

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**Examining teachers' perspectives and strategies for teaching reading
comprehension in Public Basic Schools
in the Abuakwa South Municipality**

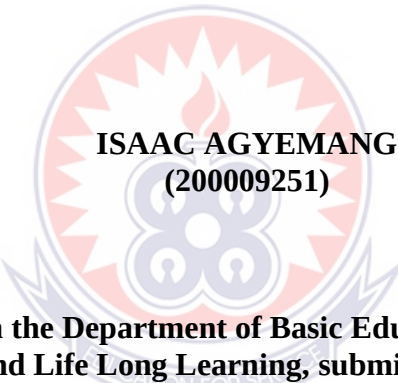


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**EXAMINING TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR
TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION IN PUBLIC BASIC SCHOOLS
IN THE ABUAKWA SOUTH MUNICIPALITY**



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**A thesis in the Department of Basic Education, School of
Education and Life Long Learning, submitted to the school of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Basic Education)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

DECEMBER, 2024

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Isaac Agyemang, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE.....

DATE

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis/dissertation/project as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

SUPERVISOR: **PROF. EMMA SARAH ESHUN (PhD)**

SIGNATURE.....

DATE

DEDICATION

To my wife, children, parents and family (brothers and sisters)



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I am profoundly grateful to the Almighty for bestowing upon me the wisdom, patience, and strength to undertake this research and successfully complete my Master of Philosophy degree in Basic Education, with a focus on English Language. This endeavour has been both a remarkable and transformative experience, and I remain deeply thankful for the support and guidance I have received from various individuals who made this achievement possible.

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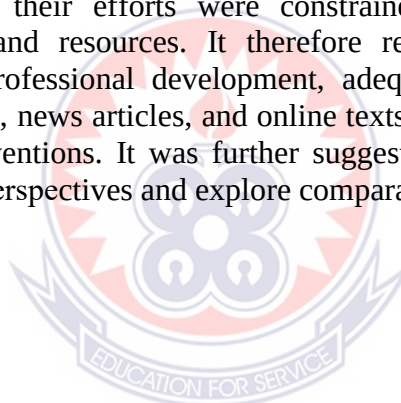
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ABSTRACT

This study explored teachers' perspectives on the teaching of RC in public basic schools in the Abuakwa South Municipality. It examined teachers' views on RC, the instructional strategies they employed, their continuous professional development (CPD) needs, and the challenges they encountered in teaching RC. It was a qualitative approach underpinned by a phenomenological design. Fifteen (15) teachers were selected through purposive, maximum variation, and criterion sampling techniques. Data were collected using semi-structured interview and an observational checklist and were analysed thematically, supported by verbatim excerpts from participants. The findings revealed that RC plays a vital role in students' academic success and overall development; however, teachers' perspectives on its complexity varied. Instructional strategies such as vocabulary instruction, the question-answer relationship technique, graphic organizers, scaffolding, and story retelling were employed but not applied systematically. CPD opportunities were limited, revealing a gap between teachers' professional knowledge and classroom practices, which compelled them to rely largely on traditional methods. The main challenges included students' limited vocabulary, students' lack of reading fluency, and inadequate resources. The study concluded that although teachers were committed to fostering comprehension skills, their efforts were constrained by insufficient continuous professional support and resources. It therefore recommended the provision of targeted continuous professional development, adequate and alternative resources such as digital libraries, news articles, and online texts, as well as the implementation of early literacy interventions. It was further suggested that future research should incorporate learners' perspectives and explore comparative contexts.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter examines the need to explore teachers' strategies for teaching RC in public basic schools. It discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem, and scope of the research. It also presents the purpose, objectives, and research questions, as well as the significance, limitations, and delimitations of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

The acquisition of RC skills plays a crucial role in students' academic success and overall personal development. RC enables learners to understand, interpret, and analyse written texts, which are essential for learning across all subjects. Proficiency in RC is strongly linked to academic achievement and is considered a reliable predictor of success across the curriculum. Seuss (1991) aptly emphasized this by stating, *"The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go"* (p. 566).

Given the pivotal role of RC in teaching and learning, strategies for its effective instruction have attracted considerable scholarly and policy attention (Brown, 2017; Davis, 2015; Kissau, 2015; McNeil, 2011; NaCCA, 2019; Pearson & Cervetti, 2017). In 2019, the Ministry of Education (MoE), in collaboration with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), developed the National Pre-tertiary Education Curriculum Framework. This framework prioritised pupils' ability to read and comprehend texts effectively. Similarly, the current English Language curriculum requires teachers to introduce students to a range of RC strategies that will equip them

with the skills necessary for interpreting and understanding any form of text. These measures were designed not only to foster academic progress but also to prepare learners for lifelong learning. Nevertheless, questions remain regarding how teachers perceive the teaching of RC and the strategies they employ in practice.

Preliminary observations from the new English Language curricula (Standards-Based and Common Core) indicate a lack of clearly articulated strategies such as reciprocal teaching, question–answer relationships (QAR), scaffolding, and the use of graphic organisers (GOs). This gap appears to have created a disparity between teachers’ theoretical knowledge and their classroom practices. Consequently, traditional methods—typically involving reading, explanation, and questioning continue to dominate RC instruction. Research further suggests that teachers devote more time to teaching mechanical reading skills and decoding rather than explicitly focusing on comprehension (Murris, 2014; Prinsloo et al., 2015; Snilstveit et al., 2016; Verbeek, 2010).

In an era characterised by rapid change and the proliferation of diverse texts, the ability to read and comprehend is not optional but essential. The OECD (2018) maintains that academic and life success now requires not only basic comprehension but also the ability to employ advanced information-processing skills, including analysing, synthesising, summarising, integrating, and interpreting information from multiple sources. Yet, studies show that many teachers lack adequate training to effectively support students in developing these RC skills (Klapwijk, 2011; Pretorius & Lepalala, 2011; Zimmerman, 2020). Teaching RC at the basic school level is therefore often viewed as complex and challenging (Elleman & Oslund, 2019; Montero, 2019). These limitations, coupled with systemic challenges, hinder the

development of critical thinking and meaningful learning experiences that are essential for lifelong learning.

The former United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, echoed similar concerns in his post-2015 development planning remarks, asserting: *“We should truly be angry about the state of our education. Thirteen years after Dakar, so many students have passed through education, but education has not passed through them”* (as cited in Soliván & Winthrop, 2015). His statement highlighted the pressing need to ensure not only access to education but also quality learning experiences that foster comprehension and critical engagement. These concerns remain largely unresolved, affecting students’ preparation for lifelong learning and national examinations.

Research continues to document these challenges. Walpole et al. (2017) found that many students failed to attain satisfactory RC levels before their final examinations. Similarly, the annual Chief Examiner’s Reports (CER) on English Language have consistently underscored the negative impact of inadequate RC preparation on performance in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). For instance, the 2022 report observed that many candidates introduced ideas unrelated to those in the given passages, demonstrating weak comprehension skills.

The 2023 CER further noted that English Language performance fell below expectations, with numerous candidates scoring below the pass mark. Candidates were often unable to understand passages or questions before attempting answers. Many resorted to copying sections of the passage without rephrasing or demonstrating comprehension. For example, when asked, *“State why the writer went to the coast,”* some candidates simply responded, *“My desire to win gold and also see the sea drove me”* a verbatim lift from the passage without contextual understanding (CER, 2023, p.

5). The Chief Examiner's report highlighted the unfortunate nature of such responses, questioning whether candidates truly possess the necessary skills to comprehend the passage and the specific question.

The 2022 report reaffirmed these concerns, citing widespread weaknesses in grammar, tenses, sentence construction, and comprehension. The report indicated that even when candidates produced marginally readable work, their responses were marked by grammatical inaccuracies, inconsistent tenses, and incoherent expressions. According to the report, some candidates appeared not to grasp whether they were reading English or another language. The CER concluded that the majority of candidates misunderstood the given topics despite clear instructions (CER, 2023).

The CER recommended strengthening the teaching and learning of English Language, particularly RC, by equipping students with the necessary skills to identify key ideas and comprehend passages. However, despite repeated calls for reform, RC continues to receive limited attention in many Ghanaian basic schools. This gap between teachers' knowledge and their classroom practices highlighted the need to explore teachers' perspectives and the strategies they employ in teaching RC in public basic schools, particularly in the Abuakwa South Municipality.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The ability to read and comprehend is indispensable in the teaching and learning process, and it remains central to every subject in the basic school curriculum. It enables students to succeed in academic work and lifelong learning. Effective RC is widely recognized as a cornerstone and a fundamental skill required of every learner in any educational endeavour. It enhances students' ability to speak and write clearly and effectively, as well as to respond appropriately to written communication. RC not

only motivates individuals to read widely and explore the world around them but also fosters critical thinking that extends beyond immediate realities, thereby supporting personal growth and professional development. Prioritising and nurturing RC skills therefore has a profound impact on students' academic achievement, personal growth, and overall well-being.

Despite its benefits, the teaching of RC continues to pose significant challenges for basic school teachers in the ASM. Zimmerman and Smit (2020), together with Zimmerman (2016), linked these challenges to a lack of adequate formal instruction, while Snilstveit et al. (2016) attributed them to ineffective instructional practices. These factors appeared to affect students' academic achievement and personal development negatively. For example, in the United States, fewer than six percent of fourth-grade learners were reported to have scored at or above proficiency in RC (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013). Similarly, in South Africa, Tanzania, and Indonesia, many students completed basic education without acquiring adequate RC skills (Ligembe, 2014). In Ghana, the National Education Assessment (NEA) Report (2016) highlighted comparable challenges, showing that students continued to struggle to develop the essential RC skills required for academic and professional advancement. Alhassan (2023) further observed that a particularly concerning phenomenon is the persistence of reading and comprehension difficulties among many public-school students, despite several years of formal education. This situation is especially pronounced among junior high school (JHS) students in the rural areas.

In response to these persistent challenges, the Government of Ghana and other stakeholders have been investing in education to promote lifelong learning by

strengthening foundational reading skills not only in English but also in Ghanaian languages. Various programmes and initiatives, such as the Ghana Accountability for Learning Outcomes Project (GALOP) and Transition to English (T2E), have been intensified. Additionally, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in collaboration with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), has been developing contextually relevant teaching and learning materials in both English and local languages. In addition to these measures, interventions such as reading festivals have been organised at district, municipal, and regional levels to support pupils in developing effective reading and comprehension skills.

Within the Abuakwa South Municipality, the Municipal Education Directorate, in collaboration with Dr Kingsley Agyemang, Registrar of the Ghana Scholarship Secretariat, has been organising reading and spelling challenges for pupils in basic schools. Deserving pupils are selected for international educational tours to motivate them to cultivate lifelong reading and comprehension habits. However, despite these interventions, there is little or no literature addressing the significant gap in teachers' perspectives and approaches to the teaching of RC at the JHS level. Existing studies (Agbofa, 2023; Alidu, 2021; Ganie et al., 2018; Hidayati, 2018; Owu-Ewie, 2014) have largely focused on assessing students' RC skills and challenges at the primary and senior high school levels. Few have explored teachers' perspectives or examined the strategies they employ in RC instruction at the JHS level.

In 2022, the Abuakwa South Educational Directorate (ASED) conducted an RC assessment to evaluate students' ability to read short passages and respond to related questions. However, this assessment did not investigate teachers' perspectives or the instructional strategies they adopted to enhance RC. Al-Issa (2015) argued that

comprehension improves when learners are familiar with the content (content schema), understand the structure and genre of the text (formal schema), and can decode and interpret word relationships within sentences (language schema). This underscores the crucial role of teachers' knowledge and perspectives in the effective teaching of RC skills.

Observations and personal interactions with language teachers in ASM revealed varying perspectives and a limited understanding of how to equip students with effective comprehension skills. Further discussions highlighted the inadequacy of CPD opportunities for teachers, particularly regarding strategies for teaching RC. These gaps appeared to affect students' academic performance adversely, especially in English Language RC and related subjects. According to the ASM report on the 2023 Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) analysis, RC scores in the municipality declined significantly, from 52.5% in 2022 to 45.2% in 2023. This decline raised serious concerns among stakeholders, yet no study had been conducted in ASM to investigate the underlying causes of this trend.

It is against this backdrop that the present study seeks to investigate teachers' perspectives and strategies for teaching RC in public basic schools in the ASM. The study aims to address the existing gaps by providing insights into teachers' perspectives, the challenges they encounter, and their CPD needs, which will ultimately contribute to enhancing students' RC skills and overall learning outcomes.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perspectives and the instructional strategies they employed in teaching RC in public basic schools in the ASM.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study sought to:

1. Explore teachers' perspectives on the teaching of RC in public basic schools in the ASM.
2. Examine the common strategies teachers employ in teaching RC in public basic schools in the ASM.
3. Identify the CPD opportunities that support teachers in teaching RC effectively.
4. Examine the challenges teachers encounter in teaching RC in public basic schools in the ASM.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do teachers perceive the teaching of RC in public basic schools in the ASM?
2. What common strategies do teachers commonly employ in teaching RC in public basic schools in the ASM?
3. What CPD opportunities support teachers in teaching RC effectively?
4. What challenges do teachers encounter in teaching RC in public basic schools in the ASM?

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study explored teachers' perspectives and the strategies they commonly employed in teaching RC in public basic schools in the Abuakwa South Municipality. Its significance lay in its multifaceted contributions to educational policy, practice, theory, and future research, as outlined below.

Educational Policy

The findings provided valuable insights for educational policymakers, the Abuakwa South Municipal Directorate of Education, School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs), and heads of basic schools. By identifying teachers' perspectives and instructional strategies, the study informed evidence-based decision-making aimed at enhancing RC instruction at the basic school level. It further highlighted the need for policies that were aligned with the practical realities and challenges teachers faced.

Educational Practice

The study offered practical implications for classroom teachers and school leaders by identifying effective strategies that were in use, as well as the challenges associated with teaching RC. These insights formed a basis for professional development programmes, teacher training, and classroom support, thereby contributing to the improvement of pedagogical skills, content knowledge, and instructional techniques among teachers.

Curriculum Development

The findings served as a reference point for English Language curriculum developers and education officers. Capturing the real-world experiences and strategies of teachers, the study supported curriculum review and reform efforts. It emphasised the need to ensure that RC components were relevant and responsive to the instructional demands evident in basic school classrooms.

Educational Theory

The study contributed to the theoretical understanding of how teachers approached the teaching of RC. It provided insights into the pedagogical principles underpinning the strategies employed by teachers, thereby enriching the theoretical discourse

surrounding RC. It also enabled teachers to reflect on their practices and to identify areas requiring professional growth.

Methodology and Future Research

Finally, the study served as a useful resource for future researchers investigating similar topics. It laid a foundation for comparative studies across different regions and educational settings and encouraged further inquiry into the relationship between teacher beliefs, instructional strategies, and student outcomes in RC

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

This study was subject to certain delimitations, which were intentionally set to define its scope and focus. It was confined to public basic schools in the ASM, thereby excluding private schools and other municipalities. This boundary was informed by the researcher's access and familiarity with the context, and it was intended to enable a more in-depth exploration of teachers' perspectives within the public basic schools.

The study concentrated exclusively on teachers' perspectives, instructional strategies, and classroom experiences related to the teaching of RC. Consequently, the voices of learners, school administrators (heads and SISOs), and curriculum developers were not incorporated into the data collection process. While this focus provided in-depth insights into teaching practices, it restricted the study's ability to present a more holistic view of RC instruction within the basic school system.

The study further employed a qualitative research design, which prioritised depth over breadth. Data were gathered primarily through interviews and classroom observations with a relatively small sample size. Although this approach allowed for a rich,

contextualised understanding of the phenomenon, the findings were not intended to be generalised to all public basic schools in Ghana.

The study was also delimited to RC instruction at the basic school level, without extending to kindergarten or secondary levels. This focus on basic education was informed by the critical role of early literacy in shaping long-term academic achievement. These delimitations were necessary to ensure the manageability of the research and to allow for a focused exploration of the topic within the educational context of the Abuakwa South Municipality.

1.8 Limitations

While the study provided valuable insights into the teaching of RC in public basic schools in the Abuakwa South Municipality, several limitations may have influenced the findings and their generalisability.

The research was geographically confined to a single municipality, which limited the extent to which the findings could be applied to broader educational contexts across Ghana or comparable settings. The sociocultural, economic, and institutional conditions specific to the ASM may have shaped teacher practices and learner experiences in unique ways, thereby constraining the transferability of the results to other contexts.

The study again relied primarily on qualitative data, including interviews and classroom observations. Although this approach facilitated a detailed exploration of teacher beliefs, strategies, and challenges, it was susceptible to researcher bias and participant reactivity. For example, teachers might have portrayed their practices more

favourably during interviews or observations, potentially resulting in data that reflected idealised representations rather than everyday practices.

The study further did not systematically incorporate learners' perspectives or assess student outcomes in RC. Consequently, conclusions about the effectiveness of instructional strategies were drawn solely from teacher accounts and observed practices, without corroborating evidence from learner performance. This limited the ability to establish direct links between the identified strategies and student learning outcomes.

Moreover, the study was restricted to public basic schools in the Abuakwa South Municipality, thereby excluding private schools and limiting opportunities for comparison across the two sectors.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The research is organised into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the study, presenting the background, problem statement, purpose, objectives, research questions, significance, limitations, delimitations, and organisation. Chapter Two reviews related literature, organised around key concepts, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and empirical studies. Chapter Three outlines the research paradigm, design, study area, population, instruments, validation, data collection, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four presents the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of findings. Chapter Five summarises the key findings and offers conclusions, recommendations, implications, and directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature underpinning the study, focusing on the theoretical, and empirical frameworks. The theoretical framework discusses Schema Theory in relation to RC and its practical application. The conceptual framework examines key aspects of RC, and strategies employed in RC instruction. The empirical review analyses prior studies conducted on instructional strategies for RC.

The literature review is organised thematically as follows:

- Schema Theory (Bartlett, 1932) and its application
- The concept of reading comprehension
- The relevance of teaching reading comprehension
- Teachers' perspectives of reading comprehension
- Reading comprehension strategies (RCs)
- Instructional strategies for teaching RC
- Challenges teachers encounter in teaching RC
- Empirical review

2.1 Schema Theory (Bartlett, 1932; Rumelhart, 1980)

Bartlett's Schema Theory provides a psychological framework with significant implications for RC. Several studies highlight the role of schemata in shaping comprehension (Huang, 2019; McNeil, 2011; Salbego & Osborne, 2016; Stott, 2011). Schema Theory posits that individuals organise associated memories into structured

mental frameworks, schemata, that facilitate the interpretation of new information (Fulbrook, 2020).

When reading, relevant schemata are activated based on prior knowledge and experiences, enabling readers to construct meaning beyond the words on the page. Anderson (1994) explained that comprehension occurs when readers activate schemata that correspond to the events or objects described in a text. For example, encountering the word *car* activates knowledge of related concepts such as wheels, roads, and driving, thereby supporting interpretation.

The theory also emphasises the importance of integrating new information into meaningful structures. Retelling a story or summarising a lesson, for instance, enables learners to build coherent mental representations, strengthening retention and recall. In this respect, schema activation enhances both comprehension and language proficiency.

Al-Issa (2015) further described schema as a cognitive mechanism through which knowledge is acquired, organised, and applied during comprehension. Thus, Schema Theory underscores the role of prior knowledge in shaping the meaning readers construct from texts.

2.2 Types of Schema Theory and Their Application in RC

Bartlett (1932) and Rumelhart (1980) identified three main types of schemata: linguistic, content, and formal.

2.2.1 Linguistic Schema

Linguistic schema refers to readers' existing knowledge of language, including vocabulary, grammar, and syntax (Khartite, 2021). It forms the foundation upon

which comprehension is constructed, as it enables readers to recognise words, interpret sentence structures, and assign meaning to textual elements (Al-Issa, 2015). Without sufficient linguistic schema, readers struggle to integrate textual information with content and formal schemata, often leading to fragmented or superficial comprehension.

Koda (2005) observed that vocabulary breadth and depth directly influence readers' ability to process text and infer meaning. Similarly, Perfetti and Stafura (2014) emphasised that knowledge of morphology, semantics, and syntax enables readers to move beyond word recognition towards deeper levels of comprehension. Linguistic schema, therefore, serves as the bridge between decoding symbols and constructing coherent meaning.

In second language (L2) reading, the importance of linguistic schema becomes more pronounced. Carrell (1987) argued that deficiencies in vocabulary and grammar pose greater challenges to L2 readers than the absence of background or formal schemata. Likewise, Alderson (2000) described inadequate linguistic competence as a “threshold” problem in L2 comprehension, noting that without a minimum level of linguistic knowledge, learners cannot effectively apply higher-order strategies such as prediction or inference. These insights underline the interdependence of linguistic schema and other schema types in the reading process.

2.2.1.1 Application of Linguistic Schema

Xue (2019) emphasised that students with limited vocabulary, weak grammatical knowledge, or insufficient familiarity with English sentence structures face significant challenges in RC. To address this, vocabulary instruction in meaningful contexts is recommended, as it allows learners to link new words to prior knowledge and

experiences. This not only aids comprehension but also strengthens retention and long-term proficiency. Nation (2015) further noted that vocabulary learning is most effective when learners encounter words repeatedly across varied contexts, reinforcing semantic and syntactic associations.

The mastery of sentence structures also plays a crucial role in strengthening linguistic schema. Academic texts often feature complex and embedded constructions, which may cause misinterpretation if not explicitly taught. Instructional strategies such as sentence combining, clause deconstruction, and the explicit teaching of cohesion devices help learners interpret dense academic language more effectively (Grabe, 2009).

As Ur (2016) observed, grammar provides the framework for recognising how words function in relation to one another, thereby supporting accurate interpretation. For instance, distinguishing between verb tenses, passive and active voice, or conditional clauses is central to understanding nuanced arguments and narrative sequences.

Based on these insights, Xue (2019) recommended a threefold approach for strengthening linguistic schema:

- Expanding vocabulary: Building learners' lexical repertoire increases their ability to decode and comprehend texts of varying difficulty.
- Teaching sentence patterns and complex structures: Encouraging students to analyse longer sentences fosters syntactic awareness and supports comprehension.
- Fostering grammatical knowledge: Equipping learners with grammar enables accurate and coherent interpretation of texts.

Implementing these strategies provides learners with a solid linguistic foundation that not only enhances immediate comprehension but also prepares them for advanced reading tasks such as critical analysis and academic literacy. In sum, linguistic schema constitutes the bedrock of RC, and its deliberate development is indispensable for meaningful engagement with texts.

2.2.2 Content Schema

Rumelhart (1980) described content schema as comprising two aspects: (1) the context or social environment related to reading materials, and (2) the background knowledge readers already possess. Narrowly, it refers to the cultural knowledge of a language. He argued that comprehension of meaning largely depends on understanding cultural traditions and customs. Carrell (1983) similarly defined content schema as “the background knowledge of the content area of the text that readers bring to the text” (p. 83).

Brown (2017) argued that meaning is not transmitted solely by the text; rather, it is constructed by the reader. Meaning, therefore, emerges from the interaction between textual information and the reader’s cultural and emotional context. Many scholars emphasise that cultural background knowledge is essential for understanding certain discourses and can even outweigh linguistic competence in its impact on comprehension. Xue (2019) noted that a lack of cultural background knowledge may contribute to dyslexia.

2.2.2.1 Application of Content Schema

Xue (2019) contended that understanding individual words or sentences does not guarantee full comprehension of a text’s central idea. Language and culture are

interconnected, and a lack of relevant background knowledge often hinders comprehension.

To strengthen content schema, teachers are encouraged to:

- Guide students to pay closer attention to local and international affairs by watching news outlets such as CNN and BBC, and by reading English newspapers.
- Organise debate competitions and speech contests on current issues and world events.
- Foster interest in reading by introducing classical literature, which exposes students to world history and culture, thereby enriching their cultural knowledge.

2.2.3 Formal Schema

Formal schema refers to the discourse form, structure, and rhetorical organisation of texts (Carrell, 1983; Rumelhart, 1980). According to Singhal (1998), it includes knowledge of text types, genres, and structural conventions. Readers' schemata differ depending on their familiarity with the structural organisation of a text. For instance, newspapers, stories, poems, and scientific articles each activate different schemata.

The more familiar a reader is with a genre's structure, the better they can identify the central ideas and follow the author's reasoning. Formal schema also contributes to reading speed and comprehension accuracy.

