopnarine & Yildirum, 2018) and developed countries (Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004; Tizard et al, 1988). In developed contexts, maternal education effects have been largely explained by findings showing the tendency for mothers of higher SES to talk more to their children (Hoff et al, 2002), use more varied vocabulary (Hart & Risley, 1995; Hoff & Tian, 2005; Hoff et al., 2002), and more complex sentence structures (Huttenlocher et al., 2002). Mothers with higher education levels have also been found to be more likely to place emphasis on the development of reading and writing skills and to provide homework support at home (Jerrim & Micklewright 2009). Research has also shown SES-related differences in child oral language development with children from high SES families in developed countries tending to have larger vocabularies (Hart & Risley, 1995; Hoff, 2003) and higher levels of receptive and productive grammatical skills in the early elementary years (Snow, 1999). SES is not a uniform

construct, however, and the predictive power and relevance of its diverse indices vary across contexts, communities, and cultures. For example, in a synthesis of research on home language and literacy environments from 40 low- and middle-income countries, Nag et al. (2019) found that the effects of SES on literacy outcomes were not uniform. That is, low income did not always result in low literacy outcomes, as communities and homes varied in how efficiently they used limited resources and in their attitudes towards literacy.

In terms of its relationship with HLE, multilevel models of literacy development have shown that SES and HLE have distal and proximal effects on literacy development, respectively (Hoff, 2006; Hoff & Tian, 2005; Sénéchal, 2006), with SES often moderating and shaping HLE and its effects on literacy outcomes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Butler & Le., 2018; Ngorosho, 2011; Roopnarine & Yildirim, 2018). Therefore, while SES (e.g., family income, parental education) has a more distal effect on literacy outcomes, HLE factors may have more proximal effects (Hoff, 2006). Thus, a common methodological approach in the literature and the one taken in the present study, is to control for the effects of SES to gain greater insight into the role of HLE in literacy development.

3.3.1.2 HLE and Literacy

According to Sénéchal et al. (1998), home literacy experiences fall into two categories—formal and informal. Most commonly operationalised as shared book reading, informal home literacy activities are those with a primary focus on meaning rather than on the ‘code’ or print itself (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Much research has shown significant associations between storybook reading and the development of foundational oral language skills such as vocabulary (Sénéchal, 2014; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). In contrast, formal home literacy activities involve direct parent tutoring with an explicit focus on print (e.g., letter-sound correspondence, the

alphabet, word writing) (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002), and such practices have been found to have positive effects on the development of more code-based literacy skills (Sénéchal et al., 1998, 2014). In addition to formal and informal HLE, Puglisi et al. (2017) maintain that home literacy experiences can also be classified as indirect or passive wherein parent-related factors such attitudes and beliefs concerning literacy, as well as personal engagement in literacy activities influence the nature of the HLE and ultimately, child literacy outcomes (e.g., Phillips & Lonigan, 2009; Wells, 1987).

Like SES, HLE is not a uniform construct and the effectiveness and relevance of varied HLE indices vary across contexts. In addition to varied impacts, discussions of HLE and literacy become even more complex for over half the children of the world who live in multilingual contexts — given wide variation in experiences, language exposure, and family circumstances across such environments (Nag et al., 2019).

3.3.1.3 HLE and Literacy in the Caribbean

Research exploring the relationships between HLE and literacy outcomes in the Caribbean is almost non-existent. However, consistent with results from Nag et al. (2019), the single known study (Roopnarine & Yildirim, 2018) considering the relationship between HLE and literacy outcomes in the Caribbean reported mixed findings concerning HLE practices and their relationship with reading-related measures of literacy.

Using categorical data from the UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Roopnarine and Yildirim (2018) explored the relationship between parent-child play, book reading, and storytelling and early literacy development in 5 Caribbean islands — Belize, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Suriname, and Jamaica. Child literacy outcomes were based on maternal reports (yes/no responses) of their child's ability in early literacy skills (e.g., identify 10

letters). Logistic regression was carried out to explore the predictive nature of parental engagement in literacy activities in the home on child literacy outcomes while controlling for the effects of variables known to correlate with child outcomes in developing countries (maternal education, household wealth, preschool enrolment, area of residence, and number of books in the home). Results showed inconsistencies in parental literacy practices across Caribbean islands with both mothers and fathers in the Dominican Republic being more likely to read to their children, and mothers in Jamaica being more likely to tell stories to their children. Parental engagement in literacy activities in the other islands was comparatively low. The consistent trend was that mothers were more likely to be the primary caregiver and more likely to engage in literacy activities with their children than fathers—a finding that the researchers link to the prevalence of mate-shifting and resultant father absenteeism in the Caribbean (Anderson & Daley, 2015; Roopnarine & Jin, 2016). In terms of the relationship between literacy practices in the home and early literacy skills in children, mothers' book reading in the Dominican Republic and storytelling in Jamaica were significant predictors of letter identification skills. Similarly, mothers' book reading in the Dominican Republic and storytelling in Jamaica and Guyana were significant predictors of word reading. The predictive nature of storytelling as opposed to book reading in Jamaica is consistent with the oral tradition of the island and underlines the importance of using context-sensitive indices of HLE as the more traditional indices of book reading emerged as a non-significant predictor. The researchers point out that while the effects of HLE practices on literacy outcomes were mixed across countries, SES related factors such as household wealth (e.g., access to drinking water, house materials, toilet facilities), as well as the number of educational books in the home and preschool involvement showed a more consistent and significant predictive pattern on literacy outcomes in most of the islands. Based on such

findings, Roopnarine and Yildirim (2018) maintain that in the developing context of the Caribbean, while parental engagement in home literacy activities at home may be helpful in supporting early literacy development, they may not be sufficient as their effects are moderated by variables such as household wealth, access to educational books, and preschool enrolment. Such findings were corroborated by Walls (2021) who in an Anguilla-based parenting study, found that while parents acknowledge the value of supporting learning at home, challenging work schedules and the demands of caring for multiple children were consistently named as the key obstacles to providing literacy support at home.

There are a few methodological limitations affecting the generalizability of the findings, however. As the study relied on secondary categorical information, no insight is provided into the frequency and the quality of parental engagement in home literacy activities — which likely impacted the efficacy of HLE for child literacy development. Additionally, and of key importance, is the absence of home language information in the study — a likely confounding variable which may be linked to inconsistencies in findings concerning the role of HLE across Caribbean islands. Given that creoles are spoken in all the included countries and considering findings from low- to middle-income contexts showing that home language factors such as parents' proficiency and literacy in the language of schooling can influence the efficacy of HLEs (Nag et al., 2019), the efficacy of HLE across homes in the Caribbean was possibly impacted by parents' levels of English proficiency and literacy. As the study only considered two informal indices of HLE (storybook reading and storytelling) and did not include writing skills in the measures of literacy, much is still left to be understood concerning the role of more formal HLE approaches and their interaction with writing development.

3.3.1.4 Research on HLE and Writing

While the relationships between home literacy practices and reading development have been explored widely in the literature, few studies have considered the relationship between HLE and writing (Adams et., 2021; Guo et al., 2020; Puranik et al., 2018) and thus most HLE survey instruments have scarcely included items related to writing practices in the home (Puranik et al., 2018). This gap in our understanding of the relationship between HLE and writing skills is even more pronounced for developing countries (Kim et al., 2019; Ngorosho, 2011). Studies from developed countries have shown differential impacts of HLE wherein informal practices such as shared book reading tend to have a more facilitative effect on foundational oral language skills and reading, while formal parent tutoring appears to be more directly associated with writing outcomes both concurrently and longitudinally (Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004; Puglisi et al., 2017; Sénéchal, 1998; 2014; Tizard et al., 1988). While such findings have been corroborated in developing countries to some extent (e.g., Ngorosho, 2011), context-specific factors such as parental literacy and proficiency in the language of schooling, the skill of the family tutor (Nag et al., 2019), and SES factors (Roopnarine & Yildirim, 2017; Wells, 1987) often impact the efficacy of parental tutoring.

Ngorosho (2011) explored the relationships between reading (letter, word and sentence) and writing ability (word writing) and two aspects of the home environment- the living environment and the literacy environment among 300 children in Grade Three in Tanzania. The HLE was measured using context-sensitive indices of SES: parental levels of education, occupation, quality of housing (e.g., material of walls, access to electricity and water), and wealth (e.g., ownership of a radio, bicycle, or land). Home literacy variables included the availability of books for school subjects at home, writing resources at home (notebooks and writing instruments), and parental involvement in literacy activities (parent tutoring and

homework assistance). Findings showed that when both reading and writing were combined into a summary score, fathers' education, the quality of house wall material[2], number of books for school subjects, and parental support in literacy (homework assistance and parent tutoring) emerged as the strongest predictors of overall outcomes—with father's education explaining the largest amount of variance (16%). A slightly different pattern emerged when reading and writing scores were entered as separate outcome variables. While all reading scores were predicted by father's level of education, quality of house walls, and number of books for school subjects, the only statistically significant predictor of writing was parental involvement which included both parental tutoring and assistance with homework— a finding indicating that writing, more than reading may require more formal, intentional, and scaffolded support through parent tutoring in the home.

The strong relationship between fathers' education and literacy outcomes relative to the statistically non-significant contribution of mothers' education departs from the general trend of a strong association between maternal education and literacy outcomes in both developed (Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004; Tizard et al, 1988) and developing countries (Jariene & Razmantiene, 2006; McCormac, 2012; Roopnarine & Yildirum, 2018). Ngorosho (2011) linked this finding to the significant correlations found between fathers' education and other SES and HLE variables such as household income and assets, living conditions, maternal education, and literacy resources in the home in their study, as well as in previous research in low-income contexts (e.g., Mtana et al., 2004; Ngorosho, 2010). Additionally, non-significant relationships between maternal education and literacy outcomes may have been influenced by low levels of

[2] House wall material refers to the physical materials used to build the walls of the home (e.g., zinc, concrete).

variation in maternal education as most mothers only had primary level education. While the predictive nature of fathers' education is less common in the literature as an index of SES, the finding is consonant with research from the Caribbean (Roopnarine & Yildirim, 2018) and other low-to-middle income contexts (see Nag et al., 2019) where HLE effectiveness is often moderated by SES. Beyond the role of father's education, findings are consistent with those reported in developed countries showing the importance of more formal and direct home literacy support for writing as opposed to more incidental and informal indices such as shared book reading (Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004; Sénéchal, 2014; Sénéchal & Lefevre, 2002).

It therefore appears that as a productive skill, child writing is best supported by more direct parent tutoring and scaffolding. However, there may be a caveat. Research from developing contexts has shown that the effects of parent tutoring on literacy development are not uniform, particularly where there is a mismatch between the home and school language. For example, a notable finding from Nag et al.'s (2019) systematic review was the negative association between tutoring and child outcomes in some contexts (i.e., Asia, Sub-Sahara, and Latin America), particularly when tutors were fathers or siblings. A trend of non-significant associations between maternal tutoring and literacy outcomes was also observed. The researchers therefore highlight the need for greater insight into the nature of tutoring methods used and the level of tutor competence in HLE research. Nevertheless, despite the complexities of interactions between HLE and caregiver literacy skills, a clear and consistent trend in the research is that children generally stand to benefit from facilitative home language environments.

3.3.2 The Role of Writing Instruction

The relationship between writing quality outcomes and writing instruction is not well understood (Dockrell et al., 2016; Olinghouse, 2008). While some research has reported

statistically significant positive associations between instruction and student writing quality (e.g., Fisher et al., 2011; Kim et al, 2013), mixed or non-significant relationships between writing instruction and quality have also been reported (e.g., Olinghouse, 2008; Graham & Perin, 2007; Graham et al., 2012). Studies exploring the impact of instruction on writing quality have focused on varied instructional approaches (e.g., the process approach, component-skill focus) and dimensions of instruction (e.g., instructional time) across diverse learner groups, using varied data collection methods (e.g., observation vs interview). Such methodological variation across studies has contributed, at least in part, to mixed findings. Nevertheless, despite wide variations in research, large-scale meta-analyses have shown that in the main, writing instruction does have an impact on student writing outcomes (Graham et al., 2012; Graham & Perin, 2007; Kim et al., 2021), though its effects may be mediated by teacher, learner, and task factors (Kim et al., 2021; Olinghouse, 2008).

Research exploring the efficacy of instructional approaches have reported mixed findings. Positive impacts of handwriting and spelling instruction on writing quality and compositional fluency have been reported (Berninger, 2000; Berninger & Amtmann, 2003; Santangelo & Graham, 2016). However, the efficacy of grammar instruction for improving writing quality has not been widely supported (Graham & Perin, 2007; Olinghouse, 2008), nor have instructional approaches with a strong emphasis on the process approach to writing (Graham & Sandmel, 2011). Instruction focused on the process approach to writing has been met with criticism due to the strong emphasis on higher-level skills such as planning and revision skills, often at the expense of lower-level transcription and oral language skill development (Berninger, 1994; Olinghouse, 2008). Instead of a single-skill emphasis, researchers have deemed more balanced approaches to writing instruction that address both lower- and higher-

level language and literacy skills (Graham et al., 1991; Troia & Graham, 2003), as well as those that consider learner factors at the individual or group level (Olinghouse, 2008) to be the most effective approaches to improving student writing quality.

Olinghouse (2008) recommended differential approaches to writing instruction tailored for student ability based on findings from a study of 120 primary school learners across 13 schools in the US. While no statistically significant effects were found for time spent teaching pre-planning and basic writing skills (e.g., mechanics) statistically significant student by instruction interaction effects on writing quality were observed. Instruction focused on planning skills proved more beneficial for learners with lower IQs and for those with greater proficiency in word reading. Based on such findings, Olinghouse (2008) maintained that high quality instruction will likely look different for students of different abilities and skillsets. That is, learners with more advanced reading and literacy skills may benefit more from instruction focused on planning and other higher-level skills, while learners with lower levels of language and literacy proficiency may require instruction with a stronger initial emphasis on lower-level transcription skills or oral language skills. While Olinghouse's (2008) study focused on first language speakers of English, such findings are likely to be particularly relevant for second language learners of English who come to task with varied levels of English proficiency and may need additional support and targeted writing instruction as they acquire basic writing and oral language proficiency skills. In the main, to prove effective, instructional approaches will need to be more responsive to learner characteristics and skillsets. One relatively recent instructional approach that has sought to make use of learner skills and competencies in multilingual classrooms is the translanguaging approach.

Translanguaging is a more recent trend in bi/multilingual writing research and pedagogy, which, in relation to writing, refers to the use of a learners' full linguistic repertoire in all or some stages of the writing process (García & Wei, 2015). As translanguaging-based approaches have also been suggested for the development of literacy in Jamaica (Nero, 2014), it is worth exploring the efficacy of the pedagogical approach for writing. While more research has explored putative benefits of translanguaging on the social and emotional development of multilingual learners (e.g., García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017; Song et al., 2022), there has been limited research assessing its impact on writing quality. Of the studies which have focused on writing, there has been the tendency towards case studies of single learners or very small groups of learners (< 5) (e.g., Canagarajah, 2011; Velasco & García, 2014) thus limiting the ability to make broader generalizations. Another challenge in the translanguaging literature is the broad definitional and operational scope of 'translanguaging' which makes it difficult to isolate, and therefore judge the efficacy of the approach for improving student writing. There therefore remains a gap in our understanding how translanguaging pedagogy can serve to improve writing outcomes (Blasena, 2020; Williams, 1996).

In a recent study, Blasena (2020) explored the impact of translanguaging on student writing. A secondary goal was to explore the effects of translanguaging on the use of adjectives in writing. Twenty-eight students in Grades Four and Five who were enrolled in a Spanish immersion program participated in a translanguaging intervention that involved the use of all students' linguistic resources (Spanish and English) in the creation of pre-writing documents as a planning activity. No significant effects of the intervention were observed on student writing quality, however. Blasena (2020) concluded that students needed more direct writing instruction to build grammatical and adjectival knowledge for writing. Though translanguaging did not

improve writing outcomes, it may be possible that learners could benefit from translanguaging practices in pre-writing ideation phase to build ideas, but that such an approach may need to be combined with more direct instructional approaches. It may also be the case, as found by Olinghouse (2008) and Kim et al. (2021), that as an instructional approach, translanguaging may be differentially effective for learners at different levels of proficiency in the target and home languages. In the Jamaican writing classroom, learners may stand to benefit from using the home language at various stages of the writing process, however further research is needed.

Beyond exploring the efficacy of instructional approaches, few studies have considered the role of instructional quality or factors such as teacher preparedness and proficiency in the language of instruction. Such factors are likely to play a significant role in contexts where the there is a mismatch between the language of the masses and the language of schooling. In developing contexts, where even less research has been carried out, writing instruction may also be influenced by teachers' preparedness to teach in a multilingual context, limited resources, large class sizes, exam-oriented schooling, language attitudes, and language education policy. Such factors will be further explored in relation to writing instruction provision in Jamaica and similar contexts later in this chapter.

3.4 The role of the first language in literacy development

In the Caribbean, the putative negative interference from creoles on English (or other lexifier languages) has been believed to be responsible for poor literacy outcomes. As a result, despite local (Carpenter & Devonish, 2010) and international research (Cummins, 1979, Genesee et al., 2006; Wei & Martin, 2009) showing positive and facilitative effects of developing proficiency in the L1, the inclusion of the creoles in the classroom has been fiercely protested

(Banton, 2011; Elsasser & Irvine, 1985; Robinson 2016; Tucker, 2012). Such a concern, however, is not entirely unfounded, given the peculiar relationship between creoles and their lexifier languages wherein, for many, the largely shared lexicons often mask underlying structural differences between the languages (MoEY, 2001). Given the relationship between creoles and their lexifier languages, research on writing in creole contexts has largely adopted a contrastive approach involving error analysis of scripts with reference to predetermined grammatical features to detect creole interference. This methodological approach is built on the premise of language transfer or cross-linguistic influence which grew out of behaviourist traditions of language acquisition. Given the dominance of the approach in creole writing research, a brief overview of the relevant theory and terminology is warranted.

3.4.1 Cross-linguistic Influence

In its most basic sense, language transfer refers to the application of the rules of one language to another in the process of language learning and can be categorized as both positive and negative (Ellis, 2015). In positive transfer, knowledge of one language facilitates target language learning, while in negative transfer or interference, knowledge of one language tends to result in errors in another language (Ellis, 2015). While language transfer is the more traditional term, 'cross-linguistic influence' (CLI) has been adopted widely as it accounts for the bidirectional nature of language transfer between the L1 and L2 (Hummel, 2020). CLI represents a more nuanced and weaker version of earlier behaviourist theories of language acquisition such as the contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH) (Lado, 1957) which has lost support over the years but is worth considering.

Influenced by behaviourist approaches to language learning, the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) (Lado, 1957) maintained that all L2 errors could be predicted by differences

between the L1 and L2. Within this framework, similarities between the L1 and L2 would facilitate acquisition while differences would result in more difficulty of acquisition (Lado, 1957). The strong version of the CAH has been widely rejected due to the subjectivity of determining easy and difficult structures and based on research showing that not all errors could be attributed to L1 interference (e.g., Dulay & Burt, 1974; Jackson & Whitman, 1971). For example, Dulay and Burt (1974) analysed the grammatical errors made by Chinese and Spanish speaking children learning English and found that both language groups showed similar sequential patterns of language development with most errors (85%) being developmental rather than interference-based (3%).

In light of the flaws associated with the CAH, Corder (1967) later proposed error analysis — a weaker version of the CAH built on the premise that the analysis of learners' errors could provide insight into the nature of second language acquisition. Error analysis diverged from the CAH through the recognition of different types of errors- errors attributable to a learners first language (interference) and developmental errors made by learners regardless of their first language. A key development in the error analysis tradition was the recognition of what Selinker (1972) termed the interlanguage — a separate linguistic system used by L2 learners in the process of developing target language proficiency. According to Selinker (1972), a learner's interlanguage may resemble the target language to varying degrees as the learner develops proficiency, however, certain aspects or structures within the interlanguage may become 'fossilized' and never fully acquired.

Despite improvements on the CAH, the error analysis approach has been criticized for sole focus on learner errors at the expense of considering actual learner competency as well as for failing to account for the role of avoidance in language and literacy outcomes, where learners

may avoid difficult structures (Hummel, 2020). Research on writing in creole contexts has largely adopted an error analysis approach over the years. In 2006, Seigel countered arguments for the exclusion creoles from the classroom that were based on negative interference by pointing out that research on creole interference in writing, which he claimed amounted to two studies (Winch & Gingell, 1994; Winer, 1989), was inconclusive. However, other studies have explored language transfer among Jamaicans (Burris-Melville, 2020; McCourtie, 1998; Nero, 1997) and speakers of other vernacular languages (e.g., de Klein, 2006) that have provided evidence of creole interference in writing. These studies are explored in detail later in this chapter.

While there is no generally agreed theory of language transfer to date, there is a consensus that in addition to developmental errors, some L2 errors may be attributed to cross-linguistic influence. Given the peculiarities of the relationship between English and Jamaican Creole, the home language is likely to exert some influence sometimes resulting in errors and in other cases, given the shared vocabulary, resulting in facilitative effects on English literacy. In the remainder of the chapter, literature more specific to the Jamaican and similar linguistic contexts well be discussed. The discussion will proceed, first, by contextualizing the Jamaican language situation and then by considering language education policy, the nature of writing instruction, and finally, the writing outcomes of learners with Jamaican Creole and similar languages as home languages.

3.5 The Jamaican Language Situation

As described in Chapter One, Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English (English) are the two dominant languages spoken on the island of Jamaica. While English is afforded official status in the country and therefore is the language of instruction, Jamaican Creole — the first language of the majority — is afforded lower prestige and is generally associated with lower

social class (Devonish & Carpenter, 2007). Jamaica presents a unique linguistic context for the study of literacy development owing to the peculiar relationship between the home and target languages- one characterized by indistinct language boundaries (Nero, 2014) and the host sociolinguistic factors influencing language use in the country. The upcoming sections lay the groundwork for an understanding of the complexities surrounding literacy, and more specifically writing development amongst primary school learners in the Jamaican context. To begin, literature exploring the nature and structure of Caribbean creoles, and more specifically Jamaican Creole will be reviewed, followed by a discussion of the key issues of that come to bear on literacy development including language attitudes, the role of the home language in education, and pedagogical approaches to language and literacy education. Finally, research on the writing challenges experienced by learners with creoles and other non-standardized varieties as their dominant language will be reviewed. Given the dearth of research on writing development in creole contexts and the parallels between students learning English in Jamaica and those more commonly deemed as learning EAL in the Global North, a systematic review presenting research on EAL writing will follow to provide a fuller understanding of the writing challenges experienced by learners in the primary years learning English as an additional language.

3.5.1 What are Creoles?

Creole languages are the linguistic product of extended contact between groups of people who do not speak a common language yet need to communicate (Siegel, 2010). Unlike pidgins which also find their provenance in language contact, creoles, due to sustained contact over generations, become the native language of a people (Salmon & Menjívar, 2017). While creole languages are spoken widely across the world in colonial and post-colonial societies, Caribbean creoles in particular, were born out of the forced mixing of language groups resulting from the

horrors of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade— an endeavour that involved the capture, transport, and enslavement of millions of men and women from the West Coast of Africa for work on European-owned plantations in the West Indies (Helms-Park, Dronjic, & Tucker, 2016). As contact languages, creoles are made up of a substrate language(s) largely contributing the grammar and phonology of the creole, and a superstrate or lexifier language contributing the majority of the lexicon (Siegel, 2008, 2010). For Caribbean creoles, the lexifier language represents the language of conquest and dominance, that is, English, French, Dutch, Spanish or Portuguese, while the substrate represents the languages of the conquered, that is, indigenous languages of West Africa.

As a British Colony, the creole spoken in Jamaica is a combination of British English as the lexifier language and a substrate mixture of the Akan, Bantu, Twi, and Kwa African languages contributing the grammatical base of the language (Patrick, 1999). With English supplying approximately 90% of the lexicon of Jamaican Creole (Wright Karem & Washington, 2021), the boundaries between the lexifier and the creole particularly on the surface level, become somewhat blurred— a factor which has contributed to the creole being viewed as a broken form of English in need of fixing rather than as a language in its own right. Consistent with this view, Jamaicans, despite their actual proficiency, identify as L1 speakers of English (Nero, 2014). Nevertheless, despite deep-seated standard language ideology in the Caribbean affording greater power and prestige to the European lexifier languages, creoles have long been accepted by linguists as languages in their own right (Devonish, 1986; Greenfield, 1830; Labov, 1969; Muhlhausler, 1997; Rickford, 1987; Seigel, 2006).

3.5.1.1 The Creole Continuum. In his seminal work, DeCamp (1971) coined the term ‘creole continuum’ to describe the nature of the languages spoken in Caribbean countries.

Within the continuum, the creole and the lexifier language represent end point 'lects', with the most conservative form of the creole being deemed the basilect, the standardised lexifier language as the acrolect, and the middle range varieties characterized by varied mixtures of the creole and lexifier languages, as the mesolect (DeCamp, 1971; de Rooj, 1994). While being the most widely received model, the creole continuum has been criticised by Jamaican linguist Hubert Devonish (2012) as having the problematic implication that the creole can progressively "become" Standard English and so, in the case of Jamaica, the majority of individuals who speak Jamaican Creole would therefore be "semi-lingual" as opposed to bilingual. Instead of a continuum, Devonish (2003) conceptualizes Caribbean linguistic contexts, and Jamaica in particular, as diglossic, wherein speakers use two separate languages or dialects for separate and non-overlapping functions (Ferguson, 1959). In such contexts, the 'high variety' ('H') is generally standardized and used in education and formal situations, while the 'low variety' (L) is used in unofficial contexts and in everyday informal speech. Diglossia, however, has been widely dismissed as being too 'black-and-white' an explanation and therefore inadequate for describing the nuanced nature of language use in the island (Jettka, 2010; Patrick, 2006). Nevertheless, both attempts at capturing the complexities of language usage in Caribbean societies offer useful insights with diglossia highlighting the tendency for differential usage of the language in a context-dependent fashion, and the continuum highlighting the fluidity of language use in Caribbean with many speakers being able to move between language varieties.

3.5.2 Language Use in Jamaica

Today, the pure and exclusive use of the basilect or acrolect is less common in Jamaica (Nero & Stevens, 2018; Patrick, 2006). Rather, language use is characterized by frequent mixing and meshing of the languages in a manner consistent with Canagarajah's (2013) and García's (2009)

descriptions of translanguaging (Nero & Ahmad, 2014), and is closely tied to social status — the basilect being generally associated with low social status and the acrolect with high social status (Nero, 1997). As Nero (1997) points out, however, this is not exclusively so. Other variables such as context, education, age, residency (i.e., rural or urban), as well as speakers desire to perform "acts of identity" or express "social and ethnic solidarity" also come to bear on language use (Nero, 1997, p. 587). Overall, the acrolect is spoken by a small minority, while most Jamaicans are speakers of basilectal or mesolectal varieties (Clachar, 2005).

Jamaican Creole, unlike dialects of English, is "largely unintelligible by non-Jamaicans" (Patrick, 2006, p.88) due to strong West African influences on the grammar of the language in particular, as well as on the phonology, and to a lesser extent, the vocabulary of the creole. The following adapted example from Hall-Alleyne (1981) highlights the nature of the continuum in Jamaica ranging from the basilect to the acrolect:

1. *Im a nyam im dina*
2. *Im a (h)it im dina*
3. *Im (h)iiting im dina*
4. *He is eating his dinner*

In addition to highlighting the nature of the continuum, Hall-Alleyne's (1981) widely cited example also underlines the complexities of literacy development in the Jamaican context and the implications for writing. In the above example, only item number four (the acrolect) would be assessed as correct by a teacher, while the other examples representing the basilectal and mesolectal varieties which constitute Jamaican Creole, would be assessed as incorrect. Some brief descriptions of the grammar, morphosyntax, and phonology of the language are presented the upcoming section.

3.5.3 A Brief Description of Jamaican Creole

As previously mentioned, Jamaican Creole consists of a mixture of a British English which supplies the bulk of the lexicon and a combination of West African languages forming the substrate and contributing significantly to the grammar and phonology of the language. There is no officially accepted orthography for Jamaican Creole, though the Cassidy-JLU orthographic system (Jamaica Language Unit, 2009) which is used throughout this study, has been proposed by, and is widely used by linguists. Additionally, there is also a published Jamaican Creole dictionary (Cassidy & Le Page, 2002) highlighting the phonology of the language, though, again, this is almost exclusively used in academic circles. The upcoming sections provide a brief description of Jamaican grammar, phonology, and vocabulary in relation to English.

3.5.3.1 Grammar. Grammar, which in the context of the present study refers to both sentence structure and morphosyntax, is the feature that most distinguishes the creole from English. In her seminal work on Jamaican Creole language instruction, Bailey (1966) provided one of the first linguistic descriptions of Jamaican Creole grammar and outlined key differences between the creole and English. Bryan (2010, pp. 8-9) provides a summary of the key grammatical differences outlined by Bailey (1966) alongside a few additional points highlighted by Alleyne (1989) and Craig (1999), which has been adapted below in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1

Grammatical Differences Between Jamaican Creole and English

Jamaican Creole Grammatical Rule	**Example**
There is no subject-verb concord	*Di bwai dem ron/ Di bwai ron* The boys run/ The boy runs
The tense system uses the unmarked verb as well as a particle indicating ‘past’	*‘Him (ben) iit/ Him (did) iit* He ate/ He has eaten

Creole uses the objectless active verb to indicate the passive voice	'D*i fuud sel aaf*' All the food has been sold
Creole verbs and adjectives predicate without the use of the copula	*Mi sik* I am sick
The use of adjectives as verbs	*Dem mad mi* They upset me
Plural is marked with the particle 'dem'	*Do mango dem swiit* The mangoes are sweet
Personal pronouns do not vary to indicate gender and case	*Mi gaan a mi yaad* I am going home *Im lov fuud* He/she loves food
Serial verbs	*Sam draiv go a town* Sam drives/drove to town

3.5.3.2 Phonology. Jamaican Creole has fewer phonemes than English (see Fig. 3.1), and fewer possibilities for combining phonemes (Bryan, 2010). With phonological influences from its African substrate languages and 18th century dialects of English (Cassidy & le Page, 2002), some key markers of Jamaican Creole phonology include consonant cluster simplification, phoneme deletion, and consonant palatalization.

Figure 3.1

The Jamaican Alphabet (The Jamaica Language Unit, 2009)



In Jamaican Creole phonology, consonant clusters are generally simplified through epenthesis in some cases and phoneme deletion in others. When epenthesis is used, an unstressed vowel or epenthetic schwa is inserted into consonant clusters with a nasal consonant. For example, '**Sm**ith' becomes /**sim**it/ and '**sn**ake' becomes /**sin**iek/ (Bryan, 2010; Shields-Brodber, 1996). In other cases, deletion is used to simplify consonant clusters. For example, words such as 'last', 'strong' and 'skin' are pronounced /laas/, /chrang/ and /kin/, and in the case of 'Smith' above, the word final consonant cluster is simplified by deleting the /h/ phoneme. The deletion of consonants results in the creation of numerous Jamaican Creole- English homonyms. Some examples are provided below from Bryan (2010, p. 10):

English	Jamaican Creole
Tin, thin	/tin/
Fine, find	/fain/
Coal, cold	/kuol/

Another feature of the Jamaican Creole phonotactic system is the absence of the /r/ phoneme, wherein words such a ‘tree’, ‘dry’, ‘pastor’, and ‘hour’ are pronounced /chii/, /jai/, /paasta/, and /owa/. Cassidy (1971) attributes such deletions and/ or substitutions to the absence of the /r/ in the Twi language. In addition to consonant cluster simplification and deletion, palatalization of velar stops (k and g) is another characteristic feature of Jamaican phonology. A palatal glide [y] is inserted following the velar consonant such that Canada, cat, and ‘gal’, become /kyanada/, /kyat/, and /gyal/. The phonological processes mentioned in this chapter though most prolific, are not exhaustive (see Devonish & Harry (2008) for a detailed phonological analysis). Nevertheless, they provide a sense of the differences between the languages as well as some insight into possible spelling challenges for learners more dominant in Jamaican Creole.

3.5.3.3 Vocabulary. With approximately 90% of the Jamaican Creole lexicon coming from British English (Wright Karem & Washington, 2021), vocabulary represents the area of greatest overlap between the languages. Outside of the British influence on Jamaican Creole vocabulary, other contributions came from the languages of indigenous groups (e.g., Amerindians), post-slavery indentured labourers (e.g., Indians and Chinese), and most significantly, from the African languages spoken by slaves (Bryan, 2010; Cassidy, 1971). The items in Table 3.2 have been adopted from Pratt-Johnson’s (2006, p. 123) list of Jamaican Creole vocabulary items:

Table 3.2

Examples of Jamaican Creole Vocabulary

Jamaican Creole	English
Pickney	Child
Mawga	Skinny
Nuff	Plenty
Smady	Someone
Irie	Cool, good, nice
Duppy	Ghost
Facety	Rude
Craven	Greedy
Nyam	To eat
Ginnal	A trickster
Bickle	Food
Sinting	Something

The largely shared nature of vocabulary between Jamaican Creole and English presents both challenges and opportunities for learners. A key challenge associated with the shared vocabulary is the masking of underlying structural differences (MoEY, 2001). At the same time, the largely shared vocabulary between the languages means that learners more dominant in Jamaican Creole generally have greater receptive knowledge of the target language than learners more typically deemed as EAL due to the lower 'learning burden' (Nation, 2013). However, L2 research has shown that despite having considerable receptive lexical knowledge, learners often experience challenges in moving such knowledge into productive use in writing (Laufer, 1998). Therefore, learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language may still need support in building vocabulary knowledge as well as opportunities to engage in activities that push their receptive knowledge into productive use. Given the peculiar relationship between the home and school language, Jamaican learners stand to benefit from tailored pedagogical approaches that build on existing receptive skills while acknowledging the structural and systematic differences between Jamaican

Creole and English. Such programs, however, will require significant buy-in not only from the government, but from wider Jamaican society. Accordingly, prior to a discussion on literacy education and more specially, writing instruction, language attitudes in Jamaica must be addressed.

3.5.4 Language Attitudes in Jamaica

A discussion on language attitudes in Jamaica is key in understanding writing outcomes of learners given their significant bearing on home language practices as well as language and literacy instruction in schools. Language attitudes in creole contexts have been found to be complex and multifaceted (Arrieta, 2010; Rickford, 1983; Tucker & Murphy, 2022; Wassink, 1999), with views of the creole being ambivalent at best (Tucker & Murphy, 2022). Given the sociolinguistic complexities of Caribbean societies, Rickford (1983) pointed out that categorical 'good-bad' understandings of language attitudes in creole prove inadequate and simplistic and called for the use of research methodologies that tap the nuances of speaker beliefs and perceptions of the creole. In response to Rickford's call for studies exploring the complexity of language attitudes in creole contexts, Wassink (1999) carried out a mixed methods study with 51 residents from the Gordon Town community in Jamaica, exploring overt and covert attitudes towards Jamaican Creole. Participants completed language attitude interviews which consisted of both 'description questions' exploring participants beliefs about Jamaican Creole and 'attitude questions' focused on beliefs regarding the suitability of Jamaican Creole in varied contexts. Responses to description questions were analysed thematically while responses to attitude questions were coded on a Likert scale with responses more oriented towards Jamaican Creole receiving higher scores, altogether yielding an overall attitude score for each respondent. Findings showed that overall, most individuals reported positive feelings towards Jamaican

Creole. However, when responses were grouped under 'FEEL', 'USE', and 'HEAR', a more complex pattern emerged. Despite expressing positive attitudes toward the creole, participants were less welcoming of having Jamaican Creole spoken to them and even less willing to speak creole. Similarly, regarding the use of Jamaican Creole in education, while most respondents desired that their children be able to understand the language (75%), a much smaller number of respondents were willing to have their children speak the language. Wassink explained these seemingly contradictory attitudes in terms of overt and covert language prestige. Questions that solicited participants' feelings towards Jamaican Creole tapped positive covert attitudes while questions addressing the usage of the language tapped more negative overt attitudes, as the use of more stigmatized languages, rather than one's feelings towards them would be more likely to reflect negatively on a speaker.

More recently, the Jamaica Language Unit (2005) carried out a language attitudes survey of over 1000 Jamaicans stratified for age, gender, and urban/rural residency. While findings concerning attitudes to the use of Jamaican Creole were largely consistent with those reported by Wassink (1999), findings concerning attitudes towards the use of creole in education departed from those reported in similar research (e.g., Wassink, 1999; Tucker & Murphy, 2022). Most respondents (71%) indicated that they thought instruction in both the creole and English would be beneficial for children and just over half the sample (57.5%) were in favour of having Jamaican Creole included in textbooks. At the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, participants generally thought English speakers were more intelligent, educated, and likely to be wealthy. The findings from the Jamaica Language Unit's language attitudes survey have been used by linguists lobbying for bilingual education and official status for Jamaican Creole on the premise of increased acceptance of Jamaican Creole by Jamaicans (e.g., Devonish, 2012). While

this may be the case in some measure (i.e., increasing acceptance), survey findings showing high levels of acceptance of bilingual education may have been inflated by interviewer effects. It is unclear how much background information on the study participants received, however, knowing that interviewers were from the University of the West Indies, and more specifically from the department run by linguist, Professor Hubert Devonish who is well known across the island for his unwavering public defence of Jamaican bilingual education, participants may have been influenced in their responses— providing answers more aligned with what they felt the researchers believed and what they felt may be may a more 'educated' response. Additionally, given the nature of surveys, researchers would have been limited in their ability to delve deeper into participant responses to tap the more nuanced nature of attitudes held by respondents. Nevertheless, excepting findings showing a large public interest in bilingual education, findings highlighting the complexity and ambivalence of language attitudes among creole speakers are consistent with wider research and reflect what Lippi-Green (1997) deemed as persistent standard language ideology. According to Lippi-Green (1997) standard language ideology affords greater power and overt prestige to the 'standard' language, while the creole is afforded more covert prestige and seen as more suited for informal contexts and for matters of less consequence. As seen the findings from Wassink (1999) and the Jamaica Language Unit (2005), language attitudes are intricately bound up with views on the inclusion of the home language in education and as will be seen in subsequent sections, have significant bearing on policy and practice in the writing classroom.

3.6 Jamaican Creole in Education

Despite a gradual positive shift in attitudes in recent years — affording heightened presence to Jamaican Creole in national media (Whyte-Williams, 2008), attitudes towards the

inclusion of the home language in Jamaican classroom have remained more resistant to change and thus present a significant barrier to efforts to include the home language in literacy education (Christie, 2003; Migge, Léglise & Bartens, 2010). The inclusion of the home language in Jamaican classrooms has been fiercely contested and over the years with the debate taking place in both academic circles and public spheres. A sense of the debate over the years can be garnered from the national newspaper editorial titles below:

"Stop this 'teach Patois' nonsense!" (Tucker, 2012)

"Give Patois its Rightful Place in the Classroom" (Kouwenberg, 2013)

"No Need to Promote Patois" (Robinson, 2016)

"A Waste of Time to Teach Patois – Seaga[3]" (Hill, 2011)

"Stop Demonising Patois: From a Semi-lingual to a Bilingual Jamaica" (Devonish, 2012)

"Patois won't Help" (Banton, 2011)

Patois vs English- Not a Zero-Sum Game" (Sylvester, 2022)

3.6.1 Language as a Problem

Government policies and approaches towards the inclusion of Caribbean creoles and vernacular language varieties in education have generally adopted what Ruiz (1984) terms a 'language as a problem orientation'. From this stance, the creole is seen as problematic — impinging on the development of English proficiency and therefore something to be fixed, or from a historical perspective, eradicated. According to Seigel (2006), creoles have been kept out

[3] The Hon. Edward Seaga is a former prime minister of Jamaica

of the classroom primarily due to societal beliefs about the nature of the language, misconceptions concerning the goals of educational programs that incorporate the home language, concerns about negative effect of the home language use on students' academic outcomes, and concerns about the practicality of including the home language in education.

In addition to the previously discussed issues of standard language ideology and ambivalent attitudes towards Jamaican Creole, misconceptions concerning the goals of programs including the home language have also mitigated program effectiveness. As evidenced in some of the newspaper article titles referenced earlier in this section, some of the arguments against the inclusion of the home language in the classroom may be rooted in misunderstandings of program goals. Within the Jamaican context, Professor Hubert Devonish and other linguists from the Jamaica language Unit have strongly advocated for official status for Jamaican Creole as well as bilingual education both in the academic and public sphere — a stance which has received strong push-back from the government and general public. However, the stance of full bilingual education presented by the linguists is not entirely consistent with the approach suggested by educational researchers on the island, who have leaned more towards a more tempered stance through the inclusion of the home language in education as a resource to build proficiency in English while valuing the home language. However, as linguists have been more vocal in local media, all attempts at the inclusion have generally been interpreted as the strong version presented by linguists — that is, the teaching of Jamaican Creole in the form of bilingual education and therefore have often been rejected by the public.

Perhaps the most common argument against the inclusion of creoles and other vernacular languages in the classroom have been based on concerns that the inclusion of the creole will be to the detriment of students through 'ghettoization' (Snow, 1990), linguistic interference

(Thomas, 1990), and wasted instructional time (Seigel, 2006). Such arguments are based on the worry that inclusion of the creole in education may rob some learners of opportunities to learn the language of socioeconomic progress thus preventing social mobility (ghettoization) and that the time spent on the creole will ultimately detract from valuable instructional time in English literacy.

In terms of pragmatics, arguments against the inclusion of the home language in the classroom have been rooted in issues of standardization and the limited availability of translated texts (Bryan, 2004; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007; Morren & Morren, 2007; Nero, 2014). While the Cassidy-JLU orthographic system was developed by linguists (Jamaica Language Unit, 2009), it is not approved by the Jamaican government as an official orthography and its usage is therefore generally limited to academic spheres. Relatedly, the inclusion of the home language in education has also been refuted due to the limited supply of translated texts. While a few translated texts exist particularly in the arts (poetry and stories for example), there are very few, if any, Jamaican Creole academic texts. Both practical and ideological constraints have hampered efforts aimed at the inclusion of the home language in literacy education.

3.6.2 Language as a Resource

An alternative to the language-as-a-problem orientation is viewing the home language as a resource in the classroom– the position taken in the current study. Consistent with the language-as-a-resource approach (Ruiz, 1984), research has long pointed to the importance of the home language in second language literacy development (Cummins, 1979) and numerous studies have shown the positive effects of additive bilingual education programs that include the home language in instruction on both the academic and language development of language learners (e.g. Collier & Thomas, 2004; Genesee et al., 2006; Lindholm- Leary, 2001, 2011; Lindholm-

Leary & Genesee, 2014; López & Tashakkori, 2004; Marian, Shook & Schroeder, 2013; Thomas & Collier, 2002) — a finding replicated in the Jamaican context through the Bilingual Education Project (BEP) (Carpenter & Devonish, 2010; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007).

The Bilingual Education Project (Carpenter & Devonish, 2010; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007) represents the most robust bilingual education pilot initiative in the English-speaking Caribbean to date. Findings from the project provide support for the use of the L1 in the classroom by showing that children who received instruction through the mediums of both Jamaican Creole and English not only showed greater awareness of Jamaican Creole as a distinct language, but also showed marked improvements in English language proficiency and self-confidence.

In adopting an additive approach to bilingual education, the BEP departed from other pilot projects in the region that espoused a transitional bilingual education approach (e.g., The Foundation-Based Education Bill of the Netherland Antilles and Columbia's Project 2000 Trilingual Education Project). The BEP involved learners in Grades One to Four from four primary schools along with their classroom teachers. The project addressed the two main areas of challenge to bilingual education in creole contexts as outlined by Tabouret-Keller et al. (1997): the necessary perception of the languages as distinct, and a change in the belief that bilingualism would be harmful for children. Within the project, classroom teacher training played a pivotal role. Teachers received language awareness training and were provided with translated texts for the teaching of reading and writing in Jamaican Creole. Preliminary results indicated that by the third year of the project children had developed marked language awareness in their ability to write and decipher the two languages (Devonish & Carpenter, 2007). Additionally, the researchers (Carpenter & Devonish, 2010) reported that participants not only showed improved home language proficiency but also showed marked improvements in English language

proficiency as evidenced in their performance on the language arts subtest of the National Diagnostic Test. Such findings offer support to Cummins' (1979, 1991a) theory of linguistic interdependence wherein proficiency in the second or target language is supported by and linked to proficiency in the first language.

Despite the positive findings, additive bilingual education is yet to be embraced by the Jamaican Ministry of Education. In some measure, this may be due to the methodological limitations of the BEP. In an external review of the BEP, Morren and Morren, (2007) pointed out low attendance rates at teacher training sessions, insufficient translated literacy texts due to limited funding, and the exclusion of the home language from writing instruction on the part of some teachers. Considering that the success of such a program would rest heavily on teachers receiving sufficient bilingual education and language awareness training as well as the availability of translated texts, fidelity to treatment conditions emerged as a significant problem and likely undermined the project objectives and the trustworthiness of findings. Teachers' practice of keeping the home language separate from writing is unsurprising. As Widdowson (1994) points out, while teachers may be more tolerant of deviations in pronunciation and spelling, standard English prescriptivism is particularly enduring in the area of grammar. This therefore results in the practice of writing being guarded with vigilance and held at a distance from the home language, given the premium placed on writing in creole contexts and its central role in assessment. An additional limitation of the study is the stark absence of empirical data — very few details are presented on the nature of the data and data analysis procedures that allowed the researcher to arrive at their conclusions. Additionally, the published reports were initial and midpoint studies— and to this point no final report for the 4-year longitudinal study has been published therefore rendering the findings somewhat inconclusive. Despite the methodological

limitations of the study, the work of the Jamaica Language Unit is commendable and within its context (anglophone Caribbean), is ground-breaking. The initial results provide some support for use of the home language as a linguistic resource within the language arts classroom and are consistent with outcomes found in studies carried out with similar languages such as Tok Pisin (Seigel, 1997) and Australian Aboriginal Creole (Murtagh, 1982).

3.6.3 Language Education Policy in Jamaica

The creation of language education policies for contexts where non-standardized and stigmatized language varieties are spoken has always been a complex and contentious endeavour (Nero, 2014). A key example of such tensions was embodied in what came to be known as 'The Ebonics Controversy' or the 'Ebonics Firestorm' (Rickford, 2006). In repone to the consistent underperformance of black students in literacy and content area subjects, the Oakland Unified School District published a policy that recognised African American Vernacular English (AAVE) as the first language of numerous students in the school district. The policy stipulated that the first language be used "for the combined purposes of facilitating the acquisition and mastery of English language skills while maintaining, respecting, and embracing the richness of the language" (Oakland Unified School District, 1997). Much to the surprise of the school board, the resolution was met with local and international uproar — largely stemming from a misunderstanding that the policy was aimed to put black students at a further disadvantage through the provision of instruction in a language associated with lower social status (Rickford, 2006). In the anglophone Caribbean, matters have been no less complicated. With the first language of the masses being an oral language generally associated with lower social class (Nero & Stevens, 2018) and seen by many as a hindrance to English acquisition, the creation of policy

including the home language has been a matter of debate and vexation. Amidst such challenges, efforts have been made across the Caribbean to implement language policies that support the development of literacy in the official languages of education in line with second language research showing the instrumental role of the first language (see Devonish & Carpenter (2007) for a review). One of the fallouts from tensions between research and language attitudes has been gaps between policy and practice — a challenge not unique to the Caribbean but observed across many low- to middle-income contexts across the world (Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2019; Nag et al., 2016).

Language policy efforts in Jamaica first emerged during the colonial era with the aim to "diffuse a grammatical knowledge of the English language as the most important agent of civilization for the coloured population of the colonies" (Circular Despatch 1847, as cited in Augier and Gordon, 1962; MoEY, 2001). Archival research by McCourtie (1998) exploring annual reports written by 'Her Majesty's Inspectors' showed consistent lament over the English language and literacy outcomes of Jamaican children particularly in writing. In the post-colonial years of the 20th century, local and regional initiatives were put forward with the aim to improve language and literacy outcomes in the official languages for learners (e.g., CARICOM, 1993, 1997; UNESCO, 1990;) with some drawing attention to the need to embrace both the home and target language and to provide context-sensitive literacy training for teachers (NATE, 1989; 1996). In 1996, the Jamaican Ministry of Education drafted the first language policy with the objective that "all students maintain fluency in the first language and become literate in the Standard English— speaking, reading, and writing at levels comparable to those of native speakers..." (MoEY, 2001, p. 11). Little mention is made of the 1996 language policy in the literature however, but based on the current situation, this document remained a draft document

which was never officially ratified. The most recent move towards an official language education policy was made by the Ministry of Education through the Draft Language Education Policy (LEP) (MoEY, 2001).

The Draft LEP was developed with the aim to address the perpetually poor language and literacy outcomes of Jamaican students across all levels of the education system and to keep in step with regional and international trends in second language research and education provisions. Of specific relevance to the current study is that poor writing outcomes across all levels of education in the country was one of the main drivers of the LEP. A review of student performance in language and literacy national assessments in the year 2000 (MoEY, 2001) showed concerning trends in student performance: only 42% of students deemed "Not at Risk" in the Grade Four literacy exam, an unsatisfactory national average of 53% in writing at the Grade Six level, and only 44% attaining a passing grade in language arts in the regional secondary school exit exams (CSEC). It should be noted that these figures showed improvement from previous years. In an analysis of similar figures for students across the Caribbean, Craig (1999) argued that "it seems obvious that the creole influenced majority student population of the Caribbean experiences a magnitude of difficulty in acquiring English language and literacy" (p.29) and he went on to attribute the failure to a confluence of factors including: the use of teaching approaches that treat English as the mother tongue of learners, misunderstandings of the aims of language and literacy education, inconsistencies in the philosophical positions and adopted teaching methodologies, as well as an overall lack of commitment on the part of governments to ensure improvement. Other local scholars weighed in on the performance of students with some attributing outcomes to the lack of a clear policy guiding the treatment of the home language in Jamaican classrooms and a lack of context-sensitive teacher training programs

(Bryan & Mitchell, 1999). In response to local and regional research concerning learning outcomes as well as international second language acquisition research findings (e.g., Corson, 1990; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Siegel, 1997), the Jamaican Ministry of Education (2001, p.22) reviewed five policy options for the island based on Craig's (1980) framework for bilingual education policies ranging from full bilingual education to English Immersion (i.e., submersion). After considering the policy options, the Ministry of Education acknowledged the Jamaican language situation as a bilingual one and opted for a transitional bilingualism approach which would maintain Standard Jamaican English as the language of education while promoting the oral use of the home language in the early years to support English literacy development. This decision was justified on the basis of limited funding for the production of academic texts in the home language, the lack of an accepted Jamaican Creole orthography, and most importantly, the negative attitudes held by the society towards the use of Jamaican creole as a medium of instruction (MoEY, 2001). Accordingly, Pulcini's (1997) claim that language attitudes act as a form of invisible language policy, is supported in the Jamaican context. The key tenets of the Draft LEP are explored in detail in the content analysis portion of the study (see Chapter Five).

3.7 Approaches to Writing Instruction in Jamaica

Across both the Global North and the Global South, very little empirical research has investigated the impact of instructional practices and interventions on the writing of learners whose home language differs from English, the language of instruction. In fact, two systematic reviews investigating the effects of language and literacy interventions for children and adolescents with EAL (Murphy & Unthiah, 2015; Oxley & de Cat, 2019) found only three interventions that focused on improving writing outcomes over a nineteen-year span between the

years 2000 – 2019. In the Jamaican context more specifically, while some studies have investigated teachers' approach to language and literacy instruction in Jamaica (Bryan, 1997, 2004; Craig, 2006, 2014; Lewis-Fokum & Thomas, 2018; Nero, 2014; Nero & Stevens, 2018; Warrican et al., 2013) a greater focus on reading relative to writing instruction is observed in the literature. Additionally, despite persistent alarm over student writing outcomes, no writing intervention studies have been identified at the primary level. The small number of studies exploring writing instruction in Jamaica have taken an ethnographic approach and report findings showing prevalence of form-focused approaches at the expense of meaning-based approaches (Lewis-Fokum & Thomas, 2018; Nero & Stevens, 2018), persistent ad hoc correction of creole usage (Nero, 2014; Nero & Stevens, 2018), an absence of activities using the home language as a language learning resource (Nero, 2014), and wide variation in instructional approaches across schools (Nero & Stevens, 2018). These issues have been found to be connected in large part to a teachers' own language ideology, a lack of context-sensitive teacher training, as well as pragmatic issues including limited resources, large class-sizes, and individual school goals.

Through a series of classroom observations and teacher interviews, Lewis-Fokum and Thomas (2018) investigated approaches to literacy instruction in the early years at two primary schools in Jamaica. Findings showed that teachers generally adopted a skills-based approach to writing instruction wherein students either copied sentences from the blackboard or constructed their own, with little opportunity for extended or meaning-based writing opportunities such as story-writing. Additionally, while all teachers used Jamaican Creole to facilitate comprehension, there was a general 'pedagogical ambivalence' (p.1239) regarding writing instruction where teachers felt they lacked clarity on how to teach students who were more dominant speakers of Jamaican Creole.

Using a similar methodological approach, Nero (2014) reported similar findings at the secondary school level in a study investigating approaches to literacy instruction in three Jamaican schools stratified across overall achievement and socioeconomic levels. Findings showed writing instruction to be characterized by English immersion using teacher-provided models, ad hoc correction, and limited opportunities for extended writing, though the latter varied across schools. Classroom observations showed that English immersion using teacher-written models was the dominant approach to language and literacy education across all schools while the home language was used for two purposes: to scold students and to facilitate comprehension when English attempts failed — thus, teachers did not promote a culture of valuing the home language in the classroom. Additionally, English oral recitation accompanied by ad hoc correction of creole usage was common among teachers with a focus on pronunciation, rather than grammar. As Nero points out, this was problematic given that grammar represents the area of greatest difference between Jamaican Creole and English. However, as teachers do not receive training in contrasting the languages, they were unable to address grammatical issues effectively. Instead, students were often required to rephrase their sentences in English without knowing the underlying structural issues causing the error and were therefore generally unable to make the requisite corrections. Such a finding is consistent with research showing the ineffectiveness of ad hoc correction for creole and vernacular speakers (Rickford, 2006; Nero & Ahmad, 2014). In terms of school effects, in the two lower-achieving schools with students largely from low socioeconomic backgrounds, teachers generally focused more on reading development, a primary area of concern, and provided limited opportunities for extended writing. In contrast, in the higher-achieving school with students largely from middle to high socioeconomic backgrounds, there was a strong pedagogical culture of ‘teaching to the test’

wherein students were provided with numerous opportunities for extended writing of the sort present in the Caribbean secondary school exit exams. In exploring the level of alignment between teacher practice and policy (the Draft LEP), Nero found that despite being unaware of the Draft LEP's existence, teachers' instructional practices of English immersion through the provision of oral and written English models and error correction were consistent with ministerial guidelines. However, there was a slight disconnect when it came to the role of the home language in the classroom. Instead of being valued, the home language was viewed as a problem in the classroom and therefore "the instinctive practice was to correct Jamaican Creole rather than contrast it with English" (Nero, 2014, p. 239). In the absence of sufficient context-specific teacher training, language ideologies held by teachers and wider society, limited resources, and school goals (e.g., teaching-to-the-test) are likely to guide language instruction, and according to Nero (2014), become the de facto policies of classrooms.

While creoles present a unique context for language and literacy instruction, findings showing a focus on mechanics over meaning, an absence of instructional practices including the home language, and limited opportunities for creative and/ or extended writing are not region-specific but appear to be characteristic of many developing nations. In an interpretive synthesis of 16 ethnographic studies from low- to middle-income contexts focusing on the pedagogical barriers for literacy development in the primary years, Nag et al. (2016) found an absence of targeted literacy activities aimed at bridging the home-school language gap as well as the absence of 'explanation-based' corrective feedback. Additionally, a considerable number of studies in the synthesis showed that teachers emphasised the mechanics of literacy through copywriting practices at the expense of meaning-making activities, a practice which resulted in poor narrative writing outcomes in some studies. de la Piedra (2006) provided one such example

in an ethnographic study of literacy development in a rural Quechua community in Peru where students are first language speakers an oral Quechua language but are educated primarily in Spanish — much like the case of children in Jamaica. Findings showed that teachers regarded reading, writing, and speaking Spanish 'correctly' as the most important goal for children while Quechua served no instructional purpose. Additionally, writing instruction was characterized by a focus on form at the expense of meaning and included activities such as sentence copying, the teaching of isolated language structures, and the provision of teacher-written models on the blackboard (e.g., a letter of complaint). As a result, opportunities for students to engage in their own expressive and creative writing were rare — an approach that had detrimental effects on students' ability to author their own narrative texts.

While a focus on form and the provision of models are important aspects of writing instruction (Kim et al., 2021), as discussed earlier in this chapter, learners appear to benefit from more balanced approaches that are responsive to student needs and skill levels (Olinghouse, 2008). In the case of creole contexts, students may be more likely to benefit from context-sensitive English writing instruction that takes into consideration the range of linguistic abilities and language backgrounds represented in the writing classroom, while valuing the home language of all learners.

3.8 Writing Outcomes Among Creole Speakers

The poor writing outcomes of Jamaican students across all levels of education remains one of the greatest concerns of educators to date (Winer, 2006; Bryan, 2010; Ramsay, 2011) – a concern extending to the wider Anglophone Caribbean where English writing performance has been described as "lamentable" (McCourtie, 1998) and "appalling" (Winch & Gingell, 1994). As

Ramsey (2011) points out, among other developmental challenges, students who are more dominant speakers of Jamaican Creole experience added difficulties in writing as they "grapple with deciding what belongs in which language" (p.31), have limited exposure to English outside of the classroom, and fail to benefit from the transfer of writing skills from their first language as proposed by Cummins (1979) in the interdependence hypothesis, given the oral nature of Jamaican Creole. Despite the repeated calls for the remediation of writing instruction, a review of the limited literature on writing in creole contexts showed a dominant focus on college level writing (e.g., Bain, 2008; Burris-Melville, 2020; Clachar, 2005; Elsasser & Irvine 1985; Nero, 1997; Ramsay, 2011) relative to writing in the primary years where only one study was identified (Winch & Gingell, 1994). Given findings showing early writing to be a strong predictor of later writing (Ndlovu, 2010), though the focus of the present study is on primary school learners in Jamaica, research on writing at the secondary and tertiary level will be discussed as it is likely that some of the issues found in college writing stem, at least in part, from specific writing challenges in the primary years. Additionally, related language varieties sharing structural and sociohistorical similarities with Caribbean creoles are considered to provide a greater understanding of the writing challenges experienced by speakers of non-standardized languages both locally and in the English-speaking diaspora. Another trend worth mentioning at this point is that most studies have adopted an error analysis approach with a predominant focus on grammar, and more specifically, morphosyntax, while a few have taken a broader analytic approach considering student performance across the component skills of writing. The studies in this section will therefore be presented in that order for a clearer synthesis of findings.

3.8.1 Error Analysis Studies

In response to Government reports of the "appalling" writing quality of St. Lucian children, Winch and Gingell (1994) explored the role of creole interference in student outcomes and found that the dominant challenge experienced by students was the use of speech conventions in writing rather than issues related to creole transfer. One-hundred and fifty-five students between ages nine and eleven completed a narrative composition and a letter of complaint. Most students were selected from four schools that performed poorly on a national writing assessment test and a sample of British children was included as a comparison group. Student scripts were marked for overall impression (1-5) by three markers with the final score being the average of the three ratings. Error analysis was then carried out on scripts with the researchers hypothesizing four possible categories of writing errors: 1) the use of speech conventions in writing; 2) misunderstanding genre conventions; 3) creole interference; and 4) task avoidance. Findings showed an overall clustering of scores at the lower end of the marking scale. Though 24 different creole features were identified in scripts to varying degrees, no statistically significant relationship between creole interference and overall impression ratings was found. Rather, most errors were attributed to the use of speech conventions in writing- a common developmental challenge evidenced by learners regardless of their L1. While this study importantly highlights the fact that not all errors in creole writing are attributable to L1 interference, a few methodological flaws call for caution in the interpretation of the findings. Firstly, the comparability St. Lucian and British primary school writers, for whom demographic information is lacking, is questionable given the likely differences in writing instruction as well as SES and HLE, which as previously discussed, generally influence literacy outcomes.

Perhaps more importantly, the findings from Winch and Gingell (1994) have often been cited as an argument to defend the use of the creole in the classroom and to counter arguments of

creole interference (e.g., Nero & Stevens, 2018; Siegel, 2006; Simmons-McDonald, 2004). However, findings showed that when aggregated, syntactic and morphological creole-influenced errors were significantly (though slightly) correlated with impression marks, with such errors being less frequent at the higher-end of the impression scale. Given that syntax and morphology represent key areas of divergence between creoles and English, such a finding is important and raises the question of whether some other methodological issues, such as the impression-based marking approach for example, may have influenced the findings by limiting the focus on grammatical accuracy in assessment.

In a similar study taking an analytical approach to writing assessment, Winer (1989) reported somewhat contrastive findings among learners with Trinidadian English Creole as a home language. Error analysis of 896 scripts from students in Grades Seven and 11 across 16 secondary schools in Trinidad showed that while almost half of the errors were classified as 'English writing errors', that is, non-transfer errors related to mechanics and writing conventions, 65% of errors made by students were attributable in some measure to the influence of the creole on grammar and spelling. Further detailed analysis of Grade Seven scripts revealed interesting findings. Winer (1989) pointed out that despite significant errors owing to transfer, student writing also showed 'striking' levels of communicative competence which the researcher attributed to positive transfer between the home and school language. Winer (1989) and Craig (1978) argue that the high level of communicative competence displayed by speakers of Caribbean creoles is due to higher receptive knowledge of English relative to more typical leaners of EAL. However, they maintain that this communicative competence can mask underlying writing challenges, resulting in the greater tendency for creole speaking students to plateau and continue producing persistent errors and fossilised structures, which may go

unnoticed in more impression-based or holistic assessments of writing. Such a finding provides some insight into the results reported by Winch and Gingell (1994) showing no statistically significant impact of creole transfer-related errors on overall writing outcomes and underlines the pivotal role of assessment approaches in writing. Winch and Gingell (1994) scored scripts subjectively for 'impression'- that is, an overall holistic approach was taken to marking student scripts. Writing research however has shown holistic marking to be less rigorous and reliable in identifying areas of challenge in writing (Cooper & Odell, 1977; Dunsmuir, 2015; Hayes et al., 2000) and for informing intervention (Gregg & Mather, 2002) than criterion-based or analytic approaches. Should the scripts have also been marked using a more analytic approach, it is likely that interference errors, which were present primarily in morphosyntax, would have emerged as more prominent in student writing as has been the case among learners at the secondary (McCourtie, 1998) and tertiary levels (Burris-Melville, 2020; Nero, 1997) as well as among speakers of similar language varieties such as AAVE (Horton-Ikard & Pittman, 2010; Thompson, 2004) and West African Pidgin English (WAPE) in the primary years (de Kleine, 2006).

Similar findings are reported in error analysis studies focused on college writing in the Caribbean diaspora (Clachar, 2005; Nero 1997). Nero (1997) carried out a discourse analysis of the writing of four Anglophone-Caribbean students enrolled in a remedial basic college writing course to explore the influence of creole on students' writing and speech. The study sample consisted of two students from Guyana and two from Jamaica. In terms of language background, one student was deemed basilect-dominant, another mesolect-dominant, and the remaining two deemed mesolectal to acrolectal speakers. The researcher conducted interviews with students and analysed students writing over the course of a year (writing portfolios including formal and

informal writing) with reference to five verb-related morphosyntactic features that distinguish the creoles from English– subject-verb agreement, tense marking, plural marking, the use of possessive and the copula. All written scripts showed evidence of creole influence in writing on verb morphosyntax. The extent of creole features in writing, however, varied with speaker's English proficiency, with the basilect-dominant student using the creole unmarked verb almost exclusively as well as some creole-influenced phonetic spellings. The mesolectal-dominant and one of the students deemed mesolectal-acrolectal produced scripts reflective of increasing English proficiency with an interlanguage consisting of some creole-influenced features and overapplication of verb-related English morphosyntactic rules. The remaining mesolectal-acrolectal students produced writing in line with the English acrolect with minimal evidence of creole morphosyntactic influence.

A commendable feature of the current study is the categorization of participants according to language dominance — a practice scarcely adopted in creole writing research. In considering language dominance, a clearer picture is presented of the challenges experienced by learners at varied levels of English proficiency and controls in some measure the confounding variable of language proficiency (i.e., not all speakers are creole-dominant). The study findings, however, highlight the usefulness of using a triangulated approach to determine language dominance among creole speakers given the complexity of the linguistic situation characterized by blurred boundaries between the home and target language. Nero used speech recordings to determine language dominance. However, research has shown the impact of discourse context on speech wherein native speakers of non-standardized languages tend to use more first language forms in speech, particularly during informal speech (Craig & Washington, 2002; Washington et al., 1998) despite actual English proficiency. In the case of the study, the writing of one of the

participants (deemed closer to the acrolect) was more reflective of a creole dominance. While language dominance will never be clear-cut in creole contexts given the fluidity of the continuum, the use of an additional proficiency related measure of dominance and/ or a report of home language usage may create a more approximate measure of language dominance — the approach taken in the current thesis. Despite this limitation, Clachar (2005) used two measures to determine Jamaican Creole dominance — teacher reports of student speech and an assessment of language proficiency, and reported similar results in a college writing program based in the US wherein learners more dominant in creoles showed different patterns in tense marking compared to those who were proficient in English.

Collectively, error analysis studies have predominantly, though not exclusively, provided insight into the grammar-related challenges experienced by creole dominant students in writing particularly at the level of morphosyntax, while at the same time underlining the important point that not all writing challenges are due to creole interference. Due to the focus on grammatical structures (morphosyntax), these studies still leave a gap in our understanding of the wider characteristics of writing and challenges experienced by students across the component skills of writing. A smaller number of studies have moved away from the use of error analysis as the primary data analysis strategy and have provided broader insight into the nature of English writing among Jamaican learners. These are discussed in the upcoming section.

3.8.2 Research Exploring Performance Across the Component Skills of Writing

Very few studies have taken a broader approach to writing assessment beyond error analysis, as such, no firm conclusions can be drawn from the limited data, though some trends have been identified. Consistent with findings from the error analysis studies, grammar presented

as the area of greatest challenge for learners who were more dominant speakers of Jamaican Creole or similar non-standardized languages. However, in addition to grammar, compositional length, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, and organizational skills emerged as problematic for such learners.

In part of a two-part study exploring the politics of creole language education in Jamaica over a span of 30 years, McCourtie (1998) used archival data in the form of annual reports on student performance from 'Her Majesty's Inspectors' during the colonial period to pinpoint factors contributing to the failure of the Jamaican language education system over the years. The consistent finding across the colonial-era reports was that writing presented as the area of greatest challenge and failure among students. In a follow-up study McCourtie (1998) explored the writing outcomes of Jamaican learners at the secondary level to investigate whether writing outcomes of learners had improved over the years. Five-hundred and thirty typically developing Grade Nine students from 24 schools across five parishes (equally balanced for gender and school type) completed a narrative and an expository writing task, which were marked by two assessors unaware of the study objectives. Students performed more poorly on the expository task compared to the narrative task with only five (of 530) being able to successfully, albeit briefly, complete the task. Additionally, most students were challenged by the use of the present tense and plural morpheme -s [z] – a challenge which the researcher attributed to creole interference as verbs and nouns are unmarked for tense and plurality. In the narrative writing task, the main the overarching comment from the assessors concerned the brevity of scripts—none of the writing samples were of a length that would meet national or international assessment standards. Additionally, there was little evidence of ideation and originality, and most students struggled with linguistic challenges. When ranked by scores, the highest ranked

group (group one of three) which represented 7.4% of the sample showed some knowledge of English grammatical forms as evidenced in their general control of sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation. However, the assessors pointed out that their scripts "could not be regarded as a mature, highly competent piece of writing for a 15-year-old" (p. 119). The middle-ranked group also showed some control of English grammatical forms in terms of sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation. However, their scripts were concerningly brief. By contrast, Group Three, which represented the lowest scores and accounted for most of the sample (72.1%), showed challenges in grammar- particularly the use of tense, sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation. They also showed the least evidence of risk taking in their writing- by writing very short texts, using simple sentence constructions, and simple vocabulary, which the researcher attributed to linguistic insecurity. The pattern of challenges reported by McCourtie (1998) are not entirely unique to creole speakers but have also been reported among speakers non-standardized language varieties such as West African Pidgin English.

