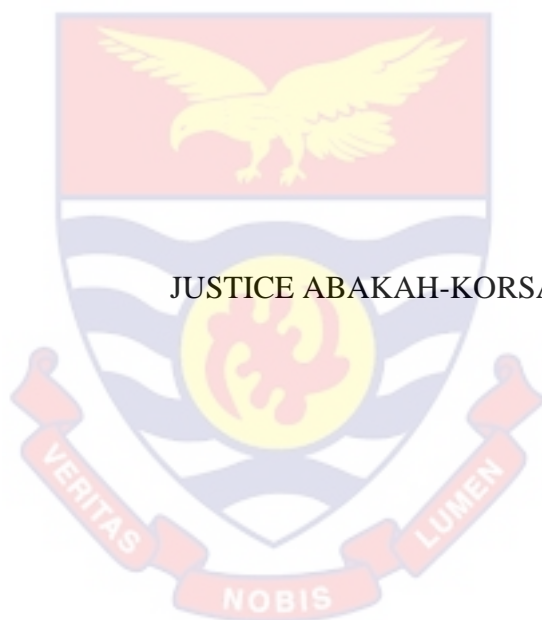


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

READING STRATEGIES AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:
A CASE STUDY AT YAMORANSA

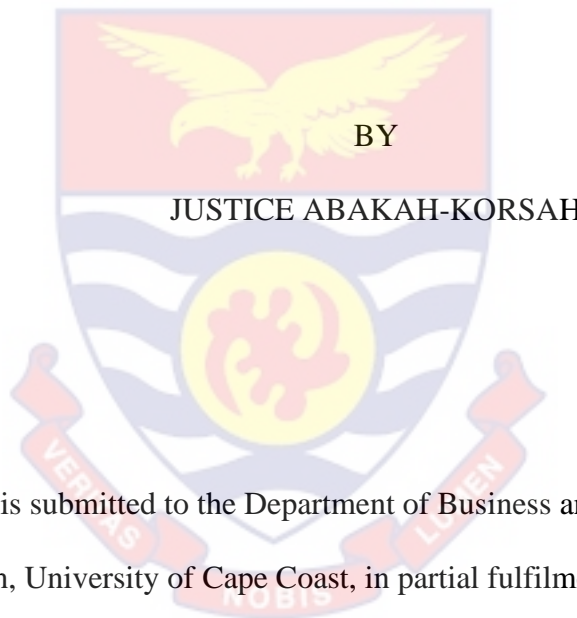


JUSTICE ABAKAH-KORSAH

2024

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

READING STRATEGIES AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:
A CASE STUDY AT YAMORANSA



Thesis submitted to the Department of Business and Social Sciences
Education, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Curriculum and Teaching

APRIL, 2024

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: Date:

Name: Justice Abakah-Korsah

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name: Dr. Wincharles Coker

ABSTRACT

Reading strategies play a crucial role in enhancing pupils' reading comprehension performance in the learning of the English Language (EL). However, the development and application of effective reading strategies have been challenging for school pupils, particularly in Yamoransa. The main objective of this study was to explore the reading strategies employed by Junior High School (JHS) pupils in Yamoransa, with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension, as well as the experiences of both pupils and teachers in the school setting. A qualitative case study approach was adopted for this research, underpinned by Vygotsky's (1978) theory of Constructivism. Data were gathered from thirty-three (33) participants through in-depth interviews and observational techniques. The study identified questioning, reading aloud, reading tests, and modeling as key reading strategies used to address reading difficulties in English Language comprehension. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for policymakers, teachers, parents, and stakeholders at Yamoransa and beyond about the significance of implementing effective reading strategies to enhance EL reading comprehension and improve pupils' academic performance. Based on the results, the study recommends reducing class sizes, improving the school environment, and ensuring that adequate reading materials are made available by the Mfantseman Municipal Directorate of Education. It was also found that large class sizes, an unconducive school environment, insufficient reading materials, and excessive playtime among pupils contributed to poor reading performance and ineffective reading strategies.

KEYWORDS

English Language:

The subject under investigation, focusing on the language students read and comprehend. In this study, the English language represents the medium through which the reading strategies are applied. It highlights the role of reading in the development of students' proficiency in a second language (L2) context, specifically for Junior High School (JHS) students at Yamoransa.

Interactive Reading:

This strategy involves an active, two-way process where students engage with the text and also interact with peers or teachers. In interactive reading, students may ask questions, make predictions, and participate in discussions, which helps to deepen their comprehension of the text. It fosters collaboration and enhances understanding through dialogue.

Literacy:

Literacy refers to the ability to read and write, with a focus on the student's reading proficiency in English. In this study, literacy is not only the students' ability to decode words but also their capacity to understand, interpret, and critically analyze the text. The study explores how literacy is developed through specific reading strategies among JHS students.

Model Reading:

Model reading refers to when a teacher or proficient reader demonstrates effective reading strategies for students. The teacher reads aloud to show proper pronunciation, fluency, intonation, and comprehension strategies. This model helps students learn how to approach reading texts in English and gives them a reference for their own reading practice.

Reading:

The core skill being investigated in the study, reading involves decoding written symbols (letters and words) to derive meaning. The study explores the strategies JHS students at Yamoransa employ while reading texts in English, focusing on how they comprehend, interpret, and respond to written material.

Reading Aloud:

This strategy involves vocalizing the words while reading a text. Reading aloud allows students to practice pronunciation, fluency, and intonation while making the reading process more engaging. In this study, reading aloud may also help teachers assess the students' understanding of the text and identify any reading difficulties.

Silent Reading:

Silent reading refers to reading without vocalizing the words, where students focus on understanding the text internally. It is a common reading strategy used in classrooms to improve comprehension and fluency. In the context of my research, silent reading is explored to understand how students manage comprehension independently and what strategies they use while reading on their own.

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DEDICATION

To my family and friends

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

GES	Ghana Education Service
MoE	Ministry of Education
TLRs	Teaching and Learning Resources
EL	English Language
RS	Reading Strategies

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The ability to read and comprehend text is crucial for academic success and personal development, especially in the context of formal education. Reading is a core skill that permeates all areas of learning, serving as a foundational tool for acquiring knowledge, solving problems, and engaging in critical thinking. The present study focuses on the reading strategies used by Junior High School (JHS) students in Yamoransa, a rural community in Ghana. The study explores how these students navigate reading difficulties and the extent to which they utilize specific strategies to improve comprehension and academic performance. It further investigates teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of these strategies and their role in supporting students to overcome reading challenges.

This chapter provides an overview of the research context, starting with the background of the study, followed by the problem statement, research objectives, and research questions. The significance of the study and its theoretical underpinnings are also outlined to demonstrate the importance of reading strategies in improving students' literacy levels in under-resourced settings.

Background to the Study

Globally, reading is considered one of the most important concepts in the teaching and learning process (Addo, 2020; Nyanor, 2019). This is due to the fact that reading is an indispensable communication tool in societies (Nan, 2018). Reading refers to learners' ability to construct meaning from a wide range of reading materials (Yan & Cai, 2022). According to Nyanor (2019),

reading is the foundation and the focal point on which all classroom learning activities revolve. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO] (2014) noted that sub-Saharan Africa is retrogressing globally in terms of literacy education, and barely makes any significant improvement in good quality education.

In sub-Saharan Africa, English has been given prominence and is used as a medium of instruction for most subjects. Alodwan and Ibnian (2014) highlight the relevance of language in education. They point out that language involves four basic skills, namely; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading has been identified as a central language skill in learning (Lee, 2012). This is as a result of its significance to influence the other three language skills – speaking, listening and writing (Mahardhika, 2021).

Literacy is traditionally concerned with the recognition of cognitive developments, strategies, and skills required in reading and interpreting printed texts (Street, Pishghadam & Zeinali, 2014). At the pre-tertiary level of education in Ghana, prominence is placed on what Paris (2005) states as ‘constrained’ skills.

Reading abilities refer to the set of cognitive and linguistic skills that allow a learner to effectively decode written texts and construct meaning from them. These abilities encompass various components, including phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, comprehension, and critical thinking. According to Paris (2005), reading skills can be classified into two categories: ‘‘constrained’’ and ‘‘unconstrained’’. Constrained abilities such as phonemic awareness and alphabet knowledge, are typically acquired early and have a finite scope. These skills are foundational and support the learner’s capacity to

recognize and interpret the symbols (letters and words) used in a text. On the other hand, unconstrained abilities, such as vocabulary development and reading comprehension, are skills that grow continuously throughout a person's life. They involved more advanced cognitive processes, such as inference-making, summarising, and integrating new information with prior knowledge (Van den & Broek, 2010). These skills are crucial for understanding complex texts, engaging in critical analysis, and navigating diverse reading contexts.

There is relevance to these since they are central to reading and literacy acquisition. From kindergarten to senior high school, learners are frequently engaged in phonemic awareness and reading comprehension (Paris 2005).

Reading strategies are positively related to students' reading and have been reported to be effective in improving students' reading and comprehension (Yan & Cai, 2022). Building a cohesive, meaning-based mental image of the scenario presented in a book is essential for successful reading comprehension (Van den & Broek, 2010). As the text develops, the reader creates meaning by constantly updating information from the text and fusing it with what they already know.

According to Williams (2007), when readers employ a variety of reading strategies, approaches, and methodologies, they get greater meaning from the texts they read. According to the literature, many methods and approaches are applied for various goals. Global, problem-solving, and support reading methods are the three types of reading strategies that work best (Williams, 2007).

In the context of Junior High School students at Yamoransa, reading abilities include the various reading strategies- global, problem-solving, and support strategies (Williams, 2007)- to enhance comprehension. These strategies empower students to actively interact with texts, navigate challenges, and deepen their understanding of the materials they read. Developing these abilities as is essential for academic success, as students must not only read to decode but also to understand, analyze, and apply information across subjects.

Ghana is noted as one of the countries where a large number of primary and secondary students cannot read and understand written texts (Leherr, 2009). According to data from a nationwide assessment, around 98% of students in basic school had difficulty reading (Early Grade Reading Report, Ghana, 2015; as referenced in Bonsu, Vanderpuye & Ntim, 2021).

The feeble foundation of literacy at the primary and secondary levels influences the learners at their tertiary level of education (Stoffelsma & De Jong, 2015). This is also evidenced by Odamtten, Denkabe and Tsikata (2015) who reported the challenge faced by Ghanaian universities as a result of students with poor English language reading proficiency. That is, when students fail to demonstrate apt reading skills, it goes along to affect the university they are affiliated with and this foregrounds the crucial role of reading in education (Odamtten, Denkabe & Tsikata, 2015). Bharuthram (2012) contends that drastic measures have to be employed to improve the overall literacy and reading levels of learners as they are indispensable to the academic achievement of learners in primary or senior high school.

Statement of the Problem

A recent growing body of literature has concentrated on reading strategies in terms of the enhancement of text comprehension. While a significant body of literature emphasizes the importance of reading strategies in enhancing text comprehension (Yan & Cai, 2021; Do & Phan, 2021; Banditvilai, 2020), much of this research has been focused outside the context of Ghanaian junior high schools (JHS). Numerous studies (Amuah-Sekyi, 2015, 2005; Adusei-Bonsu, 2020; Yussif, 2017) have demonstrated the pivotal role of reading in education, economic development, and societal participation. For instance, Adusei-Bonsu (2020) argued that reading fosters sustainable development by enabling informed decision-making (p.3), while Hamilton (2012) highlighted its importance in children's academic, social, and economic advancement.