2.2.3.1 Application of Formal Schema

Xue (2017) suggested that teachers should introduce students to a wide range of genres to strengthen formal schema and improve comprehension skills.

Steffensen et al. (1979) conducted an empirical study that illustrated the importance of content schemas in L2 RC. Two groups, Asian Indians living in the United States and Americans were asked to read letters based on traditional American and Indian weddings. Each group recalled the culturally familiar text more accurately, read it faster, and experienced fewer difficulties in comprehension. Conversely, unfamiliar content led to confusion, inaccurate predictions, and misinterpretation. These findings supported the hypothesis that readers comprehend texts aligned with their cultural frameworks more effectively than those that are culturally unfamiliar (Carrell, 1983).

2.3 The Concept of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension has been extensively explored in educational and linguistic research, with scholars providing diverse interpretations and definitions that underscore its centrality to meaning-making. Perfetti and Stafura (2014) conceptualised RC as the process of deriving meaning from written texts through the integration of prior knowledge and comprehension strategies, highlighting the reader's active role in constructing meaning. Similarly, Ramos (2018) defined RC as the extraction of meaning from text, emphasising the reader's ability to identify relevant information and assess its significance.

Guthrie et al. (2013) described RC as a transactional process in which readers dynamically engage with texts by applying background knowledge, strategies, and metacognitive skills. This perspective highlights the interactive nature of comprehension, where meaning emerges from the interplay between the text and the reader. In a related view, Aaron et al. (2014) explained RC as the simultaneous extraction and construction of meaning through interaction with written language.

Their definition underscores the dual processes of accessing textual information and integrating it with existing mental models.

The cognitive dimension of RC is further emphasised by Suyitno (2017), who characterised it as the mental process readers undergo to understand textual content. Likewise, the National Reading Panel (2000) described RC as a complex cognitive activity comprising multiple interrelated skills. They argued that RC cannot be fully understood without considering three key elements: (1) the essential role of vocabulary acquisition and instruction, (2) the use of active and interactive strategies to facilitate comprehension, and (3) the preparation of teachers to effectively guide learners in developing these skills.

Scholars have also stressed the inseparability of reading and comprehension. Owu-Ewie (2019) asserted that comprehension is the essence of reading, while Leipzig (2021) contended that reading and comprehension occur simultaneously and are inherently intertwined. According to Leipzig, a misalignment between decoding and comprehension processes impedes effective meaning-making.

From the above discussion, it may be concluded that RC is not a passive act of decoding symbols but a dynamic cognitive process. Readers actively construct meaning by integrating prior knowledge, employing strategic reading behaviours, and regulating their understanding metacognitively. Ultimately, the central feature of RC lies in the ability to generate meaning from text, a skill that empowers individuals to navigate complex information and make informed decisions in both academic and real-world contexts.

2.4 The Relevance of Teaching Reading Comprehension

The teaching of RC has been widely acknowledged as vital for learners' cognitive development, academic achievement, and intellectual growth. It entails more than the extraction of information; it requires readers to critically evaluate the relevance, credibility, and reliability of textual content (Dwyer et al., 2014). Such engagement exposes learners to diverse perspectives and evidence, thereby strengthening their critical thinking and interpretive capacities. Moore (2016) argued that RC is foundational to language fluency and indispensable across academic disciplines. Almutairi (2018) similarly emphasised its significance in both academic success and daily life, describing it as a “window of life” through which readers connect past experiences with present realities and future possibilities. Aptari (2019) highlighted RC as an enduring source of intellectual enrichment, framing it as an “unending delight” that bridges temporal and experiential boundaries.

As students progress academically, the role of RC becomes increasingly pronounced, enabling them to connect ideas across disciplines, synthesise knowledge, and critically evaluate arguments. For instance, Davis (2016) noted that strong comprehension skills equip learners to assess the validity of evidence, detect bias, and reach sound conclusions. Likewise, Pressley and Afflerbach (2012) observed that integrating information from multiple sources enables readers to construct nuanced understandings of complex topics and develop reasoned arguments. Beyond academic contexts, Mehalik and Dopp (2017) suggested that individuals with strong RC skills are better positioned to solve problems, as they can transfer insights from prior reading experiences to novel situations.

Empirical studies reinforce the importance of RC in academic success. Catts and Kamhi (2017) and Guthrie and Klauda (2014) demonstrated that comprehension is fundamental for accessing subject knowledge across the curriculum. Clarke et al. (2013) and Wong (2011) also found that students with weak comprehension skills struggle to meet learning expectations despite adequate decoding ability. Almutairi (2018) reiterated that successful learning outcomes depend on the ability to understand, analyse, and apply information gained through RC. Importantly, Khalifa et al. (2020) argued that all learners, regardless of proficiency, benefit from explicit instruction in comprehension strategies, as this fosters deeper engagement with texts and enhances information processing. The aims of RC instruction are therefore twofold: (1) to improve students' understanding of texts, and (2) to cultivate transferable skills that support critical thinking, problem-solving, and lifelong learning (Anggraini, 2021).

Snow (2016) summarized this view, stating that "RC is the heart of reading, central to the development of the critical thinking skills necessary for academic success" (p. 47). Similarly, the National Reading Panel (2000) emphasised that effective comprehension instruction not only strengthens students' ability to process and retain information but also promotes long-term educational attainment. In summary, the teaching of RC is indispensable for nurturing cognitive development, academic success, and personal growth. Equipping learners with the ability to interpret, analyse, and evaluate texts, RC instruction enhances language fluency, fosters critical thinking, and prepares individuals to meet the demands of the information age.

2.5 Teachers' Perspectives on Reading Comprehension

RC is widely recognized as a fundamental skill underpinning students' academic success across disciplines. Teachers acknowledge its pivotal role in enabling learners to access information, interpret complex texts, and critically analyse content, thereby fostering deeper subject knowledge. It is considered a cross-cutting competence that transcends disciplinary boundaries. Smith (2022) observes that proficient RC serves as a gateway for learners to engage effectively with materials in Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, and other subject areas. Similarly, Jones and Brown (2022) contend that without sufficient RC abilities, students struggle to grasp concepts, interpret data, and critically engage with subject-specific content. From teachers' perspectives, RC is not only an aspect of English language learning but also a skill that mediates access to knowledge across the curriculum. Garcia et al. (2023) report that students with strong RC skills demonstrate enhanced information retrieval, interpretation, and synthesis. Likewise, Johnson (2021) emphasises that learners who read proficiently are better positioned to comprehend disciplinary texts, thereby achieving improved retention and understanding of subject matter.

Teachers also frequently highlight RC as instrumental in nurturing critical thinking and evaluative abilities. Powell-Smith (2020) notes that proficient readers interrogate texts, assess arguments, and identify credible information across disciplines. This view is echoed by Li and Wang (2022), who stress that the capacity to critically evaluate texts promotes higher-order reasoning and reflective learning. Recent scholarship has further underscored the importance of integrating explicit RC instruction within subject-specific contexts. Martin et al. (2023), for example, advocate cross-disciplinary approaches that embed RC strategies tailored to individual subjects, thereby improving comprehension and the application of knowledge.

Overall, teachers regard the teaching of RC as a complex but essential undertaking. They recognise that effective RC instruction extends beyond basic word recognition to include higher-order processes such as contextual interpretation, inference-making, structural analysis, and summarisation (Bryan, 2023).

Comprehension involves an appreciation of context, requiring learners to connect background knowledge, anticipate outcomes, and interpret setting, characters, and circumstances. Fathi and Soleimani (2020) argue that activating prior knowledge and drawing on contextual clues enhances comprehension, with teachers often using pre-reading activities, schema activation, and graphic organisers to scaffold understanding. Pressley and Woloshyn (2021) similarly advocate the explicit teaching of summarisation techniques, including paraphrasing, reciprocal teaching, and summarising templates through which students identify central ideas, eliminate redundancies, and express key points concisely. Other research reinforces the view that effective comprehension necessitates integrating meaning across sentences, utilising background knowledge, and identifying authors' purposes and text structures (Graesser, 2015; Kendeou & O'Brien, 2018). Understanding individual sentences requires simultaneous processes, including visual word recognition, phonological and semantic activation, and syntactic parsing (Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). Wibowo et al. (2020) likewise contend that RC reflects the dynamic interaction between reader, text, and context. Indeed, Kendeou et al. (2016) describe RC as one of the most cognitively complex human activities. Echoing this, Pečjaka and Pirc (2018) and Van den Broek (2010) conceptualised RC as a multifaceted process in which meaning is extracted and constructed through active cognitive engagement with written language.

Teachers further emphasised the pedagogical importance of text structure awareness. Anderson and Pearson (2019) argue that teaching structures such as cause and effect, problem and solution, and compare–contrast enables learners to organise and interpret information more effectively. They propose strategies such as text mapping, structural identification, and graphic organisers as means of strengthening comprehension. Teachers’ perspectives of RC, therefore, remain nuanced and diverse, shaping classroom practices and influencing pedagogical approaches. This diversity underscores the necessity for sustained professional development and institutional support to equip teachers with strategies for addressing the challenges inherent in teaching RC. Several studies stress that teachers’ perspectives directly influence students’ learning outcomes. Contreras (2011) posits that teachers’ beliefs affect instructional practices, expectations, and relationships with learners, which in turn shape academic performance. Gambrell and Morrow (2017) reinforce this view, emphasising that recognising teachers’ perspectives is essential for developing supportive policies, professional training, and resources that enable teachers to manage the complexities of RC instruction effectively.

2.6 Reading Comprehension Strategies (RCs)

Reading comprehension strategies (RCs) are intentional and goal-directed cognitive operations that readers employ to construct meaning from written texts. These strategies enable readers to draw on their knowledge, abilities, and experiences to actively engage with texts. Maulizan (2015) defined RCs as conscious, reflective, and purposeful processes used by readers to achieve comprehension. This perspective underscores the deliberate and reflective nature of RCs, emphasising that effective comprehension requires active mental engagement. Afflerbach et al. (2020) described RCs as methods or procedures used by readers to enhance their understanding and

recall of texts, thereby highlighting their procedural and practical dimensions. Similarly, Nurdianingsih (2021) conceptualised RCs as the mental processes readers employ to interpret texts, foregrounding their cognitive character. Küçükoğlu (2013) likewise argued that RCs are cognitive processes that facilitate meaning-making, while Keene (2016) described them as deliberate and purposeful actions undertaken by proficient readers to comprehend texts, pointing to the skilled and active nature of strategic reading.

Other scholars have stressed the interplay between cognitive and metacognitive dimensions of RCs. Audina et al. (2020) emphasised that RCs enable readers to navigate texts, monitor comprehension, and address breakdowns when difficulties arise. Nguyen (2022) similarly observed that RCs constitute a repertoire of techniques employed to construct meaning and enhance memory retention. Across these perspectives, several features are evident: RCs are conscious, purposeful, and metacognitive processes that support readers in understanding, interpreting, and internalising texts. They provide mechanisms through which readers deepen comprehension by engaging cognitively and analytically with written material. Without these strategies, reading often degenerates into repetitive decoding with limited processing or retention of meaning, thereby constraining the ability to internalise information.

2.7 Strategies for Teaching Reading Comprehension

Effective teaching of RC requires the adoption of instructional strategies that equip learners with the skills needed to process and interpret texts. Smith and Jones (2019) identified explicit instruction as a common approach, where teachers directly model and teach strategies such as summarisation, questioning, and prediction. Martinez et

al. (2020) further emphasised scaffolding, in which structured guidance is provided to support learners as they develop independence in handling complex texts. Active engagement techniques, including reciprocal teaching, cooperative learning, and discussion, have also been recognised as effective in strengthening comprehension (Johnson, 2018).

Pressley and Woloshyn (2021) advocated summarisation, paraphrasing, and reciprocal teaching, which require learners to identify main ideas, eliminate redundancy, and articulate key points concisely. Mills (2019) proposed the PARIS strategy, Predict, Ask questions, Retell, Infer, and Summarise as a systematic method of fostering comprehension through structured engagement. Kuhn et al. (2010) reported that teachers' sustained use of such strategies builds confidence and effectiveness over time. Additional techniques recommended in the literature include previewing texts, self-questioning, making connections, visualising, applying vocabulary strategies, synthesising ideas, and evaluating information (Harvey & Goudvis, 2023; Oczkus, 2018).

Blachowicz and Ogle (2017) highlighted the importance of linking summarised ideas to the overall purpose of a text, while Oczkus (2018) encouraged the use of creative approaches such as dramatization and illustration to sustain engagement. Davis (2015) underscored questioning, predicting, and retelling, particularly when supported by graphic organisers (GOs). Lee (2019) identified six essential strategies for comprehension: decoding, fluency, vocabulary, sentence construction and cohesion, reasoning and background knowledge, and working memory and attention. More recently, broader frameworks have been proposed, including Question–Answer Relationship (QAR), Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR), reciprocal teaching,

scaffolding, and GOs. Collectively, these strategies enable learners to actively construct meaning and engage critically with texts.

2.7.1 The Question–Answer Relationship Strategy (QARs)

The Question–Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy is widely recognised as an effective pedagogical tool for improving comprehension. Almutairi (2018) argued that questioning requires learners to interact actively with texts, monitor their understanding, and construct meaning. This process is reinforced through frequent pauses for questioning, which foster higher-level thinking (Harvey & Goudvis, 2023). Moge (2021) similarly identified questioning as a key classroom activity that stimulates critical thinking and encourages students to articulate their ideas.

Earlier studies also support these claims. Iksan and Daniel (2015) and Rahman and Mahmud (2016) reported that effective questioning enhances teaching quality and communicative competence. Garcia et al. (2019) observed that questioning improves engagement, comprehension, and retention, while McKeachie et al. (2021) highlighted its role in promoting critical thinking. Stanger-Hall (2012) and Johnson (2018) further underscored its value in higher education contexts.

In reciprocal teaching, questioning occupies a central role (Oczkus, 2018). Keene and Zimmermann (2013) argued that teaching learners to generate their own questions enhances comprehension, while Mahdavi and Tensfeldt (2013) and Rouse et al. (2014) found that questioning fosters independence and critical reflection. Davis (2015) concluded that students who learn to question while reading develop greater awareness of how their comprehension is strengthened. Taken together, the literature consistently affirms that questioning is a powerful instructional strategy that promotes active learning, reflection, and deeper comprehension.

2.7.2 Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)

The Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) is widely acknowledged as an effective strategy for promoting learners' active engagement with texts. It encourages prediction, verification, and the integration of new knowledge with real-life experiences (Nerim, 2020; Wijaya & Zulaeha, 2021). DRTA is versatile, being applicable before, during, and after reading. Fitriyani and Suhardi (2019) argued that prediction prior to reading enhances comprehension and critical awareness, while Sari (2017) stressed that DRTA encourages purposeful reading as learners confirm or refute their predictions.

The interactive nature of DRTA fosters active thinking and deeper engagement (Hans & Hans, 2015). Empirical evidence suggests it produces stronger outcomes than conventional approaches, particularly in developing critical comprehension (Nerim, 2020). The Ghana Education Service (2020) also recommends DRTA, noting that reading in smaller segments with guided questions supports progressive comprehension and confidence. Teachers therefore regard DRTA as a practical means of enhancing reflective engagement with texts.

2.7.3 Scaffolding

Scaffolding involves temporary support provided by teachers to enable learners to progress towards independence (Heritage, 2010). Grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development, scaffolding bridges the gap between what learners can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance. It is particularly significant in comprehension instruction, as it helps learners connect prior knowledge to new concepts.

Wade and Kidd (2019) emphasised the role of scaffolding in linking knowledge to authentic contexts, while Eurich's (2017) meta-analysis demonstrated that scaffolding methods such as modelling and guided practice improve outcomes. Cognitive load theory also supports scaffolding, with Sweller et al. (2019) noting that structured support reduces extraneous demands, enabling learners to process information more effectively. Collectively, research underscores scaffolding as an essential tool for comprehension instruction and sustainable learning.

2.7.4 Graphic Organisers (GOs)

Graphic organisers (GOs) are highly effective tools for supporting comprehension by providing visual representations of relationships within texts (Pang, 2013; Sam & Rajan, 2013). They help learners organise information spatially, which facilitates understanding and recall (Odiri, 2015). Brady et al. (2021) observed that learners using GOs internalise content more effectively than those who rely on linear reading alone.

Teachers employ GOs to assist learners in summarising, comparing, classifying, and analysing textual content (Pang, 2013). They also support linking prior knowledge with new concepts, clarifying relationships, and strengthening recall (Dexter & Hughes, 2011). Moreover, GOs reduce perceptual errors and aid in understanding complex vocabulary (Sam & Rajan, 2013). By bridging textual content and cognitive processing, GOs enable learners to interpret and retain information more effectively.

2.7.5 Retelling the Story to Summarise the Lesson

Story retelling is recognised as an effective strategy for consolidating comprehension and strengthening recall. By narrating texts in their own words, learners focus on essential ideas, internalise content, and enhance summary skills (Schisler et al., 2023).

Martin and Gaffney (2022) found that retelling improves learners' ability to identify key details, while Davis et al. (2021) argued that it fosters the development of mental representations necessary for organising and recalling information.

Fuchs et al. (2020) also stressed that retelling encourages coherent articulation, enabling learners to express meaning accurately. Collectively, these studies highlight retelling as a valuable instructional practice that promotes comprehension and supports literacy development.

2.7.6 Challenges and Complementary Strategies

Although story retelling has demonstrated considerable value, its effectiveness is not universal. Lee and Park (2022) noted that learners with disabilities often require additional scaffolds, as retelling alone may not meet their needs. Visual aids and interactive activities have therefore been recommended as alternative entry points into texts.

Technology-based approaches have also been highlighted. Brown et al. (2022) found that digital storytelling platforms foster greater engagement than traditional methods, offering multimodal opportunities to process information. However, Garcia and Lee (2019) cautioned that inequalities in access remain a significant challenge. Complementary methods such as reciprocal teaching and think-alouds have likewise been shown to strengthen comprehension. Thompson and Hall (2021) argued that these strategies cultivate metacognitive awareness and collaborative dialogue, extending comprehension beyond the focus of retelling.

Nevertheless, the effective use of such approaches depends on teachers' knowledge and confidence. Research by Torgerson et al. (2019) and Moats (2020) revealed gaps

in teachers' preparedness, which limit effective implementation. Overall, while retelling provides a strong foundation for comprehension, it must be integrated with complementary approaches to address diverse needs and promote inclusive instruction.

2.8 Challenges Confronting Teachers in Teaching Reading Comprehension

Teachers play a pivotal role in RC instruction, yet they frequently face pedagogical and structural challenges. Graham and Bellert (2015), Davis (2015), and Clemens and Simmons (2014) identified difficulties such as limited vocabulary knowledge, inadequate background knowledge, and weaknesses in fluency and inferential reasoning among pupils. These learner-related issues often hinder effective instruction.

Beyond this, Clark (2019) stressed that limited instructional time, inadequate resources, and insufficient professional development constrain teachers' ability to adopt innovative approaches. Brown (2021) further observed that balancing learners' diverse abilities within inclusive settings remains a persistent challenge. Similar to findings on retelling (Lee & Park, 2022), students with special educational needs often require additional supports.

While technology presents opportunities, Garcia and Lee (2019) cautioned that unequal access to digital tools undermines its potential. Collectively, these challenges underscore the complex realities teachers face, which require both systemic and pedagogical responses to strengthen the teaching of reading comprehension.

2.8.1 Teachers' Knowledge about Reading Comprehension Strategies

A critical determinant of effective comprehension instruction is teachers' knowledge. Kuzborska (2011) and Coldwell (2017) highlighted the strong association between professional knowledge, teacher confidence, and instructional effectiveness. Keene and Zimmermann (2013) further emphasised the value of modelling strategies and developing a shared instructional language. Nevertheless, many teachers have limited exposure to alternative comprehension strategies, which often results in an overreliance on traditional and less effective practices, such as round-robin reading and surface-level questioning (Duke et al., 2011; Moats, 2020). This limitation intersects directly with the earlier discussion of complementary strategies. For instance, approaches such as reciprocal teaching or digital storytelling can only be effectively integrated if teachers possess both the content knowledge and the pedagogical expertise required. Research by Mudzielwana et al. (2012), Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016), and Reyna-Barron (2016) consistently demonstrates that teachers often lack such preparedness. Similarly, Madikiza and Cekiso (2014) found that insufficient knowledge restricts teachers' ability to implement strategies effectively, thereby constraining student comprehension. As Safari and Rashidi (2015) argue, professional development is therefore not merely desirable but essential in overcoming these barriers. The foregoing discussion indicates that although a range of complementary strategies exists to address the limitations of story retelling, their successful adoption is contingent upon teacher expertise and systemic support. The challenges confronting teachers whether knowledge-based, resource-related, or tied to learner diversity are thus inextricably linked to the effective use of comprehension strategies. Addressing these challenges requires sustained investment in teacher

education and equitable access to resources, enabling educators to implement multifaceted approaches that genuinely advance reading comprehension.

2.8.2 Background Knowledge of Text and Vocabulary

A substantial body of literature affirms that both background knowledge and vocabulary are fundamental to reading comprehension, though their contributions are distinct yet interrelated. Guthrie and Klauda (2014), in a meta-analysis, demonstrated that prior knowledge enables learners to connect new information to existing schemas, thereby improving comprehension and retention. Johnson (2018) similarly observed that learners with richer background knowledge consistently outperformed peers in comprehension tasks, underscoring the enduring influence of accumulated knowledge. Al-Issa (2015) further argued that comprehension draws not only on content schema but also on formal and linguistic schema, suggesting that successful reading requires familiarity with both text structures and language features.

Vocabulary has likewise been consistently identified as a decisive factor in comprehension. Cerasoli and Ford (2014) and Francie (2017) asserted that vocabulary and decoding skills underpin the ability to interpret textual meaning, while Zhang (2016) demonstrated that vocabulary knowledge predicts comprehension outcomes in both first- and second-language learners. Kintsch and Mangalath (2011) offered a complementary view, suggesting that comprehension is maximised when learners possess both functional and content-specific vocabulary. Nation (2018) reinforced this, noting the strong correlation between vocabulary size and comprehension across linguistic contexts.

Comparatively, prior knowledge provides the conceptual framework through which learners situate new information (Cain & Oakhill, 2011; Perin, 2016), while

vocabulary offers the linguistic tools required to decode, interpret, and infer meaning (Lawrence et al., 2019; Lervåg et al., 2018). These dimensions are not independent; rather, they interact dynamically. Gonzalez-Fernandez and Schmitt (2017) argued that breadth and depth of vocabulary expand in tandem, mirroring how prior knowledge grows through exposure to new content. Similarly, Johnson et al. (2022) reported a bidirectional relationship, with vocabulary supporting comprehension and comprehension, in turn, facilitating vocabulary growth.

However, challenges also emerge. Students lacking sufficient background knowledge may not achieve deep comprehension even with a strong vocabulary, as they struggle to contextualise information (Smith et al., 2021). Conversely, learners with extensive background knowledge but limited vocabulary may face decoding difficulties that hinder meaning-making (Monix, 2012; Qi, 2014). This duality underscores that vocabulary and background knowledge are not interchangeable but mutually reinforcing. Instruction, therefore, must strategically combine schema activation with targeted vocabulary development. Guthrie and Klauda (2014) and Perin (2016) recommended activating learners' prior knowledge, while Qi (2014) advocated pre-teaching essential vocabulary to ease engagement with complex texts. Beck et al. (2013) further argued that learners with larger vocabularies not only comprehend texts more effectively but also expand their background knowledge, creating a virtuous cycle of learning. In sum, vocabulary provides the building blocks of textual meaning, while background knowledge supplies the interpretive framework. Instruction must therefore develop both dimensions simultaneously to ensure robust comprehension.

2.8.3 Reading Fluency

Fluency has been broadly defined as the ability to read text accurately, automatically, and with appropriate prosody (NRP, 2011; Nevo et al., 2020; Pang et al., 2013; Rasinski et al., 2022). Duke and Pearson (2008) emphasised that fluent readers identify words rapidly, thereby freeing cognitive resources for meaning-making. Silverman et al. (2013) similarly highlighted the role of automaticity in enabling efficient comprehension processes.

Empirical studies affirm the strong link between fluency and comprehension. Rasinski (2016), in a large sample of elementary pupils, identified a robust positive correlation between the two, suggesting that fluent readers are significantly better positioned to construct meaning. Kim et al. (2017), in a meta-analysis, demonstrated that gains in fluency directly translate into improvements in comprehension across age cohorts. These findings align with earlier reports by the NICHD (2000) and NAEP (2001), both of which stressed the indispensability of fluency for literacy development. Armbruster et al. (2001) similarly found that fluency closely predicts comprehension outcomes.