West African Pidgin English is spoken in the Anglophone countries along the west coast of Africa including Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria. Alongside Caribbean creoles, WAPE belongs to the group of Atlantic Creoles that find their genesis in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and which bear structural similarities particularly as it relates to verbs (de Kleine, 2006). In response to rising immigration rates from West African countries and a correspondingly large number of these children been classified as 'Limited English Proficiency' in the US, de Klein (2006) investigated the writing challenges experienced by West African students in Grades Six to 12 who had been placed in ESL classes due to poor English language skills evidenced in school placement tests. Ninety-eight descriptive texts were analysed through corpus analysis to identify trends in the data. Findings showed that students experienced challenges in lower-level

transcription skills including spelling and punctuation as well as in the higher-level skills of vocabulary, grammar, and organization. While organization proved to be more of a challenge for learners at the lowest level, grammatical and, to a lesser extent, spelling errors, emerged as the most prolific and consistent type of error across all proficiency levels. Grammatical errors included but were not limited to a lack of articles, absence of plural, possessive, and tense markers, as well as the absence of subject-verb agreement and copula usage-patterns consistent with West African Pidgin English and Jamaican Creole grammar. This finding was corroborated in part by the participants' ESL teachers who named grammar as the area of greatest challenge in writing for the students. As the Caribbean and West African diaspora continue to grow in the Global North, studies exploring the areas of challenge experienced by learners from these backgrounds can prove useful in guiding pedagogy for teachers working with these populations.

More recently, using a mixed-methods design Burris-Melville (2020) investigated the challenges experienced by Jamaican University students in academic writing and found that organization, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and vocabulary, as well as genre specific demands such as referencing proved to be areas of significant challenge and that most students experience writing anxiety. The study involved 265 undergraduate students and 27 faculty members stratified across school year, gender, and academic departments. Data were collected by means of perception questionnaires for both students and faculty and an analysis of a subset of student scripts. Fifty-eight percent of students reported that they found academic writing to be extremely difficult while 89% of faculty members reported that from their perspective, students found academic writing to be extremely difficult. In terms of the areas of challenge, students more commonly reported difficulty in the lower-level skills of spelling and punctuation as well as the higher-level organizational skills, and the genre specific skills of referencing and paraphrasing.

Faculty perceptions were somewhat different. In addition to referencing, all faculty identified organization, grammar (particularly tense usage), receptive and expressive vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation as the key writing challenges for students. Analysis of student writing corroborated these claims as research conventions was followed closely by grammar, mechanics (spelling and punctuation), and to a lesser though sizable extent, vocabulary. In addition to areas of challenge, a questionnaire exploring writing apprehension showed that 85% of the students reported experiencing mid- to high-level writing anxiety.

A unique feature of this study is the use of multiple data sources to gain insight into the nature of writing performance at the university level and the possible contributing factors of challenges in writing in the creole context — an approach contrasting with the general trend of a narrower focus on error analysis evidenced in the previous section. However, as no clear outline is provided of the approach taken to the assessment of student writing (e.g., marking rubric, assessment framework), the findings are somewhat difficult to interpret and, in some cases, vague. Excepting clearly outlined grammatical challenges (e.g., subject-verb agreement, tense marking), the nature of challenges in other component skills are described in a rather cursory and vague sense. This is most evident in the brief description of challenges in vocabulary which the research states were based on dictation, word choice, and expression. However, without a rubric or the provision of a framework operationalizing these terms- it is unclear what they refer to and how they were assessed, particularly since oral language skills like vocabulary can be assessed across numerous dimensions (e.g., diversity, sophistication, breadth, depth). Nevertheless, despite this limitation, the findings reported in the study are consistent with findings from other studies reported in this section at the primary and secondary level showing significant challenges

in transcription and oral language skills among learners with creoles or vernacular languages as their home and dominant language.

The research reviewed in this section has highlighted numerous issues surrounding the writing development of learners with creoles as home languages both in the Caribbean and farther afield. Learners who are more dominant speakers of Jamaican Creole experience significant challenges in writing with all studies consistently highlighting the underperformance of students. Beyond low levels of performance in writing, creole speakers appear to be most challenged in the area of grammar but also in lower-level transcription skills and higher-level skills such as vocabulary and organization. Compositional length, which has been found to be correlated with writing outcomes (Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004) also emerged as an area of challenge for students. A limitation of most studies in this section, however, has been the failure to include a control or comparison group consisting of learners who are not creole dominant — an issue likely linked to the challenges of language group allocation in creole contexts. In the absence of a control or comparison group, it is difficult to decipher whether the challenges identified are unique to creole dominant students or represent a wider problem among learners in Jamaica. The current study aims to address this limitation and efforts to do so are addressed in Chapter Six.

Taken together, learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language appear to experience significant challenges in writing, with grammar being the area of greatest challenge. Poor writing quality outcomes may be linked to a host of learner and contextual factors including, but not limited to, individual differences in the component skills of writing, L1 interference, instructional approaches, and gaps in policy and practice. However, as only two study explicitly

considered the role of contextual factors at the classroom level (i.e., Nero, 2014, 2018), much is still left to be understood.

The present study seeks to address some of the methodological limitations found in the literature, particularly by taking a broader analytic approach to exploring writing challenges beyond an error analysis of grammatical structures. Group allocation (i.e., creole dominant and English dominant), which has been largely absent from studies will also form a key component of the methodological approach. Relatedly, while previous studies generally relied on descriptive analysis methods, statistical methods will also be used in this study to explore possible language group differences in overall writing quality and across the component skills of writing. These methodological decisions which have been guided in part by gaps in the research are discussed in Chapter Six.

3.9 Next Steps

Up to this point, the selective literature review has focused on L1 research and on the few studies exploring writing in creole contexts. Given the gaps in the creole research particularly around the role of component skills in writing outcomes, there is still much left to be understood. Educational researchers and linguists in the Caribbean have consistently underlined the utility of second language research for understanding and supporting literacy development (Bryan, 2010; Carpenter & Devonish, 2010; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007; Ramsay, 2001), given that English – the language of education, functions more like a second language than as a first language for many students (Craig 1999; Ramsay, 2011). However, in terms of second language research, far less attention has been paid to writing relative to its sister-skill of reading (Babayiğit, 2014; Leseaux et al., 2006; Murphy, 2014). Of the limited research exploring L2 English writing, there has been a strong focus on learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) (Michel et al., 2019)

and on older university-level learners with more advanced levels of English proficiency (i.e., studies focused on English for Academic Purposes (EAP)). As a result, our understanding of the nature of writing among EAL populations in the primary years is limited (Babayiğit, 2014; Leseaux et al., 2006; Murphy, 2014).

In addition to reducing the amount of bias in a review of literature, a systematic review serves to gather the existing evidence on a specific research topic in order to garner a clearer understanding of the phenomena at hand (Macaro, 2020). Accordingly, the upcoming chapter presents a systematic review on the writing quality outcomes of learners with English as an additional language (EAL), with a particular focus on the role of the component skills of writing in writing quality. As learners more typically referred to as EAL in the Global North often represent the speech communities of the Global South, including the Caribbean, and are educated in English, a language different from the language of the home, they share important similarities with many Jamaican learners. The research findings presented in the upcoming chapter will add another piece to the puzzle of understanding the characteristics of, and challenges experienced in writing among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language that could not be provided by first language research alone.

4. Systematic Review

4.1 Introduction

Comparatively less research has focused on writing development in learners with English as an additional language (EAL) when compared research on reading (Babayiğit, 2014; Chall, 1983; Lesaux et al., 2006a; Murphy, 2014; 2018; Murphy et al., 2015). There are therefore numerous gaps in our understanding of the unique nature of writing in EAL populations which cannot be filled through what Grabe and Kaplan (1996) refer to as "a wholesale borrowing" (pp. 26) from first language writing research. Given the complexity of writing and its reliance on a host of language, literacy, and cognitive skills, as well as curriculum content knowledge (Genesee et al., 2006), learners with EAL face unique writing challenges as they are tasked with simultaneously developing proficiency in the language of instruction and learning curriculum content. This review aims to synthesise the research on writing attainment among learners with English as an additional language (EAL) in the primary and secondary years and to explore areas of similarity and difference in the development of writing skills among learners with EAL and their native English speaker (NES) peers.

While the previous chapter largely focused on the nature of writing outcomes among learners with English as their native language and highlighted a smaller body of literature on writing in creole contexts, it widely acknowledged that both first and second language research (particularly the latter) are relevant to understanding writing development among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language (Bryan, 2010; Carpenter & Devonish, 2010; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007; Ramsay, 2011). With very limited research on writing in creole contexts, and the presence of large number of creole-speaking immigrants in ESL classes in the global north (Clachar, 2005; Nero, 1997), a systematic review exploring the writing outcomes of EAL and

NES learners as well as the role of component skills of writing in overall writing quality adds another piece to the puzzle of understanding the writing outcomes of Jamaican primary school learners.

Defining 'EAL'

Learners with EAL have been defined as learners whose first or home language differs from the language of instruction at school (Murphy, 2014; Ofsted, 2013) and are therefore learning the language of instruction and curriculum content simultaneously. Such learners are by no means a homogenous group but come to the task of learning English while at the same time learning content with varied levels of first and second language proficiency, educational experiences, language backgrounds and differing socioeconomic statuses (Murphy, 2018). As such, researchers have pointed out the inaccuracy of indiscriminate and binary groupings of learners solely based on language status (e.g., monolingual vs. EAL) (Hutchinson, 2018; Strand & Hessel, 2018; Strand et al., 2015) as this largely ignores the heterogenous nature, particularly in terms of language proficiency, of EAL populations. For the purpose of this review, learners with EAL will be defined as those whose home language is not English and who are simultaneously learning the language of instruction (English) and curriculum content at school. While numerous other terms have been used to identify this group of learners, the term EAL will be used throughout this review as it acknowledges the fact that for many learners English may not be the second, but rather an additional language (to multiple other languages).

4.2 Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between the component skills of writing and overall writing outcomes for learners with EAL and their monolingual peers?

2. Do learners with EAL and their NES peers differ in their overall writing quality outcomes?

4.3 Executive Summary of Findings

The systematic review explored the relationship between the component skills of writing and the overall writing quality of learners with EAL as well as investigated the nature of differences, if any, in writing quality and attainment between learners with EAL and their NES peers in the primary and secondary school years. The search protocol yielded 12 studies with 28 different home languages represented. All studies were conducted in the Global North—two in Australia, three in Canada, five in England, and three in the United States. Studies were generally multivariate in nature, exploring differences in writing quality outcomes between learners with EAL and NESs and/ or the relationship between component skills of writing and overall writing quality for each language group. In line with the EPPI-Centre's application of Gough's (2007) weight of evidence (WoE) appraisal framework, seven studies received a high rating, four received a medium rating, and one study received an overall low rating.

The narrative synthesis of the studies shows mixed findings regarding overall differences in writing quality between learners with EAL and NESs- with findings tending to be influenced by study-related and learner factors. Both lower-level transcription skills and higher-level oral language skills are implicated in the writing quality outcomes of learners to varied extents across the language years. While learners with EAL tended to have comparable or superior transcription skills compared to their NES peers, a consistent NES advantage in oral language skills was observed with vocabulary consistently emerging as one of the strongest predictors of writing quality for learners. Findings add support to the SVW as both EAL and NES learners show strong reliance on both lower- and higher-level writing skills to varied measures across the

primary years as they develop writing proficiency. The upcoming sections outline the study methodology and the synthesis of findings in detail.

4.4 Methodology

The present review was prepared following the systematic review protocol guidelines outlined by The Campbell Collaboration (2001). Campbell systematic reviews use transparent and systematic methods in sourcing, reviewing, and synthesizing research to answer questions in the Social Sciences (The Campbell Collaboration, 2001) and therefore was deemed suitable for a systematic review in the field of Education.

4.4.1 Information Sources

The primary sources of data were electronic research databases accessed through the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford that were relevant to the field of Education, Applied Linguistics, and Educational Psychology:

1. Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC)
2. Linguistics and Language Behaviour Abstracts (LLBA)
3. PsychINFO
4. The British Education Index

In addition to electronic databases, research published by government and research organizations (i.e., grey literature) already known to the primary researcher and which met the inclusion criteria were also included.

4.4.2 Information Search

An initial list of search terms was developed with reference to terminology from earlier reviews focused on learners with EAL (e.g., Murphy & Unthiah, 2015; Oxley & de Cat, 2019) as

well as terminology used in broader second language literature so as to capture a wider array of second language learning contexts (see Table 4.1). The search terms were piloted on the databases listed in the previous section and then adjusted in consultation with a specialist librarian from the Education Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford. Searches were carried out from March 3rd- 28th, 2020.

Table 4.1

Search Terms

Language Vocabulary "Vocabulary knowledge" "Lexical knowledge" "Lexical proficiency" Lexicon "linguistic proficiency" "language proficiency" Reading Oral Listening Speaking	**AND**	writ* "Writing quality" "writing proficiency"	**AND**	Elementary primary Secondary "High school" Adolescent Child* Pupil	**AND**	EAL ESL DLL L2 LBOT "second language" "Minority language" "Diverse language" "Heritage language" "Community language" Multilingual "Language minority" "Additional language" "English language learner" "English as an additional language" "English as a second language" "Dual language"	**NOT**	EFL "foreign language" University Adult Undergraduate Postgrad* Graduate Masters College

		"language background other than English"

4.4.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Following the data search, article titles, abstracts and full texts were screened based on the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Table 4.2

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Rationale/Notes
Document Type	1. Complete record	Incomplete record	Complete reference information necessary to access full-text documents for review.
	2. Peer-reviewed and grey literature	Opinion pieces or reviews	In order to capture all the relevant work on the topic liberal inclusion criteria have been employed such that both peer reviewed and grey literature (e.g., dissertations and theses) will be included.
	3. Primary research	Secondary research (e.g. systematic reviews)	No prior systematic reviews with the same research objectives have been identified.
Year of Publication	4. Published in 1990 and onwards	Published prior to 1990	Coincides with period of significant growth in second language writing research and the production of journals dedicated to the field (Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008)

Relevance	5.	Relevant to understanding the nature of writing attainment in learners with EAL and their NES peers as well and the impact of language and literacy skills on writing attainment.	Not relevant to understanding the nature of writing attainment in learners with EAL and their non-EAL peers as well and the impact of language and literacy skills on writing attainment.	Studies that have focused on multiple language and literacy skills including writing will be considered. In this case, only the portion of the study on writing (if measured separately from other skills) will be included.
Participants	6.	Focuses on students learning English as an additional language who are accessing the curriculum in the target language (English)	Does not focus on students learning English as an additional language who are accessing the curriculum in the target language (English).	The present review does not focus on bilinguals who are not simultaneously learning English and accessing curriculum entirely in English.
	7.	Focuses on primary and secondary school learners (approx. 5-18 years of age)	Focuses on adult learners	The review seeks to understand learners in primary and secondary school years.
	8.	Focuses on typically developing learners.	Focuses on atypically developing learners.	Where atypically developing children may be included in a study but are not the majority (e.g. intact classroom sample) or focus, such a study will be included in the review.
Research Design	9.	Quantitative research	Qualitative research	Though qualitative research is valid the review seeks to find and synthesise research using objective measurements of variables decided a priori.
	10.	Includes a quantitative writing outcome variable (dependent variable)	Only provides descriptive (qualitative) writing outcomes	The objective of the review is to understand relationships among writing and other variables as well as to investigate differences in writing attainment for EAL and NES learners. As such it is important for direct measures of variables to be taken in order to statistically investigate relationships and language group differences.

4.4.4 Study Quality Appraisal

Gough (2007) highlights the complexity of assessing 'quality' in systematic reviews by pointing out that while a study may meet generic quality criteria with regards to methodological rigor, it may not be relevant and/or fit for the purpose of answering review-specific questions. In order to evaluate trustworthiness of the findings reported in the included studies as well as their appropriateness and relevance for the present review, Gough's (2007) Weight of Evidence (WoE) framework which includes one generic (WoE A) and two review-specific assessment criteria (WoE B & WoE C) was applied to the eligible studies. With this framework, WoE A assesses the general quality and rigour of the study, WoE B assesses the relevance of the evidence in terms of the appropriacy of the research design and methodology for answering the review question, and WoE C considers the relevance of the evidence to the review based on the focus of the study (e.g., population, research questions) (Gough, 2007). An additional WoE D then captures the overall rating taking into consideration all the prior assigned ratings by means of an average.

Articles were read by the primary researcher and rated in accordance with the WoE criteria. Gough (2007) however, does not provide explicit guidance for quality rating decisions. Therefore, to limit the subjectivity introduced by having only one reviewer carrying out the quality appraisal, the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Coordinating Centre's (EPPI Centre) (2003) application of Gough's (2007) WoE framework was used to guide the quality appraisal of each study. The EEPI Centre's (2003) application of the WoE framework assesses the reporting, methodology, design, and interpretations of studies through a series of questions requiring explicit and substantial evidence for assigned ratings (see Appendix A). Gough (2007) highlights the EEPPI-Centre's framework as a suitable application of his WoE framework that has been widely used particularly in education-related reviews commissioned by

the Department of Education (UK). Though the use of the EPPI-Centre guidelines assisted in curtailing the amount of subjectivity and bias introduced by quality appraisals being carried out by one individual, the lack of inter-rater reliability remains a limitation of the present review.

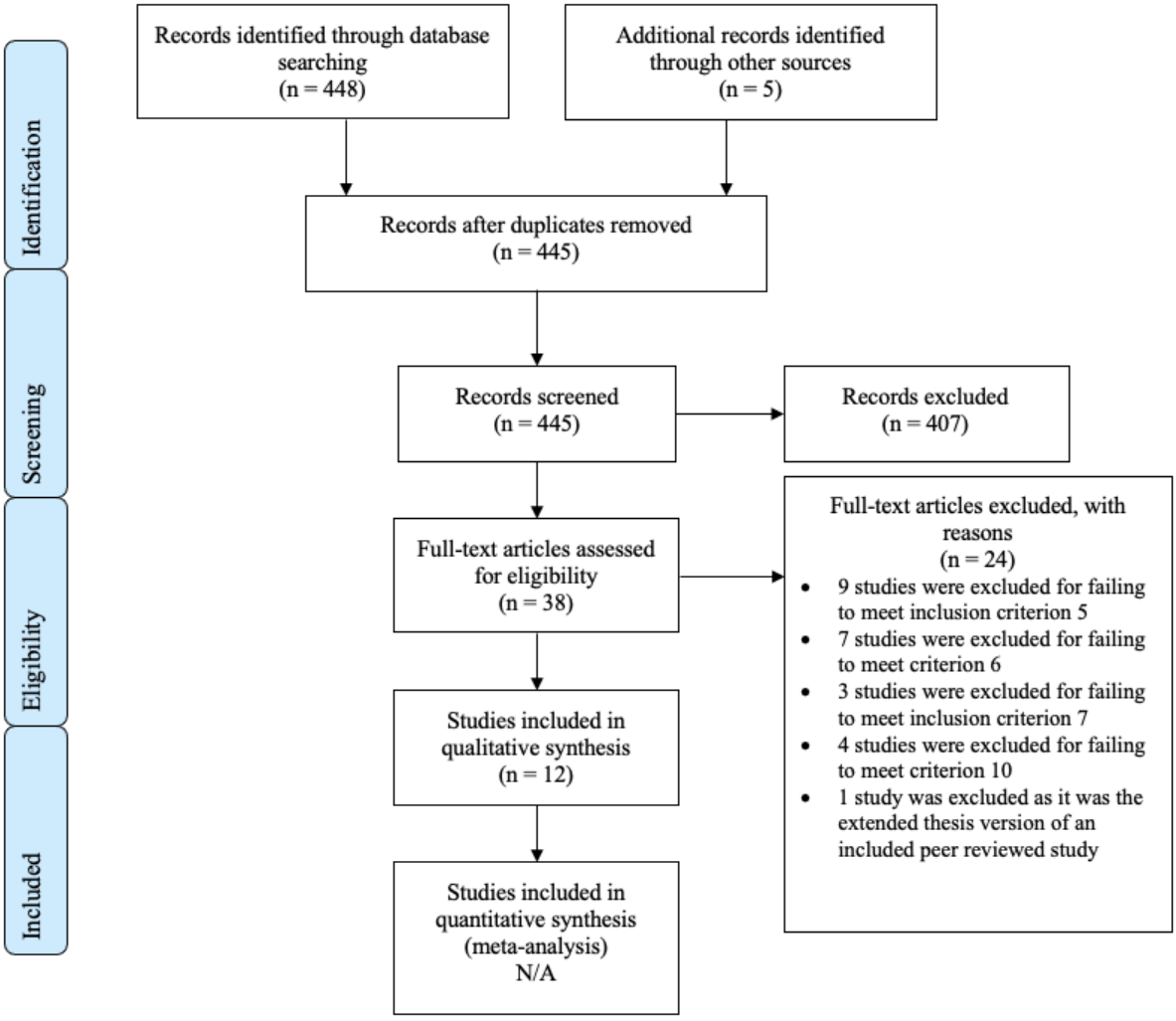
4.5 Results

The search strategy protocol yielded 445 records after duplicates and study titles that clearly did not meet the inclusion criteria were removed. Two reviewers screened an initial 10% of the abstracts using the Rayaan software package and achieved 92% inter-rater agreement. Disagreements in judgement were discussed until consensus was achieved based on the inclusion criteria. The primary reviewer then completed the process of abstract screening which resulted in the inclusion of 38 records and the exclusion of 407. Finally, full-text screening was carried out by the primary reviewer based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria yielding 10 records. At this stage, the common reasons for exclusion were research design, language learning context, and education level. Numerous studies used qualitative methods and/ or did not employ objective measures of variables- a few of which addressed creole languages. Additionally, studies often focused on balanced bilinguals and on learners in higher education as well as immersion and EFL language learning contexts. Two additional papers were added in July 2022 that met the inclusion criteria (Babayiğit, 2015; Zhang et al., 2022). These documents were not found through a systematic search but in the references of research articles addressing the same topic. In total, two theses (Ball, 2003; Ndlovu, 2010), seven peer-reviewed journal articles (Babayiğit, 2014, 2015; Harrison et al., 2016; Mackenzie et al., 2015; Silverman et al., 2015; Woolpert, 2016; Zhang et al., 2022) and three non-peer reviewed research documents published by the UK government (Cameron 2003; Cameron, Besser, 2004) and the Bell Foundation, a national UK

research charity (Murphy et al., 2015) were included in the review. The search process has been outlined in a Prisma flowchart below (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1

Prisma Diagram Outlining the Search Protocol and Flow of Data



4.5.1 Study Characteristics

Details on the language background of learners included in the studies and the location of the studies are outlined in Tables 4.3 and 4.4.

Table 4.3

Language Backgrounds of Learners with EAL

First Language	No. of Studies
Spanish	6
Punjabi	6
Urdu	6
Bengali	4
Gujarati	4
Arabic	3
Chinese	3
Portuguese	3
Somali	2
French	2
Tamil	2
Turkish	2
Vietnamese	1
Amharic	1
Cantonese	1
Catalan	1
German	1
Hungarian	1
Italian	1
Korean	1
Latvian	1
Malayalam	1
Patois/Creole	1
Polish	1
Romanian	1
Russian	1
Tagalog	1
Thai	1

Table 4.4

Study Locations

Australia	Canada	England	United States
Mackenzie et al. (2015)	Ball (2003) Harrison et al. (2016) Ndlovu (2010)	Babayiğit (2014) Babayiğit (2015) Cameron (2003) Cameron & Besser (2004) Murphy et al. (2015)	Silverman et al. (2015) Woolpert (2016) Zhang et al. (2022)

4.5.2 Study Summaries

A data extraction form was developed and piloted to collect information on the twelve included studies. Information related to the study (e.g., authors, type of publication), the sample (e.g., size, school grade, and EAL allocation procedure), variables and measures, data analysis methods, and findings was entered into a master spreadsheet. Two tables are presented in this section— the first providing a general overview of the studies (Table 4.5) and the second providing details on the nature of writing assessment employed in each study (Table 4.6).

Table 4.5

Overview of Included Studies

Author(s)	Title	Sample	Aims	Component Skill measures/ non-writing measures	Main Finding(s)
Ball (2003)	The relation between reading and writing development in English and ESL students	**N** = 289 (EAL: 110, NES: 179) **Grade:** 3, 5, & 6 (18 schools) **EAL allocation:** presence of other language in the home **SES details:** Schools in a lower-middle class suburb	To explore the relationships between higher- and lower-level skills in reading and writing of learners with EAL and native speaking students.	**Pseudoword Decoding** (WRMT-R Word Attack test) **Word Recognition** (WRAT-III Reading) **Reading fluency** (Biemiller Test of Reading Processes) **Reading Comprehension** (Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test) **Spelling** (WRAT-III) **Phonological Awareness** (TAAS) **Rapid Automatic Naming** (CELF-III) **Short-term Auditory memory** (CMS)	Main effect of language status on writing outcomes only evident in spelling- learners with EAL having higher scores. Grade was a more powerful predictor with learners in grades 5/6 achieving higher scores.

				Working Memory (CMS) **Sequencing ability** (CMS) **Memory for words, sentences and stories** (WRAML)	
Babayiğit (2014)	Contributions of word-level and verbal skills to written expression: comparison of learners who speak English as a first (L1) and second language (L2)	**N**= 168 (EAL: 72; NES:94) **Grade:** 4 (7 schools) **EAL Allocation:** speaks a language other than English at home/ in community **SES details**: Free school meals	To explore the contributions of word-level and verbal skills to the writing quality of learners with EAL and those with English as a mother tongue	**Receptive Vocabulary** (BPVS-II) **Working Memory** (Working Memory Test Battery for Children-Listening Recall Subtest) **Semantic Fluency** (category naming task) **Single Word reading** (Single Word Reading Test 6-16) **Single Word Spelling** (Graded Word Spelling Test)	The native English speaker (NES) group had significantly higher scores in verbal skills and writing quality when compared to learners with EAL. Patterns of relationships between writing quality and word-level and verbal skills were similar in magnitude for both groups.
Babayiğit (2015)	The dimensions of written expression: Language group and gender differences	**N** = 159 (EAL = 70; NES = 89) **Grade**: 5 (7 primary schools) **EAL Allocation**: speaks a language other than English at home/ in community. **SES details**: Free school meals	To examine the extent (if any) of an L2 disadvantage in writing and to explore possible related gender differences	**Single-word spelling** (The Graded Word Spelling Test)	The NES group outperformed peers on all measures of writing. There was main effect of gender where girls outperformed boys on all measures of writing.

Cameron (2003)	Writing in English as an additional language at Key Stage 4 and post-16	n = 139 (EAL: 102, NES: 73) **EAL Allocation**: speaks a language other than English at home and English proficiency **SES details**: Free school meals	To investigate the writing skills of learners with EAL with both low and high levels of English proficiency.		Pupils with EAL with lower levels of English proficiency performed at significantly lower levels than native speakers (low proficiency) and learners with EAL with higher levels of English proficiency in the areas of grammar, as well as in the use of formulaic phrases, prepositions and mature vocabulary. Learners with EAL who were categorized as having higher English language proficiency also were challenged at the word level in the use of prepositions, formulaic phrases and also in the area of grammar.
Cameron & Besser (2004)	Writing in English as an additional language at Key Stage 2	N= 264 (EAL: 138, NES: 126) **Grade:** 6 (13 schools) **EAL Allocation**: speaks a language other than English at home and English proficiency **SES details**: Free school meals	To investigate the writing skills and areas of challenge for learners with EAL.		No significant differences in overall story construction between learners with EAL and EMT Learners with EAL showed superior performance in spelling compared to native English speakers and used more figurative language. Learners with EAL had greater challenges at the word level particularly with prepositions and formulaic phrases when compared to native English speakers.
Harrison et al. (2016)	Predictors of spelling and writing skills in first and second-language learners	**N** = 112 (EAL:62, NES:50) **Grade:** 3 (5 multi-ethnic schools) **EAL allocation:** School district designation (entering	To explore the influence of the component processes of writing in learners with EAL.	**Spelling** (WRAT II subtest) **Handwriting** (Alphabet writing task) **Rapid naming** (Rapid naming subtest of the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing)	No significant main effect of language status on writing outcomes.

		school with limited to minimal English) and teacher interviews. **SES details:** Predominantly middle-class neighbourhoods		**Verbal Working Memory** (Digit Span Backward Task from WISC-III **Oral Vocabulary and Syntactic Awareness** (PPVT-IV) **Syntax** (Construction Subtest of Comprehensive Assessment of Spoken language) **Phonological Awareness** (Elision subtest of the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing) **Word-level Reading** (Sight Word Efficiency subtest of the Test of TOWRE)	
Mackenzie et al. (2015)	Writing over time: An analysis of texts created	**N** = 250 (EAL: 40, NES: 210) **Grade**: 1 (75 schools) **EAL allocation**: - **SES details**: -	To investigate how authorial and secretarial aspects of year 1 pupils' writing change over the span of a year.		There was significant improvement on all 6 skills (sentence structure, spelling, handwriting, text structure, vocabulary, and punctuation) between the two time points. Learners with EAL performed more poorly on all measures at both time points however, the scale of their improvement between the time points was larger than for native English speakers except on the measure of vocabulary.
Murphy et al. (2015)	Profiling the writing challenges in children with English as an additional language	**N** = 100 (EAL: 48, NES: 52) **Grade**: 5 **EAL allocation:** School classification and	To understand the unique challenges and the nature of writing development among learners with EAL.	**Receptive vocabulary** (BPVS II) **Expressive Vocabulary** (CELF) **Cognitive Functioning** (British Ability Scales)	Learners with EAL had significantly lower scores on baseline measures of vocabulary, single word reading and reading comprehension. In both narrative and expository writing, the only significant differences between the two groups were

		Language Background Questionnaire **SES details:** -		**Non-verbal IQ** (WASI) **Linguistic Skills/Language Age** (CELF) **Language Background** (LBQ)	in the higher-level skills of 'organization' and 'ideas' with the learners with EAL achieving lower scores. When matched based on language age, learners with EAL had higher non-verbal IQ scores. However, the NES group still had significantly higher scores on higher-level skills in writing including organization, cohesion and thematic development. Learners with EAL achieved significantly higher scores than NES students in spelling. When compares to the NES group, learners with EAL displayed more language related differences across the narrative and expository genres (e.g., vocabulary, spelling). All students showed improvements in their narrative writing between the two timepoints in areas of punctuation, sentence construction, organization and ideation, but such growth was not observed for vocabulary, especially for learners with EAL.
Ndlovu (2010)	Story-writing development from grades 4 to 6: Do language status and reading profile matter?	**N** = 178 (EAL: **Grade:** 4, 5, 6 (12 schools) Data taken from a Longitudinal dataset. **EAL allocation:** - **SES details:**	To explore the impact of reading proficiency (decoding and comprehension) and language status on writing attainment.	**Non-verbal reasoning** (Ravens Standard Progressive Matrices) **Receptive Vocabulary** (PPVT-R) **Listening comprehension** (CELF-III) **Phonological Processing** (researcher-developed test based on Rosner Test of	Reading proficiency emerged as a stronger predictor of writing outcomes than language status. Current writing skill as a significant predictor of later writing outcomes.

		Low- to middle-class neighbourhoods.		Auditory Analysis Skills) **Rapid Automized Naming** (RAN Test) **Verbal Memory** (Digit Span Subtest of WISC-III) **Pseudoword decoding** (word attach subtest of the WRMT) **Real word reading** (Reading Subtest of the WRAT III) **Reading Comprehension** (Gates- MacGintie Reading Test-)	
Silverman et al. (2015)	The relationship between language skills and writing outcomes for linguistically diverse students in upper elementary school	**N** = 197 (EAL: 79, NES: 118) **Grade**: 3-5 (3 schools) **EAL allocation:** Identified as 'Limited English Proficient' based on school's language assessment. All Spanish L1 **SES details:** -	To explore the relationship between writing outcomes and language skills (vocabulary, morphology and syntax) and grade level of learners with EAL and native English speakers.	**Expressive vocabulary breadth** (WMLS Picture Vocabulary Test) **Receptive vocabulary depth** (CELF Word Classes Subtest) **Morphology** (Extract the Base Test) **Syntax** (CELF Formulated Sentences Subtest) **Handwriting** (PAL-II Paragraph Copying Subtest) **Spelling** (CBM Spelling Fluency Test)	No significant main effect of language status on story composition, however when vocabulary knowledge was controlled for, learners with EAL performed significantly better than the native English speakers.
Woolpert (2016)	Doing more with less: The impact of lexicon on dual-	**N** = 200 (EAL:100, NES: 100)	To create a profile of writing in EAL populations	**Non-word decoding** (Woodcock-Johnson III Word Attack subtest)	The only significant difference between learners with EAL and the NES group was on a measure of writing accuracy where the EAL group scored

	language learners' writing	**Grade**: 1-4 (8 schools) **EAL allocation**: Deemed 'Limited English proficient' based on state assessment. **SES details:** All schools deemed low-SES	and to investigate the impact of vocabulary knowledge on writing outcomes for learners with EAL.	**Vocabulary breadth** (Woodcock-Johnson III Picture vocabulary Subtest)	more poorly due to a number of lexical and morphological errors. When vocabulary was controlled for, the only observed difference between the group was that the EAL group used more literary language features. There was a main effect of grade wherein learners in more advanced grades wrote more texts showed greater diversity of vocabulary, less spelling errors, and greater syntactic complexity.
Zhang et al. (2022)	Early writing skills of English Language Learners (ELLs) and native English speakers (NESs): examining predictors of contextualized spelling, writing fluency, and writing quality.	**N** = 69 (EAL = 34 NES = 35) **Grade:** 1 **EAL allocation**: School records **SES details:** Free school meal qualification	Investigate the role of transcription and oral language skills on contextualised spelling, writing fluency and writing quality.	**Word-level reading** Woodcock-Johnson III Word Attack & Letter-Word Identification subtests **Passage Comprehension** WJ-III Passage Comprehension **Receptive Vocabulary** PPVT- IV **Expressive Vocabulary** Expressive One-Word picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT-4) **Handwriting** (Letter-writing fluency test) **Single-word spelling** WJ-III Spelling subtest **Writing Fluency** WJ-III Writing Fluency subtest **Writing Quality** WJ-II Writing samples subtest	No statistically significant different in overall writing outcomes. Statistically significant difference observed for handwriting with the EAL group outperforming NES peers. Writing fluency predicted by spelling and handwriting for EAL group and by spelling for NES group. Writing quality predicted only by expressive vocabulary for EALs and only by spelling for NES.

4.5.3 Summary of Writing Measures

As seen in Table 4.6, all studies included a narrative writing task. Other additional genres included persuasive, expository, and descriptive writing. While Cameron (2003) included some narrative writing, a wide range of texts such as mock exam samples and content area essays were also included. In terms of writing assessment, studies either used analytic or holistic approaches to marking texts, or a combination of both. Holistic marking involves assigning an overall score of writing quality based on some predetermined criteria (Dunsmuir et al., 2015) while analytic marking is guided by a detailed scoring rubric and involves the scoring or rating of specific component skills in writing to arrive at an overall writing quality score (Dunsmuir et al., 2015).

Studies were generally multivariate in nature and explored relationships between component writing skills and overall writing quality and/ or language group differences in writing quality using the following statistical analyses: correlation, regression, structural equation modelling, t-test, and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Table 4.6

Writing Measures and Assessment Approach

Study	Writing Dimension & Measure	Genre	Writing Assessment Approach
Babayiğit, 2014	**Writing Quality** *WIAT-2 Written Expression subtest*	Narrative	Analytic
Babayiğit, 2015	**Writing Quality** WIAT-2 Paragraph writing subtest **Compositional Fluency** (Total number of words in WIAT-2)	Narrative	Analytic
Ball, 2003	**Writing Quality** TOWL-III Story-writing subtest	Narrative	Holistic

Cameron, 2003	**Writing Quality** Mock GCSE samples, content area essays	Mixture	Holistic & Analytic
Cameron & Besser, 2004	**Writing Quality** National Curriculum Test Samples	Advertisement Narrative	Analytic & holistic
Harrison et al., 2012	**Writing Content and Structure,** **Writing Quality** *WIAT-2 Paragraph subtest*	Narrative	Analytic & holistic
Mackenzie et al, 2015	**Writing Quality** *Free-writing task assessed based on sentence structure, spelling, handwriting, text structure, vocabulary, and punctuation*	No specific genre	Analytic
Murphy et al., 2015	**Writing Quality** *Writing Analysis Measure (WAM)* *WIAT-2 Written Expression subtest*	Narrative Expository	Analytic
Ndlovu, 2010	**Story Conventions,** **Story Composition Quality** *Test of Writing Language (TOWL)- Story Composition, story construction, and Contextual Conventions Subtests*	Narrative	Analytic & holistic
Silverman et al., 2015	**Story Conventions,** **Story Composition Quality** *Test of Writing Language (TOWL)- Story Composition and Contextual Conventions Subtests*	Narrative	Analytic & holistic
Woolpert, 2016	**Writing Accuracy, Productivity, and Complexity** *Test of Narrative Language*	Narrative	Analytic & holistic
Zhang et al., 2022	**Writing Fluency** *Woodcock Johnson-III Writing Fluency subtest* **Writing Quality** *Woodcock-Johnson- 3 Writing samples subtest*	Narrative Descriptive	Holistic

4.5.4 Study Quality Appraisal

Table 4.7 presents the WoE ratings for each study based on a detailed appraisal using the EPPI-Centre's application of the WoE framework. Key areas of limitations across studies are outlined in this section including issues such as language group allocation, sample size, and consideration of contextual variables. The outlined limitations provide some insight into the WoE ratings for each study.

Table 4.7

Weight of Evidence (WoE) Ratings for Studies

Study	WoE A: Trustworthiness of evidence (Quality and rigour of the study)	WoE B: Appropriateness of evidence for this review (Methodology and design)	WoE C: Relevance of focus for this review	WoE D: Overall strength of evidence of this review
Babayiğit (2014)	Medium	High	High	High
Babayiğit (2015)	Medium	High	High	High
Ball (2003)	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Cameron (2003)	Medium	Low	High	Medium
Cameron & Besser (2004)	Medium	Low	High	Medium
Harrison et al. (2016)	High	High	High	High
Mackenzie et al. (2015)	Low	Low	High	Low
Murphy et al. (2015)	Medium	High	High	High
Ndlovu (2010)	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Silverman et al. (2015)	High	High	High	High
Woolpert (2016)	High	High	High	High
Zhang et al. (2022)	Medium	High	High	High

4.5.4.1 Limitations Across Studies

Language Group Allocation. A key limitation of many studies in the review was the failure to consider English language proficiency when classifying learners as EAL. Of the 12

studies included in the review, only five studies included a measure of English language proficiency (Cameron, 2003; Cameron & Besser, 2004; Harrison et al., 2016; Silverman et al., 2015; Woolpert, 2016), one study included a language background questionnaire (Murphy et al., 2015) and five classified learners to EAL on the basis of another language being spoken in the home or community (Babayiğit, 2014; Babayiğit, 2015; Ball, 2003; Mackenzie et al., 2015; Ndlovu, 2010). Though Zhang et al., (2022) used 'school records', no information was provided on schools' language grouping approach. The failure to consider English language proficiency in language group allocation is problematic as English language proficiency, rather than language status, has been found to be the strongest predictor of educational outcomes for learners with EAL (Strand & Hessel, 2018). Additionally, learners with EAL represent a heterogenous group with varied levels of target language exposure and proficiency. Thus, binary groupings (EAL and non-EAL) that fail to consider English language proficiency often mask real differences between the groups (Hutchinson, 2018; Strand & Hessel, 2018; Strand et al., 2015) and may result in lower levels of internal validity.

Sample Size. While sample sizes were relatively large in the present review, two studies were limited in this regard. Zhang et al.'s (2022) study included a relatively small sample (N =69, EAL= 34, NES= 35) resulting in lower statistical power. Mackenzie et al.'s (2015) study involved a relatively large sample (N = 250), however, 40 EAL learners were compared with 210 native speaker children. Though equal sample sizes are not required for the ANOVA used in this study, homogeneity of variance (a model assumption) was possibly violated due to the large disparity in group sizes.

Socio-economic Status and Home Literacy Environment Information. The impacts of contextual variables such as socioeconomic status (SES) and home literacy environments on

child literacy outcomes were discussed at length in the narrative review. In the present review, no studies reported information on home literacy environments and four studies did not report nor control the effects of SES on literacy outcomes (Murphy et al., 2015; Mackenzie et al., 2015; Silverman et al., 2015). Given the role of SES and HLE in child literacy, findings, particularly those exploring language group differences, must therefore be interpreted with some amount of caution.

4.6 Narrative Synthesis

4.6.1 What is the relationship between the component skills of writing and overall writing outcomes for learners with EAL and their monolingual peers?

In line with the SVW, both lower-level transcription skills and higher-level text generation skills at the word, sentence, and text level showed statically significant relationships with writing quality for both learners with EAL and their NES peers. These relationships however were often mediated by learner factors such as age, the nature of writing assessment, and task demands. Findings concerning lower- and higher-level skills are discussed in the upcoming sections.

4.6.1.1 Transcription Skills

Consistent with the SVW (Berninger, 2000) and findings from first and second language writing research (e.g., Feng et al., 2019; Graham & Eslami, 2020; Graham at al., 1997; Kent & Wanzek, 2016), the two studies in the present review with a sole focus on elementary grade learners provide evidence for strong and significant associations between lower-level transcription skills and writing quality for both learners with EAL (Harrison et al., 2016) and their NES peers (Zhang et al., 2022) in the early years.

Findings suggest that the role of transcription skills in writing may be mediated by the nature of the writing task and by the approach to assessment. Zhang et al. (2022) found that

transcription skills explained more variance in writing outcomes for learners with EAL and their NES peers when writing was assessed on the dimension of fluency (length) than when assessed for overall quality. Similarly, Harrison et al. (2016) found that while transcription skills did not predict learner outcomes when texts were assessed for writing content and structure, when measures of fluency were added to the rubric, transcription skills were the sole predictors of writing outcomes for learners with EAL, and predicted writing outcomes for NESs in addition to oral language skills. Both findings are consistent with wider first language research showing strong and significant correlations between measures of compositional length or fluency and learners transcription skills (Ahmed et al., 2022; Juel, 1988; Gansle et al., 2012; Graham et al., 1997; Kent & Wanzek, 2016; Santangelo & Graham, 2016).

A consistent trend across most studies was the absence of a NES advantage in transcription skills. Rather, two studies reported an EAL advantage in handwriting (Harrison et al., 2016; Zhang et al. 2022), three studies showed evidence of an EAL advantage in spelling (Cameron, 2004; Ball, 2003; Murphy, 2015), and five studies reported no difference in spelling outcomes between learners with EAL and native speaker peers across the primary grades (Babayiğit, 2014, 2015; Harrison et al., 2016; Ndlovu, 2010; Zhang et al., 2022). One possible explanation for the absence of an NES advantage in spelling may be an interaction between spelling ability and written vocabulary. Studies have shown that spelling scores are often negatively skewed in measures of writing for both EAL and NES learners (Babayiğit, 2014; Olinghouse, 2008; Graham et al, 1997) due to a reliance on known words (Graham et al., 1997; Grobe, 1981; Ndlovu, 2010). Given consistent finding showing an EAL disadvantage in vocabulary knowledge, it may be the case that learners with EAL tend to be more conservative in their word choice — accurately spelling words that they know, while some NESs with larger

vocabularies may be more adventurous in their spelling— drawing on a wider range of lexical items that they may be familiar with in terms of meaning but not necessarily form.

Closely related to findings showing comparable or superior transcription skills of learners with EAL relative to their NES peers, was a small but consistent amount of research showing that transcription skills tend to explain a greater amount of variance in writing quality outcomes for learners with EAL relative to their NES peers, particularly in the early years (Ball, 2003; Harrison et al., 2016; Silverman, 2015; Woolpert, 2016). These findings suggest that younger learners with EAL may be compensating for lower levels of oral language proficiency through a greater reliance on lower-level transcription skills to bootstrap their writing performance. However, as researchers point out (e.g., Harrison et al., 2016), while such a strategy may suffice in the early years on elementary story writing tasks, it is unlikely to be adequate in the upper primary grades as the oral language and curriculum demands increase. All findings considered, transcription skills play an important role in written production for both EAL and NES learners in the early years, however, as learners advance through primary school and their transcription skills become more automatised, consistent with the SVW, findings suggest that oral language skills become more pivotal in determining writing outcomes.

4.6.1.2 Oral Language Skills

In the present review and consistent with wider literature, oral language skills are operationalized as vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. Consistent with wider second language research (e.g., Bialystok et al., 2009; Hessel & Murphy, 2019; Lesuax et al., 2006), eleven studies reported a NES advantage in oral language skills. In the only study reporting no effect of language group on oral language skills (Zhang et al., 2022), language groups were matched for receptive vocabulary knowledge – a widely used proxy measure for oral language

proficiency. Oral language skills consistently emerged as significant predictors of writing outcomes for both NESs and their peers with EAL. However, from the observed findings, the relative predictive strength of oral language skills in writing quality may be influenced by a combination of task and learner factors, the approach to writing assessment, and the specific dimension of oral language being measured (e.g., receptive vs expressive vocabulary). Finally, both learners with EAL and their NES peers showed improvements in oral language proficiency across the primary grades (Mackenzie et al., 2015; Murphy et al., 2015, Woolpert, 2016; Ndlovu, 2010), however, the magnitude of growth for expressive or written vocabulary tended to be much smaller (Mackenzie et al., 2015; Murphy et al., 2015). As slightly different patterns emerged for vocabulary and grammatical knowledge and diverse measures were used for each skill (particularly vocabulary), the findings for each component skill are reported separately.

4.6.1.2.1 Vocabulary. Consistent with wider second language research (e.g., Bialystok et al., 2009; Lesaux et al, 2006), all studies excepting one that matched learners on receptive vocabulary knowledge (Zhang et al., 2022), reported an NES advantage in written vocabulary (Babayiğit, 2014, 2015; Ball, 2003; Cameron, 2003; Cameron & Besser, 2004; Harrison et al., 2003; Mackenzie, 2015; Murphy et al., 2015; Ndlovu, 2010; Silverman et al., 2015; Woolpert, 2016). Written vocabulary was generally assessed in terms of vocabulary diversity — the use of rich, varied, and appropriate vocabulary, across studies — a pattern consistent with wider research highlighted in the narrative review. Six studies considered the predictive role of vocabulary in student writing outcomes through regression analyses or structural equation modelling and vocabulary emerged as a significant predictor of writing outcomes for both NESs (Babayiğit, 2014; Ball, 2003; Harrison et al., 2016; Silverman et al., 2015) and learners with EAL (Ball, 2003; Babayiğit, 2014, 2015; Murphy et al., 2015; Silverman et al., 2015; Zhang et

al., 2022). However, vocabulary tended to explain more variance in EAL scores. Given the complexity of vocabulary as a linguistic construct, the impact of vocabulary on writing outcomes appeared to be influenced by the dimension of vocabulary measured (e.g., breadth, depth, receptive, expressive), the dimension of writing quality assessed (e.g., writing conventions, story writing quality, content quality), and the age of learners.

Both receptive and expressive vocabulary played significant roles in writing quality scores across the primary grade levels. Using an analytic scoring approach, Babayiğit (2014, 2015) found receptive vocabulary knowledge to be strongly correlated with overall writing quality for both EAL and NES students in Grades Four and Five in the UK, so much so that when the effects of vocabulary were controlled, differences in writing outcomes between the language groups (NES advantage) became non-significant (Babayiğit, 2014). A somewhat similar trend was reported in three studies using measures of expressive vocabulary (Silverman et al., 2015; Woolpert, 2016; Zhang et al., 2022) where controlling for the effects of vocabulary resulted in an EAL advantage in overall writing quality across the primary grade levels. Expressive vocabulary had a particularly large impact on EAL writing as while commonly being named among other predictor skills, in three studies, expressive vocabulary emerged as the only or strongest predictor of EAL writing outcomes (Babayiğit, 2015; Murphy et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2022). Such a finding might be expected as expressive vocabulary knowledge and writing are both productive language skills (Stæhr, 2008).

Another important dimension of vocabulary is found in the distinction between vocabulary breadth and vocabulary depth. Silverman et al. (2015) considered the role of vocabulary depth and breadth on two dimensions of writing quality — contextual conventions and story writing among learners in Grades Three to Five in Canada. While vocabulary breath

was significantly correlated with story composition scores, vocabulary depth was not significantly correlated. This finding, however, may be owing in part to the fact that vocabulary breadth was measured expressively while vocabulary depth was measured receptively. As previously discussed, given that writing is an expressive language skill, expressive vocabulary, regardless of the dimension (i.e., breadth vs depth), may prove more instrumental for writing (Stæhr, 2008). Silverman et al. (2015) also reported that none of the vocabulary measures were significantly associated with contextual conventions which focused on the assessment grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2022) found stronger associations between vocabulary and writing quality when texts were scored for overall story quality rather than for compositional length. Such findings support research showing that the relative predictive strength of component literacy skills is linked to the nature of the literacy task and the way in which the particular skill is measured (Bae & Bachman, 2010).

While conclusions cannot be reached concerning the specific role of each dimension of vocabulary on writing outcomes due to wide methodological variation in the small sample of studies, the consistent finding across measures and assessment approaches is that vocabulary knowledge plays a key role in writing quality outcomes for both first and second language speakers of English. However, the impact of vocabulary on writing quality be moderated by variables such as learners' age/grade, the dimension of vocabulary being assessed, and the nature of the writing task.

4.6.1.2.2 Grammar. As with vocabulary, most studies (10) reported a NES advantage in grammatical knowledge in writing (Babayiğit, 2014, 2015; Ball, 2003; Cameron, 2003; Cameron & Besser, 2004; Harrison et al., 2016; Mackenzie, 2015; Murphy et al., 2015; Silverman et al., 2015; Woolpert, 2016), while one study reported no significant language group differences

(Ndlovu, 2010). Findings from the only study of secondary school learners with EAL showed that significant grammatical challenges persisted through Grades Nine to Eleven for learners with both high- and low-levels of English proficiency (Cameron, 2003). Cameron (2003) pointed out that while the high English proficiency EAL group showed superior performance on most writing measures, their writing continued to be characterised by significant grammatical challenges (e.g., subject-verb agreement).

In terms of the predictive nature of grammatical skills on writing, findings are mixed. In some studies, grammar was included as part of an oral language composite score (e.g., Ball, 2003; Woolpert, 2016) and so the unique role of grammatical knowledge in writing quality is somewhat difficult to decipher in such cases, especially given the strong impact of vocabulary as discussed in the previous section. For example, Woolpert (2016) found that learners with EAL had statistically significantly lower scores on a writing accuracy measure due to challenges in vocabulary and morphological accuracy, however once the effects of vocabulary were controlled, language group differences were no longer statistically significant. Woolpert's report is consistent with findings from Kent and Wanzek's (2016) meta-analyses of L1 English writing showing low to moderate effect sizes for the role of grammatical knowledge in writing. Nevertheless, three studies including learners in Grades Three to Five reported significant effects of grammar skills on writing (Harrison et al., 2016; Silverman et al., 2015; Woolpert, 2016). However, as with the previously discussed component skills, the findings suggest that while grammatical knowledge plays an important role in writing quality, its effects may be mediated by the nature of the writing task and the approach to assessment.

In Silverman et al.'s (2015) study, students in Grades Three to Five completed two narrative writing activities, one being assessed based on contextual conventions (transcription,

spelling, sentence complexity, and grammar), and another based on overall story composition (organization, content, plot, theme and character development, vocabulary usage). While grammatical knowledge did not explain a significant amount of variance in overall story composition quality, when writing was assessed based on 'contextual conventions', syntactic knowledge emerged as the only statistically significant predictor of student writing outcomes for both language groups. There however may be methodological factors contributing to the predictive power of syntactic knowledge in Silverman et al.'s (2015) study as the contextual convention composite included more measures of grammar than any other skill (i.e., 7 of 21 measures). Nevertheless, Harrison et al. (2016) reported very similar findings among learners in Grade Three using different measures. Harrison et al. (2016) found that syntactic knowledge predicted writing outcomes for both learners with EAL and NESs when assessed based on content and structure (vocabulary usage, sentence structure, organization). However, when assessed based on overall story quality, syntactic knowledge only explained a statistically significant amount of the variance in the scores of the NES learners, while transcription skills predicted EAL outcomes. Finally, Woolpert (2016) assessed the writing of learners in Grades One to Four using three measures: accuracy, productivity, and complexity, and found language group differences only emerged when writing was assessed for accuracy as learners with EAL made significantly more oral language errors (vocabulary and morphological) than their NES peers. The findings from these three studies underline the key role of assessment approaches when exploring the writing outcomes of learners. In each case, when grammatical knowledge was directly assessed using a rubric, its effects became clearer than when writing assessment was based on more holistic measures of overall story writing which tended to focus on higher-level story features such as character and plot development, for example.

Overall, findings show that beyond lower-level transcription skills which play a key predictive role in writing outcomes particularly for learners in the elementary grades, oral language skills make significant contributions to the writing of leaners with EAL and NESs as they progress through the primary years, though the role of vocabulary in writing quality appears to be stronger than that of grammatical knowledge.

4.6.1.3 Reading

The two Canadian studies that explored the role of reading in writing outcomes report findings that are consistent with the large body of research showing that reading and writing are similar yet distinct skills drawing on similar linguistic and metacognitive knowledge (e.g., Berninger et al., 1994; Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Schoonen, 2019; Shanahan, 2016; Tierney & Shanahan, 1991), or as Shanahan (2016, p.195) maintains, "two buckets drawing from the same well".

Ball (2003) found that the lower-level skills of decoding and spelling were significantly correlated across language status and grade while the higher-level skills of reading comprehension and story composition were only significantly correlated for students with EAL in the earlier stages of literacy (Grade Three) and NESs in the later stages of literacy development (Grades Five and Six). Similarly, in a longitudinal study of learners from Grades Four to Six, Ndlovu (2010) found a significant main effect of reading profile (i.e., decoding and reading comprehension skills) on writing outcomes. Poor decoder's writing was characterized by shorter lengths, mechanical errors (punctuation and capitalization), spelling errors, less diverse and complex vocabulary, syntactic errors, and poor story organization, while poor comprehenders were significantly challenged in grammar, organization, and plot development. Such findings are consistent with first language research from Cragg & Nation (2006) who found

that good comprehenders (10-year-olds) produced narratives with better overall structure and more semantically rich content compared to poor comprehenders.

Such findings offer support for reading-writing relationships and the Simple View frameworks for both skills (Berninger, 2000; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Juel, 1988). In the case of reading, decoding represents the lower-level skill, and reading comprehension, the higher-level skill. As research has shown that the two literacy skills draw on similar knowledge stores (Schoonen, 2019), learners with reading challenges appear to also experience writing challenges. The findings from Ball (2003) and Ndlovu (2010) may also offer support for the wide body of research showing positive effects of reading instruction and interventions on writing outcomes for learners in preschool through to Grade 12 (See Graham et al., 2018 for a metanalysis).

4.6.1.4 Organization

Only two studies from the UK (Babayiğit, 2015; Murphy et al., 2015) considered the role of higher-level organization skills in writing outcomes and found a NES advantage in organization for learners in Grade Five. Given the small number of studies that included a measure of organization in writing assessment, findings concerning the role of organizational skills in writing are inconclusive.

In Babayiğit's (2015) study of writing with 150 Grade Five leaners, 'organization skills' was the sole predictor of narrative writing outcomes for NES learners while vocabulary predicted writing outcomes for their peers with EAL. Similarly, Murphy et al. (2015) explored the writing profiles 100 students in Grade Five carrying out assessments at the beginning and end of the school year. Findings showed statistically significant differences between the language groups in the higher-level skills of organization and ideation when texts were analysed based on chronological age, with learners with EAL performing more poorly. When matched for language

age[4], learners with EAL had higher non-verbal IQ scores yet significant differences in organization persisted. These differences, however, were not observed at the end of the school year. Findings from Babayiğit (2015) and Murphy et al. (2015) are consistent with the SVW. In both studies, while no significant differences were observed in lower-level transcription skills, learners with EAL had significantly lower oral language skills than their English monolingual peers. As organization is a higher-level skill, within the SVW framework, it would be expected that deficits in oral language skills at the word and sentence level would constrain organization at the text or discourse level. Nevertheless, findings from Murphy et al. (2015) showing a closing of the gap in organizational skills in writing between the language groups overtime are hopeful as they indicate significant improvements within the span of a year for learners with EAL.

On a methodological note, these findings highlight the utility of analytic rubrics in pinpointing areas of challenge for learners (Dunsmuir et al., 2015; Gregg & Mather, 2002). Both Babayiğit (2015) and Murphy et al. (2015) assessed student scripts using an analytic rubric that explicitly included an organization component. As most studies showed an NES advantage in oral language skills, consistent with the SVW, learners with EAL may also experience significant challenges in textual organization and other higher-level processes. However, such challenges may go unnoticed when not directly assessed.

4.6.2 Are there differences in overall writing quality outcomes for learners with EAL and NES learners?

An answer to the question of whether EAL and NES learners differ significantly in their overall writing outcomes is not straightforward. Rather, based on the data, the answer appears to

[4] Language age- (i.e., English language ability based on CELF-5 language proficiency measure. This approach contrasts with grouping participants by chronological age),

be ‘it depends’. Findings concerning differences in writing quality outcomes for EAL and NES learners were mixed, with eight studies reporting statistically significant language group differences on measures of writing quality (Babayiğit, 2014, 2015; Cameron, 2003; Cameron & Besser, 2004; Mackenzie et al., 2015; Murphy et al., 2015, Silverman et al., 2016; Woolpert, 2016) and eight studies reporting no statistically significant language group effects on writing quality (Ball, 2003; Cameron & Besser, 2004; Harrison et al., 2016; Murphy et al., 2015; Ndlovu, 2010; Silverman et al., 2015; Woolpert, 2016; Zhang et al., 2022). A deeper look at some trends across the studies provides some insight into what may appear on the surface as a stalemate in the research. Writing outcomes across groups appear to be mediated by factors such as the dimension of writing examined, the assessment approach, and grade levels.

4.6.2.1 Assessment Approach & Writing Dimension. Seven studies found that despite an EAL disadvantage in oral language skills, no differences were observed in overall writing quality when the outcome variable was overall story writing quality which was assessed using more ‘whole-text’ or holistic approaches that focused on higher-level story features and productivity (e.g., plot and character development, creativity, story schema) (Ball, 2003; Cameron & Besser, 2004; Harrison et al., 2016; Ndlovu, 2010; Silverman et al., 2015; Woolpert, 2016; Zhang et al., 2022). In contrast, when writing quality was assessed using ‘within-text’ or analytic rubrics that included measures at the word, sentence, and text level (e.g., vocabulary, morphology, syntax, organization), a slightly different pattern emerged. Eight studies using analytic rubrics reported statistically significant differences between learners with EAL and their NES peers with the former performing more poorly (Babayiğit, 2014, 2015; Cameron, 2003; Cameron & Besser, 2004; Mackenzie et al., 2015; Murphy et al., 2015, Silverman et al., 2016; Woolpert, 2016). For example, Cameron & Besser (2004) compared 265 learners in Grade Six

and found no statistically significant differences between EAL and NES learners when writing was assessed at the whole-text level based on story features (context, story development, creativity, response to prompt), however, when assessed using a 'within-text' text rubric including measures of story features, mechanics, and oral language, statistically significant language group differences emerged, with the EAL group performing more poorly. Similarly, Woolpert (2016) found no significant differences between language groups when stories were assessed for overall complexity and productivity (length), but statistically significant group differences emerged showing an EAL disadvantage when texts were assessed for accuracy due to challenges in vocabulary and morphology. While analytic approaches that focus on higher- and lower-level skills appear to effectively highlight areas of challenge for learners, particularly in oral language skills in the case of the present review, holistic marking approaches that primarily focus on overall story composition features may mask real challenges experienced by learners particularly in oral language skills.

4.6.2.2 Grade-Level. Another factor that may interact with writing quality and the nature of the differences between learners with EAL and their NES peers is grade-level. Two studies that showed no differences in writing outcomes regardless of the assessment approach focused on elementary grade learners in Grades One (Zhang et al., 2022) and Three (Harrison et al., 2016). Findings from both studies suggest a strong reliance on lower-level transcription skills (spelling and handwriting) for both language groups- a finding supporting the SVW. Consistent with the SVW, it may be the case that younger learners do not differ significantly in overall writing outcomes based on their language status, as much of their cognitive resources are dedicated to the lower-level skills of handwriting and spelling (where research has shown no

EAL disadvantage), which in turn constrains higher-level skills at the word, sentence, and text level.

Other studies showed that writing outcomes improve for both language groups as learners progress through the primary grades. Consistent with wider first and second language research (e.g., Howard et al., 2004; Olinghouse & Leaird, 2009; Verheyden et al., 2010), the three cross-sectional studies exploring language group differences in writing reported a main effect of grade on writing quality (Ball, 2003; Silverman et al., 2015; Woolpert, 2016) with learners from both language groups in higher primary grades receiving higher scores. A similar pattern was reported in a developmental study by Murphy et al. (2015) where both expository and narrative writing were assessed at the beginning and end of the term for students in Grade 5. While statistically significant differences in writing outcomes were reported in the initial assessment with learners with EAL performing more poorly on higher-level skills, no differences were observed between learners with EAL and NESs at the end of the year, a finding indicating significant growth in writing skills for both groups.

4.7 Summary of Findings

Study findings largely support the SVW framework with learners drawing on both lower- and higher-level component skills to varied extents to produce written scripts across the primary years, regardless of their language status. For younger learners, lower-level transcription skills played a stronger predictive role in writing outcomes than for older learners. Additionally, no EAL disadvantage was observed in transcription skills, rather there was a tendency towards an EAL advantage with some studies reporting a greater reliance on transcription skills (e.g., spelling known words) among learners with EAL, than among NESs — a strategy that likely served to bootstrap their writing in the early years.

Beyond transcription skills, another observed trend was a NES advantage in oral language proficiency, particularly on measures of vocabulary knowledge, which were consistently found to be highly correlated with writing quality, so much so that when partialled out, language group differences became statistically non-significant in some cases. Reading skills and organizational skills were also found to play a significant role in writing quality for both NESs and learners with EAL. However, too few studies considered these skills for a trend to be observed in the findings.

In terms of overall differences in the writing outcomes, altogether, findings suggest that the extent to which learners differ in overall quality outcomes likely depends on the nature of tasks and assessment approach, the age or school grade of learners, as well as individual and group differences in the component skills of writing. In the main, there tended to be no language group effects on writing quality outcomes among younger learners who showed a greater reliance on lower-level skills nor when writing was assessed using more holistic marking approaches focused overall story quality. However, when writing was assessed using analytic rubrics that evaluated the component skills of writing, particularly oral language skills, an NES advantage was observed in overall writing quality.

4.8 Limitations

The present review is not without limitations— some inherent to the review methodology and others specific to the included studies. Limitations of the included studies such as issues in language group allocation, sample size, and the absence of SES and HLE information in some studies were discussed more fully earlier in the review. However, it is worth reiterating that variables beyond those considered in the included studies likely contributed to writing quality outcomes among learners such as, but not limited to, the nature of writing instruction across

samples, socioeconomic status, and home language and literacy environments. Therefore, as a sum of the studies, the current systematic review only presents part of what is likely a complex and multifaceted picture of writing for both NESs and learners with EAL.

Specific to the present review is the limitation of reliability. Due to limited resources, quality appraisals were carried out solely by the primary reviewer as opposed to by two or more individuals which would have been ideal. However, steps were taken to ensure the highest level of objectivity possible given the circumstances through the use of a two-stage quality review. Instead of making 'expert' judgements on quality solely using the Weight of Evidence Framework (Gough, 2007), the primary reviewer used an adaptation of the Weight of Evidence framework recommended by Gough (2007) which was extensive in nature and required substantive evidence to support each rating assignment. Altogether, the findings provide insight into the nature of writing outcomes for learners with EAL and NESs which will serve to supplement our understanding of the writing outcomes among primary school learners in Jamaica, who share similarities with both NESs and learners with EAL.

4.9 Where do we go from here?

Jamaican linguists have maintained that given the peculiar linguistic context of the island, both first and second language research contribute to a fuller understanding of the nature of language and literacy development for learners more dominant in Jamaican Creole as well as of their instructional needs (Bryan, 2010; Carpenter & Devonish, 2010; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007; Ramsay, 2011). Accordingly, the narrative and systematic literature reviews presented up to this point have provided a broad base of knowledge and discussion concerning writing attainment for both first and second language speakers of English across developing and developed contexts. The studies of learners in the Global North have provided insight into the

writing attainment of learners with English as an additional or native language, with most of the home or 'additional' languages spoken in these contexts having their provenance in the Global South. Research from developing countries has highlighted the key role of contextual factors such as SES and home language literacy environments in literacy outcomes, as well as provided some insight into the writing attainment of learners in somewhat similar linguistic contexts where creoles or vernacular language varieties are spoken. Closer to home, the Caribbean studies discussed in the narrative review have highlighted the persistent underperformance in writing across all educational levels over the years. These studies have largely adopted an error analysis approach to writing research and given the relationship of creoles and English in the anglophone Caribbean, have focused on grammatical errors.

While the literature reviews have provided deeper insight into the writing attainment of learners across the primary years, they have also highlighted some gaps in our understanding of writing, particularly in the Caribbean. Few studies have considered wider contextual factors such as the ecology of the writing classroom when investigating writing development. There is therefore a need for research exploring the nature of writing instruction as well as the ministerial policies and guidelines that come to bear on writing pedagogy and ultimately, student writing outcomes. The present study seeks to contribute to filling this gap by progressively working towards an understanding of student writing quality outcomes in Jamaica. The first stage consisted of the systematic literature review which provided some insight into the writing outcomes of learners whose home language differs from the language of schooling. Following on from this, the subsequent stages involve the consideration of curriculum and policy documents guiding writing instruction, the experiences and instructional approaches adopted by teachers in the writing classroom, and then finally, an assessment of student writing using an analytic

approach. The assessment of student writing samples serves to provide insight not only into possible language group differences in writing quality outcomes, but also into how both Jamaican Creole dominant and English dominant students fare across the component skills of writing.

5. Content Analysis: Curriculum and Policy

5.1 Introduction

The present study explores the nature of writing among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language and investigates whether there are specific challenges associated with writing in the Jamaican creole context. Prior to classroom data collection, content analyses of the policy and curricular documents that guide writing instruction in Jamaican primary schools was carried out to gain a greater understanding of the government's guidelines for writing instruction. Three documents were analysed — the Draft Language Education Policy (LEP), the National Standards Curriculum for language arts, and its supporting textbook — English Across the Curriculum. In exploring the ecology of the Jamaican primary school writing classroom through the analysis of instructional documents, this chapter serves to lay the groundwork for classroom data collection and to contextualize the findings concerning the nature of writing outcomes among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. Additionally, on a methodological note, Goldstein and Reiboldt (2004) highlight the instrumental nature of content analysis in informing later stages of research such as interviews by uncovering new questions and observable events. Accordingly, the content analyses of documents in this study served to inform discussions and interviews with teachers and school administrators. The present chapter provides an overview of the content analysis of these curricular and policy documents. Findings and limitations are also discussed.