In Thailand, a study assessed the effectiveness of reading strategies on reading comprehension (Banditvilai, 2020). In South Africa, Naidoo, Reddy and Dorasamy (2014) studied reading literacy and making a case for improving the teaching of reading across the curriculum in the primary schools

However, despite these global insights, there is a clear gap in understanding how reading strategies specifically affect JHS students in Ghana, particularly in rural areas like Yamoransa. Studies on reading strategies in Ghana have primarily focused on teacher perspectives or general reading literacy (Bonsu, Vanderpuye & Ntim, 2021), with limited attention to the strategies students themselves employ and how these influence their academic outcomes. Furthermore, while international research (Naidoo et al.,

2014; Yan & Cai, 2021) explores reading pedagogy across different educational levels, there is little empirical evidence on how Ghanaian JHS students, especially those in non-urban settings, utilize reading strategies to enhance comprehension and academic performance.

This study seeks to address this empirical and geographical gap by focusing on the reading strategies adopted by JHS students in Yamoransa, a rural community. In addition, it aims to fill the methodological gap in existing literature, which largely overlooks student-centered approaches in favor of teacher-centered ones. The study will provide insights into the specific reading challenges faced by these students and the strategies they use to overcome them, thus contributing to both national and international discussions on improving reading literacy in low-resource educational settings.

Purpose of the Study

The current study looked at the reading strategies of junior high school students in Ghana's Central Region's Yamoransa village.

Research Objectives

The specific objectives were to:

- i. explore the reading strategies that JHS students use to enhance their reading comprehension.
- ii. iexamine the challenges that students face in relation to the reading strategies they employ.
- iii. investigate teachers' perspectives on the reading strategies they use, and how they support students in overcoming reading difficulties?

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What reading strategies do JHS students use to enhance their reading comprehension?
- ii. What challenges do JHS students face with the reading strategies they employ?
- iii. How do teachers perceive the effectiveness of the reading strategies they use, and how do these strategies help students overcome reading difficulties.

Significance of the Study

Theoretically, the study provides significant contributions in the growing body of literature. As the study is grounded in Socio-Constructivist Theory, the findings of the study will make relevant contributions through recommendations for application of the idea to studies in education.

The practical significance of the study lies in the application of the key findings by learners, teachers and policy-makers. It provides heuristic relevance to serve as a precursor to investigating further studies in the field.

This sets the study in a significant domain to achieve what it seeks to explore to serve as a reference material for further research and also be useful for National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) of Ghana to give more knowledge or education in teaching and learning of reading strategies to aid in raising students' academic achievement in the nation's basic schools.

The results of the study will be relevant in the education field and benefit the junior high school students in Yamoransa. The study will help students to develop interest in seeking reading strategies to guide them know the basic way to read and comprehend. It will improve the teacher's

knowledge and serve as a guide to English language teachers as well as student to equip them in handling basic reading skills and strategies.

Delimitations

The study examines reading strategies with three key delimitations. Street, Pishghadam, and Zeinali (2014) emphasized that literacy and reading are social practices embedded with diverse attitudes, emotions, and social dynamics. Consequently, I grounded the study theoretically in Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-Constructivist Theory. Specifically, I focused on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) within this framework. Considering literacy and reading as social practices, as Street et al. (2014) elucidated, I investigated learners' attitudes toward reading literacy. This emphasis on learners' attitudes is crucial as it influences their perception of reading difficulty and comprehension.

I confined the study to the case study research approach, as Shank (2002) advocated for qualitative inquiry grounded in subjects' experiences within specific sociocultural contexts. Within this framework, I narrowed the scope to a descriptive case study (Yin, 2003) to investigate subjects' attitudes. Additionally, I delimited the study to examine reading strategies utilised by students during reading, focusing on comprehension, prompted by reports from the chief examiner (2019) highlighting students' poor comprehension skills.

Organisation of the Study

The study is structured into five chapters. Chapter One encompasses the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives (both general and specific), research questions, significance of the study, and organization of

the study. Chapter Two delves into a comprehensive review of pertinent literature pertinent to the study, including empirical works by other authors related to the study's research problem and objectives. This chapter covers concepts such as literacy as a readiness strategy, reading as a strategy, reading strategies as an approach to reading difficulties in students, Ghana's perspective on reading strategies, and various approaches to reading strategies such as plethora, eclectic, and metacognitive approaches. Theoretical and conceptual foundations are also discussed to provide a framework for understanding the research questions and objectives.

The methodological approaches used in the study are described in Chapter Three. These include the research design, study area characteristics, data sources, target population, sampling techniques and sample size determination, data collection instruments, pre-testing procedures, data collection protocols, data processing and analysis methods, data management, and ethical considerations. The results and their discussion are presented in Chapter Four, which also covers topics like the participants' sociodemographic characteristics, the analytical framework (main themes and sub-themes), and a thorough discussion of the findings.

Finally, Chapter Five offers a summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the findings, recommendations based on the conclusions, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review in this chapter is organized into three sections: Theoretical Framework, Conceptual Review, and Empirical Review. These sections aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of reading strategies and their application in junior high schools (JHS), specifically in the context of Yamoransa. This review draws upon relevant studies to explore the theoretical underpinnings, the concepts of reading strategies, and empirical evidence from various geographical and educational settings. A key goal is to identify gaps in existing literature and position this study within those gaps.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is rooted in **Lev Vygotsky's Socio-Constructivist Theory** (1978), which emphasizes the importance of social interaction and teacher guidance in the development of cognitive skills, including reading. According to Vygotsky, learning occurs through guided interactions where students, with the help of teachers, develop strategies that support their comprehension and problem-solving abilities. The teacher plays a crucial role in mediating students' learning through strategies such as skimming, scanning, and problem-solving.

The socio-constructivist framework highlights that knowledge is not passively received but actively constructed by learners through interaction with their environment. In the context of reading, this means that students develop comprehension skills through dynamic teacher-student interactions that encourage critical thinking and the use of effective reading strategies.

Vygotsky's theory is particularly relevant to this study, as it underscores the importance of social learning and strategy development in reading.

The theoretical framework suggests that, through guidance, learners can improve their reading strategies over time, with the goal of eventually using these strategies independently. This concept aligns with the study's focus on exploring how JHS students in Yamoransa utilize various reading strategies to overcome reading difficulties.

The theory accounts for the learning development of learners. There is a consensus that the socio-constructivist theory is critical to language learning (in this regard, reading) and development. Figure 1 conceptualizes issues from the original theory and how the reading strategies adopted by learners can improve on the continual development process of reading.

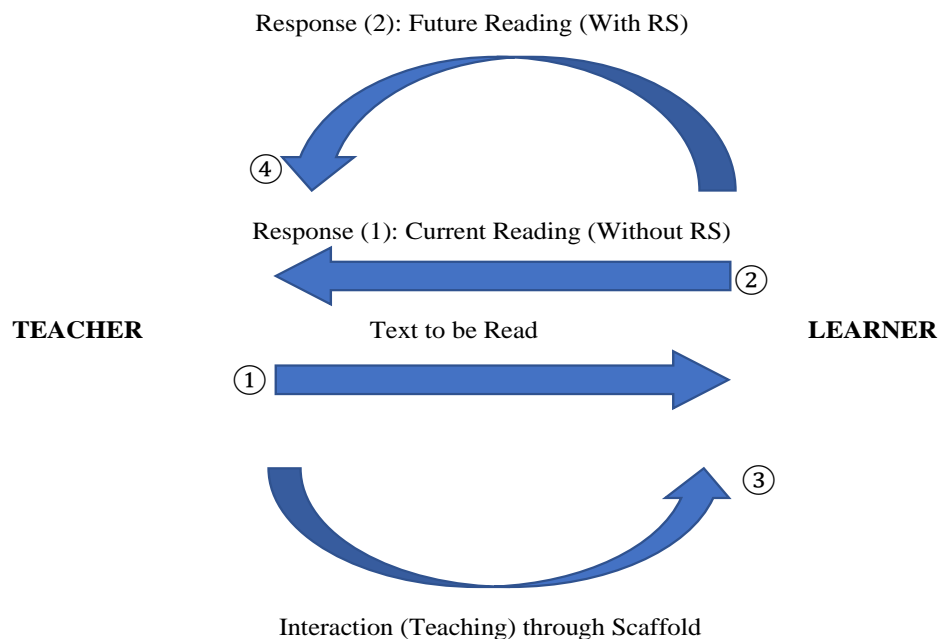


Figure 1: Adapted from Vygotsky (1978)

The recurrent exchanges between the instructor and the learner in connection to reading development are depicted in figure 1 of the proposed

theoretical framework. The example demonstrated motivation, which Frankel et al. (2016) identified as a fundamental component of reading literacy.

The motivation is provided based on the student's initial reading competence without the use of reading strategies. Through the motivation provided by the teaching and the teaching of reading strategies, the future reading response of the learners shows a development. This highlights the strategic principle of reading by Frankel et al. (2016). The overall process of developing the reading literacy of learners is a continual process as figure 1 elicits.

The framework presents how teachers support learners to develop their reading skills through strategies. Emphasis is placed on the assistance provided to the learner. Shabani, Khatib and Ebadi (2010) quoted that there is "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under 'teacher' guidance" (p. 238). This means that the theory focuses on the attainable development of reading skills of learners through mediating means such as the reading strategies and teacher facilitation.

As highlighted by Amuah-Sekyi et al. (2015), the previous knowledge of learners is important to reading. In this framework, the teacher identifies the relevant previous knowledge that is peculiar to the reading contexts and finds what reading strategy is useful to the text. The idea is that after completing the reading task through the help of the teacher, the learner will likely be able to complete the same task individually next time using the available reading strategies, and through that process of reading. In this portion, the review of

the theory was based on study interest. Theoretical developments by Lev S. Vygotsky have transcended boundaries and are applicable to language education (Lantolf et al., 2018). Lev Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory is particularly covered in this study's theoretical review.

According to Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory from 1978, learning is an active process that creates knowledge. As learning is an active social process, it happens when a teacher and student engage in language-based interactions. This notion provides a crucial area for communication between the instructor and the pupil. Through this dynamic engagement, learners advance toward their potential and build new abilities. I think of these exchanges as active reading techniques.

In the theory, the learning context is of critical importance in shaping the reading skill. Vygotsky advocated for learning as experiencing, and emphasized the importance of creating a learning environment where students are active participants in the creation of their own knowledge. To maximize student involvement and use of strategies, they have to be presented with authentic texts that are meaningful, relevant, and parallel to problems in the real world. Optimally, learning should also involve the interplay of cognitive and physical experiences (Kim, 2014).

In the reading context, Chen (2012) summarized that the instructor does more than simply assign texts to be read. The instructor is an integral part of how students learn to read; encouraging students to look at problems critically. A good instructor is able to foster a helpful learning environment by asking relevant questions and promoting discovery. This process of questioning has been supported by Ayitey and Baiden (2020).

In addition to the reader using reading strategies to understand the text he or she reads, other things around the reader could influence his or her learning in his or her learning environment. It could be the varied textbooks, the structure of the text, the cultural background of the learner and most importantly, the prior knowledge of the learner.

Finally, the underpinning theory has been very useful to this study in the sense that the theory emphasises how we learn and the thinking process, rather than how a student can memorize and recite a quantity of information. From Vygotsky's perspective, learners construct meaning from reality, but not passively receive what are taught in their learning environment. This perspective aligns by applying reading comprehension techniques to comprehend the content by the learners. Therefore, constructivism means that learning involves constructing, creating, inventing, and developing one's own knowledge and meaning. To determine the usefulness of the theory to this study, a study by Amineh and Asl (2015) corroborated that, in the socio-constructivist theory, knowledge and understanding is constructed from the experience and is modified through different strategies applied to the experience. Problem solving and understanding are emphasized in this theory.

Strengths and Weakness of the Theory

The theory of constructivism is relevant to this study and has shown a robust conceptualisation and connection of the related reviewed literature to help in the discussion of the problem and objectives of the study. The strength of the theory revealed that the student selects information, constructs hypotheses, and makes decisions, with the aim of integrating new experiences into the existing knowledge and experience (Amineh & Asl, 2015).