Kuhn et al. (2010) argued that fluent reading conserves cognitive resources for higher-order processes. Bhlool (2013) likened fluency to “fuel” for comprehension, while Hudson et al. (2015) warned that fluency deficits reflected in slow or inaccurate reading significantly impede meaning-making. Howie et al. (2017) further observed that fluency challenges often overlap with broader language proficiency issues. Taken together, these findings indicate that fluency is not merely a technical skill but a cognitive gateway to comprehension, fully realised only when supported by

complementary elements such as vocabulary, background knowledge, communication, and adequate resources.

2.8.4 Students' Communication Level

Oral communication plays a central role in literacy instruction. Aleksandrak (2011) described speaking as the most critical skill in the communicative era, while Shteivi and Hamuda (2016) identified it as a direct indicator of language knowledge. Danibao and Tari (2023) similarly stressed that English instruction should prioritise equipping learners with the ability to communicate effectively in real contexts.

Research also highlights the conditions necessary for meaningful communication. Urban (2016) reported that insufficient planning time limits teachers' ability to design communicative lessons. Kaplan and Chan (2017) supported this view, arguing that adequate preparation enables teachers to create differentiated and engaging tasks. Huff and Christensen (2018) emphasised that careful preparation enhances opportunities for interaction, while Jacobs and Hayirserver (2016) underscored the importance of providing students with sufficient space to express and exchange ideas.

Communication also strengthens reading comprehension. Cremin et al. (2022) demonstrated that interactive discussions enrich vocabulary, strengthen comprehension, and foster fluency. This underscores the reciprocal relationship between fluency and communication: fluent readers participate more effectively in discussions, while communicative practices, in turn, reinforce prosody, vocabulary, and interpretive skills.

2.8.5 Inadequate Reading Materials

The issue of inadequate reading materials represents a fundamental barrier to effective comprehension instruction. While textbooks and supplementary resources remain indispensable for guiding teaching, their availability and quality vary significantly across contexts, with notable implications for students' background knowledge, vocabulary development, fluency, and communication. Textbooks continue to serve as central instructional tools, offering structured content across the academic year (Olumorin et al., 2010; Harwood, 2017; Mullis et al., 2012). Empirical evidence affirms their importance: Chingos and West (2010) found that students without textbooks performed significantly worse on assessments, while Beth (2017) reported that adequate reading resources foster greater participation and teaching effectiveness.

However, scarcity of appropriate materials presents a persistent challenge. Tomlinson (2016) and Awad (2019) argued that limited resources curtail vocabulary growth and comprehension opportunities, while Alhassan (2017) and Nguyen and Tran (2020) observed that shortages constrain teachers' ability to provide effective instruction. Limited exposure to diverse and authentic texts also restricts schema activation (Guthrie & Klauda, 2014) and narrows vocabulary development (Nation, 2015; Gonzalez-Fernandez & Schmitt, 2017).

Fluency likewise suffers when opportunities for repeated, meaningful reading are limited (Rasinski, 2016; Kuhn et al., 2010). Similarly, communicative practices are constrained when learners lack varied texts that stimulate discussion (Cremin et al., 2022). La Croix et al. (2023) strongly advocated for authentic reading experiences, noting that real-world texts broaden perspectives and enhance critical reading. The

National Reading Panel (2000) also underscored the need for diverse materials to stimulate vocabulary growth and comprehension.

In summary, inadequate reading resources are not an isolated problem but a structural issue undermining comprehension development. While textbooks remain central, their scarcity restricts vocabulary, fluency, communication, and background knowledge. Conversely, access to abundant, varied, and contextually relevant materials empowers students to activate prior knowledge, expand vocabulary, and build fluency. Resource availability thus emerges as a pivotal determinant of literacy development and educational equity.

2.10 Empirical Review

A number of empirical studies have been conducted to investigate strategies for teaching reading comprehension. Whilst some studies explored a range of methods and techniques, others concentrated on individual strategies with particular reference to specific grade levels. This section critically reviews key studies relevant to the present research.

Mudzielwana et al. (2012) examined strategies for teaching RC among Grade 3 Tshivenda-speaking learners in South Africa. The study arose from concerns regarding low levels of RC among these learners. Adopting a qualitative design, the authors collected data through teacher interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations across three schools. Their findings revealed several factors contributing to poor comprehension outcomes, including the limited availability of Tshivenda reading resources, insufficient teacher training, and the inadequate application of effective comprehension strategies. The study recommended improvements in teacher education programmes and the provision of more Tshivenda

reading materials to address these challenges. The relevance of Mudzielwana et al.'s (2012) research to the present study lies in its shared focus on comprehension strategies and its use of qualitative methods. However, their work was confined to lower grade levels and did not sufficiently consider teachers' perspectives on their preferred strategies. This limitation highlights the need for further inquiry into teachers' perspectives and practices, which the present study seeks to address.

Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016), in their study titled *Reading comprehension in South African schools: Are teachers getting it, and getting it right?*, investigated teachers' comprehension instruction practices and related challenges. Surveying 159 teachers across 30 schools in three provinces, the study uncovered a significant mismatch between teachers' reported practices and learners' actual literacy performance. Data were analysed using SPSS (Version 22), and findings indicated that many teachers lacked sufficient knowledge of effective comprehension strategies and did not actively engage in rich reading practices themselves. Consequently, students' literacy outcomes remained poor. The authors concluded that improving comprehension requires enhancing teachers' pedagogical expertise whilst simultaneously fostering their own reading habits and comprehension skills. Although Pretorius and Klapwijk's (2016) study aligns with the present research in examining teachers' understanding of comprehension, its quantitative orientation limited deeper exploration of contextual issues. The exclusive reliance on questionnaires excluded qualitative methods such as interviews and observations, which, according to Creswell (2012), provide richer insights by allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives. The present study therefore seeks to address this gap by incorporating qualitative methods.

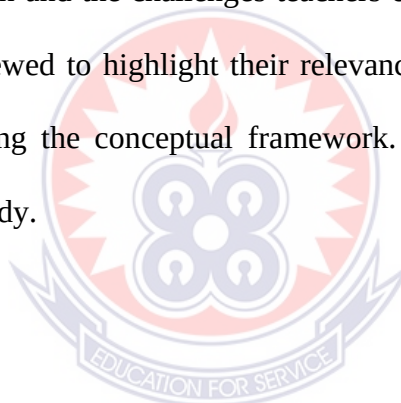
Ganie et al. (2019) investigated explicit RC difficulties in English texts among high school students in Medan. Using purposive sampling, the researchers collected data through observation and documentation of classroom practices. Thematic analysis revealed three key findings: (a) students' foundational English knowledge was below average, which hindered comprehension; (b) some teachers failed to adopt methods that facilitated comprehension; and (c) traditional practices such as reading aloud, having students read, and answering textbook questions predominated. These findings corroborated Soemantri's (2011) earlier assertion that traditional approaches remain pervasive in many classrooms. Ganie et al.'s (2019) study is relevant to the current research due to its shared emphasis on identifying challenges faced by teachers in teaching comprehension. Both studies also adopted qualitative approaches and employed thematic analysis. Nevertheless, Ganie et al.'s (2019) work was restricted to observation and documentation, without incorporating interviews to capture teachers' perspectives. As Creswell (2012) observes, interviews enrich data by enabling participants to provide deeper reflections on the issues under study. Thus, the inclusion of interviews in the present study is expected to offer a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' strategies and challenges.

What emerges from this comparative review is that whilst the existing literature illustrates the important dimensions of comprehension instruction, gaps remain. In particular, the perspectives of teachers regarding their preferred common strategies, the contextual challenges they face, and the rationale behind their instructional choices remain underexplored. Furthermore, the integration of multiple qualitative methods such as interviews and observations has not been adequately employed to provide a holistic picture. Addressing these gaps is crucial, as teachers are central agents in shaping learners' comprehension outcomes.

In sum, the reviewed studies provide valuable insights into comprehension instruction across diverse contexts. They also reveal significant gaps, particularly relating to teachers' perspectives and the use of qualitative methods to capture in-depth experiences. Addressing these gaps forms the rationale for the present study.

2.11 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter reviewed the related literature underpinning the study. It began with the theoretical foundations and discussed different interpretations of RC and comprehension strategies, using appropriate terminology. It further examined the significance of teaching reading comprehension, alongside current strategies for teaching comprehension and the challenges teachers encounter in practice. Empirical studies were also reviewed to highlight their relevance to this research. The chapter concluded by presenting the conceptual framework. The next chapter outlines the methodology of the study.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter presents the methodology used in the study. It highlights the research paradigm, research design, study area, target population, sampling techniques, and instruments for data collection. It also describes the validation of the instruments, the data collection procedures, data analysis, triangulation, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Paradigm

Researchers' perspectives are shaped by their worldviews, philosophical inclinations, and basic assumptions concerning the nature of social reality, knowledge, and human behaviour (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A philosophical stance, otherwise referred to as a research paradigm, is made up of a set of assumptions that direct how a researcher approaches the study of a subject of interest (Henn et al., 2016). This study was underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist paradigm was adopted based on the assumption that individuals construct their social reality, which is inseparable from the meanings and interpretations they attach to their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This means that the interpretivist paradigm enabled the researcher to gain an understanding of the perspectives of teachers by exploring the subjective viewpoints of participants.

Interpretivists are known to rely on qualitative research methods such as interviews and observations (Creswell, 2018), which provide researchers with the opportunity to obtain in-depth insights into the lived experiences of participants and the meanings they attach to them. According to Creswell (2016), participants attempt to make sense of the world in which they live and work. They also make sense of it through their

engagement with the researcher, as further asserted by De Vos et al. (2011). In this study, the interpretivist paradigm enabled the researcher to immerse himself fully in the participants' context, by moving with them, observing them, and talking with them, to understand what they think, feel, and believe. Thus, the ideas, thoughts, emotions, and experiences of participants were accurately and adequately represented in this study. The approach also helped reduce the misinterpretation and misrepresentation of information.

3.2 Research Design

This study employed a phenomenological design. A phenomenology is a qualitative research design used to explore and understand the lived experiences of individuals. The aim is to provide a comprehensive account of the phenomena as experienced by individuals, without trying to interpret or explain them using pre-existing theories or concepts (Guisasola et al., 2023). In addition, a phenomenology preserves the voices and perspectives of participants, reducing the risk of distorting or misrepresenting their experiences in the process of data collection and analysis (Lee, 2022). It also helps to identify central themes that capture the essence of the lived experience, while simultaneously preserving the subjective perspectives of participants.

Prosek et al. (2021) reiterated that the purpose of a phenomenology is to reveal the essence of lived experiences and to explain them in a rigorous and systematic manner. Given this, a phenomenology was considered the most suitable methodological approach for this study, since the focus was on teachers' experiences of teaching English Language. The study therefore employed a qualitative research approach because the phenomenon under investigation was not adequately researched, and quantitative research alone would not provide sufficient insight into the participants'

perspectives, understandings, and challenges. Qualitative data, collected through interviews and participant observation, provided more detailed insights.

In this sense, participants had the opportunity to openly discuss their perspectives, instructional practices, professional development opportunities, and challenges in teaching English Language. According to Streubert and Carpenter (2011, p. 70), *“human phenomena could not and should not be reduced to mathematical formulas.”*

In line with this assertion, the study made use of the voices of participants in the form of their personal constructs, subjective meanings, opinions, beliefs, and interpretations of events. The use of open-ended questions helped uncover participants’ personal experiences of teaching English Language. This approach enabled the researcher to explore the subjective world of participants and arrive at meaning construction of the perspectives of teachers on reading comprehension.

3.3 Population

The population of the study consisted of English Language teachers in public basic schools within the ASM. This group was deemed appropriate because English Language teachers were directly responsible for teaching RC at the Junior High School level and were, therefore, best placed to provide informed accounts of the instructional strategies, challenges, and perspectives under investigation. As Cohen et al. (2018) observed, defining a research population in educational studies required alignment with the research objectives and a focus on individuals most directly engaged with the phenomenon of interest. Including teachers across the six educational circuits of the Municipality, the study ensured contextual representation whilst concentrating on participants who possessed the most relevant expertise.

The target population comprised a total of 48 English Language teachers, which was considered appropriate and feasible for qualitative research. Creswell and Poth (2018) indicated that qualitative studies often employed relatively small populations to allow for in-depth and detailed exploration rather than broad statistical generalisation. Likewise, Patton (2015) highlighted that qualitative inquiry prioritised “information-rich cases” over numerical representativeness, as the aim was to capture detailed experiences and meanings. The manageable size of the population enhanced the practicality of data collection and ensured that the narratives of participants could be incorporated comprehensively into the analysis. This careful alignment between the population and the study objectives strengthened the credibility and contextual grounding of the findings regarding RC pedagogy within the Municipality.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique, consistent with non-probability sampling strategies, was employed to intentionally select participants who possessed substantial, relevant, and varied experiences related to the phenomenon under investigation. The purposive sampling technique was deemed appropriate given the study’s phenomenological orientation, which required in-depth engagement with individuals capable of providing rich, detailed, and meaningful accounts of their lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It also facilitated a focus on participants who could provide deep insights into the phenomenon, thereby ensuring the generation of data that were both contextually grounded and thematically robust. The primary aim of the purposive sampling technique was to target specific characteristics of a population of interest, which enabled the researcher to answer the research questions effectively (Covernton et al., 2019).

From the total population of forty-eight (48) English Language teachers in public basic schools in the ASM, a purposive sample of fifteen (15) participants was selected. Out of the fifteen (15) participants, six were male and nine were female. The sampling process was informed by the principle of information-rich cases as proposed by Patton (2015), which emphasises selecting individuals based on their ability to illuminate critical aspects of the phenomenon. This criterion ensured that each participant contributed significantly to the understanding of the subject under study. To further enhance the depth and breadth of the collected data, maximum variation sampling was employed to ensure fair representation of participants with diverse characteristics. This approach was particularly suitable for phenomenological research, as it facilitated the identification of both common and unique perspectives, thereby enriching the findings and enhancing their transferability (Malterud et al., 2016; Palinkas et al., 2015; Robinson, 2018). Morse (2020) affirmed that variation in participant selection strengthens the ability to capture the essence of lived experiences. The use of maximum variation sampling in this study thus ensured a balanced understanding of the phenomenon by incorporating participants with diverse characteristics, capturing both shared patterns and unique perspectives within their lived experiences. According to Patton (2015), maximum variation sampling provides a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon by uncovering its multifaceted nature across diverse cases.

In addition to purposive and maximum variation sampling, a criterion sampling technique was also applied. This technique ensured that only participants who met specific eligibility requirements were included in the study. Criterion sampling is regarded as valuable in qualitative research because it allows the researcher to focus on cases that satisfy predetermined conditions of importance, thereby ensuring direct

relevance to the research questions (Patton, 2015). The application of clear eligibility requirements enhanced the rigour and credibility of the study, as data were obtained from information-rich cases directly related to the phenomenon under investigation. When combined with purposive strategies, criterion sampling refined the participant pool and enhanced the depth of the data collected, since all respondents possessed the essential characteristics necessary to provide meaningful insights (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Ritchie et al., 2014). These eligibility criteria included age, years of teaching experience, and academic qualifications. This multi-layered sampling approach was designed to maintain methodological rigour, ensure alignment with the philosophical foundations of phenomenological research, and facilitate the collection of data that were rich, diverse, and contextually meaningful. The strategic integration of purposive, maximum variation, and criterion sampling enabled the researcher to address the research objectives with depth and detail, while operating within the practical constraints of the study.

The sample size of fifteen (15) participants was also consistent with conventions in phenomenological research. Prior studies have suggested that between five and fifteen participants are often sufficient to achieve depth and saturation (Dukes, 1984; Guest et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2009). Scholars have further argued that adequacy in qualitative sampling depends not only on the number of participants but also on the richness and depth of the data collected (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Vasileiou et al., 2018). Similarly, recent studies emphasised that saturation is frequently reached with between nine (9) and seventeen (17) participants (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Thus, the inclusion of fifteen participants was considered methodologically appropriate, as it ensured sufficient diversity of perspectives while remaining consistent with established parameters for phenomenological inquiry.

3.5 Study Area

This study was carried out in the Abuakwa South Municipal of the Eastern Region of Ghana, with Kibi as its capital. The municipality covered an estimated land area of 210 square kilometres and was originally part of the East Akim District created in 1988. It attained municipal status in 2008 and, following a re-demarcation in 2018, became Abuakwa South Municipal under LI 2304, with the northern portion established as Abuakwa North Municipal.

According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2023), the projected population of Abuakwa South Municipal in 2023 was **46,370**, comprising approximately **22,930 males** and **23,440 females**. The area lay within the moist semi-deciduous forest zone, with about 15% of its land covered by forest reserves, including parts of the Atewa Forest. Farming remained the main economic activity, supported by small-scale artisanal mining, while the municipality continued to operate under Ghana's local government system as one of the 33 municipal and district assemblies in the Eastern Region.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

In qualitative research, the choice of data collection instruments and the procedures followed are essential for obtaining rich, detailed accounts of participants' experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, two principal instruments of data collection were employed: semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. These complementary approaches were carefully chosen to generate in-depth data and to facilitate triangulation, thereby enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). While the semi-structured interviews provided valuable insights into teachers' perspectives, experiences, and instructional

practices, the classroom observations corroborated these accounts by documenting how RC instruction unfolded in authentic classroom contexts.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection instrument. This method involved predetermined questions supplemented with open-ended probes, which encouraged participants to elaborate on their responses and explore emerging ideas in depth (Gall et al., 2017). Such flexibility enabled dialogue whilst maintaining focus on the research objectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) observed, semi-structured interviews struck a balance between structure and openness, allowing researchers to elicit participants' lived experiences whilst ensuring that discussions remained aligned with the study's central themes.

Semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix A) was developed in advance and structured around the core themes of the study, including teachers' perspectives on RC, instructional strategies, CPD influences, and encountered challenges. It also incorporated demographic data such as age, gender, academic qualifications, and teaching experience, which contextualised participants' responses and informed the purposive sampling strategy. The guide included open-ended questions and prompts designed to stimulate reflection and elaboration (Kallio et al., 2016). It was reviewed by colleagues and supervisors to enhance its content validity and credibility, a process consistent with Bryman's (2016) recommendations for ensuring rigour in qualitative data collection.

Pilot-testing with English Language teachers outside the study area further refined the guide, improving clarity and contextual relevance to the ASM. Pilot studies are widely recognised as an essential step in qualitative research, as they help to identify

ambiguous or culturally inappropriate questions and allow for necessary adjustments prior to the main fieldwork (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). This iterative process of development and refinement reduced potential sources of bias and improved the reliability of the instrument, thereby addressing a common concern in interview-based research (Gall et al., 2017; Yin, 2018). Ultimately, semi-structured interviews were justified as the most appropriate tool for exploring teachers' perspectives on reading comprehension, owing to their capacity to generate nuanced, contextually grounded, and credible qualitative data.

3.6.2 Observation

Classroom observations were employed to complement and corroborate the interview findings by providing direct evidence of instructional practices in Public Junior High Schools' RC lessons. This approach is consistent with the principle of **data triangulation**, which enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Flick, 2018). While interviews capture teachers' reported beliefs and experiences, observational data allow the researcher to verify how these beliefs are enacted in practice, thereby bridging the potential gap between espoused theories and actual classroom behaviour (Clarke et al., 2013; Cohen et al., 2018). A structured observation checklist (see Appendix B) was designed, guided by the research objectives and relevant literature. This aligns with O'Leary (2017), who notes that observation tools grounded in theoretical and empirical work help researchers focus on pertinent aspects of classroom life. The four domains, teachers' perspectives on RC, instructional strategies, CPD influences, and observed challenges, reflect areas identified in recent literacy research as critical for improving comprehension instruction (Elleman & Oslund, 2019; Guthrie & Klauda, 2014; Snilstveit et al., 2016).

Employing classroom observation alongside interviews, the study provided a more detailed and holistic understanding of RC instruction. As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue, observation captures the “here and now” of human activity, allowing researchers to witness behaviours and interactions that may not surface in interviews. This methodological integration therefore strengthened the study’s capacity to draw credible insights into English Language teachers’ RC practices. A non-participant approach was adopted to reduce researcher influence on teacher behaviour, thereby ensuring the authenticity of observed practices.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

3.7.1 Formal Authorisation and Ethical Clearance

Formal introductory letter was obtained from the Department of Basic Education, University of Education, Winneba, as well as from the Abuakwa South Municipal Education Office (see Appendix C). Additional permission was sought from SISOs and head teachers of the participating schools. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who received a consent form outlining the study’s purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, the right to withdraw at any stage, and the measures taken to safeguard confidentiality and anonymity (see Appendix D). This process was guided by the ethical principles of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018). Ethical clearance is crucial in qualitative studies as it safeguards participants’ rights and ensures adherence to professional standards (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.7.2 Pilot Testing of the Interview Guide

Prior to the main fieldwork, the interview guide was pilot-tested with teachers from the Abuakwa North Municipal Education Directorate who were not part of the final sample. This allowed refinement of the wording, sequencing, and clarity of questions, thereby

ensuring cultural and contextual appropriateness for the Abuakwa South Municipality. Pilot studies are recognised as essential in qualitative research because they help identify potential ambiguities and ensure the reliability of instruments (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002).

3.7.3 Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews

The actual interviews were scheduled at times and venues convenient for participants, usually in private spaces within school compounds such as unused classrooms, offices, or shaded outdoor areas. A total of fifteen one-to-one semi-structured interviews were conducted, each lasting 45 to 60 minutes. At the start of each session, the researcher restated the study's objectives, addressed participants' concerns, and reconfirmed consent. While the interview guide provided structure, its open-ended format enabled new but relevant themes to emerge (Gill et al., 2008). Semi-structured interviews are widely valued for balancing focus with flexibility, thereby generating in-depth and nuanced data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

3.7.4 Recording, Transcription, and Validation

All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission using digital devices, supplemented by field notes that captured non-verbal cues and contextual observations. Recordings were transcribed verbatim, checked for accuracy, and pseudonyms were applied to ensure confidentiality. To enhance credibility, transcript summaries were returned to participants for validation and clarification (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member-checking strengthens trustworthiness by confirming that interpretations reflect participants' intended meanings (Cohen et al., 2018).

3.7.5 Selection of Teachers for Observation

From the total sample of interviewees, four teachers were purposively selected for classroom observation to reflect diversity in gender, teaching experience, and school type. Each teacher was observed on two occasions within a three-week period during English Language lessons, with sessions lasting 35–40 minutes to capture a complete literacy period. Observations were arranged in consultation with teachers to reduce disruption. Non-participant observation was adopted, minimising researcher influence on classroom behaviour (Cohen et al., 2018).

3.7.6 Use of Observation Checklist and Field Notes

Observations were guided by a structured checklist derived from the research objectives and supplemented with detailed field notes. These recorded contextual features such as spontaneous teacher–learner interactions and non-verbal communication. After each session, teachers were invited to reflect on the lesson, and their reflections were integrated with field notes to enrich interpretation. Observation is a vital complement to interviews, as it captures real-time practices that participants may not fully articulate (Flick, 2018).

3.7.7 Triangulation of Data Sources

Observation findings were triangulated with interview data to identify patterns of convergence and divergence, as well as emerging themes. Triangulation is essential in qualitative research because it enhances credibility and provides a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through these systematic and ethically steps, the study ensured the collection of credible, trustworthy, and contextually relevant data that illuminated teachers' perspectives and practices in the teaching of RC in Public Basic Schools in the Abuakwa South Municipality.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

The data were analysed using a thematic analysis approach grounded in phenomenological principles. This process enabled the identification, interpretation, and organisation of recurring patterns across participants lived experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2016). The analysis was enriched with verbatim excerpts from participants, in line with ethical procedures, to ensure that the findings were firmly rooted in authentic accounts (Morse et al., 2020). The researcher engaged in a process of immersion by repeatedly reading the interview transcripts, observational notes, and field notes. This facilitated a holistic understanding of participants' narratives and classroom practices, while also enabling the corroboration of interview data with insights from JHS classroom observations. Such integration enhanced both the validity and the depth of the findings.