5.2 Research Question

The research question guiding the content analysis of policy and curricular documents in this chapter is presented below. To gain insight into the alignment of policy and practice in the

writing classroom, content analyses findings presented in this chapter will be revisited in Chapter Eight and explicitly compared with teacher reports concerning instructional approaches for targeting the writing challenges of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language.

1. What approach is taken by the Jamaican Ministry of Education to address the writing challenges experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language?

5.3 Defining Content Analysis

Content analysis is one of the most widely used research methods in applied educational studies (Sándorová, 2019) and has been defined broadly by Cohen et al. (2007) as "summarizing and reporting written data" (p. 475) and more narrowly as "a strict and systematic set of procedures for the rigorous analysis, examination, and verification of the contents of written data" (p. 475). As in the present study, the method is often used alongside other research methods as a supplemental data source adding contextual richness and greater understanding of participants and the phenomena being studied (Bowen, 2009). The latter factor proved useful in this study given the constraints on in-person observation and interaction during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and school closures.

While qualitative and quantitative approaches can be used in content analysis, qualitative content analysis (QCA) was adopted in the present study. QCA has been defined as the systematic analysis of both manifest and latent content in textual data (Mayring, 2014; Graneheim et al. 2017). While quantitative content analysis generally focuses on data reduction and exploring manifest meaning through frequency counts and statistical analyses, in qualitative content analysis, a researcher explores both manifest and latent meanings of texts while also considering contextual factors that may shape the data. In this way qualitative content analysis

takes a more interpretative stance than quantitative approaches (Drisko & Maschi, 2015; Sandelowski, 2000; Selvi, 2020). It is important to note however, as Sandelowski (2000) points out, that while more interpretive than quantitative approaches, qualitative content analysis is the least interpretative of the qualitative research methods and still aims to summarize data with no requirement to "re-present the data in any other terms but their own" (p. 338). Consistent with this, greater emphasis is placed on the use of more inductive coding methods that stick close to and describe the data rather than a-priori theory-driven deductive coding (Sandelowski, 2000). Taking into consideration the research objectives, the complexity of the Jamaican sociolinguistic context, and the necessity of considering sociohistorical and socio-political factors, the qualitative approach was deemed to be more suitable for the present study.

5.3.1 Qualitative Content Analysis Protocol

Though qualitative content analysis is widely used in educational studies, there is limited consensus on procedural guidelines (Selvi, 2020). In light of this issue, a transparent and systematic protocol was adopted to guide data collection and analyses. Drawing on conceptualizations of qualitative content analysis and exemplar studies, Drisko and Maschi (2015) provide an outline of the key components of qualitative analysis for social science research. While Drisko and Maschi's (2015) guidelines provided the overarching framework and incorporated key qualitive concepts such as reflexivity, some steps were also adopted from Cohen's et al. (2007) protocol for content analysis in educational studies which added further systematicity to the protocol. While Cohen's model is not exclusively positioned for qualitative content analysis, there was significant overlap with Drisko and Maschi's approach. Cohen et al.'s (2007) framework included discrete steps aimed at ensuring systematicity in the protocol such as

defining the population, sample, and units of analysis prior to coding. These were considered useful structural additions which served to complement the guidelines provided by Drisko and Maschi and are reflected in steps one and four. An outline of the adapted guidelines is provided below:

1. Define the document population and sample
2. Assess data quality
3. Data immersion and familiarization
4. Define the units of analysis
5. Identify the main categories (subcategories may be included as well)
6. Decide the codes
7. Carry out reliability checks
8. Analyse the data
9. Data presentation
10. Researcher reflexivity and self-reflection

The upcoming sections are closely aligned with each step in the QCA protocol, starting with a discussion of the sampling procedures and assessment of document quality and credibility.

5.4 Sampling and Data Quality

As this study focuses on children's writing within the ecology of the writing classroom, the relevant texts include policy and educational documents put forward by the Ministry of Education that guide and/ or mandate teacher practice. This section outlines the document sampling approach and provides further details and contextual information for each document included in the sample.

A purposive sampling approach was employed wherein documents were selected based on being fit for the purpose of providing insight into the ecology of the writing classroom. After reviewing policy documents and government approved booklists made available on the Ministry of Education's website, as well as meeting with the administrators from primary schools in Jamaica to get a sense of the document population, one relevant policy document, a language arts curriculum document, and one government prescribed language arts textbook were identified. As the population of documents was relatively small and accessible (i.e., one policy, one curriculum, a list of approved textbooks), three representative sources were included in the sample for content analysis. The sample therefore consisted of the Draft Language Education Policy (MoEY, 2001), the National Standards Curriculum (MoEY, 2018), and Primary English Across the Curriculum (Narinesingh & Seetahal Maraj, 2020) — the language arts textbook used by the students included in the empirical study sample.

5.4.1 Document Context

Rose et al. (2020) argue that documents are "socially, culturally, and historically contextualized" (p. 212) and therefore consideration of context is essential in qualitative content analysis. While the social and historical dynamics of the Jamaican linguistic situation were described at length in the narrative literature review and will not be reiterated here, it is important at this point to bear in mind that the included documents were written and published in a context where English is the only official language and is generally held as the language of progress and opportunity, where attitudes towards the creole tend to be ambivalent at best, and the inclusion of the home language in education has been fiercely contested over the years. That said, any official document addressing the inclusion of Jamaican Creole is by nature,

contentious—a factor which will likely impact the way the authors approach the writing and presentation of content.

Finally, it is important to note that both the LEP and curriculum are written from the perspective that most learners in Jamaican primary school classrooms speak Jamaican Creole or varieties closer to Jamaican Creole as a home language (MoEY, 2001, p. 17), with the terms 'home language' and 'Jamaican Creole' being used interchangeably. From this perspective, the suggested pedagogical approaches and activities are what the Ministry of Education deem best for supporting this specific population.

5.4.2 Language Arts Curriculum

The National Standards Curriculum (NSC) for Grades One to Nine was introduced as an update to previous versions of the curriculum and in response to recommendations from the 2004 Education Task Force Report (Mayne & Dixon, 2020). The Education Task Force defined the previous curricula as being "teacher-centred", "content-heavy", and focused on memorization (Mayne & Dixon, 2020, p. 31), rather than on the development of "creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication"- the skills deemed necessary for the 21st century (MoEY, 2016). In response to such critique, the NSC was designed by a multidisciplinary team of over 40 specialists commissioned by the Ministry of Education to represent a more progressive approach to education that aligned more closely with international benchmarks (Buckle-Scott, 2021; Mayne & Dixon, 2020).

While the NSC covers a variety of subject areas, only the language arts section of the National Standards Curriculum for Grade Six was considered, based on its relevance to the aims of this study. The language arts curriculum adopts an integrative approach to instruction as

language skills are taught and practiced via content and themes from other disciplines and consists of six language-based strands covered across a span of three school terms:

1) Listening and Speaking;

2) Fluency and Recognition (word recognition);

3) Reading for Meaning and Enjoyment (comprehension);

4) Reading for Information (research and study skills);

5) Language Structure (grammar and conventions);

6) Communication (writing)

The curriculum is divided into three terms, each of which are further divided into two units, except for Term Three which only has one unit. As seen in Figure 5.1, each unit consists of: attainment targets; objectives; suggested teaching and learning activities (including key skills and assessment criteria); learning outcomes and suggested resources.

Figure 5.1

Sample of National Standard Curriculum (Writing Strand)

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Focus Question: How do we use our expression to show our understanding of land formations and their impact on the environment?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">COMMUNICATION (WRITING)</td></tr>
<tr><td>ATTAINMENT TARGET(S):</td><td colspan="2">OBJECTIVES:</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Develop approaches to the writing process to enable students to organise their ideas into a coherent structure, including, layout, sections and paragraphs
• Write to narrate, to persuade and for a range of transactional purposes, using SJE and JC and incorporating multimedia approaches to writing
• Use language and text forms correctly and with imagination to create vibrant and engaging texts
• Write well-constructed paragraphs which have linking sentences within and between them</td><td colspan="2">Students will::
• Identify and discuss the importance of key phrases in writing prompts
• Use the stages of the writing process to compose narrative and expository pieces reflecting the content given
• Use a variety of writing techniques to respond to narrative writing prompts (sensory details, dialogue, etc.)</td></tr>
<tr><td>SUGGESTED TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES
STUDENTS WILL:</td><td>KEY SKILLS</td><td>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</td></tr>
<tr><td>Examine specific writing prompts given to them and make presentations on what they understand the prompt to mean.

Discuss in groups the importance and benefits of using writing prompts, and write about those benefits in their journals

Write an expository piece on landforms in response to the writing prompt given.</td><td>• Analyse writing prompts
• Respond to writing prompts</td><td>Presentations should outline the mode, task and key words within a prompt

Group discussions should outline the importance of writing prompts to the writing process and at least three benefits of using writing prompts

Expository piece should adhere to the following principles:
- Paragraphs contain topic sentences, supporting details and concluding sentences
- Transitional phrases and words are used to link paragraphs</td></tr>
<tr><td>Imagine they are an earthquake or a landform. Brainstorm ideas for a narrative or explanatory piece relating to their choice by using such techniques as the 5Ws and 5 senses.</td><td>• Brainstorm, create, draft, edit, revise and</td><td>Five Senses Chart appropriately used</td></tr>
</table>

Note. This image has been adopted from the Grade 6 National Standards Curriculum: Language Arts (MoEY, 2018, p. 43).

5.4.3 Language Arts Textbook

Primary English Across the Curriculum (Grade Six) is the government-approved language arts textbook for primary school students in Grade Six. The textbook is listed on the Ministry of Education's website among other approved learning resources and is distributed free of cost to all students in public primary schools. Normally, these books are kept at school for students to use during language arts sessions, however during school closures students were

invited to keep a copy of the text at home. The textbook is an activity-based supporting text for the NSC and as such, focuses on developing the specific skills addressed in the curriculum. The textbook is divided into 14 themed units that draw on cross-curricula links from science and social studies among other areas to address the language skills as outlined in the NSC. The activities target specific language skills such as reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary, for example, using a thematic approach. The textbook was included for content analysis to provide insight into the nature of activities used in the writing classroom to support learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language.

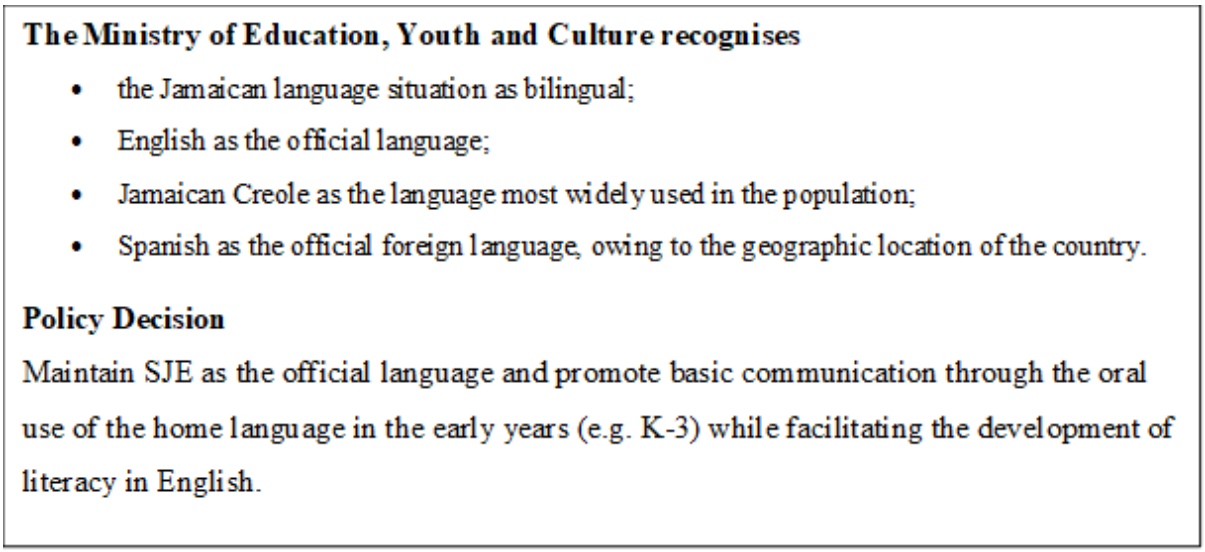
5.4.5 Draft Language Education Policy

The Language Education Policy (LEP) was drafted by the Ministry of Education in 2001 in response to the consistent underperformance of students at all levels in the areas of language and literacy, and in response to the growing body of research on second language development internationally (MoEY, 2001). In the preamble to the policy, the complex relationship between the home language and the language of schooling is identified as a key challenge for English literacy development needing to be addressed formally by means of a language policy (MoEY, 2001).

As discussed in the literature review (section 3.6.3), following a review of five possible bilingual education models for the island ranging from English monolingualism at one end to Jamaican Creole monolingualism at the other, the Ministry of Education decided on a transitional bilingualism language policy where English is maintained as the official language of education and literacy while the home language is used in the early years for basic communication while facilitating English literacy (see Figure 5.2).

Figure *5.2*

The Jamaican Language Education Policy Decision



The Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture recognises

- the Jamaican language situation as bilingual;
- English as the official language;
- Jamaican Creole as the language most widely used in the population;
- Spanish as the official foreign language, owing to the geographic location of the country.

Policy Decision

Maintain SJE as the official language and promote basic communication through the oral use of the home language in the early years (e.g. K-3) while facilitating the development of literacy in English.

Note. This image has been adopted from the Jamaica Language Education Policy (MoEY, 2001, pp. 23-24)

The document begins with a preamble outlining the state of literacy in the country, and background research on second language acquisition (largely from the Global North) which sets the stage for the five policy options and final policy decision described above. The policy document is divided into subsections addressing the required provisions for language learners, language goals for schools, guidelines for language and literacy instruction and assessment, special education provisions, and teacher education. Additionally, implications for stakeholders (e.g., the government) and plans for policy revisions are also outlined. As the present study focuses on typically developing learners of English, the sections addressing special education language provisions and Spanish as a foreign language instruction were excluded from the analysis.

Of key importance is the fact that though developed in 2001, the LEP was never formally ratified by the Jamaican parliament due to the government's rejection of the underlying premise of national bilingualism (Nero, 2014). The LEP therefore remains a draft document. The

implications of the draft status of the LEP are discussed in the upcoming section in relation to document credibility and are taken into consideration in the discussion of findings.

5.4.6 Document Quality

While neither Drisko and Maschi's (2015) nor Cohen et al.'s (2007) protocols explicitly include a step that addresses the quality of documents, this was seen as an important way of increasing the transparency of data analysis and the trustworthiness of findings. Scott (1990) outlined a quality control protocol to weigh the validity and reliability of documents used in social science research including four key criteria: authenticity; credibility; representativeness and meaning. Within his framework, authenticity refers to the legitimacy of the document and its source; credibility speaks to the trustworthiness, plausibility, and accuracy of the documents; representativeness refers to whether the selected documents are typical and reflective of the relevant population of documents; and meaning refers to the clarity and logic of the presented evidence or content (Mogalakwe, 2006). Each of these criteria are discussed in the relation to the sample.

Authenticity. The NSC document was downloaded as a PDF file from the official Ministry of Education's website and was verified by each school principal and classroom teacher involved in the classroom fieldwork. Similarly, the supporting text, English Across the Curriculum (Grade 6), was listed as the approved language arts textbook on the Ministry's website and classroom teachers confirmed that students used this textbook. The LEP presented a slightly different picture, however. While the tenets of the policy are well known in linguistic and educational research circles, and the document is authored by the Ministry of Education, the LEP was never officially approved by parliament and as such, it remains a draft document (Nero,

2014). As a result, the document was not available on the Ministry of Education's policy webpage but was accessed as a PDF document by means of a Google search— a factor which calls the authenticity and credibility of the document into question. After much consideration, despite its unofficial status, the decision was made to include the draft LEP document in this study as it provides insight into what the Ministry of Education deems best practice for language education and "presents the clearest indication yet of an articulated national policy on language education by the government of Jamaica" (Brown-Blake, 2007, p. 383). The document is therefore likely to have a significant influence on the NSC and its supporting language arts textbook which were developed in the years following the drafting of the LEP.

Credibility. In assessing document credibility, Scott (1990) points to the importance of ensuring that documents are not distorted in any way for the purpose of research. The NSC is a government commissioned and published document that guides the nation's education system. That said, the document was prepared prior to this study and for purposes beyond the current study. No changes were made to accommodate or benefit the current investigation, and, in this way, there is no apparent reason to believe that the document was distorted in any way. The NSC was downloaded from a trustworthy source and presents what the Ministry of Education deems best-practice for writing instruction and provides a window into what is required of teachers and expected of students. The supporting activity text, Language Across the Curriculum (Grade 6) presents a similar picture to the NSC in terms of credibility- providing a window into the nature of writing activities deemed effective by the Ministry of Education and is highly consistent with the values of curriculum integration highlighted in the NSC. As previously discussed, the precarious positioning of LEP as a draft document and the fact that it was not made publicly available on the Ministry of Education's website likely impacts the

trustworthiness of the document in reflecting the beliefs of the Jamaican Ministry of Education. This positioning of the LEP therefore limits the conclusions that can be made concerning the impact of the language policy on student writing outcomes. Such factors will be taken into consideration in the discussion of findings.

Representativeness. The population of texts relevant to providing an understanding of the writing classroom and instruction was small and accessible for the most part. Excepting teacher lesson plans which were not made available, all relevant documents were included for analysis and in this way were representative of the document population for the study- each being typical of the group of documents they represent.

Meaning. Scott (1990) points out that the goal for content analyses is to gain a clearer understanding of the meaning of a particular document and therefore clarity and comprehensibility of content are key. In terms of what Scott (1990) deemed 'face value' meaning, all three documents were clearly formatted using relevant headings and comprehensible language that communicated the intended meaning clearly. More interpretive meanings which are addressed in the discussion chapter consider the face-value content as well as contextual information surrounding the generation of the documents and the Jamaican education context in which they are situated. The upcoming section addresses to approach to sorting the documents for analysis.

5.4.7 Units of Analysis

Syed and Nelson (2015) define the unit of analysis as "the section of qualitative data that will receive a code" (p. 377) and point out the importance of defining such units prior to coding to ensure consistency, replicability, and the feasibility of the analytic approach. The sampling units for each document in this study are defined below:

LEP

The LEP document was divided into major sections (e.g., literacy, language instruction and stakeholder responsibility) with supporting bulleted points providing further detail. Each bulleted point was treated as a unit of analysis to which one or more codes could be ascribed.

Curriculum Documents

Given the challenge of isolating the skill of writing from other language skills (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, listening and speaking) (Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004), the SVW which partly formed the basis of the study's theoretical framework, was used to set the parameters for inclusion. As outlined in Chapter Two, according to the SVW, writing consists of three core processes operating within an environment of memory: transcription, text generation, and executive functioning. The first two processes are relevant to determine the language skills to be included for analysis from the NSC and textbook. According to Berninger (2002), transcription involves the lower-level skills of handwriting and spelling while text generation involves word, sentence, and text level oral language skills such as vocabulary and grammar. From this perspective, the strands focused on the following skills were included for analysis: writing, vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and 'listening and speaking'.

NSC. Each unit is divided into major headings (e.g., Suggested Teaching and Learning Activities, Attainment Targets) with supporting bulleted points which provided further detail. In line with the organization of the documents, each bulleted point was treated as a unit of analysis which could receive one or more codes.

Textbook. The Language Across the curriculum textbook solely focused on activities. Consistent with the format of the textbook, each activity was treated as a unit of analysis

receiving one or more codes as relevant. The skill area and units of analysis for each document are summarized in Table 5.1

Table 5.1

Units of Analysis

Document	Document Type	Portion analysed	Portion excluded from analysis	Unit of analysis
National Standards Curriculum (language arts)	Government Curriculum	Curriculum Strand: - Communication (Writing) - Language Structure (Grammar & Conventions - Vocabulary - Listening and Speaking*	Reading for Meaning and Enjoyment (comprehension); Reading for Information (research and study skills	Each bulleted point
English Across the curriculum	Textbook	Skill Areas: - Writing - Grammar - Spelling & Punctuation - Vocabulary - Listening and speaking*	Reading comprehension	Each Activity
Language Education Policy	Policy document	Policy	Research background preamble Special education Spanish as a foreign language instruction	Each bulleted point

5.5 Defining Codes and Constructing Categories

A hybrid approach was taken to creating the overarching categories for sorting the data. As an initial step, a short and tentative a priori list of categories was drafted in line with the research questions and initial readings of the data to sort and capture data that would directly address the research questions. Once the tentative list of categories was drafted, codes were derived using a bottom-up data driven approach based on thorough readings of the raw data. Open or descriptive codes were used for content analysis as opposed to analytic or axial codes. Once an initial list of codes was drafted, the a priori list of categories was then reanalysed and refined to reflect the data more closely as per general practice in content analyses (Cohen et al., 2017).

Two separate codebooks were created for the content analyses of the three documents — Codebook 1 being applied to both the National standards Curriculum and its supporting language arts textbook and Codebook 2 being applied to the LEP (See Appendix B). Each codebook consisted of broad categories that corresponded closely with the headings outlined in each document (e.g., activities, tools, teacher expectations) and subsumed more specific codes that emerged from the data (e.g., vocabulary building, modelling, writing process). While recommending that codes remain as discrete as possible, Miles and Huberman (1984) point out that it is possible in the initial stages of coding, to work with as many as 90 codes as one reads through the data. The premise here is that after an iterative process of reading and rereading the data and applying the working codebook to a sample of the data, the codebook is refined and updated as was done in this study. Codebook 1 (NSC and supporting text) consisted of 29 codes and Codebook 2 (LEP) consisted of 21 codes. Samples from each codebook can been seen below in Tables 5.2 and 5.3.

Table 5.2

Sample from Codebook 1 (NSC and textbook)

PEDAGOGY	***Any approach, method, strategy, activity recommended for teaching writing. This is the "how" of teaching writing***	
Methods	Writing process	Teaching students how to effectively use the writing process to produce good writing (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing)
	Strategy	The use of strategies such as the RAFT, mnemonic devices etc to aid and guide writing
	Explicit Grammar	Explicit teaching of grammatical structures and conventions (e.g., tense, parts of speech (e.g., adverbs, adjectives, nouns) to aid writing
	Explicit Vocabulary	Explicit teaching of vocabulary to improve writing
	Modelling	Provision of a model or sample of writing to provide a reference of good writing/expectation in a particular genre
	Text Exposure	Exposing students to books of different kinds to improve writing
	Figurative	Teaching students to interpret and use figures of speech in writing
	Prompts	Teaching students how to interpret and respond to writing prompts

Table 5.3

Sample from Codebook 2 (LEP)

Category	**Code**	**Description**
ROLE	***The role, place of, or the purpose served by Jamaican creole in education.***	
	Basic communication	Use of the creole of basic communicative purposes (not necessarily literacy related)
	Comprehension	use of the creole to help students understand concepts and therefore develop in their content and Standard English knowledge
	Resource	Use of the creole as a tool or resource for writing, speech, discussing language

5.6 Intercoder Reliability

Two coders independently applied the initial codebook to a portion of the National Standards Curriculum (33%) and the Language Education policy in its entirety. The activities in the language arts textbook corresponded to the outlined activities in the curriculum and therefore the same codes were applied, and the textbook was not included in the intercoder review. Krippendorff (2004) points out that clear and explicit instructions are key in increasing intercoder reliability. Therefore, in addition to the detailed codebook, clearly worded guidelines were created and discussed with the second coder who was a doctoral researcher in the field of education with experience in qualitative research.

During the initial discussions, there were opportunities for clarification and the explanation of basic linguistic concepts that were included in the documents and codebooks (e.g., 'contrastive analysis') as the second coder did not have an educational background in linguistics. One category ('learning objectives') was removed from Codebook 1 after a series of intercoder discussions due to significant overlap between the codes with the 'pedagogical approach' category at the levels of descriptions and labels. Since both coders were unable to agree on clear-cut descriptions that would differentiate the codes in each category, the 'learning objectives' category was removed as the same information was captured by the codes in the pedagogical approach category.

Following the initial discussions, coding was then carried out independently by each coder using Microsoft Word (see Table 5.4 for coding sample) after which a spreadsheet comparing each coding instance for both coders was created to guide subsequent discussions as seen in Table 5.5.

Table 5.4

Sample of NSC coding- (Coder 2)

Suggested Teaching and Learning Activities Students will:	**Key Skills**
GRAMMAR Use adjective and adverbial clauses to extend sentences related to the human body system	• **GRAMMAR** Use adjectival and adverbial clauses
IDEA BUILDING Brainstorm ideas about the title of a story relating to body systems in order to activate prior knowledge. **CONCEPT/ IDEA MAP** Their ideas should be written on a concept map.	• **GROUP DISCUSSION** Discuss ideas
GROUP DISCUSSIONS In groups, **GRAMMAR** use adjectives, adverbs, descriptive phrases and **FIGURATIVE** figures of speech to create **GENRE** an advertisement for exercise equipment designed to build muscles. Each group will present their advertisement to the class. **PEER-REVIEW** After each group's presentation, the rest of the class should reflect on the use of parts of speech and figurative expressions.	• **GENRE** Create advertisements • **FIGURATIVE** Use figures of speech • **PEER-REVIEW** Share feedback

While widely acknowledged that on its own, percentage agreement is not a sufficient measure of reliability as it does not control for chance agreements (Cohen, 1960; Krippendorf, 2004; Lombard et al., 2002; O'Conner & Joffe, 2020; Roaché, 2018), O'Conner and Joffe (2020) highlight its efficacy when used to inform intercoder discussions. Accordingly, a combined approach to assessing intercoder consistency was used in the present study — with intercoder discussion of coding disagreements as the primary method, which was guided by percentage agreement. Percentage agreement checks served to flag codes that may have needed clearer demarcation or elaboration.

Overall, there were minimal discrepancies at the level of code application likely due to the coherence between the names of categories and the headings. The first round of independent coding showed high levels of consistency with total coding agreement on 43 out of a total of 51 units of analysis. Both coders then met to discuss each coding discrepancy. Of the eight discrepancies in coding, five were data units to which two or more codes could be correctly

applied, with the 'presentation' and 'group discussion' codes showing the greatest levels of disagreement. Items two and three in Table 5.5 provide some examples of this. As seen in items two and three, both coders agreed on all codes except: group discussion and presentation. After reviewing the disagreement together, both coders agreed that the data unit showed evidence of both 'group discussion' and 'presentation', therefore, both codes were applied in this case. To ensure coding consistency, both coders agreed that in each coding instance, all relevant codes should be applied once present.

Table 5.5

Excerpt from Coding Comparison Spreadsheet

Unit of analysis	**Code Application**	
Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities	**Coder 1**	**Coder 2**
1. Use adjective and adverbial clauses to extend sentences related to the human body system	Grammar	Grammar
2. In groups, use adjectives, adverbs, descriptive phrases and figures of speech to create an advertisement for exercise equipment designed to build muscles. Each group will present their advertisement to the class. After each group's presentation, the rest of the class should reflect on the use of parts of speech and figurative expressions.	Genre; Grammar; *Presentation; Figurative; Peer review	Genre; Grammar; *Group discussion; Figurative; Peer Review
3. Work in groups to examine sample business letters. Consider how they are structured and compare to the friendly letter structure. Share findings with class.	Modelling; Genre; *Presentation	Modelling; Genre; *Group discussions

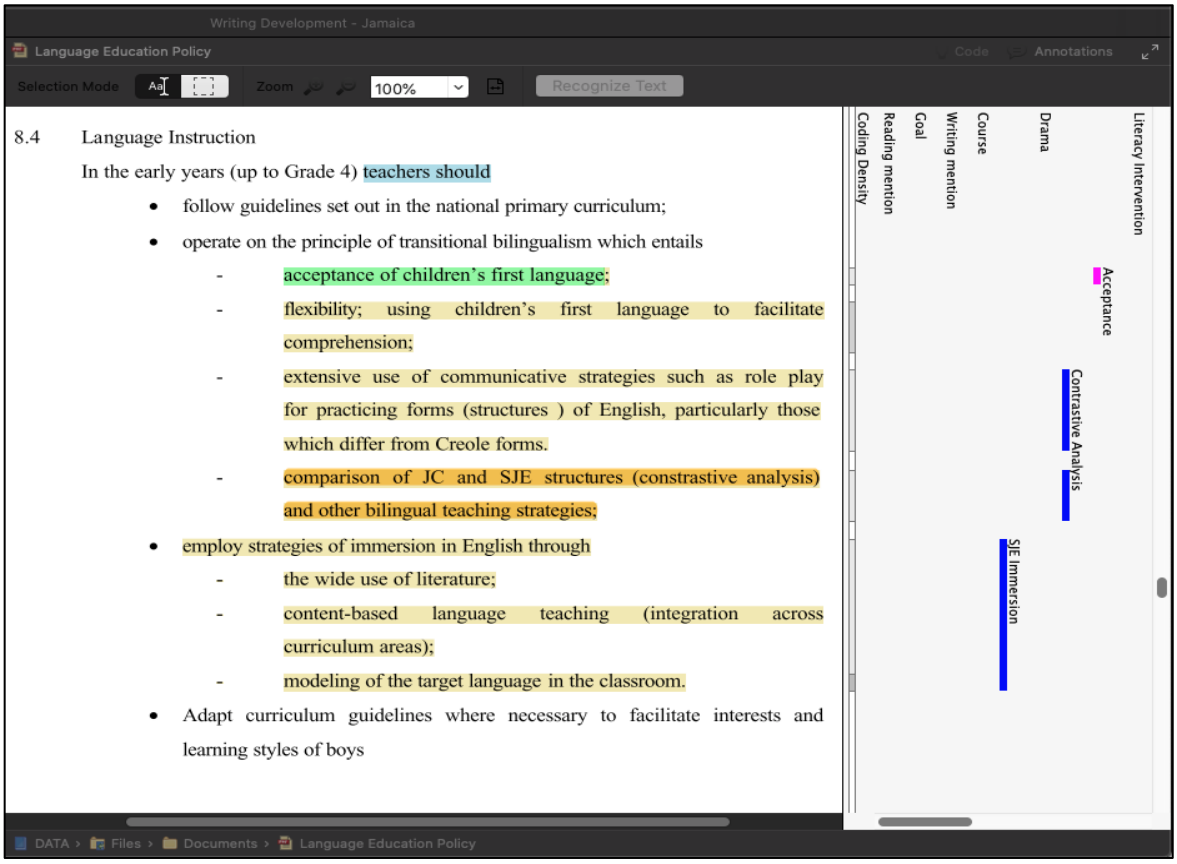
Notes: Codes highlighted in red showed disagreement

5.7 Data Analysis

Following the validation of the codebook, all three documents were coded by the primary researcher using the updated codebooks. Each document was uploaded to NVivo 12 for sorting, coding, and analysis and codes were applied based on incidence as opposed to existence (see Fig 5.3 for example). Once coding was complete, the documents were re-read to assess how well codes and categories reflected the data, and categories were further explored. While findings from content analyses are often presented in the form of frequency tables, the decision was taken to exclude frequency tables from the reporting of findings as they did not prove to be entirely reflective of all the data, given the nature of the documents' purpose and length. As pointed out by George (1959), and evident in the present study, while informative, frequency does not always equate with significance as key information may only be mentioned very few times or in some cases, only once, depending on the nature and purpose of the document. Accordingly, in the upcoming sections, findings concerning the guidelines for supporting the writing development of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language are presented thematically in narrative form while taking the prevalence of codes into account. In addition to the narrative presentation of findings, excerpts from codebooks, coding samples, and figures are included throughout the chapter for greater transparency of the data analysis process.

Figure 5.3

Example of Document Coding in NVivo 12



5.8 Findings

5.8.1 What approach is taken to address the writing challenges experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language?

Across the three documents three key categories emerged that highlight the Ministry of Education's approach to targeting the writing challenges experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language: contrastive analysis, code switching, and English immersion— the latter being the most dominant approach. While the LEP was never officially ratified by Jamaican parliament and was developed over 15 years before the curriculum and associated

textbook, the curricular documents show significant alignment with the transitional bilingualism approach espoused in the LEP. Each category will be explored in the upcoming sections.

5.8.1.1 English Immersion

Consistent with the transitional bilingualism policy proposed in the LEP, English immersion emerged as the dominant approach to literacy, and more specifically, writing instruction for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language, across all three documents. Codes subsumed under the English immersion category covered instructional methods and activities that were entirely oriented towards English with no consideration of the home language. Within this approach students are provided with extensive exposure to and practice in spoken and written English, as well as extensive explicit instruction focused on the vocabulary and grammar to improve English writing skills.

LEP

The principle of immersion was threaded through the LEP and when compared to contrastive analysis and code switching, covered more coding instances. Codes subsumed under this category in the LEP included: SJE[5] Immersion, (English) Textual Exposure, and SJE modelling as all three served the same goal of providing learners with extensive exposure to English to improve language and literacy proficiency. Some examples of guidelines from the LEP coded under this category are presented below:

The language learner should be provided with

- *increased exposure to English, and particularly to idiomatic English, through different types of immersion.*
- *opportunities to hear and speak the target language in a variety of situations (p.24)*

Teachers should employ strategies of immersion in English through

- *the wide use of literature.*

[5] SJE: Standard Jamaican English

- *content-based language teaching (integration across curriculum areas).*
- *modelling of the target language in the classroom. (p.25)*

Literacy teachers should

- *expose pupils to a wide variety of high-interest materials in the target language particularly in the early years of schooling" (p.26)*

Based on the predominance of the English immersion code in the LEP document, it can be surmised from the data that English immersion is the main approach recommended by the Ministry of Education to support the literacy development of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language.

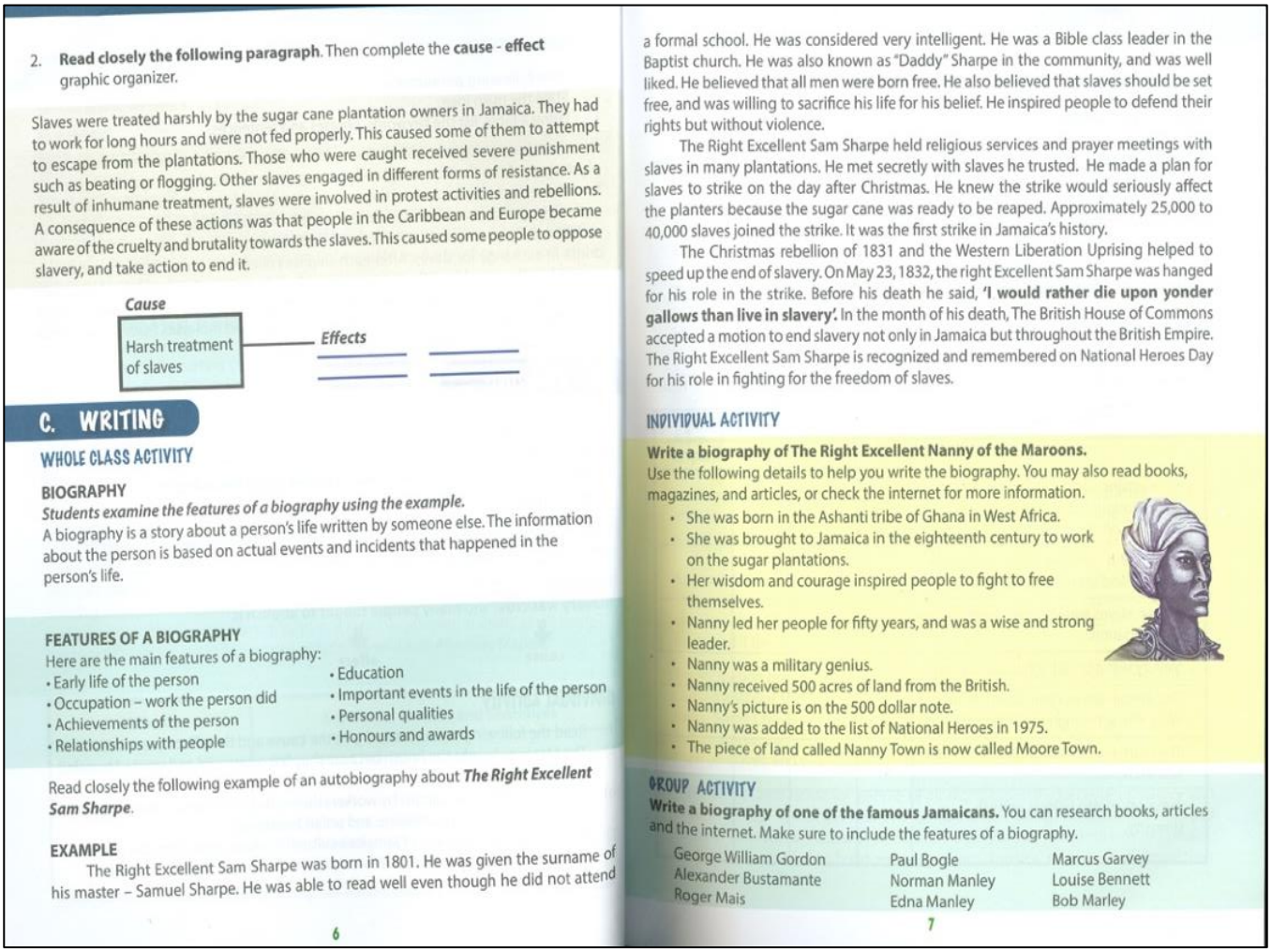
NSC & Textbook

Analysis of both texts showed alignment with the LEP wherein English immersion emerged as the dominant approach for supporting learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language, particularly in the areas of the curriculum and textbook dedicated exclusively to writing instruction[6]. In both documents, writing instruction was found to consist of extensive practice in writing across genres with much emphasis on the interpretation of prompts, organizational skills as well as training in the use of the writing process, the provision of English models, and checklists to guide writing. An example of a typical writing section of a unit in the textbook is shown below in Figure 5.4, wherein students are first provided with a brief introduction to a specific genre followed by the presentation of a model, and a writing prompt for students to complete.

[6] This refers to the sections of the curriculum and textbook that fell under the "Writing (communication)" strand as opposed to the other stands such as language structure and vocabulary, for example, which serve to support writing and were included in the analysis.

Figure 5.4

Sample of a Typical Writing Subsection of the Textbook



2. **Read closely the following paragraph.** Then complete the **cause - effect** graphic organizer.

Slaves were treated harshly by the sugar cane plantation owners in Jamaica. They had to work for long hours and were not fed properly. This caused some of them to attempt to escape from the plantations. Those who were caught received severe punishment such as beating or flogging. Other slaves engaged in different forms of resistance. As a result of inhumane treatment, slaves were involved in protest activities and rebellions. A consequence of these actions was that people in the Caribbean and Europe became aware of the cruelty and brutality towards the slaves. This caused some people to oppose slavery, and take action to end it.

Cause	*Effects*
Harsh treatment of slaves	_____ _____ _____ _____

C. WRITING

WHOLE CLASS ACTIVITY

BIOGRAPHY

Students examine the features of a biography using the example.

A biography is a story about a person's life written by someone else. The information about the person is based on actual events and incidents that happened in the person's life.

FEATURES OF A BIOGRAPHY

Here are the main features of a biography:

- Early life of the person
- Occupation – work the person did
- Achievements of the person
- Relationships with people
- Education
- Important events in the life of the person
- Personal qualities
- Honours and awards

Read closely the following example of an autobiography about ***The Right Excellent Sam Sharpe***.

EXAMPLE

The Right Excellent Sam Sharpe was born in 1801. He was given the surname of his master – Samuel Sharpe. He was able to read well even though he did not attend a formal school. He was considered very intelligent. He was a Bible class leader in the Baptist church. He was also known as "Daddy" Sharpe in the community, and was well liked. He believed that all men were born free. He also believed that slaves should be set free, and was willing to sacrifice his life for his belief. He inspired people to defend their rights but without violence.

The Right Excellent Sam Sharpe held religious services and prayer meetings with slaves in many plantations. He met secretly with slaves he trusted. He made a plan for slaves to strike on the day after Christmas. He knew the strike would seriously affect the planters because the sugar cane was ready to be reaped. Approximately 25,000 to 40,000 slaves joined the strike. It was the first strike in Jamaica's history.

The Christmas rebellion of 1831 and the Western Liberation Uprising helped to speed up the end of slavery. On May 23, 1832, the right Excellent Sam Sharpe was hanged for his role in the strike. Before his death he said, **'I would rather die upon yonder gallows than live in slavery'.** In the month of his death, The British House of Commons accepted a motion to end slavery not only in Jamaica but throughout the British Empire. The Right Excellent Sam Sharpe is recognized and remembered on National Heroes Day for his role in fighting for the freedom of slaves.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

Write a biography of The Right Excellent Nanny of the Maroons.

Use the following details to help you write the biography. You may also read books, magazines, and articles, or check the internet for more information.

- She was born in the Ashanti tribe of Ghana in West Africa.
- She was brought to Jamaica in the eighteenth century to work on the sugar plantations.
- Her wisdom and courage inspired people to fight to free themselves.
- Nanny led her people for fifty years, and was a wise and strong leader.
- Nanny was a military genius.
- Nanny received 500 acres of land from the British.
- Nanny's picture is on the 500 dollar note.
- Nanny was added to the list of National Heroes in 1975.
- The piece of land called Nanny Town is now called Moore Town.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Write a biography of one of the famous Jamaicans. You can research books, articles and the internet. Make sure to include the features of a biography.

George William Gordon	Paul Bogle	Marcus Garvey
Alexander Bustamante	Norman Manley	Louise Bennett
Roger Mais	Edna Manley	Bob Marley

6 7

In terms of grammar, both documents show that teachers are expected to provide students with a substantial amount of explicit instruction alongside grammar-focused activities involving sentence writing and completion tasks and the use of language checklists for peer-reviewing. The primary focus of vocabulary instruction was on word recognition, as emphasised in the name of the curriculum strand- 'Word Recognition and Vocabulary Development'. The vocabulary strand of the curriculum was directly connected to the skill of reading, rather than writing and therefore

focused on the development and use of word recognition and spelling strategies (e.g., word journals). No explicit guidance nor activities that focused on connecting and transferring vocabulary knowledge to writing were included.

Overall, when compared to the language structure and listening and speaking strands of the NSC, the home language appeared to be held at some distance from the writing, language structure, and vocabulary strands, where English immersion was found to be the primary approach. Such a finding is consistent with the transitional bilingualism approach taken in the draft LEP that supports the oral use of the home language to facilitate the acquisition of English.

5.8.1.2 Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive analysis emerged as an approach taken by the Ministry of Education to support the writing development of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language to varying degrees across all three documents. Instructional methods and activities that were coded under the contrastive analysis category focused on drawing students' attention to the differences between Jamaican Creole and English in both spoken and written forms to improve linguistic awareness and ultimately, English proficiency. The category is explored in relation to the three documents starting with the LEP.

LEP

The purpose of the draft LEP was to outline the approach to language education for the Jamaican education system with the aim of improving English literacy. Accordingly, of the three documents, the LEP provides the most explicit and clear-cut directives for the treatment of the home language in the classroom and instructional approaches for supporting learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language in achieving English literacy. In the preamble to the policy,

the Ministry of Education (2001) names the "peculiar linguistic relationship shared by Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English" (p. 8) and the resulting difficulties in discerning the structural differences between the languages, as the greatest stumbling block to Jamaican students learning to speak and write in English. Consistent with this position and the espoused transitional bilingualism approach, alongside English immersion, the Ministry of Education prescribes contrastive analysis as a key instructional approach to support learners in being able to differentiate the home from the target language to improve literacy development (MoEY, 2001).

Unlike the NSC and textbook which have sections dedicated to writing specifically, the LEP focuses on literacy skills more generally with no sections of the policy dedicated to reading or writing exclusively. In line with this, no explicit connection is made between contrastive analysis and writing instruction, specifically. However, a contextual reading of the entire document would support the interpretation that contrastive analysis is a proposed method for writing alongside all other language and literacy skills. Such an interpretation stems from the considerable emphasis placed on underperformance in writing across all education levels and its links to the challenges with language differentiation in the preamble to the policy. Evidence of the contrastive analysis approach to language education is shown in the following excerpts:

> *"In the early years (up to Grade 4) teachers should operate on the principle of transitional bilingualism which entails… comparison of JC and SJE structures (contrastive analysis) and other bilingual teaching strategies." (p. 25)*
>
> *"[Literacy teachers should] develop approaches which recognise similarities and differences between pupils' home language and the language of texts." (p.26)*

NSC & Textbook

While absent from the writing and vocabulary strands, contrastive analysis was most evident in the listening and speaking strand and to a lesser extent in the language structure

(grammar) strand of the curriculum. In the language structure strand, contrastive analysis was solely evident in the attainment targets subsection (see Table 5.6). Greater evidence of contrastive analysis was found in the listening and speaking strand which beyond inclusion in the attainment targets, incorporated detailed suggested teaching and learning activities focused on language differentiation.

Table 5.6

Attainment Targets Including the Home Language

Curriculum Strand	**Attainment Target**
Language Structure (Grammar and Conventions)	*Students should be able to:* • Use and adapt a range of sentence structures according to context, distinguishing between **SJE and JC**. • Write sentences, paragraphs and extended pieces which are grammatically accurate and correctly punctuated, using **SJE and JC** appropriately
Listening and Speaking	*Students should be able to:* • Recognise, value and make distinctions between home language and SJE to improve/acquire language and literacy competencies • Explain and comment on speakers' use of language, including use of SJE and JC, vocabulary, grammar and other features

As a supporting text, the language arts textbook followed a similar pattern to that of the NSC, in that none of the activities in the 'writing' sections of the text involved the home language or contrastive analysis. However, the sections of the textbook addressing grammar, vocabulary, spelling, as well as listening and speaking incorporated the home language to varied extents in a few activities aimed at supporting learners in differentiating the languages. These activities were almost exclusively included in the units under the Cultural Heritage theme and focused on the identification of false homophones between the languages, translation (spelling),

and editing (see Table 5.7). An example of the contrastive analysis activities for grammar and vocabulary from Unit 5 are presented in Fig 5.5

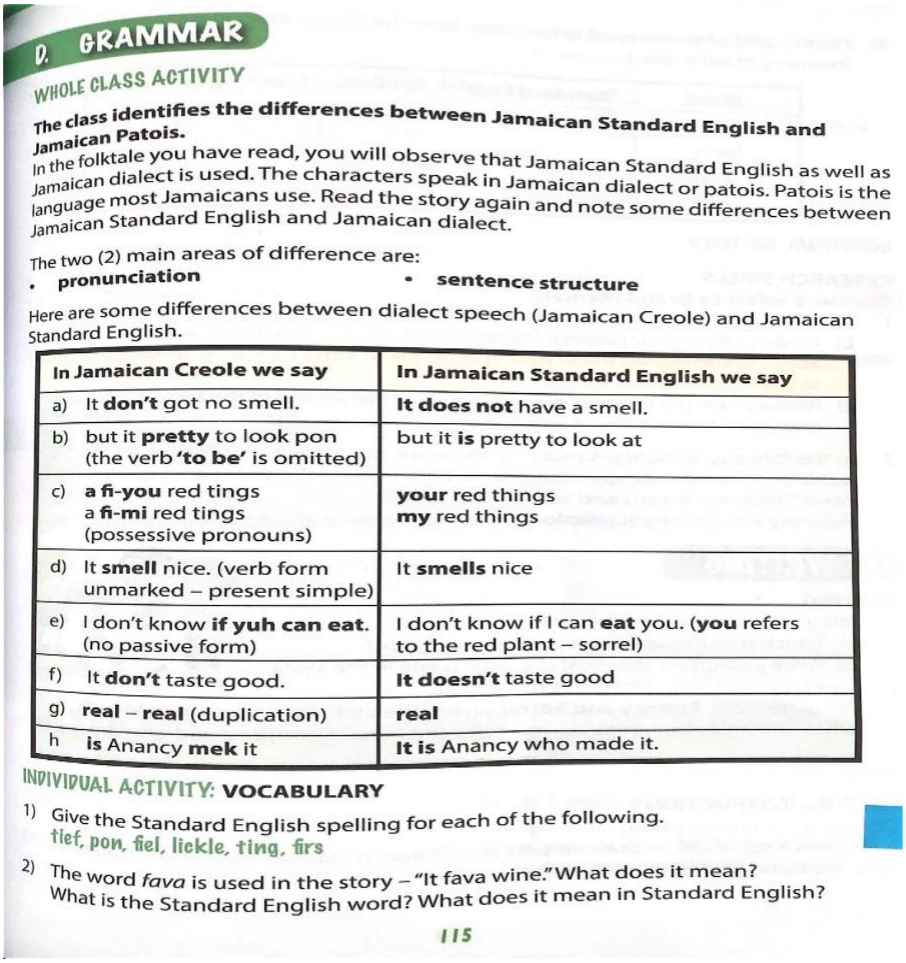
Table 5.7

Textbook Units Including Contrastive Analysis Activities

Unit & Theme	Writing	Grammar	Vocabulary	Spelling	Speaking & Listening
1: Cultural Heritage	-	-	-	-	x (p.3)
2: Cultural Heritage	-	-	-	-	
3: Cultural Heritage	-	-	x (p. 75)	-	
4: Cultural Heritage	-	-	-	-	
5: Cultural Heritage	-	x (p. 115)	x (p. 115)	x (p.116)	
6: Landforms	-	-	-	-	
7: Landforms	-	-	-		
8: Landforms	-	-	-	-	
9: Light and Sound	-	-	-	-	
10: Light and Sound	-	-	-	-	
11: Human Body	-	-	-	-	
12: Human Body	-	-	-	-	
13: Diversity	-	-	-	-	x (pg 254-255)
14: Diversity	-	-	-	-	

Figure 5.5

Examples of Grammar and Vocabulary Activities Focused on Contrastive Analysis



D. GRAMMAR

WHOLE CLASS ACTIVITY

The class identifies the differences between Jamaican Standard English and Jamaican Patois.

In the folktale you have read, you will observe that Jamaican Standard English as well as Jamaican dialect is used. The characters speak in Jamaican dialect or patois. Patois is the language most Jamaicans use. Read the story again and note some differences between Jamaican Standard English and Jamaican dialect.

The two (2) main areas of difference are:

- **pronunciation**
- **sentence structure**

Here are some differences between dialect speech (Jamaican Creole) and Jamaican Standard English.

In Jamaican Creole we say	In Jamaican Standard English we say
a) It **don't** got no smell.	**It does not** have a smell.
b) but it **pretty** to look pon (the verb **'to be'** is omitted)	but it **is** pretty to look at
c) **a fi-you** red tings **a fi-mi** red tings (possessive pronouns)	**your** red things **my** red things
d) It **smell** nice. (verb form unmarked – present simple)	It **smells** nice
e) I don't know **if yuh can eat**. (no passive form)	I don't know if I can **eat** you. (**you** refers to the red plant – sorrel)
f) It **don't** taste good.	**It doesn't** taste good
g) **real** – **real** (duplication)	**real**
h **is** Anancy **mek** it	**It is** Anancy who made it.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY: **VOCABULARY**

1) Give the Standard English spelling for each of the following.
tief, pon, fiel, lickle, ting, firs

2) The word *fava* is used in the story – "It fava wine." What does it mean? What is the Standard English word? What does it mean in Standard English?

115

5.8.1.3 Code-switching

Closely related to, though less dominant than contrastive analysis, was the allowance for code-switching in writing. Data grouped under the code-switching category included instructional methods and activities that allowed students to use both languages in writing based on appropriateness for the communicative purpose and audience. Though very similar to the concept of translanguaging, the term code-switching is used in line with document terminology.

As codeswitching was evident in the NSC but only referenced in relation to secondary school learners in the LEP, the findings from the NSC and supporting text are presented below.

NSC & Textbook

Code-switching generally occurred solely in the attainment targets of the writing and language structure strands of the curriculum wherein students were expected to be able to write sentences, paragraphs, and extended pieces using both English and Jamaican Creole where appropriate, based on the audience and purpose of writing (see Table 5.8.). Beyond being mentioned as an attainment target for writing, code switching is not apparent in any suggested teaching and learning activities or learning outcomes of these strands and it is therefore not clear how students would attain proficiency in writing extended pieces in both English and Jamaican Creole. Consistent with the emerging trend and as expected based on the transitional bilingualism policy which allows the oral use of the home language in early years, code-switching was most prominent in the listening and speaking strands of the curricular documents not only at the level of attainment targets.

It is worth pointing out that while it is not clear how code-switching is used to explicitly target the writing challenges of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language (as in the case of contrastive analysis and immersion), it was included as a category as it was the only means through which the home language was included in the writing strand of the curriculum.

Table 5.8

Attainment Targets Addressing Code-switching

Curriculum Strand	**Attainment Target** ***Students should be able to:***
Communication (Writing)	• Write to narrate, to persuade and for a range of transactional purposes, **using SJE and JC** and incorporating multi-media approaches to their writing.
Language Structure (Grammar and Conventions)	• Write sentences, paragraphs and extended pieces which are grammatically accurate and correctly punctuated, using **SJE and JC** appropriately.
Listening and Speaking	• Communicate with confidence and competence for different purposes and audiences, using SJE and JC creatively.

5.9 Limitations

Not unique to this study but characteristic of document analyses more generally, is the issue of bias in both document authorship and interpretation. Cohen et al. (2007) point out that "as well as having a life of their own, documents are interpretations of events" (p. 204). Two characteristics of the documents that carry implications for bias in this study are of note — the authorship and the context. The documents in the study represent, firstly, how the Jamaican Ministry of Education wishes to present their stance on language and literacy education both locally and internationally, and secondly, a complex linguistic context where the inclusion of the creole in education has been fiercely contested over the years. These tensions between the reality of the linguistic context and pressure on the Ministry of Education to provide policy and curricular directives that sit well with both Jamaicans as well as with international education standards may well impact the way the documents are written — particularly their ecological validity.

Beyond the documents themselves is the issue of researcher bias and subjectivity in the interpretation of the document content. Rose et al. (2020) point out that documents are "reliant on a researcher's own understanding of the context in which they are produced" (p. 209) and that when researching documents as an insider familiar with the context, bias is often introduced in the interpretation of findings. As an insider who grew up and was educated through secondary school in Jamaica and who belongs to a family of educators within the Jamaican education system, I have a contextual understanding of the education system, teacher practices and training, and the often-conflicting attitudes towards Jamaican Creole — which I am not immune to. These factors inevitably influence my reading, interpretation, and analysis of the documents. Actions were therefore taken to mitigate biases as much as possible and to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. Firstly, the second coder who double coded the documents was not of Jamaican heritage and in this way approached coding as an outsider with no preconceptions or assumptions, and from this position could call into question any coding instances that seemed less than objective. Secondly, as Rose et al. (2020) recommend when mitigating insider bias, the findings from each document were interpreted and discussed in relation to the other documents in the sample as well as other data sources including teacher interviews and students' writing outcomes (see Chapters Eight and Nine) to provide some degree of member-checking and confirmation of findings. Additionally, Scott's (1990) document quality control protocol was applied to validate the authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning of each document. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that some amount of subjectivity in the authorship and interpretation of documents likely remains.

The precarious position of the draft LEP is another limitation of the content analysis. As previously discussed, the Ministry of Education's draft LEP was never officially approved by the

Jamaican government due to a rejection of the underlying premise that Jamaica is a bilingual nation. Resultantly, the draft LEP is not an authoritative document on language and literacy policy which brings into question the validity and usefulness of its inclusion in the sample. Much consideration was given to this issue and the decision was made to include it in the sample as in the absence of any similar document of its kind from the ministry of Education, the draft LEP presented the clearest articulation of the Ministry of Education's position on language education for the Jamaican creole context – and this was supported in the alignment between the draft LEP and the curriculum documents (i.e., language arts curriculum and textbook).

Similarly, while all teachers confirmed that they used the NSC as a guide and acknowledged that the language arts textbook was used by the students, the extent to which each teacher made use of the supporting textbook and how closely they followed the curriculum was less clear and likely to vary based on teachers' instructional preferences. That said, the NSC and textbook represent government recommendations but may not be a direct reflection of the writing classroom. To address this issue and gain greater insight into the ecology of the writing classroom, the alignment between government guidelines and teacher practice is explored in Chapter Eight.

Finally, it would have been advantageous to have two or more reviewers code all the documents in their entirety, however, limited time and resources meant that this was not possible. To ensure that the codebook and resulting analysis was as reliable as possible, the codebook was corroborated by a second coder by means of an independent analysis of a sample of the texts and a clear audit trail of the steps involved in the coding procedure has been outlined. The limitations will be considered further in the discussion of findings.

5.10 Summary and Discussion of Findings

The content analysis of curriculum and policy documents served as a supplemental source of data providing insight into the more distal factors that impact the writing classroom and ultimately, student writing outcomes. Findings showed alignment among the policy and curricular documents in the guidelines and instructional approaches aimed at supporting the writing development of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language.

The dominant trend that emerged across all three documents was a more generalized approach to writing instruction in the form of English immersion — providing learners with extensive exposure to models of English writing, opportunities to practice writing across genres using the writing process, as well as explicit instruction in English grammar and word recognition strategies, with limited to no consideration of the home language. Contrastive analysis was another approach to writing instruction observed to varied extents across all three documents involving instructional methods and activities aimed at building learners' ability to differentiate the home and school languages. Though less pervasive in the documents, code-switching also emerged as an approach recommended by the Ministry of Education. This category, however, was more difficult to pin down as it was most evident in the attainment target section of the curriculum across the writing, grammar, and listening and speaking strands, but was only supported with teaching and learning activities in the latter strand.

The dominance of the immersion approach in the language arts curriculum and the supporting textbook is consistent with the transitional bilingualism policy decision adopted in the Draft LEP which aims for monoliteracy in English. The immersion approach adopted by the Jamaican Ministry of Education is also consistent with wider educational research from the region highlighting the key principles for literacy development among creole-speaking learners (Bryan, 2004; Watson-Williams et al., 2011) — immersion in the target language, extensive

opportunities for practice, provision of structured support and modelling, and contrasting the languages.

Overall, the home language was held most separate from the skill of writing. Each of the approaches involving the home language were most evident in the listening and speaking strand and to a lesser extent, the language structure strand, however, they were almost entirely absent from the writing strand of the curriculum and textbook saving the expectation that students be able to write for varied purposes in both the home and target language. This is consistent with the transitional bilingualism approach proposed in the LEP where the home language is used primarily orally, not in written form, and to facilitate English language and literacy acquisition. As Nero (2014) points out, compared to all language skills, the role of the home language in writing has always been controversial given the premium placed on writing, its central role in high stakes assessment, and the dismal student performance across all school levels over the years. Findings showing that contrastive analysis was most evident in the listening and speaking strand of curriculum would be expected given the fact that as per the LEP, the Ministry of Education only sanctioned the oral use of the home language for English development. However, given that grammar represents the area of greatest structural divergence between the home and target language, one might also expect contrastive analysis to be a dominant in the language structure strand and in the corresponding textbook activities. However, this was not the case. Contrastive analysis was only evident in the attainment targets of the language structure strand and starkly absent from the suggested activities and learning outcomes in the curriculum. In the sole textbook activity representing contrastive analysis in grammar (see Fig. 5.5), a cursory approach is taken wherein a few examples highlighting differences in how things are said in Jamaican Creole and English are presented. However, the underlying structural

differences or creole rules that lead to the surface level structures presented in the examples are inconsistently addressed, leaving some differences (e.g., treatment of the verb 'to do') unexplained and without subsequent follow-up tasks as seen in other grammar activities. Without understanding and engaging with the Jamaican Creole rules that account for the grammatical patterns, students are less likely to grasp the underlying structural differences. This cursory approach is inconsistent with recommendations put forward by Bryan (2004) and the Panel on Education (Bryan, 2011) that point out that contrastive activities must be explicit and used in prewriting and shared writing activities so that students grasp the structures as different.

The cursory approach taken to the inclusion of the home language in literacy instruction, however, is somewhat understandable given the precarious positioning of the LEP which remains a draft document. As the LEP was never approved by parliament, curriculum and textbook developers are restricted in the lengths they can go to address the creole in the writing classroom and in treating learners as bilingual, as this premise was rejected by the government. Furthermore, without the approval of the LEP and its attending recommendations, teachers have not received training in teaching learners to differentiate the languages and therefore textbooks and curriculum will need to be in alignment with this.

As a point of integration, these findings will be revisited in Chapter Eight to explore the level of alignment between government policy and teacher practice in supporting the writing development of learners more dominant in Jamaican Creole. Content analysis findings will also be integrated in the final findings chapter focused on student writing outcomes. This chapter has served to provide insight into policy and curriculum guidelines for the writing classroom. The upcoming chapters will focus on empirical research exploring the nature of the writing classroom and student writing outcomes.

6. Classroom Methodology

This chapter provides an outline of the research methodology adopted for data collection and analysis in the classroom phases of the study involving both students and teachers. Student participants completed a series of writing, language proficiency, and cognitive tasks, which were scored and analysed using inferential tests. Teachers participated in online semi-structured interviews, which were analysed thematically. Detailed discussions of the study context, the sampling approach, data collection instruments, and procedures are provided in the current chapter. Ethical considerations and methodological limitations are also discussed.

6.1 Study Context

Two pieces of contextual information are of utmost importance to situating this study: the immediate fieldwork setting and the wider ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic that marked the data collection period and changed the nature of educational instruction and research. Both contextual aspects had unique but also intersecting effects in this study, particularly in terms of access to education and, by extension, participation in the study. The effects of COVID-19-related school closures on education in rural communities in developing countries present a different picture from that of more developed and wealthier areas, particularly in terms of access to online education. The impact of school closures on the design and findings of the study are discussed further in the upcoming sections and throughout this thesis.

6.1.1 The Study Location

Classroom data collection was situated in one of the main towns in the parish of St. Ann, located eight miles from the north coast of the island, with a population of over 9000 (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2011). The centre of commerce in the bustling rural town is the popular

local market that attracts farmers, higglers, and shoppers from across the island particularly on 'Market Days'. In addition to the local market, the town is also known as the educational hub of the parish; with three high schools, two primary schools, two infant schools, the only school for the deaf located outside of the capital, and a community college, all within the town limits. Jamaica is known for having the most churches per square mile in the world (Olsen, 1999; McKoy, 2017) and the town in which this study is situated is no exception, with over 20 churches in the area. Thus, regular attendance at Sunday School and other weekday Bible programs is the norm for most children growing up in the area.

The town's proximity to the North Coast — the tourism hub of the island — and its status as an agricultural and educational centre in the parish mean that in addition to farming and vending, residents generally work as teachers and in the service industry as hotel staff, helpers, taxi drivers, and as civil servants. Additionally, a large bauxite mining site is in the parish of St. Ann that provides employment for many men in the town. Given the nature of these jobs, most residents generally have a low to modest income. As it relates to access to pertinent resources, many homes still do not have running water. However, residents are generally able to access water tanks or 'stand-pipes' in the community.

The universities on the island are located in the capital, therefore students who are able pursue higher education must move away from the area and tend to remain in the city after completing their degrees for greater job opportunities and the possibility of upward social mobility. The town therefore has a flatter socioeconomic spread as compared to more metropolitan areas of the island with wider variation in income, education levels, and household resources.

6.1.2 COVID-19 and Data Collection

Data collection took place during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in Jamaica, when schools were closed and instruction moved online. Moving school online introduced a host of factors that resulted in the exclusion of many students from schooling, and by extension, from this study. In a report in the national newspaper in May 2021 the Hon. Fayval Williams, the Minister of Education, reported that over 120,000 students had failed to attend online school in the last year. Williams commented, “We know that there are many challenges facing students and parents. We know that not everyone has proper connectivity and even in cases where they do, they might not have the money for the data plans and so on” (Wilson-Harris, 2021). All activities in this study were carried out online and therefore relied on a stable internet connection which often proved to be a challenge for some students due to electricity outages and limited access to the internet and devices — issues which are generally more prevalent in rural areas like the study context. Additionally, while some students were being supervised by caregivers who ensured that school tasks were completed and submitted, many children remained unsupervised during the day. In other cases, children gained the added responsibility of working to assist their families during the pandemic or taking care of younger siblings during the day. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and data collection must be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings of this study and will be considered in the discussion of findings.

6.2 Recruitment and Sampling

The study population included typically developing primary school students in Grade Six (11 and 12 year olds) at Jamaican public schools. It is important to note that two types of primary-level education are available in Jamaica — public and preparatory (private) schooling—

the former being free of cost and located throughout the country, and the latter charging relatively high tuition fees and more commonly located in high SES communities within urban centres. Based on the research objectives, it was important to recruit a sample that included a significant number of students who were likely to speak Jamaican Creole as a home language. A purposive sampling approach was therefore taken to recruit students from public schools in a rural town where a higher proportion of the student population would be more likely to speak Jamaican Creole than would be found in a 'prep school' in the capital. Having grown up and attended primary school in the rural town previously described in section 6.1.1, I was able to gain access to each school through personal connections with administrators. The recruitment process and resulting sample are described in the upcoming sections.

6.2.1 Recruitment

In January 2021 documentation was submitted to the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Education outlining the research aims, the nature of each activity, as well as ethical clearance from the University of Oxford. While this was not a requirement, in the absence of clear guidelines for carrying out research in schools from the Ministry of Education, the decision was made to inform the Ministry of the study plans. Principals from each school were then contacted first by phone to establish a connection and to issue an initial invitation for participation and subsequently by email with the study details and ethics documents. I worked directly with the Grade Six coordinator at each school to schedule data collection sessions which took place during language arts sessions, as well as to arrange informational meetings with teachers and to share consent documents with parents.

6.2.2 School One

Fifty-two students drawn from six Grade Six classes at School One were included in the study. School One is a co-ed whole-day primary school located in the south-end of the town serving children in the town centre and its close environs. School One is the larger of the two schools included in the study with 1006 students enrolled and a 35:1 student to teacher ratio (MoEY, 2020; National Education Inspectorate, 2011). Consistent with the SES profile of the town, the school serves children from low to middle income families with parents working mostly in the tourism or bauxite mining industries (National Education Inspectorate, 2011). As a public school, the school receives funding from the Jamaican Government.

6.2.3 School Two

Thirty-eight students drawn from four Grade Six classes at School Two were included in the study. School Two is located at the north-end of the town and serves students from the town centre and the surrounding environs. In the most recent audit, the school had a population of 686 students and a 29:1 student to teacher ratio (MoEY, 2020). Like School One, the SES of the town is generally reflected in the school population with parents working in tourism, education, and as civil servants. As a public school, the school receives funding from the Jamaican Government. School 2 was recruited in March 2021 after data collection at School One was completed (February 2021). Importantly, there are no systematic differences between the schools in terms of socioeconomic status or learner populations. Students generally attend the school closest to home or the school with available space at the time of enrolment. Accordingly, no school effects were anticipated.