Again, Liu and Chen (2010) interpreted language learning (reading literacy) in the socio-constructivist theory as the cycle of questioning, interpreting, and analyzing information, combining information and thinking to develop, build, and alter meaning and understanding of concepts, and integrating new understandings which is very crucial in adopting reading strategies for school going-children.

Vygotsky (1978) noted that learning is a continual movement from the current intellectual level to a higher level which more closely approximates the learner's potential. The potential of reader/student is improved when he or she adopts and uses appropriate reading strategies for the assigned authentic text.

According to Vygotsky (1978), for the learner to improve, there has to be mediation (strategies adopted by the learner to resolve a problem or achieve a target) and scaffolding. The scaffolding can come in the form of underlining some words for the readers or helping the readers find the meaning of words in a dictionary. The development of reading through mediation and scaffolding occurs in what Vygotsky termed as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

In the same vein, the theory recognises that individuals often exhibit higher levels of skill through the strategies and encouragement. And this study is of the view that when students adopt significant reading strategies coupled with the assistance of teachers, they can increase their development in reading.

The study also corroborates with Costino and Hyon (2011) on the assertion that Social Constructivism in ESL reading is more pragmatic; in that, it steers learners towards meeting their immediate needs such as understanding the text and structuring appropriate reading strategies, involved in completing

their reading tasks. Nonetheless, the study also shows interest in when and how the reading strategies are used as well as the teacher-learner interaction which ensures the development in reading.

Apart from the strengths of the study, social constructivism stresses several positions on teaching and learning that can be productively applied in the small group classroom and not larger groups. Additionally, a learner negotiates meanings and develops her or his own understanding of texts through the strategies they adopt in reading and several factors influence the reading process and the strategies adopted by readers. Consequently, the theory assumes that with appropriate guidance from the teacher, readers can develop their reading literacy proficiently.

Review of Conceptual Issues

The conceptual review focuses on key terms and concepts related to the study of reading strategies. These can be classified into silent reading, reading aloud, and model reading, and the broader concept of literacy. Each of these strategies plays a role in helping students understand and retain information from texts.

The study explores several types of reading strategies, including metacognitive strategies (e.g., self-monitoring comprehension), eclectic strategies (drawing on multiple techniques), and more focused strategies such as skimming and scanning for specific information. The review highlights common challenges that students face when reading, such as decoding difficulties, poor vocabulary, and lack of comprehension. These difficulties are often compounded by factors like inadequate teaching methods and insufficient prior knowledge. The review will also discuss the specific reading

challenges faced by Ghanaian students, particularly in rural areas like Yamoransa. Studies have shown that students in such settings often struggle with reading comprehension due to a lack of resources and teacher training (Bonsu, Vanderpuye & Ntim, 2021).

Reading

Everybody learns differently, and learning English can provide a variety of challenges. To comprehend a text, reading requires a sophisticated cognitive process called character decoding. Students who read in English become more interested in the language and the chance to learn new things.

Other speech activities can be taught by reading (Irkinovich & Izatullaevna, 2022). Communication and the sharing of ideas and information are two ways to acquire a language. Students' primary practical objective when studying a foreign language is to become more proficient communicators. Reading allows one to recognize the author's encoded text. The auditory and graphic pictures of language events (words, phrases, sentences) that the learner creates in his speech memory (auditory, speech-motor, and visual) provide the basis for this identification. These images have a distinct and significant coloring. It is widely acknowledged that the link between sounds and letters in English is more complicated than in many other alphabetic languages, making it more difficult to learn to read and write.

Nonetheless, the secret to learning a new language can lie in being organized and having solutions for the most frequent problems. You must exercise observation to get beyond these challenges (Irkinovich & Izatullaevna, 2022). When reading or listening to someone who speaks English fluently or natively, pay attention. Read more books, or incorporate

podcasts and movies into your everyday schedule. Students must be proficient in the English alphabet, understand sound-letter correspondences, and be able to read words, word combinations, single phrases, and brief texts that are connected to program language material during the first stage of education, which lasts one to two years.

Reading comprehension is dependent on certain abilities that educators must develop in the classroom. Additionally, the first of these abilities is the ability to correlate a speech unit's auditory-speech-motor image with its visual image (Irkinovich & Izatullaevna, 2022).

The sum of these skills is the reading technique. To properly plan reading lessons, you need to know two things: firstly, what it means to be able to read, and secondly, by what means this skill can be developed. To be able to read is, first of all, to master the technique of reading, that is, to instantly recognize the visual images of speech units and voice them in internal or external speech, and secondly, any speech unit is an operational unit of perception (Gazieva, 2021). Such a unit can be a word, or even a syllable (with poor reading technique), a phrase of two or more words (syntagmatic), and even a whole complex phrase (and a paragraph in case of speed reading), the larger the operational unit of perception, the better the reading technique, and the better the reading technique, the higher the level of understanding of the text (Irkinovich & Izatullaevna, 2022). Reading comprehension also entails being able to quickly connect vocabulary words and grammatical constructions to their meaning.

Additionally, this alludes to a clear comprehension of the semantic aspect of speech units. Such an understanding is primarily predicated on the

reader's ability to anticipate (anticipate) certain grammatical forms (structural anticipation) as well as the semantic content of the text they are reading (meaningful anticipation) (Gazieva, 2021; Nikitullayevna et al., 2023). The study identifies multiple approaches to teaching reading skills at the current level of development of teaching foreign languages: syllabic (learning combinations of syllables), sound (learning sounds and their subsequent variety into words), and alphabetic (learning the names of letters and then their combinations of two or three letters) (Kumar, Koul & Singh, 2023). There are three methods that include memorization of genuine words, phrases, and sentences: phonemic-graphic, sound analytical-synthetic, and full words.

Yurko and Protsenko (2021) state that many people take reading for granted, but the act of reading and properly comprehending a text is a complex and interactive process. They reflect on the significance of reading that it can make your written English become more fluent and show you written grammar rules in action.

According to Noor (2016), reading is a talent that is developed via teaching and learning and is critical for learning in schools and beyond in modern communities. One factor that is specifically mentioned as being important to the reading process is comprehension.

Frankel et al. (2016) also highlighted some principles of reading that is found to be relevant in the conceptualization of theoretical issues underpinning this study as well as the methodological processes of the study. Their study revealed that reading is a constructive process, reading must be fluent, reading is strategic, reading requires motivation, and reading is a continuously

developing skill. These principles give robust description and understanding of reading strategies in this study.

Reading Strategies

Reading strategies encompass a range of cognitive approaches employed by individuals to comprehend and engage with written text. These strategies vary in their application and purpose, with silent reading involving the internal processing of information without vocalization, reading aloud utilizing spoken words to enhance comprehension and pronunciation, and model reading serving as a demonstration of effective reading techniques by proficient readers. Whether for personal study, group discussions, or educational settings, selecting an appropriate reading strategy depends on the context and goals of the reading activity, catering to the preferences and needs of the reader or learners involved.

The objective of reading instruction is to enable students to read with comprehension. In evaluations involving school-age students and in most instances of adult reading, comprehension is gauged based on individuals' responses following the silent reading of texts. Silent reading gained prominence during the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in schools that embraced individually guided education plans, such as "open" schools or those with multi-age classrooms, allowing for differentiated instruction and personalized pacing. Although it experienced a surge in popularity initially, this educational model faced a decline during the back-to-basics movement. Despite this, it persists in the United States in limited pockets around the country.

According to Bojovic (2010), reading strategy is a flexible activity that takes considerable time and resources to develop and it involves strategies.

Again, Fauzi and Ashadi (2019) study revealed that reading strategies show how readers identify the purpose of reading, what parts to attend to, how to comprehend the text or words. Similarly, Rajoo and Selvaraj (2010, p. 1301) observed reading strategies as “how readers interact with the written texts and how these strategies help to enhance text comprehension which includes mental plans.” This means that reading strategies show how readers conceive of a task, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they don't understand. Basically, reading strategies can be any comprehension-enhancing action taken by the readers.

Kasemsap and Lee (2015) defined reading strategies as a set of cognitive and purposeful actions that help readers construct and maintain meanings and make sense of the texts when they are engaged in reading tasks. Reading strategies are employed to help readers increase their comprehension of the texts before, during and after they read.

Nordin et al. (2013) also define reading strategies as “any processes that the readers are conscious of executing with the intention of constructing meaning from written texts” (p. 469). Aziz et al. (2011) opined that reading strategies are important as they can actually assist the ESL learners' reading process and gives them a clear sense of direction on what they are actually digesting while reading. Learners should use reading strategies to plan how to read and to enhance their reading comprehension (Poole, 2010). The existence of reading strategies is good for learners to solve their reading problems. Reading strategies are also encountered to provide learners the way they will organize their task, choose appropriate skills and strategies, techniques, and behaviors to comprehend the text and learn it.

According to Muijselaar et al. (2017), metacognitive reading knowledge is a crucial precondition for using reading strategies during text comprehension. After their studies in Denmark, they did this. They looked at the relationships between reading comprehension and strategy knowledge as children grow, following 312 Dutch students from the start of the fourth to the conclusion of the fifth grade. Assessments were given for vocabulary, working memory, reading comprehension, reading strategies, and reading fluency.

The findings demonstrated the distinct relationship between reading comprehension and reading techniques, as well as between reading comprehension and reading methods. Though comprehension is crucial to the reading process, according to Klapwijk (2015), students still struggle with it and teachers still don't give it enough attention in the classroom.

Silent Reading

Silent reading, as a reading strategy, involves absorbing written information without the vocalization of words. This approach relies on the reader's ability to mentally process and comprehend the text, eliminating the need to articulate the words audibly (Richards, 2019). One primary purpose of silent reading is the efficiency it offers in information processing (Schimmel & Ness, 2017). However, without the constraints of vocalization, readers can navigate through the material at their own pace, potentially enhancing both speed and overall understanding (Cohen & Freeman, 2022). This method is particularly expedient in situations where individuals seek to cover a significant amount of material quickly, such as during personal study sessions or when consuming written content individually.

Moreover, silent reading promotes the internalization of the material. In essence, by engaging with the text on a cognitive level without the mediation of spoken words, readers may find it easier to focus on comprehension and retain information (Hiebert & Daniel, 2019). The absence of external auditory distractions allows for a more immersive reading experience, fostering a deeper connection with the content. This makes silent reading a valuable strategy in educational contexts where learners need to independently grasp and retain information from textbooks, articles, or other written resources. The autonomy it provides empowers individuals to adapt their reading pace to suit their comprehension abilities and learning preferences (Schimmel & Ness, 2017).

Silent reading aligned well with the principles of whole-language education, emphasizing individual decision-making in writing, reading, and demonstrating progress. While there is a lack of definitive studies on the prevalence of silent reading in classrooms over the decades, it is reasonable to infer, based on examinations of basal readers, standards, and curriculum guides, that from the 1960s through the early 2000s, silent reading played a significant role the classroom space in various forms (Hale et al., 2011; Schimmel & Ness, 2017).

Reading comprehension, although a constructed skill, is heavily influenced by text genre and structure. The rationale supporting silent reading is largely rooted in the belief that humans have limited cognitive resources for demanding tasks, including reading. When readers engage in reading aloud, expending cognitive energy on decoding, pronunciation, and intonation, fewer resources remain for comprehending the text (Richards, 2019; Schimmel &

Ness, 2017). This perspective is supported by research emphasizing the cognitive challenges associated with demanding tasks.

In essence, silent reading is a versatile and effective strategy that facilitates both efficient information processing and meaningful internalization of content. It caters to individual learning styles and is particularly beneficial in scenarios where self-directed study or personal reflection is emphasized, providing readers with the flexibility to engage with written material in a manner that suits their cognitive processes and preferences.