Initial codes were generated from significant statements and phrases that reflected teachers' perspectives, instructional strategies, CPD, and challenges. These codes, drawn from both interview and observational data, were organised into themes that captured commonalities and variations in the lived experiences and practices of participants (see Appendix E). Themes were refined and reviewed to ensure alignment with the research objectives, while triangulation across interviews and observations strengthened the credibility of the findings (Yin, 2018). Throughout the analysis, the researcher adopted bracketing (*epoché*) to minimise personal biases and maintained reflexive journaling to ensure analytical transparency (Habibullah, et al., 2023).

The use of NVivo software facilitated the systematic organisation, coding, and retrieval of data, although the interpretation and theme development were conducted manually to preserve the detailed interpretive nature of phenomenological inquiry.

Importantly, the researcher retained interpretive control over the coding process, ensuring that the software functioned as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for analytical thinking (Elliott-Mainwaring, 2021). Bracketing, as a central element of phenomenological research, was consistently applied to suspend preconceptions and minimise bias during analysis (Gagura, 2023). Additionally, reflexive journaling was maintained throughout the research process to document personal reflections, decisions, and methodological considerations, thereby enhancing transparency and rigour.

3.9 Trustworthiness

Ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research is essential to maintain the credibility, reliability, and validity of the findings. Guba and Lincoln (1981) stated that all research must have “truth value,” “applicability,” “consistency,” and “neutrality” in order to be considered worthwhile. They further argued that the nature of knowledge within the quantitative paradigm (rationalistic) differs from that within the qualitative paradigm (naturalistic). Each paradigm requires paradigm-specific criteria for addressing trustworthiness. Qualitative research is deemed trustworthy when it accurately represents the lived experiences of the study participants (Speziale & Carpenter, 2011). According to Lincoln and Guba (1981) and Creswell (2009), the criteria for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research refers to the degree of believability and trustworthiness attributed to the data and analysis. It is achieved when participants recognise the research findings as reflective of their own experiences (Streubert et al.,

2011). To ensure credibility, the study was meticulously planned at every stage, maintaining rigour and adhering to established standards throughout the processes of data collection, analysis, and reporting. In addition, the data were recorded with the highest level of accuracy. Multiple data sources (interviews and observations) were employed to cross-validate findings, thereby enhancing their credibility. Preliminary findings were also shared with participants to verify accuracy and interpretation, ensuring that their viewpoints were represented faithfully.

3.9.1.1 Prolonged Engagement

Prolonged engagement requires the investigator's involvement with a site for a sufficient duration to identify and account for potential distortions that might otherwise affect the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, ample time was devoted to interacting with the participants. This allowed for a deeper understanding of their experiences, while also fostering the establishment of a trusting relationship throughout the interviews, observations, and member-checking processes.

3.9.1.2 Member Check

Member checking refers to the process through which data, analytical categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested by members of the stakeholder groups from whom the data were originally collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Hungler, 2014). Also referred to as respondent validation, member checking enables participants to review findings from the data analysis to confirm or challenge their accuracy (Creswell, 2015; Johnson & Waterfield, 2015; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, member checks involved sharing the research findings with participants to determine whether the results were plausible. This provided participants with the

opportunity to correct factual inaccuracies and challenge any perceived misinterpretations.

3.9.1.3 Persistent Observation

Persistent observation, often used alongside prolonged engagement, is a key aspect of ensuring the rigour and trustworthiness of qualitative research. It involves dedicating significant time within the research setting to gain a comprehensive understanding of the context, interactions, and dynamics under study. Persistent observation aims to identify the characteristics and elements most relevant to the research focus and to explore them in depth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, substantial time was devoted to collecting observational data, thereby fostering a thorough and refined understanding of the phenomenon under examination. This approach improved access to participants' perspectives and experiences, allowing the researcher to observe closely and listen attentively within classroom settings.

3.9.1.4 Triangulation

Triangulation in qualitative research refers to the practice of using multiple sources, methods, data types, researchers, or theoretical perspectives to enhance the validity and reliability of findings. It is considered one of the most important and widely applied standards of rigour in qualitative research (Johnson et al., 2020). Triangulation enables researchers to ensure that their conclusions are well-founded and not reliant upon a single source of data or perspective. According to Yin (2014), the principle of triangulation is concerned with verifying events, descriptions, or facts reported in a study.

In this study, triangulation was achieved through multiple strategies, including the diversification of data sources, member validation, peer review, and expert

endorsement. A comparative analysis was conducted between interview and observational data to establish corroborating evidence and strengthen the validity of findings. Methodological triangulation was employed to reduce error and enhance accuracy in both data collection and analysis. Preliminary findings were shared with participants for verification, ensuring that their perspectives were represented authentically. In addition, findings were presented to colleagues and subject experts to obtain feedback, further confirming the credibility of the research. As Creswell (2016) observes, triangulation enables researchers to provide corroborating evidence by employing multiple methods to collect data from diverse sources.

3.9.2 Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research refers to the extent to which the findings and conclusions from one study can be applied to other contexts, settings, or populations. It is a crucial aspect of ensuring the relevance and broader applicability of qualitative research. Research findings are transferable only if they fit appropriately into new contexts beyond the original study setting (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). Generalisability, in this sense, refers to the extent to which the account of a particular situation can be extended to other participants, times, or settings (Maxwell, 2016).

In this study, rich and detailed descriptions of the research setting and procedures were provided to enable readers to assess the applicability of the findings to other contexts. Participants (English Language teachers) were deliberately selected to represent diverse viewpoints and experiences, thereby enhancing the likelihood that the findings could be transferred to contexts beyond the immediate study.

3.9.3 Dependability

Dependability is closely linked to both credibility and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It refers to whether the study would produce similar results if replicated under the same conditions, using the same methods and participants (Shenton, 2004). Findings therefore demonstrate consistency when the research process is logically structured, thoroughly documented, traceable, and open to external auditing (Holloway, 2013; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

In this study, the research process was carefully documented, including decision-making processes, data collection procedures, analytical steps, and modifications to the research design. Such comprehensive documentation allows others to understand, assess, and verify the consistency and appropriateness of the study's procedures. Moreover, the findings were reviewed by colleagues experienced in qualitative research, who provided constructive feedback on the research design, methodology, and outcomes. Supervisors also ensured that the interpretations, findings, and recommendations were supported by evidence.

3.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which research findings can be validated by others. It is closely associated with the concept of objectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). According to Guba and Lincoln, confirmability is achieved when credibility, transferability, and dependability are realised and can be affirmed by external reviewers.

In this study, confirmability was established by cross-referencing the data collected from participants to ensure that the findings were derived directly from the data and were not influenced by researcher bias or subjective interpretation.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations in qualitative research are essential to ensure that the rights, well-being, and dignity of participants are respected throughout the research process. They describe the need for participants to understand the aims, objectives, and potential harm that their involvement may entail (Seidman, 2016). Criteria for ethical consideration may encompass "informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, and other factors" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2011, p. 420). Hence, the following ethical issues were observed: access, informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, privacy/confidentiality, plagiarism, and paraphragiarism.

3.10.1 Access

Creswell (2012) pointed out that researchers should obtain the necessary permissions and approval before conducting the research by providing a detailed explanation of the procedures, the required time, and the use of the data to the gatekeepers. Therefore, written permission was obtained from the Department of Basic Education, University of Education, Winneba. Prior to the research interview, a permission letter to conduct the research in ASM was also submitted through the Municipal Director of Education to the SISOs and the head teachers whose circuits and schools were sampled for the study, after which approval was granted. (Appendix C)

3.10.2 Informed Consent

Participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research, the procedures involved, the kind of data to be collected, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw without any negative consequences. Kusi (2012) asserted that it is unethical to engage people in research without their informed consent. Prior to the teachers' involvement in the research, verbal informed consent was obtained from

them before commencement. Several visits were made to the schools to explain the purpose, procedures, and risks involved in order to make participants feel at ease and willing to provide the necessary assistance. According to De Vos et al. (2011), obtaining informed consent implies providing adequate information on what the research is about, the expected duration of participants' involvement, the procedures to be followed, possible advantages and disadvantages of participation, dangers to which participants may be exposed, and the credibility of the researcher's communication with potential participants. Therefore, participants were given time (two days) to reflect on their participation in this research, their roles as participants, and the information they would share, as this could be considered somewhat sensitive. This ensured that the researcher respected and protected participants' rights and described the intended use of the data to them. Voluntary participation in this study was based on Guillemin and Gillam's (2005) premise that participation should at all times be voluntary (Appendix D)

3.10.3 Privacy

Participants' "rights to privacy" are very important in research (Kusi, 2012). According to Cohen et al. (2018), the "right to privacy" means that a person has the right not to take part in the research, not to answer questions, not to be interviewed, not to have their home intruded into, not to answer telephone calls or emails, and to engage in private behaviour in their own private place without fear of being observed (p. 64).

In other words, the researcher has a moral obligation to strictly consider the rights of the participants, who are expected to provide information for the investigation (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). Fouché and De Vos (2012) referred to 'privacy' as an

agreement between persons that limits the access of others to private information. Therefore, participants were assured that any information provided would not be divulged and that they could withdraw from the study at any time if they so wished. As a result of their right to privacy, information from the study was securely stored. Hard copies were kept under lock and key, whilst soft copies were stored on a password-protected computer. No information was disclosed or shared with any member of the school during the study. All personal information was securely kept confidential and safe.

3.10.4 Anonymity and Confidentiality

A participant is considered anonymous when the researcher or any other person cannot identify the respondent from the information provided (Cohen et al., 2018). In other words, anonymity is protected when the source of information cannot be traced from the research report (Kusi, 2012). In ensuring anonymity and data protection in this study, nowhere in the report were participants or schools identified by their real names. Personal names and other identifiers were erased from the written or recorded files and replaced with either fictitious names (pseudonyms), codes, or numbers. Personal information concerning research participants was also treated confidentially.

Participants were informed that the data obtained was for research purposes only and that they would remain anonymous in the research report. Information would not be made available to anyone not directly involved in the study unless the respondent agreed to reveal certain details (e.g., age). This was done to prevent possible victimisation of participants where certain responses could be viewed negatively by other stakeholders. Oliver (2010) pointed out that anonymity is a vital issue in research ethics because it provides participants with the opportunity to have their

identities concealed. In sum, confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed by ensuring that data obtained were used in such a way that no one other than the researcher knew the source.

3.10.5 Plagiarism and Paraphragiarism

Plagiarism refers to the act of taking undeserved credit for work authored by another professional (Gall et al., 2017). Accordingly, all sources and pieces of information cited from previous studies relevant to this research were properly acknowledged through accurate in-text citations and referencing. This approach was adopted to avoid academic dishonesty, commonly referred to as plagiarism.

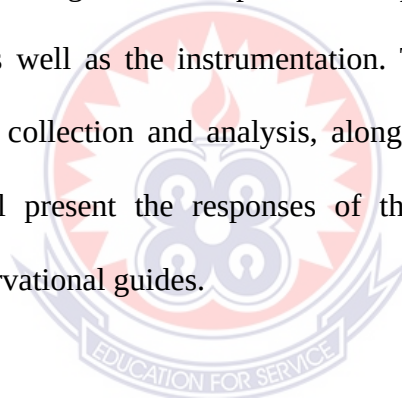
Paraphragiarism is a form of academic dishonesty that occurs when someone rewrites another person's work by changing only a few words or the sentence structure, while still keeping the original ideas and phrasing too close to the source without proper citation or sufficient transformation into their own words (Pecorari, 2008). Paraphrasing in this study was conducted with academic rigour to ensure that the original meanings were preserved while significantly rephrasing the content in the researcher's own words. To minimise the risk of inadvertent paraphragiarism, where the paraphrased material too closely resembled the original source, plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin was employed to assess the originality of manuscript drafts. Any similarities identified were carefully reviewed and amended to align with established standards of scholarly writing.

In addition, all interview transcripts and field notes were based on original data collected by the researcher. Participants' contributions were presented accurately and without distortion, and clear distinctions were maintained between their views and the researcher's interpretations. Ethical research practice also involved anonymising

(concealing participants' identities and related details) to protect their privacy and to ensure that other people's ideas were not wrongly presented as the researcher's own thoughts. Implementing these measures, the study upheld high standards of academic integrity and ensured that the findings reported were both credible and ethically sound.

3.11 Summary

This chapter discussed in detail the methodology, which portrayed the research paradigm and focused on the approach to the research design. It presented the rationale for choosing the qualitative method and phenomenology. The setting of the study was highlighted through the description of the population, the sample, and the sampling strategies, as well as the instrumentation. The chapter also described the actual process of data collection and analysis, alongside the ethical considerations. The next chapter will present the responses of the research participants to the interview and the observational guides.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents, analyses, and discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research objectives. It begins with the demographic characteristics of participants, after which the data are thematically analysed and illustrated with direct quotations to reflect participants' voices. The findings, drawn from both interviews and classroom observations, are further discussed in relation to relevant literature in order to provide deeper insights into the phenomenon and to address the research questions outlined in Chapter One.

The research questions that guided the study were as follows:

1. How do teachers perceive the teaching of RC (RC) in public basic schools in the ASM?
2. What common strategies do teachers employ in teaching RC in public basic schools in the ASM?
3. What CPD opportunities support teachers in teaching RC effectively?
4. What challenges do teachers encounter in teaching RC in public basic schools in the ASM?

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the 15 teachers who participated in the study. The demographic data were categorised into age, teaching experience, and academic qualifications, as summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	40 years and above	5	33.3
	Below 40 years	10	66.7
Teaching Experience	15 years or more	4	26.7
	Less than 15 years	11	73.3
Qualification	At least B.Ed. (1st or 2nd Degree)	6	40.0
	Below B.Ed. (e.g., DBE)	9	60.0
Professional Training in RC	Attended	0	0.0

The sample of fifteen participants comprised a diverse group of teachers with varying characteristics. Five (33.3%) participants were aged forty years or above, which ensured the inclusion of individuals with considerable professional maturity, while ten (66.7%) were below forty years of age. In terms of teaching experience, four (26.7%) participants had taught for fifteen years or more, whereas the majority (73.3%) had less than fifteen years of experience. Regarding qualification, six (40.0%) participants possessed at least a Bachelor of Education degree, while the remaining nine (60.0%) held qualifications below this level, predominantly the Diploma in Basic Education. Notably, none of the participants had attended professional training on RC strategies in the municipality. This demographic characteristic was essential, as qualitative research valued diversity in participants' backgrounds to capture multiple perspectives and strengthen credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). Variation in experience and qualifications enriched the data by allowing exploration of both shared patterns and individual differences in teaching practices (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

4.1.1 Research Question One

How do teachers perceive the teaching of RC in public basic schools in the ASM?

This research question sought to explore teachers' perspectives and understandings of RC. Following interviews and observations with teachers, three predominant themes emerged: (1) RC was considered essential for both academic achievement and lifelong learning; (2) RC served as a foundational skill across multiple disciplines; and (3) perspectives on RC varied, with some teachers viewing it as straightforward and others perceiving it as complex.

4.1.1.1. RC: A Foundation for Academic and Lifelong Learning

Participants generally regarded RC as a fundamental skill that students needed to succeed both academically and in life. They indicated that the ability to understand texts improved students' communication skills and formed the foundation for lifelong success. According to them, teaching RC enabled students not only to grasp complex concepts, make informed decisions, and communicate effectively but also to think critically, learn independently, and solve problems in life.

A female respondent stated that:

"The first thing a student need is the ability to read and understand. If a student is able to read and understand clearly what he or she reads, that student can read for other information and progress in life" (ELT-4).

A male respondent also held the view that:

"RC is a very good aspect of the English Language. It builds students' vocabulary level and helps them express themselves well with the L2 language" (ELT-5).

Other respondent mentioned that:

"In fact, when students are able to read and understand clearly, it empowers them to communicate effectively so as to take good decisions in their lives" (ELT-7).

One respondent pointed out that:

"If you don't know how to read or speak English, you can't do Mathematics or Science. Sometimes the word problems that are given

are in English and if you don't assimilate it well, you cannot do it. You will have to understand what you have read. So, RC is in effect, all the subjects that we learn. If you don't understand English, you cannot do any of the subjects" (ELT-8).

A respondent intimated that:

"Teaching RC is a way to help learners understand the meaning of words and other expressions that are needed in their daily conversation" (ELT-10).

Another respondent articulated that:

"In fact, I can say that RC is very important. It helps students to expand their knowledge in other subjects. If a student is able to read and understand well, that student is able to perform well in all other subjects" (ELT-12).

A respondent revealed that:

"As for me, RC has helped me as a teacher to discover new things and educated myself in so many areas of life. I see it to be the gateway to learning anything about everything. It has also helped me develop my knowledge, skills, and experiences in life" (ELT-15).

A respondent also stated that:

"In fact, RC has exposed me as a teacher to other things I didn't know of and other things I've never heard of. Sometimes from the passage that we read, the words as well as the expressions that we come across" (ELT-11).

In the same vein, a respondent added that:

"RC is very important in the teaching and learning process. When you are able to read and understand, it enables you to make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and engage with any material you come across" (ELT-9).

Another respondent remarked:

"Teaching RC is one of the best ways to improve students' vocabulary and enhance their communication skills. It gives them an opportunity to speak and write good English" (ELT-2).

Another respondent was emphatic that:

"Oh, I see it as an essential for success in all subject areas. In mathematics, for example, students need to be able to comprehend word problems and understand the concepts and processes involved in solving them. In science, students need to understand complex concepts and experiments to be able to draw conclusions and make predictions" (ELT-3).

On the other hand, a respondent remarked:

"If students struggle to understand what they read, it becomes a challenge to their overall academic growth. It limits their ability to

perform well in other subjects and express themselves clearly.” (ELT-1).

In the same vein, another respondent added that:

“RC is very good. It has an influence on almost all the subjects. The students being able to read and understand has the ability to answer any question. Without it they can’t learn other subjects. For instance, before students can get the concepts on grammar, the primary objective is for students to read and understand” (ELT-14).

Another respondent articulated that:

“RC is the basics of all learning. Without the ability to understand and analyze written text, students will struggle in every subject. It's indeed, very important” (ELT-6).

Another respondent was emphasized that:

"In this information age that we in, is it very very important for students to know how to read and understand any reading material oo (ELT-13)"

The above responses highlighted that the ability to understand and interpret written texts enabled students to stay informed, continue learning independently, and adapt to new information and applications throughout their lives. Classroom observations confirmed that teachers provided opportunities for learners to apply RC skills, such as connecting texts to real-life contexts and summarising content, thereby supporting participants’ emphasis on the practical value of comprehension. The instructional strategies observed also reinforced the role of RC in language acquisition, as suggested by several participants. This indicated that when RC was effectively taught, it enhanced students’ capacity to learn independently, remain informed, and adapt to new information, which constituted a key component of lifelong learning.

4.1.1.2 RC: a foundational skill across various subjects

Participants also perceived the teaching of RC as being intertwined with other subjects. They believed that acquiring RC skills provided students with the opportunity to understand and interpret what they read, heard, or saw, as well as to explore other subjects within the school curriculum. According to them, the teaching

of RC enabled students to integrate knowledge from various disciplines, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of other subjects. They further suggested that teachers of other subjects needed to incorporate RC skills into their lessons to support students in comprehending and analysing informational texts related to their studies.

This perspective underscored the recognition of RC as a cross-disciplinary skill, positioning it not merely as a language competency but as a central tool for accessing, interpreting, and applying knowledge across the entire curriculum.

A respondent expressed her view by saying that:

"Teaching RC skills helps students understand and engage with texts across all subjects, from science to social studies."(ELT- 12)

In the same vein, another respondent added that:

"Without strong RC skills, students will struggle to grasp the concepts in every subject be it Maths or Ghanaian. Language" (ELT-6).

In the same vein, another respondent added that:

"It helped me as a teacher to discover new things and educate myself in so many areas of life. I see it to be the gateway to learning something about everything. It has also helped me develop my knowledge, skills, and experiences in life." (ELT-15)

Another respondent shares her view by saying that:

"When students can comprehend what they read, they are better equipped to analyze and synthesize information in various subject areas."(ELT-9)

One respondent pointed out that:

If you are able to read and understand, it enables you to make informed decisions, communicate effectively and engage with any material you come across" (ELT - 11)

In the same vein, another respondent added that:

"Effective RC skills enable students to critically evaluate and interpret information across different subjects."(ELT- 8)

Another respondent articulated that:

"Teaching RC enables the students to be able to read and comprehend textbooks, articles, and other educational materials in every subject area."(ELT-5)

In the same vein, a respondent added that:

"RC isn't just for English classes; it's a skill that supports learning in all subject students learn."(ELT- 1)

Another respondent revealed that:

"The ability to understand and interpret text is fundamental for academic success in all subjects, not just reading comprehension."(ELT-7)

A respondent also stated that:

"Good RC skills allow students to access and engage with other subjects' contents across the curriculum." (ELT-14)

Another respondent was emphatic that:

"If you are able to read and understand any text, it exposes you to a wide range of words and anything. This helps you to build your own vocabulary and improve your understanding of whatever you read" (ELT-13)

On the other hand, a respondent remarked:

"Students with strong RC skills tend to perform better across various subjects because they can grasp complex concepts more easily."(ELT-13)

In the same vein, another respondent added that:

"RC aids students in understanding exam questions and writing clear, concise answers in all subjects."(ELT- 10)

Another respondent pointed out that:

"If you don't know how to read or speak English, you can't do Mathematics or Science. Sometimes the word problem that are given is in English and if you don't assimilate it well, you cannot do it. You will have to understand what you have read. So, RC is in effect, all the subject that we learn. If you don't understand English, you cannot do any of the subjects "(ELT-1)

A respondent articulated that:

"Sir, from understanding word problems in math to analyzing scientific reports, RC is at the heart of all learning". (ELT-4).

These statements collectively underscored the critical role of prioritising the teaching of RC to ensure students' academic success and overall learning. The responses indicated that the ability to read and interpret written texts not only enhanced students' vocabulary and communication skills but also served as the foundation for

success in all subjects. It strengthened and broadened students' knowledge, providing them with a stronger command of the English language as well as other disciplines.

The observational data confirmed that classroom practices often aligned with the view of RC as a key skill across various subjects. Strategies such as vocabulary instruction, linking texts to real-life themes, and encouraging critical thinking reflected the importance teachers placed on RC for academic success. For example, in one lesson, the teacher linked the theme of *honesty* to students' prior experiences, guided them in identifying main ideas, and encouraged them to apply their understanding to real-life situations. Although some lessons focused mainly on decoding and summarising, the overall teaching approaches reinforced the idea that RC underpinned learning beyond English, thereby confirming its foundational role in broader educational development.

4.1.1.3 Divergent Viewpoints: Reading Comprehension as both Simple and Complex

Participants expressed varied perspectives regarding the teaching of RC. While some regarded it as a straightforward and manageable task, others perceived it as a complex and intellectually demanding process. This theme reflected the subjective nature of instructional experience and acknowledged that teachers' perspectives were shaped by factors such as their teaching contexts, the abilities of their students, and their specific instructional goals.

4.1.1.4 Simple and Easy Task

Several participants perceived RC instruction as a relatively simple task, particularly when compared with teaching grammar and composition. These teachers considered their role as primarily guiding students to understand vocabulary and interpret the content of reading passages. They believed that once students could recognise words

and explain their meanings, comprehension would follow naturally. For such teachers, RC required less specialised instructional effort and could be effectively addressed through routine classroom practices, such as vocabulary drills, oral questioning, and basic summarisation.

For example, one respondent stated:

“Teaching RC is not a problem at all. Treat the meaning of new words in the passage and their correct pronunciations. Just do model reading and allow students to read the text and answer questions based on the passage” (ELT-3).

Similarly, another teacher observed:

“When you get students to understand the key vocabulary words that appear in the text, reading the whole passage becomes somehow normal and easy” (ELT-14).

A respondent echoed this view, highlighting the simplicity of the task:

“Oh, I know RC involves just a direct interaction with text, helping students to grasp meanings of what they read” (ELT-6).

These teachers generally framed RC as a procedural task centered around vocabulary and textual engagement. As one teacher noted:

“Teaching RC is not all that difficult at all. The difficulty may come when even you the teacher, don’t understand the words in the passage... Sometimes, you have to do research... before you can meaningfully engage the students” (ELT-2).

Another participant contrasted it directly with grammar instruction:

“Unlike grammar, where you have to take the learner through rules... RC is not like that. When the child can read on his own, he will be able to answer questions without any assistance from you the teacher” (ELT-11).