6.2.4 Students

Altogether, the student sample included 90 learners (mean age: 11.4), 35 of whom were boys and 55 of whom were girls. Forty-two students spoke Jamaican Creole as a home language and 48 spoke Standard Jamaican English (English) as a home language. Students in Grades Three and Five were initially included in the sampling frame, however, the pilot phase of the study highlighted challenges for data collection with these younger learners owing to differences in the structure and consistency of online instruction offered at these grade levels as well as learners' challenges with using online classroom technology independently. The decision was therefore made to exclude these grade levels and focus on learners in Grade Six. At the point of data collection, Grade Six students were preparing for the national Primary Exit Profile (PEP) exam; a high stakes test that determines secondary school placement. This meant that Grade Six students were receiving more structured online instruction given the upcoming exams in May 2021. Additionally, both school principals recommended working with this group as they struggled less with the use of online classroom technology and as school administrators, they were eager to gain insight into the literacy readiness of their students who would soon transition to secondary school. Grade Six represents a pivotal point in the Jamaican educational system marking the transition from primary to secondary education and as such, research with learners in this transitional stage can provide useful insight into secondary school readiness and possible gaps in writing skills.

6.2.5 Teachers

The population of focus was Grade Six teachers in Jamaican public schools. Ten teachers (two men, 8 women) took part in the study, each one being the classroom teacher for one of the intact

Grade 6 classes included in the study. This purposive sampling approach marked a key point of mixed methods integration at the methodological level in this study as the sample from the quantitative portion of the study (students) determined the teacher sample for the subsequent qualitative portion of the study. All teachers had received formal teacher training with qualifications at the diploma, bachelor's, or master's level, had been teaching at the primary school level between 5-16 years, and reported following the National Standards Curriculum for language arts instruction. Though all 10 teachers attended the student data collection sessions and provided a report on the dominant language of each student, only nine teachers (2 men, 7 women) agreed to participate in the interviews. The upcoming section outlines the triangulated approach to language group allocation in this study.

6.3 Language Group Allocation

Though some studies have highlighted differences in the educational outcomes of Jamaican Creole speakers (e.g., Craig, 1983; Christie, 2003; Siegel, 2007), in most cases, it is unclear whether or how researchers have determined the language dominance of participants (i.e., Jamaican Creole or English). A few researchers have attempted to categorize learners for the sake of comparison in language-related studies with creole-speaking populations (Clachar, 2005; Nero, 1997; Wright-Karem, 2021) – acknowledging the important fact that not all Caribbean children are creole dominant. Wright-Karem (2021) relied on teacher and parent reports of language usage, and both Nero (1997) and Clachar (2005) classified learners based on the presence of morphological features associated with the creole in speech during interviews. The latter approach acknowledges that while many speakers are able to shift between lects, shifting is governed, among other things, by competence and therefore creole-dominant speakers

will produce more creole features (Winford, 1997). Each of these approaches however, on their own, while having merit also have limitations and these are addressed in the upcoming section.

Given that this study aims to understand the nature of writing and the specific challenges, if any, experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as their dominant language, it was essential to group student participants. Therefore, while the creole continuum has three main points (basilectal, mesolectal and acrolectal) as discussed in Chapter Three, the decision was made to divide learners into only two home language groups based on dominance (Jamaican Creole and English). In this way, a child who was able to speak a mesolectal variety but was also highly proficient in English would be allocated to the English group as this child would not be likely to experience the same challenges as another with low English proficiency.

In the absence of an established methodological protocol for language group allocation and the challenges introduced by the creole continuum, a triangulated approach was adopted to determine participants' more dominant language based on language usage and proficiency to allocate learners to language groups (Jamaican Creole and English). Drawing on and supplementing methods used in prior studies (Clachar, 2005; Nero, 1997; Wright-Karem, 2021), this approach included three data sources: teacher report, a researcher-developed grammaticality judgement task (GJT), and a language environment questionnaire completed by parents or guardians. Each data source is described in the upcoming sections and the procedure for group allocation is also outlined in section 6.3.4.

6.3.1 Teacher Report

Through a series of teacher-researcher meetings following student data collection, teachers reported on the home language of each student based on language usage and proficiency in English. As a large portion of children's days are spent at school, teachers were able to

provide information concerning the language a child uses more frequently and with more ease at school, as well as how children perform on oral language assessments as outlined in the national curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2018). Teachers who knew individual parents and/or guardians were also able to comment on parental language.

As highlighted in Chapter Three, the issue of speakers being unclear on the boundaries between Jamaican Creole and English was raised, and so an obvious concern in using teacher reports of student's home languages was their ability to reliably do so. Teacher reports were first piloted at the lower grade levels (Grades 3 and 5). Results showed that for more clear-cut cases teachers were able to make language group judgements with ease as evidenced in their comments during a debrief (e.g., X-student speaks Jamaican Creole most of the time, Y-student hardly speaks English, Z-student never speaks Jamaican Creole). However, further discussion with the researcher and reference to oral language performance of students was particularly necessary to aid judgements for students whose language dominance was less clear-cut for teachers. Thus, the process of language group allocation was iterative in nature. Teachers were first asked to provide an initial list categorizing students based on their home language into the groups: 'Jamaican Creole', 'English', or 'mixed/unsure'. In this initial list, teachers were instructed to categorize students as 'Jamaican Creole' or 'English' *only* when the cases were clear and obvious and to place all other cases in the 'unsure/mixed' category. The language grouping of the latter group was then decided through further teacher-researcher conferencing, with reference to scores on the GJT described in the upcoming section. This process is described more fully in section 6.3.4 where language group procedures are outlined.

6.3.2 Grammaticality Judgement Task

Given the unique linguistic context and the absence of standardized tests for learners with Jamaican Creole as a dominant language, a researcher-developed grammaticality judgement task (GJT) was used to assess grammatical knowledge of key constructs that distinguish Jamaican Creole and English (see Appendix C). In this way, the GJT served as a performance- or proficiency-based data source for language group allocation. Grammaticality judgement tasks are a common language elicitation method wherein participants make decisions concerning the correctness of sentences in a particular language (Mackey & Gass, 2015; Murphy, 1997). As discussed in the literature review, the grammatical base of creoles is what establishes them as a language and is the key point of divergence from the lexifier language. That said, while measures of vocabulary are widely accepted and used in research as proxies for language proficiency, they do not suffice for the purpose of allocating learners to language groups in the Jamaican creole context given that much of the lexicons of each language are shared.

A key benefit of the GJT is that it allows for the elicitation and analysis of specific grammatical constructs which may not be produced readily in more natural production tasks (Ellis, 1991; Gutiérrez, 2013; Mackey & Gass, 2015; Murphy, 1997). This was of particular importance in the present study as other standardized tests of grammatical knowledge such as the TROG-2 (Bishop, 2003) did not tap the key grammatical structures that differentiate English and Jamaican Creole in the pilot phase, and as such were not found to be fit for purpose in the Jamaican context. Grammaticality judgement tasks however are not without challenges and research has shown that the design and modality of GJTs impact performance and the type of knowledge accessed (Bialystok, 1978; Ellis, 1991; Loewen, 2009; Murphy, 1997). Considering

this, much care was put into the development and administration of tasks particularly in the areas of modality, content, and linguistic complexity. These considerations are presented below.

Modality. The GJT was aural and timed. Being a native Jamaican, I read the 22 sentences to ensure that the accent would be clear and familiar to participants. Each sentence consisted of four or five words and had a duration of three seconds. Upon hearing the sentence, participants had seven seconds to make a judgement by selecting "YES" or "NO" on an online Google Form. Once all 22 questions were read and responded to, the form was submitted.

The decision to make the GJT a timed task with no opportunity for review was in line with Mackey and Gass' (2015) GJT guidelines in which they argue that if the aim of the task is to gain insight into students' grammar as opposed to their knowledge of formal rules, timed tasks that do not allow opportunity for review or revision are more effective. Loewen (2009) points out that though there is no established response time to decrease the likelihood of participants accessing explicit knowledge of formal rules, common time spans in the literature range between three to ten seconds. Student performance and feedback during the pilot phase showed that ten seconds was too long a duration and seven seconds proved most appropriate for learners to make implicit judgements without much opportunity for reflection on explicit grammatical rules (Loewen, 2009).

GJT items were presented aurally to limit construct irrelevant variability. While there is an orthographic system for Jamaican Creole (i.e., the Cassidy-JLU orthographic system), this is primarily used by linguists and not the Jamaican layperson who, when writing in creole, would tend to do so primarily for social reasons (e.g., texting, social media posts) using English orthography. The presentation of sentences in written Jamaican Creole in an academic setting would therefore appear foreign to participants — likely resulting in ceiling effects due to the

obvious departure from English. This decision, however, was a trade-off between construct validity and task difficulty as research has shown a statistically significant interaction between task modality and accuracy wherein participants make less accurate judgements of ungrammatical sentences and have slower response times when presented with items aurally rather than visually (Murphy, 1997). Performance on the pilot task however confirmed that the task was manageable for students.

Linguistic Complexity. Each sentence was four or five words in length and consisted of simple vocabulary items familiar to students and basic sentence structures (e.g., no subordination or passive voice). Murphy (1997) points out that the use of proper nouns can introduce bias as learners may react differently to specific names. As a result, the choice was taken to exclude the use of proper nouns in sentences saving one instance in which the name of the town where all the participants lived was used. Considering that all students were equally familiar with the name of the town, no bias is expected to have been introduced in this case.

Content. Bryan (2010) provides a description of Jamaican Creole based on a compilation of syntactic rules primarily outlined by Bailey (1966) that highlights the key features distinguishing Jamaican Creole from English. The GJT tested four key grammatical constructs as outlined by Bryan (2010) including Subject-verb agreement, tense marking, copula deletion, and pronoun marking (see Table 6.1). The four selected grammatical constructs are ubiquitous in Jamaican speech and could be included with ease in simple sentences while maintaining the sentence length and timing constraints set for the task. Additionally, these morphosyntactic features have been used by other Caribbean researchers as markers of creole language influence (e.g., Clachar, 2005; Malcolm, 2021; Nero, 1997)

Table 6.1

Grammatical Constructs Tested in the GJT (Adapted from Bryan 2010, pp. 8-9)

Construct	**Rule**	**Example**
Subject-Verb Agreement	There is no subject-verb concord in Creole; there is no requirement that verbs agree with respect to number	*Di bwai ron* The boy runs/the boys run
Tense Marking	The tense system uses the unmarked verb, as well as a particle indicating 'past'	*Him (ben) iit/him (did) iit it* He has eaten/he ate
Personal Pronouns	Personal pronouns do not vary to indicate gender or case. '*Mi*' for example, can be used to refer to subject, object, or possessive.	***Mi** gaan a **mi** yaad* I am going (to my) home
Copula Deletion	The creole adjective like the verb, predicates without the use of the copula	*Mi sik* I am sick

To avoid inaccurate judgements from the student participants due to weariness or boredom, only a modest number of items (22 sentences) were included in the task (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Each grammatical construct was tested in 5 different sentences (three ungrammatical and two grammatical) and two distracter items were included which did not test any of the grammatical areas of focus and did not count towards the final score. Each ungrammatical sentence (n = 12) contained only one error and grammatical constructs and sentence types (grammatical and ungrammatical) were spread throughout the task instead of being grouped together to prevent participants from guessing patterns (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Sample items from the GJT are included below:

1. My friend love mangoes. * (subject-verb agreement)
2. We love our school. *[DISTRACTOR ITEM]*
3. He climb the tree yesterday.* (unmarked tense)
4. The boys run to school.
5. My friend sick today. * (copula deletion)
6. Him gone to him house. * (invariant pronoun)

Admittedly, having slightly more ungrammatical items (n =12) than grammatical items (n = 8) meant that if a participant guessed that every sentence was incorrect, they could still have a score of 60%. However, this approach has been used in other second language studies to target the grammatical constructs of focus while maintaining a conservative number of test items (e.g., Ellis, 1991; Tabatabaei & Deghani, 2012). Given the time restrictions for classroom data collection in the present study, this approach was adopted.

6.3.3 Home Language and Literacy Environment Questionnaire

Two questionnaires were combined into one online survey instrument and distributed to parents to collect information concerning students' home language environment (Part 1) and home literacy environment (Part 2) (see Appendix D). The Language Environment Questionnaire portion of the survey was intended to be used as one of the sources for determining language group allocation while the scores from the Home Literacy Environment portion (Part Two) were intended to be used as a covariate in the data analysis when investigating differences in the writing outcomes between both language groups. The survey went live on March 22, 2021 and was closed on June 30, 2021. Teachers shared the link to the survey through their WhatsApp groups for parents and sent reminders to complete the survey throughout the data collection period. Unfortunately, despite numerous efforts to boost survey

completion, low response rates from the parents of the students included in the study meant that the data from the language environment questionnaire and home literacy questionnaire could not be used for their initial purposes, that is, for language group allocation and to control for the effect of home literacy environments in the quantitative analysis. These methodological issues and their implications are addressed in the results and discussion chapters. Nevertheless, the information from both sources proved useful in providing a richer description of the context.

Home Language Environment. Language environment questionnaires are widely used in second language acquisition studies to determine the nature of language usage in the home. The language environment questionnaire in this study was an adaptation of the Alberta Language Environment Questionnaire (ALEQ) created by Paradis (2008) to provide insight into the language background of children with EAL in Alberta, Canada. The tool is not specific to any particular home language and takes into consideration the learner's language input and output with parents (or main caregiver), adult relatives, siblings, and playmates. This wide scope proved particularly relevant for the Jamaican context given that in many cases multiple generations live together in homes and children are often raised by grandparents or other relatives.

In its original format, the ALEQ is administered as an interview. However, with schools being closed and the risk of COVID-19 infection, there was no opportunity to meet with parents in-person and time constraints made calling all parents impractical. Therefore, the questionnaire was administered as an online survey. In addition to changes in the mode of administration, contextual changes were made to the content of the questionnaire. For example, questions related to immigration to Canada (e.g., How many years have you been in Canada/approximate date of arrival?) as well as those inquiring about children's length of exposure to English were removed.

None of these items counted towards the original LEQ score and therefore there was no need to adapt the scoring procedure.

A five-step Likert scale was used in the language environment questionnaire wherein responses indicating more dominant use of Jamaican Creole were given lower scores and responses indicating more dominant use of English in the home were given higher scores. The assignment of lower scores to Jamaican Creole and higher scores to English was not value laden but simply in keeping with the approach used by Paradis (2008) in the scoring rubric. Home language scores were calculated by dividing a participant's total score by their total number of scores. Lower scores indicated more dominant use of Jamaican Creole in the home while higher scores indicated more dominant use of English in the home.

Home Literacy Environment (HLE). The second section of the online questionnaire for parents or guardians focused on children's HLE. Data derived from this portion of the online survey was intended to control for the effects of students' HLEs when investigating the differences in writing outcomes between the language groups. The HLE section of the questionnaire was adapted from Buvaneswari's and Padakannaya's (2017) Home Literacy Environment questionnaire for kindergarteners in India with Tamil as a home language. Though other tools have been created to explore HLE, the questionnaire created by Buvaneswari and Padakannaya was found to be particularly suitable for this study due to significant contextual parallels: the tool was specifically created for a lower income context and for children whose home language differed from English — the language of schooling.

The questions in the instrument tap the five dimensions of home literacy environment outlined in the literature: "physical literacy environment, parent literacy habits, child's own

literacy habits, parent-child interaction for language and literacy activities, and parental beliefs about literacy" (Buvaneswari & Padakannaya, 2017, pp. 6-7). The instrument was adapted to suit the Jamaican context (e.g., questions were added regarding Sunday School attendance, reading the local newspapers, and specific writing activities) but also reduced (e.g., culturally irrelevant items removed) to suit the online platform and to encourage survey completion. One contextual limitation of the adapted instrument was that it failed to elicit information concerning oral storytelling in the home. As the sharing oral folktales, particularly by older generations is a key part of Jamaican culture, the questionnaire likely failed to capture the full essence of the HLEs of some families.

A Likert scale format was used for responses in the HLE questionnaire with parents and caregivers indicating the frequency with which they engaged in or observed particular literacy activities or behaviours in their home (e.g., never; not often; sometimes; often; very often) and their beliefs about literacy (e.g., strongly agree; somewhat agree; not sure; somewhat disagree; strongly disagree). Responses were rated from one to five, with responses indicating disagreement or low frequency receiving lower scores and responses indicating frequency and greater agreement receiving higher scores. Once the survey was completed a total score was calculated for HLE with higher scores indicating a richer or more supportive home literacy environment.

6.3.4 Language Group Allocation Procedure

Due to low response rates, it was not possible to use the language environment questionnaire for language group allocation. It was used instead as a descriptive tool for the study context. With two sources remaining (teacher report and GJT), straightforward cases in which both

sources leaned strongly to one language were decided first. That is, participants for whom teachers in the first instance could make a confident judgement of their home language and whose scores on the GJT aligned with teacher judgements were allocated first. For example, a child who a teacher deemed to speak Jamaican Creole as a home language and whose score on the GJT fell below the sample average was allocated to the Jamaican Creole language group.

However, in a few instances (n = 8), allocation was not as straightforward and was carried out on a case-by-case basis through further teacher-researcher conferencing. For such cases, in addition to referencing the score on the GJT, additional information was sought from teachers concerning students' English language proficiency as reflected in recent assessments, as well as their language usage with teachers, classmates, and parents if known. One such example can be seen in Table 6.2.

In terms of proficiency, teachers were asked about student performance on their most recent end of term language arts assessments (December 2020), particularly in the oral language and listening module as well as the grammar and conventions module. Additionally, as the national PEP exam consists of a series of assessments between Grades Four and Six that creates a profile for each student, it was informative for allocation purposes. As all students would have completed assessments in each language skill in line with the National Curriculum in Grades Four and Five, measures of student performance from these assessments were also sought from teachers. As these documents and grades are confidential, teachers were simply asked to give general reports such as low levels of performance, average levels of performance, and so on. In terms of language usage, teachers were asked questions concerning the student's language usage with them (the teacher), with classmates, the parents' language, and comments on the child's language use with parents if known.

Table 6.2

Example of Group Allocation Procedure

Participant: #34 Initially placed in the 'mixed/unsure' category by teacher. Final allocation: Jamaican Creole		
Additional Information	**Response**	**Notes/Relevance**
Does this student perform at a low level/ struggle in all or most subject areas?	No	This was to ensure that language dominance was not being conflated with overall ability.
Oral assessment *(end of term exams, PEP exam performance in years 4-5)*	Below average	
Grammar conventions assessment *(end of term exams, PEP exam performance in years 4-5)*	Below average	
Overall performance in English	Low performance	
Language to you	Mixed	
Parents language & interactions with child	Creole dominant, sometimes English	
Language to classmates	Creole dominant	Creole
Performance on GJT	12/22	Below sample mean - indicating creole dominance

It was generally found that when teachers initially placed a student in the mixed/unsure category, following further discussion, these students were assigned to the Jamaican Creole group. The initial confusion on the part of teachers often came from the child being able to use some English but not being highly proficient in the language particularly as evidenced in assessments. There was, however, a limitation to this approach, as the inclusion of language proficiency measures from teachers to determine language groups could have caused some circularity in findings. In light of this limitation, statistical analyses for each measure were run twice — in one instance including the eight participants who were somewhat difficult to classify and then excluding them in a second set of analyses (see Appendix E). As no differences

emerged between both sets of inferential analyses exploring language group differences (language proficiency, cognitive ability, writing), the decision was made to retain the eight learners in the dataset. Therefore, the results presented in Chapter Nine are representative of all 90 participants.

In relying on different sources of data to determine group allocation, it is hoped that the inherent limitations of each estimate were offset by the strengths of the other (Dörnyei, 2007), to create a stronger indicator of a child's dominant language than any one measure could provide given the complexity of the linguistic context. The subsequent section describes the instruments and procedures used in classroom data collection with students.

6.4 Classroom Data Collection Instruments

The instruments used for student data collection during online classroom sessions fell under two categories: background measures and written expression. Background measures included language proficiency and cognitive ability and were used to describe the sample while the written expression measure was the key outcome variable in the quantitative portion of the study. The GJT task also was administered during the classroom data collection sessions, however, as a description of the instrument and its administration was provided in the previous section, this information will not be repeated in this section. Background measures will first be discussed in the upcoming section, followed by a description of the written expression measure.

6.4.1 Background Measures

Two standardised measured were used to collect information on language proficiency and cognitive ability – the vocabulary subtest from the WISC-IV and the Matrix Reasoning subtest of

the WASI-II. In evaluating the validity and reliability of data collection instruments, researchers have underlined the importance of considering cultural, socio-economic, instructional, and linguistic factors that have significant bearing on how participants perform (Fraine & McDade, 2009; Kahlon, 2021; Laher & Cockcroft, 2017; Nag, 2016; Vagh & Nag, 2019). Accordingly, while it was not possible to run statistical checks of validity and reliability for the background measures, these psychometric constructs have been considered in line with Bachman and Palmer's (2006) framework of test usefulness which addresses not only the reliability and validity of psychometric tests but also the authenticity and suitability of measures within a context. In keeping with such an approach, factors such as task and content familiarity, cultural item bias, and the linguistic influence of the home language were considered in reference to the WASI-II Matrix Reasoning task and the WISC-IV Vocabulary subtest in the Jamaican context.

6.4.1.1 Language Proficiency (Vocabulary)

Given the focus on literacy in the present study it was important to measure language proficiency not only to describe the sample but also because language proficiency has been found to be the strongest predictor of educational attainment (Demie, 2018; Demie & Strand, 2006; Strand & Hessel, 2018), and writing outcomes more specifically (Babayiğit, 2014; Ball, 2003). Without a global measure of language proficiency, vocabulary knowledge is widely used as a proxy measure and has found to be strongly correlated with literacy skills (Anderson & Freebody, 1981; Babayiğit, 2014; Burgoyne et al., 2011; Cameron, 2003; Cameron & Besser, 2004; Hutchinson et al., 2003; Laufer, 1997; Murphy et al., 2015). In the light of this, language proficiency was measured using the vocabulary subtest of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-IV) (Wechsler, 2004). While the British Picture Vocabulary Test is the more commonly used measure of vocabulary knowledge and was the intended measure of language proficiency, test availability in Jamaica was limited and copyright laws prohibited the online

administration of the test. The vocabulary subset of the WISC-IV was recommended and provided by an educational psychologist at one of the few assessment centres on the island as it was one of the main tests being used as proxy measure of children's language proficiency as part of larger cognitive assessments.

Forming part of the verbal comprehension composite, the task is an expressive vocabulary knowledge test suitable for learners between the ages of six and 16. Participants are presented with 36 vocabulary items of increasing difficulty (e.g., cow, clock, ancient, dilatory) and are required to provide a definition orally. The WISC-IV vocabulary subtest manual stipulates that 'any recognized meaning of the word is acceptable, but lack of content is penalized' (p. 103)'. Accordingly, each response is awarded a score of two, one, or zero based on knowledge of the concept as outlined for each item in the scoring manual.

Bachman and Palmer (1996) highlight test authenticity as key factor in determining the usefulness of a language test for a specific context. Test authenticity addresses the overlap between the nature of the test and the nature of tasks experienced outside of the testing situation. Within cross-cultural language testing situations, authenticity involves participants level of familiarity with both the nature of the content and structure of the task (Reynolds & Ramsay, 2009; Nag, 2016; Vagh & Nag, 2019). In the present study, prior to data collection, teachers confirmed that word definition tasks were commonly used in language arts lessons and therefore were not foreign to students. Nevertheless, it is also worth acknowledging that task familiarity does not always equate with validity. In the Indian context, Vagh and Nag (2019) point out that while word definition tasks are used frequently language instruction, they tend to involve memorization and rote reproductions on exams. In such contexts, these tasks may not always accurately measure the intended underlying construct – that is, depth of vocabulary knowledge,

and therefore may have limited construct validity. Based on the structure of national primary exit exams (PEP) which emphasizes critical thinking skills rather than memorization (MoEY, 2018), and anecdotal knowledge of the use of word definition tasks in language arts classes (i.e., in-class or take-home assignments with the aid of a dictionary or thesaurus which are not tested on exams), there did not appear to be a focus on memorizing and reproducing word definitions. As such, it is likely that the word definition task had suitable levels of ecological validity in this regard.

Related to task familiarity, is learners' familiarity with the content in the language task which includes age or developmental appropriateness and opportunities for exposure to the nature of vocabulary included in the task (Laher & Cockcroft, 2017; Vagh & Nag, 2019). Being norm-referenced on six to 16-year-olds, the WISC-IV vocabulary task includes vocabulary items that range from relatively simple high frequency words (e.g., clock, umbrella) to more complex words that are generally acquired later in language development (e.g., ancient, rivalry), with some items being well beyond the expected Grade Six proficiency level. The task therefore covered a variety of age and English proficiency levels. However, in terms of exposure, there are limitations on the appropriateness of the task for capturing vocabulary knowledge of the entire sample that are worth considering.

With particular reference to the use of word definition tasks, learners' performance may also be impacted by their opportunities for exposure to vocabulary items included in the task (Kahlon, 2021; Vagh & Nag, 2019). In the present study, it is possible that due to variation across home language and literacy environments (e.g., number of books in the home, parental involvement in literacy activities, parental literacy), some participants would not have had the same opportunities for exposure to the vocabulary included in the word definition task at home

and therefore would be put at a disadvantage relative to learners with more facilitative home literacy environments. Relatedly, while each vocabulary item was checked by the primary researcher and teachers were made aware of the items, the use of vocabulary items more likely to be encountered by Caribbean primary school children in books and instruction would have been more ideal. However, there was no existing database to provide such information. It is therefore worth acknowledging that variation in children's' level of exposure to the vocabulary items included in the task likely introduced some amount of bias in the findings from the WISC-IV vocabulary subtest. As a result, a cautious interpretation of the findings is encouraged.

It is also important to consider the ways in which bilingualism and linguistic features of the home language can impact a learner's performance on language tests (Kahlon, 2021; Laher & Cockcroft, 2017; Vagh & Nag, 2019). As a Jamaican native, I reviewed each vocabulary item to check for any items that could cause possible confusion for participants due to semantic and phonological interference from the home language. Patterns in student answers were also considered to explore if any cultural understandings and/ or linguistic factors played a role in how students defined particular words. Assessment was adapted for any response that showed patterns of cultural loading- that is, the influence of cultural understandings and experiences (Reynolds & Ramsay, 2009) (see section 6.5 for an example). This prevented students from being penalised for culturally influenced responses that were at odds with the options provided in the manual. Altogether, while a word-definition task developed specifically for Jamaican learners would have been ideal, in the absence of such a measure and considering the efforts made to improve the usefulness and fairness of the measure for Jamaican students, the WISC-IV vocabulary subtest was deemed to be a sufficiently appropriate measure of English vocabulary

knowledge for research purposes. However, given the limitations of possible cultural bias, the findings from the WISC-IV vocabulary subtest must be interpreted with caution.

6.4.1.2 Non-Verbal IQ

The Matrix Reasoning subtest of the Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence (WASI-II) (Wechsler, 2011) was administered to determine whether both language groups were of comparable levels of cognitive ability. The Matrix Reasoning task is a standardized measure of non-verbal cognitive ability and has been found to be a valid, reliable, and time efficient measure (25 minutes) in contexts where the full test battery is neither viable nor necessary (McCrimmon & Smith, 2012). The task involves pattern completion wherein participants are presented with a matrix of images and are required to select the image that best completes the pattern from a list of five options.

In the absence of locally developed measures, non-verbal measures of cognitive ability have been identified as a more suitable form of testing when working cross-culturally and in linguistically diverse contexts (Fraine & McDade, 2009; Laher & Cockcroft, 2017; Reynolds & Ramsay, 2003). The preference for non-verbal measures is owing to the tendency of such measures to use more neutral stimuli that are less impacted by culture, language proficiency, and socioeconomic status. Accordingly, in the absence of any standardized tests for creole speakers, the WASI-II Matrix Reasoning task was deemed most suitable as the non-verbal nature of the test meant that participants with greater English proficiency did not have a linguistic advantage over those more dominant in the creole. Additionally, in terms of content and structure, the Matrix Reasoning subtest was judged as having ecological relevance in the study context as classroom teachers confirmed that the test items were very similar to the items in the Mental Ability subtest of the National Primary Exit Profile (PEP) exams for which the students were

being prepared. Therefore, the structure and content of the test were familiar to the students. However, as the instrument is norm referenced on a UK population, only raw scores were used in this study.

While efforts were made to maintain methodological rigor in the present study, it is worth reiterating that the use of measures from another culture and the inability to run statistical reliability checks (e.g., test-retest reliability) on these standardized measures due to time limits on data collection sessions, call for a cautious interpretation of the findings. As indicated earlier, only raw scores will be used for both background measures, and to increase the reliability and trustworthiness of the findings, a detailed description of the adaptations made to each test during administration and assessment is provided in section 6.5. Issues concerning the reliability and validity of these measures in the present study are further discussed in Section 6.9

6.4.3 Written Expression

Written expression was assessed using Dunsmuir et al.'s (2015) Writing Analysis Measure (WAM). The WAM is an analytic assessment rubric for narrative writing which, in line with the Simple View of Writing, focuses on both lower- and higher-level skills including handwriting, spelling, vocabulary, punctuation, sentence structure and grammar, organization, and ideas. In line with the study aims, the assessment of students' narrative writing serves as a useful diagnostic tool for pinpointing specific areas of challenge in writing as well as low target language proficiency and oral language skills (Nag, 2013). In this way, the assessment of narrative writing can guide writing pedagogy and intervention programs.

Though originally developed to reflect the targets outlined for writing in the national curriculum of England and Wales (Dunsmuir et al., 2015), the instrument's targets mirror the

written expression benchmarks outlined in Jamaica's National Standards Curriculum (MoEY, 2016). In addition to its suitability for the Jamaican context, this instrument was chosen because of the analytic approach taken to scoring texts. Analytic scoring provides a more detailed assessment of writing through the evaluation of individual component skills (e.g., vocabulary, organization, sentence structure) in one piece of writing (Dunsmuir et al., 2015) and has been found to have greater reliability and validity than holistic measures which tend to be more subjective in nature (East, 2009; Espin et al., 2004). Additionally, analytic scoring provided greater insight into the areas of strength and weakness in writing thus proving more instructive for the development of writing interventions due to its explicit focus on component skills of writing (Gregg & Mather, 2002).

Though example prompts are provided with the WAM, the key component is the rubric. This allowed greater flexibility in tailoring a prompt that suited Jamaican students. One of the prompts from the WAM which was used in the pilot study was slightly adapted as seen below in figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1

Written Expression Task

Writing Activity

Imagine that when the COVID-19 pandemic ends you could go anywhere on a trip with your family. You could go anywhere at all. Write about where you would go and the things you would do.

As the prompt did not require students to write about a specific type of experience (e.g., A Day at the Museum) it proved to be accessible to children with different experiences. Additionally, the task was deemed suitable as very similar prompts (e.g., going on a trip) were identified in the PEP sample papers made available on the Ministry of Education website. While the WAM provides two writing prompts, due to time restrictions and limits on some students' internet access, only one writing prompt was administered — a factor which is further addressed in the limitations section of this chapter. The subsequent section outlines the procedures employed during the data collection sessions with students and the adaptations made to activities in response to COVID-19 school closures.

6.5 Classroom Data Collection Procedures

Due a spike in cases of COVID-19 on the island the government decided against reopening for face-to-face instruction in 2021 therefore data collection was moved online using the ministry of Education approved Google Meet platform. The resulting adaptations to instruments and their administration are outlined in this section.

Data collection with students was carried out during regular scheduled online language arts sessions supervised by classroom teachers. Both schools allotted one hour and 15 minutes for data collection and extra time for introductions and for students to ask questions for clarification purposes. Sessions began with introductions which included a briefing on the study, a discussion about consent, and pictures of life in Oxford to engage the students. In each session, four different slideshows for each activity (WAM, WISC-IV, GJT, and WASI-II) were shared with participants via screen-sharing on the Google Meet platform. All activity responses were submitted via online response forms (Google Forms) except for the written

expression task in which case students took a picture of their work and submitted it via WhatsApp or email, as per usual practice in local schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All tasks were administered to whole (intact) classes online and all students used individual devices (i.e., laptops, desktop computers, tablets) in their own homes to complete the tasks. Students were asked to keep their cameras on and mics off during activities unless contributing to the session. This way, it was easier to monitor whether activity conditions were being met (e.g., working individually) and that all students could hear clearly and were not shouting the answers aloud as was sometimes the case during piloting. In addition to student instructions, family members who were at home during the data collection session were also provided with instructions regarding the independent work of students. The importance of ensuring that participants completed all the tasks on their own was explained and family members were explicitly asked to refrain from providing any support with any of the activities. It was made clear to family members that the tasks were not part of school exams and so students were welcome to ask the researcher questions if necessary. A full outline of all the task instructions provided during data collection (both for parents and students) is provided in Appendix K. The details of each activity are presented in the following section outlining the data collection instruments and any necessary adaptations.

Writing Analysis Measure (WAM)

In the written expression task (WAM) students were shown the prompt on the screen while hearing it being read twice. Once all students were clear on the instructions and had gathered their writing instruments, they were given 15 minutes to complete the task. Students were asked to keep their cameras on so that they could be monitored, particularly to avoid parents and siblings doing the activity for them- an issue encountered in the pilot study.

Nevertheless, some children were genuinely unable to keep their cameras on due to technical issues — a limitation in this study. The WAM was the first task administered to ensure that students had enough time to submit their work and were not tired from all the other activities. It was essential that students provided handwritten as opposed to typed scripts as it would not be possible to assess handwriting skills and autocorrect and predictive text functions would mask students actual control of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, vocabulary, and syntactic skills. As a result, students were required to take a clear picture of their handwritten work and send it to the phone number provided via WhatsApp. This procedure was recommended and approved by the schools and is further discussed in the ethics section (see section 6.10).

Scripts were scored in an iterative process by two markers: the primary researcher and a local teacher with training in Special Education and Literacy. Studies have shown differences in levels of inter-rater reliability for some component skills of writing more than others (e.g., Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004; Muenz et al., 1999). To increase reliability, the markers met together to discuss and apply a marking scheme by assessing five sample scripts together (from the pilot study) and created a guide for each criterion to limit subjectivity. Examples provided in the WAM rubric were also consulted. Each marker then independently scored an initial 10% of scripts according to the WAM rubric (see Appendix F) after which inter-rater reliability was checked and discrepancies discussed. Subsequently, another 10% of scripts were scored by both markers and inter-rater reliability was checked once again. Following this process, the remaining scripts were then scored by one marker against the WAM rubric, and the guide created by the markers. Interrater reliability outcomes are reported in the findings chapter.

One change was made to the rubric following the pilot. In the original rubric, scores for each skill ranged from one to four however none of these scores accounted for cases when there was simply no evidence of the skill to be assessed as was the case for some students in the pilot for punctuation and organization. For example, according to the original rubric, the lowest score (i.e., 1) for punctuation was given when a student "show[ed] awareness of how full stops are used in writing" (Dunsmuir et al., 2015, pp. 15). However, in a few cases, there was no evidence of full stops, and in such instances a score of zero was assigned in agreement with the second marker. The addition of a zero rating only applied to the skills of punctuation and organization.

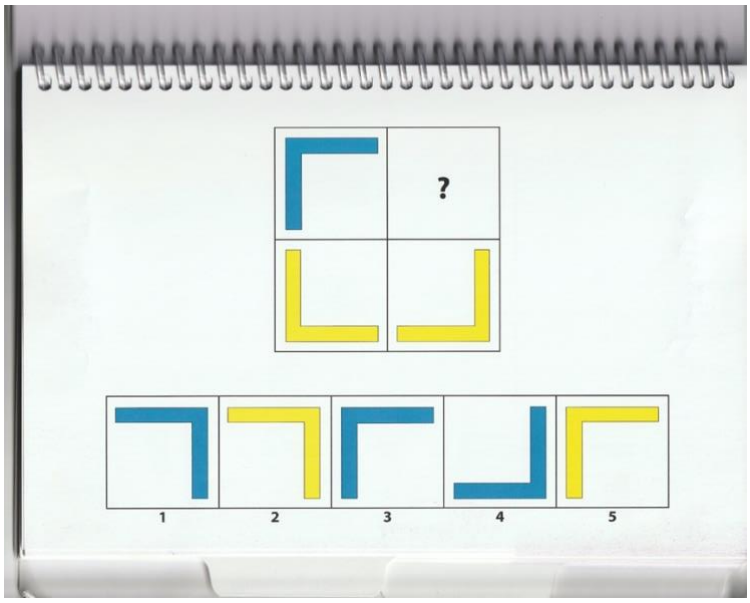
WASI-II Matrix Reasoning Task

The Matrix Reasoning subset of the WASI-II was administered to a whole-class using the Google Meet platform. The WASI-II guide requires that the test be administered individually and in-person with participants. However, given that the test served research and not clinical purposes and all students completed the test in the same conditions — a quiet place in their home, the findings still have ecological validity and were instrumental in checking for statistically significant differences in cognitive ability across the language groups.

As the researcher, I held the booklet in front of my webcam and flipped through each page. Each page consisted of one test item. In the Matrix Reasoning task, students are presented with a matrix that needs one final piece to in order to be complete. As seen in Figure 6.2, students were required to select one of five options that would best complete the matrix. Students entered their responses on an online Google Form which was pre-programmed as a multiple-choice quiz and shared with the participants before the start of the activity. Each submission was automatically marked once submitted. These scores were not made visible to students.

Figure 6.2

Sample Item from the WASI-II Matrix Reasoning Subtest



A well-lit background was used to ensure that all learners were able to see the pictures from the booklet clearly. During in-person test administration, the researcher generally turns the page after the participant has responded. However, as the subtest was administered to a whole class, this was not possible. The WASI-II manual stipulates that if a student has not responded after 30 seconds, the test administrator should check in with the student and ensure that they are seeing the correct image. Using this timing as a general estimation of the timeframe within which an answer would be typically expected, each item was held before the camera for 25 seconds before I announced that I would be turning the page soon. Altogether, students saw each matrix for 30 seconds. This procedure was tested first with the students using the sample items to ensure that the timing was appropriate, the administration room was well lit, the positioning of the images before the camera was ideal and consistent and that all students could see clearly.

While the test is normally terminated after participants provide three consecutive incorrect responses, due to the group setting, all participants were allowed to answer all items or leave items blank. At the end of the task, students were reminded to click the 'SUBMIT' button. As the WASI-II is norm-referenced on a UK population, raw scores were used.

WISC-IV Vocabulary Subtest

Due to the shift to online learning, it was not possible to administer the vocabulary subset of the WISC-IV as outlined in the manual and so the test was adapted. The test was administered online to whole classes instead of individually, and participants provided written (typed) instead of oral responses. Similar to the Matrix Reasoning task, students submitted their responses through an online Google form which was shared at the beginning of the activity. Once all students confirmed that they were able to access the form, they were provided with detailed instructions for the activity (see Appendix K for the full instructional script). As would have been the case in in-person administration, each word was read aloud once, and students were required to provide the meaning of each word. The online answer form was numbered and allowed students to write the meaning of each vocabulary item without any restriction on the length of their typed text. Students first completed a practice question to ensure that they understood the instructions and that their environment was quiet enough to hear the sentences being read (i.e., 'what does x mean?"). Once the activity started, each sentence was read once, and students were encouraged to write definitions as best they could but not to worry about writing in complete sentences or their inability to spell a word. The activity was timed with an allotted 30 second response time for each item. During the pilot exercise, this time frame was found to be sufficient for learners from both Grades Five and Six to provide a typed definition without extra time to consult an online search engine. Additionally, while the test is normally

terminated after participants provide three consecutive incorrect responses, due to the group setting, all participants were allowed to answer all items or leave items blank. At the end of the activity, students were reminded to click the 'submit' button at the end of the form.

Written scripts were only scored for content and no marks were deducted for spelling or grammar as this would not have been the case if answers were provided orally. Tasks were scored in line with the test manual by one marker. As general practice, the manual stipulates that "any recognised meaning of the word is acceptable, but lack of content is penalised. If the child indicates only a vague knowledge of the word's definition, do not give full credit" (p. 103). Participants were given a score of two, one, or zero based on the content of their responses in consultation with the detailed manual which outlined different levels of answers for each item (e.g., synonym, general category) and provided numerous examples. Given the detailed nature of the marking guidelines and answer key, the activity was scored by only one marker. As the WISC-IV is norm referenced on a UK population, raw scores were used.

After piloting, one change was made to the content of the test regarding marking rubric for the word 'pest'. Given the farming context in the local town, the students tended to provide definitions of the word 'pest' that related more to a plant or crop destroying insect, rather than defining 'pest' as an annoyance as presented in the rubric (i.e., a definition related to annoyance received higher marks). Therefore, students providing the former definition were also awarded full marks (2 points).

Rodd (2020) named vocabulary tests among the online research tasks most susceptible to cheating owing to participants' ease of access to online dictionaries therefore, in addition to time restraints, Rodd (2020) recommended looking at "predictable patterns in the data" to identify

possible instances of cheating. In line with this, the average performance of Grade 6 students on the vocabulary task was taken into consideration to identify possible outliers and ran all submissions through search engines. Answers that were copied and pasted from the internet were given a score of zero. These cases were uncommon and were generally found in responses to the more difficult items closer to the end of the task.

The upcoming section outlines the qualitative methods employed in data collection with teachers.

6.6 Qualitative Data Collection (Teachers)

6.6.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect information concerning teachers' understanding of the writing challenges of students in primary school, challenges faced in teaching writing in creole settings, best practice strategies, and experiences of teacher training and development.

The semi-structured interview is the more commonly used format in Applied Linguistics wherein researchers prepare guiding questions that are largely open-ended in nature (Dörnyei, 2007; Hyland, 2016), thus allowing for participant elaboration and the contribution of new knowledge and ideas (Rose et al., 2020). A key advantage of employing a semi-structured interview is the opportunity for the teachers to act as semi-collaborators or "co-constructors of knowledge" (Rose et al., 2020, p. 114) concerning writing instruction in a context where very little research has been carried out. Additionally, the open-ended nature of questions and the opportunity to follow-up on responses in real time makes the semi-structured questionnaire a

useful and appropriate tool for this study given the complex and often ambivalent attitudes towards the creole and its role in education and literacy more particularly.

The interview schedule was first piloted with a Jamaican teacher who also worked as a school administrator and teacher trainer at one of the local teachers' colleges. In her diverse capacities she was able to bring multiple perspectives to the piloting process and act as a semi-collaborator through the provision of critical feedback and recommendations concerning the language and the directness of the questions to garner more honest responses. Additionally, as a semi-collaborator she suggested additional introductory questions, particularly introductory questions to establish rapport with teachers as well as to understand their attitudes towards teaching in the first place (e.g., what are three factors that led you into the field of teaching?). At the end of the piloting phase, the interview schedule was adapted accordingly (see Appendix G).

6.6.2 Interview Procedure

Interview sessions were carried out online using Zoom. All nine participants opted to be interviewed at the end of the school day to avoid having to rush back to the classroom. Once a date and time were agreed upon, a Zoom invite was sent to each teacher. A reminder was sent a day before the session. As the researcher, I kept my camera on throughout the interview and teachers were invited to do so if they felt comfortable. Two teachers opted to keep their cameras off during the interview.

Holmes et al. (2013) use the term 'researching multilingually' to refer to studies like the current one which "invite the use of more than one language in the research process and its dissemination" (p. 286) and urge researchers to adopt a 'translingual mindset' wherein intentional decisions are made regarding the role of languages across the stages of research.

Within this framework, careful thought must be given to issues of relationality as well as the contextual and social aspects of the linguistic spaces in which the research takes place both in the field and in the dissemination of findings (Andrews et al., 2020; Holmes et al., 2013). Within the context of this study, the choice of language used during interviews required careful consideration — walking a fine line between solidarity and possible condescension or presumption. The decision was made to ask all planned questions in English to avoid what could be interpreted as condescension and an assumption of participants' inability to converse at a high level in English. However, as each interview progressed, I adjusted my language to match more closely with that of the participant particularly when clarifying questions and in discussion. This approach invited codeswitching to varied extents in each interview, with some participants switching completely to Jamaican Creole for portions of the interview once rapport was established and, in most cases, when they felt strongly about an issue. At the level of transcription and dissemination of findings, a wider audience and alternate linguistic space needed to be considered. Therefore, in the findings chapter English translations have been provided alongside the Jamaican Creole excerpts for purposes of clarity and reproducibility in the research space.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim with the Jamaican Creole portions transcribed using the Cassidy-JLU orthographic system (Jamaica Language Unit, 2009) and uploaded to NVivo 12 for analysis.

6.7 Data analysis

6.7.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

SPSS (v28) was used to analyse the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyse the sample demographics, explore the spread of scores through measures of central tendency, and to check whether the assumptions of parametric tests were met (see Appendix H), while inferential statistics were used for significance testing. The background measures of cognitive ability and language proficiency (WASI-II, WISC-IV) yielded continuous data while the WAM yielded data at two levels: ordinal and continuous. In line with the differences in the levels of data yielded by the WAM, both parametric and non-parametric tests were used to investigate questions 1 and 1a, that is, the overall differences between the language groups and the particular areas of difference and challenge for students in relation to the individual higher and lower-level writing skills respectively.

6.7.1.1 Question 1: Are there differences in the writing outcomes of learners with Jamaican Creole and English as home languages?

Question one involved analysis on two levels: overall writing scores and component skills. A t-test was carried out to investigate whether there were statistically significant differences in the overall writing outcomes of learners with Jamaican Creole and English as a home language. In keeping with research showing meaningful links between HLEs and literacy outcomes (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Sénéchal et al., 1998), the original data analysis plan was to carry out an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) that would allow for the controlling of HLE effects when investigating the differences in writing outcomes between the language groups. However, as discussed earlier, low response rates to the HLE questionnaire meant that these

scores could not be used in analysis and therefore the independent samples t-test was used. This limitation is taken into consideration in the interpretation and discussion of the findings. All participants who were included in the analysis completed the writing task, therefore there were no missing scores to account for.

Before running an independent samples t-test, data must satisfy four assumptions: approximately normally distributed; interval data; independence of scores, and homogeneity of variance across groups. All assumptions were satisfied (See Appendix H for assumption checks).

While the sample size of each language group was larger than 30 – the recommended minimum sample size for between-group comparisons (Cohen, 2009; Field, 2009; Loewen & Hui, 2021), G*Power calculations (Faul et al., 2007) recommended a sample size of 128 participants (64 in each group) for an independent samples t-test, with alpha level set to .05, to detect a medium effect size. The sample size of the present study (90 participants with 48 and 42 in each group) is smaller than recommended and as a result, findings must still be interpreted with caution.

6.7.1.2 Question 1a: What are the areas of challenge for students with Jamaican Creole as a home language?

To garner a more in-depth profile of the writing of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. As previously stated, the WAM yielded both continuous and ordinal data in the form of an overall score and individual ratings (0/1 - 4) for each component writing skill, respectively. The latter group of scores are the focus of this question.

Field (2013) points out that data derived from ratings of different scorers should be treated as ordinal as opposed to interval data due to the inherent subjectivity. Therefore, the ratings assigned to each skill (e.g., vocabulary, punctuation) within the rubric were treated as ordinal while the overall scores were treated as continuous data as outlined in the previous section. Accordingly, the relationships (both differences and association) between a learners' language group and outcomes on each writing skill and the likelihood of each group performing in a certain way on each skill, was assessed using non-parametric versions of the tests. To address this research question a Mann-Whitney U test was carried out to investigate differences between the language groups on each writing skill and to get a clearer picture of areas of challenge and/ or strength for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language, respectively. The Mann-Whitney U is a non-parametric test that explores differences between independent groups. The test requires that the dependent variable be continuous or ordinal, that the independent variable be categorical in nature, and that the observations are independent (i.e., not repeated measures). These assumptions were checked and met prior to running the Mann Whitney U test.

To gain insight into the odds of students' receiving a high or low score on each component skill based on their language group, odds ratios were explored. The odds ratio is the more common effect size measure for categorical data and is generally only performed on 2x2 contingency tables (Field, 2009). Data were therefore dichotomized (high/low rating). That is, for each skill (e.g., vocabulary), ratings between one and two were recoded as 'low' and ratings between three and four were recoded as 'high' and a chi square test was then run on the dichotomized data.

In addition to tests exploring language group differences and odds across the component writing skills, frequency data of student scores were also used explore areas of challenge in writing. This approach was important to gain a more objective sense of the writing challenges experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language without using their English-dominant peers as a reference.

6.7.1.3 Missing Data

Though over 150 students participated in the study, students who did not complete the writing activity were excluded even if they completed all other as this was the core task of the study. Students who completed the writing activity but had missing scores due to internet and electricity challenges during the data collection session were still included in the study. In total, 30 cases with missing values were retained in the dataset and the 'analysis by analysis' method in SPSS was used wherein missing values were removed for relevant tests.

Being the longest and last activity administered during data collection sessions, the WASI (cognitive ability) contributed the highest number of missing values (N = 23). During the activity, some students were disconnected from WIFI due to electricity cuts and/ or insufficient mobile data. Due to the nature of the activity, it was not possible to repeat the items for these students if or when they returned the online session. While 23 students did not complete the WASI, the proportion of missing values was relatively uniform across the language groups (Jamaican Creole = 11, English = 12) and no statistically significant association was found between missing data and language groups. Since there was no systematic pattern in the missing data and the WASI was not a core but rather a background measure in the study, no data imputation was carried out.

6.7.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Semi-structured interviews with teachers were analysed using qualitative content analysis. As outlined in Chapter Five, qualitative content analysis has been defined broadly "summarizing and reporting written data" (Cohen et al., p. 475) and more narrowly as "a strict and systematic set of procedures for the rigorous analysis, examination, and verification of the contents of written data" (p. 475). Qualitative content analysis of interview data is generally chosen as an analytical approach for interview data when the aim of analysis is to provide a descriptive account of participant responses (Vaismoradi et al., 2013; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Though similar and often conflated with thematic analysis in the research literature, the key difference between the methods lies in the extent of abstraction and data transformation in analysis (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). While thematic analysis emphasizes latent content through the development of more abstracted themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006), in qualitative content analysis the researcher 'sticks closer to the data' by identifying and categorizing patterns and trends in the data to produce a descriptive or account of the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

Due to its descriptive nature, qualitative content analysis proved instrumental for the present study — allowing for more direct comparisons of results across research phases in the study (i.e., documents, teachers, student writing outcomes) while maintaining terminological consistency. As the protocol adopted in Chapter Five for the analysis of curricular and policy documents (i.e., Cohen et al., 2007; Drisko & Maschi, 2015) was geared specifically towards documents (e.g., books, curriculum, policies) rather than interview data, it was not adopted for this phase of the study. Instead, Elo and Kyngäs' (2008) three-step qualitative content analysis protocol which has been highlighted as a suitable, clear, and parsimonious approach for the

analysis of interview data (Vaismoradi et al., 2013) was adopted and is outlined in the sections below.

Content Analysis Protocol (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008):

1. Preparation (Data immersion and selecting units of analysis)
2. Organizing (Coding and categorization)
3. Reporting (Transparent presentation of main categories and/ or concepts)

Preparation

Elo and Kyngäs (2008) outline two key processes that take place in the preparation phase: becoming familiar with the data and determining the units of analysis. The familiarization process started with the transcription of the audio recordings of the interviews. Once transcription was complete, I read and reread transcripts to gain further familiarity and a more holistic understanding of data (Drisko & Maschi, 2015). At this stage, I also made initial notes concerning possible categories, codes, and interesting quotes to ensure a fuller and more accurate description of the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). As the data (teacher responses) was not highly structured, each participant response was treated as a unit of analysis to which one or multiple codes could be applied as appropriate. Transcripts were uploaded to NVivo 12 for sorting, coding, and categorization.

Organization

The organization of the data involved coding and category formation. Though not explicitly outlined by Elo and Kyngäs (2008), inter-rater reliability was also explored in this phase given its key role in the creation of the codebook. Following the preparation phase, an initial list of inductive codes and categories based on the raw data and in line with the overarching research questions was generated. A code is a label or phrase that describes or

summarizes a piece of text. In inductive or data-driven coding, codes and wider categories are derived directly from the raw data through a process of thorough reading rather than from prior data, research, or theory as in the case of deductive coding (Azungah, 2018; Boyatzis, 1998; Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Though coding was primarily inductive, Saldaña (2021) points out that rather than being mutually exclusive, deductive and inductive coding approaches are "dialectal" (p. 41) and exist along a continuum (Boyatizis, 1998). As a result, even when using a primarily inductive approach, coding is rarely exclusively data driven as researchers generally approach data with some amount of prior knowledge and expectation of outcomes that frame analysis to some extent (Saldaña, 2021). This was the case in the current study as some initial data categories and codes were influenced by the research objectives, specific interview questions, and my own expectations based on anecdotal and empirical knowledge of Jamaican education and literacy.

Codes were grouped into subcategories and broader categories based on similarities and their suitability in addressing key research questions. As recommended by Elo and Kyngäs (2008), categories were named using 'content-characteristic' terms (p. 111). The use of content-characteristic terms was particularly important for the continuity of terminology throughout the study as key categories from the interview data would later be compared with key trends in student writing outcomes. A 'miscellaneous' category was also included to capture codes that did not appear to correspond with the main categories identified in the data.

Once drafted, the codebook was applied in the first instance to one interview transcript by two reviewers independently for validation purposes. Given the inclusion of Jamaican Creole in the transcripts, it was important that the second person coding the interview understand Jamaican Creole and be able to read the Cassidy-JLU orthography. A fellow educational researcher and

Jamaican native with experience in carrying out literacy research in the Jamaican context was invited to assist in the double coding of one of the interview transcripts. This ensured that pertinent information was not lost in translation but rather that the full meanings of expressions were understood and coded consistently and accurately. The selected transcript was one of the longer transcripts and included a significant amount of codeswitching thus allowing for greater coverage of data, more coding opportunities, and the opportunity to establish clarity on Jamaican Creole translations. After completing independent coding, both reviewers then met to discuss the coding outcomes, clarify hazy definitions, address discrepancies, and discuss recommendations for codebook adjustments. Once issues were pinpointed and agreement was reached on discrepancies, I coded the interviews independently.

Reporting

Elo and Kyngäs (2008) underline the importance of transparency in the reporting process to improve the reliability and trustworthiness of findings in qualitative content analysis. In addition to presenting a narrative description of the categories and subcategories yielded from the data analysis, authentic interview excerpts and codebook samples are included in the results chapter (Chapter Eight) to ensure a clear connection between the data and the reported findings (Polit & Beck, 2004). The full version of the codebook is also included in the appendices section (see Appendix I). Finally, as recommended by Elo and Kyngäs (2008), sample information such as teacher names (pseudonyms), certification, and other relevant contextual notes are included at the beginning of Chapter Eight in order to facilitate greater transferability of findings.

6.8 Ethical considerations

Data collection, storage, and participant recruitment were carried out in accordance with the University of Oxford Policy on Research Involving Human Participants Data Protection

(CUREC, 2019) and the COVID-19: CUREC Guidance on Research Involving Human Participants (CUREC, 2020). Additionally, recruitment and data collection were carried out in line with the following CUREC Approved Procedures: *AP25 Non-invasive methods with children as participants in institutional and non-institutional settings (version 5.3)* and *AP15 Teachers and Teaching in Education Settings (version 2.1).* All ethics-related documents are included in Appendix J.

Upon receiving ethical approval, schools were contacted with an invitation to participate in the study. Once approval was provided by school principals, I was put in contact with the Grade Six coordinator at each school who facilitated the sharing of participant information forms and consent forms with teachers and parents via email and parent WhatsApp groups. Teachers read through the consent form and provided oral consent prior to the interview and parents were provided with opt-out forms, a permissible practice under *Approved Procedure 25: Non-invasive methods with children as participants in institutional and non-institutional settings* to garner a more representative sample. In the first five minutes of each data collection session, I explained the concept of consent to the students and read through the assent form. Students were then invited to indicate their willingness to participate the study by means of an online Google form which formed the first section of the first task. The form was designed to ensure that students would not be able to move on to complete the activity without first providing consent. All data were saved on a password protected USB key, uploaded to the University provided OneDrive, and will be kept for three years post-publication after which files will be permanently destroyed.

During the pilot phase, students completed the writing tasks and sent a picture of their work via WhatsApp to their classroom teacher who would then forward all submissions to me.

This process however did not prove successful as many submissions got lost along the way and it provided additional work for teachers already burdened with the task of adjusting to online education in an under-resourced setting. Both school principals agreed that the most effective way of sharing the hand-written submissions would be for students to send pictures of their work directly to me (as was normal practice with classroom teachers). This required sharing my personal phone number with students. To ensure the safety and privacy of all parties involved, I did not store the contact information for any student, and I blocked all student phone numbers once submissions were received and acknowledged. Students and parents were encouraged to contact their classroom teachers who would then liaise with me concerning study-related questions and parents had access to my email address which was included on the study information sheet should they have questions.

6.9 Limitations

In a timely conference address during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown concerning online data quality, Rodd (2020) advised that to move forward in research in such a momentous and strange time, we must "accept the chaos…[of] the brave new world of online testing" (Rodd, 2020). This study, and the data collection methods in particular, are reflective of the times. Social distancing restrictions and the switch to online learning resulted in many opportunities for innovations in research design while at the same time introduced some methodological limitations discussed in this section.

As previously discussed, the sample size was smaller than what was recommended by Gpower to detect a .05 size effect and therefore is likely to be underpowered. Findings are therefore to be interpreted with caution.

In a similar vein, due to low response rates, it was not possible to use the data from the home language and literacy survey for language group allocation or to control for the effects of home literacy environments when comparing the language group outcomes. Without a measure of home language environment, language group allocation was determined solely by school-based indicators (teacher report and performance on GJT) thus resulting in a less holistic measure than intended. However, careful and systematic measures were taken to allocate learners to language groups. Additionally, the absence of an HLE covariate increased the likelihood of confounded findings as HLEs have been found to have a significant impact on the literacy outcomes of children. Nevertheless, the study is largely exploratory and makes no claims to providing a full explanation of writing challenges experienced by learners, but rather explores the possible role of the home language and instruction on writing outcomes while acknowledging that in such a complex linguistic and social context, other factors are certainly at work.

Only students who completed the writing task were included in the study, thereby introducing the possibility of selection bias. It is possible that the students who submitted writing pieces were more likely to be confident and proficient writers with higher English proficiency or had greater access to uninterrupted Wi-Fi for online schooling (which may be associated with SES, an important potential confounder). Efforts were made to mitigate potential biases as much as possible. Teachers were asked to help encourage students to complete the task during the session. However, outside of the physical classroom it was easier for students to ignore prompts. In terms of access to the internet, I applied for and was awarded the Green Templeton Competitive Fieldwork Funding grant which I donated to the school's COVID-19 internet fund to enable willing students to join the sessions if they were challenged in this regard.

In the end, the sizes of the language groups were not very different (English n= 48, Jamaican Creole n=42).

Adaptations were also made to the writing task in line with online schooling restrictions which may impact the validity of findings. While the WAM includes two writing prompts, due to time restrictions of online schooling, only one writing task could be administered — a factor limiting the generalisations that can be made about learners writing from this study. Indeed, Fitzgerald (2008) underlined the importance of obtaining at least two pieces of text for assessment purposes in second language research to gain clearer insight into learner skills given the possible impact of topic on writing.

It is also worth acknowledging that moving data collection likely compromised the validity and reliability of measures due to changes in task demands, increased opportunities for cheating, and variation in test-taking conditions. As described in section 6.5, the WISC-IV vocabulary subtest was administered to groups (intact classes) as a written task rather than as an oral task. Given research highlighting the cognitively demanding nature of writing (McCutchen, 2006) and the impact of task modality on language assessments (Biber, 1988; Kormos & Trebits, 2012; Murphy, 1997), it is likely that the shift in modality resulted in a significant change in the task demands, and by extension, the reliability and validity of the measures. To address the likely bias introduced by the task adaptations, learners were told that they would not be penalized for grammatical or spelling errors and that they were not required to write in complete sentences, as this would not have been the case in oral task administration. Learners were also provided with an example prior to starting the task that showed what an acceptable answer may look like in terms of structure and length (see Appendix K for task instructions).

In addition to modality changes, the imposition of a time limit on both the Matrix Reasoning task (WASI-II) and the vocabulary task (WISC-IV) likely had an impact on the task demands. To limit the impacts of time restrictions on student outcomes, the timing of each task was thoroughly piloted to ensure that students were provided with ample time to respond to test items. Students were also provided with sample items prior to the start of each task.

Moving data collection online meant less control of the test taking conditions of each participant. While some students may have been able to work in a quiet room on their own with little to no distractions, other students were not able to do so given their living situations. Such variation likely introduced some bias in the study, with some participants completing the tasks in more ideal conditions than others, thus impacting the reliability of findings.

Relatedly, tele-practice guidelines have underlined the importance of ensuring a steady internet connection for all test takers, as well as high-quality headsets, speakers, and suitable size screen for test completion to maintain high levels of reliability (APA, 2020; Pearson, 2021). Given the socioeconomic distribution of the rural town, it was not possible to ensure that all students had access to high-quality devices. Students completed the tasks with whatever form of device was available to them for everyday online schooling. This meant that some students used tablets while others used laptops, and while many children had access to headphones, others did not own their own pair. Efforts were made to manage the effects of such variation as much as possible. As outlined in the task instructions, constant checks were made to ensure that all students could both see the screen and hear clearly at all times. Additionally, parents were made aware of the importance of quiet working conditions ahead of the data collection session by teachers. Nevertheless, variation in test-taking conditions remained and likely impacted the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

Another key limitation of remote assessment is increased opportunities for cheating during tasks. The American Psychological Association highlights the importance of monitoring participants closely during remote test administration to ensure that the designated individuals are the ones completing tasks and to limit opportunities for cheating (APA, 2020). In the present study, limits on monitoring and controlling test-taking conditions likely presented increased opportunities for cheating– whether by receiving help from family members, through mobile or online communication with classmates, or through using online search engines for word definitions. As discussed throughout the chapter, steps were taken to mitigate cheating through the management of the online classroom environment and adaptations to marking approaches. Firstly, clear instructions were given to both parents and students concerning the importance of independent task completion. Participants (and caregivers) were also reminded that the activities were not an exam and therefore would have no impact on their school assessment (see Appendix K). The imposition of time constraints on tasks has been highlighted as an approach to curtailing opportunities for cheating in remote assessment (Newman et al., 2021). This was adopted in the present study wherein each task was timed thus limiting opportunities to correspond with others or to consult search engines. Students were also required to keep their cameras on so that the test taking conditions could be monitored as closely as possible and to ensure that the designated individuals were the ones completing the tasks (APA., 2020; Pearson, 2021). While keeping all microphones on throughout the tasks would have also helped in the monitoring of cheating, this was not done as piloting revealed issues of background noise and the tendency of students to say answers aloud. Finally, as described in section 6.5., students' responses for the WISC-IV vocabulary task were run through Google to check for cheating. Despite the strategies adopted to mitigate cheating, it is worth acknowledging the possibility that some participants cheated on

some tasks –- a factor that limits both the validity and reliability of the measures used in the present study.

Beyond the limits of online data collection, another limitation of the present study concerns the issue of culture bias in using standardized measures that were developed in the Global North. Researchers have highlighted the importance of taking participants contexts and experiences into consideration when evaluating the validity and usefulness of language tests in cross-cultural testing situations (Kahlon, 2021; Vagh & Nag, 2019). In the present study, variation in home language and literacy environments is likely to impact students' performance on the word definition task (WISC-IV), with some children having greater opportunities to encounter words in print and speech. Relatedly, as there is no existing child-directed print corpus that could be used to evaluate the suitability of the vocabulary items as has been one in similar contexts (i.e., Nag et al., 2020), it is possible that some test items did not fully align with the nature of vocabulary that a Jamaican child in Grade Six would have been exposed to in books and instruction. To address this issue of item appropriacy, I reviewed each vocabulary item and allowed teachers to review the vocabulary items as well, while bearing in mind that the task was developed for learners between the ages of six to 16 and would therefore be expected to have test items beyond the learners' level of proficiency. Despite these efforts, it is likely that there is some amount of systematic cultural bias in the findings and as it was not possible to explore the reliability and validity of the measures statistically, the student outcomes are to be interpreted with caution.

6.10 Researcher Positionality

Rose et al. (2020) identifies a lack of researcher reflexivity as "one of the biggest threats to interviews as a data collection method" (pp. 127). It is therefore important to articulate my

positionality as a researcher, being both an insider and outsider, as well as reflect on my own biases. Though I grew up in the study town, speaking Jamaican Creole was not encouraged in my home and my parents placed high value on English literacy development. I learned Jamaican Creole outside of my home as I grew older. My parents had the time and resources to fill our home with books and ensure that my siblings and I practiced reading and writing daily. I am therefore aware that my childhood language experiences do not mirror the experience of the many Jamaican children who speak Jamaican Creole as a home language and that the standard language ideology of my home and wider culture has likely shaped my view of Jamaican Creole and its usage in some way. Additionally, as education and the opportunity to 'live in foreign' (the US, Canada, or the UK) are highly valued in Jamaica, I am aware of my privileged position particularly as a student from the University of Oxford, and its possible impact on interviewee responses. However, I believe that belonging to the community, familiarity with teachers, and my ability to understand and speak Jamaican Creole helped to put both students and teachers at ease in some measure. In each classroom data collection session, students were invited to ask questions about academia, career paths, and studying abroad. Numerous students expressed how encouraged they felt that 'someone like them' from the same town could study at the University of Oxford. In this way, my positionality as a member of the community not only served to put students at ease and make them more willing to complete the tasks, but also went beyond the scope of the study in showing students that they too could accomplish anything.

Additionally, as a researcher based in Britain, the nation that colonized Jamaica, I have been very careful to avoid an ethnocentric and prescriptive approach that would recommend a curriculum overhaul, rally for the implementation of additive bilingual education, or even highlight problems in the educational system without pinpointing manageable, practical, and

sustainable steps (e.g. teacher professional development) that could be implemented within the current system until larger changes can be made. The present study is framed in such a way that the findings can serve to inform writing interventions and inform teacher training programs on the island.

6.11 Summary

The fieldwork portion of the study described in this chapter consisted of two phases marked by qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis, respectively. In line with the ecological approach to writing espoused in the study, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed thematically to better understand the writing outcomes of students. Interviews focused on pedagogical approaches to writing, instructional challenges, and teachers experiences of training and preparation for teaching writing in a creole context. In the final phase, quantitative student data were collected and analysed statistically to investigate the specific areas of challenge in writing experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language.

In addition to findings related to teachers and student performance, the study methodology also yielded important contextual findings that served to provide greater insight into the writing challenges experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. For the sake of clarity, and in keeping with the pattern of progressively focusing on student writing, findings will be presented across the next three chapters starting with contextual findings which will then be followed by findings from teacher interviews and finally, findings concerning student writing outcomes.

7. Findings: Contextual

This chapter presents supplementary contextual findings that serve to provide a richer description of the study context and of the unprecedented times during which data collection took place. These findings also provide insight into some of the ecological factors that likely influence English writing attainment among Jamaican primary school students. Themes addressed in this chapter include home language and literacy environments, student attitudes to literacy activities, and changes in writing instruction due to COVID-19 school closures.

7. 1 Home Language and Literacy Environments

There was a mismatch between the parents who completed the survey and the children who completed the writing activity (WAM). Though 114 parents completed the home language environment portion of the survey, and 86 completed the home literacy portion, many of their children were not included in the study because they failed to complete the writing activity. Only 39 parent responses for the students involved in the study were collected and therefore the data could not be used as intended, that is, for language group allocation and as a covariate, respectively. Rather they have been used to provide a richer description of the study context.

One-hundred and fourteen (114) parents completed the home language environment questionnaire. As seen in Table 7.1, all family members more commonly reported using equal amounts of Jamaican Creole and English when speaking to children in the home. Consistent with the creole continuum, few speakers reported the exclusive use of Jamaican Creole or English. While both mothers and fathers showed relatively similar language usage patterns, fathers generally used more Jamaican Creole than mothers. In homes where another adult (e.g., grandmother) was present and served as a primary caregiver (60%), the adult tended to use more

Jamaican Creole with children than parents (mother and father). In such cases only 20% reported usual use of English while 78% used either equal amounts of both languages or more Jamaican Creole when speaking to the child. Siblings tended to use equal amounts of Jamaican Creole and English but also appeared to speak more English than adult caregivers.