Reading Aloud

Reading aloud is a reading strategy wherein individuals articulate the words of a text audibly rather than silently processing the information internally. This method can be employed both individually and in group settings, serving as a communicative tool to convey the content to oneself or others (Batini et al., 2020).

The primary purpose of reading aloud lies in its ability to enhance comprehension by engaging both visual and auditory senses simultaneously (Bartolucci & Batini, 2020). This multisensory approach can contribute to a deeper understanding of the material, as it allows individuals to absorb information through multiple channels, catering to diverse learning styles. Language, whether spoken or written, serves as a crucial tool for enhancing our comprehension of the world and our interactions with others (McCauley & Christiansen, 2019). The quantity of words an individual comprehends and employs can be considered a reliable predictor of their ability to engage in relational contexts. Research emphasizes the role of reading in expanding

one's personal vocabulary and facilitating the shift from understanding words receptively to using them actively (Bartolucci & Batini, 2020).

The advantages of exposure to reading aloud extend throughout an individual's lifetime, with particular significance in early childhood, where children exhibit exceptional speed in learning new words (Cabell et al., 2019).

In educational contexts, reading aloud is frequently utilized, especially in classrooms, as it offers several benefits. First and foremost, it facilitates discussion among learners. When individuals read aloud in a group, it provides an opportunity for collective exploration of the text, enabling participants to share interpretations, ask questions, and collaboratively delve into the content. Also, reading aloud aids in the improvement of pronunciation skills. The audible articulation of words allows readers to refine their spoken language abilities, contributing to enhanced oral communication skills. Furthermore, the act of vocalizing the text can serve as a reinforcement mechanism, helping individuals solidify their understanding of the material by incorporating both visual and auditory cues into the learning process.

Since a child's time in a classroom is limited, each daily activity that occupies those minutes needs to be academically worthwhile. Since the publication of *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, reading aloud in class has been acknowledged as an important academic practice (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1985). Numerous people view it as a potent tool for developing readers for life (International Literacy Association [ILA], 2018). According to research, reading aloud to young children improves their language skills in the short term from early childhood through primary school (Klein & Kogan, 2013). For older children, there may be long-term advantages as well

(Kloosterman, Notten, Tolsma & Kraaykamp, 2011). Creating intriguing scenarios that include kids in the reading process might help make read-aloud sessions more productive.

Before starting the book, the teacher can foster anticipation by discussing and questioning the characters or scenarios depicted on the book cover (Acosta-Tello, 2019). Encouraging children to make predictions about the story and later validating these predictions during the reading process is another way to keep them engaged (ILA, 2018). Engaging discussions about the book's theme, connections to other stories, or real-life incidents can generate interest and active participation. Children can be drawn into a story by their enthusiastic reading, appropriate intonation, appropriate tempo, and use of many voices for different characters (Acosta-Tello, 2019).

Establishing a dialogue with the children about the story's events makes them integral to the narrative, involving them in the experience and enriching the learning potential of the read-aloud.

Model Reading

Reading models are a tool used to instruct reading. Reading is a fundamental value in education for life skills including pleasure, career, and education. What makes this a universal skill is that aspects of reading are embedded in daily life where written communication is a constant. Reading is a complex skill that involves a process that often includes aspects such as word identification, syntax, and comprehension (Nadeau, 2022). Model reading is a pedagogical approach where a proficient reader, often a teacher or an experienced individual, reads a passage or text aloud to demonstrate proper reading skills such as fluency, expression, and intonation (Baha, 2017). The

purpose of model reading is to provide learners with a tangible example of effective reading habits. However, by showcasing how a skilled reader navigates through a text, model reading offers a visual and auditory model for learners to observe and learn from.

One key objective of model reading is to serve as a teaching tool. By presenting a clear and proficient example, model reading guides learners in developing their own effective reading habits (Brown & Pressley, 2023). The demonstration of proper fluency, expression, and intonation helps learners understand the nuances of effective reading, encouraging them to adopt similar techniques. This approach can be especially beneficial for students who may struggle with aspects of reading, as it provides a real-time illustration of how a proficient reader approaches and engages with written material.

Furthermore, model reading encourages active engagement from the audience. Listeners are not merely passive recipients; they are encouraged to follow along with the model reader, creating an interactive learning experience. This participatory element allows learners to simultaneously see and hear the text, reinforcing comprehension and potentially instilling a sense of confidence as they mimic the demonstrated reading strategies (Brown & Pressley, 2023).

However, model reading acts as a bridge between theory and practice, offering learners a concrete example to emulate and facilitating the development of effective reading skills. This strategy is particularly valuable in educational settings where the goal is to enhance students' reading proficiency and comprehension. Reading is more than just picking up the

words and understanding what they mean when you read a book, narrative, work of literature, etc. English language instructors have a responsibility to assist pupils in developing positive habits so they are prepared to become proficient readers.

One of the most significant issues in the realm of education may be how teachers should instruct students in reading (Baha, 2017). Teachers should find a method to encourage their pupils to read for enjoyment and information at the same time if they want their students to learn how to read properly. The bottom-up, top-down, and interactive models are the three main reading models, according to Browne (1998).

The bottom-up model

As per Browne's (1998) explanation, this model delineates reading as an educational process that starts with the student's comprehension of letters, sounds, and words, together with their morphological formation to construct sentences. Because it moves from partial to entire information, this concept is known as the "part to whole model." This strategy works really well with young children, especially when it comes to learning. Because the focus is on the letters, identifying their forms, and reading particular words, it works well. If applied to higher levels, this approach has several drawbacks since it disregards the reader's attitudes, experiences, and expectations. Furthermore, because its sole purpose is to promote memory, it ignores context.

This model focuses on direct instruction and the teaching of phonics to further reading growth. Learners are taught very specific skills of decoding words, work parts, and sounds in order to build on the structure of language. This model is used mostly in lower elementary grades where the emphasis is

on the shapes and sounds of letters. After one has comfortably reached proficiency in phonics, they are moved to learning sentence structures and so on until they are able to read and comprehend more intricate pieces of writing. This model of reading instruction is sometimes referred to as a part-to-whole method because it focuses on the parts of words and works up to a whole language comprehension goal.

The top-down model

This concept, also known as the whole-to-part and inside-out models, takes into account the reader's background and the perspectives they bring to the text. According to Browne (1998), "this model suggests that readers begin to read by drawing on their knowledge of the world to predict the general meaning and specific words in context, as well as their understanding of the structure and meaningfulness of language, stories, and other genres." This model is more realistic and wide (Baha, 2017). It should be noted that the more the students' experiences are incorporated into the learning process, the more successful the instruction will be.

Furthermore, this paradigm promotes speculating. Its recognition of such texts may be significantly influenced by cross-cultural identifications, which is one of its drawbacks. For example, certain cultures may not know much about a given issue, making it extremely difficult for readers to understand the subject matter.

In this model, the focus is whole-language learning through the exploration of literature. This method is adopted by instructors who feel that students learn by doing. Therefore, by exposing learners to a variety of literature, they will gain the skills to be successful lifelong readers. The

assumption in this model is that each student has a wealth of interests and background knowledge that can be used to decode the language of a particular piece of writing (Nadeau, 2022). When a learner builds on prior knowledge of a subject matter, they can infer or use the context of a piece to help them overcome the more challenging aspects.

The Interactive Model

According to Baha (2017), this paradigm combines the elements of top-down and bottom-up approaches to offer reading a deeper meaning. Reader engagement has increased in the present. To forecast what they will read in the reading text, they draw on their prior knowledge of the topic matter, their familiarity with written language, their reading, and their own expectations. Therefore, the best method for identifying the words and letters in the text is to look at the text's specific features. The integration of reading skills and communication activities is this model's most significant benefit. In my view, we would use this approach in Palestine if we were permitted to do so, just because it teaches by showing a picture and explaining what it depicts. Here, the words are learned before the sounds. The previous Phonic approach, which concentrated on sounds that might be utilized to recognize new words, is being refuted by this method. In his studies, Baha (2017) the available evidence on word attack instruction indicates that greater positive transfer (i.e. Ability to read new words composed of familiar grapheme-phoneme correspondences) results from single letter training than from whole-word training. This is the most widely used approach in modern teaching of reading. This model incorporates a combination of both top-down and bottom-up. Teachers utilizing this model understand the importance of building

foundational skills such as in the bottom-up model while still appreciating the importance of reading interest and personal choice in selecting literature.

Concept of Literacy

Literacy is a multifaceted concept that extends beyond the basic ability to read and write. While traditional literacy skills remain crucial, the concept of literacy has evolved to encompass a broader set of competencies required to navigate the complexities of the modern world. In the 21st century, digital literacy has become increasingly important, involving the ability to critically evaluate and utilize information from various digital sources. This includes understanding how to navigate online platforms, discerning credible information from misinformation, and employing digital tools effectively. The concept of literacy has thus expanded to embrace not only traditional text-based communication but also the diverse forms of information prevalent in our technologically-driven society.

Moreover, literacy is now seen as a dynamic and lifelong process rather than a static skill acquired in early education. Continuous learning and adaptability are integral components of literacy in a rapidly changing world. Beyond the acquisition of information, literacy involves the development of critical thinking skills, enabling individuals to analyse, interpret, and synthesize information from diverse sources. This empowers individuals to engage in informed decision-making, contributing to their personal and societal well-being. In essence, the concept of literacy has evolved to encapsulate a comprehensive set of skills that empower individuals to navigate and contribute meaningfully to an increasingly complex and interconnected global society.

In addition, cultural literacy has gained recognition as an essential aspect of a well-rounded education. Cultural literacy involves an understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural norms, values, and perspectives. It fosters empathy, tolerance, and a global mindset, allowing individuals to engage meaningfully with people from different backgrounds. In today's interconnected world, cultural literacy is crucial for fostering inclusive societies and promoting collaboration on a global scale. Therefore, the concept of literacy has transcended its traditional boundaries, encompassing a rich tapestry of skills and knowledge that are vital for personal growth, societal harmony, and active participation in the contemporary world.

Literacy is not only the ability to read and write but also the confidence and willingness in language acquisition, language construction and language communication. Literacy is defined from the perspective of Frankel, Becker, Rowe and Pearson (2016) as “the process of using reading, writing, and oral language to extract, construct, integrate, and critique meaning through interaction and involvement with multimodal texts in the context of socially situated practices” (p. Their definition underscores the key aspects in reading and literacy generally. Frankel et al. (2016) observed that literacy can be receptive which captures the problem of this study in relation to reading as a strategy.

Moreover, literacy happens in a social practice context which involves the other language skills. Literacy has been confined in the Arts (in primary and secondary schools) and humanities (in tertiary institutions). However, the

processes of a text can be progressive or retrogressive to the practice of literacy for comprehension.

Ghana's Perspective on Reading Strategies in Junior High Schools

Empirical evidence in Ghana highlights the relevance of reading strategies in enhancing pupils' reading comprehension. Various studies have documented the importance of adopting effective reading strategies to improve students' abilities in reading and understanding texts. The use of reading strategies in Junior High Schools in Ghana has become a crucial area for research, as these strategies help learners navigate and comprehend challenging texts, thereby improving their academic performance.

One prominent reading strategy discussed in Ghanaian literature is the **eclectic reading strategy approach**. This approach combines multiple methods of teaching reading, such as the alphabet method, syllabic method, and whole-word method, ensuring that the limitations of one method are compensated by the strengths of another. The eclectic approach enables teachers to select and adapt reading strategies to suit the individual needs and abilities of their students, breaking the monotony of a single method and engaging students more effectively.

Another key reading strategy adopted in Ghana is the **plethora reading strategy approach**, which involves both bottom-up and top-down processing techniques. This strategy includes predicting, using prior knowledge, and summarizing as methods to enhance comprehension. It focuses on helping students actively engage with the text by making connections between new information and their existing knowledge, thereby improving their understanding and retention of the material.