These participants also emphasized student independence, suggesting that once basic literacy and vocabulary knowledge were in place, comprehension could be achieved with limited teacher intervention. One respondent summarised:

“It’s one of the easiest things to teach, as long as you keep the students interested and motivated with the right materials, once the student knows how to read” (ELT-9).

Overall, these views suggested that RC was perceived as less cognitively demanding than other components of English language instruction, with success largely dependent on vocabulary acquisition and text familiarity.

4.1.1.5 Complex and Demanding Task

In contrast, other participants conceptualized RC as a challenging, multifaceted pedagogical activity requiring deep cognitive engagement and sophisticated instructional strategies. These participants emphasized that comprehension involved far more than word recognition. As one respondent explained:

“Teaching RC is much more difficult than merely finding the meaning of words. It requires active thinking and understanding of the author’s message with interpretation, analysis, and evaluation of the passage. It is an activity that involves both perception and thought” (ELT-8).

Another teacher highlighted the role of fluency and student difficulty:

“A lot of our students have a problem; even reading simple text with understanding is a challenge. This makes teaching RC very difficult” (ELT-2).

Several participants described the need for teachers to be able to analyze texts and scaffold complex ideas. For instance:

“Please, when you are teaching reading comprehension, you need to apply your own knowledge, know the sentence structure in order to identify the relationships between the ideas in the sentences and the paragraphs. If you the teacher cannot do this, how can you teach the students to understand the passage?” (ELT-12).

Others expressed concern about students’ limited vocabulary and the implications for comprehension:

“Many students cannot read well and those who are able to read small, small also read without knowing how the words are used in a passage” (ELT-9).

One participant provided a more detailed interpretation:

“It is not only asking the students to read the whole passage and answer questions. It needs critical thinking. You need to teach students how to grasp the meaning of words and expressions used by the author” (ELT-4).

Additionally, another respondent noted the unpredictable nature of meaning in context:

“Sometimes even one word may mean different things. Even sometimes, you have to solicit the idea from the text” (ELT-3).

A further challenge mentioned was the diverse learning needs within a classroom:

“One challenge in teaching RC is addressing the diverse needs of students, considering factors such as their background knowledge, language proficiency, and cognitive abilities” (ELT-14).

Participants in this category consistently emphasized that effective comprehension teaching involved the use of strategies such as prediction, questioning, summarising, and connecting text to prior knowledge. As one teacher explained:

“Effective RC instruction involves teaching students’ strategies for actively engaging with texts, such as making predictions, asking questions, and summarising the text” (ELT-9).

Finally, one respondent summed up the broader instructional goal:

“Teaching RC involves immersing students in rich language experiences, exposing them to diverse texts, and guiding them to make connections between what they read and their own experiences and knowledge” (ELT-15).

These responses revealed varying perspectives among teachers, which underscored a fundamental divergence in how RC was conceptualised and taught. The varied perspectives were attributed to teachers’ individual experiences, professional training, and the specific classroom contexts in which they operated. The findings highlighted the need for CPD aimed at fostering a shared understanding of RC as a multifaceted skill and equipping teachers with strategies to address diverse educational settings. The observational data reaffirmed the interview findings by revealing varied teaching

approaches to RC, highlighting its perception as both a simple and complex skill. While some lessons focused mainly on basic decoding and summarisation, others incorporated deeper strategies such as critical thinking, inference, and real-life application. These differences reflected variations in how RC was understood and taught, further highlighting the need for CPD to promote a shared and more comprehensive understanding among teachers.

4.1.2 Research Question Two

What common strategies do teachers employ in teaching RC in public basic schools in the ASM?

This research question aimed to explore the various strategies and techniques commonly employed by teachers to teach reading comprehension. When respondents were asked about the strategies, they frequently use to teach reading comprehension, six (6) themes emerged as effective approaches: vocabulary instruction, retelling a story to summarize the lesson, the question-answer relationship strategy (QARs), graphic organizers (GOs), previewing texts to activate students' background knowledge, and scaffolding.

4.1.2.1 Vocabulary Instruction

In relation to vocabulary instruction, it emerged from the data that the majority of participants primarily focused on teaching the meanings of key vocabulary words and their pronunciation. Their emphasis was on building vocabulary as the principal technique for helping students to read and understand texts. Participants, therefore, perceived knowledge of vocabulary as the main factor influencing reading comprehension. According to them, students only needed to understand key vocabulary words in context to enable them to comprehend the texts they read.

A respondent remarked:

"Before I start teaching, I read through the passage myself to identify new key words that might be a little difficult for students to understand. I pick out those words and teach how to pronounce them. Sometimes, if there are words that are too long, I teach them how to break the words into syllables. After that, I teach them the meaning of those words" (ELT-3).

A respondent also shared her view that:

"Usually, I ask students to just think through the passage and come out with words that are very difficult for them. So, they will come out with the words, then I will explain them. Sometimes, I do read for them, then I will ask them to read paragraph by paragraph to identify those who have difficulties" (ELT-7).

Another respondent stated that:

"As for me, in the pre-reading stage, I put new words from the passage on the board, we will go through the pronunciations before I have the kids read. If it's JHS 1, normally I do model reading. When we are done reading, I ask them to find the meaning of those words as used in the passage. Sometimes, there are some of the passages that have moral lessons attached to it, so I will ask them to come out with the moral lessons in that passage and when they are done, they will answer questions on it" (ELT-5).

On the same view, a respondent echoed:

"I don't know, but I often teach students the meanings of key words, their correct pronunciation before they read and answer questions on the text. Please, am I on the right path?" (ELT-10).

In the same vein, a respondent articulated that:

"What I do is that I first teach the new words and sometimes expressions for the students to understand. After that, I will let them form at least a sentence with the words and the expressions before they do the comprehension itself" (ELT-1).

Another respondent observed that:

"In teaching RC, you have to get some words that you think the children are not familiar with. Give them the meaning of these words and then try to make them use the words to form their own sentences. Getting the understanding of the words, then you come to the passage. Then we read the passage so that whatever sentence they come across, they can get the understanding" (ELT-11).

One respondent pointed out that:

"in the first place, if there are unfamiliar words that students do not know, I spend time to find out and make sure that students are able to use them before they read the passage" (ELT-13).

Another respondent claimed that:

“Usually I ask them to skim, scan, and look through for new words and expressions they have never come across. Sometimes they have even come across but they don’t understand the meaning of the words. So, I will ask them to bring those words out. Then I will drill them through for them to get the meaning of those words. After we’ve done all these, then we begin to do the reading proper. At times we do scrambling of words with the new vocabs that are in the passage, I rewrite it for them to rewrite it again to form letters and sentences” (ELT-2).

Another respondent intimated that:

“I first introduce the passage to the pupils and discuss the title, the author, and the concept of the passage. Again, I drill pupils on the key words. When everyone is able to recognize and pronounce the key words correctly, I then read the passage aloud for pupils to listen attentively, taking notes on pronunciation, fluency, and intonation. The pupils are then guided to read the text carefully and then search through the text to find the answers to the questions” (ELT-6).

A respondent expressed her view by saying that:

“Oh, I first write the new words on the board. Then, I drill students through them. After that, I guide them to skim or scan through the passage to get information about the story” (ELT-8).

In the same vein, another respondent added that:

“As for me, I look through the text. If there are unfamiliar words that students do not know, I spend time to help them find out their meaning. Then, I make sure that they are able to replace them in the passage correctly” (ELT-9).

Another respondent shared her view by saying that:

“Students find it difficult to understand a passage when they don’t know the meaning of the words used in the passage. So, I usually drill them through key words in the passage. I do that just to help them get more vocabularies and understand the text” (ELT-5).

Another respondent was emphatic that:

“Oh, I always ask students to use new words to form sentences on their own before reading. This practice even helps you, as the teacher, to assess how well they have mastered the meaning of those words” (ELT-3).

In the same vein, another respondent added that:

“As for me, I usually drill students through the difficult words to help them pronounce them correctly, before they read and answer questions on the passage” (ELT-12).

Another respondent revealed that:

“Please, I normally like to check for students’ correct pronunciation while I teach them the meaning of key words in the passage” (ELT-4).

On the other hand, a respondent remarked:

“In fact, it is better to teach students to understand the words before they read. Students can’t read and understand when they don’t understand the meaning of the words used in the passage” (ELT-7).

Some participants also noted that if students did not understand the meanings of words in a text, it became very difficult for them to read and comprehend. According to these teachers, teaching the meanings of new words within a passage helped students to expand their vocabulary, thereby enabling them to understand texts more effectively.

Participants shared their experience through the following statements:

“Students find it difficult to understand a passage when they don’t know the meaning of the words used in the passage. So, I usually drill them through key words in the passage. I do that just to help them get more vocabularies and understand the test” (ELT-5)

“Oh, I always ask students to use new words to form sentences on their own before reading. This practice even helps you, as the teacher, to assess how well they have mastered the meaning of those words.”(ELT-3)

“As for me. I usually drill students through the difficult words to help them pronounce them correctly, before they read and answer questions on the passage” (ELT-7)

“Please, I normally like to check for students’ correct pronunciation while I teach them the meaning of key words in the passage” (ELT-4)

“In fact, it is better to teach them to understand the words before they read. Students can’t read and understand when they don’t understand the meaning of the words used in the passage” (ELT-15) .

“What I normally do is that as the students are reading, I’ll ask questions to find out whether they are following or they have difficulty understanding the passage” (ELT-12)

“Usually, I ask them to look though the passage for new words and expression they have never come across. Then, I drill them through. That is what I do for them to understand the passage”. (ELT-10)

“You cannot read and understand without knowing the meaning of the words: every communication is based on words. What I normally do is that I take students through the key words to enable them know how to use the words” (ELT-2)

“Personally, I always teach students to better understand difficult words by breaking down the word into smaller parts, then I guide them to read and answer questions on the passage” (ELT- 13)

“I usually prefer drilling students through key words in the passage. I do that so that it will help them get more vocabularies and understand the test” (ELT- 8)

The data indicated that vocabulary instruction played a pivotal role in how teachers facilitated RC in the classroom. Participants consistently emphasised the need to teach the meanings and pronunciation of vocabulary prior to engaging with a text. Common strategies included identifying challenging words beforehand, practising pronunciation, breaking words into syllables, and encouraging students to use new vocabulary in context. Overall, there was a shared understanding among participants that a strong grasp of vocabulary was essential for effective comprehension of written texts.

The observational findings confirmed that vocabulary instruction was a key pedagogical method employed by participants to enhance reading comprehension. Teachers consistently introduced unfamiliar words prior to reading, focusing on meaning and pronunciation to support understanding. Strategies such as sentence construction, guided discussions, and collaborative reading were used to reinforce vocabulary knowledge and facilitate engagement with texts. These practices highlighted vocabulary instruction as an intentional and structured approach, integrated into reading lessons to improve learners’ comprehension and language proficiency

4.1.2.2 Scaffolding

Participants reported using various scaffolding strategies to support learners’ RC. They described activating prior knowledge and establishing background knowledge through topic discussions and the introduction of key vocabulary, which they believed

helped learners connect new information to existing knowledge and reduced cognitive load. Several participants highlighted teaching vocabulary and using prediction activities to encourage active and purposeful reading. Others reported employing modelled reading and strategically involving more proficient peers to demonstrate effective reading practices. These approaches were perceived to ease access to texts, boost learners' confidence, and facilitate the gradual development of independent RC skills.

As one respondent explained,

“Personally, I explain the text and some of the words they may find difficult before reading. After reading, I will then guide them to find answers to the questions on the passage” (ELT-8).

Another participant supported this strategy, stating,

“In fact, it is better to teach students to understand the words before they read. Students can't read and understand when they don't understand the meaning of the words used in the passage” (ELT-7), affirming the critical role of vocabulary instruction in comprehension.

In a similar way, another respondent remarked,

“As for me, in the pre-reading stage, I put new words from the passage on the board, we will go through the pronunciations before I have the kids read. If it's JHS 1, normally I do model reading. When we are done reading, I ask them to find the meaning of those words as used in the passage. Sometimes, there are some of the passages that have moral lessons attached to it, so I will ask them to come out with the moral lessons in that passage and when they are done, they will answer questions on it” (ELT-5).

These accounts demonstrated comprehensive scaffolding, incorporating vocabulary instruction, modelled reading, and post-reading analysis aligned with the principle of scaffolding, in which instruction was tailored to learners' immediate needs and gradually shifts towards independence.

Another respondent highlighted the use of collaborative learning as a scaffolding tool, noting,

“Sometimes I encourage students to discuss the text with each other, either in small groups or as a whole class. This helps them to clarify their own thoughts and learn from each other” (ELT-14).

Peer interaction similarly served as a meaningful scaffold, allowing students to co-construct understanding through dialogue and shared perspectives. Model reading was also identified as a vital component of the scaffolding process. One teacher remarked,

“In fact, I do a model reading first. Then, I’ll ask the students to read one after the other. In so doing, I will let them identify those who can’t read well, then I’ll help them especially, with the pronunciation of words. I also do drill of new vocabulary words. After finding the meaning, I will ask them to use the words to form sentences on their own before they read the passage” (ELT-12).

This multi-stage approach, modelling, guided reading, vocabulary drilling, and sentence construction reflected a well-sequenced scaffolding process that progressively builds learners’ reading fluency and comprehension skills.

Creative pre-reading activities also featured in some responses. For instance, a respondent noted,

“Please, at times I ask the students to do scrambling of words with the new vocabs that are in the passage. After that I’ll re-write it for them to rewrite it again to form letters and sentences before they come to the passage” (ELT-9).

Such word-based games not only served to reinforce vocabulary acquisition but also helped to engage learners actively before tackling the text, thus supporting their cognitive and linguistic readiness.

Additionally, differentiated reading support was observed. One teacher explained,

“For me, in the initial stage, I teach the vocabulary words to help them understand and pronounce the key words correctly. When we

come to the reading stage, I'll do a model reading, then I'll call out some good students to read. Those who find it a bit difficult in reading, you assist the person to read at least 2 or 3 paragraphs. In the end, I'll ask them to explain in the L1 so that I get to know whether comprehension has taken place” (ELT-1).

Here, scaffolding extended beyond vocabulary and reading fluency to include checking understanding through code-switching to the first language (L1), which provided a culturally and linguistically responsive means of ensuring comprehension.

In contrast, one participant took a more facilitative approach, stating,

“Personally, I don't do model reading myself, I guide students to do the reading after going through the key words. Then they will move on to the questions. Questions that they can get the answers from the passage directly and the ones they will have to think or connect the answers to the passage” (ELT-2).

This method, while less directive, still constituted a form of scaffolding, where the teacher ensured foundational support through vocabulary instruction and guided questioning, allowing learners to engage in higher-order thinking.

Finally, the importance of teacher preparation in scaffolding was evident in a teacher's comment:

“Before I start the lesson, I will read through the passage myself to identify the new vocabulary words that might be a little difficult before allowing the whole class to read the text and answer questions based on the passage” (ELT-4).

This response demonstrated a proactive approach to scaffolding, whereby the teacher anticipated learners' challenges and prepared instructional interventions accordingly. The findings revealed that scaffolding was implemented through diverse yet interconnected strategies, including pre-teaching vocabulary, modelled reading, group discussions, vocabulary games, guided questioning, and the use of L1. These practices

reflected multiple dimensions of understanding scaffolding, aiming to bridge students' learning gaps while gradually guiding them towards independent comprehension.

The observational data confirmed that scaffolding was a central instructional approach employed by participants to support learners' reading comprehension. Teachers implemented strategies such as pre-teaching vocabulary, activating prior knowledge, modelled reading, guided questioning, and collaborative learning to gradually build students' understanding. These scaffolded practices enabled learners to engage with texts more effectively, despite challenges such as limited vocabulary and varied reading abilities. Overall, the observations reinforced the interview data by demonstrating that structured, supportive teaching methods were integral to guiding students towards independent comprehension and critical engagement with texts.

4.1.2.3 Activating Students' Background Knowledge

Another strategy that emerged from the interview data related to participants linking students' prior knowledge to a passage. They indicated that when they were able to connect students' background knowledge to the text, they did not encounter difficulties in their explanations. According to them, they usually identified what students already knew and made such knowledge relevant to the text to facilitate better understanding. They emphasised that students who possessed prior knowledge about a text tended to make a conscious effort to think critically and engage more deeply with the material.

The following were the comments made by some participants:

"Sometimes you can ask some pre-reading questions to find out what they know about the text. Then you connect such knowledge to the passage". (ELT-9)

“First, look at the text that you are going to use for the comprehension. Then, as you go, relate it to whatever thought students already have about the text, whether they have prior knowledge in relation to the text. This helps them to think critically and understand the passage”. (ELT-10)

“For me, anytime I’m going to teach a story, first of all, based on the story, I first have to find out the students’ previous knowledge so that I can link the text to what I’m going to teach” (ELT-3)

“I teach from known to unknown. So, I start with things around us before I go to the next level to bring them what they don’t know at all” (ELT-11)

“Usually, I try looking for things around the school. Students who already have previous knowledge about a text think and reflect in order to understand the passage”. (ELT-15)

Other participants shared the following views:

“As for me, I always try to find out what students know so that I can relate it to what I’m about to teach for them to understand it better. In fact, if students are not familiar with the topic, explaining generally becomes a bit difficult” (ELT-12)

“Please, in some of the passages, there are some of the things that students have not seen their real objects before. In that situation, it becomes difficult for students to understand. Therefore, you the teacher have to let them know before they read the passage” (ELT-4)

“At times, I ask the students to think of what they already know about the title of the passage and then guess what the text might be. Students who have prior knowledge about a text always make conscious effort to think critically to understand the text” (ELT-2)

In fact, I usually find out students’ knowledge that are related to the passage. If you are able to link that knowledge to the text, you do not encounter difficulty in your explanation. (ELT-6)

“Sometimes, I ask the students to think of what they already know about the title of the passage and then guess what the text might be”. (ELT-8)

Observations drawn from the above responses clearly indicated that teachers brainstormed students’ background knowledge. They typically sought to identify students’ prior knowledge and connected it to the text to enhance comprehension. It could, therefore, be concluded that teaching RC became easier when students

possessed considerable background knowledge of the text. The observational data corroborated the interview findings, showing that activating students' background knowledge through text previewing was an essential instructional strategy.

For example, in one lesson, the teacher introduced a passage about environmental conservation by asking students to describe issues they had observed in their communities. This approach helped learners connect new information to their existing knowledge, enabling them to comprehend the text more effectively. Overall, the findings suggested that previewing the text was a deliberate and structured strategy that facilitated critical engagement and supported the gradual development of independent RC skills. On the other hand, where this strategy was less thoroughly applied, students encountered difficulties with fluency and expression, indicating that successful RC depended on the intentional and comprehensive activation of prior knowledge.

4.1.2.4 Graphic Organizers (GOs)

Another significant strategy identified from the interview data involved participants creating mental images or visual representations to assist students in comprehending and recalling key information from texts. Some participants stated that they occasionally used mental imagery or utilised pictures from the textbooks to help students predict, summarise, or retell the text.

A participants stated that:

“I sometimes use pictures from the textbook based on what they are going to read for them to predict the outcome of the passage” (ELT-2)

One participants pointed out that:

“Sometimes, you create pictures in their mind as they are reading. For instance, there is this 2016 question on “galamsey”. So, as they are

reading, you can make them think of a “galamsey site” in their mind”. (ELT-6)

Another participant expressed her view that:

“At times, I ask the students to use the pictures in the textbook to describe what is happening in the passage”. (ELT-14)

A participant shared her experience by saying that:

“As for me, if there are pictures, I start with. I try to make them identify them. May be, the picture may tell something about the passage and that can help them develop the title or whatever the passage is all about”. (ELT-15)

One of the participants articulated that:

“In some of the passage, I guide the students to imagine what is happening in their mind to enable them develop the title of whatever they are reading.” (ELT-8).

A respondent also asserted that:

“Normally, I guide them to express their thoughts of what they have read and relate it to their lives” (ELT-12)

Another respondent added that,

“Occasionally, I ask students to predict the text to find out what the text might be through the title or the initial paragraphs” (ELT-3)

A respondent also indicated that,

“Sometimes, if there are pictures, I start with. I try to make them identify them. May be, the picture may tell something about the passage and can help them develop the title or whatever the passage is really about”. (ELT-5)

In the same vein, another respondent revealed that:

“Personally, I do pre-reading activities. For example, we create mental pictures based on the text that is going to be read. We do that to predict the outcome of the passage”. (ELT-10).

Based on the statements provided, it could be concluded that the participants utilised visual aids and guided imagery, known as GOs, to assist students in making predictions and engaging in RC activities. These strategies facilitated

students' critical thinking and supported the visual representation of complex ideas. Classroom observations indicated that, although GOs were not directly observed in all lessons, activities such as making predictions, asking guided questions, and summarising served a similar purpose.

4.1.2.5 Questioning–Answer Techniques (QATs)

Another prominent theme identified was the questioning–answer technique. Participants indicated that they frequently used questions throughout their lessons to help students predict outcomes, develop a deeper understanding, or become actively involved in the lesson. Others reported that they typically asked questions either to anticipate the content of a text or to assess whether students had comprehended it.

A respondent remarked that:

“Prior to the main lesson, I first ask questions based on what the students are going to read to help them predict the outcome of the texts. From time to time too, I ask them what they think we are reading about” (ELT-1).

Another respondent claimed that:

“I always try to ask questions to find out pupils' previous knowledge. For example, if it's about a market scheme, you ask them the kind of activities that go on in the market” (ELT-6).

A respondent expressed her view by saying that:

“Normally, I ask questions before they start reading a text just to find out what students know about the text and sometimes to make predictions” (ELT-14).

In the same vein, another respondent added that:

“At times, I asked students to answer questions using their own experiences and background knowledge” (ELT-3).

Another respondent shares her view by saying that:

“Sometimes, we first read through the questions before we go through the passage. Having the questions in mind, you indicate where the answers may be” (ELT-3).

Another respondent articulated that:

“From time to time, I ask questions throughout the reading in order to find out whether they have understood the passage” (ELT-7).

In the same vein, a respondent added that:

“As for me, they first read through the questions. After that, you go through the passage with them. In order not to waste time, as you are reading the passage, having the questions in mind, you indicate where the answers may be or where you will see signs of the answers to the questions that you are given” (ELT-5).

Another respondent revealed that:

“You know that you can’t teach without asking questions. You have to engage students actively throughout the lesson by highlighting important information, and taking notes while reading” (ELT-11).

A respondent remarked:

“In fact, passages with moral lessons, I ask students to come out with the moral lessons from the passage and when we are done, they answer the questions on it” (ELT-13).

Another respondent articulated that:

“Sometimes, we read the passage first. After reading the passage for the first time, we go through the questions and come back to read the passage again. So, whenever we meet the answer to the questions, we underline it according to the way the questions are numbered” (ELT-12).

A respondent expressed her view by saying that:

“Oh, after every passage, there are comprehension questions which test whether students have understood the passage and that is what I usually use” (ELT- 10).

In the same vein, another respondent added that:

“After reading, I usually tell students to answer questions with a few words or brief sentences with information that can be found in the text” (ELT-8).

Other participants were of the view that they sometimes asked questions to help students monitor their own understanding of what they are reading.

The participants made the following statements:

“Oh, what I usually do is to guide them to read and answer questions based on the passage. Please, for some time now, this is the only way I teach students: teaching the meaning of new words, their correct pronunciation. Then, I guide them to read silently and answer questions on the passage” (ELT-9).

“As for me, I regularly ask students questions such as 'What is the main idea?' or 'How does this character feel?' that can help them to think critically about the text” (ELT- 15).

“Please, one significant thing is that students are actively engaged with the lesson when you continually ask them questions” (ELT- 4).

The data presented above suggested that questioning-and-answering techniques were an integral and widely used classroom activity employed by participants to engage students before, during, and after lessons. These techniques facilitated comprehension, activated prior knowledge, encouraged critical thinking, and enhanced students' overall learning experiences. The observational data confirmed that questioning-and-answering techniques (QATs) played a central role in supporting students' RC. For example, during a reading lesson, a teacher asked students to predict what might happen next in a story, justify their reasoning, and discuss their answers with peers before reading further. Such techniques encouraged active participation, fostered comprehension monitoring, and enabled teachers to identify misconceptions or gaps in understanding.

4.1.2.6 Re-telling the Story to Summarize the Lesson

Participants indicated that they usually guided students in re-telling stories to summarise lessons by helping them identify key events and main ideas within a text. According to them, they often employed questioning techniques to prompt students

and ensure that they captured essential details, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of the text.