Table 7.1

Language Input at Home

Language Input	Always JamC[1]	JamC usually	Equal amounts of JamC & English	English usually	Always English
Mother	0.84%	18.49%	57.98%	22.69%	0.00%
Father	6.93%	21.78%	45.54%	23.76%	1.98%
Other adult caregiver	8.57%	28.57%	40.00%	20.00%	2.86%
Siblings[2]	5.38%	17.58%	42.98%	27.76%	6.31%

[1] JamC – Jamaican Creole
[2] Siblings- in cases were more than one sibling was present in the home, the average of language used by all siblings was used.

While these findings likely give a general approximation of child language input in the home, a note of caution is due here for a few reasons. Firstly, since the findings are based on self-report within a context where the use of English is generally associated with higher social status (Nero & Stevens, 2018), it is possible that responses concerning the use of English are inflated. Additionally, as pointed out in Chapter Three, due to the nature of the creole continuum, for many speakers, there is a mismatch between perceived and actual language proficiency and/ or usage. As a result, many Jamaicans deem themselves fluent speakers of English and at times, believe that they are speaking English when this may not be the case. Similar concerns will come to bear in parent responses to questions concerning home literacy practices addressed in the

upcoming section. Unfortunately, it was not possible to carry out reliability testing for the language environment portion of the questionnaire due to COVID-19 constraints. That is, for a questionnaire of this nature, test-retest reliability may have proven informative, but due to restrictions on teachers' time during online schooling, schools agreed to asking parents to complete the survey once. Despite these limitations, parent responses were generally in line with what would be expected in a creole continuum with the majority of speakers using a mixture of both languages. Additionally, parent reports of language use in the home were also generally reflective of the study sample. When overall language environment scores were dichotomized (with a score 3 as the mid-point), more parents provided responses indicating a greater orientation to the use of Standard Jamaican English (59%) compared to Jamaican Creole (41%) in the home. This distribution was relatively close to that found in the student sample of the present study using the method of language group allocation described in Chapter Six. That is, 53% of the sample were deemed dominant English speakers (n = 48) and 47% were more dominant in Jamaican Creole (n = 48).

7.2 Home literacy Environments

The home literacy section of the questionnaire addressed literacy practices in the home, the nature of parent-child interactions during literacy activities, and parents' beliefs concerning literacy development and instruction. Parents were also asked about child attendance at Sunday (or Sabbath) school and socio-demographic information such as parents' highest level of education was also collected. At the end of the survey, parents were also given the option to provide additional comments. Eleven parents provided comments. Though this group represents a relatively small proportion of the sample whose comments may not be entirely representative

of the population, their responses provide further insight and a richer contextual description of home literacy environments in the study location and are discussed throughout the remainder of the chapter alongside survey responses.

7.2.1 Reliability

The home literacy questionnaire consisted of three subscales from Buvaneswari's and Padayanka's (2017) home literacy environment questionnaire: parent literacy habits, parent tutoring and engagement in literacy activities, and parental beliefs concerning literacy. Buvaneswari and Padayanka (2017) reported high item-level and overall scale validity, however, as items were slightly adapted to suit the Jamaican context, it was important to explore the internal consistency of the measure. As Cronbach's alpha is the most widely used measure of reliability for questionnaires and unlike split-half reliability, considers all possible ways of splitting the data to explore correlations (Field, 2009), it proved to be the more suitable measure. According to Field (2009), when a questionnaire includes multiple subscales, separate measures of reliability must be carried out for each one. Therefore, separate Cronbach's alpha calculations were carried out for the three subscales in the home literacy environment questionnaire. Field (2013) suggests that alpha values of .7 and above indicate good reliability while substantially lower alpha values indicate poor reliability. Findings showed that the parent tutoring and parental beliefs subscales yielded high alpha coefficients of .8 and .9, respectively, while the home literacy practices scale yielded a lower alpha coefficient of .6. A similar trend was observed by Buvaneswari and Padayanka, where parent's literacy practices showed wide variation. In addition to wide variation of parent literacy practices, the relatively lower alpha coefficient for the literacy practices subscale was due in part to the addition of a contextual item concerning

Sunday School attendance. As expected, child Sunday School attendance (a religious practice) was not correlated with other parent literacy practices that were included in the home literacy subscale (e.g., playing word games, reading the local newspaper). However, based on personal and insider knowledge of the central role played by Sunday School in Jamaican communities and the significant emphasis placed on literacy skills by Sunday school teachers, as well as the fact that the alpha coefficient was not considerably lower than .7, the item was retained.

7.2.2 Home Literacy Environment Results

Eighty-six parents completed the home literacy environment portion of the online survey, the results of which are presented in Table 7.2. Higher scores represent richer home literacy environments. The mean score was 79.39 out of a possible score of 110 and scores ranged from 43 to 106 with most scores clustering near the centre of the distribution as seen in Figure 7.1. In the original data analysis plan, home literacy environment scores would have been included as a covariate in the comparison of writing outcomes between learners with Jamaican Creole and English and home languages respectively.

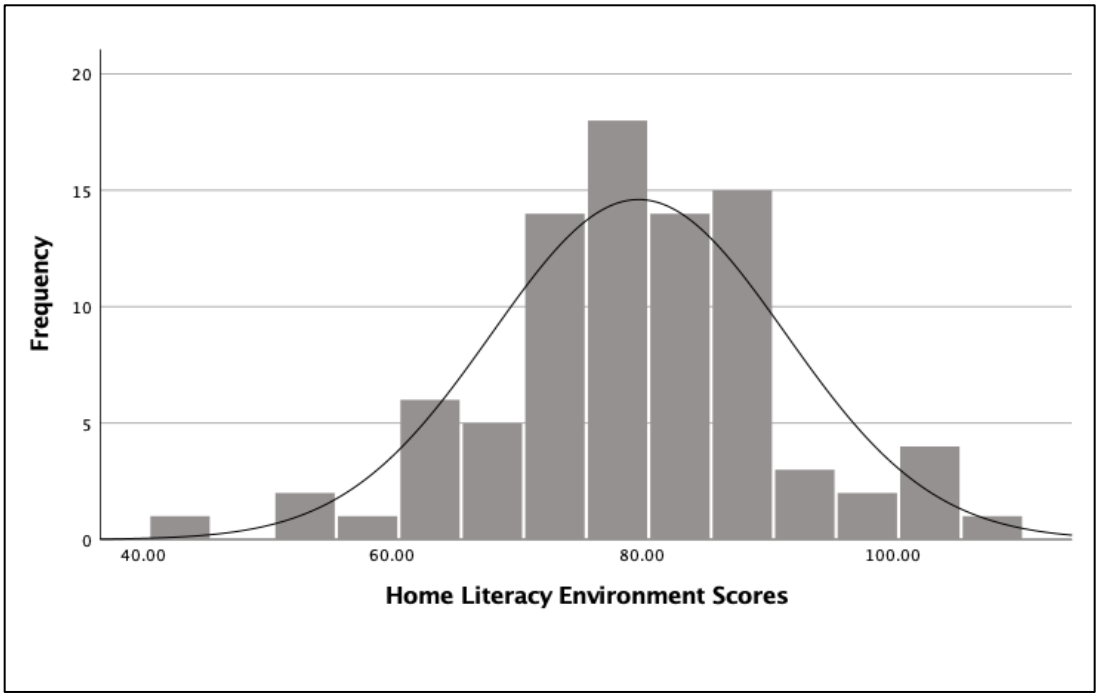
Table 7.2

Home Literacy Environment Descriptive Statistics

	M	SD	Min	Max
Home Literacy Environment	79.39	11.67	43	106

Figure 7.1

Frequency Distribution of Home Literacy Environment Scores



It is important to note however that these findings represent parents' self-reports of their own literacy practices and beliefs as well as their children's practices. Therefore, parents' reports are largely subjective and may be affected by their desire to be seen in a positive light. Indeed, as a local and 'insider' of this town and considering school administrators' complaints of parental illiteracy as a challenge, these findings are interpreted with caution as they may not be entirely reflective of the home language and literacy environments.

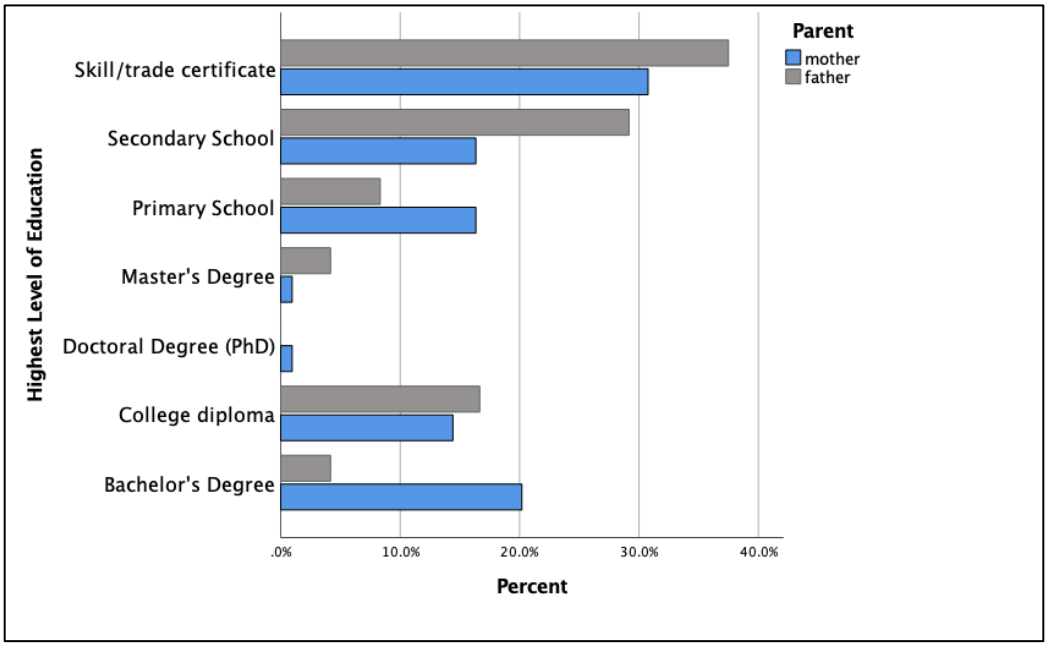
7.2.2.1 Parental Levels of Education

As discussed in the narrative literature review, parental levels of education have been widely used as proxy measures of socio-economic status (Hoff, 2006; McCormac, 2012; Roopnarine & Yildirim, 2018) with research showing mothers level of education to be strongly associated with child literacy outcomes (Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004; Hoff et al., 2002; Tizard

et al., 1988). As part of the home literacy questionnaire, parents were asked to indicate their highest level of education. As seen in Figure 7.2, the most common qualification acquired by parents was a skill or trade certification (e.g., hairdressing, auto mechanics, chef). Following skill or trade certificates, primary school and bachelor's degrees were also common levels of education for mothers, while secondary school and to a lesser extent, diplomas were held by fathers. For both groups, postgraduate degrees were uncommon. Of note, almost 40% of mothers in the sample had either primary or secondary schooling as their highest level of education — a pattern that was not observed among fathers. Such an observation is important given the significant associations between mothers' level of education and child literacy outcomes both internationally (Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004; Jariene & Razmantiene, 2006; McCormac, 2012; Tizard et al, 1988) and in the Caribbean (Roopnarine & Yildirum, 2018), with higher levels of education often correlating with higher literacy outcomes.

Figure 7.2

Parent's Highest Level of Education



An interesting and important finding that emerged from fieldnotes was the association made by the Grade Six coordinators at both schools between mothers' professions and child language and literacy. While discussing the language usage of students for the purpose of language group allocation, the Grade Six coordinator at School Two commented that the students whose mothers were teachers tended to be more dominant speakers of English with better grades in language arts. While not tested statistically, such an association is likely linked to teachers' training in literacy instruction. As a result, teachers may be more likely to place greater emphasis on the development of reading and writing skills at home and may be in a better position than some parents to provide more effective parent tutoring and homework assistance. This hypothesis was supported in a similar discussion with the Grade Six coordinator at School One. Reflecting on her upbringing in a poor family with limited access to books and literacy support at home, Ms. Mair shared that since training as a teacher and pursuing her masters, she learned the importance of supporting literacy development at home and as a result, now places a strong emphasis building her son's literacy skills — using whatever extra money she may have to purchase books each month.

7.2.2.2 Parent Literacy Habits

Parents' personal literacy habits have been conceptualized as passive or indirect components of HLE (Puglisi et al., 2017) that are correlated with child literacy outcomes (Phillips & Lonigan, 2009; Wells, 1987). Parents most commonly reported writing or typing (61%), playing word games (41%), or reading non-work-related materials such as books (36%) either often or very often while being observed by their children. That most parents regularly engage in personal writing is a promising finding given research showing that children whose

parents engaged in intentional writing activities (as opposed to more functional writing such as list making) tended to be more advanced writers in Grades Four and Five (ages nine and ten, respectively) (Wells, 1987). However, as the questionnaire did not specify the nature or medium of writing, it is somewhat unclear how parents' home writing practices might impact student literacy outcomes in the present study. For example, it is not clear whether parents were referring to texting, engaging in extended writing (e.g., narratives), writing notes, or lists, nor is it clear how some forms of writing, such as texting for example, may impact child writing outcomes.

7.2.2.3 Parents engagement in literacy activities at home

Helping with language arts homework and encouraging children to read product labels, street signs, and signboards were the most common activities that parents reported engaging in with their children. The least practiced literacy activities were those more oriented towards direct parent tutoring — such as engaging in extended or creative writing activities with children (e.g., writing stories, songs, poems) and shared book reading that involved pointing to letters and words as well as making explicit letter-sound connections. These findings are consistent with research showing the tendency of parents to place greater emphasis on informal home literacy environments compared to more direct or formal HLE in the form of parent tutoring activities (Aram & Levin, 2001). However, as discussed in Chapter Three, research suggests that writing skills tend to benefit more from direct home literacy activities that involve parent tutoring in writing (Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004; Ngorosho, 2011; Puglisi et al., 2017; Sénéchal et al., 1998, 2014; Tizard et al., 1982). Therefore, it is possible that parents reported literacy practices may have a limited impact on students' writing quality outcomes.

7.2.2.4 Parents beliefs about literacy

Parents beliefs about literacy and literacy instruction have been found to have indirect effects on child literacy outcomes (Phillips & Lonigan, 2009; Wells, 1987). In the current study, while most respondents (over 75%) strongly agreed that parents could help their children with literacy tasks at home and should encourage interest and confidence in reading and writing, parents were less supportive of statements that put much instructional onus on themselves through the direct teaching of literacy skills at home (e.g., 'children do well at reading because their parents teach them to read' (62% strongly agree) or 'parents should add to the literacy skills their child learns at school by teaching their child literacy skills at home' (67% strongly agree)). Consistent with such findings, parents provided additional comments which underlined the central role of the teacher as the primary source of instruction and the secondary role of parents in providing encouragement and reinforcement:

> **Parent 1**: "Teachers are there to teach, whilst parents are to reinforce what was taught."
>
> **Parent 2**: "Parents should always ensure that their children are doing well in school and check their books to see if they have completed their homework"
>
> **Parent 3**: "I often tell my child to reflex [reflect] on the how her day went at school and analyse if she was comfortable and if not try and do better the naxt [next] day"

Parents beliefs concerning their role in literacy development may be grounded, at least in part, in the challenges they experience in providing facilitative home literacy environments.

7.2.2.5 Barriers to Facilitative HLE

Most of the comments provided by parents addressed the challenges that they experienced in providing a facilitative literacy environment. Of the comments provided, the difficulty of balancing the demands of providing for their families and providing a supportive literacy environment was the most commonly raised concern:

> **Parent 4:** I am a security guard so am always working to make ends meet, I hardly find time to teach my children but when I do, I teach them different topics and leave work for them which they don't complete most times.
>
> **Parent 5:** I strongly agree in helping my child yes am a single parent an [and] I have to go out there an fen [and fend] for them when I come home there a lot of shore [chores] to be done an [and] help them but the 100% what I should be doing is not there but I encourage her to do her best an help in whatever way I can.

Consistent with findings from low- to middle-income contexts (Nag et al., 2019), across all comments, parents acknowledged the importance of fostering facilitative HLEs for their children despite their limitations. In addition to the demands of supporting the family, two parents commented on the difficulties of providing facilitative HLEs when parents themselves struggled to understand school assignments and had low levels English literacy. For such parents, the role of the teacher in their child's literacy development was paramount due to their limitations in providing additional support at home with one parent commenting that their child was simply "better off in front of the teacher." School administrators confirmed the challenge of low-literacy levels among many parents, which proved especially challenging during COVID-19 school closures. The possible magnitude of the impact of low parental literacy levels on child outcomes is likely masked in the current study. Due to COVID-19 related school closures and lockdowns, the home language and literacy survey could only be completed by parents in an online format, and, as a result, the findings are likely biased to some extent, as parents or caregivers would need to be able to read and use a mobile device or a computer to access and complete the survey. Therefore, perspectives from caregivers with low levels of English and technological literacy have likely been excluded.

7.2.3 Community Literacy Practice

In response to research highlighting the importance of more context-sensitive measures of HLE (Nag et al., 2019; Ngorosho, 2011), a questionnaire item addressing Sunday (or Sabbath) School attendance was added to the instrument given its central role in the lives of many Jamaican children, and the research showing the benefits of religious literacy activities for child literacy development (Papen, 2018). Sunday School in Jamaica serves not only to transmit Christian beliefs and practices to younger generations, but also facilitates literacy development (Reid, 2022) through a host of activities including but not limited to bible reading, the study of scripture verses, poems, and songs, as well as the writing of reflective texts throughout the school year and during the summer holidays (i.e., Vacation Bible School, summer camps). Unsurprisingly, Sunday School emerged as one of the most common literacy practices outside of the classroom in the present study. Only 15% of parents reported that their child did not attend Sunday School while the rest of the sample varied in attendance levels, with 42% attending sometimes, 19% attending often, and 24% attending very often. It likely that attendance rates were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic where Sunday School was moved online, and Jamaican churches saw dramatic drops in attendance nationally (Reid, 2022). Nevertheless, findings highlight the importance of the inclusion of contextualized HLE measures to gain deeper insight into literacy outcomes and underline the need for further research into community literacy practices in developing nations that may support literacy attainment.

7.3 Student Attitudes Towards Writing

While at least 180 children were part of the intact classes during data collection, only 90 completed the writing activity and were therefore included in the study. While a few students

may not have completed the writing activity due to technical problems (e.g., WIFI or electricity issues) the majority simply chose not to complete or submit the writing task. Prior to data collection, teachers warned that students did not enjoy writing and were often hesitant to complete writing activities. Teachers reached out to students who did not complete the task but often to no avail. While this introduced some amount of self-selection and possible bias, there was not a large difference in the numbers of learners from each language group included in the study (n = 42, n = 48). Such a finding is important and likely to have some bearing on student writing outcomes. Indeed, Dunsmuir and Blatchford (2004) found that teachers assessments of a child's attitude to writing was one of the strongest predictors of writing outcomes in the early primary years and numerous studies have reported positive correlations between measures of motivation and writing attainment among learners (see Camacho et al. (2021) for a systematic review). Within the Caribbean context, Burris-Melville (2020) reported high levels of writing anxiety among Jamaican university students, a factor which the researcher linked to the prolific writing challenges experienced by students. Within the current study, students' negative attitudes to writing are likely to have contributed to the high levels of task avoidance and may have implications for student writing quality outcomes.

7. 4 Covid-19 Pandemic and Writing Instruction

As described in Chapter Six, data collection took place during the COVID-19 lockdown when schools across the world were closed, and instruction was moved online. A key finding from meetings with teachers and school administrators concerned the effects of COVID-19 school closures on writing instruction. Though no teacher admitted to dedicating less time to writing during COVID-19 school closure, comments indicated that students were provided with even

fewer opportunities for extended writing due to the challenges of collecting students handwritten texts for marking and the frustrating challenge of caregivers completing writing tasks for students — the former being a significant hurdle in the early stages of data collection. Given findings showing negative impacts of limited extended writing opportunities on student writing quality overtime (de la Piedra, 2006), it is likely that the quality of the writing samples collected in the present study were impacted by the nature of writing instruction provided during COVID-19 school closures, which at the point of data collection (February – March 2021) was in effect for approximately one year.

7.5 Summary of Contextual Findings

While home language and literacy data could not be used as initially intended, they have served to provide a richer description of the study context and have highlighted some important trends that will provide greater insight into the characteristics of writing among Jamaican primary school students. Overall, parents' reports on child language input showed a trend towards relatively equal amounts of Jamaican Creole and English being spoken in homes. In terms of SES, a relatively large percentage of mothers were not educated beyond the secondary school level and teachers believed that mothers' occupations influenced child language and literacy outcomes. Parents were generally more likely to engage in informal HLE activities compared to direct parent tutoring activities which have been found to be particularly beneficial for writing development. Such practices were likely influenced in some measure by parental beliefs concerning literacy, low levels of parental literacy in some cases, and by the challenges of providing for multiple children. Community literacy practice in the form of Sunday School appeared to play an important role in the community and therefore may have some influence on

students' literacy development – more research is needed in this area, however. Finally, teachers reported that most students did not enjoy writing, and engaged in less extended writing during the COVID-19 school closures – factors which will likely have some bearing on student writing outcomes. The findings reported in this chapter will be integrated in the discussion of student writing outcomes in chapter 9 to provide greater insight into the nature of writing challenges experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language.

8. Findings: Teachers

This chapter presents the findings from the qualitative interviews with classroom teachers. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with nine of the classroom teachers who taught the Grade Six students involved in the study. The aim of this portion of the study was to gain insight into teachers' concerns for students' writing, their instructional approaches in the writing classroom as well instructional challenges and their experiences of teacher training in relation to teaching writing in a creole context.

Interview data were analysed using computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) by means of NVivo 12. As noted in the methods chapter, interviews were transcribed verbatim. No grammatical corrections were made to participant's utterances and all caps has been used to highlight words that were emphasised by speakers. Jamaican Creole utterances were transcribed using the Cassidy-JLU orthographic system and are highlighted using italics. English translations have either been provided in-line or separately. In cases where there is a significant amount of code switching, the English translation is provided separately (below) instead of in-line, for ease of reading. Findings from the interview data are presented in the upcoming sections starting with the outcomes from inter-coder reliability checks.

8.1 Inter-coder Reliability

As outlined in section 6.9.2 of the methods chapter, two educational researchers who were fluent in both Jamaican Creole and English reviewed and coded a portion of the interview data in accordance with the codebook. The longest interview with the most instances of code-switching was chosen to allow for more extensive coding opportunities and a review of the Jamaican Creole transcription. Due to the qualitative nature of the data and the fact that

transcripts were not broken down into pre-defined chunks of text for coding, quantitative measures of inter-coder reliability such as percentage agreement were not well suited for the data, therefore a qualitative approach was taken to establishing inter-coder reliability. Coders reviewed the transcript independently using the codebook (see Table. 8.1 below for sample) then met to review each coding instance and to discuss areas of disagreement which were documented. The full codebook can be found in Appendix I.

Table 8.1

Sample of Interview Codebook

Name	Description
Areas of Challenge	These refer specifically to challenges faced in the composite skills of writing- e.g., vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, expression. It must not be a reason for the challenge (e.g., motivation) but a specific area of challenge
• Capitalization	Capitalization as an issue in writing.
• Expression	What teachers often refer to as 'colourful writing'. This includes the use of figures of speech, idioms, and other phrases to make writing more expressive and interesting.
• Few lines	Students write very little when given writing tasks.
• Grammar & Sentence Structure	Challenges related to grammar and sentence structure. This includes issues such as subject-verb agreement, parts of speech, tense etc.
• Handwriting	Handwriting as a major issue in writing outcomes
• Ideas & Background Knowledge	A lack of ideas/ background knowledge as a major challenge for student writing. This does not speak to prior linguistic knowledge (e.g., grammar rules) but rather content related knowledge that would support writing. E.g., knowledge about field trips, a day at the beach.
• Organization	Organization/layout of writing and ideas as a major challenge. This includes transitions, paragraphing
• Punctuation	Punctuation as a major challenge in writing
• Spelling	Spelling identified as a major challenge in writing outcomes
• Vocabulary	Vocabulary identified as a major issue affecting writing outcomes

Name	Description
Assessment	How student writing is assessed
• Peer marking	Peers evaluate writing. This can be in class discussion, switching scripts peers, critiquing each other's writing, etc.
• Teacher marking	Teachers collect and mark students writing themselves
COVID-19	Any comments of the specific impact of COVID-19 on writing

There were three instances of disagreement that were discussed and resolved:

1. ***'Background knowledge' code description too vague:*** This code referred to students' experiential knowledge (e.g., of a day at the beach) and belonged to the 'Areas of Challenge' parent node. However, the second coder felt that 'background knowledge' could refer to every type of knowledge (e.g., grammatical knowledge, vocabulary knowledge). Both coders agreed that the description should be made more explicit and clearer.
2. ***Overlap of 'prompts' and 'ideation' codes:*** The second coder pointed out that in some cases there was an overlap between the 'prompts' and 'ideation' codes which belonged to the 'Pedagogical Approaches' parent node. This overlap was due to the fact that in many cases, teachers' descriptions of using prompts involved the use of pictures to aid ideation prior to writing, thus connecting both codes. The decision was made by both coders to apply both the 'prompts' and 'ideation' codes to these units of analysis.
3. ***'Writing course' code confusion***: There was confusion on the part of the second coder concerning what the 'writing course' code referred to. In the codebook, 'writing course' referred to courses taken by teachers to build their own writing skills as opposed to courses that focused on training teachers in how to teach writing in the Jamaican Creole context. Once this clarification was provided, the disagreement was resolved.

As there were only three instances of discrepancy in coding which were easily resolved, no further interview transcripts were double coded by both reviewers. In the upcoming section the findings from the interviews are presented.

8.2 Teacher Demographics

All participating teachers provided consent for direct quotes to be included in the study under the guise of a pseudonym. The pseudonyms along with teacher demographics are presented in Table 8.2 below. All teachers completed their qualifications at Jamaican colleges and/ or universities saving one teacher who completed her master's program in Literacy at an American university.

Table 8.2

Teacher Demographics

Pseudonym	Qualification	Years Teaching	School	Additional Roles/notes
Ms. Downer	Bachelor's degree, Primary Education	5	1	
Mr. Gordon	Diploma, Primary Education Bachelor's degree, Primary education	13	1	
Ms. Mair	Diploma, Primary Education Bachelor's degree, Primary Education Master's degree, Literacy Education*	16	1	Grade Coordinator **American university*
Ms. Scott	Diploma, Primary Education Bachelor's degree, Primary Education (Literacy Specialist)	3.5	1	
Ms. Williams	Diploma, Primary Education Bachelor's degree, Primary Education	18	1	
Ms. Elliot	Diploma, Primary Education	14	2	
Ms. Henry	Diploma, Secondary Education Bachelor's degree, Primary Education	7	2	
Ms. Hariot	Diploma, Primary Education Bachelor's degree, Primary education (Literacy Specialist)	9	2	

Mr. Fisher	Bachelor's degree, Special Education Master's degree, Business Administration	20	2	Grade Coordinator

8.3 What do teachers believe are the areas of concern in writing for students with Jamaican Creole as a home language?

Teachers were asked what they thought were the areas of challenge in writing, if any, for their students with Jamaican Creole as a home language. Three key categories of responses emerged in the data concerning teachers' views of the writing challenges experienced by learners: 'students write how they speak', limited expression, and mechanics. The first category directly addressed challenges in writing faced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language while the latter two applied more broadly to learners in Grade Six regardless of their language background.

8.3.1 Students Write how they Speak

The central trend in teacher responses was that students with Jamaican Creole as a home language 'write how they speak'— a phrase often used by teachers during interviews. Teachers reported that students with Jamaican Creole as a home language often 'mixed up' the languages which posed a problem in writing. Within this category, teachers pointed out key areas of challenge in writing which they linked directly to the influence of the oral language spoken in the home: grammar and sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling, and organization. The concerns highlighted by teachers for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language were mostly language-related and each of these areas are treated as subcategories in the data presented below:

8.3.1.1 Grammar and Sentence Structure. Grammar and sentence structure was the most common area of concern teachers had for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home

language, being raised in four of the nine interviews. Teachers pointed out that students struggled to construct grammatical sentences and were often unaware of the grammatical differences between the two languages. Such sentiments can be seen in the excerpt below from 'Ms. Elliot':

> ***Ms. Elliot**:* One problem you find with them… subject-verb agreement. So, you know when you are writing you have to ensure that your verbs agree and your subjects agree and sometimes we talk about double negatives and all of that! For them it's very hard! … [when you tell them] 'we gonna edit now and see what corrections you can put' … they say *"Miss notn nuh rong wid it!"* [Miss, nothing is wrong with it!]"

As outlined in Chapter Three, subject-verb agreement is one of the key areas of grammatical divergence between Jamaican Creole and English wherein subject-verb agreement is mandatory in English but not in Jamaican Creole. The excerpt above underlines the idea expressed by teachers, as it relates to grammar, that children with Jamaican Creole as a home language tend to write in a fashion more consistent with their spoken language.

8.3.1.2 Vocabulary. Vocabulary was also named by some teachers as an area of challenge for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. Teachers claimed that vocabulary challenges stemmed from the influence of the oral home language (Jamaican Creole) and students' level of exposure to the language of schooling. Two key areas of challenge were vocabulary knowledge and the unintentional use of creole vocabulary when writing in English. In terms of vocabulary knowledge, one teacher pointed out that while students often had sufficient exposure to the language to be able to 'call the words' or recognize their form, comprehension of word meanings and their appropriate use in writing remained a major problem for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. In addition to limited knowledge of word meaning, another teacher

named a lack of knowledge and usage of figurative and idiomatic expressions in writing as a challenge for learners with Jamaican Creole:

> **Ms. Mair:** *"...like the simile, the alliterations, when yu a tiich dem fi rait dem nuh have no clue weh dem can se ... 'as di flower bends its head'. The children are clueless as to those little things to put into their writing to spice it up... if you don't have this then your writing ah go jus be FLAT and BORING!*
> ***English translation:***
> Like the simile, the alliterations, when you are teaching them to write they do not have a clue of what that they can say… 'as the flower bends its head'. The children are clueless as to those little things that can be put into their writing to spice it up…if you don't have this then your writing will just be FLAT and BORING!

Two teachers named vocabulary as one of the main challenges experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language, due to the influence of the home language:

> **Mr. Fisher:** Vocab, vocab, vocabulary... they write the way they speak. Sometimes the words are nonsense words. For example, we get creole sometimes in the writing and when we read it we say, 'OHHHHH!' because at first we are lost! We don't know what the person is trying to say and so sometimes after reading you have to call them and say 'what are you saying here?' and when they read it for you, because that's how they talk …they write the way they speak.
>
> **Ms. Williams***:* [Jamaican Creole] It affects their writing because when they come to school…*dem ahh tell yuh word like "mada" and "shi se" and "nyam"* and when you tell them to write the word "eat" *is like yu telling them Spanish*.
> **English translation***:*
> It affects their writing because when they come to school…they tell you words like "mada"(mother) and "shi se" (she said) and "nyam" (eat) and when you tell them to write the word "eat" it is like you are speaking Spanish to them.

While 'Mr. Fisher' deemed this as a vocabulary issue, it may also be considered as a challenge with spelling due to the influence of Jamaican Creole phonology. Mr Fisher pointed out that once students read their scripts aloud, he was able understand the 'nonsense words'— a comment bearing similarity to teachers' concerns for spelling which are presented in the upcoming section.

8.3.1.3 Spelling. Spelling was named as another common area of challenge for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. Teachers connected spelling challenges to oral language skills, and the influence of Jamaican Creole phonology. While most teachers simply pointed out that spelling was a challenge for this group of learners because of their language background, 'Ms. Williams' provided a detailed example of the influence of Jamaican Creole phonology on students spelling in writing tasks:

> **Ms Williams:** I realize that however the students speak, that is how they write… For example, when they want to write "has" they mix it up with the word "as"[7]… so when they are writing and you read their paragraph, you realize that the word should have been 'has' or 'as' at some places. So, when you listen to them orally, you realize that how they speak — they actually write. So, if you can get them to talk properly, they will write properly.

8.3.1.4 Organization. Though not as prominent as other areas, organization was also highlighted as an area of concern by one teacher. This subcategory encompassed any response related to students' challenges with presenting ideas in a logical and sequential manner in writing. 'Ms. Elliot' made a direct link between disorganized writing and what she deemed as the unstructured free-flowing nature of oral Jamaican Creole:

> **Ms. Elliot:** …how they transition from one point to another point is absolutely off most of the time, I guess because of how they talk…they write just like how they talk! Also their organization, you know *like when yu a taak patwa eniting kom a yuh mowt yuh jus se it* [you know when you are speaking patois (Jamaican Creole), anything that comes to your mouth you just say it] …so it's (their writing) just all over the place."

[7] In Jamaican Creole phonology, the /h/ phoneme is often deleted word-initially, and in other cases it is added word initially (e.g. hypercorrection)

8.3.1.5 A General 'Mixing-up' of the Languages. In addition to the specific component skills of writing addressed above, some teachers spoke more broadly of the influence of the home language on writing, pointing out that students often "mixed up" both languages unintentionally in their writing. 'Ms. Hariot' and 'Ms. Elliot' echoed such sentiments.

> ***Ms. Hariot:*** It's really challenging because when you see that in a child's writing that they are mixing up Standard English and the patois it poses a challenge. You have to be going through and circling and saying remember this is not English and then you put the correct…it's kind of challenging to be honest.
>
> ***Ms. Elliot:*** I think English Language not being many of them first language is also another issue as well because you realise sometimes that some of them will write creole in their writing and all of that… And even those ones too…they are the ones that shy away from the writing too because they know that their English is not ALL THAT!

Overall, teachers' concerns for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language appear to be more language-related (e.g., vocabulary and grammar). As teachers often pointed out that writing was generally a "weak area", they also provided responses concerning writing challenges for all learners despite their language background and these findings are presented in the upcoming section.

8.3.2 Writing Challenges Across Language Groups

In addition to commenting of the specific areas of challenge for learners with Jamaican Creole, teachers were also invited to speak to more general areas of concern for all learners. Two key categories of responses emerged in the data: limited expression and mechanics.

8.3.2.1 Text length. Text or compositional length emerged as the dominant category as it related to areas of challenge in writing for students. Threaded through teacher responses was the frustration of students writing 'very few lines' in response to writing prompts that required

extended writing, despite being encouraged to write more. This frustration is evidenced in the excerpts below:

> **Ms. Harris:** Presently, writing at the primary level...it is not so good. The students, they are not expressing themselves. If you tell them to explain something they write one sentence…you tell them, 'that is not an explanation- one sentence, say something more…you have to stretch your sentences! You have to add the where, the how, you need to add this to your sentence to make it stretch'. Expression is a MAJOR MAJOR problem. You ask a question, they just write the point, no explanation, nothing to it, and that's the major problem- straight to the point, one sentence.

> **Ms. Elliot:** So, if we give them an essay to write and stuff they just do two lines. I'm like, 'really?... this is a 15-mark question…come on! You gotta write something with substance man!' I don't know they just do something for teacher to say they did something…. not like its anything with much substance.

> ***Ms. Douse***: They write a story in one paragraph. So even the other day I was saying "one paragraph is not a story!" … when you check the work its [still] one paragraph… they finish in one paragraph [laughs].

8.3.2.2 Mechanics. Challenges related to punctuation and capitalization were also among the common challenges mentioned by teachers during the interviews. The two skill areas were often listed together or referred to collectively as 'mechanics' by teachers. Therefore, while these two skills were initially coded separately, they were later collated into one code ('mechanics') during analysis.

> **Ms. Downer**:…yes, at times they know how to spell, but to construct the sentences, use the punctuation marks, and the capital letters and those things (are a problem). Sometimes even with the capital letters… you have to say to them 'remember when you are writing you are supposed to write with capital letters'… you realize they are making those mistakes. The punctuation mark and utilizing capital letters… stuff like that is the main problem.

It is of note that while handwriting is generally grouped under the category of mechanics, it was not named by any teacher as an area of challenge for students.

Findings showed that writing was an area of concern across the board, regardless of learner's language background. However, there were some language-related differences in the concerns expressed by teachers. General concerns for primary school writers were focused on mechanics and limited expression in writing tasks, while concerns for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language were more language-related and stemming from the influence of the home language in the areas of vocabulary, grammar, and spelling.

8.4 What instructional approaches do teachers adopt to support learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language in the writing classroom?

Following on from teachers' responses concerning the challenging areas in writing for learners with Jamaican Creole as home language, interviewees were asked about the methods, activities, and/ or tools that they used in their writing lessons to support such learners. The overarching finding here was that for the most part, teachers did not use methods that were specifically geared at supporting these learners but adopted more general approaches which are reflected in the three key categories: the language experience approach, modelling, and the use of the writing process. Two less dominant instructional approaches that were directly geared at learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language, however, were the ad hoc correction of the creole and making explicit connections between oral and written language. The latter approach was the least dominant instructional practice — being reported by only one teacher, however, it is included as a category given the focus on and inclusion of the home language. Altogether, five categories were present in the data: the language experience approach, modelling, the use of the

writing process, making explicit connections between oral and written language, and ad hoc correction. The instructional approaches that were more targeted to learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language are presented first.

8.4.1 Ad hoc Correction of the Home Language

Teachers tended to use ad hoc correction of the creole without supporting explanatory feedback—an approach that did not appear to be very effective based on teacher accounts. Some teachers reported requiring students to reproduce their statements which included Jamaican Creole, in English. Ms. Williams provided an account of her approach to teaching English wherein she would respond to students' creole productions with, "alright…tell me properly now", with 'properly' meaning 'in English'. In the case of writing, Ms. Elliot reported that after reviewing students' texts, she would present students with their writing that included errors due to the use of the home language and require them to indicate the corrections that could be made. However, to her frustration, students generally could not pinpoint any errors in their writing.

8.4.2 Oral and Written Language Connections

This category included methods that drew explicit connections between spoken and written language to improve writing. These activities included the use of the home language in the form of drama and discussion, as well as the oral drafting of scripts prior to writing. Ms Mair, the Grade Six coordinator at School One, was particularly passionate about this method which she deemed 'a communicative approach' to writing:

> ***Ms. Mair:*** *(I use) activities that involve a lot of communication. Communication using first their mother-tongue language and then now introducing them... immersing them into the Standard English. So, for my class we do a lot of discussions, sometimes my discussions go all the way up to 35 minutes because I get them to talk… I try to build a platform where they can express…so I say once you can talk it, you can write it down.*

'Ms. Mair' also provided a detailed and animated example of how she used the communicative approach in writing classes by connecting the home language (Jamaican Creole) to writing through the medium of speech and drama. She describes an oral drama activity in which students made their arguments for and against deforestation — first in Jamaican Creole, before working together as a class to translate their arguments into English and subsequently writing a persuasive essay using the same arguments. As the account involved a significant amount codeswitching, both the original excerpt and a translated version (English) are provided below:

> **Ms. Mair**: *I put them in groups and I put one side "cut down the tree" and the other side "don't cut down the tree" and it was like a passageway and one person whisper as the other person passing "cut down the tree wi want it fi mek bed" and the other side was saying "yuh a iidyat? Cut down di tree and weh yu get oxygen fram? … and when they talk it in the patois and they go back in their seat I say "aarait, evriting yuh jus se inna patwa…rait it dung". So now I go on the board… and we translate it into standard English and I said alright here are some points that you are going to use to argue. Some of them could have just given me a paragraph but it was an excellent paragraph. When you use the communicative approach and you put them to go act it out- when you say write now…smaddy affi av somn fi rait … somebody have to think "oh a dat mi jus se!".*
>
> ***English translation:***
> I put them into groups, one side was 'cut down the tree' and the other side was 'don't cut down the tree' and there was a passageway and one person whispered as the other person passed 'cut down the tree, we want it so we can make beds' and the other side was saying 'are you an idiot? Cut down the trees and where will we get oxygen from?' And when they spoke in patois and then went back to their seats I said to them, 'alright, write down everything you just said in patois'. Then I went to the blackboard, and we translated it into standard English, and I said alright, here are some points that you are going to use to argue. Some of them could only give me a paragraph but it was an excellent paragraph. When you use the communicative approach and make them act it out, when you tell them to write now...someone must have something to write…someone has to think, 'oh I just said that!'"

Ms. Mair was the only teacher who reported making explicit connections between the home and school language to support the writing of learners with Jamaican Creole as their home or dominant

language. Additionally, she was also the only teacher who explicitly included the home language in the writing process in a manner reflective of translanguaging pedagogy. It is of note that Ms. Mair was also the only teacher who completed her teacher training degree outside of Jamaica and reported a deep interest in and engagement with educational research during her interview.

8.4.3 The Language Experience Approach

The language experience approach emerged as the dominant approach to writing instruction. Teachers often described activities that either drew on prior experiences of learners or that exposed them to unfamiliar experiences to aid idea-building for writing. Some teachers referred to this approach explicitly as the 'language experience approach' while others described activities that achieved the same goal. Activities subsumed under this category involved the use of pictures, discussions, as well as watching videos and movies. Mr Fisher, the Grade Six coordinator at School 2 was an advocate of the language experience approach and provided the following explanation of how he uses the approach in the writing classroom:

> ***Mr. Fisher:*** The Language Experience Approach- I think that it is very effective…
>
> ***Interviewer:*** and could you tell me a bit about that approach?
>
> ***Mr. Fisher*****:** We teach them based on their experience, what we do is actually pull from them. Then we actually get them to write so they are not only writing their own personal experience but the experience of others. So, if they are not familiar with something, then they can get it from somebody else. Somebody else will explain because somebody else has that experience. What we find most of the times is that they are given topics and they have no experience… because the prompt is going to be "write about a day spent at a park" …they have never been to a park, but somebody else has been to the park so we allow that person to explain what happens at the park. Sometimes we use videos too — to show them what it looks like so that at the end they have an idea of what is expected."

Ms Mair, the Grade Six coordinator at School 1 pointed out that given the limited experiences of some of her students, before switching to the language experience approach, she was "doing the children wrong" by simply putting a prompt on the board and expecting them to write on their own. She explained how she used the Language Experience Approach in her lessons to help improve students' writing:

> **Ms. Mair:** I tend to focus on their experience…I started from the Language Experience Approach where we talk about the topic, we brainstorm...I bring topics from their background and give them varieties so it's not just 'write about your summer experience' because '*what if I never have a summer experience*?'. I know my children so I know the things that they probably would have an experience about and I would put that topic down ... If the ideas are there… now I can take them through the editing.

Interview data also showed that those who used the language experience approach often included the use of audio-visual media to provide students with exposure to unfamiliar experiences. 'Ms Scott' provides one such example:

> ***Ms. Scott****: We use the video sometimes to show them things that they do not familiar with* in terms of going out to get the experience, but they can watch this in a particular movie or sometimes I will have like one and two students who will say*, 'oh Miss, you know I watch this in a movie!'* and they can relate in that way. I say once you can relate it to something you have seen, you can just put it into your writing.

8.4.4 Modelling

The two teachers in the sample named modelling as their primary approach to teaching writing. This method involved providing students with a model piece of writing that could be used as a template or guide for their own work. In both cases, the teachers were the ones providing the model:

> **Mr Fisher**: I model things. Whatever I am giving them I normally model it. So, say for example we are writing a business letter… I will write one, and then we write one as a class, so they have two… It works. At least they are seeing what to do, what not to do, and now they are taking an active part in it so they feel "well I wrote this!" so they are left with a good feeling and so now they can go on and try one for themselves independently.

> **Mr Gordon**: At times I try different strategies but most of the times I do modelling. Leading by example. When you use modelling, they try to follow you but if you make them work on their own they won't do anything like that.

8.4.5 The Writing Process

The writing process was the fourth and final instructional approach identified in the data and was operationalized in the codebook as 'teaching methods related to the writing process including the stages of prewriting/planning, drafting, editing, reviewing'. Initially, only responses that addressed the writing process in its entirety were included in the category. However, after reviewing the category and re-reading the raw data, the decision was made to include other codes (e.g., 'planning') which corresponded directly with the component stages of the writing process. A key finding was that the writing process was scarcely used on its own by teachers but rather in conjunction with the other approaches described in this section. 'Mr. Fisher' provides an example of combining the use of the writing process with the modelling approach to help students organize their ideas:

> **Mr. Fisher:** "I am writing a letter on the board and the thoughts are coming so quickly, the thoughts are coming fast than how I can write…[so] We go through the writing process where they edit, do the first draft, they rewrite, proofread, whatever. We go through the writing process from time to time and they use it as a guide"

In line with using the writing process as a guide, three teachers mentioned that they incorporated the use of graphic organizers as a tool in their writing classes to help students to organize their ideas in the pre-writing stage. 'Ms Hariot' provides one such example:

> **Ms Hariot**: What I normally do is use graphic organizers… when you put your thoughts in the graphic organizer it is easier for you to write. I might say alright we are going to do this first, normally I say put your thoughts down and I go through… "what are you supposed to put here? and put here? Okay now put your writing together'.

As evidenced in the excerpts, the Grade Six coordinators at both schools (Mr. Fisher and Ms. Mair) provided more extensive descriptions and examples of the instructional approaches they adopted in the writing classroom. Overall, the language experience approach was found to be the dominant approach adopted by teachers at the Grade Six level in both schools. Modelling and the use of the writing process to guide writing were also common. Contrastingly, approaches specifically geared at supporting the writing of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language such as ad hoc correction of the creole and the linking of oral and written skills were less common.

8.5 What challenges do teachers experience in providing writing instruction to students with Jamaican Creole as a home language?

The time-consuming nature of writing instruction and assessment emerged as the key instructional challenges experienced by teachers. Initially three categories of responses were identified in relation to this research question, however, after reviewing the categories, the raw data, and the research questions, it became evident that the two other categories "lack of contextualized resources" and "below grade level literacy skills" were directly addressing

reading as opposed to writing. The findings presented in this section therefore relate to the time-consuming nature of writing instruction and assessment which has been coded as 'Time on Task'.

8.5.1 Time on Task

The most prominent category of responses concerning the challenges of providing writing instruction in the Jamaican context addressed the time-consuming nature of writing instruction particularly as it related to assessment. The challenge of time on task seemed especially poignant for teachers at the Grade Six level given the demands of the curriculum, the limited time allotted to writing instruction, and the necessary preparation for the Primary Exit Profile (PEP) exams. One teacher highlighted the difficulty of helping weaker students with writing given the time constraints and demands of the curriculum, while another alluded to the time required for writing instruction being a waste of time considering the demands of the Grade Six curriculum, respectively:

> ***Mr. Fisher****: Sometimes time really does not allow us…right, because remember Grade Six is strictly exam oriented. It doesn't matter what people say to you…schools are ranked based on what they do in exams…this is also bad because what happens is that you are going to work with the faster ones and the ones who are slow will get left behind*
>
> ***Mr Gordon****: Writing is really a tedious task. It can take weeks to complete a simple writing piece to get to some sort of perfection. And that is time…time waste…I don't want to say time wasted but you are using up a lot of time.*

Most teachers pointed to the specific challenge of assessing students' written scripts given the limited time allotted to writing instruction and large class sizes as their greatest

challenge. Additionally, some teachers expressed frustration with taking the time to prepare engaging lessons but not having the time to provide students with adequate feedback:

> **Mr. Fisher**: it (writing) takes time to mark — that's the problem and remember that our classes in Jamaica are so big and we don't have any assistants so sometimes it takes time to mark because when you are marking you are editing.
>
> **Ms Elliot**: Writing takes time to be marked and as a matter of fact you have teachers who shy away from writing class because IT IS A LOT OF WORK!
>
> **Ms. Mair**: When you are doing some subject like writing I think it need to be more specific and purposeful… so having 25 students and you give them something to write, you are not able to give immediate feedback…It is crucial …to make them know how well they are doing in writing. *It nuh mek sens I se I give yuh this lesson, I ask you to write dis and den yuh don't know where yuh are…where yuh stand.*
> [it doesn't make sense that I give you this lesson, I ask you to write this and then you don't know where you are…where you stand.]

The frustration with the time-consuming nature of assessing student writing was also evident in teachers' responses when asked what changes they would make to writing instruction if given the opportunity. Some teachers suggested a specialist to focus on writing not only because it was a "weak area" for students but largely due to the time demands of writing instruction and the competing demands of the Grade Six curriculum and exam orientation:

> **Ms. Downer:** I would get someone to focus on that area. When it comes on to the writing its time consuming …it is actually difficult for you to go through the writing on an individual level…so if you have somebody to only focus on that…as I said before for the other subjects like Mathematics, you can actually mark it and say this is right but when it comes on to the writing you have to take time to go through it…so if we could get a literacy specialist who just focuses on the writing because its honestly kinda hard… the writing… to mark at times so it is something extra.

In response to the time-consuming nature of assessing and providing feedback on students' writing, teachers shared that they adopted a peer-marking approach to assessment:

> **Ms. Hariot:** Sometimes I would say when we were at school (prior to COVID-19), give the person beside you your work to read and give your corrections… then after that you rewrite and carry it to me.
>
> **Ms Downer**: its (assessing writing) time consuming yes, so what I normally do is after I give them the writing, the student share and each student would give their critique so that makes it a lot easier for me. So we write and then share and then we critique and say okay, this could have been done this way and you could add this to it or you could end it this way… and so in that way it makes it easier.

Overall, findings showed that the main challenge experienced by teachers was the time-consuming nature of writing instruction and assessment given the time constraints outlined in the curriculum, large class sizes, and the exam orientation of Grade Six curriculum- factors which at times made it difficult to help students who were weak in writing. Given the limited time allotted to writing each week (approximately one hour), the large class sizes, the time consuming nature of writing assessment, the demands of teaching to the test for Grade Six, and the time spent on approaches such as modelling, it may be the case that students have minimal opportunities to author their own creative texts and to put into practice and receive feedback on the writing skills that they have been taught.

8.6 To what extent do teachers feel equipped to provide writing instruction in a creole context?

To gain insight into the extent to which teachers felt equipped to provide writing instruction in the Jamaican Creole context, they were asked questions concerning the nature of their teacher training and professional development programs as it related to writing. Teachers were also asked questions concerning their own competence in writing and the extent to which they enjoyed and engaged in writing in their own lives. Though most teachers had at least a

vague memory of completing a writing-related course (communications or syntax) during training, responses showed a general trend of teachers feeling ill-equipped by training programs to teach writing in the Jamaican context and on a more personal level, low confidence in their own writing skills as teachers. The findings are presented below in two sections: teacher training programs and teacher competence.

8.6.1 Teacher Training

Though teachers had different levels of qualification and specialization, when asked if they felt that their teacher training program prepared them adequately to teach writing in the Jamaican Creole context, the consistent response was that teachers felt ill-prepared by training programs. Within this category, three subcategories emerged from the data that provide insight into teacher's feelings of ill-preparedness: teachers' area of specialization or lack thereof, a dominant focus on reading skills, and a need for contextualized and practical teacher training. Each subcategory is addressed in this section.

8.6.1.1 Areas of Specialization. As seen in Table 8.2, most teachers completed a general primary education program which covered all subject areas while three teachers were trained as literacy specialists. The interview data showed a trend of teachers who completed the general primary education degree feeling ill-equipped and attributing their lack of preparation to the nature of their program. These teachers often proposed that those who specialized in literacy during their teacher training were the ones who would be adequately equipped with the skills needed to teach writing in their context:

> **Interviewer:** Do you feel that your teacher training program prepared you adequately to teach writing in this (creole speaking) context?

> **Ms. Elliot:** [laughs] oh no, I don't think so. As in adequately to teach writing? … No no no no…that was more general preparation [laughs] perhaps the persons who majored in literacy. Maybe they would have done more focus on writing and stuff like that. I don't do literacy, we touched it but not so in depth. My focus was on all subject areas.

One teacher believed that while she did not feel fully equipped to teach writing based on her training in the general primary education diploma, the training program was adequate:

> **Ms. Downer:** Well for me the programs are adequate, and I know for persons who would be doing literacy, right…they will be fully equipped as they will only be focusing on that… so unlike me now where I do the primary education where I have to do EVERYTHING…but for the persons who are doing literacy they are just focused on that area. They will be fully equipped no doubt about that.

Interwoven with this subcategory of teacher specialization was another thread in the data- the dominant focus on reading at the levels of teacher training and teacher understandings of literacy.

8.6.1.2 A Dominant Focus on Reading Skills. Three teachers in the sample specialized in literacy during their teacher training programs. These teachers were also asked whether they felt well equipped by their training program to teach writing in the creole context and contrary to the ideas presented previously by other teachers, the literacy specialists also did not feel adequately prepared. Their responses indicated a dominant focus on reading skills in their teacher training programs as well as in their own understanding of literacy. Therefore, literacy specialists while appearing more equipped to teach reading, did not feel as equipped to teach writing in the Jamaican context:

> **Ms. Hariot:** "Literacy was my specialty … but it focuses more on comprehension and word recognition more than writing. As it relates to creole, I don't think that we are adequately prepared to deal with it."

> **Ms. Scott:** "… (They should) make writing a specialised area. Even though I specialise in literacy, reading and writing goes hand in hand so just like the literacy specialist is there, they could take in that special area (writing) into it…The person who is in that special area could do both or they have an additional role for it."

In the excerpt above the teacher who identifies as a literacy specialist points out that writing goes hand in hand with reading and therefore should be included in the specialist area of literacy or be made into its own focus areas. Such a comment would imply that writing is not necessarily included as an area of focus during teacher training, hence the need for a specialized area or its inclusion in the literacy specialist training program. Indeed, during interviews, despite being explicitly asked questions about writing, teachers often provided responses concerning reading. In addition to the factors of teacher specialization and the dominant focus on reading skills, another subcategory of responses that emerged in the interview data was a call for more applied and contextualized teacher training.

8.6.1.3 A Need for Applied and Contextualized Pedagogy. Another subcategory of responses that emerged in teacher responses concerning teacher preparation was the need for more applied and contextually relevant pedagogy. Teachers highlighted a focus on foreign or theoretical content as opposed to practical and contextual training as well as a lack of training in dealing with the creole in the classroom:

> **Ms. Scott**: And when you are in college or university, they mostly use a lot of content from where you (the researcher) are from…overseas…you know, foreign content. So, it's not really put into our context as Jamaicans with our students…so …no (I don't feel adequately prepared).

> **Mr. Gordon:** I did the diploma and bachelors. But you know these are just like papers. They don't really develop you into a better teacher. That's my opinion. They are teaching about some psychologists and so on and in the long term that's not what you are teaching.

> **Ms. Hariot**: They need to give people the reality of the classroom...when you come to it., the actual setting its completely different. In language arts and math you are not adequately prepared- it needs to go deeper. They give you the theories and so on but the actual knowledge of what you are supposed to know in the subject, you don't really get. Instead of focusing on the psychiatrists and psychologists of this and that…more focus is needed on the actual content you have to teach and how to go about teaching it.

With reference to training in dealing with the home language of students during literacy instruction, teachers did not feel that they received the necessary practical preparation. Ms Williams shared that based on her teacher training she entered the classroom with a 'strictly English' mindset but was confronted with a very different reality in the classroom which made teaching difficult:

> ***Ms. Williams****:* I don't think it prepared me really in the way to really deal with the creole. No! because I went into the classroom as I said *an a taak an tingk se bwai iz strikli English an dat is how yu go and teach when you are on teaching practice and those things…not knowing that I would buck up on children who would pressure you to talk a certain way…*and the training I received didn't prepare me.
> **English translation:**
> I don't think it prepared me really in the way to really deal with the creole. No! because I went into the classroom as I and was talking, thinking that it was strictly English and that is how you go and teach when you are on teaching practice and those things…not knowing that I would encounter children who would pressure you to talk a certain way…and the training I received didn't really prepare me.

This ill-preparedness to deal with the home language of many students (Jamaican Creole) in the classroom was a common thread in teacher responses with all but one teacher not being familiar with the term 'transitional bilingualism' — the language education policy adopted by the Jamaican Ministry of Education. Moreover, all teachers indicated that they had not received

any training during college or professionally that focused on dealing with Jamaican Creole in the classroom and in language arts in particular.

One teacher, however, provided a slightly different picture. Ms. Mair expressed that she felt more equipped to teach writing in the Jamaican context since doing a masters in literacy online with an American university. She pointed out that in doing this program she was exposed to the practice of research, and this has broadened her understanding of writing and provided intervention ideas to help the students. She also shared that research has now become a large part of her own practice.

Nevertheless, most teachers felt ill-equipped by their respective teacher training programs to provide writing instruction in the Jamaican context due to a focus on reading as opposed to writing, the nature of their programs, and a lack of applied and contextualized teacher training pedagogy. In addition to teacher training preparation, teachers' preparedness to teach writing in relation to their own competence and attitudes to writing was also explored- these findings are presented in the upcoming section.

8.6.2 Teacher Competence

Teachers were also asked to provide a self-assessment of their own writing skills. While both male teachers quickly expressed confidence in their skills, most female teachers were less confident in their own writing skills admitting that writing was their "weakest area", "not a strong point", or something that they could only do "averagely". Female teachers generally expressed low confidence in their own competence as writers and appeared to be self-conscious about their writing especially when it would need to be read by others.

> **Ms. Scott:** For writing, I lack confidence so I will just think that it is not written properly — some little errors there, I am not doing it correctly, I always have self-doubt. I am not confident in myself so many times I will ask another teacher to look at it (my writing), so I have to work on myself with that. Even though I don't really show the students that… I am being a hypocrite"
>
> **Ms. Downer:** *Yea honestly, I don't like to write none at all…*if you are writing for others to see you have to be very careful cause they are checking everything so it's like you have to ensure that all the *HI's* [8] are crossed, all the t's…especially if you are a teacher, they expect you to know everything. They are going to critique you…like this is not supposed to…that not supposed to and all those things…and it's not going to be perfect.

Consistent with Ms Downers comment above, 6 of the 9 teachers expressed a dislike for writing, with some attributing this dislike of writing on the part of both teachers and students to being *'a Jamaican thing' or 'our culture'. '*Ms Elliot' was one of the teachers who held this belief:

> **Ms. Elliot**: I think it's a Jamaican thing to be honest. Jamaican people…we…well not we because I do it, but most of us, we don't like to write. We don't like to write.

Taken together, the responses showed that most teachers felt ill-equipped to teach writing in the Jamaican context. Based on the data, such feelings of ill-preparedness appear to stem from what teachers deem to be gaps in their teacher training, low levels of self-expressed competence and confidence in their own writing skills, as well as a general dislike of writing.

8.7 What are teachers attitudes towards the inclusion of the home language in language education?

All teachers reported using the home language to facilitate the comprehension of course content when attempts in English failed. However, when asked about their opinions concerning

[8] The addition of /h/ word-initially (before a vowel) is a phonological feature of Jamaican Creole.

the inclusion of the home language in the language arts classroom and their understanding of the transitional approach to bilingualism proposed in LEP, no teacher expressed positive attitudes nor awareness of the LEP. In fact, after being made aware of the tenets of the LEP, Mr. Gordon quickly dismissed the document as simply a form of lip service given its inconsistencies with societal beliefs concerning language use. Teachers named issues such as regional variation, a lack of official status, standardized orthography, and international currency as the main reasons for not being in agreement with the inclusion of the home language in education. Responses also showed that teachers had varied understandings of what it meant to include the home language in the classroom — showing concern for guarding writing in particular.

When asked for his opinion on the inclusion of the home language in language education, Mr Gordon, while liking the idea of what he considered moving away from 'colonial influence', like most teachers concluded that until Jamaican Creole was standardized and made an official language, it did not have a place in the language classroom:

> Hmm...my honest view…they can use it, but it would have to be an official language first. Then again, personally, I think that its full time we move away from our colonial masters' influence, so using the patwa would be a better thing for me right now but as I said before it's not standardized or recognized on the world scene — it's just a dialect. So, the English is better but as we all know a lot of Jamaicans are below the literacy level so when kids are born in these homes, their first language that they are introduced to is the creole but thank God for school and YouTube and some TV programs and the teachers of course, they are able to shift from patwa...but for me its English…language. Until patwa is established, its English."

Teachers were particularly concerned about the use of the home language in the writing classroom where leaners already experienced significant difficulties. Referring specifically to writing instruction, Mr. Fisher expressed similar concerns as Mr. Grant concerning the

standardization of the language emphasizing that Jamaican creole was only spoken and not written:

> Alright, first and foremost, patwa is a spoken language you know. There are no, I don't think there are any constant way of spelling a word. There are several variations of spelling words in patois so there and then we are going to have a problem…for me patois is really a spoken language, not a written language.

Consistently, Ms. Scott felt that while the home language could be included in drama and storytelling, as most teachers did, Jamaican Creole did not have a place in the writing classroom due to a concern that 'they [students] won't have perfect writing'. Such findings likely have significant implications for the alignment between government policy and teacher practice.

8.8 Summary and Discussion of Findings

Teachers reported that creole dominant learners experienced challenges in oral language (grammar and vocabulary), spelling, and to a lesser extent, organisation, with their writing showing a general 'mixing-up' of the languages. Grammar, however, emerged as the area of greatest challenge in teachers' opinions. While these challenges were specific to learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language, the most consistent category of responses addressed teachers' reports of compositional length as a significant challenge for all learners in addition to mechanics (spelling and punctuation), though to a lesser extent. In response to the reported areas of concern, teachers reported the use of generalized instructional approaches more oriented towards English immersion to support the writing of creole dominant learners. This approach included the provision of numerous teacher-written models as well as the use of the writing process, and the language experience approach. Though less common, teachers also reported

practicing ad hoc error correction (of the creole) as well as the inclusion of activities serving to bridge the home and school languages during writing instruction.

In terms of teacher experiences, the time-consuming nature of writing instruction and assessment was named as the greatest challenge and barrier to the provision of effective writing instruction and most teachers reported feeling-ill-equipped to teach writing in the Jamaican creole context. Finally, to get a fuller sense of the ecology of the writing classroom, it was worth exploring teachers' attitudes to the use of Jamaican Creole in literacy, and more specifically, writing instruction. Findings showed that teachers' attitudes toward the use of Jamaican Creole in the writing classroom were generally negative.

8.8.1 Teachers Concerns for writing

In teachers' estimations, creole dominant students were most challenged in oral language (vocabulary and grammar), spelling, and organisation, with grammar being the most dominant and consistent area of concern in writing. Findings showing grammar to be the area of greatest challenge from teachers' perspective are consistent with teacher reports from earlier research (Burris-Melville, 2020; de Klein, 2006). Such a finding is unsurprising given the consistent body of research showing grammar to be the area of greatest challenge experienced by creole-speaking students (Burris-Melville, 2020; Clachar, 2005; McCourtie, 1998; Nero, 1997, 1994, 2018; Winer, 1989) as well as by speakers of similar language varieties (de Klein, 2006; Thompson et al., 2004).

In the only other study exploring teachers' perceptions of the writing challenges for Jamaican students, Burris-Melville (2020) reported identical findings wherein university faculty consistently named grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and organization as the key

areas of challenge in writing for Jamaican university students. While Burris-Melville focused on university students, research has shown early writing to be one of the strongest predictors of later writing outcomes (Ndlovu, 2010) and so it is likely that students experienced similar challenges during the primary years which remained unresolved. Similarly, in a study exploring the English writing quality outcomes of learners with West African Pidgin English as a home language (de Klein, 2006), ESL teachers identified grammar as the greatest challenge facing learners in writing. For both Jamaican Creole and West African Pidgin English, grammar represents the key area of divergence from English. Both languages use unmarked verbs (tense, subject-verb agreement) and nouns (possessive and plural) and generally delete the copula. Consistently, teachers in the current study provided examples of verb-related grammatical issues in students' writing such as subject-verb agreement where creole dominant students consistently used the unmarked verb.

While findings concerning grammar and the 'mixing up' of the languages are unsurprising, teachers' report of vocabulary and organisation being key areas of challenge for creole dominant students relative to their peers more dominant in English were less anticipated. Nevertheless, as seen in the findings from Burris-Melville (2020), such concerns are not unique to this study as vocabulary and organization were also named by faculty members as key areas of challenge for Jamaican university students. Given that approximately 90% of the vocabulary of Jamaican Creole is from English, one may not expect there to be significant language group differences, however a closer look at teachers' comments and consideration of the varied dimensions of vocabulary and what it means to 'know' a word, may provide some insight. Nation (2001) defined knowing a word as knowing its form, meaning, and use. Additionally, as discussed in the narrative review, vocabulary knowledge involves both receptive and productive

knowledge of words. While some teachers highlighted the influence of the home language on vocabulary as evidenced in the use of creole words in English writing, one teacher pointed out that while creole dominant students were able to 'call [say] the words' and sometimes recognize their form due to varied levels of exposure to English, they were often unfamiliar with word meanings and unable to use them productively in writing. Such claims are consistent with findings from Winer (1989) and Craig (1978) wherein despite having greater receptive knowledge of English than learners more typically deemed as second language learners (owing to the shared vocabulary between the languages), Caribbean students still experienced significant and persistent oral language challenges in the productive skill of writing.

The only teacher (Ms Elliot) who raised organisation as a concern attributed the challenge experienced by creole dominant students in writing to what she felt was the more haphazard nature of Jamaican Creole speech where speakers simply 'say what comes to their mouths' as opposed carefully planning and organizing their thoughts. While the validity of Ms. Elliot's attribution is questionable and informal speech is generally less structured than written language, regardless of one's language background, the concern that creole dominant learners appear to have particular challenges with organisation in writing has been reported in earlier studies among older learners (Burris-Melville 2020, de Klein, 2006) as well as among learners more typically referred to as EAL in the Global North (Murphy et al., 2015).

It must be noted, however, that a methodological limitation of the study may have influenced these findings to some extent. During the interviews, when teachers were asked to name the areas of concern in writing for creole-dominant students, examples of the component skills of writing were also provided for the purpose of clarity – a factor which may have steered teacher responses in some measure. The decision was made to provide teachers with examples as

during the first interview it became clear that teachers needed further elaboration — an issue that did not emerge in the pilot. To keep the protocol consistent across teachers, the examples were provided in subsequent interviews in the same order. It must also be noted however, that other questions in the interview schedule (and those that arose naturally as follow-ups) also required teachers to reflect on their concerns for student writing. Therefore, interview transcripts were canvased in their entirety for occurrences of responses that highlighted challenges in writing, as opposed solely coding responses to the single question of concern. Following this process, the trends in teacher concerns remained consistent. Despite the possible influence of the examples provided in the question, findings mirror teacher reports from earlier studies (Burris-Melville, 2020; de Klein, 2006) and are supported in the extant literature exploring writing quality in creole contexts.

Though teachers were asked specifically about challenges of learners more dominant in Jamaican Creole, text length was consistently named as a significant challenge for all learners regardless of their language background and this represented the most consistent and dominant concern. Teachers also named mechanics (spelling and punctuation) as a key area of challenge for all learners — a finding consistent with reports from Burris-Melville (2020). Teacher reports concerning text length show consonance with concerns voiced by educators and assessors over two decades ago when McCourtie (1998) explored the writing challenges experienced by Jamaican secondary school students. After grouping 530 learners according to their scores on narrative writing task (high, middle, and low ranks), external assessors commented that across all groups, none of the scripts were of a length that could meet national or international assessment standards (e.g., high stakes exams). As research has shown compositional length to be significantly correlated with transcription skills and overall writing quality, such a concern on the

part of teachers may possibly be linked to the other areas of challenge. In the upcoming chapter, the level of alignment between teachers' concerns and the challenges evidenced in students' writing will be explored

8.8.2 Teachers' Approaches to Writing Instruction

Teacher responses showed greater adoption of more generalized whole-class approaches for supporting learners more dominant in Jamaican Creole relative to more context- and learner-sensitive pedagogy. English immersion was the dominant overarching approach to instruction and included the use of teacher-written models, the writing process, and the building of background knowledge through the language experience approach, with limited opportunities for extended writing on the part of students. Though to a lesser extent, teachers also reported practicing ad hoc correction of the creole, as well as drawing explicit connections between the home and school languages — the latter being the least common method.