The **metacognitive reading strategy approach** is also widely recognized in Ghana. This strategy emphasizes students' awareness of their own thinking processes while reading. Through metacognitive strategies, students learn to monitor and regulate their comprehension, employing techniques such as self-questioning, summarizing, and reviewing to enhance their reading skills. Research has shown that students who are aware of their metacognitive processes perform better in reading comprehension tasks.

One specific metacognitive strategy used in Ghana is the **SQ3R strategy** (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review), which guides students through a structured reading process. This strategy helps students approach texts methodically, beginning with an overview (survey), generating questions about the text (question), actively reading (read), recalling key points (recite), and reinforcing their understanding through review (review). This systematic approach has been found to significantly improve reading comprehension among JHS students.

These strategies, including the eclectic, plethora, and metacognitive approaches, provide a framework for addressing reading comprehension challenges in Ghana. By focusing on the development and application of these reading strategies, teachers can better support students in overcoming difficulties and improving their overall reading performance.

Reading Strategies to Decipher Reading Difficulties

As the relevance of reading strategies have been identified and reviewed accordingly, it is significant to recognise other studies that have come out with reading strategies to decode readers who find reading difficult. A study by Amuah-Sekyi et al. (2015) categorized the reading strategies into

three: global, problem-solving and support reading strategies. They explained that the reader uses the global reading strategy to focus on reading by understanding the purpose for reading, previewing and making predictions of the text. More recently, Fauzi and Ashadi (2019) explained that the global strategies are intentional and planned techniques by which a student manages his or her reading. Drawing from the scholars' perspectives, such techniques include using of relevant previous knowledge, skimming and using the text structure.

The problem-solving reading technique addresses difficulties with text comprehension. Examples provided by Amuah-Sekyi et al. (2015) include attempting to regain focus after losing it, varying one's reading speed depending on how simple or difficult the content is, figuring out the meaning of words that are unclear, and revisiting the text to increase understanding. These instances are initiated when dealing with the text directly. Readers use these strategies as confined, attentive techniques when they have problems in comprehending texts. With the support reading strategies, there is the use of assistance systems to aid the reader to understand the text. This makes them responsive to the text they read. Such assistance includes, paraphrasing, rewording, summarizing, using a dictionary, underlining information and using reference materials.

Contrastively, Meniado (2016) presents metacognition as a strategy of reading. Metacognition has received considerable attention in research on language learning especially, in reading because metacognition highlights how learner makes plans for reading, monitor the reading process and evaluate how one has learned (Fauzi & Ashadi, 2019). Metacognition was introduced by

Flavell in the 1970's. According to Iwai (2011), metacognition is key to reading comprehension since it is found essential in the development of some linguistic, cognitive, and social skills.

A study by Gassner (2009) provides a more detailed explanation where he explains that metacognition is the understanding one own knowledge that he or she could describe or express verbally. In other words, metacognition is about being aware of one's own mind when solving problems in reading a text which implies that one has to purposively and continuously adapt and choose appropriate strategy in solving reading problems to understand what is being read. It can be agreed that metacognition allows the students to plan, to monitor, and to assess their understanding and performance related to their activities they are doing.

A study by Iwai (2011) also summarizes the process of metacognition into three parts: planning, monitoring and evaluation. Amuah-Sekyi et al. (2015) described metacognition from to perspective: "knowledge about cognition which includes knowledge about the readers' cognitive resources such as conceptualization of the reading process and knowledge of the use of appropriate reading strategies on the one hand and the regulation of cognition which is related to the reader's self-regulatory procedure for solving problems on the other hand" (p. 59).

Review of Empirical Studies

Reading is a multifaceted skill crucial for academic success and lifelong learning. This empirical review synthesizes findings from related studies on various aspects of reading, including reading strategies, silent reading, reading aloud, model reading, and literacy. By examining existing

research in these areas, this review aims to provide insights into effective practices for promoting reading proficiency and literacy development

Reading

Reading is now central to living and to acting successfully in the professional and academic contexts. This assertion affirms that of Amuah-Sekyi et al. (2015) study that observed that reading is central to the learning, success in academic and professional life of students. The study also viewed reading to be the core language skill to build the development of all other language skills and sub-skills such as Listening, speaking, writing, vocabulary and grammar. Similarly, a study by Sari (2017) shares idea on the concept of reading by highlighting that reading is the most important skill of languages in academic life depends on the ability to read and understand written English.

Another study by Johnson (2008) indicates that traditional meaning of reading as the practice of making meaning from a text. Some scholars like Grabe (2009, p. 15) noticed that “reading is the strategic process that requires a number of skills and processes used in reading needs effort on the part of the reader to anticipate text information, selecting key information, organize and mentally summarize information, monitor comprehension, repair comprehension breakdowns, and match comprehension output to the reader goals”. Oyetunde (2015) elucidates on the concept of reading by stating that “reading is a process of meaning construction the reader uses the information in the text and in his head. The information in the text refers to the three basic language systems namely, the graph phonic system, the syntactic system and the semantic system. Li (2010) provides enlightenment that, reading can occur on two different levels: reading may mean looking at a written text in order to

understand its contents. This is the first type of reading. It is usually done silently. The understanding that results is called reading comprehension. The second type of reading refers to speaking or reciting a written text aloud (oral reading). This can be done with or without an understanding of the contents.

Several scholars have presented the relevance of reading in academia and the world at large. Reading is an important ability for studying in school, but it's also necessary for people to read and comprehend labels, directions, job application forms, and newspapers in order to properly communicate with others in daily life (Chatman, 2015). More specifically, reading abilities are necessary for people to be able to work and keep a job, participate successfully in a variety of everyday activities, and lead independent lives (Hoeh, 2015).

Reading is believed to be one of the key competencies for full participation in modern societies. In longitudinal studies in Australia, Canada and Switzerland; Lems, Miller, and Soro (2010) revealed that “reading requires the use of strategies before, during, and after reading” (p. 172). As such, the relevance of reading, and the strategies involved are crucial in language literacy.

Reading Strategies

According to Bojovic (2010), reading strategy is a flexible activity that takes considerable time and resources to develop and it involves strategies. Again, Fauzi and Ashadi (2019) study revealed that reading strategies show how readers identify the purpose of reading, what parts to attend to, how to comprehend the text or words. Similarly, Rajoo and Selvaraj (2010, p. 1301) observed reading strategies as “how readers interact with the written texts and how these strategies help to enhance text comprehension which

includes mental plans.” This means that reading strategies show how readers conceive of a task, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they don't understand. Basically, reading strategies can be any comprehension-enhancing action taken by the readers.

In the growing body of literature, several studies have highlighted reading strategies and their relevance to students reading (Nyanor, 2019; Amuah-Sekyi et al., 2015, Azumah, 2014, Afflerbach, Pearson & Paris, 2008). According to Afflerbach et al. (2008), readers' efforts to decipher, comprehend, and create the meaning of a text are guided and modified by reading strategies, which are unique, purposeful, and deliberate behaviors.

The reading strategies in literature presents varied strategies that are used for different purposes. A study by Ruki and Cubukcu (2014) hinted those readers employ such strategies in order to simplify the reading process and comprehend better. Similarly, Amuah-Sekyi et al. (2015) summarized those readers use such strategies for problem solving, or learning new knowledge.

Furthermore, according to Amer et al. (2010), using reading methods effectively is acknowledged as a crucial way to improve reading comprehension. When reading techniques are applied in practice, they help readers understand the texts they read for pre-, during, and post-reading assignments. Similarly, as stated by Abidin and Riswanto (2012), proficient readers utilize several reading techniques to understand written materials. In addition, Raftari et al. (2012) also demonstrated that successful readers employ reading strategies more actively and make use of a greater variety of strategies to assist their comprehension.

According to a study Marxban and Akbarnejad (2013), they examined how collaborative reading techniques affected Iranian university students' ability to comprehend what they were reading. Using the socio-constructivist theory, they provided an overview of corporative learning as an instruction that involves teams of students “working together towards a common goal under the following conditions: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face primitive interaction, appropriate use of collaborative skills, and group processing” (p. 937). After using an experimental research design, they concluded that collaborative learning positively influences reading strategies. They recommend that textbook writers should encourage students to use cooperative reading strategies.

Utilizing a pretest posttest control group in quantitative quasi-experimental design, Yazdani and Mohammadi (2015) investigated the efficiencies and deficiencies of reading strategies through the impact of Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) and Guided Reading (GR) on reading comprehension. They used sixty-one Iranian students. Their study was guided by three research questions. The findings of their study generally suggested the importance of incorporating reading strategies in instruction of reading comprehension to lead students to greater learning opportunities and to make reading in second language an autonomous process. Furthermore, they opined that emphasis should be given in helping the students develop the ability to use strategies effectively.

A research akin to this was carried out in the Eastern Cape of South Africa by Cekiso and Madikiza (2014). In particular, their study on the reading strategies used by Grade 9 students in one of the Mthatha District schools

showed that the students from the chosen school were not using a wide range of reading strategies and as a result found it difficult to understand the printed text. Their investigation was spurred by the reading issue that the school's instructors noticed, noting that students were learning but not understanding. Also, Yussif (2017) conducted a study on improving pupils English reading comprehension through training teachers on effective teaching strategies in Ridge Junior High School "A", Sagnarigu District. Action research was used in the study.

A purposeful sampling strategy was employed to choose 36 participants, including 30 out of 817 students and 6 out of 32 instructors from Ridge J.H.S. 'A'. Teacher interviews and student or teacher observations served as the data collection tools. The results showed that poor teaching-learning resources, a hostile classroom environment, a lack of a solid foundation in English language reading, and student absenteeism are among the issues that hinder the teaching and learning of reading. Inasmuch as the study is relevant to reading, it does not make necessary recommendations on which reading strategies is significant to improve reading.

Lee (2012) investigated the selection of reading strategies among genders by EFL college students. The purpose of her study was aimed to probe the question whether foreign language reading strategies use among EFL college freshmen differ according to different genders and the differences of frequency using types of reading strategies. She used a quantitative study for analysis of her data. Her results presented a difference in the reading strategies used by males and females. Based on the findings, metacognitive and

cognitive strategies were most correlated with overall strategy use; these two types best predicted college EFL students' strategic behaviors of reading.

Manoli and Papadopoulou (2014) investigated the elementary teachers' familiarity with reading strategies in Greece. After their content analysis, they reported that students were given some opportunities to practice reading strategies there was no evidence that they were being taught the active comprehension processes validated in the reading research. Also, a tentative conclusion was that the specific Greek elementary English as Foreign Language teachers do not teach students reading strategies to derive meaning from written texts.

Silent Reading

Silent reading has been a subject of interest for researchers across various fields including psychology, education, linguistics, and neuroscience. Here are some key studies on silent reading.

According to a study Cunningham, & Stanovich (1997), they analysed the early reading acquisition and its relation to reading experience and ability 10 years later. Their longitudinal study investigated the relationship between early silent reading ability and later reading proficiency. It found that early silent reading ability was a strong predictor of reading comprehension and overall reading achievement in later years.

Studies highlight reading ability as a lexical quality to comprehension (Perfetti, 1997). Perfetti's study focuses on the lexical quality hypothesis, which suggests that skilled reading relies heavily on the quality of word representations in memory. The study explores how silent reading proficiency is influenced by the quality of word knowledge and lexical processing.

Rayner (1998) investigated the eye movement in reading and information processing. Rayner's comprehensive review summarizes two decades of research on eye movements during reading, shedding light on the cognitive processes underlying silent reading. The study discusses how eye movement patterns can reveal insights into word recognition, language processing, and comprehension.

Nation and Snowling (1997) critically evaluate existing measures of reading skill, including assessments of silent reading proficiency. The study discusses the importance of reliable and valid measures for identifying reading difficulties and guiding effective intervention strategies.