Some of them had this to say:

"What I mostly do is ask students to narrate the story, focusing on the key words and phrases in the passage. This helps them remember and retell the story in their own words"(ELT-1)

"Oooh, I sometimes ask students to think and present the main idea in the story. This practice usually enables them to grasp the essence of the text." (ELT-13)

"I tell students to tell me what they have read, identifying the important facts from the passage. This enables them to answer questions about the text." (ELT-6)

"Most of the time, I ask students to summarize the lesson by recalling the main ideas in the passage using their own English." (ELT- 11)

"Generally, I guide students to read the text silently for a few minutes, and then they answer questions related to the text in their book." (ELT-8)

"At times, I ask students to retell the story in the text using their own words. At times too, they will also identify the main ideas in the text." (ELT-7)

"I do ask students to identify the main idea in the text and rephrase it in their own words." (EL-4)

"At times, I encourage students to summarize what they have read in their own words. This helps them clarify their understanding of the text."(ELT-9)

"Oh, I use to guide students to express their views as they read, but sometimes they find it difficult to speak, which makes teaching boring."(ELT- 3)

The data shows that participants commonly use story retelling and summarization techniques, guiding students to identify key ideas and express them in their own words. These strategies help deepen students' understanding and engagement with the text. The observational data showed that teachers encouraged students to recount stories and summarisation strategies during reading lessons. Students were observed re-narrating texts in their own words, which aligned with the teachers' accounts that

such practices supported learners in identifying key ideas and deepening their comprehension of the text. These activities not only enhanced learners' retention of information but also promoted critical thinking, oral communication skills, and the ability to summarise effectively. Overall, the findings suggested that re-telling was a deliberate and structured instructional practice that supported comprehension, consolidation of knowledge, and engagement with texts.

4.1.3 Research Question Three

What CPD opportunities support teachers in teaching RC effectively?

With regard to the CPD opportunities that support teachers in teaching RC effectively, a key theme that emerged was the lack of in-service training focused specifically on RC strategies.

4.1.3.1 Lack of In-Service Training on RC Strategies

A prominent theme that emerged from the data was the lack of in-service training focused on RC strategies. Participants reported having limited access to targeted and continuous PD in this area, which highlighted a systemic gap in the ongoing support available to teachers. According to them, this absence appeared to have resulted in a reliance on outdated instructional practices and a diminished capacity to implement evidence-based strategies effectively.

One participant reflected,

“I’ve been teaching for over 10 years, but I can’t remember the last time we had a workshop or PLC specifically focused on RC. Most of the training we attend is on the Cockcrow” (ELT-4).

Another teacher similarly observed,

“The Municipal Education Office rarely organizes in-service training or PLC on RC strategies. It feels like RC is not seen as a priority” (ELT-14).

These responses exemplified the perceived institutional neglect of RC instruction and strategies. Participants consistently observed that, despite attending workshops and professional learning communities (PLCs), the content rarely addressed strategies for teaching RC.

One respondent stated,

“It's surprising that even with numerous workshops and PLCs we attend, none of them have focused on reading comprehension” (ELT-13).

Another remarked,

“Since I started teaching, I haven't had any formal training focused specifically on RC strategies” (ELT-3).

These statements suggested a gap between the practical challenges teachers faced and the support structures intended to address them. In some cases, it was observed that the few in-service training sessions that addressed RC were limited in scope.

One teacher recounted,

“Four years ago, I attended a workshop at Koforidua, where we were taught how to teach reading comprehension. The emphasis was on the pre-reading, reading and other activities and so on, but not on specific strategies for teaching reading comprehension” (ELT-2).

This response showed that even when RC was mentioned, the approach often remained superficial and procedural rather than strategic or skill-based. Additionally, teachers expressed uncertainty about their ability to apply new and effective RC strategies, owing to the lack of structured training.

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As teachers explained,

“We are expected to teach comprehension, but no one has actually shown us how to use any RC strategies like Scaffolding effectively” (ELT-9).

“In fact, oo, there hasn’t been any formal training workshop on teaching RCs, apart from the traditional reading and answering questions at the end of the passage”.(ELT-8)

“Apart from the stages of teaching reading (pre-reading, reading and post – reading activities), I have certainly not been introduced to any RCs”. (ELT-1)

The data revealed a significant lack of explicit instruction and CPD in RC strategies, which limited teachers’ pedagogical competence and potentially affected learners’ outcomes. This highlighted the urgent need for sustained, strategy-oriented training to better equip teachers to address pupils’ diverse learning needs. The observational data corroborated the interview findings by revealing that, although teachers occasionally provided practice opportunities, they frequently lacked effective modelling and adaptation of RC strategies, such as questioning–answer techniques and scaffolding. This limitation was evident in the restricted differentiation of instruction and only modest encouragement for meaningful engagement with texts. Collectively, these observations substantiated the interview data and emphasised the pressing need for targeted in-service training to support teachers in implementing RC strategies more strategically and responsively.

4.1.4 Research Question Four

What Challenges do Teachers Encounter in Teaching RC Skills in the ASM?

With respect to the challenges encountered by teachers, the data revealed that multiple difficulties impeded their efforts to teach RC. From the interview data, four major themes emerged: students’ limited vocabulary, low reading proficiency, poor communication skills, and inadequate resource materials.

4.1.4.1 Students' Limited Vocabulary

One of the key challenges that emerged from the interview data was the difficulty teachers faced in delivering effective RC instruction due to students' limited vocabulary. According to participants, it was challenging to teach RC when students lacked the necessary words to understand and interpret texts. This vocabulary limitation made it difficult for learners to follow lessons, engage in discussions, and express their ideas clearly, which in turn reduced the effectiveness of RC instruction. Teachers reported feeling constrained in their ability to introduce higher-order reading skills, as learners struggled with basic word recognition and contextual understanding. They indicated that the lack of vocabulary not only disrupted the flow of lessons but also required them to spend additional time on vocabulary building before addressing comprehension tasks. This added pressure made the teaching process more demanding and slowed overall academic progress, thereby highlighting vocabulary deficiency as a significant instructional challenge.

They supported their claims with the following responses:

"With the vocabs, it is very big problem for students. So, you the teacher have to explain it in a context for them to understand it before they can read and understand" (ELT-8)

"The way students read doesn't even bring out the meaning of the passage. Their vocabulary is down. Their expressions too are not good. They struggle to kin construct simple sentences. If you want them to read, then, you will not finish it" (ELT-3)

"Please, you know that if students don't know the meaning of individual words in a text, it will be difficult for them to understand it". (ELT-11)

"Surprisingly, majority students cannot read simple sentences properly. Behind all of these is their vocab, because they don't understand the meanings of words used in a text. (ELT-4)

"I think the fundamental concern is that students lack understanding of key words and simple language used in a text. If students understand

the meaning of the words, they will be able to understand the text and answer questions on it". (ELT-10)

"There are certain students who can read and speak very well. I always make sure such students read in class to help their friends." (ELT- 9)

"I have some good students in my class. These students can easily read and explain the words in the passage easily. These students usually read in class to save time (ELT- 1)

"I always rely on some good readers to help create a more friendly and suitable learning environment, both for themselves and their peers. These students are my role models." (ELT- 6)

I think it is about the vocabs. Even after explanation and all that when it has been used in context and you want them to explain as it has been used in context, it becomes difficult. They always want to rely on the ones that you gave them. If not then, it means that you have to go back. (ELT- 15).

"Majority students lack vocabulary words that are necessary to help express their thoughts clearly" (ELT-10)

"The problem is that students cannot make use of simple and appropriate words, so when they speak you don't easily get their intended message correctly" (ELT-7)

"Reading is a problem for students at the JHS. Even certain simple words that you'd expect them to be able to pronounce and understand is a problem (ELT-13)

"Hmm, you expect students to understand the key vocabulary words and be able to use them appropriately. You know that vocabulary use plays essential role in how well students can read, speak and write, but it is not like that with our students. (ELT-5)

"Students do not have strong vocabulary words to confidently speak in class. Only few always engage in conversations and contribute actively in class discussions" (ELT- 12)

"Teaching students who can explain the meaning of simple sentences make teaching very easy". (ELT- 14)

Based on the responses provided above, it was evident that students' limited vocabulary was a major barrier to the effective teaching of RC, as it hindered their ability to understand texts, express ideas, and engage in class activities. The observational data corroborated these findings. Teachers were often compelled to

spend additional time explaining words and building vocabulary before addressing comprehension tasks, which slowed progress. In several lessons, teachers frequently paused to explain unfamiliar words or rephrase sentences to aid learners' understanding. At times, lessons were considerably slowed as teachers provided repeated word explanations before students could progress to comprehension tasks. These interruptions highlighted the extent to which vocabulary deficiencies hindered the teaching and learning process. Conversely, students with stronger vocabularies demonstrated better reading, understanding, and participation, thereby making teaching more effective. This emphasised that vocabulary development was a fundamental requirement for successful RC and overall academic achievement.

4.1.4.2 Students' Limited Reading Fluency

In addition to the students' limited vocabulary level, majority of the participants reported that students' inability to read fluently posed a significant challenge for delivering RC instruction. According to them, several students were unable to decode words, read with appropriate phrasing and intonation, or maintain a steady reading pace, which hindered their ability to understand and engage with texts. Participants reported that these fluency difficulties disrupted the flow of reading lessons and limited students' capacity to apply comprehension strategies effectively. Consequently, they were often compelled to allocate additional time to developing students' basic reading skills before addressing higher-level comprehension tasks, which made the instructional process more demanding and less efficient.

A respondent lamented that:

“Ah, a learner at the JHS, you expect that learner to at least, know how to pronounce some small, small words like 2 or 3 letter words correctly, but it is surprising that you go to a class and learners cannot pronounce them. At times you have to wait more time to help them get

the meaning and even help them to be able to read. I think it is because they are not using the L2". (ELT-3)

A respondent remarked that:

Some students read for reading sake. They don't take note of punctuation marks. They read out the words just like that. So, I always make sure they read well. (ELT-7)

Another respondent stated:

"The problem lies on the ability of the students to read well. Students who are not able to read well don't perform well in class. Those who are able to read understand at least some of the things they come across in the passage and use them". (ELT- 9)

"Hmm, the problem is that majority of the students cannot read with proper stress and intonation. They therefore have difficulty maintaining the same pace with their peers". (ELT- 12)

Another respondent said that:

"Oh, at the JHS, you expect learners to be able to read a text perfectly and be able to explain what they have read, but they cannot read well, let alone, explanation". (ELT-5)

A participant expressed her frustration by saying that:

"Hmm, these children are not able to read and understand what they read. After taking my time to go through all techniques that I know, still most of them do not understand. I don't know if it is intentional or they've just refused oo. Even simple sentences, when you ask them to read, it becomes a problem. What they are able to read, they don't understand". (ELT- 15)

Other participants had these to say:

"In fact, a lot of students cannot read simple, simple words correctly. This affects their ability to understand and learn other subjects". (ELT-11)

"Do you know what? Most of the students don't read well nor understand what they even read". (ELT-13)

"The students do not know how individual sounds come together to make up words. They find it difficult to read and construct simple sentences correctly". (ELT-8)

"A teacher may have the required skills to teach, but if the student cannot read and read well and understand simple, simple sentences, it will be difficult for you the teacher to teach effectively". (ELT-6)

“In fact, students who struggle to read have difficulty understanding and explaining what they read. Teaching these students is always boring” (EL- 2)

Based on the preceding discussion, it was inferred that reading fluency played a pivotal role in reading comprehension, and students’ inability to read fluently presented a substantial barrier to the effective teaching of the skill. Conversely, some participants believed that these challenges originated from the primary school level. They indicated that a significant number of students transitioning from public primary schools lacked oral English and reading skills. This deficiency affected their ability to express themselves effectively at higher levels and, in turn, had a detrimental impact on the teaching of RC at the junior high school level.

They expressed their views in the following ways:

“The problem is that students don’t get the basis at the primary level, so when they come to J.H.S, it’s left to you to start all over again with them. You have to teach them the sound and the phonetics. So, by the time they get to start reading, you see that time is far spent. You have wasted a term or may be two and you have few times to be with them”. (ELT-1)

“Many students don’t acquire the oral language skills necessary to express themselves in English before they come to thee JHS. In fact, it is always difficult to teach these students” (ELT-13)

“In fact, some of the students are not capable to read at all. We receive weak students from the primary school. Therefore, what I do is that for the whole week, I will do reading activities just to help those who cannot read. So, we read for the first day, the following day, then the 3rd day, we do the comprehension”. (ELT-2)

“Please, some of the students cannot express themselves in English when they come to JHS. I always have to break down the passage into smaller sections to make it easier for them to understand, even with that ‘koraa ‘it is a problem?’”(ELT- 5)

“In fact, a lot of the students cannot read well, they can’t also speak English, because of that they feel reluctant to always ask questions in class, especially, if there's something they don't understand”. (ELT-3)

“Pupils who come from the primary school can't read. Teaching these students is very difficult. (ELT-7)

These responses further indicated that students who are not well-exposed to reading and oral English language at the primary school level struggle with RC at the JHS. This suggested that students' ability to read fluently is a key element necessary for teaching reading comprehension.

In the same vein, two participants said that:

“Students who are good and can read very well and explain whatever they read makes teaching easy paa”. (ELT- 22)

“There are some few students in my class who can read well without any difficulty. They always try to make some sense out of whatever they read”. (ELT- 8)

The findings revealed that limited reading fluency posed a major barrier to the effective teaching of RC at the JHS level. Many students struggled with decoding, stress, intonation, and pace, which disrupted lesson flow and impeded comprehension. These difficulties were largely linked to weak foundational literacy and oral English skills acquired at the primary level, requiring teachers to reteach basic reading before introducing comprehension strategies. Observations further confirmed that students frequently paused, mispronounced simple words, and read in a fragmented manner, leading to disengagement among peers and slowing the pace of lessons. While teachers attempted to scaffold learning through modelling and choral reading, the majority of students continued to face challenges in achieving smooth and expressive reading. In contrast, students with fluent reading skills demonstrated stronger comprehension and interpretation of texts, highlighting the essential role of fluency in supporting academic achievement.

4.1.4.3 Students poor communication skills

Data gathered revealed that students' poor communication skills in English posed a significant challenge for teachers in delivering RC strategies at the JHS level. Since

English was the medium of instruction, teachers found it difficult to teach effectively when students lacked the ability to express themselves clearly. Participants reported that many students had not mastered basic grammatical structures, often producing sentences with common errors. This limited students' ability to engage meaningfully with texts, ask questions, or participate in discussions, thereby impeding comprehension-focused instruction. As a result, teachers were compelled to address language weaknesses alongside teaching RC, which affected the overall effectiveness of their lessons.

One of the participants articulated that:

"Students lack sufficient vocabulary to express their ideas effectively. They cannot arrange their own words even in a correct sentence to express themselves in English. Because of this they cannot write simple sentences correctly". (ELT-13)

Some participants claimed that:

"Students have not grasped the basics of the English grammatical constructions well. They always make simple, simple mistakes in their tenses and subject-verb agreement. If you ask them questions in English language, they always respond in Twi". (ELT- 7)

"My students cannot speak the English language and they always struggle to express their ideas. This makes it difficult for me to always grasp their thoughts. (ELT-8)

Ah, it is very difficult for a teacher to teach successfully if the students are unable to communicate with the teacher. (ELT-1)

Other participants also expressed their frustrations and disappointments in the following ways:

"Students don't speak English language. When you ask them to re-tell what they have even learned, it becomes a problem. They will stand there and be looking at you. It's a problem oo". (ELT-4)

"In fact, simple simple words for students to express their ideas is a problem. They hardly construct simple meaningful sentence in English language. Because of that I usually use the local language (Twi) to teach so that they can take active part in the lesson". (ELT-3)

“Oh, the problem is that sometimes students may understand the concept alright, but how to express themselves in English becomes a problem. At times, I have to translate it into Twi before they can talk in class”. (ELT-12)

“Our students cannot read nor communicate with the English language at all. They often use Twi to respond to questions. Even after explanation and all that, when it has been used in a context and you want them to explain them as it has been used in the context, then it becomes a problem. Why? Because they can’t express themselves”. (ELT-9)

“Ei, majority of the students cannot speak any good English. They even write simple, simple sentences with common, common grammatical errors. I sometimes, wonder how they were even promoted to the JHS”. (ELT-15)

On the other hand, some participants submitted that other students are good. They can speak and write good English.

A respondent articulated that:

“Only few students can express themselves well in English language. These students always try to ask and answer questions in class with the English language”. (ELT-6).

Another respondent added that:

“If our students can express themselves well and write good sentences, teaching RC will not be a problem at all, because they know some of the words already, they’ve met them before and they’ve been using it”. (ELT-2)

The data revealed that students’ poor communication skills in English significantly hindered the effective teaching of reading comprehension. Many students lacked sufficient vocabulary, struggled with grammar and sentence construction, and frequently resorted to using Twi, which limited classroom interaction and comprehension-focused learning. Consequently, teachers were often compelled to combine language instruction with reading comprehension, thereby reducing lesson

effectiveness. While a few students demonstrated satisfactory communication skills, the majority faced persistent challenges, making it difficult for teachers to achieve their instructional objectives.

During a RC lesson, several students struggled to respond to the teacher's questions in English, often reverting to the local language or remaining silent. When prompted to explain the meaning of a passage, some learners used fragmented sentences with limited vocabulary, rendering their responses unclear. Others were unable to construct complete sentences, even when given additional time. This lack of communicative competence disrupted the lesson flow, as the teacher frequently had to rephrase questions, translate into the local language, or provide sentence starters. As a result, opportunities for meaningful discussion and deeper text analysis were significantly reduced, limiting the overall effectiveness of the comprehension lesson.

4.1.4.4 Inadequate Reading Materials

The recurring challenge identified in the interviews was the scarcity of reading materials, particularly textbooks for English language learning. Participants indicated that the shortage of textbooks hampered the teaching of reading comprehension. They emphasised that access to a variety of texts was crucial for students to develop their vocabulary and reading skills, while also providing teachers with a structured approach to instruction. According to them, the challenge of inadequate reading materials began at the primary level, leading some teachers to neglect the teaching of reading. This deficiency at the primary level created ongoing difficulties for students as they progressed in their education. Consequently, many students struggled to communicate effectively in English when they transitioned to higher levels.

Majority of the participants shared their views in the following ways:

"In a class of 48 students, we have only 3 textbooks, so how do I teach comprehension? And the students too don't have reading materials at home. Their parents too are not ready to buy the books for them " (ELT-7)

"Please, you know that textbooks provide a variety of texts that enable the teachers to teach well. Because the textbooks are not sufficient, it is difficult to teach effectively". (ELT-15)

"Oh, if the textbooks are there that will help them to read effectively, teaching RC will not be difficult, but they are not available. This problem starts from the primary level that is what they will tell you that they don't have reading material. Because of that many teachers either relax or even neglect this aspect of the English Language. As a result, students always move to the JHS without being able to read and express themselves in the English language". (ELT-3)

"We lack sufficient textbooks, which restrict students access to reading. Because of this, I always rely on the Cockcrow". (ELT-9)

"Please, you know that the textbooks offer teachers the opportunity to know what and how to teach a passage. They also enable students to practice their reading skills, but they are not enough to assist us do in effective teaching". (ELT-11)

"As a matter of fact, we don't have the textbooks, so I sometimes don't want to even teach this aspect at all". (ELT-9)

"The problem is that we lack textbooks that will help us to teach. There are moments you the teacher will feel reluctant to teach reading comprehension". (ELT-1)

"Master, let's be frank. At the primary level, many teachers don't teach reading comprehension. Some even ignore it due to lack of reading materials. This poses a big challenge when students move to the next class". (ELT-5)

"Truly, we lack textbooks. It's necessary we write specific information on the board for them to practice, but if we have textbooks, it will make the process easy. Once you teach them, they can also practice independently, especially at home". (ELT-8)

"The biggest challenge is our textbooks. At times you want to teach RC but because the books are not enough, you have to ignore and teach other aspects. (ELT-10)

"Please, as I speak now, even in form two, they are almost 60 students. I have only 5 reading books. How do I teach them?" (ELT-13)

“We don’t have readers. And at times I have to print them myself. If you tell them to contribute something small, some will pay and others will not pay. So, sometimes I have to print it for them just to encourage them. This sometimes makes me ignore teaching it”. (ELT-14)

“In fact, our textbooks contain a wide range of vocabulary words that offer opportunities for me to teach new words to students. Due to students’ limited access to the textbooks, they are unable to encounter a good number of words and thus struggle to develop their language skills”. (ELT-6)

The above responses indicated that the inadequate provision of reading materials, particularly English textbooks, posed a significant barrier to the effective teaching of reading comprehension. This shortage restricted students’ exposure to diverse texts, limited vocabulary development, and reduced opportunities for independent practice. As a result, many teachers either neglected or minimised the teaching of reading comprehension, especially at the primary level, which subsequently contributed to students’ persistent difficulties in reading fluency and communication as they progressed to higher levels of education. Classroom observation revealed that in a class of over 40 students, only a few had access to the required text, compelling others to share or remain without books. This scarcity curtailed opportunities for independent reading and active engagement, slowed lesson delivery, and compelled the teacher to rely on reading aloud and writing excerpts on the chalkboard. Consequently, both participation and comprehension-focused learning were significantly constrained.

4.2 Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research questions, existing literature, and theoretical perspectives. The discussion highlights how the results extended, confirmed, or contradicted previous studies, while addressing the contextual realities of the study area.

Research Question One: How do teachers perceive the teaching of RC in public basic schools in the ASM?

The study's findings revealed three key themes: the perceived value of RC for academic and lifelong success, the cross-disciplinary significance of RC, and the complexity of its instruction. Schema Theory posits that readers draw upon pre-existing mental frameworks, or schemata, to interpret and make sense of new textual information (Anderson, 1994; Rumelhart, 1980). This theoretical perspective provided a valuable foundation for interpreting the participants' insights and instructional practices.

The study found that RC was regarded as an essential and foundational skill for both academic achievement and lifelong learning. Interview data indicated a strong consensus among teachers that the ability to read and understand texts not only enhanced students' vocabulary and communication skills, but also enabled them to critically engage with content across all subject areas. This was reflected in statements such as, *"RC has helped me... to discover new things and educated myself in so many areas of life"* (ELT-15), and *"RC is the basics of all learning"* (ELT-6). Such perspectives underscored the belief that RC extended beyond mere language acquisition, encompassing broader intellectual development and personal empowerment. Observational data substantiated these views. Teachers consistently

incorporated RC instruction into their classroom practices, not merely as an isolated literacy skill but as a means to support analytical thinking, summarisation, and real-life application. Participants placed significant emphasis on the development of core reading strategies, such as identifying main ideas and understanding word meanings, which were crucial to deep textual engagement. These practices implicitly encouraged the activation of relevant schemata, enabling students to connect text content with their prior knowledge. Such approaches corroborated Snow's (2016) assertion that RC lies at the heart of reading and plays a critical role in fostering the critical thinking skills necessary for academic success. Panel (2000) highlighted that effective RC instruction significantly enhances students' abilities to process and retain information, leading to improved academic outcomes and lifelong learning.

The findings further demonstrated that RC is a cross-disciplinary skill. It is essential across all subjects, helping students to understand lesson content in areas such as Mathematics and Science, perform better in examinations, and apply knowledge in real-life contexts. As one respondent noted, *"If you don't understand English, you cannot do any of the subjects"* (ELT-1). This finding aligns with Maulizan's (2015) argument that RC facilitates not only language acquisition but also comprehension across subject areas. It is further supported by Smith's (2020) study, which indicated that RC enables learners to access and understand disciplinary content in Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, and other domains. Similarly, Moore (2016) and Jones and Brown (2022) contended that comprehension is integral to subject mastery, not simply an English language skill. These perspectives support the assertion that academic success requires students to understand, analyse, and apply information acquired through RC (Almutairi, 2018). However, Ness (2016) argued that RC alone

may not be sufficient to guarantee academic success and lifelong learning; it must be complemented by other skills and strategies.