These findings closely mirror results from research in Jamaica (Lewis-Fokum & Thomas, 2018; Nero, 2014) and other low- to middle-income contexts (de la Piedra, 2006; Nag et al., 2016). Within the Jamaican context at both the primary (Lewis and Fokum, 2018) and secondary school levels (Nero, 2014), researchers have found writing instruction to be dominated by English immersion with a particular focus on form through the extensive use of teacher-written models and copy-writing tasks with very few opportunities for student authorship of creative and extended texts. Such findings are likely linked to what Lewis-Fokum & Thomas (2018) called a "pedagogical ambivalence" concerning writing instruction in creole contexts where teachers, as reported in the current study, feel ill-equipped to provide writing instruction for learners who are more dominant speakers of Jamaican Creole due to inadequate training. Nag et al. (2016) also reported strikingly similar trends in an interpretative synthesis of 16 studies from low- to middle-

income countries where writing instruction was often marked by target language immersion, an absence of activities to bridge the home and school languages, and limited opportunities for extended writing, the latter practice having a particularly negative impact on student narrative writing skills (e.g., de la Piedra, 2006). In the current study, only one teacher reported bridging the home and school language in writing instruction using translanguaging pedagogy. Though Ms Mair did not explicitly reference translanguaging, she described an activity in which she used drama as a tool to incorporate the home language in the pre-writing stage to develop ideas and then in the production of the first draft of an expository piece, before translating texts to English. Another key practice reported by teachers in the present study was the ad hoc correction of creole usage in speech and writing without supporting explanation — a finding also reported by Nero (2014) among Jamaican secondary school teachers and by Nag et al. (2016) across low- to middle-income contexts. In the present study, Ms. Elliot provided one such example. Ms. Elliot reported her practice of showing students their written texts and requiring them to pinpoint the necessary corrections (creole interference errors). However, much to her frustration, students were generally unable to do so as evidenced in their consistent retort, "*Miss notn nuh rong wid it*!" ("Miss, nothing is wrong with it!"). The ineffectiveness of ad hoc correction without supporting explanation for learners with creoles and other vernaculars as home languages has been reported in the literature (Nero, 2014; Nero & Ahmad, 2014; Rickford, 2006) with learners rarely being able to identify their own errors. Nero (2014) attributed this method of correction to teachers' own negative attitudes towards the use of the home language in the classroom which results in the "instinctive practice to correct rather than to contrast" the creole with English (p. 239) as well as to a lack of professional training that would equip teachers with the requisite skills to not only identify, but also to explain the underlying cause of creole-related errors.

Overall, findings are consistent with research in the Caribbean and other low- to middle-income contexts where teachers adopt form-focused English immersion practices with few opportunities for students to engage in and receive feedback on extended writing tasks. While the areas of challenge highlighted by teachers centred largely on oral language and transcription skills (e.g., spelling and punctuation), their instructional approaches showed a significant focus on the higher-level processes of planning and ideation using the language experience approach to build ideas as well as the writing process as a planning tool at the pre-writing stage.

8.8.3 Alignment of Policy and Practice

When held together, there was some consistency and perhaps predictability in the areas of alignment and misalignment between teacher practice and government guidelines in the writing classroom. The areas of greatest alignment were observed in the dominance of English immersion teaching methods evident across all three documents and in the oral use of the home language to facilitate comprehension as prescribed in the language policy. However, less alignment was seen in recommendations concerning the provision of extensive opportunities for extended writing, the use of the home language as a language learning resource (i.e., contrastive analysis or language differentiation), and teacher attitudes towards the use of Jamaican Creole in the classroom. The findings therefore indicate a significant gap between policy and practice — a consistent trend observed in low- and middle-income multilingual contexts across the world (e.g., Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2019; Nag et al., 2016). In the Jamaican context, gaps between teacher practice in the writing classroom and government policy can be attributed, at least in part, to the non-official status of the LEP, the limited practical outworking of home language inclusion in the curriculum beyond attainment targets, gaps in teacher training, practical classroom challenges, and attitudes towards the use of the home language in education.

Status of the LEP. The non-ratified status of the LEP has significant bearing on the interpretation of findings. As the LEP was never officially approved by parliament, no teacher in the study was aware of its existence. In the absence of a clear and official LEP and in light of ambivalent societal attitudes towards Jamaican Creole, the inclusion of the home language in writing instruction as outlined in the curriculum appeared to be treated as optional and even unrealistic, rather than as a requirement.

A fallout of the status of the LEP is a lack of context-sensitive teacher preparation for the provision of writing instruction in a creole context. A full section of the LEP is devoted to describing the nature of training and assessment requisite for the provision of literacy instruction in the Jamaican context. The LEP required that teachers regularly participate in language competence appraisals and complete approved courses in Jamaican Creole and English as separate languages as well as in language and literacy instruction in creole contexts (MoEY, 2001, p.28). However, as the draft LEP was never officially approved by parliament, changes were not made to teacher training programs and continuing professional development programs were not created. Therefore, though the curricular documents show alignment with the LEP largely at the level of attainment targets, in the absence teacher training and the provision of suggested teaching activities, teachers are limited in their ability to support the writing development of all learners. This lack of training was echoed by most teachers who reported feeling ill-equipped to teach writing in the Jamaican creole context.

Attitudes Towards the use of the Home Language in the Classroom. Pulcini's (1997) argument that language attitudes are a form of 'invisible policy' was corroborated in the present study where largely negative attitudes towards the use of Jamaican Creole in language and literacy education impacted teachers' instructional approaches in the writing classroom. While

the LEP called for the acknowledgement and celebration of the home language, this was not reflected in teacher responses. One teacher, once made aware of the policy, was rather dismissive of what he felt was a pretentious effort to save face given inconsistencies between policy and actual societal beliefs and practices. Teachers' negative attitudes towards the use of the home language in the writing classroom were largely due to concerns of the limited international currency of the home language and the concern that students would not have *'perfect writing'* should the creole be included in writing instruction. Teacher views were reflective the societal language attitudes highlighted in the narrative literature review where language is seen more of a problem that may hinder the acquisition of English — the language of education and socioeconomic progress. Such findings highlight the critical role of teachers who are themselves influenced by societal language ideologies in shaping classroom language policy and instruction. Nag et al. (2016) aptly highlight the role played by teachers and the necessity of addressing underlying societal attitudes and beliefs that mitigate the effectiveness of efforts to improve instructional practice:

> Teachers bring their experiential, cultural, and ideological background to shape classroom practices, subtly changing interventions that aid to implement meaning-focused and learner-centred pedagogy. These findings confirm that the impact of in-service training on educational reform will remain low if 'embedded and tacit' cultural constructs are unacknowledged during the reform process (Clarke, 2003). (p. 47)

Until there is a shift in societal attitudes and a clearer stance from the government regarding the home language in education, gaps between policy and practice are likely to remain.

Practical Constraints. In addition to issues concerning teacher training and language attitudes, teachers' approaches to writing instruction were influenced by pragmatic issues including large class sizes, requirements to 'teach-to-the-test', and limited instructional time. All teachers and school administrators confirmed that writing instruction was allotted an hour in the

weekly timetable for Grade Six. However, teachers consistently named the time-consuming nature of writing instruction and assessment as a significant challenge given large class sizes and the requirements to prepare Grade Six students for the national high-stakes exam used to determine secondary school placement (PEP). Ms. Mair's comment on the futility of assigning writing tasks without ample time to provide feedback due to the large class sizes echoed such issues, as did teachers' consistent recommendation for a specialist teacher focused solely on writing. Given class sizes, limited time, and the challenges of assessing the writing, whole-class activities such as copywriting, the provision of teacher-written models, and the discussion of ideas to build background knowledge (language experience approach) appeared to prove more economical for teachers than the provision of frequent opportunities for extended meaning-based writing – a finding also reported by Nag et al. (2016) across other low- to middle-income countries.

Research has shown that learners stand to benefit from more differentiated approaches to writing instruction that consider learner's skills and English proficiency levels (Olinghouse, 2008). However, findings from the present study showed a trend of more generalised writing instruction in the form of English immersion with a focus on form and higher-level planning skills, at the expense of opportunities for extended writing. Such findings were generally consistent with wider research in low- to middle-income countries. Teachers' instructional practices appear to be influenced in some measure by the curricular documents, but also by gaps in training, practical constraints and standard language ideology. In the upcoming chapter, findings from the final stage of study concerning student writing outcomes will be presented. Results from the current and earlier chapters will be integrated in the discussion of student writing outcomes to create a clearer picture of writing in the Jamaican creole context.

9. Findings: Student Writing Outcomes

The previous chapters have progressively provided insight into the nature of the Jamaican primary school writing classroom and as such, have set the stage for the present chapter. The aim of this final phase of the study was to investigate characteristics of writing among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language relative to their English dominant peers and to investigate the writing challenges, if any, experienced by these learners. This chapter presents the findings from the classroom fieldwork phase of the study which involved the quantitative analyses of student language and literacy measures. The chapter also presents a discussion of the findings concerning student writing outcomes — integrating results from each phase of the study to create a fuller picture of and deeper insight into the nature of English writing among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. The research questions guiding this phase of the study are outlined below.

Research Questions

1. Are there differences in the overall writing quality outcomes of learners with Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English as home languages?

    a. What, if any, are the areas of challenge for students who speak Jamaican Creole as their home language?

9.2 Reliability and Validity

Prior to addressing the research questions, reliability and validity checks were made for the written expression task (WAM) and the grammaticality judgement task, respectively, as outlined in the next section.

9.2.1 Writing Assessment Measure (WAM) Interrater Reliability

As described in Chapter Six, two markers first met to discuss and apply a marking scheme by assessing five sample scripts together (from the pilot study) and created a guide with concrete examples in addition to the examples from the WAM rubric to limit subjectivity. Following this, both markers independently scored an initial 10% of scripts after which inter-rater reliability was checked and discrepancies were discussed. Consistent with the approach taken by Dunsmuir et al., (2015) in validating the WAM, two different reliability coefficients were used to account for both continuous and ordinal scale data. The intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) was used as a measure of interrater reliability for the overall writing scores (continuous scale) and Cohen's weighted Kappa was used for each component skill in the writing rubric (ordinal scale).

According to Koo and Li (2016), ICC values between .5 and .75 are accepted as indicating moderate reliability, while values between .75 and .9 indicate good reliability, and anything above .9 is accepted as excellent reliability. In the first instance, inter-rater agreement for the overall scores was moderate, ICC = .63, 95% CI = -.28 – .91, and inter-rater agreement for the component writing skills was largely discrepant (see Tables 9.1 and 9.3 respectively). In subsequent discussion, discrepancies were identified as being largely due to the second reviewer's admitted tendency to provide more lenient marks to 'encourage students'. The objectives of the study were therefore reviewed, it was reiterated that students would not receive their scores, and the rubric (including examples) was once more reviewed carefully. Following this stage, another 10% of the scripts were scored independently by both reviewers,

this time achieving excellent interrater reliability (ICC = .98, 95% CI .91- 1) as seem in Table 9.4.

Table 9.1

Intraclass Correlation Coefficient for Overall Writing at Time 1

	Intraclass Correlation	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Average Measures	.63	-.28	0.91

Note. Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.

Table 9.2

Intraclass Correlation Coefficient for Overall Writing at Time 2

	Intraclass Correlation	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Average Measures	.98	.91	.99

Note. Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.

Cohen's weighted kappa statistic was then used to measure interrater agreement for each component skill of writing. When compared to its unweighted version, the weighted kappa statistic takes into account the magnitude and severity of disagreements, placing greater weight on large differences as opposed to smaller ones, thus making it a more suitable measure for ordinal data (Sim & Wright, 2005). Cohen's kappa can range from 0-1 with zero representing no agreement; .01- .2: slight agreement; .21- .4: fair agreement; .41- .6: moderate agreement; .61-.8:

substantial agreement; and .81 -.1: almost or perfect agreement (Cohen, 1960; Landis & Koch, 1977). Though other interpretations of kappa values have been offered (e.g. Altman, 1999; Fleiss, 1981; McHugh, 2012), a Kappa value > .60 is generally accepted as satisfactory in the literature (Brown, Glasswell & Harland, 2004).

As seen in Table 9.3, there were excellent levels of agreement for spelling and organization, moderate to substantial agreement for punctuation, grammar, vocabulary, and ideas, and a fair level of agreement for handwriting. Both markers engaged in further discussion on all remaining discrepancies particularly in the area of handwriting which had the lowest level of agreement, and once this process of review was complete, the remaining scripts were then scored by one marker against the WAM rubric.

Table 9.3

Inter-rater Agreement for Component Writing Skills Between Markers at Time 1 and Time 2

	TIME 1		*TIME 2*	
Skill Area	$K_{(W)}$	Significance	$K_{(W)}$	Significance
Handwriting	.4	.08	.4	.03
Spelling	.3	.07	.9	<.001
Punctuation	.1	.45	.6	.01
Grammar & sentence structure	.2	.26	.6	.02
Vocabulary	-.2	.64	.7	.01
Organization	.2	.39	.8	.01
Ideas	.5	.02	.6	.03

9.2.2 Grammaticality Judgement Task: Reliability and Validity

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19-related school closures and the upcoming high-stakes exams for study participants, there was insufficient time for students to complete the GJT twice to establish test-retest reliability. Nevertheless, internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The GJT yielded an acceptable alpha coefficient of .7. An alpha value of .7 for a GJT is consistent with the reliability coefficients reported in earlier research (e.g., Ellis, 2005; Gutiérrez, 2013; Vafaee et al., 2017).

Table 9.4

Reliability Coefficient of the GJT

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.70	20

Besides test-retest reliability, another common approach to testing the reliability of GJTs is to compare participants' performance with their scores on another related task (Qureshi, 2020). Accordingly, the concurrent validity of the GJT was also explored. This was done by comparing students' scores on the GJT and their language proficiency as measured by WISC-IV. As the GJT scores were negatively skewed despite a log transformation and reassignment of outlier values (Field, 2009), the non-parametric Spearman's Rank Order coefficient was carried out to explore the concurrent validity of the GJT. As seen in Table 9.5, results showed that the GJT and WISC-IV outcomes were significantly and moderately correlated, $r_s = .55$, $p < .001$.

Table 9.5

Correlation Between Scores on the GJT and the WISC-IV

			WISC-IV	GJT
Spearman's rho	WISC-IV	Correlation Coefficient	1	.55**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	<.001
	GJT	Correlation Coefficient	.55**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

Once the reliability of the language and literacy measures was established, descriptive and inferential statistics were run to explore student outcomes on the background measures of non-verbal IQ and language proficiency as well as to address the research questions concerning writing outcomes. These findings are presented in the upcoming sections.

9.3 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for measures of written expression, language proficiency, grammatical knowledge, and non-verbal IQ are presented in Table 9.6 for learners with Jamaican Creole and English as home languages, respectively. Learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language had descriptively lower mean scores on all measures compared to their peers with English as a home language. The WAM rubric consisted of seven component skills, which each being ranked on a four-point scale. Accordingly, a learner's overall score was out of a possible

28 points. The descriptive statistics show that writing scores overall were relatively low with averages of 44.71% (m = 12.52/28) and 63.75% (m = 17.85/28) for learners with Jamaican Creole and English as home languages, respectively. These findings will be further explored through inferential statistics in the upcoming section.

Table 9.6

Descriptive Statistics of Outcomes on Student Measures

	Jamaican Creole				English			
	M	SD	Min	Max	M	SD	Min	Max
WAM	12.52	2.57	8	18	17.85	3.25	10	24
WISC-IV	14.26	4.67	6	25	22.84	5.61	12	32
GJT	13.78	2.00	11	18	17.18	2.11	12	20
WASI	11.52	3.44	5	17	12.22	3.81	5	20

9.4 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics were used to explore background measures, as well as to investigate the key research questions concerning differences between the language groups in writing outcomes as well as the particular areas of challenge in writing for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language, if any.

9.4.1 Background Measures

Non-verbal IQ. Before comparing the performance of each language group on the WAM, tests were carried out to check whether there were statistically significant differences in language proficiency and cognitive ability between both groups. It was particularly important that there

was no statistically significant difference in cognitive ability (non-verbal IQ) between the groups as this would introduce a confounding variable. A Mann Whitney U test was caried out to investigate possible language group differences in cognitive ability. The Mann Whitney U test is a non-parametric test of difference for independent samples and was used due to possible violations of the normality assumption in the WASI data. While the scores from the WASI were approximately normally distributed as seen in their skewness and kurtosis values (when divided by the respective standard error values) and the non-significant Shapiro-Wilk test statistic (see Appendix H) when plots were explored, the frequency histogram for the English dominant group appeared multimodal. Considering this apparent discrepancy between the numeric (and statistical) measures and the visual checks for normality, the decision was made to use non-parametric testing. As expected, results from the Mann-Whitney U test confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference in cognitive ability between learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language (Mdn = 12) and English as a home language (Mdn = 12), $U = .68$, $p = .5$ (see Table 9.7).

Table 9.7

Comparison of Non-verbal IQ Across Language Groups

	Jamaican Creole Mdn	*English* Mdn	*Mann-Whitney U* (standardized)	p
WASI	12	12	.68	.50

English language proficiency. The vocabulary knowledge subset of the WISC-IV was used as a proxy for English language proficiency. An independent samples t-test was carried out to explore group differences in language proficiency as the WISC-IV data met all the test assumptions (approximately normally distributed data, homogeneity of variance, interval data, independence of scores). As expected and as seen in Table 9.8, there was a statistically significant difference in English language proficiency between the language groups, with learners in the English dominant group achieving higher scores (M =22.84, S.D = 5.61) than their peers with Jamaican Creole as a home language (M = 14.26, S.D = 4.67), $t(76) = -7.24$, $p < .001$. Considering that .8 is considered a large effect size in the social sciences (Field, 2009), the magnitude of this difference was very large based on the effect size (d = 1.65 95% CI [-2.16 – 1.13]).

Table 9.8

Comparison of English Language Proficiency across Language Groups

	Jamaican Creole		English		*t*(76)	p	Cohen's *d*
	M	SD	M	SD			
WISC-IV	14.26	4.67	22.84	5.61	-7.24	< .001	-1.65

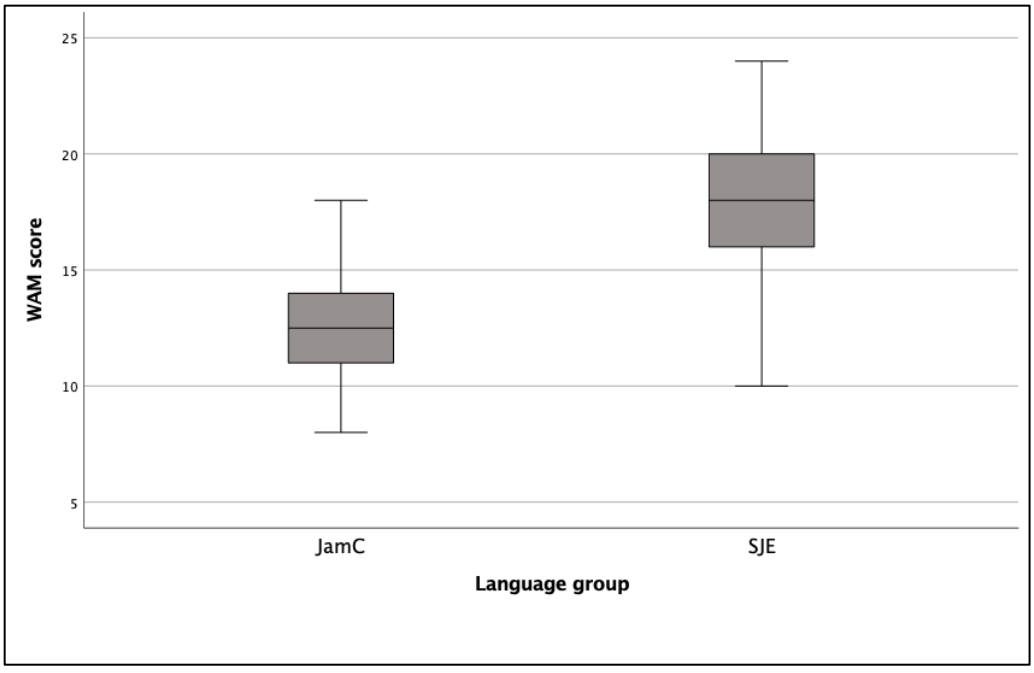
Once reliability and validity checks were run and it was established that there were no statistically significant differences in cognitive ability between the language groups, differences in writing outcomes between the language groups were explored.

9.4.2 Are there differences in the overall writing quality outcomes of learners with Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English as home languages?

As seen in Table 9.6, descriptive statistics of scores on the written expression task showed that learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language had a lower mean score (M = 12.52, SD = 2.57) than peers with English as a home language (M = 17.85, SD = 3.25) as seen in Figures 9.1 and 9.2. However, as indicated by the standard deviations and evidenced in the overlapping and wide error bars, there were sizable amounts of within-group variation in overall writing scores, particularly for learners more dominant in English.

Figure 9.1

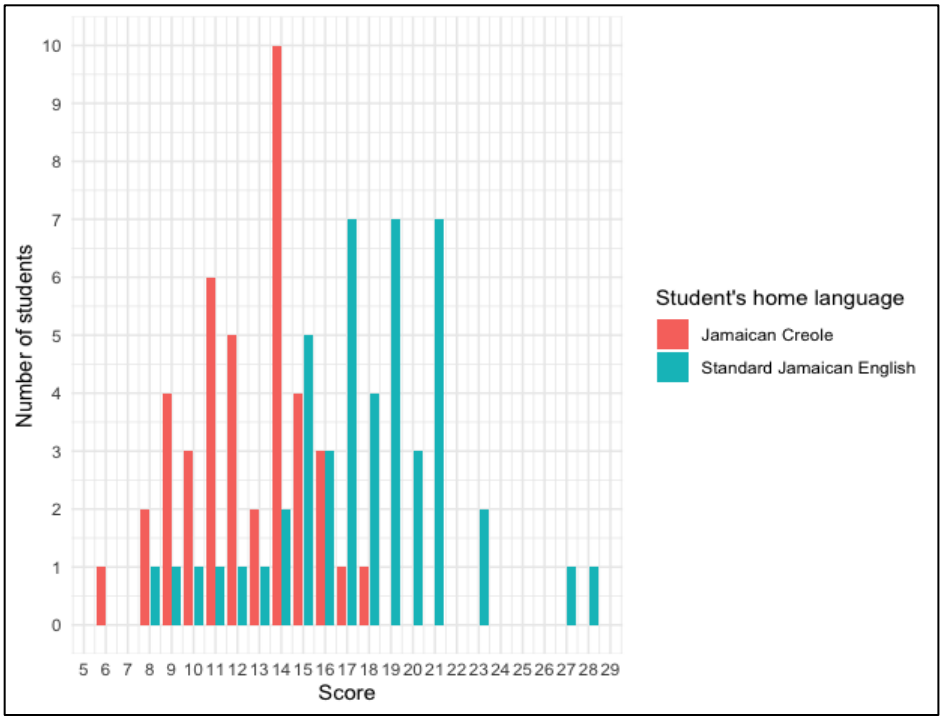
Boxplot of Writing Scores for Language Groups



Notes: JamC: Jamaican Creole; SJE: Standard Jamaican English

Figure 9.2

Clustered Bar Chart of Scores on the Writing Analysis Measure by Language Group



To investigate whether there was a statistically significant difference in the overall writing scores between both language groups, an independent samples t-test was carried out. As noted earlier, before running an independent samples t-test, data must satisfy four assumptions: normally distributed data; interval data; independence of scores, and homogeneity of variance across groups. All assumptions were satisfied (see Appendix H for assumption checks). Findings showed that overall, learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language achieved statistically significantly lower scores (M = 12.52, SD = 2.56) than their peers with English as a home language (M = 17.85, SD = 3.25) on the written expression task, $t(88) = -8.54$, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 9.9). The magnitude of the difference between the language groups in written expression was very large ($d = 1.8$ 95% CI [-6.56 - -4.08]).

Table 9.9

Comparison of Language Groups on Total Written Expression Scores

	Jamaican Creole		English		*t*(88)	p	Cohen's *d*
	M	SD	M	SD			
WAM	12.52	2.57	17.85	3.25	-8.54	< .001	-1.8

9.4.3 What, if any, are the areas of challenge for students who speak Jamaican Creole as their home language?

Descriptive statistics suggest that learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language tended to perform more poorly than their peers with English as a home language across all skill areas on the WAM. The distribution of scores for each language group in each skill area is visualised in a series of density plots in Figure 9.3 showing the tendency for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language to receive lower scores.

As described in Chapter Six (section 6.7.1.2), ratings for each component skill were ordinal in nature and therefore required the use of non-parametric testing given the violation of normality for parametric testing. As a result, descriptive findings showing language group differences in ratings across component skills were further explored through a Mann Whitney U test. As seen in Table 9.10, the language group differences were statistically significant at the $p < .001$ significance level across all component skill areas. Additionally, the differences in the median scores between the language groups for spelling, punctuation, grammar, and vocabulary tended to be larger than for handwriting, organization, and ideas.

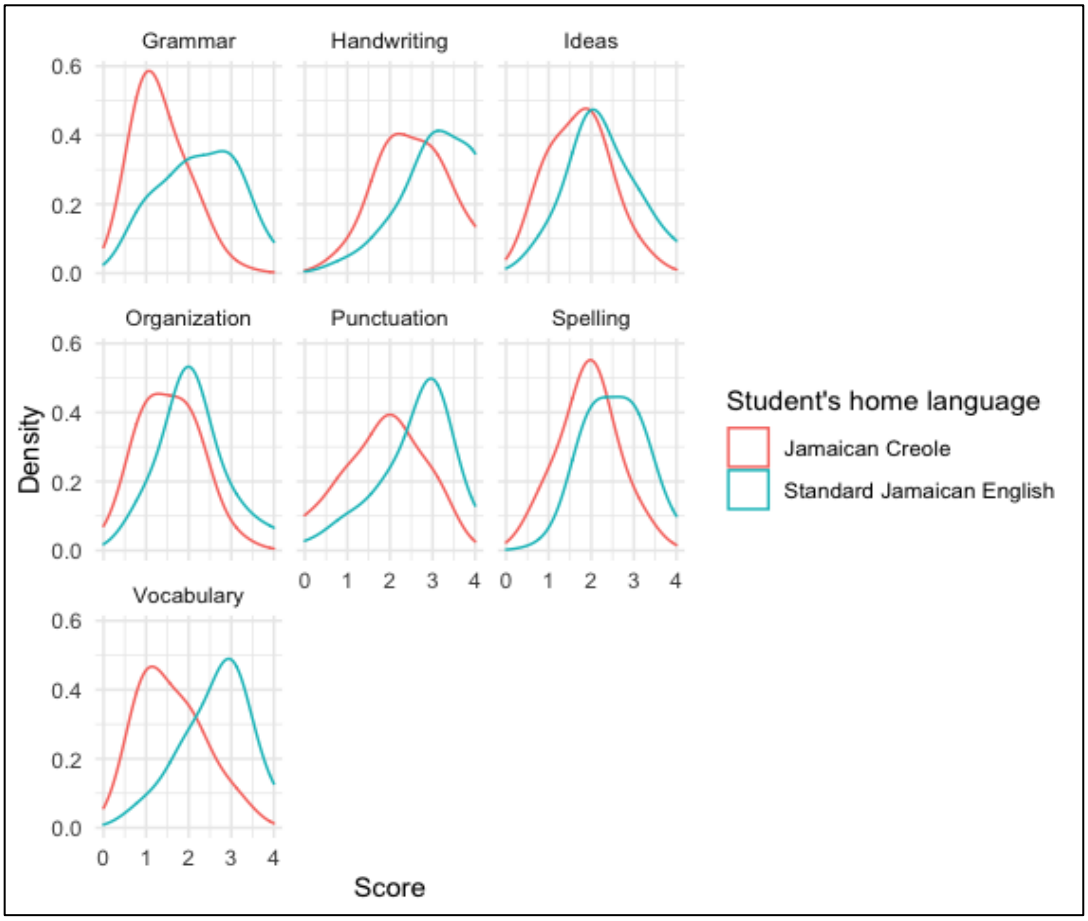
Table 9.10

Comparison of Scores in each Skill on the WAM for Learners with Jamaican Creole and English as Home Languages.

	Jamaican Creole Mdn	*English* Mdn	*Mann-Whitney U*	p
Handwriting	2.5	3	609.00	<.001
Spelling	2	3	532.50	<.001
Punctuation	2	3	535.00	<.001
Grammar	1	2	300.50	<.001
Vocabulary	1	3	344.00	<.001
Organization	1.5	2	600.00	<.001
Ideas	2	2	618.00	<.001

Figure 9.3

Density Plots Showing the Distribution of Scores on each Component Skill of the WAM



The odds of students' receiving a high or low score on each component skill based on their language group were also explored. The odds ratio is the more common effect size measure for categorical data and is generally only performed on 2x2 contingency tables (Field, 2009). Data were therefore dichotomized (high/low rating). That is, for each skill (e.g., vocabulary), ratings between 0-2 were recoded as 'low' and ratings between 3-4 were recoded as 'high' and a chi square test was then run on the dichotomized data. Odds ratio calculations showed that learners with English as a home language were more likely to achieve high scores on all component skills than their peers with Jamaican Creole as a home language, particularly in the

areas of vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. The highest odds ratio was seen in the area of vocabulary, where learners with English as a home language were three times more likely to gain a high rating than peers with Jamaican Creole as a home language. Vocabulary was followed by grammar, punctuation, handwriting, and spelling in which learners with English as a home language were more than two times more likely to gain a high rating than their Jamaican Creole peers. While learners with English as a home language were still more likely to obtain a high rating on organization and ideation, the odds were lower than in the areas of vocabulary grammar, punctuation, handwriting, and spelling as seen in Table 9.11.

Table 9.11

Odds of learners with English as a Home language scoring Highly Compared to Learners with Jamaican Creole as a Home Language

	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower	Upper
Vocabulary	2.74	1.81	4.14
Grammar	2.40	1.77	3.26
Punctuation	2.28	1.48	3.53
Handwriting	2.17	1.22	3.86
Spelling	2.07	1.44	2.97
Ideas	1.75	1.25	2.45
Organization	1.71	1.22	2.40
N of valid cases	90		

Two finding were particularly unexpected. Firstly, given the typology of the languages and that 90% of the Jamaican Creole lexicon overlaps with English, one might not have expected that vocabulary would be the skill that distinguished the groups the most. Additionally, findings suggesting a statistically significant interaction between handwriting and a learner's language group were somewhat unanticipated given that handwriting is not a language-related skill, nevertheless the magnitude of the association was comparatively small. These findings will be discussed in relation to wider literature and the study methodology in the discussion section of this chapter.

Odds ratios provided insight into the likelihood of performance in relation to another group. However, as the aim of the study was not only to explore language group differences but to gain insight into the areas of challenge experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole, it was important to explore the frequency distribution of scores to gain insight into the writing challenges experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language without using the English speakers, who also performed at relatively low level in overall writing, as a reference group.

As seen in Table 9.12, over 86% of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language received scores at the lower end of the rating scale for all skills except for handwriting. The frequency distribution of scores (dichotomized) showed a slightly different pattern of challenges for learners from each language group. Unsurprisingly, grammar emerged as the most challenging area for these learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language, closely followed by organization, ideation, vocabulary, spelling, and to a slightly lesser extent, punctuation. In contrast, organization proved to be the most challenging area for learners with English as a home

language with over 79% receiving a low rating (0-2). Organization was followed by ideation, grammar, and spelling for learners in this group.

Table 9.12

Frequency Distribution of Scores Across Component Writing Skills

	Jamaican Creole		English	
Skill Area	**0 – 2**	**3 – 4**	**0 – 2**	**3 – 4**
Handwriting	50.00%	50.00%	18.75%	81.25%
Spelling	85.66%	14.23%	47.91%	52.09%
Punctuation	76.18%	23.82%	33.33%	66.67%
Grammar	97.61%	2.39%	56.25%	43.75%
Vocabulary	88.09%	11.91%	35.41%	64.59%
Organization	95.24%	4.76%	79.16%	20.84%
Ideas	90.47%	9.53%	66.67%	33.33%

9.5 Additional Trends

Two additional and important findings which were not captured by the WAM rubric concerned text length and creole interference. As these results concerning text length and creole interference have significant bearing on the interpretation of findings, they are addressed below.

9.5.1 Text Length

Though not accounted for in the WAM, text length emerged as a significant challenge for learners in the present study. Despite being encouraged to continue writing, many students tended to write very short texts. Two such examples are provided in Figures 9.4 and 9.5. Though

some learners from both language groups produced short texts, as text length was not formally assessed, no conclusions can be made concerning interactions between language group and text length.

Figure 9.4

Example of short text length (1)

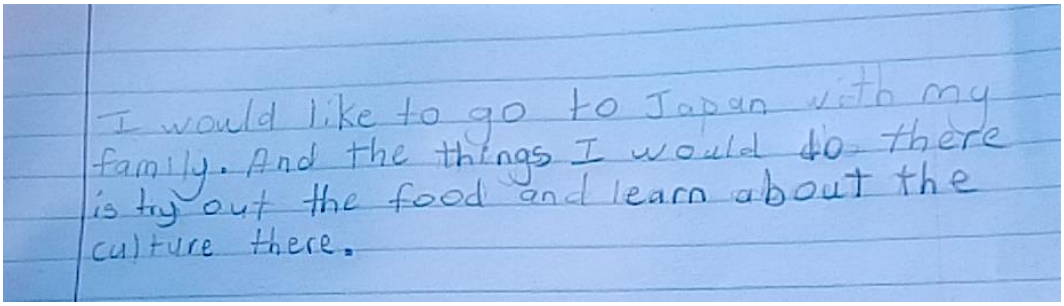
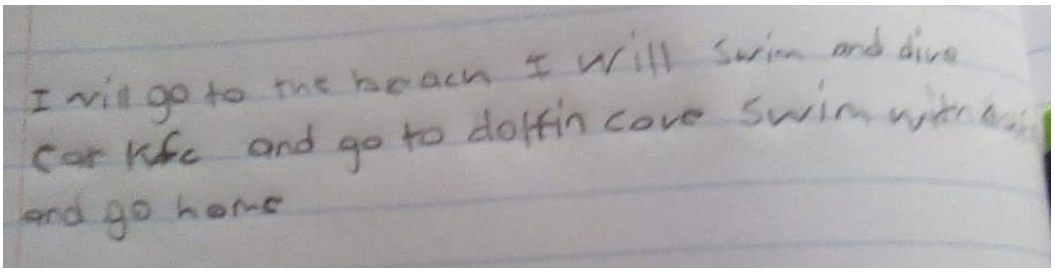


Figure 9.5

Example of short text length (2)



9.5.2 Creole Interference

Though no formal error analysis was carried out as it was beyond the scope of the present study, it is worth commenting on evidence of interference in student scripts with reference to the features of Jamaican Creole outlined in Chapter Three. Given the description of Jamaican Creole provided in Chapter Three, spelling and grammar represent the areas where interference would be most evident and expected. Overall, only one spelling error appeared to be possibly attributable to creole interference where the student spelled ‘Eifel Tower’ as ‘Highfull Tower’

given that ‘h’ is often added word-initially before vowels in Jamaican Creole. However, it is also very likely that this spelling error simply represents an eggcorn and therefore may not be linked to the creole. Grammar, which was assessed for both accuracy and complexity using the WAM rubric, presented a slightly more nuanced picture. Despite the fact that a considerable number of students in the English group were given low ratings for grammar, these ratings were generally, though not exclusively, due to the use of simple sentence structures rather than issues with grammatical accuracy linked to the creole (see figure 9.6 for an example). However, for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language, in addition to the dominant use of simple sentence structure, grammatical errors linked to the home language (see Table 3.1 or 6.1) were much more common (e.g., unmarked tense, absence of subject-verb agreement, serial-verb usage) with student scripts showing evidence of creole structures (see Fig. 9.7).

Figure 9.6

Example of a Text Receiving a Low Score for Grammar Written by an English dominant Student

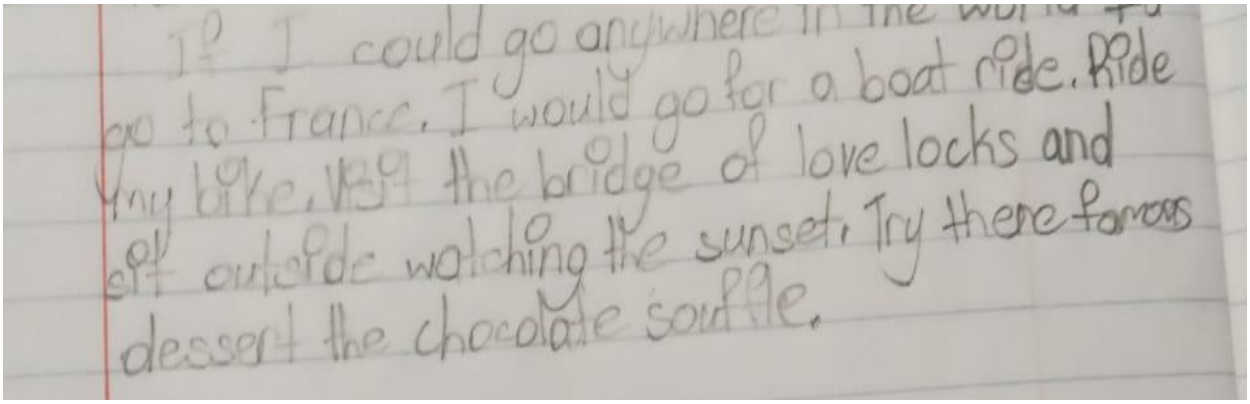
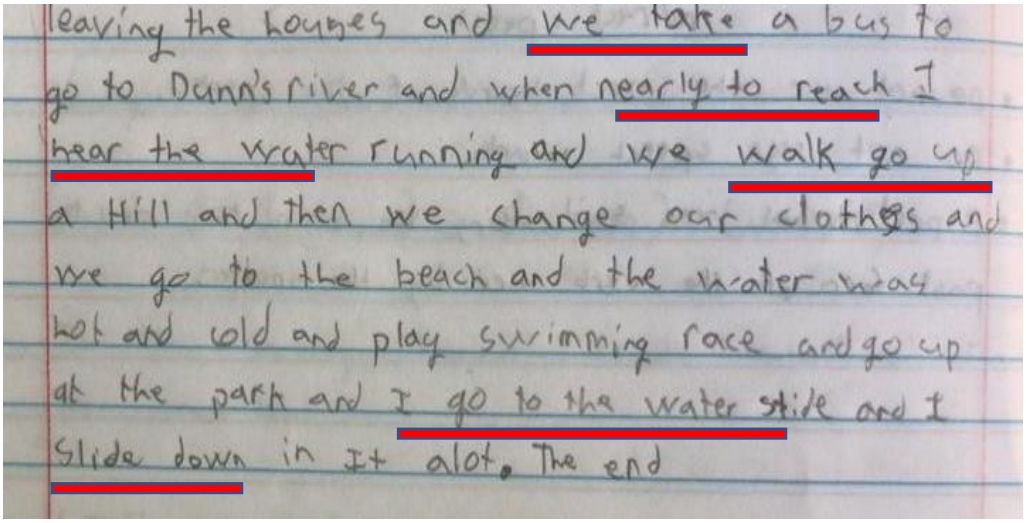


Figure 9.7

Example of a Text Receiving a Low Score for Grammar Written by a Jamaican Creole Dominant Student


leaving the houses and we take a bus to go to Dunn's river and when nearly to reach I hear the water running and we walk go up a Hill and then we change our clothes and we go to the beach and the water was hot and cold and play swimming race and go up at the park and I go to the water slide and I slide down in it alot. The end

As seen in Figure 9.6, while there is no evidence of creole morphosyntax in the text of the English dominant student, the student is challenged in the area of sentence structure- writing either simple or incomplete sentences (e.g., 'Ride my bike'). In contrast, in Figure 9.7, the creole dominant student, though describing past events, generally used the unmarked verb (e.g., 'I hear the water running', 'I go to the water slide'). The student also uses serial verbs which are only present in the creole and not in English (e.g., we walk go up a hill), as well as creole sentence constructions (e.g., nearly to reach), and displays challenges with sentence structure (e.g., run on sentences, subject deletion). While a full and systematic error analysis was not a part of the present study which sought to depart from an isolated focus on grammatical errors, these trends are worth exploring in a future project.

9.6 Summary of Findings

Findings showed relatively low overall performance in writing, with average scores of 44.71% and 63.75% for the Jamaican Creole and English language groups, respectively. Learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language performed at a statistically significantly lower level than learners with English as a home language in the written expression task and were also more likely to receive low ratings on all the component writing skills, in comparison to their peers with English as a home language. Given that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups on non-verbal IQ, these difference in writing outcomes are likely due at least in part, to the language status of learners. In addition to group differences, slightly different patterns of writing challenge emerged for each language group. Learners with Jamaican Creole as their home language were most challenged in grammar, followed by organization, ideation, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation. While learners more dominant in English were most challenged in organizational skills, followed by ideation, grammar, and spelling. While both language groups were challenged in grammar, learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language showed evidence of creole interference in writing while this was rarely observed in the writing of their peers with English as a home language. Finally, in addition to the areas of challenge addressed in the WAM rubric, text length emerged as an area of challenge for learners from both language groups.

While the findings suggest a home language advantage in writing outcomes, other contextual and methodological factors may have also influenced student writing outcomes. Findings concerning student writing quality will now be discussed with reference to wider research literature, and the study findings relating to the study context as well as the ecology of the writing classroom at the levels of policy, curriculum, and pedagogy.

9.7 Integrated Discussion of Findings

9.7.1 Language Group Differences in Writing Quality

In addition to relatively low levels of performance across the language groups, statistically significant differences in the writing quality between learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language and their peers with English as a home language were observed, with the former group performing more poorly. Student writing quality outcomes are addressed with reference to findings from the systematic review, the content analyses of curriculum and policy documents, and teacher interviews. Methodological factors inherent to the study that had some bearing on findings are also discussed.

Like the learners with EAL in the systematic review, learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language had significantly lower levels of English oral language proficiency than their peers with English as a home language. Research has shown language proficiency to be one of the strongest predictors of literacy and educational attainment more generally (Anderson & Freebody, 1981; Burgoyne et al., 2011; Hutchinson et al., 2003; Laufer, 1997; Strand & Hessel, 2018). Additionally, oral language skills, particularly in the form of vocabulary knowledge, has been found to be a significant and strong predictor of writing quality for both first (Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004; Harrison et al., 2016; Olinghouse & Leaird, 2009) and second language learners of English (Babayiğit, 2014, 2015; Engber, 1995). Given the observed challenges in oral language proficiency on the part of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language, findings showing poor writing quality among these learners are unsurprising. Similar patterns have been observed among learners more typically deemed as EAL in the Global North. Findings from the systematic review showed that learners with EAL generally performed more poorly in overall writing quality relative to their NES peers when writing was assessed using an analytic approach, as in the current study. That learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language performed more

similarly to learners with EAL than L1 English speakers, adds support to calls from educational researchers and linguists in the Caribbean for governments to recognise that for many children, English functions more like a second, rather than a first language, and that therefore, more suitable and context-sensitive literacy support is needed (Craig, 1983; Carpenter & Devonish, 2010; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007; Simmons-McDonald, 2004). In line with such calls, findings showing poorer writing quality for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language can likely be attributed, in some measure, to the nature of writing instruction.

As reported in Chapter Five, teachers adopted a more generalized approach to writing instruction characterised by English immersion. Though in some measure, policy and curriculum documents recommended the use of contrastive analysis and code-switching in the writing classroom to support learners, teachers were unaware of the existence of the LEP and clear directives for the inclusion of the creole in instruction were absent from the curriculum. As a result, interview findings revealed what Lewis-Fokum and Thompson (2016) termed a "pedagogical ambivalence" (p. 1239) on the part of teachers. Teachers reported feeling ill-equipped to provide writing instruction for learners more dominant in Jamaican Creole. The absence of clear guidance and training in supporting the English writing development of creole dominant learners, coupled with teachers' negative attitudes towards the use of the creole in the classroom, resulted in a generalized approach to writing instruction more suited for English monolinguals.

Research, however, has shown that learners stand to benefit from more differentiated approaches to writing instruction that take into consideration learners' levels of language proficiency and literacy skills (Olinghouse, 2008). In the present study, teachers placed a strong emphasis on English immersion and the development of higher-level skills in writing such as

planning and ideation. However, given that learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language had significantly lower levels of oral language proficiency and performed more poorly across all higher- and lower-level writing skills, it is likely that these learners first need additional support to improve and automatise their lower-level transcription skills, and more differentiated oral language support given the differences between the home and school language.

In addition to instructional effects, the study methodology may have also influenced findings showing significantly lower writing quality outcomes on the part of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. While careful consideration was given to grouping the based on language usage and proficiency, it is still worth acknowledging that given the complexity of the linguistic situation in Jamaica and the nature of the creole continuum, the approach to language grouping may have lacked precision for the classification of some learners. Nevertheless, findings showing poor writing quality outcomes for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language are consistent with wider research among speakers of creoles and non-standardized languages (de Klein, 2006; McCourtie, 1998; Nero, 1997; Thompson, 2004).

9.7.2 Writing Quality Outcomes Across Groups

In addition to statistically significant language group differences in writing quality, it is also worth pointing out that on average, relatively low scores were observed across the sample for writing quality, with the creole dominant students having an average of 44.71% and learners more dominant in English having an average of 63.75%. Such a finding is consistent with earlier reports of poor writing outcomes among Jamaican students over the years (McCourtie, 1998; MoEY, 2001) and can likely be explained in some measure by instructional approaches, home language and literacy environments, student attitudes to writing, and the study methodology.

Based on findings from the teacher interviews in Chapter Eight, writing instruction was characterised by English immersion though the use of teacher-written models, the language experience approach to build ideas, and the writing process to guide student writing. Additionally, students appeared to have limited opportunities for extended writing. However, the efficacy of instructional approaches with a strong emphasis on the process approach to writing and on the teaching of higher-level planning skills with limited opportunities for extended writing, as observed in the present study, have not been supported in the research literature (Graham & Sandmel, 2011; Olinghouse, 2008). Rather, research has shown that learners stand to benefit from a balanced approach to writing instruction that focuses on both lower- and higher-level writing skill development in accordance with student needs (Graham et al; Olinghouse, 2008; Troia & Graham, 2003), as well as from regular opportunities for authoring extended texts (de la Piedra, 2006). Indeed, in the Peruvian context, de la Piedra (2006) found that writing instruction that was characterized by Spanish immersion and limited opportunities for extended meaning-based writing tended to result in poor narrative writing skills among Quechua children, who, like many Jamaican children experience a mismatch between the oral home language and the language of schooling.

Another important and related contextual factor that may have influenced the nature of student outcomes and writing instruction was the COVID-19 school closures. As discussed in Chapter Seven, teacher comments suggested that writing instruction was impacted by COVID-19 school closures. Teachers commented on the challenges of collecting and providing feedback on student writing through online mediums and reported that as a result, students received fewer opportunities for authoring their own texts. Given that student writing samples were collected during this period, overall low scores may have been in some measure an instructional effect.

In addition to COVID-19-related school closures, home literacy environments may also provide some insight into student writing outcomes. The study findings showed that a sizeable portion of mothers were not educated beyond the secondary school level, with many only having primary school education. This pattern was not observed among fathers. Research, however, has long shown strong and significant associations between maternal education and child literacy outcomes in both developing and developed countries (Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004; Jariene et al., 2012; Roopnarine & Yildirum, 2018; Tizard et al., 1988). Moreover, in the Caribbean and more particularly in Jamaica, mothers have been found to be the more likely caregiver and the parent more likely to engage in literacy activities (Roopnarine & Yildirim, 2018) – a finding that has been linked to the high levels of father absenteeism in the Caribbean (Anderson & Daley, 2015; Roopnarine & Jin, 2016). Given such research findings, it is possible that some mothers may have been more limited in their capacity to provide facilitative HLEs for their children that would support writing development. At the same time, it is worth pointing out that research has also shown that HLE and SES do not have uniform effects on literacy outcomes (Nag et al., 2019), and therefore, it is likely that low levels of maternal education in the community did not necessarily result in less facilitative HLEs for all learners.

In addition to maternal education, findings also showed that parents were more likely to engage in informal and indirect home literacy practices compared to more direct or formal home literacy practices involving parent tutoring in writing. Overall, parents were less likely to engage in writing tasks with their children than other activities. As discussed in Chapter Three, a consistent body of research has shown significant positive associations between formal HLE activities such as parent tutoring in writing and child writing outcomes relative to informal and indirect literacy practices that tend to have limited effects on child writing skills (Ngorosho,

2011; Senechal et al., 1998; Senechal et al., 2014). Given that parents in the present study were less likely to engage in parent tutoring or in writing activities with their children, it is likely that the HLEs represented in the sample were not largely facilitative for writing development and as a result may have contributed to the relatively poor writing outcomes observed among many students. Such HLE patterns were likely linked to parental beliefs about literacy instruction as well barriers to fostering facilitative HLEs. Indeed, parents and teachers highlighted challenges with parental illiteracy and parents commented on the challenges of engaging in home literacy activities when having to care and provide for multiple children.

Another contextual finding of relevance, however, was the possibly facilitative role of Sunday School attendance on literacy outcomes. Sunday School attendance emerged as one of the most common activities for children in the community. Based on insider knowledge as a town local, most Sunday School teachers at the larger churches in the town tend to be schoolteachers and principals. Considering the barriers faced by many parents in providing facilitative HLEs for their children, community literacy practices including, but not limited to Sunday School, may provide supplementary literacy support for learners, particularly in rural towns where the church plays a very central role in the community. However, more research is needed in this regard. Beyond the contextual factors discussed so far that may have contributed to overall low performance in writing across the language groups, learner factors such as motivation and attitudes to writing which were discussed in Chapter Seven, may also offer insight into the observed writing outcomes.

Low levels of motivation and negative attitudes towards writing may have also contributed to overall low levels of performance in writing across language groups. During meetings and interviews, schoolteachers and administrators consistently lamented students' low

levels of motivation and negative attitudes towards writing. Given the consistent body of research showing positive correlations between writing motivation and writing attainment (see Camacho et al. (2021) for a systematic review) and research showing that teachers' reports of student attitudes to writing serve as one of the strongest predictors of writing outcomes in the primary years (Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2004), it is likely that the generally negative attitudes held by many students towards writing are linked to the relatively low levels of performance observed in the study. However, as student motivation and attitudes towards writing were not directly measured, no causative or correlational claims can be made concerning attitudes to writing and writing quality.

Altogether, in addition to significant language group differences in writing quality outcomes where learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language performed more poorly than their peers with English as a home and dominant language, an overall trend of relatively low levels of performance was observed across the sample. The present discussion has shown that while writing outcomes in the Jamaican context are linked in a large part to linguistic factors, a host of learner and contextual factors also play a pivotal role in writing quality outcomes. In the upcoming section a detailed discussion of the specific writing challenges experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language will be presented.

9.7.3 Areas of challenge in writing for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language

Learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language performed at a lower level across all the component skills of writing compared to their peers with English as a home language. While research in creole contexts has largely highlighted the significant challenges that creole-speaking students experience in grammar, findings from the current study show that beyond grammar, creole dominant students are challenged in both lower-level transcription skills as well as higher-

level text generation skills. Slightly different patterns of writing challenges emerged across the language groups. For learners more dominant in English, organisation emerged as the most challenging skill followed by ideation, grammar, and spelling. However, for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language, grammar proved to be the most challenging skill, followed by organization, ideation, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation. Findings concerning the writing challenges experienced by students with Jamaican Creole as a home language are strikingly consistent with the writing concerns outlined by teachers in Chapter Eight and are discussed in line with the SWV, the ecology of the writing classroom, contextual findings, and methodological factors.

The SVW proposes that writing consists of three component processes- transcription, text-generation, and executive functions, all functioning within a working memory environment. Lower-level transcription skills are generally mastered first and once automatized, free up cognitive space for text generation at the word, sentence, and phrase levels (Berninger et al., 2002). Accordingly, deficits in transcription skills place a greater burden on working memory which then curtails efficient text generation at the word, sentence, and text level. Within this framework, given the low levels of performance in the transcription skills of handwriting, spelling, and punctuation, it would be expected then that learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language would be challenged at the level of text generation. This was borne out in the findings. Learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language displayed challenges in the lower-level transcription skills of handwriting, punctuation, and spelling — being more than two times more likely to receive a low rating in each transcription skill than their peers with English as a home language. Consistent with the predictions of the SVW, these learners experienced even

greater challenges in higher-level text generation skills at the word, sentence, and text level. Student outcomes in transcription and text generation are discussed in the upcoming sections.

9.7.3.1 Transcription skills. Learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language performed more poorly in transcription skills (handwriting, spelling, and punctuation[9]) than their peers with English as a home language and excepting handwriting, generally received low scores across the transcription skills. Such findings add support to the small but consistent body of research highlighting spelling and punctuation as areas of significant challenge for learners with creoles as home languages, across all levels of education (Burris-Melville, 2020; de Klein, 2006; McCourtie, 1998). However, these findings depart from trends observed among learners more typically deemed as EAL in the Global North. In the systematic review, learners with EAL generally performed on par with, or better than their NES peers on measures of handwriting (Harrison et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2022) and spelling (Cameron, 2004; Ball, 2003; Harrison et al., 2016; Murphy, 2015; Ndlovu, 2010; Zhang et al., 2022). Such findings underline the need for greater research and pedagogical attention to the challenges experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language beyond grammar and morphosyntax.

There was no observed trend in handwriting ratings among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language as half the group received high ratings (3-4) and the other half received low ratings (1-2). While poor handwriting is not attributable to the influence of the home language, it may be linked to factors such as motivation as well as learners' proficiency in higher level writing skills. Indeed, Skar et al. (2022) underlined the relationship between handwriting and other literacy skills including spelling, topic knowledge, and planning skills, and Hayes and

[9] Though punctuation is not explicitly referenced in the SVW, it has been operationalized as a lower-level transcription skill as has been done in similar research (e.g., Dockrell et al., 2016; Hayes & Olinghouse, 2015).

Olinghouse (2015) highlighted the association between poor transcription skills and low motivation in writing. In the present study, some teachers attributed students' poor writing skills to low levels of motivation and negative attitudes to writing. It is possible that findings showing statistically significant language group differences in handwriting may be owing in part, to lower levels of motivation in writing and lower levels of proficiency in spelling on the part of some learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. However, as motivation was not directly measured in the present study, this remains a postulation.

As reported earlier in this chapter, spelling emerged as an area of significant challenge for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. Low ratings in spelling were not linked to phonological creole interference, but instead, as per the WAM rubric (Dunsmuir et al., 2015), were owing to the general tendency of spelling common monosyllabic (e.g., cat, bat, boy) or high frequency words (e.g., because, while, inside). Such a finding has obvious links to vocabulary knowledge. As previously outlined, vocabulary represented the greatest difference between the language groups, with learners with Jamaican Creole being three times more likely to receive a low rating in vocabulary than their peers with English as a home language. Given the low levels of vocabulary knowledge observed among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language, it is unsurprising that these learners were very conservative in their written vocabulary, relying on monosyllabic and high frequency words which in most cases they were able to spell correctly. However, this practice resulted in lower spelling scores due to an absence of more complex words in their texts (whether attempted or spelled correctly).

Unlike handwriting and spelling, very little is known about language group differences in punctuation skills, as punctuation is rarely included as a key variable in writing research – a factor likely owing to the general absence of punctuation in component models of writing.

Nevertheless, the study findings highlighting punctuation as an area of challenge for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language are consistent with wider research on writing in creole contexts (de Klein, 2006; Burris-Melville, 2020). In line with the SVW, as learners with Jamaican Creole struggled with lower-level transcription skills, it is unsurprising that higher-level writing skills at the word, sentence, and phrase levels presented an even greater challenge.

9.7.3.2 Oral language Skills. Oral language skills represented the greatest difference between the language groups, with learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language being three and two times more likely to gain a low rating for vocabulary and grammar, respectively, relative to their peers with English as a home language.

Grammar. Consistent with the concerns reported by teachers, grammar emerged as the area of greatest challenge in writing for learners more dominant in Jamaican Creole. This finding is unsurprising given the language typology and the consistent body of research highlighting the grammatical challenges experienced by creole speakers in writing (Burris-Melville, 2020; Clachar, 2005; de Klein, 2006; McCourtie, 1998; Nero, 1997, 2014, 2018). However, beyond creoles, such findings also mirror trends in the systematic review where almost all studies (n=10) reported a NES advantage in grammar.

As highlighted in the Chapter Three, grammar represents the area of greatest divergence between Jamaican Creole and English. Studies in the narrative review consistently reported that learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language experienced significant morphosyntactic challenges in writing due to creole interference. Indeed, in the current study, learners with Jamaican Creole as their home language showed greater evidence of creole interference than their peers with English as a home language. Creole interference was most observed in verb morphosyntax (tense and subject-verb agreement), as has been consistently reported in earlier

studies (Burris-Melville, 2020; de Kelin, 2006; McCourite, 1998; Nero, 1997; Nero & Stevens, 2018; Winer, 1989). The use of serial verbs was also evident in some texts — a finding not reported in previous research. It must be pointed out, however, that no formal error analysis methodology was employed in the present study. Rather interference trends were highlighted and noted during the marking process. Nevertheless, consistent with findings from Winer (1989), Winch & Gingell (1994), and McCourtie (1998), creole interference was not the sole cause of grammatical errors in writing. Creole dominant learners also experienced significant difficulties in sentence structure — writing incomplete or very simple sentences. McCourtie (1998) reported that learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language took less risks in writing by producing very simple sentences — a tendency which McCourtie (1998) attributed to learners' 'linguistic insecurity'. The findings in the study show that learners who are more dominant speakers of Jamaican Creole experience grammatical challenges not only in morphosyntax but also in sentence structure. Greater instructional support in distinguishing the grammars of their home and school languages as well as in building grammatical skills for English writing is therefore necessary.

In terms of instruction, findings from the content analysis phase of the study showed that policy and curriculum documents included the use of contrastive analysis to support learners in differentiating the home and school languages to varied extents. This practice, however, was strikingly absent from teacher practice — a fallout of the non-official status of the LEP. As a result of the gap in policy and practice, learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language receive little to no support in differentiating the grammatical structures of their home and school language and fail to benefit from the ad hoc correction of their home language in the classroom. One teacher, however, who completed her postgraduate studies at an American university,

described an instructional approach consistent with translanguaging pedagogy that drew on drama, a central feature of Jamaican culture, as well as the use of the home language in different stages of the writing process. Ms. Mair's creative approach to engaging students in writing while encouraging language differentiation may provide a possible model for supporting the English writing development of Jamaican primary school learners, while valuing the home language. Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter Eight, the implementation of such instructional methods would require a change in attitudes towards the use of the home language in the writing classroom as well as relevant teacher training.

As grammar is the feature that most distinguishes Jamaican Creole and English, the finding that over half of the learners who were deemed more dominant in English also received low ratings in grammar (1-2) requires some discussion. Such a finding is likely linked to the nature of the creole continuum, as well as methodological factors.

Findings showing evidence of creole features in the writing of learners more dominant in English are generally consistent with the creole continuum described in Chapter Three. This pattern was first observed by Nero (1997) who explored creole interference in the writing of basilectal, mesolectal, and acrolectal creole speakers in a remedial college writing course. Nero found evidence of creole interference in the writing samples of all learners despite their level of English proficiency. However, as in the current study, evidence of creole interference in the writing of the acrolectal speaker was very limited. Given the somewhat fluid nature of the creole continuum, features of the creole may remain in the interlanguage of some learners deemed more dominant in English, depending on the nature of their language exposure and usage patterns.

Relatedly, and as previously discussed, the approach to language grouping in the current study may have also contributed to the overlap in low scores for grammar between the language

groups. As described in Chapter Six, due to low-response rates, home language environment information could not be used as part of the triangulated approach to language group allocation. In the absence of a home language measure, the reliance on teacher reports and student performance on the GJT may have been less accurate in determining language groups than if three measures were used. Nevertheless, within creole contexts, any attempt at language grouping will involve some amount of error and the study findings appear to be consistent with wider research (Nero, 1997). Taken together, the nature of the creole continuum and the possible influence of the language group allocation approach help to provide an explanation for low scores due to creole interference. However, as noted earlier, there were very few observed instances of creole-influenced grammatical errors in the writing of learners more dominant in English. Consideration of the WAM rubric may provide greater insight into the grammar outcomes of learners more dominant in English.

Writing was assessed for both grammatical accuracy and sentence structure in the WAM. While there was a significant amount of overlap among groups in the lower score range for grammar, the reasons for lower ratings across the groups were generally different. As seen in the example provided earlier in Figure 9.9, learners who received lower ratings in the English dominant group generally wrote very simple or incomplete sentences (e.g., no subordination, no subject) with very basic use of conjunctions, however, few morphosyntactic errors were observed. Such patterns of grammatical challenges are consistent with findings from Winch & Gingell (1994) and Winer (1989) who found that a sizable portion of the writing challenges experienced by learners in creole contexts were developmental rather than being creole-influenced. Nevertheless, such a finding calls for greater support in grammar, particularly in sentence structure and complexity for all learners.

Vocabulary. Consistent with teachers' reports, vocabulary emerged as a challenging aspect of writing for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language and was the skill that most distinguished the language groups. Learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language were three times more likely than their English dominant peers to get a low rating for written vocabulary. Such a trend is strikingly consistent with those observed in the systematic review concerning vocabulary knowledge and writing. In the systematic review, a consistent NES advantage was observed in vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary emerged as one of the strongest and most consistent predictors of writing quality that served to distinguish the language groups. In fact, some studies showed that when its effects were controlled, there was no longer an NES advantage in writing quality (Babayiğit, 2014) and in other cases an EAL advantage was observed (Silverman et al., 2015; Woolpert, 2016; Zhang et al., 2022). Not much attention may be paid to vocabulary development among leaners with Jamaican Creole as a home language because of the shared nature of the vocabulary between the home and school languages. However, the study findings call for greater pedagogical and empirical attention to be paid to vocabulary development in creole contexts, as learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language performed in a manner more consistent with second language speakers of English rather than first language speakers. Low vocabulary scores in writing on the part of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language are likely due, at least in part, to language typology, the nature of instruction, and home literacy environments.

Consistent with wider research practice, the WAM rubric measured vocabulary largely on the dimension of diversity. As discussed in Chapter Three, vocabulary diversity has been found to be a significant predictor of writing quality, both for first (Dunsmuir & Blatchford, 2009; Grobe, 1981; Harrison et al., 2016; Olinghouse & Leaird, 2009) and second language speakers of

English (Babayiğit, 2014; Engber, 1995). Though 90% of the Jamaican Creole lexicon is adopted from English, that 90% still represents only a relatively small subset of the English lexicon. Given that Jamaican Creole functions as an oral language in Jamaican society and is generally used for informal and unofficial purposes that do not necessarily require a wide range of vocabulary, learners with Jamaican Creole as their home language are still limited in the academic English vocabulary requisite for academic writing. It cannot, therefore, be assumed that children who speak Jamaican Creole as a home language function as first language speakers of English in the area of vocabulary. Rather, such learners may need greater instructional support in building both their receptive and productive vocabularies for writing.

The limited focus on building productive vocabulary knowledge in the language arts curriculum may be a contributing factor to learners poor writing outcomes. Content analysis of the language arts curriculum showed minimal focus on the productive use of vocabulary knowledge in writing. Rather, the vocabulary strand of the language arts curriculum focused on building receptive vocabulary knowledge through vocabulary recognition strategies and word lists, with little evidence of methods and strategies that encourage learners to push their receptive vocabulary knowledge into productive use. While this may have less impact on learners with English as a home language, as evidenced in their higher vocabulary ratings in the written expression task, learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language (who generally have less exposure to and practice using English outside of the classroom) appeared to be more negatively impacted by teachers' instructional approaches. Indeed, in a study exploring receptive and productive vocabulary development in second language learners, Laufer (1998) found that though second language learners showed sizeable gains in receptive vocabulary knowledge after a year of instruction, no such gains were observed in their productive vocabulary knowledge in

writing. Laufer (1998) attributed the significant lag in productive vocabulary knowledge in part, to vocabulary instruction that was characterised by limited opportunities for learners to push receptive knowledge into productive use. Other contextual factors, such as HLE, possibly influenced the poor vocabulary ratings for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. However, as sufficient HLE data was not collected to carry out comparisons across language groups, no causal or specific correlational links can be drawn.

Writing research in creole or vernacular-speaking contexts has focused on grammar (particularly morphosyntax) through error analysis largely at the expense of other skill areas such as vocabulary. However, the findings from the present study reveal that vocabulary, among other skills, was also significantly challenging for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. Greater research and pedagogical attention are therefore required to support the development of receptive and productive vocabulary among learners in creole contexts.

9.7.3.3 Ideation and Organization. Both higher level skills of organization and ideation proved especially challenging for both groups. Organization emerged as one of the more challenging areas for the Jamaican creole group second only to grammar, and as the most challenging skill for the English dominant group. Ideation was the second most challenging skill area for the English dominant group and followed organisation for the creole-dominant learners. While the differences between the groups for organization and ideation were statistically significant, the magnitude of the language group differences were smaller than for transcription and oral language skills.

In terms of organisation, similar findings have been reported among learners with West African Pidgin English as a home language, where de Klein (2006) found that learners encountered significant challenges in organizing their texts. Similarly, in Burris-Melville's

(2020) study of academic writing at the tertiary level, organisation emerged was one of the most challenging areas for Jamaican university students. Once again, the findings bear striking similarities with the those reported in the systematic review. A similar trend was also observed among the small number of studies in the systematic review that assessed organization in an analytic rubric wherein a clear NES advantage was observed (Babayiğit, 2015; Cameron, 2003; Murphy, 2015). Consistent with the predictions of the SVW, as learners struggled with the lower-level transcription skills and higher-level oral language skills at the word and sentence level, it is unsurprising that they also experienced significant challenges in the higher-level skills of ideation and organization. Beyond the predictions of the SVW, challenges in organisation and ideation can likely be explained at least in part, by learners' challenges with text length, and the nature of writing instruction provided to students.

As discussed in Chapter Eight, text length or what some teachers referred to as 'limited expression', was one of the most consistent concerns voiced by teachers for students' writing. This challenge was prolific across students' texts despite their language background. McCourtie (1998) reported similar findings in a study of 530 Grade Nine Jamaican students wherein across all writing proficiency levels, students' texts were judged as not being of a sufficient length to meet national or international assessment standards. Based on the WAM rubric used in the present study, higher scores in ideation were awarded for interesting, engaging, and fleshed-out ideas rather than for short and underdeveloped ones. In the area of organisation, higher scores were awarded for the development of ideas and meaning across well-organized paragraphs. Therefore, students who wrote only a few lines or a sentence in response to the prompt received lower scores for ideation and organization regardless of their language group. That leaners from both language groups tended to write short texts is likely a contributing factor to the smaller

magnitude of difference between the groups in both organisation and ideation. However, this finding also highlights a key limitation in the present study, wherein text length was not controlled and therefore may have acted as confounding variable in some measure. In addition to the possible role of text length in student writing outcomes, instructional approaches are also likely to provide some insight into learner's challenges in organisation and ideation.