Moss et al. (2015) also examined the language and literacy spectrum. Their study employs latent trait modeling to investigate the underlying structure of language and literacy skills, including silent reading proficiency. By examining the relationships among various linguistic and cognitive factors, the study provides insights into the multidimensional nature of silent reading ability. These studies represent a diverse range of approaches to understanding silent reading, from longitudinal investigations of reading development to detailed analyses of cognitive processes underlying reading comprehension.

Reading Aloud

Research emphasizes the benefits of read-aloud sessions for education and suggest certain elements of the process that enhance kids' language and reading abilities (ILA, 2018). Children's language development appears to be favorably influenced by the frequency of reading aloud, the discourse that occurs during the reading, and the degree of involvement they display throughout the experience (Keller, 2012; Klein & Kogan, 2013); Worthy,

Chamberlain, Peterson, Sharp & Shih, 2012). Therefore, to captivate children during a read-aloud, whether led by a teacher, parent, or caregiver, it is essential to build anticipation. Creating anticipation encourages children to listen more attentively, eagerly anticipating whether their expectations about the story will unfold. Utilizing the book cover is a method to generate anticipation, especially since many covers depict the story's characters (Acosta-Tello, 2019). The English Language teacher conducting the read-aloud, can create a series of inquiries that encourage kids to study the facial emotions and body language of the figures on the cover, guiding them to make predictions about the characters' nature.

During this phase, the teacher or reader should refrain from passing judgment on the children's responses, accepting any answers related to the cover's depiction. Questions such as "Why do you think he is on the cover? What is he doing? What do you think this story might be about? Where do you think the story might take place?" are suitable and encourage heightened engagement. Through such inquiries, even young children can be steered to predict the characters' traits and the storyline. However, reading aloud is a dynamic reading strategy that leverages both visual and auditory elements to enhance comprehension (Acosta-Tello, 2019). It is a valuable tool in educational settings, fostering group discussion, improving pronunciation, and reinforcing understanding through the integration of spoken language into the learning experience.

The effectiveness of read-aloud sessions can be enhanced by creating engaging situations that involve children actively in the reading experience. Before starting the book, the teacher can foster anticipation by discussing and

questioning the characters or scenarios depicted on the book cover (Acosta-Tello, 2019). Encouraging children to make predictions about the story and later validating these predictions during the reading process is another way to keep them engaged (ILA, 2018). Engaging discussions about the book's theme, connections to other stories, or real-life incidents can generate interest and active participation. Reading stories with enthusiasm, using proper inflection, maintaining a suitable cadence, and employing different views from each character serve to draw readers into the narrative (Acosta-Tello, 2019). Establishing a dialogue with the children about the story's events makes them integral to the narrative, involving them in the experience and enriching the learning potential of the read-aloud.

Concept of Literacy

Literacy happens in a social practice context which involves the other language skills. Literacy has been confined in the Arts (in primary and secondary schools) and humanities (in tertiary institutions). However, the processes of a text can be progressive or retrogressive to the practice of literacy for comprehension. A study by Hobbs (2016) also corroborated in the academic tussle and posited that: "Literacy is a complex constellation of cognitive, social and affective competencies that involve the use of symbol systems for expressing and sharing knowledge and ideas, information and experiences" (p. 27). Hobbs's definition is the most all-rounded as it stresses on social and affective usages of not only language but symbol systems as well. At this stage, it would be very difficult for one to elide the complexity of the term, 'literacy'.

A study by Wendt (2013) revealed that the current method of focusing on academic learning is not effective when students are unable to comprehend and apply new knowledge due to lack of literacy skills. The affirmed that of Mullis et al. (2016) who conceptualized reading literacy as “the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual” (p. 86). Mullis et al. (2016) recognizes that there are socio-cultural and subjective approaches to reading literacy. The ultimate goal of reading literacy according to Mullis et al. is the one that the society deems fit for it to be learned. The individual's use of the information gained through reading is also a precept of reading literacy.

Focusing of the various reading strategies presented from the literature, the study adopts the three categories of reading strategies as provided by Amuah-Sekyi et al. (2015) and Fauzi and Ashadi (2019). These strategies are relevant to the study because it captures the other strategies presented. The metacognitive strategy presents a slightly innovative approach to reading; however, it is specifically aligned to comprehension (Teng, 2020; Kung, 2019; Meniado, 2016). The reading strategies have chalked relevant importance in similar English as second language contexts. The notable aspects of the reading strategies are noted by Amuah-Sekyi et al. (2015) who posited that the concern is when to use which strategy and how to use it.

Factors Causing Reading Difficulties in Learning and Teaching

In academic environment especially in the junior high schools, there are several factors that influence the student's performance based on the teaching and learning strategies. Student's inability to read and even comprehend to what they read may be caused by some factors including

teaching and learning approaches, inadequate reading materials, and lack of parental and teacher's supervision of the students in the school and home environments help enhance academic achievement and reading methods.

Teaching and Learning Approaches

Teaching regarded as a fundamental skill that will help students to read without difficulty. Teaching strategy makes the development of proficient reading skills for learners even more essential, not only for their academic success, but for their daily lives as well. Unfortunately reading is a skill that many children struggle to master. In order for students to be confident readers, teachers can provide students with effective teaching strategies for reading (Honin, 2001). Several studies have examined the instructional practices of teachers who have had success in teaching children to read. (Presley, 1994; Yokoki, 1996 & Yankin, 1994). Effective teachers of reading used an approach that combined a variety of language-based and literature based with comprehensive, explicit instructions (Honin, 2001). These teachers adopted the skills or strategies of phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding and other word recognition skills to enhance children to read.

Reading Materials

According to Nyanor, (2019), the inadequate supply of reading materials contributes to reading difficulties. It is through the reading materials that pupils can help pupils to practice reading to develop reading skills. A study by Shonel (2010) noted that effective reading requires the availability of adequate reading materials. Inadequate reading materials do not promote effective reading. Reading materials needs to be adequate to enable students get access to them. Classes with large class size are likely to face problems of

distribution of reading materials like textbooks. Pupils in the class are usually more than the reading materials. As a result, pupils are compared to share them in ratios for instance three pupils is to a textbook. This does not enhance successful reading (Nyanor, 2019). The choice of words in textbooks also causes reading difficulties. Students feel discouraged if they come across difficult words or unfamiliar words in reading. That is, if the words used in the reading materials do not interest learners, they feel reluctant to read. Also, textbooks with interesting pictures generate interest in pupils to read (Nyanor, 2019).

Reading materials which have no interesting pictures does not encourage pupils to read. Aimer (2010) stated that, 'for many students, textbooks are too difficult, dull and frustrating to read' he explained that children of today have their own interest in materials they love to read and their choice of reading materials may be different from what the syllables require or what was used some years ago. Also, some textbooks do not suit the level of the learners hence children feel reluctant to read or involve them in reading (Aimer, 2010). In addition, the nature of books read by pupils can determine how successful their reading skills will be. That is to say some reading materials are not meant for some learners at certain educational level (Aimer, 2010). Therefore, the choice of books given to students must be taken into consideration before giving them out. Students feel excited when they see materials thus textbooks which contain interesting stories and pictures. Such books compel learners to read all pages in the book. By so doing, reading skills is developed but if the books are above the learners' standard, no reading

will be done which at the long round affect the reading abilities of most learners as observed in Aimer, (2010) study.

The School Environment

According to Dix (2014), reading difficulties can be associated to the school environment. The environment of the school can determine the progress of students teaching and learning. The environment can be seen as the physical things for living and no- living things around us. According to Felix (2016) it can contribute greatly to pupils reading difficulties. A noisy environment cannot promote good reading because reading requires great attention. If the environmental conditions at home and in the school are not conducive enough for pupils, reading becomes a problem (Nyanor, 2019). In some homes, there are no adequate spaces provided for students to practice reading or to learn. The environment is mostly polluted with noise. Students who find themselves in such homes find it difficult to practice reading. There are schools which are sited near industrial areas, high streets and markets centers. Schools sited at such areas always experience noise in the school premises which distracts academic work. This therefore affects reading. Classroom environment also hinders successful reading.

According to Aaron (2015), most teachers are not good in classroom management hence the sitting arrangements and the arrangement of desks make it difficult for pupils to learn or practice reading. A crowded classroom hinders the teacher who tries to adjust his or her instructions to meet the individual needs of learners opined by Aaron (2015). Overcrowded classroom does not give the teacher opportunity to pay equal attention to learners. In such

situations learners are likely to face difficulties especially in reading because the teacher cannot supervise the whole class size due to the overcrowding.

Home Environment

Apart from the school, the home is another place student learn or acquire knowledge from. The home can contribute to the poor reading of students in that, most homes does not provide any space for students or children to practice reading at their leisure times. Parents or guardians in some homes do not supervise their children to practice reading at home. Moreover, parents do not motivate their children to read. They do not assist them or guide them to practice reading. This makes it difficult for pupils to have enough time to read because they only do read at school the time allocated for reading is not enough. Children from homes with good educational background mostly develop interest in reading than children from poor educational background (Sheldon 2016). Children from homes with good background have larger vocabulary than those from homes where opportunity for verbal growth is restricted. Southgate (2014), opined that, the household has a significant impact on students' proficiency. The home can affect someone either positively or negatively. In the home environment, there are many factors which contribute to children's reading difficulties.

These include mother tongue interference (local language), lack of text books and many others. If a child will be able to become a good reader the home must play an important role by guiding the child through reading activities. Parents who do not have ample time for their kids to read or teach them reading affects the children negatively. Brainny (2015, pg. 32) share a view that, "the difference between cultures as well as socio economic status

might affect children's attitude towards reading. In some communities, adults may see very few functional roles for literacy so they may be unlikely to provide conditions in the home that are conducive to enhance pupils reading skills" how parents and children perceive and use reading varies across families and different ethnic groups.

Summary

This section presents a summary of the review of works by other authors which guided the study. I review empirical evidence that related to the study by identifying research gaps to be addressed in the present study. The segment also summarises the main issues that have emerged from the literature review and their implications for the development of this study. The issues related to the study were discussed under the following sub-themes; concept of literacy, concept of reading, reading strategies as an approach to difficulty in student's reading, Ghana's perspective of reading strategies, plethora reading strategy approach to reading, eclectic reading strategy approach to reading , metacognitive reading strategy approach to reading , reading strategies to decode reading difficulties among students, causes of reading difficulties, theoretical and conceptual issues underpinning the study where Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-Constructivist Theory was adopted for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter provides a description of the study area, study design, target population. It also discusses sample and sampling procedure, sources of data, data collection instrument, and data collection procedures. Other issues discussed in this section include pre-test of the instrument, data management, data analysis and ethical issues of the study.

Study Area

The study was conducted in the Yamoransa in the Mfantseman Municipality in the central region of Ghana (see Figure 1). Yamoransa has a total population of 5,288 with about 46 percent as males and 54 females (Darteh et al, 2014). The population of adolescent is more than half of the population of the area (Darteh et al, 2014). The Municipality surrounds an area of about 612 square kilometres with about 168 settlements. The municipality is divided into four main levels of functional administrative hierarchies including Saltpond, Mankessim, Anomabo and Yamoransa (Darteh et al, 2014). Yamoransa was selected for the study because it is one of the settlements among the communities in the region and has a large proportion of the school going-age (adolescents) with poor academic performance (Mfantseman District Assembly, 2006 as cited in Darteh, 2014).

Socio-Economic Characteristics

One of the socio-economic activities in Yamoransa is petty trading (kenkey sales) and farming as predominant economic activities. The crops cultivated in the inland area include plantain, pineapple, oil palm, maize and cassava. The residents are faced with a lot of challenges including the poor

education, lack of agricultural extension services and difficulty in accessing credit facility (Darteh et al, 2014).