The findings also revealed varied perspectives regarding the complexity of teaching RC. Some teachers perceived it as a relatively straightforward instructional task, primarily centred on vocabulary development, recall, and pronunciation. In contrast, others conceptualised it as a cognitively demanding endeavour, requiring interpretation, analysis, and evaluation. For example, one teacher remarked that effective instruction required “*active thinking and understanding of the author’s message with interpretation, analysis, and evaluation*” (ELT-8). Schema Theory provided a useful framework for interpreting these divergent views. Teachers who viewed RC as a higher-order cognitive activity implicitly recognised the importance of schema activation and integration in facilitating profound comprehension. Conversely, those who prioritised surface-level tasks appeared to have overlooked the significance of engaging learners’ prior knowledge and supporting their capacity to derive meaning beyond literal content. These varied perspectives reflected the different pedagogical practices among participants, shaped by their experiences, student abilities, and contextual realities. Observational data reinforced the complexity of RC instruction. Teachers often relied on scaffolding techniques, such as vocabulary instruction, questioning, summarising, and text-to-self connections. These strategies were consistent with recommendations by the National Reading Panel (2000), which emphasised explicit strategy instruction to support comprehension. Teachers who considered RC demanding also reported that students frequently struggled with fluency and vocabulary, which hindered their ability to grasp deeper meanings in texts. This substantiated Ness’s (2016) argument that while RC is vital, it must be accompanied by additional instructional supports to ensure student success.

Interestingly, even among teachers who perceived RC as relatively straightforward, there was recognition of the importance of student engagement and motivation. One respondent observed that teaching RC was “*one of the easiest things... as long as you keep the students interested and motivated with the right materials*” (ELT-9). This suggested that teachers’ perspectives were often contingent upon external factors such as learner readiness and resource availability. However, this view contrasts with the perspectives of Pečjak and Pirc (2018) and Van den Broek (2010), who contended that RC is a complex process involving dynamic interactions among the text, the reader, and the reading context. Similarly, Kendeou et al (2016) maintained that RC is one of the most cognitively demanding tasks undertaken by humans. These perspectives are consistent with research demonstrating that comprehending a sentence requires visually processing words, identifying their phonological, orthographic, and semantic representations, and connecting them syntactically to derive meaning (Kendeou & O’Brien, 2018; Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). Research further shows that readers must integrate meaning across sentences, draw upon background knowledge, make inferences, recognise text structures, and consider authors’ goals and intentions to understand texts effectively (Graesser, 2015; Kendeou & O’Brien, 2018).

In conclusion, the study revealed that teachers widely acknowledged the pivotal role of RC in academic success and personal development. Although their interpretations of the instructional demands varied, majority recognised RC as foundational across subjects. These findings were consistent with existing literature (Jones & Brown, 2022; Smith, 2020; Snow, 2010), which highlighted the interdisciplinary and life-enabling nature of comprehension. However, the variability in pedagogical understanding underscored the importance of consistent training and collaboration

among teachers to ensure effective comprehension instruction. Future research should aim to bridge this gap by promoting shared practices and fostering a deeper understanding of the cognitive processes involved in teaching RC.

Research Question Two: What common strategies do teachers employ in teaching RC in public basic schools in the ASM?

The various themes relating to the common strategies teachers employed in teaching RC included: vocabulary instruction, scaffolding, graphic organisers (GOs), previewing the text to activate students' background knowledge, retelling a story to summarise the lesson, and questioning techniques to support comprehension and critical thinking.

With regard to vocabulary teaching, it emerged from the data that vocabulary instruction played a central role in teachers' approaches to teaching RC. Teachers consistently prioritised the explicit teaching of vocabulary before students engaged with a text. This emphasis reflected a shared belief that understanding the meanings of words was fundamental to text comprehension. Francie (2017) confirmed this perspective, noting that comprehension improves significantly when learners understand the true meaning of words. According to Francie, given that comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading, students cannot overestimate the importance of vocabulary development. This sentiment was echoed by participants in the study. One teacher remarked, *"Students can't read and understand when they don't understand the meaning of the words used in the passage"* (ELT-15), while another stated, *"You cannot read and understand without knowing the meaning of the words: every communication is based on words"* (ELT-2). These responses illustrated that vocabulary was regarded not merely as a decoding tool, but as the very

foundation upon which comprehension was constructed. This aligned with Schema Theory, which posits that when readers lack sufficient vocabulary, they are less likely to activate the appropriate schema, thereby impairing comprehension. Consequently, vocabulary functioned as a trigger for schema activation, serving as the foundation for understanding rather than merely supporting word recognition.

Participants' instructional strategies in teaching vocabulary included identifying unfamiliar words prior to reading, drilling students on pronunciation, and encouraging them to form sentences using new vocabulary. For example, a respondent noted, *"I first teach the new words... then let them form at least a sentence with the words before they do the comprehension itself"* (ELT-1). Another stated, *"I drill students through the difficult words to help them pronounce them correctly before they read and answer questions"* (ELT-12). These practices reflected a belief that vocabulary acquisition was not only about recognition but also about application, with teachers often assessing students' understanding through sentence construction and verbal reinforcement. The observational data corroborated these practices. Teachers frequently employed vocabulary-focused pre-reading tasks, such as word drilling, pronunciation checks, and contextual usage exercises. These pre-reading practices were consistently designed to reduce lexical barriers before textual engagement. In addition, vocabulary instruction was frequently integrated with broader comprehension strategies, including summarising, retelling, and questioning, particularly among teachers who demonstrated a more refined understanding of RC pedagogy. Teachers, for instance, used vocabulary as a gateway to deeper analytical tasks, encouraging students to make connections between words, ideas, and themes within the text.

These findings aligned closely with existing literature, which has long emphasised the critical role of vocabulary in successful RC. Zhang (2016) found that vocabulary knowledge served as a strong predictor of comprehension outcomes in both first and second language contexts. Similarly, Cerasoli and Ford (2014) asserted that decoding ability and vocabulary knowledge are foundational components of effective comprehension instruction. Johnson et al. (2022) further supported this view by highlighting the reciprocal relationship between vocabulary growth and RC: as the students' vocabulary increased, so did their ability to comprehend complex texts. In summary, vocabulary instruction was perceived as the gateway to comprehension.

The study also indicated that teachers employed a range of scaffolding strategies to enhance learners' RC. These strategies were not only designed to support learners cognitively and linguistically but also aligned with key educational theories such as Schema Theory (Xue, 2019), Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and cognitive load theory (Sweller et al., 2019). Across the data, scaffolding practices were observed to be both unintentional and responsive to learners' immediate needs, with the ultimate goal of fostering independent comprehension. A consistent scaffolding strategy evident in the study was the pre-teaching of vocabulary. Participants emphasised that introducing new or difficult words prior to reading was a critical step in facilitating understanding. One teacher explained, *"Personally, I explain the text and some of the words they may find difficult before reading. After reading, I will then guide them to find answers to the questions on the passage"* (ELT-8). Another added, *"Students can't read and understand when they don't understand the meaning of the words used in the passage"* (ELT-7). These perspectives reflected the foundational role of lexical competence in comprehension and aligned with Sweller et al.'s (2019) assertion that breaking down complex

material and providing explicit explanations help reduce cognitive overload and enhance working memory efficiency.

According to Schema Theory, knowing a word means more than recognising it. It includes understanding the concepts, contexts, and experiences associated with it. This deep understanding helps activate relevant schemas when reading. In many cases, vocabulary instruction was paired with modelled reading, particularly when working with less proficient readers. This approach allowed learners to hear fluent reading, learn correct pronunciation, and observe reading behaviours. As one participant noted, *"In the pre-reading stage, I put new words from the passage on the board, we go through the pronunciations before I have the kids read. If it's JHS 1, normally I do model reading"* (ELT-5). Another explained, *"I do a model reading first. Then I'll ask the students to read one after the other... I also do drill of new vocabulary words. After finding the meaning, I will ask them to use the words to form sentences on their own before they read the passage"* (ELT-12). These scaffolded steps exemplified Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD, where learners are gradually supported through modelling and guided practice before moving towards independent performance.

Collaborative learning also emerged as a crucial scaffolding technique. Teachers encouraged peer discussions and group work to support learners in constructing meaning through social interaction. One teacher explained, *"Sometimes I encourage students to discuss the text with each other, either in small groups or as a whole class. This helps them to clarify their own thoughts and learn from each other"* (ELT-14). The observational data supported this assertion, showing that learners who engaged in peer interactions were often more active and confident in interpreting texts. This

socio-constructivist approach aligned well with Vygotsky's (1978) emphasis on social mediation in learning.

Another commonly observed practice was guided questioning, where teachers scaffolded students' thinking through structured questions. These often progressed from simple factual recall to more inferential and analytical questions. As one participant stated, *"Then they will move on to the questions... the ones they will have to think or connect the answers to the passage"* (ELT-2). Such questioning not only supported comprehension but also promoted critical thinking and deeper textual engagement, as noted in the observational data, where teachers' strategic use of questions kept learners engaged and challenged. Questioning was considered essential for forming new mental frameworks. When readers learned through questioning, they also acquired new concepts, which enabled them to build or expand their existing schemas.

In addition to conventional teaching of vocabulary, some teachers utilised creative vocabulary activities to enhance engagement and cognitive readiness. One respondent shared, *"At times I ask the students to do scrambling of words with the new vocabs... to form letters and sentences before they come to the passage"* (ELT-9). These interactive pre-reading tasks served as meaningful scaffolds for vocabulary development and schema activation, echoing Xue's (2019) Schema Theory, which advocates for the activation of prior knowledge to aid comprehension. Several teachers also implemented differentiated support, adjusting their scaffolding based on learners' proficiency levels. A participant explained, *"Those who find it a bit difficult in reading, you assist the person to read at least 2 or 3 paragraphs... then I'll ask them to explain in the L1 so that I get to know whether comprehension has taken*

place" (ELT-1). The use of first language (L1) here acted as a culturally responsive scaffold, allowing learners to express understanding in a familiar linguistic framework. This practice recognised the linguistic realities of multilingual classrooms and highlighted the importance of inclusive scaffolding techniques.

Interestingly, not all teachers adopted a directive role in the reading process. Some took a facilitative approach, offering learners greater autonomy while still maintaining a scaffolded environment. For instance, one participant explained, *"I don't do model reading myself. I guide students to do the reading after going through the key words. Then they will move on to the questions"* (ELT-2). This method still embodied scaffolding principles by providing foundational support and guiding learners into independent engagement. Proactive lesson preparation was also recognised as an essential scaffolding practice. Teachers noted the importance of anticipating challenges by reviewing reading texts ahead of lessons. As one participant mentioned, *"Before I start the lesson, I will read through the passage myself to identify the new vocabulary words that might be a little difficult"* (ELT-4). This preparation allowed for the timely incorporation of scaffolding strategies tailored to learners' needs. The observational data further revealed that teachers who understood the complexity of RC instruction used a broader range of strategies, including collaborative reading, summarisation, graphic organisers, and interactive questioning. This variation highlighted the implementation of scaffolding.

In sum, the findings demonstrated that scaffolding was executed through multiple interconnected strategies: explicit vocabulary instruction, modelled and collaborative reading, guided questioning, vocabulary games, L1 use, differentiation, and structured lesson preparation. These approaches were firmly grounded in established theoretical

frameworks and aligned with best practices in reading instruction. Through these scaffolded interventions, teachers supported learners in navigating complex texts and developing the skills necessary for independent comprehension.

The study also revealed that teachers frequently employed graphic organisers (GOs) and visual aids as strategic tools to enhance learners' RC. These approaches were used primarily during pre-reading stages to activate prior knowledge, encourage predictions, and support learners in grasping the main ideas of the texts. Participants described using textbook images, mental imagery, and illustrations to prompt students' thinking, facilitate summarisation, and assist in the generation of titles and interpretations of passages. One teacher, for instance, noted, *"I sometimes use pictures from the textbook... for them to predict the outcome of the passage"* (ELT-2), while another explained, *"We create mental pictures based on the text... to predict the outcome"* (ELT-10). Such strategies allowed students to visualise content, anticipate meaning, and make personal connections, thereby supporting comprehension. Although the observational data did not directly capture the use of GOs, classroom activities such as prediction exercises and descriptive discussions suggested their presence in practice. Pang (2013) and Dexter and Hughes (2011) highlighted the effectiveness of GOs in helping learners organise and interpret information. Sam and Rajan (2013) further emphasised their role in aiding prediction, inference, and retention of textual content. Overall, the findings affirmed that visual tools and graphic organisers played a significant role in fostering engagement and understanding in reading instruction. Their application aligned with established pedagogical theories, underscoring their relevance in enhancing learners' comprehension skills.

The findings of this study further indicated that questioning–answer techniques (QATs) were a dominant and deliberate pedagogical strategy employed by English Language teachers to support students’ RC and engagement. In this regard, teachers strategically used a variety of questioning strategies at various stages of reading instruction, before, during, and after text engagement to support comprehension, activate learners’ prior knowledge, sustain engagement, and foster higher-order thinking. Teachers often initiated lessons with questions intended to stimulate prediction and link learners’ background knowledge to the text. For instance, one participant explained, *“I first ask questions based on what the students are going to read to help them predict the outcome of the texts”* (ELT-1), while another stated, *“I always try to ask questions to find out pupils’ previous knowledge...you ask them the kind of activities that go on in the market”* (ELT-6). The motivation behind the questioning technique was that such practices reflected an intentional use of schema activation, a strategy widely supported in RC literature (Anderson & Pearson, 1984).

Prior to reading, participants frequently employed questioning to prompt prediction and elicit existing knowledge. As one teacher explained, *“I first ask questions based on what the students are going to read to help them predict the outcome of the texts”* (ELT-1), while another remarked, *“I always try to ask questions to find out pupils’ previous knowledge...you ask them the kind of activities that go on in the market”* (ELT-6). These strategies reflected Schema Theory, which underscores the importance of prior knowledge in understanding texts (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). During reading, questions were used to guide learners’ attention and monitor comprehension. A participant noted, *“From time to time, I ask questions throughout the reading in order to find out whether they have understood the passage”* (ELT-7), while another added, *“As you are reading the passage, having the questions in mind,*

you indicate where the answers may be” (ELT-5). These approaches were consistent with the Question–Answer Relationship (QAR) model, which encourages learners to connect questions with appropriate textual evidence (Raphael, 1986).

After reading, questioning served to assess understanding and deepen critical reflection. One teacher stated, *“After every passage, there are comprehension questions which test whether students have understood the passage”* (ELT-10). Another highlighted the use of inferential questions, explaining, *“I regularly ask students questions such as ‘What is the main idea?’ or ‘How does this character feel?’ that can help them to think critically about the text”* (ELT-15). Such questioning supported the development of critical literacy and metacognitive skills (Fisher et al., 2016). It was observed that all participants integrated questioning throughout the lesson as a routine part of instruction. Teachers paused to ask questions, drew students’ attention to textual evidence, and encouraged responses based on inference and personal interpretation. In many cases, students were observed underlining answers, taking notes, or re-reading portions of the text to justify their responses, practices that demonstrated active engagement and comprehension monitoring. The use of questioning was not limited to lower-order recall but extended to analysis and evaluation, supporting the development of higher-order thinking skills as outlined in Bloom’s taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002).

These findings were supported by Schema Theory, which posits that RC is enhanced when new information is connected to existing knowledge structures, or schemas (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). In teaching RC, questioning strategies play a critical role in activating learners’ prior knowledge, guiding their attention, and facilitating deeper engagement with the text. Mogea (2021) found that posing questions not only

stimulates critical thinking but also encourages learners to articulate their thoughts, thereby deepening their understanding of reading materials. Similarly, Garcia et al. (2019) reported that students exposed to frequent questioning during reading lessons demonstrated increased participation, improved comprehension, and better retention of information outcomes consistent with schema activation processes. Further studies by Iksan and Daniel (2015) and Rahman and Mahmud (2016) supported the idea that effective questioning enhances the overall quality of teaching RC and contributes to students' communicative competence and academic performance. These results highlighted the theoretical and practical value of integrating questioning strategies into reading instruction to support schema development and meaningful learning.

One teacher aptly summarised this pedagogical approach, stating, *“Please, one significant thing is that students are actively engaged with the lesson when you continually ask them questions”* (ELT-4). This statement highlighted the integral role of questioning not only as a comprehension tool but also as a means of fostering interaction and student-centred learning. These findings confirmed that questioning–answer techniques were not only widespread but also systematically employed to achieve multiple instructional goals ranging from comprehension and critical thinking to communication and engagement, affirming their place as a cornerstone of effective English Language teaching practice.

Another common strategy revealed was the use of story retelling to support students' comprehension and summarisation. Teachers consistently encouraged learners to retell stories in their own words, which enabled them to identify main ideas, internalise meaning, and construct a coherent understanding of the text. Several participants confirmed that they guided students to summarise texts through oral

narration. One teacher remarked, *“What I mostly do is to ask students to narrate the story, focusing on the key words and phrases in the passage. This helps them remember and retell the story in their own words”* (ELT-1). Another noted, *“I tell students to tell me what they have read, identifying the important facts from the passage. This enables them to answer questions about the text”* (ELT-6). The use of students’ own language in summarising was frequently emphasised. One respondent explained, *“Most of the time, I ask students to summarise the lesson by recalling the main ideas in the passage using their own English”* (ELT-11), while another added, *“At times, I encourage students to summarise what they have read in their own words. This helps them clarify their understanding of the text”* (ELT-9). This suggested that retelling was seen not as mere repetition, but as a deeper cognitive process involving rephrasing and synthesis. Some teachers also combined silent reading with guided questioning. For instance, one shared, *“Generally, I guide students to read the text silently for a few minutes, and then they answer questions related to the text in their book”* (ELT-8). Others employed both oral and written retelling. A participant stated, *“At times, I ask students to retell the story in the text using their own words. At times too, they will also identify the main ideas in the text”* (ELT-7), while another mentioned, *“I do ask students to identify the main idea in the text and rephrase it in their own words”* (ELT-4).

However, not all experiences were without challenge. One teacher admitted, *“Oh, I used to guide students to express their views as they read, but sometimes they find it difficult to speak, which makes teaching boring”* (ELT-3). This reflected that some learners struggled with verbal expression, potentially limiting the effectiveness of retelling as a strategy for them. Observational data corroborated the interview responses. Teachers actively engaged students in retelling a story they had read,

prompting them to recall the sequence of events and identify key ideas. This helped students construct responses to comprehension questions, supporting the idea that retelling contributed to memory consolidation and understanding. These findings could aptly be interpreted by Schema Theory, which posits that individuals comprehend and retain information by organising it into existing mental frameworks. Schisler et al. (2023) observed that story retelling facilitated RC by assisting learners in the arrangement and internalisation of narrative content, a process reflective of schema activation and reinforcement. In a similar vein, Martin and Gaffney (2022) contended that retelling enabled pupils to attend to salient details, thereby enhancing the precision of their responses, an outcome indicative of more efficient schema utilisation. Davis et al. (2021) suggested that the act of retelling contributed to the structuring and long-term retention of information, which aligned with the notion that repeated engagement with content strengthens schematic organisation. Fuchs et al. (2020) likewise noted that retelling fostered the production of coherent answers to comprehension questions, suggesting that such practice aided learners in integrating new information into their pre-existing cognitive frameworks.

Despite the benefits of using the retelling technique, researchers caution against relying solely on retelling. Lee and Park (2022) argued that it might not be adequate for students with learning difficulties, suggesting that visual aids and interactive elements could offer better support. Likewise, Brown et al. (2022) proposed the integration of digital tools to enhance engagement. Thompson and Hall (2021) recommended complementing retelling with strategies such as reciprocal teaching and think-alouds, which promote metacognitive skills and deeper engagement. Although story retelling was a valuable and commonly used technique for improving RC, its

effectiveness could be strengthened by combining it with other approaches to support diverse learners and maximise engagement.

It also emerged from the study that activating students' prior knowledge was a central strategy employed by teachers to enhance reading comprehension. Teachers consistently drew upon learners' existing experiences and background knowledge to introduce new texts. This approach not only supported comprehension but also encouraged critical engagement with reading materials. Again, teachers frequently used pre-reading questions and real-life references to identify what students already knew, which they then connected to the content of the passage. This method was perceived to reduce instructional difficulty and to foster deeper student understanding. Observational data confirmed these practices, showing that teachers who actively elicited and linked background knowledge engaged students more effectively and facilitated richer discussions. This finding aligned with previous literature, which emphasised the beneficial influence of background knowledge on RC (Guthrie & Humenick, 2020; Johnson, 2018; Smith et al., 2021). The results further supported Schema Theory, which proposed that comprehension is significantly enhanced when new information is meaningfully integrated with existing cognitive structures. This interpretation corresponded with the perspective advanced by Al-Issa (2015), who contended that learners were more likely to comprehend a text effectively when they were familiar with its subject matter (i.e., possessed content schema), understood its discourse structure and genre conventions (i.e., possessed formal schema), and were proficient in recognising linguistic features and syntactic constructions (i.e., possessed language schema). Accordingly, the intentional incorporation of learners' prior knowledge into reading instruction emerged as a pedagogically sound approach, one

that facilitated not only deeper comprehension but also more reflective and critical engagement with texts.

Research Question Three: What CPD opportunities support teachers in teaching RC effectively?

In relation to the CPD opportunities that support teachers in teaching RC effectively, the findings of the study revealed a substantial gap in targeted in-service training on RC strategies, which appeared to have significant implications for teachers' instructional choices. As one participant lamented, *"I've been teaching for over 10 years, but I can't remember the last time we had a workshop or PLC specifically focused on RC"* (ELT-4), while another remarked that *"The municipal education office rarely organises in-service training ... it feels like RC is not seen as a priority"* (ELT-14).

On the other hand, it was observed that teachers consistently failed to systematically model RC strategies, such as scaffolding and questioning-answer relationship techniques. This shortfall resulted in limited differentiation and low levels of student engagement. Consequently, the study found that teachers predominantly relied on their own prior knowledge when delivering RC instruction, which reflected a lack of exposure to varied pedagogical strategies. Although this finding aligned conceptually with Schema Theory (Al-Issa, 2015), which emphasises the role of prior knowledge in facilitating understanding, it revealed a notable gap. The theory reflected in teachers' actions rather than being deliberately applied to support students' comprehension. In the absence of structured training, this reliance appeared to restrict the effectiveness of instruction. This pattern also corresponded with Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy, which suggests that individuals are more likely to engage in practices they

feel competent in. Similarly, Jamali Kivi et al. (2021) observed that limited exposure to alternative strategies reinforced dependence on familiar methods, while Kuhn et al. (2010) found that repeated use of a single approach tended to increase confidence but could also hinder pedagogical innovation.

Research Question Four: What challenges do teachers encounter in teaching RC in public basic schools in the ASM?

With regard to research question four, the study revealed that students' limited vocabulary, weak reading fluency, poor communication skills, and the inadequacy of resource materials constituted the key challenges that hindered effective teaching of reading comprehension.

The study revealed that vocabulary formed the foundation of language acquisition and communication, as well as being central to reading comprehension. However, students' limited vocabulary posed a significant barrier to instruction and hindered their progress, highlighting the need for explicit teaching and supportive strategies to enhance outcomes. Teachers consistently reported that learners struggled to understand texts due to a lack of basic word knowledge, which hindered their ability to engage with lessons, express their ideas clearly, and participate meaningfully in class discussions. This absence of basic word knowledge not only delayed lesson progression but also restricted the introduction of higher-order reading strategies. As one participant observed, *"With the vocabs, it is very big problem for students... before they can read and understand"* (ELT-8). The observational data was consistent with this perspective. Students frequently mispronounced words, read without appropriate expression, and displayed poor fluency and pacing. Many pupils were unable to express their thoughts coherently, which reflected the adverse effects of

limited vocabulary on both receptive and expressive language abilities. A number of students appeared easily distracted during reading tasks, indicative of low confidence and insufficient background knowledge. These findings were in line with the conclusions of the National Reading Panel (2000), which asserted that vocabulary development constituted a critical component of reading comprehension. Similarly, Moats (2020) and Duke et al. (2011) contended that without structured training and appropriate pedagogical strategies, teachers tended to revert to traditional methods that failed to develop students' comprehension skills effectively. Studies by Akyel and Ercetin (2019) and Mudzielwana et al. (2012) further indicated that many teachers lacked the methodological expertise required to address students' RC needs, particularly in vocabulary instruction. These findings highlighted the significance of developing learners' lexical knowledge as a means of enriching their mental frameworks. Schema Theory posits that comprehension is not a passive decoding process but an active construction of meaning, in which readers draw upon their pre-existing knowledge structures, or *schemas*, to interpret new information. Students lacking the requisite vocabulary were therefore severely constrained in their ability to activate relevant schemas during reading. Therefore, vocabulary knowledge was fundamental to reading comprehension, and its limitation hindered learners' progress, highlighting the need for explicit instruction and supportive strategies to enhance outcomes.