Given the focus on building both organisational and ideation skills through the extensive use of the language experience approach and the writing process in both the curriculum and teacher practice, there appears to be an awareness of the challenges related to the two higher level skills. It is therefore a curious finding that despite the instructional emphasis on building organisation and ideation skills for writing, learners continue to experience such a high level of difficulty in these areas. Findings from Olinghouse (2008) may provide some insight into these results. Olinghouse (2008) found a student by instruction interaction in overall writing quality outcomes wherein instruction focused on planning skills only proved beneficial for students with low full-scale IQs[10] or those with more advanced reading skills. Olinghouse (2008) interpreted such findings as showing that high quality writing instruction must be based on the skillset and abilities of the learners for which it is designed. That is, learners with lower levels of language and literacy skills may not benefit from writing instruction with a strong emphasis on higher level skills such as ideation and organisation. Rather, they may need greater instructional support in developing automaticity in lower-level language and literacy skills first. In the present study, learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language struggled with lower-level transcription skills as well as oral language skills at the word and sentence level. In line with findings from

[10] Based on the Weschler-V intelligence test (WISC-5) consisting of five subscales: verbal comprehension, visual spatial, fluid reasoning, working memory, and processing speed.

Olinghouse (2008), it is likely that learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language may benefit more from instruction targeting their key areas of challenge such as transcription skills and grammar for example, at least initially. Based on the study findings, students appear to need greater support in differentiating the home and school language and greater practice in crafting more complex sentences and using more diverse vocabulary. In line with research showing statistically significant associations between text length and both transcription and text generation skills for both first and second language learners of English, (Graham et al., 1997; Graham & Eslami, 2020; Kent & Wanzek, 2016; Olinghouse & Leaird, 2009; Santangelo & Graham, 2016), it is likely that targeting lower-level transcription skills as well as oral language skills will serve to improve issues with text length and ultimately, in line with the SVW, free up greater cognitive resources for ideation and organization.

Taken together, findings concerning the writing challenges experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language offer support to both the SVW and the ecological approach to writing, with both learner and contextual factors playing important roles in writing quality outcomes. Implications for both research and practice are discussed in the final chapter.

10. Conclusions and Implications

In 1998, Lena McCourtie carried out a review of archival documents with the aim of exploring the causes of failure in the Jamaican educational system. The archival study spanned a 30-year period (1891-1921) during the colonial era beginning with annual reports from 'Her Majesty's Inspectors'. The key finding was that writing presented as the area of greatest challenge for learners in the Jamaican creole context. In a follow-up study, McCourtie (1990) carried out an empirical study of writing performance among secondary students in the post-independence era to explore whether improvements had been made over the years. The unfortunate conclusion was that the writing outcomes of Jamaican students had not significantly improved over the years despite varied attempts at reform in the educational system. In 2001, largely in response to poor writing outcomes across all levels of education, the Jamaican Ministry of Education drafted the Language Education Policy with the aim of improving the literacy outcomes of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. The policy, however, was never officially approved by parliament. Unfortunately, in 2022, findings from the present study show continuity with colonial era reports of poor writing outcomes for learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language.

10.1 Study Aims and Key Findings

As seen in the narrative literature review, no previous studies have explored writing among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language at the primary level. Additionally, of the small number of studies that have considered writing quality outcomes of creole speaking students, very few have explored learners' performance across multiple component skills of writing. Rather, there has been a strong and understandable emphasis on error analysis to explore

the role of creole interference in morphosyntax. As a result, despite reports of consistent poor performance in writing across all levels of education in Jamaica, very little is known about the writing challenges experienced by learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language, beyond grammar, particularly in the primary years. The present study aimed to fill these gaps in the literature by exploring the nature of writing among learners with Jamaican Creole as their home and dominant language in Grade Six, while considering the wider ecology of the writing classroom and its possible impact on student writing.

In addition to relatively low levels of performance across the language groups, findings showed that learners who were more dominant speakers of Jamaican Creole performed more poorly in writing than their peers with English as a home language, both in overall writing quality and across the component skills. Such findings were largely consistent with teachers' reports which highlighted oral language skills (grammar and vocabulary), spelling, and organization as key areas of challenge for creole dominant learners, with the overarching concern being that 'the children write the way they speak'.

The writing outcomes of the creole dominant learners in this study showed convergence with those from populations of learners more typically deemed as EAL in the Global North. In the systematic review on writing among EAL learners, a home language advantage in oral language skills and overall writing quality was observed when texts were assessed using an analytic approach. However, unlike the creole dominant learners in this study, learners with EAL showed no differences in, or in some cases, outperformed their NES peers on measures of transcription. Similarities between creole dominant learners and learners with EAL are important as they add support to arguments from Caribbean researchers who contend that creole dominant learners are essentially learning English as an additional language in the classroom, and

therefore, need context- and learner-sensitive instruction that takes their home language into consideration.

Beyond a home-school language mismatch, study findings also suggest writing quality outcomes among Jamaican primary school students are likely explained by a host of interrelated learner and contextual factors. A key aim of the present study was to explore the ecology of the writing classroom. Altogether, curriculum and policy documents showed the dominance of a more generalized approach to writing instruction through English immersion, with very little consideration of the home language. In the areas of the curriculum where the home language was acknowledged, little outworking beyond the level of attainment targets was evidenced. Additionally, across all the language skill areas in the language arts curriculum, the home language was held most distant from writing. While there was greater evidence of the inclusion of the home language in literacy education in the LEP than in the curriculum documents, to date, the policy remains a draft document that has neither been approved by the Jamaican parliament nor disseminated to stakeholders.

Consistent with the curricular documents, teachers largely adopted a more generalized approach to writing instruction (English Immersion) to support creole dominant learners rather than context-sensitive pedagogical approaches. However, on a smaller scale, some teachers reported practicing ad hoc correction of the home language without the provision of explanatory feedback as well as drawing explicit connections between the home and school languages during writing instruction – the latter approach being the least common. Teachers' pedagogical practices aligned with their consistent admission of feeling ill-equipped by training programs to provide writing instruction to creole dominant learners.

Significant gaps were also observed between government policy and teacher practice. The key areas of discrepancy included the provision of extensive writing opportunities for learners, the inclusion of the home language in the classroom as a language learning resource (e.g., differentiating the home and school languages), and teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of the home language in the writing classroom. Interviews with teachers highlighted limited opportunities for extended writing— an issue that was exacerbated during the COVID-19 school closures, and as previously mentioned, a lack of clarity on how to provide effective writing instruction for creole dominant learners. Additionally, teachers held negative attitudes towards the inclusion of the home language in the writing classroom, largely due to concerns of the limited international currency of the home language and its likely negative repercussions on already poor writing skills.

Findings showing policy-practice gaps and pedagogical ambivalence on the part of teachers in providing literacy instruction are not unique to Jamaica, but can also be generalized to the wider Caribbean and similar contexts in the Global South where creoles, vernacular languages, and other unstandardized and stigmatized oral languages are spoken. Indeed, very similar findings concerning policy-practice gaps and pedagogical ambivalence have been reported in large scale studies from low- to middle-income multilingual contexts where learners experience a mismatch between their home and school languages (Liddicoat & Kirkpatrick, 2019; Nag et al., 2016).

Altogether, the findings across the study phases have provided a fuller ecological understanding of writing outcomes among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language. The study findings yielded implications for theory, research, and practice which will be addressed in the upcoming sections following a discussion of the study's limitations.

10.2 Limitations

Data collection for this study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic school closures. As a result, the study is reflective of its times. The necessity of moving data collection online and the resulting methodological accommodations are likely to have had some bearing on the study outcomes. These and other limitations including cultural bias are addressed in this section.

10.2.1 Sampling

There were a few issues with sampling that may have impacted the study findings. As previously articulated, the study sample was smaller than what was recommend by GPower to detect significant group differences. Nevertheless, as group differences were statistically significant even at a stringent alpha value of .001, the findings are accepted though with some caution.

A greater concern, however, was the possible presence of bias in the sampling procedures. Carrying out research online meant the automatic exclusion of learners with no access to the internet or devices (i.e., laptops or tablets). This was not only evident in the student measures, but also in the home language and literacy surveys which were completed by parents or caregivers. In administering the questionnaire online rather than in-person, it is likely that numerous caregivers may have been excluded as the task not only required literacy skills (i.e., reading) but also technological literacy, and access to devices. In this way, it is likely that some selective bias was present in the study with the elderly and those with low literacy levels being more likely to be excluded. Additionally, only learners who completed the writing task were included in the study. It is therefore possible that students who were included in the sample may have been more confident writers, had better attitudes to writing, or may have had greater access

to uninterrupted Wi-Fi, relative to their peers who were excluded. Accordingly, the situation regarding writing in Jamaica is likely even worse than reported here in this thesis.

As detailed in Chapter Six, great efforts were made to ensure that all students could participate in the study through providing schools with funding to support learners with limited internet access (to purchase internet data) and by requesting that teachers help in encouraging students to complete tasks. In the end, the sizes of the language groups were not significantly different. Nevertheless, now that students have returned to in-person schooling in Jamaica, replication is recommended as sampling bias can now be better controlled.

10.2.2 Language Group Allocation

Due to low response rates, the home language and literacy questionnaire could not be used as intended. One purpose of the questionnaire was to provide details on learners' home language environments which would serve as an additional source of data for language group allocation. While home language environment details were still used to provide a richer description of the context and to enrich the discussion of the findings, language group allocation was solely determined by learners' performance on the GJT and based on teachers' reports of learners' language use and English language proficiency. Though efforts were made to allocate learners to the most appropriate language group, the use of three, rather than two data sources would have likely resulted in a higher level of precision.

Nevertheless, the study is set apart from extant research, firstly, by grouping learners by language dominance, and secondly, by using two, rather than one source of data for language group allocation. With students back in schools and parents being more accessible (e.g., parent-teacher conferences, pick-up and drop off-times), it is worth attempting to use the triangulated

approach to language group allocation (parent reports, teacher reports, and student performance) in future research.

10.2.3 Home Literacy Environments (HLE)

As the home language and literacy environment questionnaires could not be used as intended, it was not possible to control for the effects of HLE when comparing the writing quality outcomes of the language groups. Given the large body of research showing statistically significant associations between home literacy practices and child literacy outcomes, it is possible that HLE acted as a confounding variable in the present study. Further work is needed that explores the role of HLE in literacy outcomes in the Caribbean and replication studies that control for the effects of HLE are also recommended to gain clearer insight into students' writing quality outcomes.

It is also important to acknowledge the possibility of some amount of cultural bias in the HLE findings. The HLE survey was originally developed for use in India. While there are similarities between the contexts and contextual adaptations were made to the measure, findings could have been strengthened through further exploration of the validity of the scale in the Jamaican context. Moving forward, statistical approaches such as confirmatory factor analysis should be used when adapting a questionnaire for cross-cultural administration, as a scale may not measure latent constructs (HLE) in the same way across cultures. In the absence of cross-cultural validation of the HLE questionnaire, the findings, though only used describe the study context, must still be interpreted with some amount of caution.

10.2.4 Grammaticality Judgement Task

As pointed out in Chapter Nine, a ceiling effect was observed among English dominant learners in the GJT, wherein participants generally received very high scores. Such an outcome

suggests that the task may not have been sufficiently challenging for learners with higher levels of English proficiency for much variation in grammatical knowledge to be detected. Given that the task served group allocation purposes and simple language and sentences were used to target the most common distinguishing features between the languages, results showing a ceiling effect for English dominant learners is not surprising, and in some measure, was expected. Nevertheless, given the nature of the creole continuum and findings highlighting issues of fossilization in creole contexts where despite relatively high receptive English proficiency, learners may still produce fossilized structures (e.g., Nero, 1997), more work needs to be done to finetune language and literacy test instruments. The use of more sensitive measures of language proficiency that take the nature of the creole continuum into consideration are likely to produce findings that provide a better reflection of individual differences in English language proficiency.

10.2.5 Written Expression Task

As previously discussed, due to the limits of online schooling in Jamaica, only one writing prompt was administered during data collection. The analysis of one writing sample per student possibly impacted the validity of the research as writing quality has been found to be influenced by topic (Fitzgerald, 2008). Future in-person research in Jamaica will stand to benefit from the collection and analysis of at least two writing samples, to gain clearer insight into the nature of writing among learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language.

Also related to the writing sample was the issue of text length that became evident in the findings. A key limitation of the Writing Analysis Measure (WAM) used in the present study was that it did not account for text length. Given research showing significant associations between compositional quality and text length (Graham et al., 1997; Grobe, 1981), it would have been worthwhile to control for the effects of text length in the study in order gain clearer insight

in learners' writing challenges. Findings from the current study showing the tendency for some learners to write short texts, signals the need for replication studies controlling for the effects of text length.

Another possible limitation concerns the validity of the WAM in the study context. Vagh and Nag (2019) underline the impact of instruction on students' performance on language and literacy assessments. With reference to narrative writing, the authors point out that in contexts where classroom opportunities to engage in extended creative writing are absent, the suitability and validity of narrative writing assessments for research purposes becomes questionable. Findings in the present study suggested that students generally received limited opportunities to practice authoring their own extended texts — an issue that was exacerbated during the COVID-19 school closures. Such a finding likely constrains the validity of a narrative writing task in fully capturing learners' writing abilities in the study context. Given such a limitation, the findings from the present study must be interpreted with some amount of caution. While this issue could not be surmised prior to data collection as school administrators confirmed the central role of writing in language arts instruction and the writing task was similar in nature to the sample tasks from the upcoming national primary exit exams, instructional factors will need to be considered more carefully in future research on writing.

10.2.6 Cultural Bias of Background Measures

While the WISC-IV vocabulary subtest and the WASI-II Matrix Reasoning task are reported to have high levels of reliability and validity, these subtests have been developed in, and norm-referenced on individuals from high-income countries in the Global North rather than on learners in the Caribbean context. It is therefore important to acknowledge the issue of cultural bias in using these measures. Researchers have underlined the importance of considering the

culture, experiences, and linguistic backgrounds of learners when evaluating the validity and usefulness of measures in cross-cultural research (Kahlon, 2021; Nag, 2016; Vagh & Nag, 2019).

Relatedly, Bachman and Palmer (1996) highlight test authenticity as key factor in determining the usefulness of a language test for a specific context, with authenticity referring to the extent of overlap between the nature of the test (content and structure) and the nature of tasks experienced by learners outside of the testing situation. While teachers confirmed learners' familiarity with the structure and format of both the Matrices Reasoning and the vocabulary definition subtests, some amount of bias may have been introduced in the study findings in relation to the content of the WISC-IV vocabulary subtest. Learners' performance on the word definition task may have been impacted by their opportunities for exposure to the vocabulary items included in the task both in school and at home. Research has shown that variation in parents' educational level (Jerrim & Micklewright 2009), attitudes to literacy (Puglisi et al., 2017), child-directed conversation (Hoff et al, 2002), and engagement in home literacy activities (Evans et al., 2008; Sénéchal, 2014; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002) are linked to student outcomes in oral language and literacy skills. Given variation across home literacy backgrounds in the study context, some learners may have had less opportunities for exposure to the words included in the vocabulary subtest than others , thus leading to systematic bias in task performance.

Similarly, it is possible that students also had limited instructional encounters with some items included in the task, particularly the low-frequency items. Such a factor likely limits the construct validity of the task which aimed to measure learners' vocabulary knowledge. To mitigate instructional effects as much as possible, each vocabulary item was reviewed by the primary researcher and teachers in terms of suitability. Nevertheless, without a more systematic approach to evaluating item bias such as the use of a child-directed print corpus to determine

learners' likely levels of exposure to lexical items (e.g., Nag et al., 2020), there was likely some bias in the WISC-IV vocabulary subtest results. As a result, findings from the measure must be interpreted with caution.

The use of language tests from a different context also increases the likelihood of linguistic bias in test outcomes. Given its non-verbal modality, the Matrix Reasoning subtest has been identified as a more suitable cognitive measures for cross-cultural research given the limited linguistic bias (Fraine & McDade, 2009; Laher & Cockcroft, 2017; Reynolds & Ramsay, 2003). However, the vocabulary definition task was more susceptible to linguistic bias. To address this limitation, lexical items were reviewed for possible semantic and/ or phonological interference effects from the home language. Patterns in student responses were also explored to ensure that learners were not penalized for providing culturally influenced responses. Overall, as the bulk of Jamaican Creole vocabulary comes from English, the labels used for items and concepts in the home and target languages are largely overlapping. Nevertheless, it will be worthwhile to develop more context-sensitive measures that provide a more accurate picture of students' vocabulary knowledge in Jamaica for future research- an implication that will be addressed later this chapter.

10.2.7 Limitations of Online Assessment

It is important to acknowledge the limitations associated with moving assessment online and their implications for the interpretation of the study findings. As discussed in Chapter Six, in response to COVID-19 school closures and the resulting switch to online schooling, data collection instruments and procedures were adapted for remote administration. While efforts were made to maintain methodological rigour, it is important to acknowledge that these changes likely impacted the reliability and validity of the findings and as such, likely limit the

generalizability of the findings. The key limitations associated with remote data collection in the study include changes in task demands, variation in working conditions, and increased opportunities for cheating. Each limitation will be addressed in turn.

Task Demands. The Matrix Reasoning subtest of the WASI-II and the vocabulary subtest of the WISC-IV were designed for individual in-person administration. However as described at length in Chapter Six, the tests were administered online to whole classes with each student completing the task in their own home. Accordingly, the task modality was changed from oral to written for the WISC-IV and time limits were imposed for each task in keeping with the allotted data collection time periods and to limit opportunities for cheating. As these adaptations likely resulted in a change in the task demands of the standardized assessments, efforts were made to minimize the effects of task modality on student performance as much as possible. In the word definition task, students were told that they would not be penalized for spelling errors or for the use of incomplete or ungrammatical sentences as this would not have been penalized in oral administration. This way, students were encouraged to simply focus on providing the word meaning. For the Matrix Reasoning task, efforts were made to ensure that all students were able to see the images clearly through piloting and consistently checking in with students throughout the task. In terms of time restrictions, the timing for each task was checked through piloting to ensure that students would have ample time to respond. As changes in task modality likely impacted the validity and reliability of the standardized measures, only raw scores were used, and the testing procedures (including the instructions) were held constant across all groups to improve the reliability of findings. The tasks also had ecological validity within the study context as they mirrored common classroom activities outside of the testing situation.

Bachman (2009) argues that a key factor in determining the validity of a task is the purpose or goal of testing. While the changes in modality would likely nullify the usefulness of the tasks for clinical assessment and referral (APA, 2020), the background measures of nonverbal cognitive ability and language proficiency served research purposes in the present study. That is, to check whether both language groups were comparable on a measure of non-verbal cognitive ability and to provide an approximate description of language proficiency in the sample.

Working Conditions. Pearson tele-practice guidelines (Pearson, 2021) underline the importance of using high-quality devices and equipment (e.g., headphones, double screens, speakers) and limiting distractions during remote assessment to maintain high levels of validity and reliability. As students worked at home, it was not possible to maintain the same conditions for all students (e.g., noise levels, nature of working space) as would have been the case in the classroom. Researchers have pointed to the fact that remote assessment during the COVID-19 period has tended to amplify social inequities (APA, 2020) — an issue in the present study. While the study town had a generally flat-socioeconomic distribution, there was variation in home living environments in terms of space, the ability to work individually in a quiet room, and ownership of devices. The variation in test-taking conditions limit the reliability and generalizability of the findings in the present study.

Cheating. Researchers have highlighted the issue of cheating on tasks as one of the greatest threats validity and reliability in remote data collection (APA, 2020; Newman et al., 2021; Rodd, 2020; Wright, 2020). The present study was not immune to this challenge. As the tasks were administered to intact classes with each child working from home, it was not possible to monitor students (and caregivers) to the extent that would have been desirable to rule out the

possibility of cheating. Efforts were made to prevent cheating in line with recommendations from the literature on remote assessment (Newman et al., 2021; Reynolds & Ramsey, 2003; Wright, 2020) and tele-practice guidelines (APA, 2020; Pearson, 2021). Firstly, participants were required to keeping cameras on throughout the data collection session. This allowed for monitoring of the online classroom and ensuring that designated participants were the ones completing the tasks (APA, 2020). It is worth noting however, that due to technological difficulties, a few students in each class were not able to keep their cameras on, and therefore, it was not possible to fully monitor all participants. Additionally, clear instructions were provided to students and caregivers (if present) concerning the importance of working independently on all tasks. It was constantly reiterated that the exercises were not a school exam and would therefore have no impact on students' school grades. Finally, in keeping with recommendations for remote test administration, time limits were applied to each task to limit opportunities for cheating (Newman et al., 2021), and all responses for the word definition task (WISC-IV Vocabulary subtest) were checked using Google to detect cheating (i.e., plagiarism). Despite these procedures, the possibility still exists that some participants did not work independently and therefore, findings must be interpreted with caution.

Altogether, these factors which are largely reflective of the numerous challenges experienced in many low- to middle income contexts during the COVID-19 pandemic when education was moved online. Given the methodological limitations, the study findings must be interpreted with due caution and replication is needed. As we move forward in a post-COVID online world, much work needs to be done in developing more equitable, valid, and reliable measures for administration in the Caribbean and other low- to middle-income contexts. Possible ways forward are addressed in the upcoming section addressing study implications.

10.3 Theoretical Implications

As indicated in Chapter Two, this is the first known study to apply the SVW to a creole-speaking context, where learners have often been deemed as neither first nor foreign language learners of English (McCourtie, 1998). Findings provided some support for the SVW wherein deficits in lower-level transcription skills constrained the efficient execution of higher-level skills at the word, sentence, and phrase levels. However, there are still some gaps left in our understanding of writing in the Jamaican context that the SVW has not fully addressed on its own.

The SVW has been criticised for a lack of clarity concerning the nature of the relationships between the component skills of writing (Kim & Schatschneider, 2017). Future research using Kim and Schatschneider's (2017) elaborated direct and indirect effects model in particular, may provide greater insight into how deficits in oral language skills impact other writing skills and overall writing quality for creole dominant learners.

Additionally, given the significant challenges experienced by creole dominant learners in punctuation (i.e., second to oral language challenges), greater clarity is needed concerning the role of punctuation in the SVW model and its relationship with other skills. In the absence of a clear elaboration, some researchers have operationalised punctuation as a lower-level transcription skill (e.g., Dockrell et al., 2016) as has been done in the present study, while others have considered punctuation as a higher order editing skill (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2020). Study results showed that punctuations was second only to oral language skills, in distinguishing the language groups. Such a findings may suggest that punctuation may indeed be a higher order editing skill that is likely linked to other component skills of writing (e.g., sentence structure and

grammar) as conceptualized by Ahmed et al. (2020). However, greater theoretical clarity is needed in this regard through further research.

Another limitation of the SVW is that as a model of writing, it fails to consider factors beyond language and literacy, such as motivation, learner attitudes to writing, and contextual factors (Ahmed, et al., 2020; Graham & Eslami, 2020). As a result, and as seen in the present study and wider research, the SWV cannot be used on its own to explain second language writing (Graham & Eslami, 2020). Study findings underlined the importance of considering contextual factors in literacy research such as home literacy environments, the wider classroom ecology, and societal language attitudes that impact student outcomes in varied measures. In this way, the study also provides support for the ecological approach to writing. Moving forward, complexity theories that simultaneously consider the complex and dynamic relationships between learner and contextual factors are likely to prove instrumental in exploring literacy development in the Caribbean.

10.4 Research Implications

The study findings also have implications for research. Firstly, findings showing poor performance across all the component skills of writing on the part of learners with Jamaican Creole as a home language highlight the need for more research exploring the writing challenges experienced by this population beyond grammar. Such research can serve to guide home-grown interventions and approaches for writing instruction, particularly for learners with Jamaican creole as their home language.

This study represents one of a few studies that have attempted to group creole speakers into language groups for the sake of comparison and the only study including an English-

dominant control group. While there were limitations to the language grouping methods in the present study, largely due the impacts of Covid-19 school closures, the proposed triangulated approach to language group allocation in creole contexts is an innovation that can be adopted and refined in research moving forward. The use of a triangulated approach to language group allocation that takes into consideration both language usage and proficiency addresses, at least in part, the prolific confound in most creole writing studies — the assumption that all children in the Caribbean speak creoles as home and dominant languages.

New and promising areas of research also emerged that are worth considering in subsequent studies. As discussed in Chapter Seven, community literacy practices such as Sunday School programs in Jamaica, may prove to be an additional source of literacy engagement for students beyond the home and school. Little research has explored the nature and role of community literacy practices in literacy development (Nag et al., 2019). However, exploring the efficacy of already-existing resources in communities such as Sunday School may prove to be particularly useful in contexts like Jamaica where the church plays central role in community development, libraries are few and under-resourced, and where schoolteachers tend to volunteer as Sunday School teachers. While the present study only used Sunday School attendance as a proxy for community literacy, it may be worthwhile to explore other context-sensitive community literacy practices and their possible role in supporting literacy development in similar contexts.

Based on findings from teacher interviews, translanguaging pedagogy may be a useful tool in the Jamaican classroom when combined with other aspects of Jamaican performing arts and culture, such as drama, singing, and poetry. However, as there is limited research exploring the efficacy of translanguaging pedagogy for writing development internationally and no

research in the Caribbean, more work needs to be done in this regard before dedicating already limited government funding to such interventions.

The possibility of cultural bias in the study highlights the need for the development of local and context-sensitive language measures. Researchers from the Talk Together Project have highlighted the utility of child-directed print corpora for the development of context-sensitive language tests (e.g., word definition tasks) and learner materials (Talk Together, 2023). Within the Jamaican context, a practical step moving forward would be the development of a child-directed print corpus as has been done for Kannada and Filipino speaking children in the Talk Together project (Nag et al., 2020). Using this emic approach to language test development, the corpus could be used to guide the creation of vocabulary tests by providing information on the lexical items more likely to be encountered by Jamaican children of different ages. Such a replication project could be done in collaboration with Book Fusion – a local online book repository which alongside a wide range of books used across the Caribbean, maintains a Jamaican Ministry of Education repository including digital versions of educational texts used in the educational system.

In terms of research design, there is room for growth in future work. While a between-groups design, as adopted in the present study, is a useful starting point in the field to understand general trends in language and literacy outcomes, given the complexity of the linguistic situation and the overlapping nature of language groups (i.e., the continuum), future research may benefit from between-subjects designs. Between-subjects designs are likely to allow for a more nuanced understanding of relationships between individual learner (e.g., vocabulary knowledge) and contextual (e.g., HLE) factors and writing outcomes, without losing key patterns in the data as is likely the case with a between-groups design. Finally, as schools have re-opened, it would be

worthwhile for future research exploring related questions to adopt research designs that incorporate observation of instruction as well as the voices of students into data collection (through questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups). Such data collection methods are likely to provide a fuller understanding of writing in creole contexts.

10.5 Implications for Policy and Practice

Research findings highlighted the need for more context-sensitive pedagogy that considers the linguistic backgrounds and English language proficiency levels of learners in the classroom. A major contributing factor to the absence of context-sensitive instruction in the classroom was the lack of clear directives in the curriculum for the treatment of the home language in writing instruction and a lack of teacher training in this regard. As observed in the present study and earlier research (Nero, 2014), in the absence of clear policy, societal attitudes towards the use of the home language in the classroom (Nero, 2014) and practical constraints such as large class sizes tend to determine the language policies and instructional approaches in the classroom. There are implications for three key areas: teaching training, teacher pedagogy, and language education policy.

Teacher Training. A key finding in the study concerned the pedagogical ambivalence experienced by teachers tasked with providing writing instruction to creole dominant students. A possible way forward in supporting teachers would be the development and inclusion of at least one module in teacher training programs focused on literacy instruction for creole dominant learners. For in-service teachers, the course content could be offered in the form of a workshop series. Such a course would ideally be developed in partnership with academics and teachers in the Jamaican Context (e.g., The Jamaica Language Unit) and would involve the creation of

lectures and resources focused on raising language awareness (i.e., the distinctiveness of Jamaican Creole), uncovering and confronting standard language ideology, differentiating the home and school languages systematically, and celebrating both languages in the classroom. In addition to evidenced-based instruction on second language literacy development, teachers would be provided with video resources (e.g., instructional videos, role play), handouts (e.g., key grammatical differences and how to explain them), and a collection of sample activities and learning games that could be used and adapted for instruction. Such a course would empower teachers to support learners in the Jamaican creole context with greater confidence, by equipping them with the requisite knowledge, skills, and resources. It is also the hope that the creation of this course would also show teachers and students the value of their home language and its potential as a language learning resource in the classroom.

Beyond the Jamaican shores, the findings also have implications for teacher development and pedagogy in the Global North where numerous Caribbean immigrants are enrolled in educational programs and face significant difficulties in writing (e.g., Clachar, 2005; Nero, 1997). One key challenge that teachers need to be made aware of is the issue of fossilization among creole speakers that has implications for writing development. Research has shown that despite having initially higher levels of proficiency in English receptive skills relative to their EAL peers, creole speaking students in the diaspora tend to experience significant and protracted grammatical challenges in writing that often go unchecked due to high levels of communicative competence (Craig, 1999; Winer, 1989). As a result, many of these students continue to produce fossilized structures and ultimately achieve lower levels of attainment in literacy than their NES and EAL peers (Clachar, 2005; Craig, 1999; Winer, 1989). In such contexts, teachers stand to benefit from professional development courses that highlight the structure of creoles, the stigma

attached to these languages, the key areas of challenges experienced by creole speakers in writing and the pedagogical strategies to support such learners. Thorough assessment and reflective practice will be key in such contexts, as teachers must be careful to not assume a learner's difficulties based on their country of provenance.

Writing Instruction. While there is no one-size-fits-all intervention, findings point to the need for responsive and adaptive pedagogy wherein teachers reflect on the general challenges experienced by students in classes and tailor instruction to meet these needs. Findings from the systematic review on EAL writing underlined the key role of assessment approaches in identifying the writing challenges of learners. Within the Jamaican context, the use of suitable assessment measures such as analytic rubrics will play a key role in teachers' ability to pinpoint areas of challenge among students in need of instructional intervention. For example, within the current study, somewhat surprisingly, vocabulary emerged as a significant area of challenge among learners more dominant in creole based on analytic assessment. Teachers could respond to this need through the provision of opportunities to not only build receptive vocabulary through activities such as shared book reading, but by providing more opportunities for students to push this knowledge into productive use through creative writing tasks, role play, and expressive vocabulary games, for example.

Language Education Policy. While the instinctive recommendation would be that the Jamaican government clarify and ratify the language education policy and the role of the home language in the education, the deeper issue of standard language ideology must first be addressed before any educational reform can prove successful. Efforts will need to be made by the Ministry of Education and the Jamaican government in collaboration with educational researchers to improve awareness of the benefits of home language inclusion in literacy

instruction. Moving forward, it is of utmost importance that the government of Jamaica provide a unified voice concerning language education policy and put the necessary supports in place to ensure that all stakeholders receive the requisite training and support for implementation in schools.

In the main, student writing quality outcomes observed in the study were less than favourable, with creole dominant learners performing at a statistically significantly lower level than their English dominant peers. Findings suggest that writing outcomes are likely impacted by a host of interrelated learner and contextual variables. While the methodological limitations of the study call for a cautious interpretation of the findings, continuity has been observed in the findings with previous research. The present study has highlighted some practical steps that can be taken moving forward in research, policy, and practice to better support the writing development of all learners in Jamaican primary schools as well as in similar contexts.

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Appendices

Appendix A: EPPI Centre Education Guidelines (WoE Framework)

Section L: Quality of the study - Reporting

L.1 Is the context of the study adequately described? *Consider your answer to questions:* *Why was this study done at this point in time, in those contexts and with those people or institutions? (Section B, question2)* *Was the study informed by, or linked to an existing body of empirical and/or theoretical research?* *(Section B, question 3)* *Which of the following groups were consulted in working out the aims to be addressed in the study?* *(Section B, question 4)* *Do the authors report how the study was funded?* *(Section B, question 5)* *When was the study carried out?* *(Section B, question 6)*	L.1.1 Yes (please specify) L.1.2 No (please specify)
L.2 Are the aims of the study clearly reported? *Consider your answer to questions:* *What are the broad aims of the study? (Section B, question 1)* *What are the study research questions and/or hypotheses?* *(Section C, question 10)*	L.2.1 Yes (please specify) L.2.2 No (please specify)

L.3 Is there an adequate description of the sample used in the study and how the sample was identified and recruited? *Consider your answer to all questions in Methods on 'Sampling Strategy', 'Recruitment and Consent', and 'Actual Sample'.*	L.3.1 Yes (please specify) L.3.2 No (please specify)
L.4 Is there an adequate description of the methods used in the study to collect data? *Consider your answer to the following questions in Section I:* *Which methods were used to collect the data?* *Details of data collection methods or toolsWho collected the data?* *Do the authors describe the setting where the data were collected? Are there other important features of the data collection procedures?*	L.4.1 Yes (please specify) L.4.2 No (please specify)
L.5 Is there an adequate description of the methods of data analysis? *Consider your answer to the following questions in Section J:* *Which methods were used to analyse the data?* *What statistical methods if any, were used in the analysis?* *Who carried out the data analysis?*	L.5.1 Yes (please specify) L.5.2 No (please specify)
L.6 Is the study replicable from this report?	L.6.1 Yes (please specify) L.6.2 No (please specify)
L.7 Do the authors avoid selective reporting bias? (e.g. do they report on all variables they	L.7.1 Yes (please specify) L.7.2 No (please specify)

aimed to study as specified in their aims/research questions?)	

Section M: Quality of the study - Methods and data

M.1 Are there ethical concerns about the way the study was done? *Consider consent, funding, privacy, etc.*	M.1.1 Yes, some concerns (please specify) M.1.2 No concerns
M.2 Were students and/or parents appropriately involved in the design or conduct of the study?	M.2.1 Yes, a lot (please specify) M.2.2 Yes, a little (please specify) M.2.3 No (please specify)
M.3 Is there sufficient justification for why the study was done the way it was?	M.3.1 Yes (please specify) M.3.2 No (please specify)
M.4 Was the choice of research design appropriate for addressing the research question(s) posed?	M.4.1 Yes (please specify) M.4.2 No (please specify)
M.5 Have sufficient attempts been made to establish the <u>reliability</u> of data collection methods and tools? *Consider your answer to the following question in Section I:* *Do the authors describe any ways they have addressed the reliability of their data collection tools/methods?*	M.5.1 Yes, good (please specify) M.5.2 Yes, some attempt (please specify) M.5.3 No, none (please specify)
M.6 Have sufficient attempts been made to establish the <u>validity</u> of data collection tools and methods?	M.6.1 Yes, good (please specify) M.6.2 Yes, some attempt (please specify)

Consider your answer to the following question in Section I: *Do the authors describe any ways they have addressed the validity of their data collection tools/methods?*	M.6.3 No, none (please specify)
M.7 Have sufficient attempts been made to establish the <u>reliability</u> of data analysis? *Consider your answer to the following question in Section J: Do the authors describe any ways they have addressed the reliability of data analysis?*	M.7.1 Yes (please specify) M.7.2 No (please specify)
M.8 Have sufficient attempts been made to establish the <u>validity</u> of data analysis? *Consider your answer to the following question in Section J:* *Do the authors describe any ways they have addressed the validity of data analysis?*	M.8.1 Yes, good (please specify) M.8.2 Yes, some attempt (please specify) M.8.3 No, none (please specify)
M.9 To what extent are the research design and methods employed able to rule out any other sources of error/bias which would lead to alternative explanations for the findings of the study? *e.g. (1) In an evaluation, was the process by which participants were allocated to,or otherwise received the factor being evaluated, concealed and not predictable in advance? If not, were sufficient substitute procedures employed with adequate rigour to rule out any alternative explanations of the findings which*	M.9.1 A lot (please specify) M.9.2 A little (please specify) M.9.3 Not at all (please specify)

arise as a result? *e.g. (2) Was the attrition rate low and, if applicable, similar between different groups?*	
M.10 How generalisable are the study results?	M.10.1 Details
M.11 Weight of evidence - A: Taking account of all quality assessment issues, can the study findings be trusted in answering the study question(s)? *In some studies it is difficult to distinguish between the findings of the study and the conclusions. In those cases, please code the trustworthiness of this combined results/conclusion.* *** Please remember to complete the weight of evidence questions B-D which are in your review specific data extraction guidelines. *****	M.11.1 High trustworthiness (please specify) M.11.2 Medium trustworthiness (please specify) M.11.3 Low trustworthiness (please specify)
M.12 Have sufficient attempts been made to justify the conclusions drawn from the findings so that the conclusions are trustworthy?	M.12.1 Not applicable (results and conclusions inseparable) M.12.2 High trustworthiness M.12.3 Medium trustworthiness M.12.4 Low trustworthiness
M.13 In light of the above, do the reviewers differ from the authors over the findings or conclusions of the study? *Please state what any difference is.*	M.13.1 Not applicable (no difference in conclusions) M.13.2 Yes (please specify)

Appendix B: Content Analysis Codebooks

Codebook 1: Codebook for the National Standards Curriculum & Supporting Textbook

GOALS	*Attainment* ***targets, learning outcomes, and objectives for writing instruction***	
PEDAGOGY	***Any approach, method, strategy, activity recommended for teaching writing. This is the "how" teaching writing***	
• **Methods**	Writing process	teaching students how to effectively use the writing process to produce good writing (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing)
	Strategy	the use of strategies such as the RAFT, mnemonic devices etc to aid and guide writing
	Explicit Grammar	Explicit teaching of grammatical structures and conventions (e.g., tense, parts of speech (e.g., adverbs, adjectives, nouns) to aid writing
	Explicit Vocab	Explicit teaching of vocabulary to improve writing
	Modelling	Provision of a model or sample of writing to provide a reference of good writing/expectation in a particular genre
	Text Exposure	Exposing students to books of different kinds to improve writing
	Figurative	Teaching students to interpret and use figures of speech in writing
	Prompts	teaching students how to interpret and respond to writing prompts
• **Activities**	Idea building	this includes brainstorming activities that call on background knowledge or give students ideas for writing. This can include different formats such as discussions or other pre-writing activities.
	Genre	writing activities in a particular genre: e.g., story, business letter, friendly letter, expository, argumentative, poetry
	Group discussions	class or group discussion about writing tasks
	Drama	Use of drama or role play to aid or inspire writing
Tools	Concept/idea maps	Use of idea maps to plan writing
	Games	Various games or songs to assist in writing task
	Thought clouds	Tools to organize thoughts and plans for writing
	Media	This includes newspapers, videos and any resource used to supplement writing

JamC	***The role, place of, or the purpose served by the creole in education.***	
	Basic communication	Use of the creole of basic communicative purposes (not necessarily literacy related)
	Comprehension	use of the creole to help students understand concepts and therefore develop in their content and Standard English knowledge
	Resource	Use of the creole as a tool or resource for writing (E.G., to add effect)
Assessment	***How writing is assessed***	
	Rubric	A structured protocol used for assessing writing
	Peer-review	Students review each other's work through group/class discussions and reflections
	Marking	teachers review and mark students work

Codebook 2: Codebook for the Draft Language Education Policy

Category	Code	Description
ROLE	***The role, place of, or the purpose served by the creole in education.***	
	Basic communication	Use of the creole of basic communicative purposes (not necessarily literacy related)
	Comprehension	use of the creole to help students understand concepts and therefore develop in their content and Standard English knowledge
	Resource	Use of the creole as a tool or resource for writing, speech, discussing language
PEDAGOGY	***Any approach, method, strategy recommended for using the creole (and SJE) in language and literacy education. This is the "how" of including the creole instruction- showing teachers how to go about it***	
Methods	**Transitional bilingualism**	Bilingual methods for language learning; bilingual approach that transitions children from creole to Standard English
	Contrastive analysis	Methods and tasks that compare the creole and standard English or looks at the similarities between the languages
	SJE immersion	Immersing students in Standard English environments to improve proficiency
	SJE modelling	Providing any form of Standard English model or sample for students to read, listen to as a basis for

		developing and improving their own literacy skills
	Textual exposure (SJE)	Exposing learners to a large number and wide variety of reading materials in Standard English
	Literacy interventions	interventions for learners with poor reading and writing skills
Activities	**Discussion**	Group and class discussions that allow the use of the creole
	Oral presentations	any oral activities assigned to develop language skills that include the use of the creole
	Drama	role play and drama activities that include the creole language
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS	***Government expectations of teachers concerning attitudes towards the use of JamC in the classroom as well as their required training, teacher knowledge, and proficiency***	
Attitude	**Flexibility**	open-mindedness and flexibility in the use of the child's mother tongue in the classroom to develop literacy and language skills
	Acceptance	accepting rather than rejecting the student's mother-tongue in the classroom as a route to transitional bilingualism
Training	**Course**	course focused on distinguishing Jamaican Creole and Standard English and/ or courses that specifically focus on literacy development in creole contexts.
	Literacy centres	Use of government literacy centres and resources for training and support
	Assessments	Participate in appraisals and assessments of teaching, language, and literacy skills
Knowledge	**Current knowledge**	Stay up to date with recent literacy and bilingual teaching strategies
	SJE competence	Teachers should have good competency and proficiency in Standard English
	Curriculum knowledge	teachers should know and use the language curriculum well
	Research	Teachers should participate in and carry out language and literacy related research with particular relevance to the creole context

Notes:
English is referred to as the official language, the target language
Creole is also referred to as the mother-tongue, the first language

Appendix C: Grammaticality Judgement Task Items

7. My friend love mangoes. *
8. We love our school. *[DISTRACTOR ITEM]*
9. He climb the tree yesterday. *
10. The boys run to school.
11. My friend sick today. *
12. He is eating him dinner. *
13. I ate bread this morning.
14. My house is clean.
15. Him gone to him house. *
16. She sell fruits on the street. *
17. She ate her breakfast.
18. Mommy buy a dress yesterday. *
19. I live in Browns Town. *[DISTRACTOR ITEM]*
20. The banana chips salty. *
21. We eat chicken on Sundays.
22. I go to church yesterday. *
23. The apple is red.
24. Them love to play cricket. *
25. He run very fast. *
26. She travel to work on the bus. *
27. Our teacher happy this morning. *
28. The boy is eating a lollipop.

Appendix D: Language & Literacy Environment Survey

Note: this document presents the questions included the survey which was administered online via Qualtrics.

This study celebrates the vibrant language of all Jamaicans and will help the researcher understands the how your child uses Standard English and Patois (patwa) at home. Please complete the questions below. If a section does not apply (e.g., your child has no siblings) you do not need to complete that section.

Please be as honest as possible in your responses. All your responses will be kept private and confidential (only seen by the researcher).

Questions to Mother:

1. **What language(s) do you speak with your child?**

1. English never, Patwa always	2. English not often, Patwa usually	3. English 50% Patwa 50%	4. English usually, Patwa not often	5. English almost always Patwa almost never

2. **What language(s) does your child speak with you?**

1. English never, Patwa always	2. English not often, Patwa usually	3. English 50% Patwa 50%	4. English usually, Patwa not often	5. English almost always Patwa almost never

3. **Place a tick beside the highest level of education you have completed**

Primary school: ____
Secondary school: ____
College/trade school: ____
Bachelor's degree: ____
Master's Degree: ____
Doctoral Degree (PhD) ____

Questions to Father:

4. **What language(s) do you speak with your child?**

1. English never, Patwa always	2. English not often, Patwa usually	3. English 50% Patwa 50%	4. English usually, Patwa not often	5. English almost always Patwa almost never

5. **What language(s) does your child speak with you?**

1. English never, Patwa always	2. English not often, Patwa usually	3. English 50% Patwa 50%	4. English usually, Patwa not often	5. English almost always Patwa almost never

6. **Place a tick beside the highest level of education you have completed**

Primary school: ____
Secondary school: ____
College/trade school: ____
Bachelor's degree: ____
Master's Degree: ____
Doctoral Degree (PhD) ____

Questions about other adults in the home:

(Note: Online survey adapted to the number of adults in the home)

7. Are there other adults in the home? (For example, a grandmother)

   Yes ____ No____

   b. If yes, how many? _____
   c. Is any of these relatives a primary caregiver for your child?

8. If yes, what language(s) does the primary caregiver speak with your child?

1. English never, Patwa always	2. English not often, Patwa usually	3. English 50% Patwa 50%	4. English usually, Patwa not often	5. English almost always Patwa almost never

9. If applicable, what language does your child speak with the adult relative(s) in the home?

1. English never, Patwa always	2. English not often, Patwa usually	3. English 50% Patwa 50%	4. English usually, Patwa not often	5. English almost always Patwa almost never

Questions about brothers and sisters in the home:
(Note: Online survey adapted to the number of siblings)

10. Does your child have brothers or sisters?

    Yes ___. No_____

    If yes, how many brothers and sisters? _____

11. What language does sibling (brother or sister) 1 speak with your child?

1. English never, Patwa always	2. English not often, Patwa usually	3. English 50% Patwa 50%	4. English usually, Patwa not often	5. English almost always Patwa almost never

12. What language does your child speak with sibling 1?

1. English never, Patwa always	2. English not often, Patwa usually	3. English 50% Patwa 50%	4. English usually, Patwa not often	5. English almost always Patwa almost never

13. What language does sibling (brother or sister) 2 speak with your child?

1. English never, Patwa always	2. English not often, Patwa usually	3. English 50% Patwa 50%	4. English usually, Patwa not often	5. English almost always Patwa almost never

14. What language does your child speak with sibling 2?

1. English never, Patwa always	2. English not often, Patwa usually	3. English 50% Patwa 50%	4. English usually, Patwa not often	5. English almost always Patwa almost never

15. What language does your child speak when playing with friends?

1. English never, Patwa always	2. English not often, Patwa usually	3. English 50% Patwa 50%	4. English usually, Patwa not often	5. English almost always Patwa almost never

Literacy at Home

The following questions relate to your reading/writing activities. Please select a number from 1 to 5 to indicate how frequently you engage in the following activities (1- Never; 2- Rarely; 3- Sometimes; 4- Often; 5- Very often).

S. No	Item	Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Very Often 5
1	Our family buys and reads the local newspaper					
2	My child sees me writing/typing					
3	My child sees me reading non-work related things, for pleasure					
4	My child sees me playing word games, crossword etc.					
5	I enjoy talking about books related to various topics with friends and family members.					
7	I personally enjoy reading					
	My child attends religious activities for children (e.g. Sunday school)					

The following questions relate to your interaction with your child. Please select a number from 1 to 5 to indicate how frequently you have done the following activities with your child (1- Never; 2- Rarely; 3- Sometimes; 4- Often; 5- Very often).

S. No	Item	Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Very Often 5
1	I help my child with language arts homework					
2	I read with my child (e.g. religious texts, storybooks)					

3	I point out to words in magazines/newspapers					
4	I encourage my child to read product labels, street signs and signboards					
7	When we read, I ask my child to point out to different letters/numbers printed in the book					
8	I play reading or writing- related games with my child					
9	I engage in creative writing activities (e.g. writing stories and poems) with my child					
10	I help my child to practice writing skills (e.g. spelling, handwriting)					
11	I speak to my child about what happened during the day					

The following statements relate to your beliefs about your child's reading and writing activities at home. Please select a number from 1 to 5 to indicate how much you agree with these statements (1- Definitely disagree; 2- Disagree; 3- Not sure; 4- Agree; 5- Definitely agree).

S. No	Item	Definitely disagree 1	Disagree 2	Not Sure 3	Agree 4	Definitely agree 5
1	Parents can help their child to read and write words in addition to what is taught in school					
3	Most children do well at reading words in school because their parent teaches them to read words at home					
4	Parents have the responsibility to teach reading and writing skills to their child					

5	Most parents should add to the literacy skills their child learns at school by teaching their child literacy skills at home
7	Parents should develop the child's confidence and interest in putting ideas on paper in whatever form they can (drawing writing etc.)
9	I think that it is important to develop a broad interest in reading and writing in my child

Do you have any additional comments?

Thank you!

Appendix E: Inferential Analyses (Excluding Eight Participants)

Table 1

Comparison of language groups on WISC-IV

	Jamaican Creole		English		*t*(68)	p	Cohen's *d*
	M	SD	M	SD			
WISC-IV	14.14	4.22	23.10	5.41	-7.38	< .001	-1.80

Table 2

Comparison of language groups on total WASI

	Jamaican Creole		English		*t*(60)	p	Cohen's *d*
	M	SD	M	SD			
WASI	11.19	3.37	12.22	3.81	-8.54	.26	-.28

Table 3

Comparison of language groups on total Written Expression Scores

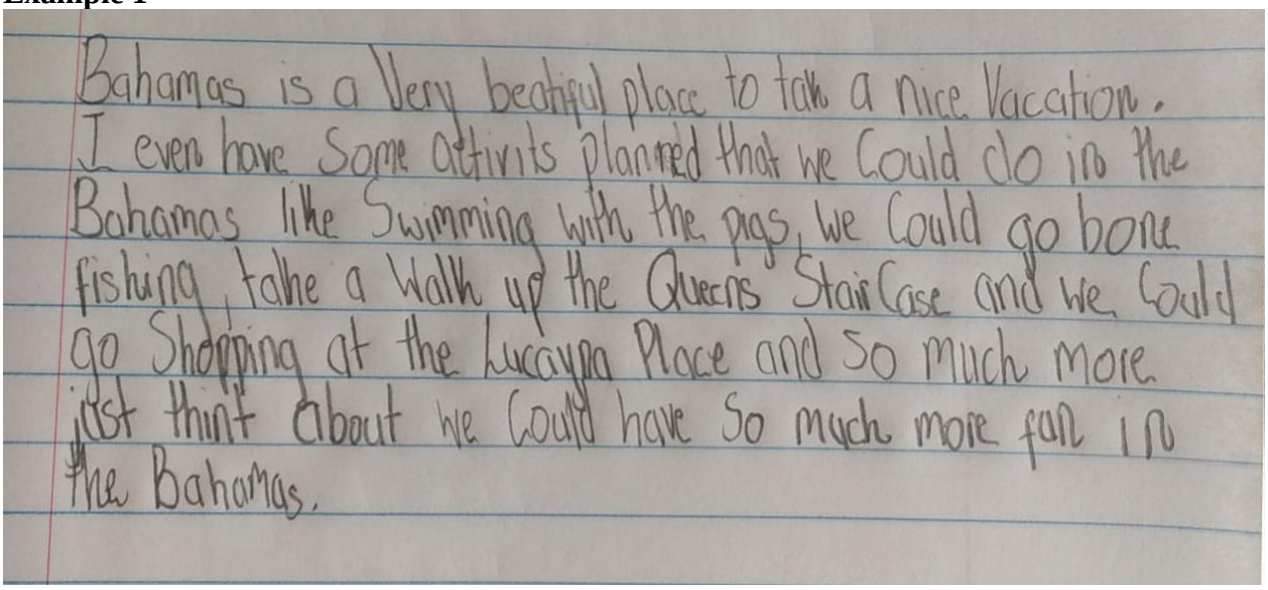
	Jamaican Creole		English		*t*(80)	p	Cohen's *d*
	M	SD	M	SD			
WAM	12.60	2.65	17.86	3.28	-7.79	< .001	-1.74

Appendix F: Writing Analysis Measure Rubric

Writing Assessment Measure (WAM)		
 TIME GUIDELINE Prompt 1: 15 minutes Prompt 2: 15 minutes	 DISCONTINUE RULE Stop the child after 15 minutes of writing	
Elements and Criteria		Circle Score
Handwriting Writing is consistent, fluent and shows excellent overall presentation. ~~and cursive.~~ Cursive is no longer a requirement in Jamaican schools so no marks will be deducted. Clear, neat and legible ~~and may show evidence of joining handwriting~~ Handwriting may vary in shape and size and is beginning to develop consistency. Handwriting is indecipherable or difficult to read.		4 3 2 1
Spelling Evidence of correct spelling of complex words containing prefixes/suffixes or irregular words e.g. souvenir, destruction, and conscious. Key here is complex words. To attain this score, evidence of complex words must be seen in the text. Attempts to spell some complex or polysyllabic words using visual or phonetic strategies, e.g 'safariye' for safari, 'adventerous' for adventurous. If you observe the student using strategies to spell these complex words then they can get this score. Spells the majority of high frequency common words correctly e.g. inside, because, while. Spells some common monosyllabic words correctly (e.g. mum, cat, bird). Uses phonic strategies to attempt to spell high frequency common words e.g. 'grat' for great, 'fhun' for fun.		4 3 2 1
Punctuation Uses a range of punctuation to clarify structure and create effect (e.g. speech marks, dashes, brackets, apostrophes, commas to demarcate sentences). Secure use of full stops and capital letters. Uses punctuation in addition to capital letters and full stops, the majority are used correctly (e.g. question marks, exclamations marks, commas in lists. A 3 should not be given unless in addition to the capital letters and full stops being used correctly, they also use at least some other form of punctuation correctly Evidence of accurate use of capital letters and full stops, however few there are. (e.g. Sentence finishes with a full stop and next sentence begins with a capital letter) Shows awareness of how full stops are used in writing. No evidence of awareness of how punctuation is used in writing. (see Example 1).		4 3 2 1 0
Sentence Structure and Grammar Secure control of complex sentences. Understands how clauses can be manipulated for effect. Able to use conditional and passive voice (e.g. having watched him eat a dog biscuit, she felt sick) Beginning to write extended sentences including subordinators (e.g. if, so, while, when, after). The basic grammatical structure of sentences usually correct (e.g. usually consistent and correct use of tenses and nouns and verbs agree). Beginning to use other conjunctions to create compound sentences (e.g. because, but, so, then) and may be using multiple clauses (still mixing up tenses). Writes simple sentences which include the conjunction 'and'. Note: The key issue here was the complexity of the sentence— a very long sentence is not necessarily complex. In cases where grammar is usually correct but the student makes one or two grammatical errors…		4 3 2 1
Vocabulary Demonstrates use of well-chosen vivid & powerful vocabulary to create effect (e.g. verbs, adjectives, adverbs) Varied use of adjectives, verbs and specific nouns (e.g. delicious for nice/sauntered for went/poodle for dog) Some selection of interesting and varied verbs e.g. jumped, compare, guess Uses simple vocabulary, appropriate to content. Writing is composed of simple nouns and verbs e.g. look, went, go, play, see		4 3 2 1

Organisation and Overall Structure Paragraphs are well organised, based on themes and provides a cohesive text for the reader (e.g. paragraphs, subheadings, logically organised events). Uses paragraphs to organise writing, showing an identifiable structure. May be short sections. Themes are expanded upon and linked together in a series of sentences. Communicates meaning but may 'flit' from idea to idea and any themes that are expanded are done so in one sentence.	4 3 2 1
Ideas Ideas are creative and interesting in a way that engages the reader. Uses a range of strategies and techniques such as asides, comment, observation, anticipation, suspense, tension. Ideas are imaginative and varied evidence of descriptive detail about characters, settings, feelings, emotions & actions. Ideas are developed to by adding detail (e.g. is beginning to provide additional information or description beyond a simple list. Produces short sections of ideas which may be repetitive and limited in nature. Note: The distinction between 1 and 2 is the development of the main idea and adding to that. For example, in example 2has the idea of Bahamas and adds a lot more things but in example 1, the participant who got a 1 only had 1 sentence but it was an idea. So	4 3 2 1

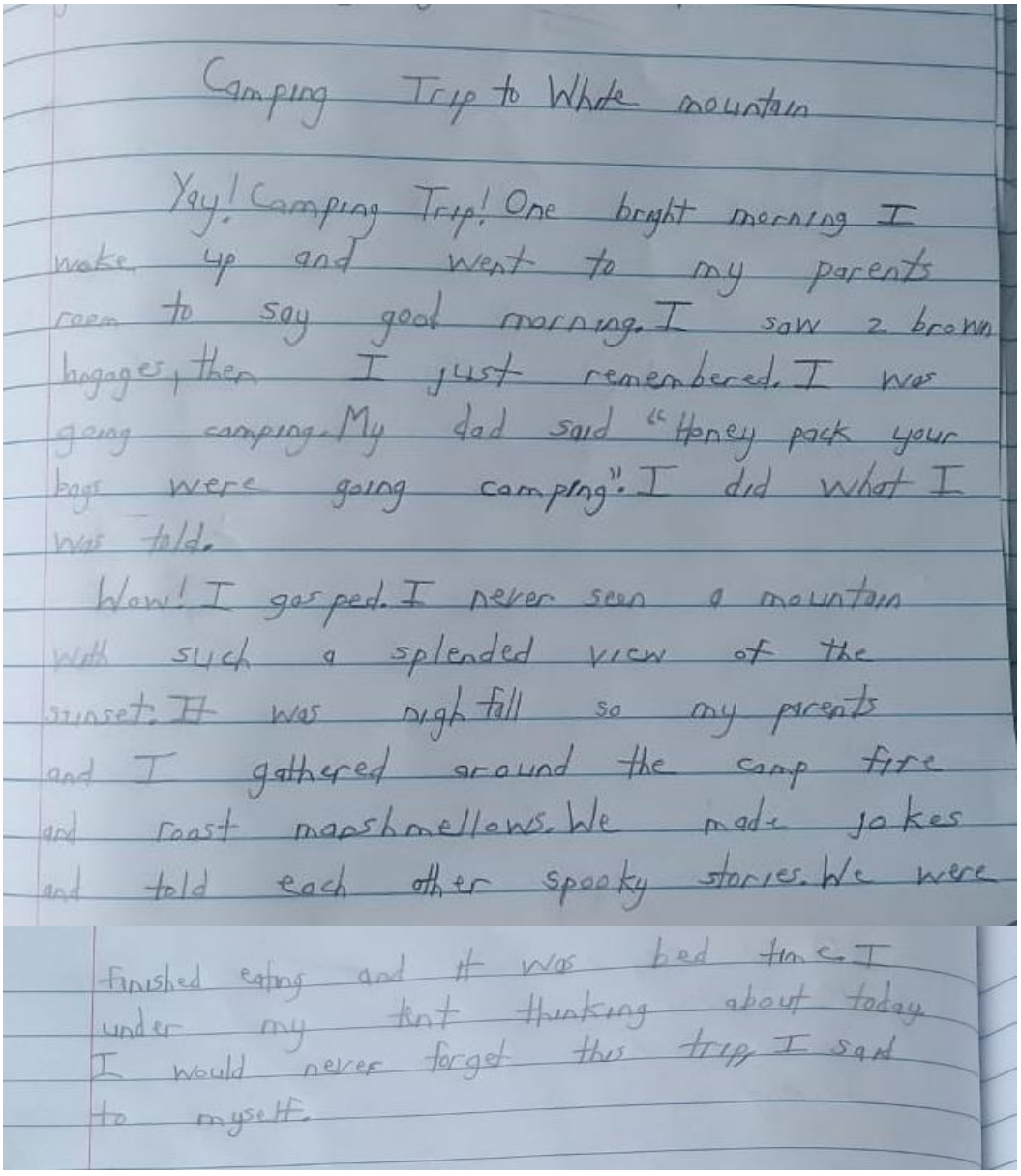
Example 1



Skill	Comments	Score
Handwriting	Consistent and fluent handwriting- somewhat squeezed together.	3
Spelling	Most high frequency words spelled correctly.	2
Punctuation	Does not show mastery of capital letter usage but is aware of how full stops are used.	1
Sentence Structure & Grammar	The student is beginning to use other conjunctions and there is the evidence of the use of more than one clause.	2
Vocabulary	Outside of proper nouns, there is evidence that the student is starting to use some variation in verbs (beyond the basic).	2

Organization	The theme of visiting the island is expanded in a series sentences. However, no paragraphing is used to add structure and organization of ideas.	2
Ideas	The idea of visiting the Bahamas is developed by adding details of activities unique to the Bahamas. Still somewhat list-like but not flitting from idea to idea. No description of activities, feelings, or characters however	2

Example 2



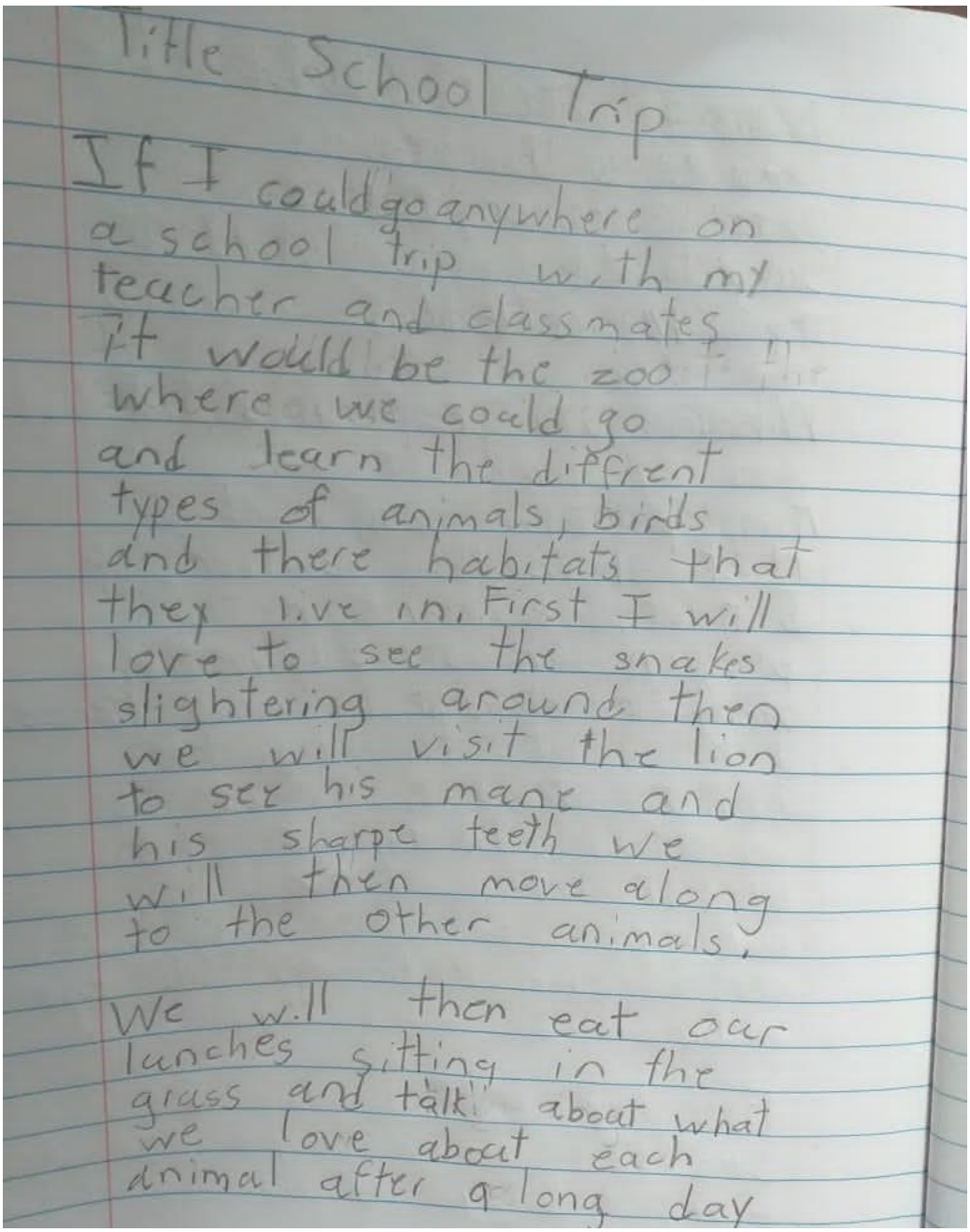
Camping Trip to White mountain

Yay! Camping Trip! One bright morning I wake up and went to my parents room to say good morning. I saw 2 brown bagges, then I just remembered. I was going camping. My dad said "Honey pack your bags were going camping". I did what I was told.

Wow! I gasped. I never seen a mountain with such a splended view of the sunset. It was nigh fall so my parents and I gathered around the camp fire and roast mashmellows. We made jokes and told each other spooky stories. We were finished eating and it was bed time. I under my tint thinking about today I would never forget this trip, I said to myself.

Skill	Comments	Score
Handwriting	handwriting clear enough, neat and legible	3
Spelling	attempts complex and polysyllabic words using phonetic strategies (e.g. ‘splended’, ‘marshmellows’	3
Punctuation	secure use of full stops and capitals pus accurate use of exclamations and quotation marks.	4
Sentence Structure & Grammar	Started to use more complex sentences and additional conjunctions such as ‘then’. There were a couple of instances of grammatical errors (e.g., ‘one bright morning I wake up’, ‘I never seen’). As the grammar was *generally/usually* correct, the participant was still given a 3	3
Vocabulary	variety in word usage; luggage (spelled wrong) instead of bags, splendid, marshmallow, spooky, and gathered.	3
Organization	Paragraphs are used to organize the writing and show the progression of themes and a logical flow.	4
Ideas	Interesting, describes other participants such as parents, talks about feelings and emotions and includes reflective thoughts/asides.	4

Example 3



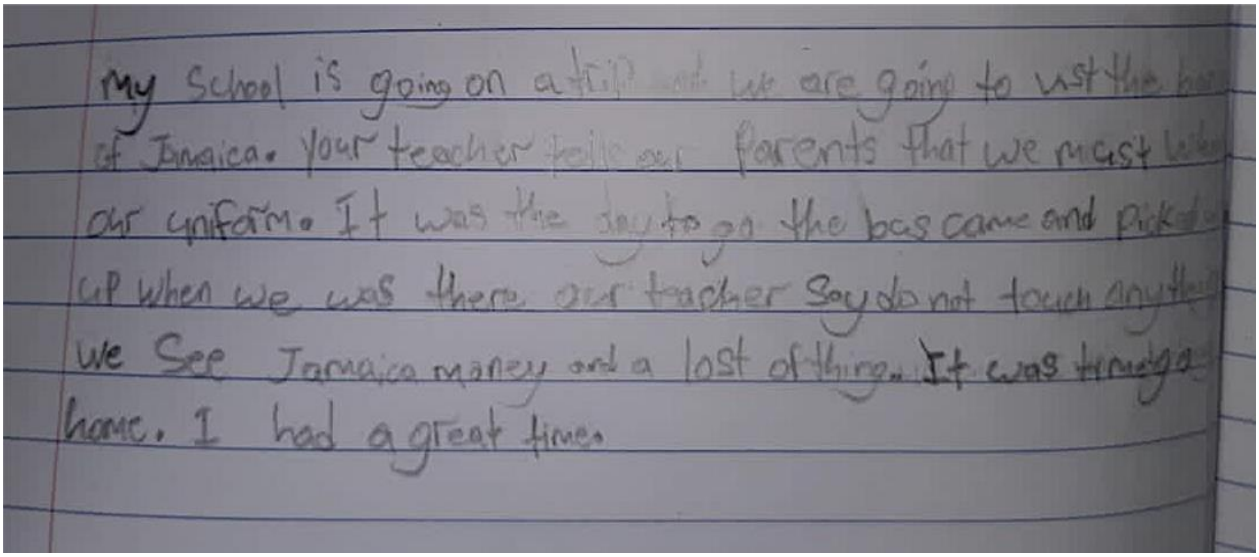
Title School Trip

If I could go anywhere on a school trip with my teacher and classmates it would be the zoo where we could go and learn the different types of animals, birds and there habitats that they live in. First I will love to see the snakes slightering around then we will visit the lion to see his mane and his sharpe teeth we will then move along to the other animals.

We will then eat our lunches sitting in the grass and talk about what we love about each animal after a long day at the zoo we will return home and tell our parents about what we saw and learn.