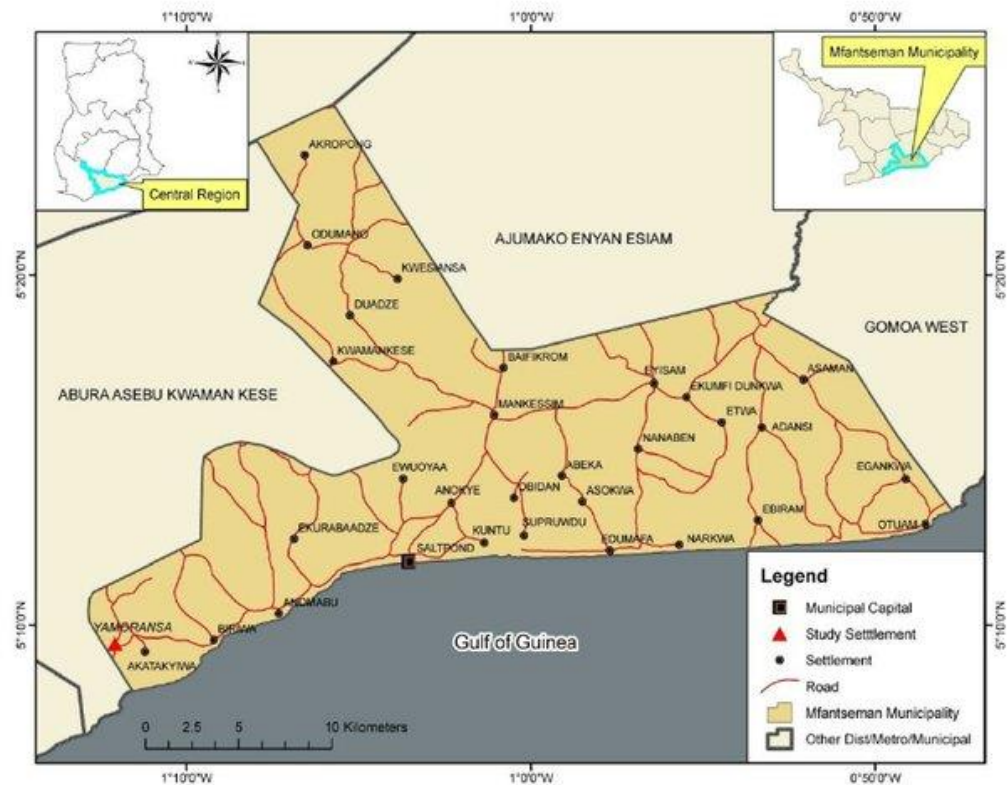


Figure 2: Map of Mfantseman Municipality showing Yamoransa

Source: Geography Information system (GIS), Department of Geography and Regional Planning University of Cape Coast (2011) cited in (Darteh et al, 2014).

Research Philosophy

The philosophical perspective underpinning this study is interpretivism. Interpretivism seeks to understand and interpret individuals' subjective experiences, values, meanings, intentions, feelings, and social constructs (Mutua & Van Der Wal, 2015). In this study, interpretivism was chosen to explore how junior high school (JHS) students experience reading difficulties and the strategies they use to overcome these challenges. This

philosophy aligns with the study's goal of capturing the personal and contextual meanings students attach to their reading processes.

Research Paradigm

The research paradigm that underpinned this study is **interpretivism**. Interpretivism is grounded in the belief that reality is socially constructed, and it emphasizes the subjective experiences of individuals. In the context of this study, interpretivism was applied to explore the unique perspectives of Junior High School (JHS) students regarding their reading strategies and difficulties. The researcher sought to understand how students make sense of their reading experiences, how they interpret their struggles, and the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. By focusing on the participants' subjective experiences, the interpretivist paradigm allowed for a rich, context-sensitive exploration of the reading phenomena in Yamoransa.

Research Approach

This study adopted a **qualitative research approach**. Qualitative research is primarily concerned with understanding social phenomena from the participants' point of view, utilizing non-numeric data such as interviews, observations, and textual analysis. The qualitative approach was selected because it allowed for an in-depth exploration of the reading difficulties faced by JHS students and the strategies they use to overcome these difficulties. In the context of this study, the qualitative approach enabled the researcher to gather detailed, descriptive data through interviews with students and teachers, allowing for a deeper understanding of the students' reading strategies. By focusing on the students' natural context, this approach provided insights into

their real-life experiences and the factors influencing their reading challenges and coping strategies.

Research Design

The research design chosen for this study is a case study. A case study is a qualitative research method that provides an in-depth, contextualized examination of a specific group, event, or phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). In this study, the case study design was employed to focus on the reading strategies used by JHS students at Yamoransa. Data was collected once from the students and their English teachers, without plans for follow-up interviews or future rounds of data collection (Twintoh et al., 2021). This one-time data collection helped capture a snapshot of the students' reading strategies in their natural educational environment.

The case study design was selected because it offers detailed descriptions and insights into the specific context of Yamoransa, using various empirical methods. This design was appropriate for investigating the complex nature of reading difficulties and strategies within a real-life context, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the issues under study.

Population

The target population for this study included junior high school (JHS) students and English language teachers from three schools in the Yamoransa community. A total of 33 participants were involved, comprising 10 students and one English teacher from each of the three schools. The Yamoransa schools were chosen based on the researcher's professional experiences, personal observations as a teacher, and participation in PTA discussions.

According to Mfantseman municipal examination reports, students in this community have demonstrated poor reading habits, resulting in unsatisfactory academic performance. Many students struggle to read and comprehend during classroom exercises and examinations, which is reflected in their poor examination outcomes. These observations informed the decision to focus the study on the Yamoransa community, where the issue of reading difficulties is evident.

The inclusion of both male and female students ensured a balanced representation of gender, allowing the study to address any potential concerns about gender bias in literacy and academic performance.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

Given that the entire target population (33 participants) was included in the study, there was no need for traditional sampling techniques. The study employed sampled students and English teachers from the three selected schools.

Purposive sampling was applied in a specific context to ensure that the right participants were selected based on the characteristics relevant to the study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where participants are chosen based on particular traits that align with the objectives of the research (Creswell, 2003).

The rationale for using purposive sampling was to ensure that students with identifiable reading difficulties were part of the study. A reading test was conducted to screen students, where they read from a Junior High School English textbook. Students who exhibited reading difficulties such as mispronouncing words, skipping words, or omitting word endings were

selected for the study. This approach ensured that the study specifically addressed the reading challenges of students transitioning from primary to junior high school.

Additionally, one English teacher from each school was selected to serve as a key informant. Teachers provided insights based on their professional experiences with students' reading difficulties, helping to contextualize the study's findings.

The decision to involve all 33 participants, including students and teachers, allowed the researcher to collect comprehensive data and avoid potential biases related to gender or other characteristics. Furthermore, the concept of data saturation guided the final sample size, where after conducting in-depth interviews, no new information emerged, confirming that the data collected was sufficient (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot, 2013).

Table 1: Selection of Schools and Participants

School	Number of Students	Number of Teachers
Sacred Heart Catholic JHS	10	1
Mt. Zion Methodist JHS	10	1
Yamoransa M/A JHS	10	1
Total	30	3

Sour Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Sources of Data

The study relied on primary data sources. Primary data were gathered through in-depth interviews and an observation approach. The data collection focused on reading strategies used by Junior High School (JHS) students, the difficulties they face, and the strategies employed by English teachers to help

overcome those difficulties. Data was collected from both students and teachers in the Yamoransa community in the Central Region of Ghana.

Data Collection Instruments

In-depth Interview Guide

The in-depth interview guide was developed based on a thorough review of relevant literature and the researcher's experiential knowledge as a teacher. The interview guide was designed to align with the study's objectives and was divided into the following sections:

Section A: Socio-demographic characteristics of participants.

Section B: Reading strategies employed by students.

Section C: Difficulties faced by students in using reading strategies.

Section D: Teachers' awareness and strategies to help students overcome reading difficulties.

Strengths of the Interview Guide

Flexibility: The one-on-one nature of the interviews allowed participants to express their thoughts freely, providing rich, detailed data.

Depth of Data: In-depth interviews facilitated a deep exploration of the participants' experiences, offering insights into both students' and teachers' perspectives on reading difficulties and strategies.

Weaknesses of the Interview Guide

Time-consuming: The one-on-one interviews required significant time to conduct and analyze.

Interviewer Bias: The interaction between the interviewer and participants might introduce biases, as participants may tailor responses to align with perceived expectations.

Rationale for Choosing the Interview Guide and Observation Checklist

The interview guide was chosen because it provided a direct means to gather qualitative data on students' reading strategies and teachers' experiences. Given the exploratory nature of the study, in-depth interviews were suitable for obtaining personal insights that could not be captured through more structured methods.

The observation checklist was developed to systematically record students' reading behaviors during English lessons. The checklist was structured to identify:

- i. Students' ability to read fluently.
- ii. Common reading difficulties such as mispronouncing words, skipping words, and omitting word endings.
- iii. Teachers' responses to students' reading challenges.

Strengths of the Observation Checklist

Real-time Data: The observation method allowed the researcher to capture students' reading abilities and difficulties in real time, providing a direct account of their behavior during lessons.

Natural Setting: Observing students in their usual classroom environment ensured that the data reflected their typical reading performance.

Weaknesses of the Observation Checklist

Limited Scope: Observation may not capture all internal processes related to reading comprehension, such as cognitive challenges students face while reading.

Observer Effect: The presence of the researcher might influence students' reading behavior, leading to atypical performance.

The observation checklist was selected to supplement the data gathered through interviews. Observation allowed the researcher to verify students' reading difficulties and teachers' responses in real classroom settings, ensuring that the data was comprehensive and not solely reliant on self-reports.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was carried out over two weeks. Both interviews and observations were conducted to gather comprehensive data on reading strategies and difficulties. The procedure is outlined as follows:

Data Collection Methods

In-depth Interviews

The face-to-face interview method was used to collect detailed information from students and teachers. Interviews were conducted in classrooms or other quiet locations within the school compound to ensure privacy and minimize distractions. Each interview lasted between 20 and 45 minutes. Both audio recordings and field notes were taken to ensure accuracy. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and students were reassured about the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

Observation

The observation method was also employed during English reading lessons. The researcher observed how students read comprehension passages and identified specific reading challenges. The focus was on students' fluency, word recognition, and sense group reading abilities. Teachers' responses to students' difficulties were also observed to understand how they supported students during reading exercises. The observation process was structured, with data recorded using the observation checklist.

Indicators for Measuring Reading Abilities

The following indicators were used to assess students' reading abilities during observation:

Fluency: Ability to read passages smoothly without frequent pauses.

Word Recognition: Correct pronunciation of words without skipping or mispronouncing them.

Sense Group Reading: Reading in chunks that made sense, rather than word-by-word reading.

Comprehension Support: Teachers' interventions to help students understand and overcome reading difficulties.

Pilot Testing of the Instrument

The pretesting of the instrument was conducted in Elmina, located in the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem (KEEA) municipality, a community in the Central Region of Ghana. Elmina was chosen for the pilot testing due to its similarities with the actual study area, Yamoransa. Both communities share homogeneous characteristics in terms of socio-cultural, educational, and economic conditions.

One key similarity is the student demographics and educational challenges, particularly regarding reading difficulties among junior high school students, which align closely with those identified in Yamoransa. These common characteristics ensured that the pretesting would provide meaningful feedback on the instrument's effectiveness and relevance.

Furthermore, Elmina is one of the top three settlements in the Central Region, similar to Yamoransa in terms of school infrastructure and educational resources, making it a suitable proxy for the main study area. This

similarity allowed the researcher to anticipate challenges that might arise during data collection in Yamoransa and to refine the instrument accordingly.