The study revealed that difficulties with word recognition, pronunciation, and fluency hindered the effective teaching of reading comprehension. Teachers reported that these challenges disrupted lesson delivery and often required them to revisit basic reading skills before advancing to comprehension tasks, a finding that was corroborated by observational data showing frequent pauses to explain words that

slowed instructional progress. Learners with stronger vocabularies demonstrated greater fluency, participation, and comprehension, whereas many others read in a monotone, mispronounced words, and neglected punctuation, which led to poor fluency and disengagement during reading activities. These challenges were frequently attributed to inadequate early literacy instruction, with several teachers noting that students often entered junior high school lacking fundamental decoding skills and oral language proficiency, thereby necessitating a return to basic reading instruction. This pattern highlighted a broader systemic gap within the literacy development continuum. The findings aligned with Rasinski (2016), who identified a strong association between fluency and comprehension, and with Kim, Park, and Wagner (2017), who confirmed fluency as a crucial factor in reading comprehension across age groups. Bhlool (2013) similarly emphasised that fluent readers were more capable of understanding and retaining information, describing fluency as a vital source of energy driving the comprehension process. Collectively, these perspectives emphasized the role of fluency as a mechanism for activating and integrating existing schemata during reading. It is consistent with Schema Theory, which posits that comprehension is facilitated when new information connects with established cognitive frameworks. Weak fluency obstructed this integration, thereby impeding comprehension, and the evidence highlighted the pedagogical imperative of prioritising fluency instruction, particularly for learners with underdeveloped foundational reading skills.

Closely related to fluent reading was the issue of poor communication skills among students. Comprehension extends beyond mere understanding; it involves the ability to express one's thoughts and ideas effectively. The study revealed that many students lacked basic vocabulary and grammatical competence, which restricted their ability to

articulate ideas clearly, participate in discussions, and comprehend texts. One teacher noted, *“Students lack sufficient vocabulary to express their ideas effectively. They cannot arrange their own words even in a correct sentence to express themselves in English”* (ELT-13). As a result, some teachers resorted to using the local language (Twi) to facilitate understanding, though this practice reduced students’ exposure to English. Observations supported these claims, indicating that students struggled to articulate thoughts due to poor vocabulary and weak sentence construction, which negatively impacted their engagement in classroom discussions. These findings substantiated participant ELT-4’s concern: *“Students don’t speak English language. When you ask them to re-tell what they have even learned, it becomes a problem.”*

The communication barriers often led teachers to switch to the local language to facilitate understanding. Whilst this approach facilitated immediate comprehension, it arguably curtailed students’ exposure to and practice of English language, thereby limiting the activation and development of relevant linguistic schemata. This aligned with the observations of Danibao and Tari (2023), who maintained that English instruction ought to prioritise the cultivation of learners’ communicative competence. Similarly, Jacobs and Hayirsever (2016) contended that robust communication abilities are fundamental to fostering both engagement and understanding in the classroom. Huff and Christensen (2018) also asserted that authentic learning cannot occur in the absence of effective communication. In the same vein, Cremin et al. (2022) emphasised the pivotal role of verbal interaction, suggesting that sustained dialogue enhances pupils’ vocabulary acquisition as well as their reading and writing proficiency. Aligned with the schema-oriented perspective, the use of the local language, although practical, was found to hinder learners’ ability to construct and reinforce the cognitive frameworks essential for sustained language development.

This highlighted the importance of integrating language acquisition with comprehension strategies to support learners' academic progression.

The study further revealed the inadequacy of English-language reading materials, particularly textbooks, as a persistent and significant challenge in the teaching of RC. Teachers consistently reported that this scarcity impeded their ability to deliver effective instruction, limited students' access to varied texts, and diminished opportunities for independent reading and vocabulary development. One participant remarked, *"In a class of 48 students, we have only 3 textbooks, so how do I teach comprehension? And the students too don't have reading materials at home"* (ELT-7). Another reflected, *"Oh, if the textbooks are there that will help them to read effectively, teaching RC will not be difficult, but they are not available. This problem started at the primary level ... many teachers either relax or even neglect this aspect of the English Language"* (ELT-3).

Schema Theory posits that comprehension depends upon the activation and expansion of prior knowledge structures (*schemata*) through interaction with varied and meaningful texts. Observational data revealed that the scarcity of reading resources restricted independent reading, slowed lesson delivery, and compelled reliance on reading aloud and chalkboard excerpts. This lack of appropriate materials not only constrained participation and comprehension-focused engagement but also hindered the formation and reinforcement of schemata essential for constructing meaning. This corresponded with Chingos and West's (2010) assertion that students lacking access to textbooks performed considerably worse than their peers, while Beth (2017) highlighted that such materials were integral to fostering active classroom participation. Nguyen and Tran (2020) similarly noted that inadequate reading

resources curtailed opportunities for developing reading skills and exposure to authentic texts. Additionally, previous literature (Kintsch & Mangalath, 2011; Klauda, 2014) linked broad textual access with vocabulary growth and deeper comprehension, an idea grounded in Kintsch's (1998) earlier claim that vocabulary knowledge is foundational to meaning construction in RC. These findings demonstrated that the persistent lack of suitable reading materials undermined both instructional delivery and learner outcomes, highlighting the importance of integrating resource provision into the English Language curriculum to support schema development and academic progress.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings, draws conclusions, outlines the implications of the study, and provides recommendations. It further suggests areas for future research.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' perspectives and strategies for teaching RC in public basic schools in the ASM. Specifically, the study explored teachers' perspectives, common strategies employed, CPD opportunities that had been effective, and the challenges encountered in the teaching of RC.

This qualitative study was underpinned by the interpretative paradigm and employed a descriptive phenomenological design. Four objectives guided the study to:

1. Explore teachers' perspectives on the teaching of RC in public basic schools in the ASM.
2. Examine the common strategies teachers employ in teaching RC in public basic schools in the ASM.
3. Identify the CPD opportunities that support teachers in teaching RC effectively in public basic schools in the ASM.
4. Investigate the challenges teachers encounter in the teaching of RC in public basic schools in the ASM.

5.2 Summary of the Key Findings

1. Teachers' Perspectives of the Teaching of RC

- I. Teachers perceived RC as essential for academic success and lifelong learning. It was regarded not merely as a literacy skill, but as a foundational competency across subjects.
- II. RC was considered a cross-curricular skill, vital for subjects beyond English Language. Many teachers noted that learners' difficulties in Mathematics and Science were linked to weak comprehension of instructional texts.
- III. Diverging views were reported on RC instruction. Some teachers focused narrowly on pronunciation and vocabulary, while others emphasised interpretation and analysis, reflecting varied pedagogical understanding of RC's complexity.

2. Common Strategies Teachers Employ in Teaching RC

- I. Explicit vocabulary instruction was widely prioritised, with teachers introducing key words before reading to support text accessibility.
- II. Scaffolding strategies such as guided reading, collaborative activities, and differentiated support promoted gradual learner independence.
- III. Visual aids and graphic organisers were used to activate prior knowledge, aid prediction, and clarify textual structures.
- IV. Question-and-answer techniques were employed throughout reading to assess comprehension and encourage critical thinking.
- V. Story retelling reinforced comprehension and memory, though some learners struggled with expressive skills.

- VI. Activation of prior knowledge was a common approach, linking new content to learners' experiences through relatable examples and targeted questions.

3. CPD in RC Instruction

- I. Teachers reported that RC received limited attention in CPD programmes, as educational authorities did not prioritise its inclusion.
- II. The lack of RC-focused training led to reliance on outdated teaching methods, with teachers depending on familiar approaches rather than evidence-based strategies.
- III. Teachers' confidence strongly influenced their choice of instructional strategies. In the absence of adequate CPD, many preferred methods they were most comfortable with, thereby limiting innovation.

4. Challenges Teachers Encounter in Teaching RC

- I. Limited vocabulary knowledge among students hindered comprehension and background knowledge activation.
- II. Poor reading fluency disrupted comprehension, as mispronunciations and weak intonation prevented meaningful engagement with texts.
- III. Weak communication skills constrained interaction and interpretation, with some learners requiring support in local languages due to underdeveloped English language schemas.
- IV. Scarcity of reading materials reduced learners' exposure to varied texts, genres, and themes.
- V. Systemic gaps in early literacy instruction resulted in weak foundational skills, with many students entering junior high school lacking basic decoding and oral language competencies.

5.3 Conclusions

1. RC is critical not only for academic success and lifelong learning but also for achievement across all subject areas, including Mathematics and Science. However, teachers' conceptualizations of RC vary, underscoring the need for consistent, theory-based pedagogical support.
2. Teachers in public basic schools in the ASM employed a diverse range of strategies particularly explicit vocabulary instruction and scaffolding supported by visual aids, questioning, story retelling, and activation of prior knowledge. Collectively, these practices reflected a balanced instructional model grounded in Schema Theory and other educational frameworks.
3. Insufficient CPD in RC has left teachers underprepared, resulting in reliance on outdated instructional methods. Limited training has also constrained teachers' confidence and willingness to adopt innovative strategies.
4. The teaching of RC is constrained by learners' limited vocabulary, poor fluency, weak expressive skills, inadequate resources, and weak early literacy foundations. These challenges demand systemic interventions, resource provision, and strengthened literacy instruction at all levels.

5.4 Implications

Theoretical Implications

The study emphasised the importance of aligning RC instruction with established learning theories. When schema theory and scaffolding principles were effectively integrated into classroom practice, learners demonstrated improved engagement and comprehension. This reinforces the argument that pedagogical effectiveness is strengthened when theory is systematically linked to practice.

Practical Implications

Although teachers employed diverse strategies, inconsistencies in application indicated a lack of uniform guidance. The findings suggested that CPD initiatives must not only introduce effective RC strategies but also deepen teachers' theoretical understanding, enabling more purposeful instructional decisions.

Policy Implications

The study highlighted a gap in sustained, theory-driven CPD for teachers. Policymakers and education authorities should implement structured and continuous RC-focused training programmes, with particular emphasis on early literacy interventions, provision of resources, and context-specific support.

Implications for Learners

The persistent learner challenges: limited vocabulary, weak fluency, and poor expressive skills highlight the need for targeted interventions. Addressing these challenges requires improved access to reading materials, structured language development, and the integration of supplementary resources such as digital libraries and online texts.

5.5 Recommendations

1. Curriculum Development

- I. The Abuakwa South Education Directorate, in collaboration with curriculum planners and stakeholders, should develop a consistent, theory-driven pedagogical framework for RC instruction.
- II. Effective strategies such as explicit vocabulary instruction, scaffolding, questioning, and story retelling should be formally integrated into curriculum guides.

2. Professional Development

- I. Education authorities should establish continuous, evidence-based CPD programmes tailored to RC.
- II. Professional learning communities (PLCs) should be strengthened to facilitate and improve collaboration and knowledge-sharing among teachers.

3. Early Literacy and Resource Provision

- I. Policymakers should prioritise early literacy interventions from the lower primary level, with structured activities to build vocabulary and fluency.
- II. Schools should be resourced with diverse texts, including supplementary and digital materials, to enrich learners' experiences.

5.6 Suggestions for Future Research

- I. Future studies should examine RC instruction in private basic schools in the same municipality to provide a comparative perspective on pedagogical approaches, resource allocation, and teacher preparedness.
- II. Learners should be included as participants to capture their perspectives on engagement, comprehension challenges, and instructional practices.
- III. Comparative studies between public and private schools should be conducted to identify best practices and disparities.
- IV. Further research should assess the long-term impact of CPD programmes on teacher efficacy and student achievement in RC, particularly where training is grounded in theory-based frameworks.

- V. Longitudinal studies are needed to evaluate the outcomes of early literacy interventions, especially for struggling readers in resource-constrained settings.
- VI. Broader comparative research across municipalities and regions could be designed to allow expansion, replication, and adaptation for larger populations.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide

A semi-structured interview guide focusing on teachers' perspectives, strategies, professional development, and challenges in teaching RC.

Interview Guide

Focus: Teachers' Perspectives on Teaching RC in Public Basic Schools Within the
Abuakwa South Municipality

Class:

Section A: Demographic Data

Please, tick in the appropriate box (✓)

- I. Sex - Male ☐ Female ☐
- II. Age - 25-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40+ ☐
- III. Highest academic qualification - Diploma ☐,
- IV. 1st Degree ☐, 2nd Degree (e.g., M.A., M.Ed., M.Phil.) ☐
- V. 4. Number of years teaching English language
- VI. 1- 4 years ☐ 5 - 9 years ☐, 10 - 14 years ☐ 15 years and above ☐

Section B: Teachers' Perspectives on Reading Comprehension (RC)

- I. What is your perspective on the teaching of reading comprehension?
- II. Why do you consider the teaching of reading comprehension in basic schools important?
- III. In your opinion, how does the teaching of reading comprehension relate to pupils' performance in other subjects, such as Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies?

Section C: Instructional Strategies Used in Teaching RC

- I. What specific strategies or techniques do you frequently use when teaching reading comprehension?
- II. How do you implement these strategies in your classroom practice?
- III. Could you elaborate further on how you teach reading comprehension?

Section D: Influence of Continuous Professional Development

- I. What kinds of workshops, in-service training sessions, or professional learning opportunities have you participated in that are related to teaching reading comprehension?

II. How have this continuous professional development opportunities influenced your teaching practice?

Section E: Challenges Observed in Reading Comprehension Instruction

I. What challenges do you personally face when teaching reading comprehension (e.g., resources, time constraints, or classroom conditions)?

II. How do these challenges affect your teaching approach and pupils' learning outcomes?

III. What types of reading materials do you normally use, and why?

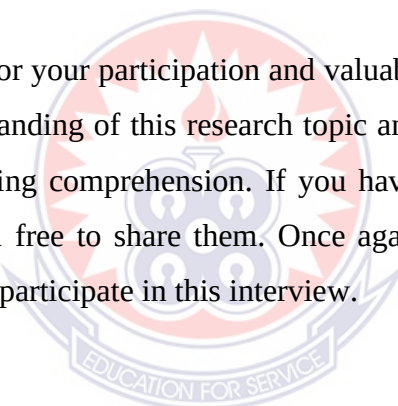
Conclusion

I. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your experiences or reflections on teaching reading comprehension?

II. Do you have any suggestions for improving the teaching of reading comprehension in basic schools within the Municipality?

Closing Statement

Thank you very much for your participation and valuable insights. Your contributions will deepen the understanding of this research topic and inform future improvements in the teaching of reading comprehension. If you have any additional comments or suggestions, please feel free to share them. Once again, I sincerely appreciate your time and willingness to participate in this interview.



Appendix B: Observational Checklist

A classroom observational checklist designed to capture teachers' strategies, resource use, learner engagement, and challenges during RC instruction

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Name:

Class:

Strand:

Please, tick in the appropriate box (✓/✗) with comments

Section A: Teachers' Perceptions of RC

Specific Indicators	Observed (✓/✗)	Comments / Evidence
RC is stated or implied as essential for academic/lifelong success		
RC is connected to performance in other subjects (Math, Science, etc.)		
Teacher shows understanding of RC beyond word-level decoding		
Instruction reflects a narrow view of RC (e.g., focused only on pronunciation/vocabulary)		
Activities include comprehension-building tasks (e.g., inference, synthesis, summarisation)		

Field Notes: _____

Section B: Instructional Strategies /Technique Used in RC Teaching

Specific Indicators	Observed (✓/ X)	Comments / Evidence
Explicit vocabulary instruction (pre-teaching, contextual use)		
Scaffolding (modelling, guided reading, gradual release)		
Use of visual aids (charts, story maps, pictures, etc.)		
Activation of prior knowledge before reading		
Use of questioning strategies (literal, inferential, evaluative)		
Story retelling or summarising activities		
Student engagement in discussions and RC tasks		
Support for oral fluency and expressive language		
Use of appropriate, varied reading materials		

Field Notes: _____**Section C: Evidence of Professional Development Influence**

Specific Indicators	Observed (✓/ X)	Comments / Evidence
Use of recent, research-based RC strategies		
Instruction includes innovative or non-traditional practices		
Teacher demonstrates confidence and fluency in RC instruction		
Teacher lacks differentiation/struggles to adapt instruction based on individual		

student strengths and weaknesses.		
Reliance on outdated, rote-based, or heavily textbook-dependent methods		
Visible use of PD-inspired tools (e.g., graphic organisers, anchor charts, routines)		
Shared new practices during teaching		

Field Notes: _____

Section D: Observed Challenges in RC Instruction

Challenge Area/ specific indicators	Observed (✓/✗)	Comments / Evidence
Students show limited vocabulary knowledge		
Students struggle with fluency (mispronunciations, monotone reading)		
Students have weak grammar or expressive skills		
Students lost track of the text during reading activities		
Students had difficulties with punctuation.		
RC instruction is frequently interrupted for translation or clarification		
Class lacks sufficient reading materials or resources		
Students show weak decoding skills or foundational reading gaps		
Teacher adjusts lessons to accommodate student comprehension challenges		
Teacher expresses concern or frustration about RC learning conditions		
Students faced challenges in articulating their thoughts effectively.		

Field Notes: _____

Appendix C: Introductory Letters

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

IN CASE OF REPLY THE NUMBER AND
DATE OF THIS LETTER SHOULD BE QUOTED



MUNICIPAL EDUCATION OFFICE
P. O. BOX KY 49
ABUAKWA SOUTH
KIBI.

MY REF NO.: GES/ER/MEO/AS/RS/2023/13

YOUR REF NO.:

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

MARCH 15, 2023

E-mail: abuakwasouthmunicipal.ded@ges.gov.gh

GPS:EF-0004-1669

ATTENTION:
HEADS OF BASIC SCHOOLS

RE: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

The Abuakwa South Municipal Education Directorate hereby introduces Mr. Isaac Agyemang, a graduate of the University of Education, Winneba, who is currently pursuing an M.Phil. programme in Basic Education.

He is undertaking a study in public basic schools within the Municipality entitled *"Examining Teachers' Perspectives and Strategies of Teaching of Reading Comprehension in Public Basic Schools in the Abuakwa South Municipality."*

The purpose of the study is purely academic and seeks to generate findings that may contribute to improving the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in public basic schools.

We request that data be collected during school hours, in accordance with research procedures and ethical standards.

All SISOs, heads, and teachers concerned are kindly requested to extend the necessary assistance and cooperation in the conduct of this exercise.

Please note that participation in the study is voluntary, and the confidentiality of responses will be respected.

Thank you.

DANIEL YEBOAH HIENNO (MR.)
MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
ABUAKWA SOUTH - KIBI

MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR
MUNICIPAL EDUCATION OFFICE
ABUAKWA SOUTH
KIBI

Cc:

Isaac Agyemang, University of Education, Winneba.

SISOs, Abuakwa South



UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING
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Our ref: SE/LL/DBE/ S.9/VOL.1/22

February 10, 2023

The Municipal Director,
Ghana Education Service
Abuakwa Municipality.

Dear Sir/Madam,

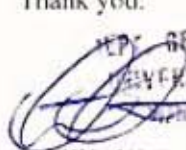
LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I write to introduce **Mr Isaac Agyemang** a second year M.Phil student of the Department of Basic Education, University of Education, Winneba, with registration number **200009251**

Mr Agyemang is to carry out a research on the Topic: *"Examining Teachers' Perspectives And Strategies of Teaching Reading Comprehension in Abuakwa South Municipal Public Basic Schools."*

We would be grateful if he could be given the needed assistance to carry out his studies in the school.

Thank you.


DEPT. OF BASIC EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION
WINNEBA, GHANA

ALEXANDRA NORLEY DOWUONA
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
FOR: HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Appendix D: Consent Form

A participant consent form outlining the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and rights of participants.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Teachers' Perspectives on Teaching RC in Public Basic Schools Within the Abuakwa South Municipality

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study that seeks to explore how teachers perceive and approach the teaching RC, the strategies they use, how professional development influences their practice, and the challenges they face.

Your participation will involve:

- I. An interview guided by open-ended questions about your experiences, perspectives, and challenges in teaching RC.
- II. Classroom observation of your RC lessons using an observation checklist.

Voluntary Participation

- I. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.
- II. The interview will take approximately thirty (30) minutes.
- III. You may choose not to participate (decline) or to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Confidentiality

- I. Your identity will be kept confidential.
- II. Data collected will be used for research purposes only.
- III. Findings will be presented in summary form, without linking responses to individuals.

Benefits

- I. The study may provide insights that will contribute to improving the teaching of RC in public basic schools.
- II. It may also highlight areas where teachers need further support and professional development.

Risks

- I. There are no known physical risks.
- II. You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer if you feel uncomfortable.

Consent Statement

I have read and understood the information provided above. I freely agree to participate in this study, knowing that I can withdraw at any time.

Participant's Name : _____

Signature/Thumbprint: _____

Date : _____

Researcher's Name : _____

Signature : _____

Date : _____



Appendix E: Themes Generated From the Qualitative Data

RQ1 : How do teachers perceive the teaching of RC in public basic schools in the ASM?

Theme	Verbatim Quotes
RC: A Foundation for Academic and Lifelong Learning	“RC is the basics of all learning. Without the ability to understand and analyze written text, students will struggle in every subject. It's indeed, very important.” (ELT-6)
RC: A Foundational Skill Across Various Subjects	“RC isn’t just for English classes; it’s a skill that supports learning in all subjects students learn.” (ELT-1)
Teaching RC as a Simple and Easy Task	“Teaching RC is not a problem at all. Treat the meaning of new words in the passage and their correct pronunciations. Just do model reading and allow students to read the text and answer questions based on the passage.” (ELT-3)
Teaching RC as a Complex and Demanding Task	“Teaching RC is much more difficult than merely finding the meaning of words. It requires active thinking and understanding of the author’s message with interpretation, analysis, and evaluation of the passage. It is an activity that involves both perception and thought.” (ELT-8)

RQ2 : What common strategies do teachers employ in teaching RC in public basic schools in the ASM?

Theme	Verbatim Quote
Vocabulary Instruction	“Before I start teaching, I read through the passage myself to identify new key words that might be a little difficult for students to understand. I pick out those words and teach how to pronounce them. Sometimes, if there are words that are too long, I teach them how to break the words into syllables. After that, I teach the meaning of those words.” (ELT-3)
Scaffolding	“Sometimes I ask students to do scrambling of words with the new vocab in the passage. After that, I re-write it for them to rewrite it again to form letters and sentences before they come to the passage.” (ELT-9)
Activating Students’ Background Knowledge	“Sometimes you can ask some pre-reading questions to find out what they know about the text. Then you connect such knowledge to the passage.” (ELT-9)
Graphic Organizers (GOs)	“At times, I ask the students to use the pictures in the textbook to describe what is happening in the passage.” (ELT-14)
Questioning– Answer Techniques (QATs)	“Prior to the main lesson, I first ask questions based on what the students are going to read to help them predict the outcome of the texts.” (ELT-1)
Re-telling the Story to Summarise Lessons	“I ask students to narrate the story, focusing on the key words and phrases in the passage. This helps them remember and retell the story in their own words.” (ELT-1)

RQ3: Identify the CPD opportunities that support teachers in teaching RC effectively in public basic schools in the ASM?

Theme	Verbatim Quote
Lack of In-Service Training on RC Strategies	“I’ve been teaching for over 10 years, but I can’t remember the last time we had a workshop or PLC specifically focused on RC. Most of the training we attend is on the Cockcrow.” (ELT-4)

RQ4: What Challenges do Teachers Encounter in Teaching RC Skills in the ASM?

Theme	Verbatim Quote
Students’ Limited Vocabulary	“With the vocabs, it is very big problem for students. So, you the teacher have to explain it in a context for them to understand it before they can read and understand.” (ELT-8)
Students’ Limited Reading Fluency	“Ah, a learner at the JHS, you expect that learner to at least, know how to pronounce some small, small words like 2 or 3 letter words correctly, but it is surprising that you go to a class and learners cannot pronounce them. At times you have to wait more time to help them get the meaning and even help them to be able to read. I think it is because they are not using the L2.” (ELT-3)
Students’ Poor Communication Skills	“Students lack sufficient vocabulary to express their ideas effectively. They cannot arrange their own words even in a correct sentence to express themselves in English. Because of this they cannot write simple sentences correctly.” (ELT-13)
Inadequate Reading Materials	“In a class of 48 students, we have only 3 textbooks, so how do I teach comprehension? And the students too don’t have reading materials at home. Their parents too are not ready to buy the books for them.” (ELT-7)