Skill	Comments	Score
Handwriting	Clear enough, legible	3
Spelling	Makes attempts at spelling polysyllabic words – 'slightering' for slithering, habitat	3
Punctuation	Secure use of full stops and capital letters	2
Sentence Structure & Grammar	Some evidence of tense mixing (not a lot) Evidence of the use of conjunctions beyond 'and' as well as subordinators	3
Vocabulary	Evidence of varied of vocabulary such as verbs (e.g., slither) and specific nouns (e.g., habitat, Lions' mane).	3
Organization	Paragraphs are used to organize the text and create a logical flow	3
Ideas	Ideas have gone beyond listing to describing activities. Other characters (e.g. parents, teachers, classmates) and emotions are also included in descriptions.	3

Example 4

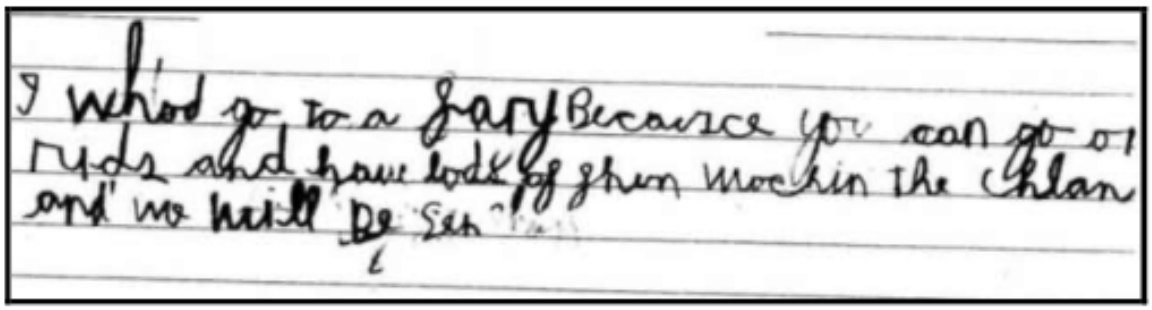


Skill	Comments	Score
Handwriting	Not very clear or consistent	2
Spelling	Common monosyllabic words spelled correctly.	1
Punctuation	Uses full stops and capitals but nothing more.	2
Sentence Structure & Grammar	Tense issues, subject-verb agreement issues, sentences simple	1
Vocabulary	Simple vocabulary, appropriate to the text.	1

Organization	Jumps from idea to idea and none is developing any.	1
Ideas	The story starts with an idea (going to the bank of Jamaica), but the student does not really develop the idea- limited.	1

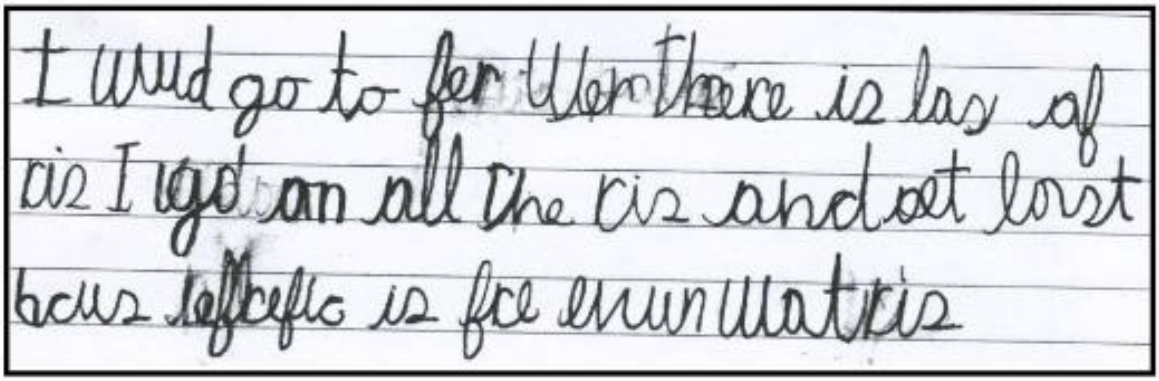
Scoring examples from Dunsmuir et al (2015)

EXAMPLE 1



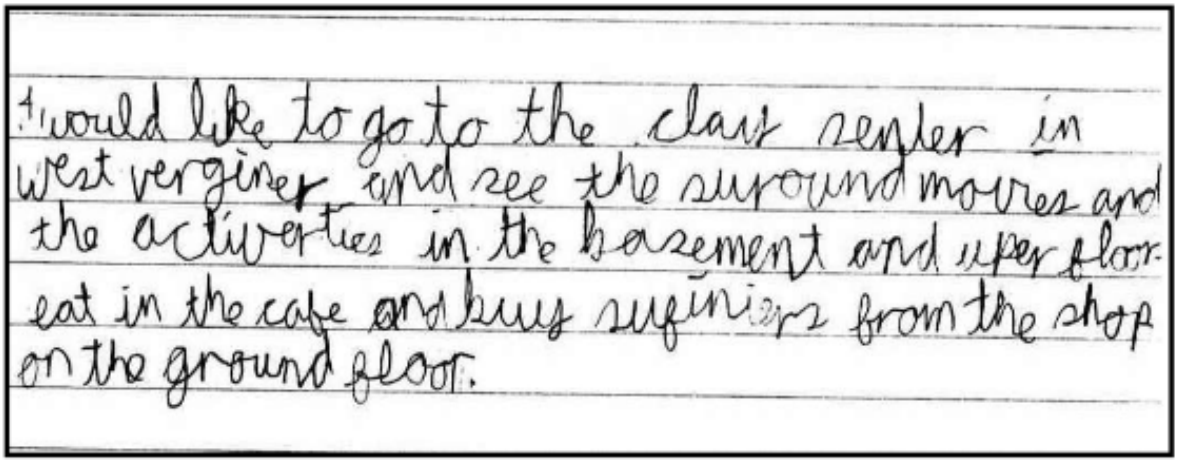
Element	Score	Description
Handwriting	1	The handwriting is difficult to read – is still too inconsistent to warrant a 2 – e.g. h/w
Spelling	1	Spells some common high frequency words correctly (go, to, you, can, and) and uses phonic strategies to attempt others (*rids* for rides/*fhun* for fun) Does not gain a 2 due to *becausce*.
Punctuation	0	No punctuation used
Sentence structure and Grammar	2	Use of 'because' as a conjunction as well as 'and' and use of a multiple clause *'....loads of fun watching the children.....'*
Vocabulary	1	Verbs used are simple – go/have/be – not *interesting* or *varied*
Organisation & planning	1	Themes have been expanded in one sentence rather than being linked in a series of sentences.
Ideas	1	The idea of going to a fair to go on rides and watching other children is rather limited in the short section of writing completed. Lack of writing also indicates limited ideas.
TOTAL	**7**	

EXAMPLE 2



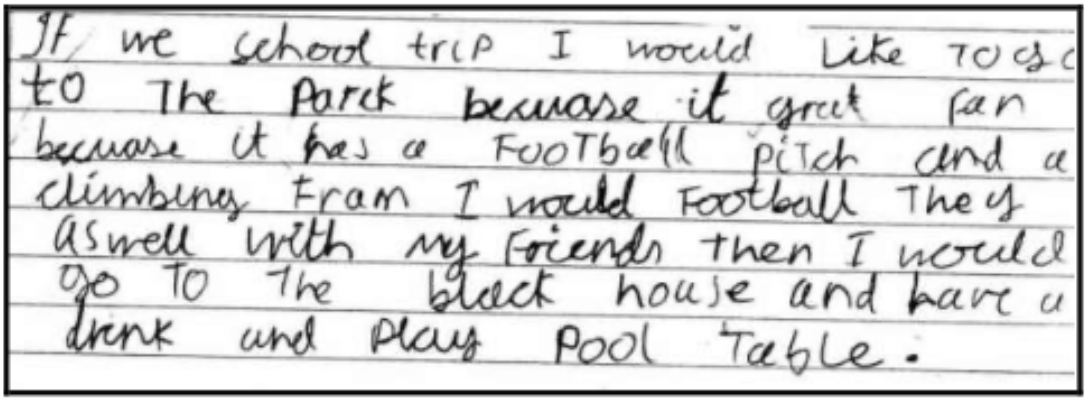
Element	Score	Description
Handwriting	1	Handwriting is difficult to read due to size and letters too close together. Final word is indecipherable as is the second word on the last line.
Spelling	1	Spells some common monosyllabic words correctly (go, to, there, all) Uses phonic strategies to attempt to spell high frequency common words (ris for rides, los for lots)
Punctuation	0	Full stops are not used
Sentence structure and Grammar	1	Uses conjunction *and* to join two simple sentences – may be using because as a conjunction, but writing is difficult to decipher making meaning difficult to form and so mark not given.
Vocabulary	1	Vocabulary is appropriate to content – uses simple verbs – go/get nouns – fair/rides. Again, writing is difficult to decipher and so cannot give extra marks for last line.
Organisation & planning	0	Has difficulty communicating meaning within a sentence – flits from idea to idea but difficult to understand what is being communicated.
Ideas	0	Idea about going to a fair is limited emphasised by the lack of writing. Ideas deemed too short to warrant a score of 1.
TOTAL	**4**	

EXAMPLE 3


I would like to go to the clay zenter in west vergine and see the surround movies and the activerties in the basement and uper floor. eat in the cafe and buy sufiniers from the shop on the ground floor.

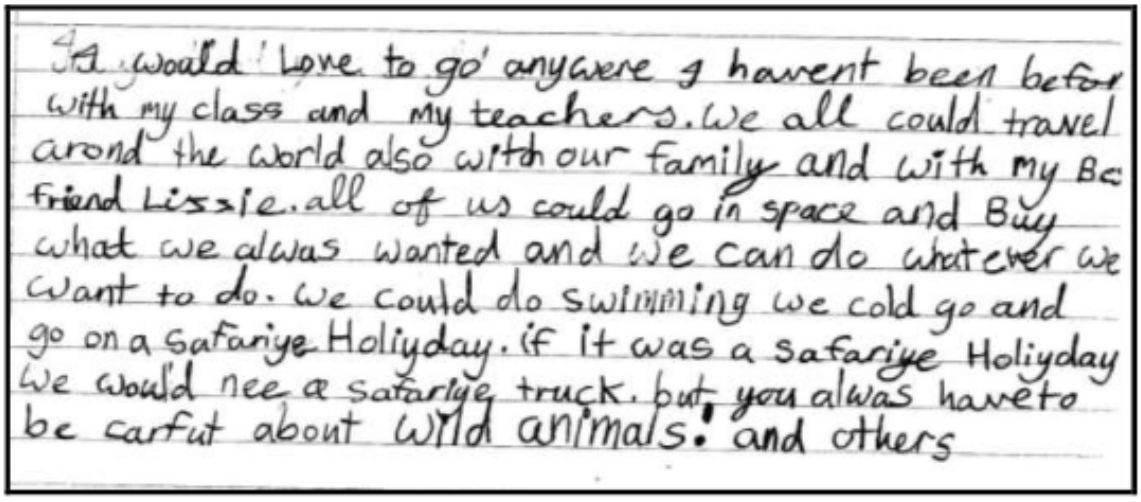
Element	Score	Reason
Handwriting	2	Handwriting varies in shape and size (e.g. 'activiteries'), shows evidence of cursive handwriting but isn't clear or neat enough to warrant a '3'.
Spelling	3	Has attempted to spell some complex word using phonemic strategies (e.g. sufiniers).
Punctuation	1	Shows evidence of how full stops are used in sentences.
Sentence Structure and Grammar	1	Writes one sentence and includes the conjunction 'and'.
Vocabulary	2	Some selection of interesting nouns e.g. basement, souvenirs, surround movies.
Organisation and Planning	1	Flits from idea to idea e.g. surround movies to activities in the basement to upper floor cake shop.
Ideas	1	Ideas are limited, very little detail added.
Total Score	**11**	

EXAMPLE 4


If we school trip I would like to go
to The Park because it grat fan
because it has a Footbell pitch and a
climbing Fram I would Football They
aswell with my Foiends then I would
go to The black house and have a
drink and Play Pool Table.

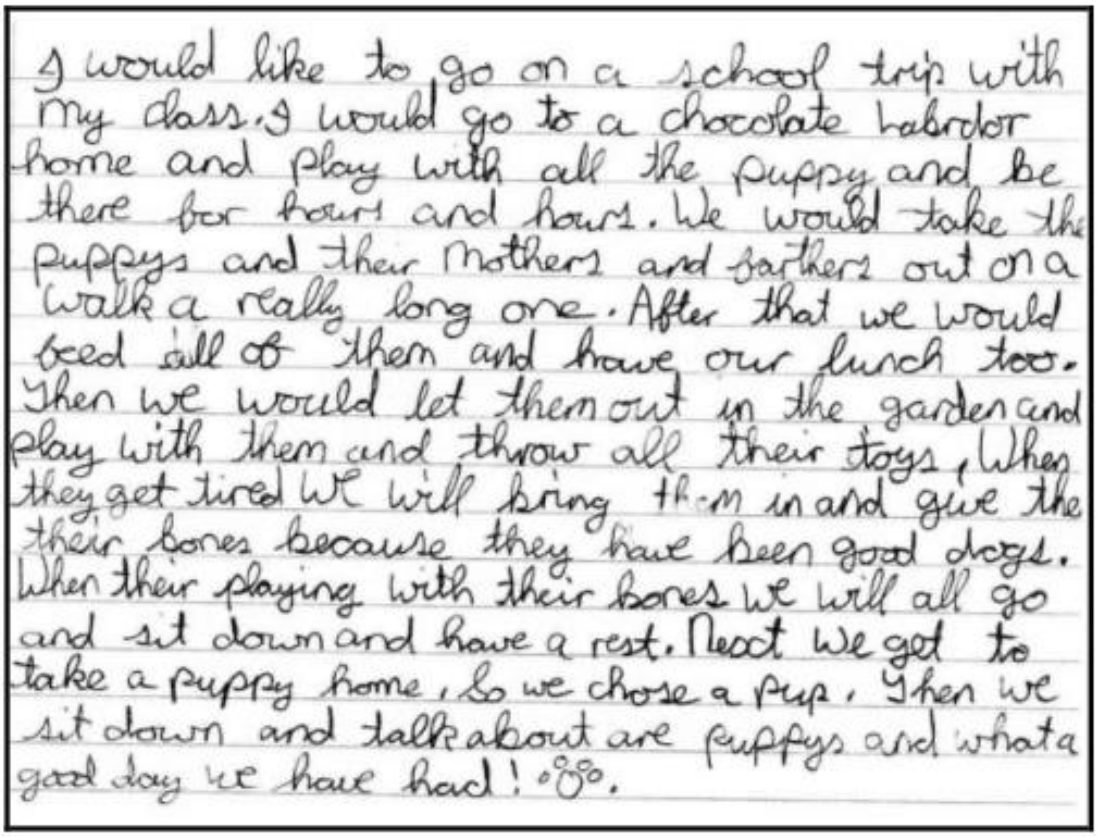
Element	Score	Reason
Handwriting	2	Handwriting varies in shape and size e.g. the word 'go' and l's in football.
Spelling	2	Spells the majority of high frequency words correctly e.g. would, friends, table, climbing, drink.
Punctuation	1	Shows awareness of how full stops are used.
Sentence Structure and Grammar	2	Uses 'because' , 'then I would' as conjunctions.
Vocabulary	1	Vocabulary is appropriate for content i.e. football pitch, climbing frame, play, go.
Organisation and Planning	2	Theme of going to the park was expanded e.g. he explained why he would go to the park ('*it grat fun*'), what is there (*climbing fram and football pitch*') and what he would do ('football they aswell with my friends') and then he goes to the '*black house*'.
Ideas	2	Ideas are developed by adding detail e.g. goes '*to the black house and have a drink and play pool table*'.
Total Score	**12**	

EXAMPLE 5



Element	Score	Reason
Handwriting	3	Writing is clear, neat and legible but is not cursive
Spelling	3	Attempts to spell some complex or polysyllabic words using visual or phonetic strategies "safariye" No evidence of spelling complex words correctly and Spells the majority of high frequency common words correctly "could" "friend"
Punctuation	1	Shows awareness of how full stops are used in writing. However capital letters are not always followed by full stop
Sentence Structure and Grammar	3	Beginning to write extended sentences including subordinators "If it was a safariye . . ." uses other conjunctions including "and" to create compound sentences "we all could travel I the world also with our families"
Vocabulary	2	Some use of interesting and varied words "wild animals" "safariye holiyday"
Organisation and Planning	2	Themes are expanded upon and linked together in a series of sentences. "I would like to go anywhere I haven't been before with my class and my teachers", however no evidence of paragraphs being used
Ideas	1	Produces short sections of ideas which may be repetitive and limited in nature. ?
Total Score	**15**	

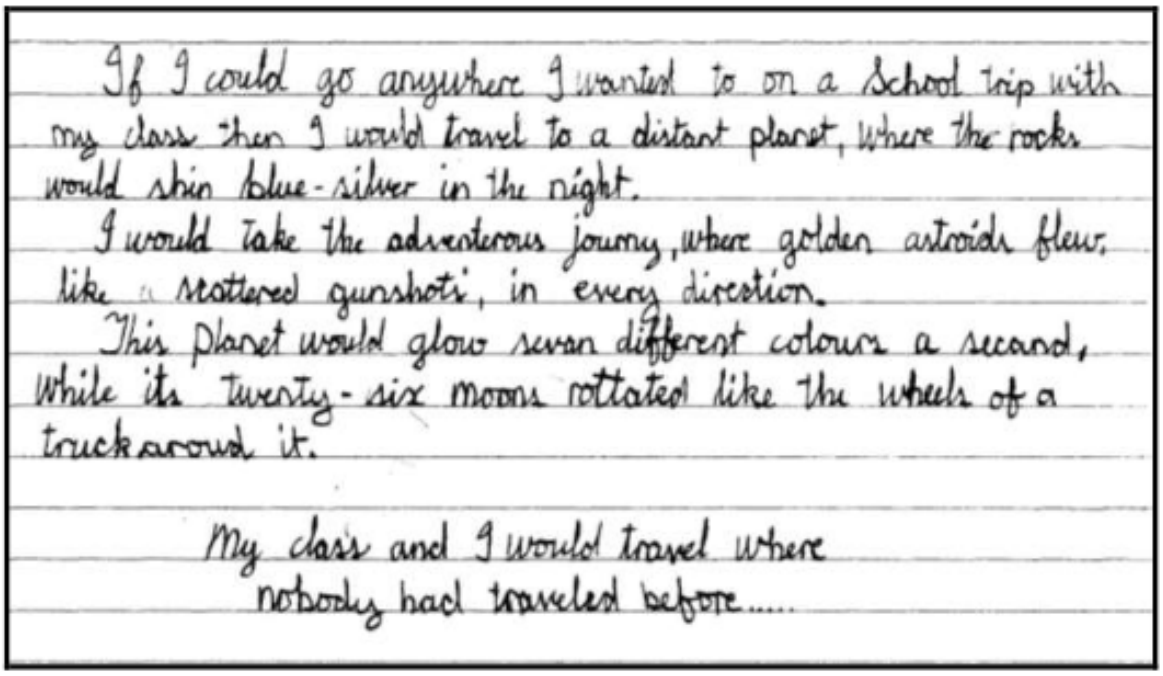
EXAMPLE 6



I would like to go on a school trip with my class. I would go to a chocolate labrdor home and play with all the puppy and be there for hours and hours. We would take the puppys and their mothers and fathers out on a walk a really long one. After that we would feed all of them and have our lunch too. Then we would let them out in the garden and play with them and throw all their toys, When they get tired We will bring th-m in and give the their bones because they have been good dogs. When their playing with their bones we will all go and sit down and have a rest. Next We get to take a puppy home, So we chose a pup. Then we sit down and talk about are puppys and what a good day we have had! °ꝏ.

Element	Score	Reason
Handwriting	4	Writing is cursive and consistent, it is clear and legible
Spelling	3	Attempts to spell some complex or polysyllabic words using visual or phonetic strategies,– "Labrdor", common polysyllabic words spelt correctly "chocolate" "because" – No evidence of spelling complex words correctly and Spells the majority of high frequency common words correctly "would"
Punctuation	3	Uses capital letters and full stops correctly and accurately. In addition an exclamation mark is used correctly. However a rage of punctuation is not used.
Sentence Structure and Grammar	3	Beginning to write extended sentences including subordinators "After", "When", "Next", however clauses are not being manipulated to produce effects
Vocabulary	1	Uses simple vocabulary, appropriate to content. Repetition of vocabulary – not varied
Organisation and Planning	2	Themes are expanded upon and linked together in a series of sentences. There is no evidence of paragraphs being used
Ideas	2	Ideas are developed to by adding detail "I would go to a chocolate labrdor home and play with all the puppys and be there for hours and hours"
Total Score	18	

EXAMPLE 8



If I could go anywhere I wanted to on a School trip with my class then I would travel to a distant planet, where the rocks would shin blue-silver in the night.

I would take the adventerous journy, where golden astroids flew like a scattered gunshot, in every direction.

This planet would glow seven different colours a second, While its twenty-six moons rottated like the wheels of a truck around it.

My class and I would travel where nobody had traveled before.....

Element	Score	Description
Handwriting	4	The writing is consistent and cursive. It appears that the writer is able to write words fluently.
Spelling	4	This writer demonstrates that he/she is able to spell complex and irregular words. E.g. different, direction, asteroids. The fact that rotated is spelt incorrectly would not prevent the writer from scoring a 4. This attempt demonstrates knowledge of spelling patterns.
Punctuation	4	Commas are used correctly to demarcate sentences, a hyphen is also used correctly blue-silver and …… is used at the end to create effect.
Sentence structure and Grammar	4	Sentences are made up of several clauses which are joined using a range of appropriate vocabulary and punctuation to create complex sentences which make sense.
Vocabulary	4	A range of well-chosen vocabulary is eloquently used to create mood and effect. e.g. scattered, rotated used as similes.
Organisation & planning	3	Paragraphs are used to structure writing. This piece did not score a 4 because paragraphs are not organised according to identifiable themes.
Ideas	4	Ideas are imaginative and creative and presented to in a way so that the reader is immediately engaged. Each section builds on the previous idea and the writer makes incorporates suspense into the piece.
TOTAL	**27**	

Appendix G: Interview Schedule

Researcher Notes:

1. *CONSENT- request oral consent*
2. *RECORD*

Introductory questions

1. How long have you been teaching at the primary school level?
2. Could you tell me three factors that led you into a career in teaching at the primary level?

Teacher Approach

1. What kind of activities are most effective for improving writing among students?
2. Could you give a few examples of an activities that you use to teach students writing?
3. If you were the headteacher/ had all the resources you needed and could make any changes to writing and literacy instruction, what changes would you make?
4. How much time is spent on writing weekly?
5. Do you think more time needs to be allotted for writing in the class timetable in order to meet the curriculum?
6. How do you incorporate writing in other subjects?

Learner Challenges

1. What in your opinion is the main reason for students not being strong writers?
2. Writing consists of various skills, for example spelling, organizing ideas, vocabulary, grammar and more. Could you tell me which skills you think are more challenging for your students who **are more dominant in patois?**
    a. Why do you think this is the case with these learners?
3. What challenges do you have as a teacher in teaching writing to these learners who are **more dominant in patois**?

Teacher Education

1. What type of qualification did you pursue for teaching?
2. Do you feel that your teaching degree prepared adequately to teach writing?
3. Were there any writing courses in your program? If so, how many? could you tell me about the nature of the program, what was required?
4. What recommendations for change would you make to teacher training programs in the area of teaching writing?

Language Usage and Attitudes

1. There is a lot of debate about using Patois in education. What are you views on this?
2. In what classroom situations are you more likely to use Patois? And why?
3. The Ministry of Education talks about ‘transitional bilingualism’ in the nation’s language policy and curriculum. What is your understanding of this concept?
4. Could you share an example of how this concept (explain concept if they do not understand) can be used in teaching writing?

Teacher ability

1. On a scale of 1-10 how comfortable are you with giving the vote of thanks at a school function?
2. On a scale of 1-10 how comfortable would you be with writing the vote of thanks to be read by someone else at a school function?
3. How confident are you in your own writing skills?

Appendix H: Exploring Parametric Test Assumptions

The two parametric tests that were carried out in the data were the independent samples t-test and correlation. As parametric tests, these analyses require that specific assumptions are met. The independent t-test assumptions include interval scale data (continuous data), that data be approximately normally distributed, homogeneity of variance across groups, and independence of observations. Similarly, the Pearson's correlation requires approximately normally disturbed data and continuous data. In the case that these assumptions are not met, a non-parametric test was used. Each assumption is explored in this appendix in line with relevant data.

Interval (Continuous) Scale Data

All outcome measures were continuous data. The WAM was measured on two levels, with overall writing scores measured on a continuous scale and ratings for each writing skill (e.g., vocabulary and punctuation) were ordinal in nature. The non-parametric chi-square test was therefore used to explore the ordinal rating data.

Approximately Normally Distributed Data

Field (2016) points out that while visual checks often suffice for large samples when checking that data meet the assumption of normally distributed data, exploring skewness and kurtosis values for prove more useful and insightful for smaller samples. As the study sample was relatively small, numeric checks of the data for each group were carried out by means of exploring skewness and kurtosis (see Table 1). Skewness and Kurtosis was explored by dividing each value by its respective standard error then compared against the value that would be expected (1.96) if the skewness and kurtosis were not statistically significantly different from zero at $p < .05$. (Field, 2016). Resulting values that were larger than 1.96 indicated significant skewness or kurtosis.

Additionally, the assumption of normality was explored through the Shapiro-Wilk test, which when compared to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality, has been found to be a stricter and more sensitive measure (Field, 2009). The results from the Shapiro-Wilk test for each variable are presented in Table 2. Within this section, the normality outcomes for each variable

as well as changes made to the data in terms of outliers are presented in turn starting with the WAM- the core measure of the study.

Table 1

Skewness and Kurtosis values of quantitative measures

		Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
WAM	JamC	12.52	2.57	-.002 (.37)	-.832 (.72)
	SJE	17.85	3.25	-.377 (.34)	.127 (.67)
WASI	JamC	11.52	3.44	-.188 (.42)	-1.171 (.82)
	SJE	12.22	3.81	.009 (.39)	.660 (.77)
WISC-IV	JamC	14.26	4.67	.260 (.40)	-.141 (.78)
	SJE	22.84	5.61	-.264 (.36)	-.787 (.71)
GJT	JamC	13.77	2.00	.415 (.39)	-.879(.77)
	SJE	17.17	2.11	-.985 (.35)*	.724 (.70)
Home literacy environment		79.39	11.67	.15 (.26)	-.08 (.08)
Home language environment		3.02	.72	-.38 (.26)	-.00 (.51)

Note: Standard error included in parentheses.

Table 2

Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality Outcomes for test variables

		Statistic	df	Sig.
WAM	JamC	.96	42	.14
	SJE	.97	48	.19
WASI	JamC	.95	31	.13
	SJE	.98	36	.76
WISC-IV	JamC	.97	35	.45
	SJE	.96	43	.13
GJT	JamC	.93	36	.02*

SJE	.90	45	<.001*
Home literacy environment	.98	86	.15
Home language environment	.96	86	.01*

*Significant at the .05 level

WAM

The WAM data was approximately normally distributed. As seen in Tables 1 and 2 respectively, no skewness and kurtoses values were above 1.96 (when divided by their standard error) and the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality was non-significant, therefore indicating that the assumption of normality of data was not violated. Histograms for each group also appear to be approximately normally distributed (see Figs. 1 and 2)

Data were explored using the SPSS explore function and three outliers were identified in the WAM data: participants 9, 70, and 89, none of which were due to data entry errors. In line with Field's (2009) recommendations for dealing with outliers, each outlier was reassigned the value of the next highest score plus one unit. The descriptive statistics in Table 6.1 reflect these changes.

1. Participant 9: score of 6 changed to the next highest score (8) plus 1 unit = 9
2. Participant 70: score of 27 changed to the next highest score (23) plus 1 unit = 24
3. Participant 89: score of 28 changed to the next highest score (23) plus 1 unit = 24
4. Participant 66: score of 9 changed to the next highest score (10) plus 1 unit = 11

GJT

Skewness and kurtosis values as well as result from the Shapiro-Wilks test of normality showed the GJT scores violated the assumption of normality. Two outliers were identified in the data and scores were found to be significantly and negatively skewed for the English language group. To address the deviation from normality, a log10 transformation was carried out and outliers were reassigned the value of the next highest score plus one unit (Field, 2009). However, none of these options solved the deviation from normality adequately. As a result, only non-parametric tests were used for significance testing with the GJT scores. The changes made to outlier values are presented below:

1. Participant 20 – score of 7 changed to the next highest score (11) plus 1 unit = 12

2. Participant 71 – score of 11 changed to the next highest score (12) plus 1 unit = 13

WISC-IV

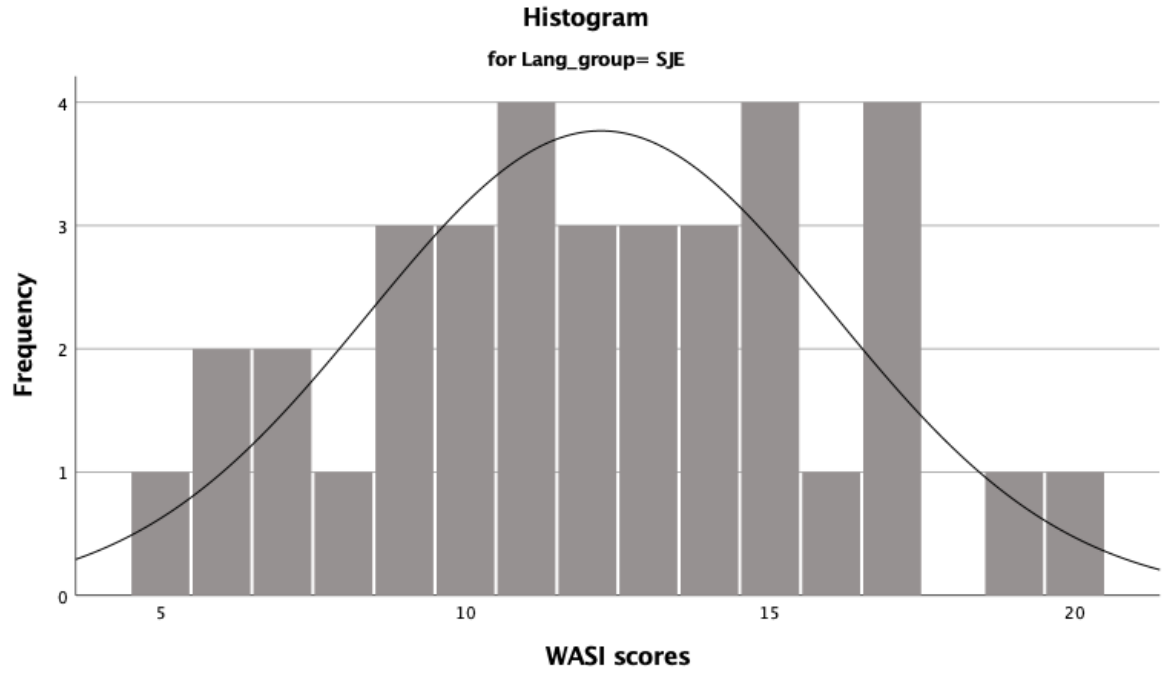
The scores from the WISC-IV were approximately normally distributed as seen in the non-significant Shapiro-Wilk test statistic and skewness and kurtosis values (when divided by their respective standard error values) in Tables 1 and 2 respectively.

WASI

The scores from the WASI were approximately normally distributed as seen in the skewness and kurtosis values (when divided by the respective standard error values) and the non-significant Shapiro-Wilk test statistic. However, when plots were explored, the frequency histogram for the Standard Jamaican English (SJE) group appeared multimodal (See Figure 1). Considering this apparent discrepancy between the numeric (and statistical) measures and the visual checks for normality, non-parametric tests will be used for the WASI.

Figure 1

Frequency distribution of WASI scores for learners with standard Jamaican English as a home language.



Home Literacy Environment

Home literacy environment scores were found to be approximately normally distributed as seen in the non-significant Shapiro-Wilk statistic and the skewness and kurtosis values which when divided by their respective standard error values were not greater than 1.96/2. Changes made to outlier observations to run the correlation test and the updated descriptive statistics were used. Details are detailed below:

Participant 14 score of 55 changed to next highest score (5) plus 1 unit = 59

Participant 58 score of 52 changed to next highest score (5) plus 1 unit = 59

Participant 84 score of 43 changed to next highest score (5) plus 1 unit = 59

Home Language Environment

Home language environment scores were not normally distributed as seen in the significant Shapiro-Wilk test statistic. Only non-parametric tests were carried out on this data.

Homogeneity of Variance

The t-test requires homogeneity of variance across groups. This assumption was explored in the relevant variables (WAM, WISC-IV, WAM) for each language group through the Levene's test. As seen in Table 3, the test statistic was non-significant for all three variables showing that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated in any case.

Table 3

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

		F	Sig.
WAM	Equal variances assumed	.74	.40
WISC-IV	Equal variances assumed	1.96	.17
WASI	Equal variances assumed	.13	.72

Independence of observations

Participants were placed in either of the language groups (i.e. no participant was placed in both language groups) and in this way scores were independent and no repeated measures analyses were carried out.

Appendix I: Interview Codebook

Name	Description
Areas of Challenge	These refer specifically to challenges faced in the composite skills of writing- e.g., vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, expression. It must not be a reason for the challenge (e.g., motivation) but a specific area of challenge
• Capitalization	Capitalization as an issue in writing.
• Expression	What teachers often refer to as 'colourful writing'. This includes the use of figures of speech, idioms, and other phrases to make writing more expressive and interesting.
• Few lines	Students write very little when given writing tasks.
• Grammar & sentence structure	Challenges related to grammar and sentence structure. This includes issues such as subject-verb agreement, parts of speech, tense etc.
• Handwriting	Handwriting as a major issue in writing outcomes
• Ideas & BK	A lack of ideas/ background knowledge as a major challenge for student writing. This does not speak to prior linguistic knowledge (e.g., grammar rules) but rather content related knowledge that would support writing. E.g., knowledge about field trips, a day at the beach.
• Organization	Organization/layout of writing and ideas as a major challenge. This includes transitions, paragraphing
• Punctuation	Punctuation as a major challenge in writing
• Spelling	Spelling identified as a major challenge in writing outcomes
• Vocabulary	Vocabulary identified as a major issue affecting writing outcomes
Assessment	How student writing is assessed
• Peer marking	Peers evaluate writing. This can be in class discussion, switching scripts peers, critiquing each other's writing, etc.
• Teacher marking	Teachers collect and mark students writing themselves
COVID-19	Any comments of the specific impact of COVID-19 on writing
Instructional challenges	These include challenges faced by teachers in providing writing instruction in the Jamaican creole context. Anything in teaching writing that poses a challenge should be included here. e.g. time consuming, limited resources, class sizes, lack of knowledge etc. This does not include student challenges. These may be seen in points teachers want to change if they had the opportunity.

Name	Description
• contextualized resources	Challenges related to a lack of resources suited to the Jamaican context. This may be in the form of books, instructional content, and other multimedia.
• covering curriculum	Challenges related to covering the entire curriculum
• exam orientation	Challenges related to the exam-oriented nature of primary school instruction. I.e. The focus is on PEP and this may mean having to rush through the curriculum and not stopping to focus more on certain topics or work more with slower students.
• marking time	This refers to marking (students writing) being time consuming
• non-mastery of lower levels	This refers to the challenge having students at the Grade 6 level who are performing at lower grade levels/ have not mastered the requisite skills for Grade 6
JamC in the classroom	Concerning the inclusion of JamC in instruction
• Attitude	This includes comments that highlight teachers attitudes and opinions concerning the use of JamC in the classroom instruction. These may include comments showing agreement, disdain, indifference. This node does not include comments on the role/why they may use creole in the classroom.
• Role	This includes comments concerning the purpose of or role played by the creole when/if used in the classroom by the teacher. The focus here is "why" they use it. E.g. to help comprehension, to correct/scold, to encourage etc. This does not include teachers' personal views and attitudes towards the use of JamC in the classroom, only the purpose/why they use it if/when they do.
▪ comprehension	JamC is used to aid students' comprehension of instructions, concepts, and content
▪ Drama and stories	JamC is useful for drama and some cultural stories
▪ minimal or no role	JamC has little or no role in the literacy classroom
View of JamC	Teacher's general view of JamC. This code does not refer to statements concerning teachers' attitudes towards the use of the creole in the classroom but only their general views of the creole. *E.g., 'it is not a language.'*
Pedagogical Approach	How do teachers go about teaching writing to learners- including their overarching methods, tools used in instruction and any details about specific activities.
Method	This includes wider approaches to writing instruction (not specific activities).
• Drama	The use of drama and role play to aid writing

Name	Description
• Ideation	A focus on building ideas and activating background knowledge relevant to the task to aid writing
• Language experience approach	This approach entails focusing on children's experience and interests to build language and literacy skills. Most times this approach is named explicitly
• Modelling	The use of a model/sample piece of writing. Students use the model as an example/ to guide and inspire their own work.
• Planning	A focus on planning activities to improve writing skills. The planning activities generally take place before writing and may entail the use of organizers of some sort.
• Practice	Focus on getting students to 'write a lot' to improve writing
• Prompts	A focus on the teaching and use of prompts in writing instruction
• Speech focus	A primary focus on standard English oral language skills first based on the belief that when oral language improves so will writing.
• Using JamC	Approaches that include the use of JamC to provide writing instruction specifically.
• Writing Process	Teaching methods related to the writing process approach- prewriting, drafting, editing, reviewing. It could include all or some stages.
Tools	These include any instrument used to accompany/enhance writing instruction. It could be technology, checklists, diagrams for example.
• Organizers	These include any tools used to organize writing and ideas for writing
• video	The use of video and multimedia in writing
Writing Activities	The specific writing activities assigned to students
Reason for teaching	This highlights individual's motivations for going into the field of teaching
• Coerced	They were coerced into teaching by someone else- e.g., a parent or relative who may have enrolled them or gave them no other choice
• Easiest path	Teaching because it was the easiest option to get into
• Love for children	Teaching primarily because of a love for children
• Nation building	Teaching because they want to help in nation building
• Not first choice	Teaching was not their first choice, but they did it because their first choice did not work out

Name	Description
Reasons for poor writing	These include the causes for writing challenges/poor writing. e.g., language issues, motivation, home literacy environments It does not include the specific areas of challenge experienced by students (e.g., spelling, handwriting, ideas)
• 'Jamaican thing'	Responses indicating that culturally, Jamaicans do not like/do not engage in writing to a great extent and this impacts writing
• Dislike	Responses identifying 'a dislike' of writing as the cause of poor writing outcomes
• Home Literacy Environment	Responses identifying home literacy environments as a major driver of writing outcomes
• mother-tongue	Responses identifying the mother-tongue (creole) and its influence as the cause of poor writing OR indicating that the mother-tongue does not make a difference
• Motivation	Responses identifying a lack of motivation as the cause of children being poor writers
• Reading	Responses identifying reading as the cause of children being poor writers
Teacher training	
• Gaps	Any gaps that teachers point out in the teacher training/education system, both during training and after (i.e., professional development)
• Qualification	This includes the type of degree and specialization (highest level)- e.g., BA, Master, literacy specialist, general primary education that each teacher completed
• sufficiency	This refers to comments concerning the sufficiency of the teacher training for providing writing instruction specifically in the Jamaican Creole context. It would include reflections on preparedness and particular training focused on teaching writing.
▪ Adequate prep	Teacher training courses provided adequate training for teaching writing in the Jamaican Creole context.
▪ Inadequate prep	Teacher training courses did not provide adequate training for teaching writing in the Jamaican Creole context.
▪ writing course	Mention of specific writing courses during teacher training to develop their own writing skills. Exclusion: This is not about reading courses.
Teacher writing	Responses related to the teachers writing on a personal level. This does not concern the teacher's writing instruction to students.

Name	Description
• Competence	Teachers' self-evaluations of their writing skills/proficiency. This includes any comments alluding to their own skill level and level of confidence in writing but not statements related to their enjoyment of reading.
• Enjoyment	This includes comments related to teachers' enjoyment (or lack thereof) of writing in their own personal lives. This does not include opinions and feelings about their own writing competence, teaching writing or students own writing,
Time on Task	Responses related to the amount of time dedicated to writing instruction.
• Integration	Comments concerning integration of writing across the curriculum. E.g., working on writing through integrating it in Science and Social Studies.
• Time allotted	How much time is spent on writing? (E.g., 1 session per week, 1 hour, 4 hours) This does not include opinions concerning the sufficiency of the allocated time.
• Time sufficiency	Opinions and views concerning whether the allotted writing time is sufficient or not/
Years teaching	This refers to how many years teachers have been teaching at the primary school level

Appendix J: CUREC Documents

CUREC Approval Email

Writing Development in Creole Contexts: A Study of Jamaican Primary School Students and Teachers - approval reference ED-CIA-21-033

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of the information provided to DREC, the proposed research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly, approval has been granted.

Should there be any subsequent changes to the project which raise ethical issues not covered in the original application you should submit details to research.office@education.ox.ac.uk for consideration.

Good luck with your research study.

With kind regards,

Dr. Sandra Mathers
Department of Education
University of Oxford

AP15 Letter to School Principal & Consent Form

Mr. XXX XXX
X Primary School
X Town, St. Ann, Jamaica

Writing Development in Creole Contexts: A Study of Jamaican Students and Teachers

Ethics Approval Reference: **ED-CIA-21-033**

Dear XXX YYY,

I am writing to enquire about conducting some research in your school in the next academic year. I am a doctoral research student at the University of Oxford, supervised by Professor Victoria Murphy and Dr. Hamish Chalmers and funded by the university of Oxford's Clarendon Scholarship. In my research study, 'Writing Development in Creole Contexts: A Study of Jamaican Primary School Students and Teachers', I will explore the nature of writing development among primary school learners as well as the experiences of teachers who teach writing to students.

The research will take place with students in grades 3, 4, and 5 and their classroom teachers. I am not aiming to change what or how the teacher chooses to teach, and will not be making any judgements about teaching. My research focus is on students' writing.

By participating in the research, your school would be contributing to research that will help us understand how learners in societies where a creole is spoken alongside standard English develop writing proficiency. There is very little research like this and it would put Jamaican education on the map.

The commitment from the school would be to allow me into Language Arts lessons over the course of one-two weeks. I will carry out three activities with students from each class including a short writing exercise, and two tasks assessing language proficiency and cognition. The language proficiency and cognition tasks will be completed on an individual basis with each child and the classroom teacher will be present. Additionally, I would like to do a short 15 minute interview with each classroom teacher at an appropriate time which would be audio-recorded for my reference.

Oxford University has strict ethical procedures on conducting ethical research with teachers and students, consistent with current British Educational Research Association guidelines. Before beginning the research, I would inform parents/guardians about the research and offer the students and parents/guardians the opportunity to refuse to participate. Throughout the research, students and parents/guardians will be able to refuse to participate at any time.

All participants, including students, teachers and the school, would be made anonymous in all research reports. The data collected would be kept strictly confidential, available only to my supervisor and myself and not used other than specified without the further consent of all involved being obtained. All recordings would be destroyed at the end of the research period, and kept in locked conditions until then. I have an enhanced DBS check from March 2020. I have enclosed copies of the information for parents/guardians and students with this letter.

If your school would like to take part in the study, or you need more information about what is involved, please contact me. Whether or not you feel it would be appropriate for your school to participate, I would be grateful if you would complete the pro-forma below, and return it to me in the stamped addressed envelope enclosed in this letter.

Thank you for your time and attention. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,
Shawna-Kaye Tucker

Writing Development in Creole Contexts: A Study of Jamaican Primary School Students and Teachers

Shawna-Kaye Tucker
Department of Education, University of Oxford

X Primary School
Mr. XXX XXX

☐ We do not wish to participate in this project.

☐ We would like to find out more about this project.

☐ We would like to take part in this project.

If you would like further information, or are interested in taking part, please give the name of a contact person for your school, and details of the best way to contact him or her.

Contact name: _____

Contact email: _____

Contact telephone number: _____

Please return this form in the stamped addressed envelope enclosed with this letter.

Thank you for your help.

Teacher Participant Information Sheet

Writing Development in Creole Contexts: A Study of Jamaican Primary School Students and Teachers.

Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC)
Approval Reference: **ED-CIA-21-033**

1. ***Why is this research being conducted?***

   The purpose of this study is to understand the nature of writing development of learners in creole contexts as well as the experience of teachers who teach writing in these contexts. Having grown up in Jamaica I would like to carry out this research so that we, as researchers and educators can all gain a greater understanding of the unique English writing challenges faced by learners with speak Jamaican Creole as a home language and influence teacher education and support.
   I (Shawna-Kaye Tucker) will be carrying out the study at your school and my work will be supervised by Professor Victoria Murphy and Dr. Hamish Chalmers from the University of Oxford.

2. ***Why have I been invited to take part?***

   You have been invited because you are a primary school teacher of students in grades 3, 4, or 5.

3. ***Do I have to take part?***

   No. You can ask questions about the research before deciding whether or not to take part. If you do agree to take part, you may withdraw yourself from the study, without giving a reason and with no negative consequences. Please do let me know if you decide you no longer wish to take part by April 2024. Up until that point your data will remain stored and will have been reviewed and analysed.

4. ***What will happen to me if I take part in the research?***

   You will be invited to attend one 20-minute interview session at your primary school and remain in the classroom while I administer a short writing activity, a language proficiency test and a general cognitive ability test to your students. Should the situation with COVID-19 change and we are unable to meet in person, the interview will take place online over Zoom and I will provide you with instructions and a script for administering the exercises to your students. The interview and the classroom visit do not have to take place on the same day. If you prefer to do each activity on separate days, please let me know and this can be arranged.

   When I arrive, I will talk you through the study procedures and give you the chance to ask any questions. If you are still happy to take part, I will ask you to sign a consent form.
   If you are happy to take part in the research, you will be interviewed once and the students in your class will complete a writing exercise as well as a short test of language proficiency and general cognitive ability.

   The interview should take approximately 20 minutes and the administering of tests to your students will take approximately but no more than 2 hours. You can also ask to pause or stop the interview and testing at any time.

With your consent, I would like to audio record you so I can have an accurate record of your thoughts during the interview.

5. ***Are there any potential risks in taking part?***

The following risks are involved in taking part in this research: a breach of confidentiality. In order to avoid this risk, your personal data will be pseudonymised. This means that a fake name will be used to identify you rather than your actual name. For example, instead of Jane Brown, 35, St. Ann, I will put, Tasha Green, 35, St. Ann.

6. ***Are there any benefits in taking part?***

There has been very little research carried out on literacy development in our country, Jamaica. Participating in this study will help us as country better understand the literacy development of our children and things we can do to help them. Also, this study will help to let people from different countries learn more about our vibrant language!

7. ***What happens to the data provided?***

The information you provide during the study is the **research data**. Any research data from which you can be identified e.g. writing samples or audio recordings) is known as **personal data**.
Personal / sensitive data will be stored on an encrypted USB and uploaded to a protected online drive and stored for 3 years after publication.
Other research data (including consent forms) will be stored for at least 3 years after publication or public release of the work of the research.

The primary researcher, supervisors, and two authorised literacy teachers who will mark the written scripts will have access to the research data. Please note that these teachers will not have access to the audio recordings from your interviews. Responsible members of the University of Oxford may be given access to data for monitoring and/or audit of the research.
I would like your permission to use direct quotes in any research outputs. Your name will not be used, I will use a pseudonym instead of your actual name.

I would like your permission to use anonymised data in future studies, and to share data with other researchers (e.g. in online databases). All personal information that could identify you will be removed or changed before information is shared with other researchers or results are made public.

8. ***Will the research be published?***

The research may be published in an academic journal.
The University of Oxford is committed to the dissemination of its research for the benefit of society and the economy and, in support of this commitment, has established an online archive of research materials. This archive includes digital copies of student theses successfully submitted as part of a University of Oxford postgraduate degree programme. Holding the archive online gives easy access for researchers to the full text of freely available theses, thereby increasing the likely impact and use of that research.

The research will be written up as a student's thesis. On successful submission of the thesis, it will be deposited both in print and online in the University archives to facilitate its use in future research. If so, the thesis will be openly accessible.

9. ***Who has reviewed this study?***

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee **ED-CIA-21-033.**

10. ***Who do I contact if I have a concern about the study or I wish to complain?***

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact Shawna-Kaye Tucker at shawna-kaye.tucker@education.ox.ac.uk or her supervisors Dr. Hamish Chalmers at hamish.chalmers@education.ox.ac.uk, or Professor Victoria Murphy at victoria.muprhy@education.ox.ac.uk. We will do our best to answer your query. I will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how it will be dealt with. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible: Dr Liam Gearon, Chair, Department of Education Research Ethics Committee at student.curec@education.ox.ac.uk

11. ***Data Protection***

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the study.
The University will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that is performed in the public interest.
Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available from http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/individualrights/.

12. ***Further Information and Contact Details***

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:
Shawna-Kaye Tucker
Department of Education, University of Oxford
15 Norham Gardens, Oxford, OX2 6PY, UK
University email: shawna-kaye.tucker@education.ox.ac.uk

AP15 Teacher Consent Form

CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC)
Approval Reference: **ED-CIA-21-033**
Writing Development in Creole Contexts: A Study of Jamaican Primary School Students and Teachers

		Please initial each box
1	I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	☐
2	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without any adverse consequences or penalty.	☐
3	I understand that research data collected during the study may be looked at by authorised people outside the research team. I give permission for these individuals to access my data.	☐
4	I understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.	☐
5	I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.	☐
6	I understand how this research may be written up and published.	☐
7	I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.	☐
8	I understand that researchers will observe lessons and other aspects of my teaching, as detailed on the information sheet, and discussed and agreed with the researchers.	☐
9	I consent to being audio recorded	☐
12	I understand how audio recordings will be used in research outputs [please delete as appropriate]	☐
13	I give permission to be quoted directly in research outputs against a pseudonym	☐
14	I agree to take part in the study	☐

_____	dd / mm / yyyy	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
_____	dd / mm / yyyy	_____
Name of person taking consent	Date	Signature

AP25 Parent Information Sheet

Writing in Creole Contexts: A Study of Jamaican Primary School Students and Teachers

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS

Ethics Approval Reference: **ED-CIA-21-033**

In partnership with researchers at the University of Oxford, Servite Primary School has agreed to take part in a study investigating the development of writing skills in young learners. My name is Shawna-Kaye Tucker and I am a Jamaican studying at the University of Oxford in England. I would like to invite your child to be part of this study. We very much hope you would like your child to take part, but before you decide, it is important that you understand why the study is being done and what it will involve.

I will be carrying the research activities at your child's school and all my work will be supervised by Professor Victoria Murphy and Dr. Hamish Chalmers from the University of Oxford.

What are we trying to find out?

This project is looking at the nature of writing development among primary school students in Jamaica. We are especially interested in understanding the skills and possible challenges experienced by learners who grow up in creole-contexts as they learn to write, that is, in countries like Jamaica where a creole language is spoken as well as Standard English. The findings from this study will help both researchers and teachers to better understand possible challenges and provide clearer direction in how to support learners at various levels of proficiency in English and Jamaican Creole.

More information about the project can be obtained by contacting the research team at shawna-kaye.tucker@education.ox.ac.uk

Why has my child been invited to take part?

We are inviting your child to take part because they are a young person, in grade 3, 4, or 5 attending either Servite Primary School. We are inviting approximately 60-80 young people to take part.

Does my child have to take part?

No. You can ask questions about the study before deciding whether or not to allow your child to participate. If you do agree to participation, you may withdraw your child and their data from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without penalty, by advising the researchers of this decision.

What will happen if my child takes part?

- During one regular Language Arts session, your child will complete 3 exercises (writing a short composition, an English language skills task, and a reasoning task) which will be supervised by the research and the classroom teacher.
- These exercises will be done in the classroom and will take no longer than 2 hours.

- Your child will **not** be video-recorded, audio-recorded, or photographed for this study.
- The researcher will only collect minimal personal information (your child's name). Your child's name however will not be included in the study and will be kept in a separate password-protected file.

What are the advantages / disadvantages of taking part?
Participation in this study has no foreseeable risks and will only add an additional opportunity for your child to practice their writing skills. As a participant, your child will contribute to research on Jamaican literacy which is very limited at the time.

What happens to the data provided? [11]
The information you or your child provide during the study is the **research data**. Any research data from which you or your child can be identified (name), is known as **personal data**.

Personal / sensitive data will be stored in a password-protected drive and will be stored for at least three years after publication of the study.

Opt-out forms will be retained by the school for the duration of the study, and for as long as the school determines appropriate after research activities have concluded at the school.

Other research data will be stored for 3 years after publication or public release of the work of the research.

The researcher and the research team will have access to the research data. Responsible members of the University of Oxford may be given access to data for monitoring and/or audit of the research. I would like your permission to use de-identified data in future studies, and to share data with other researchers (e.g. in online databases). All personal information that could identify you will be removed or changed before information is shared with other researchers or results are made public.

Will the research be published?
The research may be published in international academic journals and academic websites.
The University of Oxford is committed to the dissemination of its research for the benefit of society and the economy and, in support of this commitment, has established an online archive of research materials. This archive includes digital copies of student theses successfully submitted as part of a University of Oxford postgraduate degree programme. Holding the archive online

[11] Please refer to CUREC's Best Practice Guidance on Data Collection and Management (BPG 09)

gives easy access for researchers to the full text of freely available theses, thereby increasing the likely impact and use of that research.
On successful submission of the thesis, it will be deposited both in print and online in the University archives to facilitate its use in future research. If so, the thesis will be openly accessible.

What will happen to any samples taken from my child?

We will use your child's writing samples to help us understand the writing development in primary school learners.

Who is conducting this research?

The research project is organised by Shawna-Kaye Tucker of Oxford University, who is a PhD candidate and supervised by Professor Victoria Murphy and Dr. Hamish Chalmers. The research is funded by the University of Oxford Clarendon Fund and has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford's Central University Research Ethics Committee **ED-CIA-21-033.**

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact Shawna-Kaye Tucker at shawna-kaye.tucker@education.ox.ac.uk or her supervisors Dr. Hamish Chalmers at hamish.chalmers@education.ox.ac.uk or Professor Victoria Murphy at victoria.murphy@education.ox.ac.uk. We will do our best to answer your query. I will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how it will be dealt with. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible: Dr Liam Gearon, Chair, Department of Education Research Ethics Committee at student.curec@education.ox.ac.uk

Data Protection

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your child's personal data and, as such, will determine how your child's personal data is used in the study.
The University will process your child's personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest.
Further information about your rights with respect to your child's personal data is available from https://compliance.web.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights.

What should I do next?

Please fill in the enclosed form and return it to your child's class teacher if you would not like your child to take part in this study. Please remember that you may withdraw your child at any time, without penalty and without giving a reason, by notifying the researcher.

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

Shawna-Kaye Tucker
Department of Education, University of Oxford

15 Norham Gardens, Oxford, UK
Email: shawna-kaye.tucker@education.ox.ac.uk

AP25 Parent Opt-Out Form

Writing in Creole Contexts: A Study of Jamaican Primary School Students and Teachers

OPT-OUT FORM

Ethics Approval Reference: **ED-CIA-21-033**

If you **DO NOT** want your child to participate in the above-named research study please fill out the form below and return it to the school by 15/01/2020
If we do not receive an opt-out form from you by this date, your child may be invited to take part in this study, as described in the accompanying information sheet.

I, the undersigned, hereby DO NOT give permission for my child to take part in the study titled [Writing Development in Creole Contexts: A Study of Jamaican Primary School Students and Teachers]

Name of child: _____

Name of parent/guardian: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of researcher: _____

AP25 Student Participant Information Sheet (6-11 years)

INFORMATION SHEET FOR CHILDREN AGED 6 TO 10 YEARS

To be shown and read by parent/guardian if required

Ethics Approval Reference: **ED-CIA-21-033**

My name is Shawna-Kaye Tucker and I study at the University of Oxford. I am doing some research and would like you to join in.

Research is a way we try to find out the answers to questions. We want to see how learners like you who grow up in countries that speak an exciting creole language develop writing skills in English.

You can talk to your family, friends, or the researchers if you want to before you agree to join in.

Why have I been asked?

We are asking you if you would like to take part because you are in grades 3, 4, or 5.

We are asking 60-80 children to help us.

Your parent/guardian has said it is OK for you to join in.

Do I have to join in?

No you don't have to if you don't want to! You can ask questions before choosing whether you want to join in.

You can change your mind at any time by telling the researcher or your parent/guardian. You don't have to say why.

If you decide to stop, no one will be upset with you.

What will happen?

I am going to ask you to do a few Language Arts exercises like writing a short composition, for example and we will do all of this during your Language Arts session and your classroom teacher will be there too.

Will anything about the research upset me?

Nothing in these activities should make you feel upset, but if you feel nervous or scared, please come and talk to me or your teacher about it. We do not want you to feel uncomfortable.

Will joining in help me?

The study will not help you but it might help other children in the future.

Will anyone else know I'm doing this?

The people in our research team will know you are taking part. No one will know that you have helped us with this research - unless, of course, you tell them yourself!

What happens to what the researchers find out?

When we collect information from you we will keep it in a safe place and only the people doing the research, or helping with the research, can look at it. We will use the information to write research reports that will go in international journals.

Is this study OK to do?

Before any research involving people happens it has to be checked by a group of people known as a Research Ethics Committee to make sure that it is fair. This study has been checked by the Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford.

What if there is a problem or something goes wrong?

If you are not happy because of something that happened in the study, please talk to your parent/guardian who will let the researcher know.

Thank you - please ask us any questions.

AP25 Assent Form for Children Under 16

Project: Writing development in creole contexts: A Study of Jamaican Primary School Students and Teachers.

Child/Young Person (or if unable, researcher on their behalf) to circle all they agree with:

- Has somebody else explained this project to you?
  Yes/No
- Do you understand what this project is about?
  Yes/No
- Have you asked all the questions you want?
  Yes/No
- Have you had your questions answered in a way you understand?
  Yes/No
- Do you understand it's OK to stop taking part at any time?
  Yes/No
- Are you happy to take part?
  Yes/No

If <u>any</u> answers are "no" or you don't want to take part, that's OK! No one will be upset with you.

If you <u>do</u> want to take part, please write your name below

Your name _____

Date _____

The researcher who explained this project to you needs to sign too:

Print Name _____ _____
Sign _____ _____
Date _____ _____

Thank you!

******Note: as the study moved online, students indicated their consent by selecting yes or no in a Google form at the start of the data collection session.**

Confidentiality Script for Markers of Student's Written Work

I, _____, being appointed a script marker for the purposes of a research project in Jamaica investigating the writing development of learners in Jamaican primary schools (the Writing Development in Creole Contexts: A Study of Jamaican Primary School Students and Teachers project on behalf of the University of Oxford (the "University") agree:

(1) that all information (whether or not recorded in documentary form, or stored on any magnetic or optical disk or memory) about the Research Project including and in particular personal information regarding the participants of the Research Project coming into my possession or of which I am made aware in the course of my involvement in the Research Project will remain confidential ("Confidential Information").

(2) not to disclose any Confidential Information to any person, company or other organisation whatsoever at any time other than to the Responsible Researcher named below or persons nominated in writing by this Researcher, and to use my best endeavours to prevent the publication of or disclosure of any Confidential Information. that I shall only use the Confidential Information for the purposes of conducting research activity for the Research Project and not for any other purpose.

(3) that all the documents and recordings (including but not limited to forms, notes, voice recordings and electronic documents) regarding the Research Project given to me for the duration of the Research Project will remain the property of the University and that I will handle with care and protect all such documents and recordings.

(4) at the conclusion of the Research Project or on termination of my appointment, whichever is earlier, to return all documents and recordings provided to me or produced by me for the purposes of discharging my duties as a script markers during the Research Project to the University, and to delete irretrievably any Confidential Information (including any copies) stored on any magnetic or optical disk or memory, including personal computer networks, personal e-mail accounts or personal accounts on websites, and all matter derived from such sources which is in my possession or under my control outside of the University's premises

(5) Inform the Responsible Researcher immediately if I become aware or suspect that any Confidential Information has been disclosed to any person, company or organisation other than the Responsible Researcher or any person nominated in writing to receive that Confidential Information by the Responsible Researcher.

Responsible Researcher: Shawna- Kaye Tucker

Signed as a deed on _____ by _____ (Full name)

……

[signature of party]

in the presence of:

……

[signature of witness]

Name:

Address:

Date:

Appendix K: Task Instructions (Classroom Data Collection Sessions)

General instructions for all tasks

To students
It is very important that you work on your own in all of these activities that we will do today. I know that you may have smart mommies, daddies, and siblings at home, but I want to see your work! I want to see your ideas and how you are thinking about things.

Please remember to keep your cameras on throughout all the activities we will do today. If you are having any problems with your camera or cannot keep it on for any reason, please tell your teacher or send me a direct message in the chat box.

To family members (if any are home):
To any parents in the room, hello! And thank you for allowing your child to participate!
I need you to help me today – it is very important that your child works on their own …without your help and without their siblings (or anyone else's) help.

This is not a school exam … the activities done today will not affect your child's grades in school in any way. These activities will help me to understand more about literacy in Jamaica. I simply want to see how your brilliant child thinks and writes. So please allow them to work on their own, do not help them. If they ask you for help, please encourage them to speak with me or their teacher.

For one of the activities that your child or sibling will do today, they will need to send me a picture. Each child will be doing a bit of writing and they I will need a picture to be taken of the writing task and sent to the number that will be provided on the screen. I know that many of your children are able to do this on their own, but if your child needs some help with taking a clear picture or does not have their own phone, could you please take a picture and send it to the number that will be provided on the screen. **This phone number is only for submitting this writing task and nothing else**. If you need to contact me concerning other matters, please see my information on the information sheets that were shared with you by your child's teacher. I would be happy to answer your questions.

Thanks again…I truly appreciate your help!

Back to students:

We will be doing four activities today. Before we start each activity, I will give you instructions. The first activity will require you to write, so you will need your notebook or paper and a pencil. So please get these ready. The last two activities will be completed online. I will send a link in the chat before each activity that will take you to an online sheet where you will fill in your answers.

Is that okay? Any questions?

Activity 1: Writing Analysis Measure (WAM)

For our first activity, we will be doing some writing!

You must write on paper using a pencil or pen. Please do not type. It must be handwritten on paper.

For this activity, I am going to need your help. When you have completed the writing task, please take a clear picture of your work and send it to the number on the screen. You can ask a family member to take the photo and send it to me. Remember to write your name clearly on the sheet. Please also indicate your name in the text message. This phone number is *only* for submitting your writing task. If you have questions, you can ask me directly during the session or you can talk to your teacher.

It is very important that you work on your own in all of these activities that we will do today.

I am going to read the writing prompt to you and I want you to write as much as you can. The writing prompt is also on the screen. The phone number for submitting your writing is also on the screen.

Is everyone ready? Paper and writing instrument ready?

[read prompt] + [show slide with prompt on screen and leave on screen during task]

[after 15 minutes] Okay everyone, pencils down. Please take a picture of your writing or have someone help you and send it to the number on the screen. If you cannot send a picture now and need to wait until your parent comes home, that is okay, just let me or your teacher know. If I have not received it by the end of the day, your teacher will check in tomorrow and remind you and your parent.

[time for photos, confirm (by name) that you have received their submissions as they come in]

Activity 2: Grammaticality Judgement Test

For our second activity, I will be reading some sentences aloud once… and you will simply decide whether it is grammatically correct or incorrect.

I have sent you a link in the chat which will take you to a multiple-choice form. Can everyone please confirm that they have access to the form?

Great.

You will hear me read 22 sentences. As you can see on the response form, the sentences are not written down – you will only hear me read them. There are 22 multiple-choice items on the response form where you will select your answer: correct or incorrect. So, you will need to listen carefully.

There will only be two options for each item: correct or incorrect. You will need to select your answers quickly in this task as I will only give you seven seconds to make a choice. Please ensure that you provide a response for each sentence.

Once you hear me read the sentence, you can go ahead and select your answer on the form but remember to listen carefully first. It is very important that you listen carefully to the entire sentence. I will only read it once.

When we get to the end of the task, please remember to click the 'SUBMIT' button so that I can see your answers.

Can everyone give a thumbs up (Google Meet emoji-gesture) to let me know that you can hear me properly? It's very important that you can hear me.

Great. Just a reminder to keep your cameras on. Thank you for doing that!

Let us do a practice sentence. *[provide sample and have them select answer]*

Before we begin, does anyone have any questions?

It is important that you continue to keep your cameras on during this task.

Okay, we are now ready to begin.

[read items]

Okay, we are now at the end of the task. Please remember to click the 'SUBMIT' button.

Activity 3: WISC-IV Vocabulary Subtest

For our next activity, we will be working on a vocabulary task.

You will complete this activity online and so I have sent a link in the chat which will bring you to answer page where you will type your answers. Once you have opened the form, give me a thumbs up (Google Meet Emoji).

Great!

In this activity, "*I am going to say some words. Listen carefully and write down what each word means*" (WISC-IV manual. 105) I will read the word aloud once and you will type (not shout) the answer down on your form. For each word, you will hear me say something like, "**what does x mean?**"

Once I have read the word, you can go ahead and type the meaning of the word in the space provided. The good news is, in this activity, you don't have to worry about spelling or grammar when writing your definition – you will not lose any points if you do not spell a word correctly or if you make a grammatical mistake, or if you do not write in complete sentences.

For example, if I say, "what is a CLOCK?" you could write something like, "a clock tells the time" or "it has hands that move around on a dial" *(example taken from WISC-IV manual page 105).*

You will have 30 seconds to answer each question.

Remember, this is not an exam. Just try your best and try to provide an answer but if you do not know the meaning, that is also okay. You can leave it blank.

Do you understand? Any questions?

It is important that you continue to keep your cameras on and please remember that you are to complete this activity on your own. You are not to ask your family members or anyone for help. You are also not to use the internet to look-up the words. If you do not know the meaning, simply leave it blank and that will be okay. Do not worry if you do not know the answer. I am trusting that you are all honest students and that you will not cheat. Agreed?

Okay, now we will begin. Is everyone ready?

[read through items]

Okay, please remember to hit the "SUBMIT" button at the end of the task so that your answers will be sent to me.

(Bathroom break)

Activity 4: WASI-II – Matrix Reasoning Subtest

For this activity we will be focusing on patterns.

Please click the link I have just sent in the chat. This is your answer form for this activity.

I will hold an image up to the screen and you will have up to 30 seconds to select the option that best completes the pattern. You will see a large picture on each page…but the patten in the picture is missing a piece…it is incomplete. You will need to select one of the 5 options below the picture that will make the pattern complete (option 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5).

We will do 3 practice items before we get started so that we all understand the instructions.

Once you have completed the task, remember to click "SUBMIT" at the bottom of the page.

Please remember that this is not an exam. I just want to see how you would complete these patterns. I do not want you to feel worried or anxious. Just relax and do your best. If you are not sure about an answer, simply choose the option that you think might be best or you can leave that question blank. I encourage you to try to answer as many as you can.

Thank you for keeping your cameras on, everyone. **Please remember to keep them on during this activity** and remember that **it is very important that you do not shout the answers aloud**. Simply select your answer on the online form.

We will start with a few practice items, and I want you to tell me if you have any problems with these. Let me know if you can see the picture clearly or if there are any parts of the instructions that you don't understand.

Remember that you have 30 seconds for each item. After 25 seconds I will announce that I am going to turn the page soon. This means you only have a few more seconds left to choose your answer.

[Run practice items.]

Any questions before we start?

Great. Now let's get started! It will be just like the practice items we just reviewed, and I will give you a heads-up of when I am about to turn the page.

[run activity]

Okay, now that we have gotten to the end of the activity, please click the "SUBMIT" button.