In all, 15 students (five from each of three schools) were selected from Elmina to participate in the pilot testing. The process helped in identifying ambiguities, biases, or errors in the instrument. As a result, adjustments were made to the sequencing and clarity of the interview guide, ensuring that it was structured to collect high-quality data during the main study.

Data Processing and Analysis

Data were collected from teachers and students, using both interviews and observation methods. After each day's data collection, both the recorded interviews and field notes or observation reports were carefully managed to ensure confidentiality and privacy. Data files were created for each participant, and all information, including recordings and field notes, were securely stored. The recordings were transcribed, and both transcriptions and notes were organized using Microsoft Word, with soft copies secured in a password-protected personal Dropbox account for future use.

Analysis of Interview Data

The interview data were processed using a systematic qualitative-oriented text analysis (Richards, 2005). After transcription, the data were re-read multiple times to ensure accuracy, rigour, and consistency, with any grammatical errors corrected without altering the meaning of the participants' responses. A thematic content analysis was employed, where major themes and sub-themes were generated based on the objectives of the study. Participants' statements were presented as direct quotes to support the themes

and sub-themes identified, providing a clear understanding of their perspectives on reading strategies and challenges.

Analysis of Observation Data

The observation data were analyzed using descriptive content analysis, a tool commonly used in qualitative research to analyze non-verbal data, such as behaviors and classroom interactions. The data from the observation checklist were categorized based on predefined indicators that measured students' reading abilities and difficulties, such as:

Word recognition: Ability to read individual words accurately.

Fluency: Ability to read smoothly and with appropriate pacing.

Reading comprehension: Ability to understand and interpret the text.

Error patterns: Common difficulties like mispronunciations, skipping words, and omitting word endings.

The behaviors observed during reading exercises were systematically recorded and coded into these categories. For example, students' difficulties in word recognition or comprehension were coded under the relevant themes. This allowed for an organized and structured analysis of students' reading challenges.

The observation data were then compared to the interview data to identify patterns and correlations. For instance, students who demonstrated reading difficulties during observations often mentioned similar challenges in their interviews. This triangulation of data helped validate the findings and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the reading strategies and difficulties among the students in the study.

Ethical Issues

The study followed all the standards guiding data collection processes. First, copies of the research proposal were submitted to the University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCC-IRB) for assessment and ethical clearance. After obtaining the approval, an introductory letter from the Department of Education and Curriculum and the IRB approval letter was given to the Municipal Education Directorate and permission was sought from the school heads to carry out the study in the selected schools.

Summary

This section of the research focuses on Yamoransa, known for agriculture and business, utilizing a qualitative, cross-sectional design with an interpretivist perspective. The study targets J.H.S 1 students and English teachers in Yamoransa, selecting 33 participants purposively from three schools due to observed poor reading habits. A primary data is collected through in-depth interviews and observations to understand reading strategies among J.H.S students. An interview guide and observation checklist, developed from literature review, are used to gather socio-demographic information, reading strategies, and difficulties faced.

Data collection involves informed consent, face-to-face interviews, and observations of classroom behavior and interactions, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. The instrument is pre-tested in a similar community to enhance its trustworthiness and credibility. Recorded interviews and field notes are securely stored, transcribed, and managed to maintain confidentiality and privacy. Data is cross-checked, transcribed, and analyzed manually using

a systematic qualitative text analysis approach to identify themes and sub-themes.

In conclusion, the research method employed in this study demonstrate a rigorous and ethical approach to investigating reading strategies among junior high school students in Yamoransa. By combining qualitative data collection techniques with systematic analysis, the study aims to addressing reading difficulties in the selected context.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the study. The analysis is grouped into five main parts. The first examines the socio-demographic characteristics of the pupils and teachers in all the three selected schools in Yamoransa. The next section focuses on the objectives and the research questions for the study. The third examines the factors that cause reading difficulties for pupils in Yamoransa. The fourth section also focuses on the reading strategies to overcome pupils' reading difficulties among the studied pupils. The final section elaborates on the factors contributing to improvement in reading strategies.

Demographic Characteristics of Pupils

This section covers demographic characteristics of pupils in the three selected schools in the Yamoransa community. With the effort to avoid gabs and gender biases, the thirty participants were selected evenly and on equal level of gender.

The table below shows the distribution of the selected participants based on the gender of pupils.

Table 2: Distribution of Gender of Pupils

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Female	15	50%
Male	15	50%
Total	30	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

The gender distribution data from Table 2 illustrates an equal representation of both male and female pupils, each comprising 50% of the total sample of 30 students. This balanced distribution indicates a gender-neutral composition within the analyzed group. Such parity fosters an inclusive teaching environment, aligning with Sadker et al. (2014) assertion that gender-balanced representation sends a message of equality in shaping reading skills. This finding suggests that collaborative efforts and the exchange of best practices among teachers of various genders may be influenced positively.

In the context of reading instruction, this balanced representation underscores the importance of considering diverse perspectives and experiences, potentially enriching teaching strategies and educational outcomes.

Based on the interview conducted by the researcher, the following observations were made on the pupils ages as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of Age of the Pupils

Pupils Age	Frequency	Percent (%)
11years	6	20%
12years	15	50%
13years	9	30%
Total	30	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

Table 3 outlines the distribution of pupils' ages among the Junior High Schools in Yamoransa. The majority of students fall within the 12-year-old age group, constituting 50% of the total sample, followed by 13-year-olds

(30%) and 11-year-olds (20%). This distribution suggests a predominant concentration of students in the 12-year-old category. Understanding the age distribution is crucial for tailoring reading strategies to meet the developmental needs and cognitive capacities of students within each age group. Educators can utilize this information to design age-appropriate reading materials and instructional approaches that cater to the diverse age range represented in the student population, thus enhancing engagement and comprehension across the board. Cremin, Hendry, Leon, and Kucirkova, (2022) assert that teachers could explore age-appropriate reading materials and activities that resonate with the interests and developmental stages of 12-year-olds, fostering a more targeted and effective reading instruction.

The table below shows the subjects of interest for the pupils to decipher their ability or inability to read due to the keen interest for the subjects especially, English Language as a subject with reading as one of its aspects in teaching and learning.

Table 4: Distribution of Pupils' Subjects Interest

Subject of Interest	Frequency	Percent (%)
English Language	18	60%
Mathematics	3	10%
Integrated Science	9	30%
Total	30	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

Table 4 presents the distribution of students' subjects of interest for the Junior High Schools in Yamoransa. English Language emerges as the most favored subject, with 60% of students expressing interest, followed by

Integrated Science (30%) and Mathematics (10%). This disparity in interest highlights the varying preferences among students regarding academic subjects. Understanding these preferences is crucial for educators to tailor teaching methods and resources accordingly, ensuring that all subjects receive adequate attention and engagement. Educators can leverage students' interest in English Language to incorporate interdisciplinary approaches that integrate science and mathematics concepts, fostering a holistic understanding of the curriculum.

Additionally, targeted interventions may be implemented to enhance students' interest and proficiency in less favored subjects, such as Mathematics, to promote a balanced academic experience. Barber and Klauda (2020) revealed that recognizing and aligning teaching materials with the students' preference for English Language may foster greater engagement and motivation in reading activities.

Table 5: Pupils were asked how frequent they engage in Reading

How often do you read?	Frequency	Percent (%)
Often	27	90%
Not often	3	10%
Total	30	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

Table 5 depicts the frequency of reading among junior high school students at Yamoransa. A significant majority, 90%, report reading often, while a smaller proportion, 10%, indicate reading not often. This high frequency of reading suggests a positive reading culture among the students. Understanding students' reading habits is essential for educators to design

effective literacy interventions and promote a lifelong love for reading. With the majority reading often, educators can capitalize on this enthusiasm by providing diverse reading materials and fostering a supportive reading environment.

Additionally, targeted strategies may be developed to encourage those who read less frequently, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to reap the cognitive and academic benefits associated with regular reading habits.

For teachers, this highlights the importance of building upon and reinforcing the existing habit of frequent reading (Deale & Lee, 2022). Moreover, the acknowledgment of a minority (10%) reporting less frequent reading highlights the need for targeted interventions. Tetzlaff, Schmiedek & Brod (2021) indicated that teachers may consider personalized approaches to address the specific needs and challenges faced by these students, fostering a more inclusive reading culture across the entire student population.

Demographic Characteristics of the selected Teachers

As part of the study on the pupils, three English Language teachers were selected and interviewed each from the three selected schools. Out of the three teachers, two of them hold first-degree suggesting a foundation in professional education, which is vital for effective teaching approach in English Language. Campbell-Barr, Bonetti, Bunting and Gulliver (2020) while one of them holds a Master's degree signifying a higher level of academic qualification, the prevalence of bachelor's degree holders implies a workforce of teachers with foundational training in pedagogy and subject-specific teaching strategies in teaching reading.

In terms of their teaching experiences, one of them had taught for 11years, and another had also taught for 16years and the third teacher had 5 years which is the least experience amongst the three teachers experience in education.

The implication for teachers' delivery of reading instruction lies in the potential wealth of pedagogical expertise and accumulated knowledge that comes with years of teaching. Gore, Rosser, Jaremus, Miller and Harris, (2023) stated teachers' collective experience of at least 5 years suggests a solid foundation in the education field, which can positively influence their teaching methods, instructional strategies, and the ability to address the diverse needs of students in the context of reading instruction. The considerable experience among English Language teachers may contribute to a more nuanced and effective approach to fostering literacy skills among Junior High School students in Yamoransa.

Research Question 1

This section presents the analysis and discussions of the observations made in the classroom and interviews regarding the reading strategies and factors that may have facilitated or difficulties faced in learning and teaching reading comprehension strategies among the teachers who teach the English Language and the pupils who learn as well. The results of the study were categorized into main and sub-themes. Three main themes were developed while sub-themes that emerged from the main themes were analyzed and presented for discussions. The results were presented and discussed with theoretical issues underpinning the study as well as the empirical literature under the following themes;

Reading Strategies

Reading Strategies is a broad term used to describe a planned and explicit actions that help readers translate print to meaning.

According to some of the English Language teachers interviewed, reading strategies were explained as ways or methods employed to assist readers to translate text or print meaning.

Pani defines reading strategies as “the mental operations involved when readers approach a text effectively to make sense of what they read...Good readers apply more strategies more frequently...and more effectively than poor readers.” (Pani 2024).

The ultimate goal of reading is to make meaning of the print and the process of comprehension is both interactive and strategic rather than being a passive reader of the text (Barber & Klauda, 2020). Moreover, reading strategies are ways or methods employed to assist readers to translate text or print meaning. Therefore, readers should be made to follow a structured way or method to comprehend. These strategies were used to teach pupils reading comprehension.

Reading Aloud

With regards to the interview conducted, both pupils and teachers revealed some of the reading strategies of teaching skills and methodology used in teaching reading comprehension in class. One of the teaching skills was reading aloud.

According to Alshumaimeri (2011), reading aloud is a communicative approach and it is considered an absolute method that might hinder the development of proficiency. Reading aloud has been used widely apart from

its criticism (Gibson, 2008). Within the field of educational profession, there are many articles existing to address the issues of reading aloud.

Read-aloud is one means of assisting with the emergent literacy of pupils which is defined as “the precursory knowledge about reading and writing that children acquire prior to conventional literacy instruction and that they bring to the task of learning to read” (Justice & Pullen, 2003, p. 99). Teachers corroborated that reading aloud has been used in classrooms as the preferred reading strategy or method by the pupils. One teacher had this to say:

...very often I asked the student to read aloud. This helps them to pay attention and it helps teachers to focus and easily identify students who are not paying attention in class. (JHS 1 teacher, aged 30 years)

Most of the participants (Pupils) in this study were of the view that, the most common reading strategy practised in the classrooms was reading aloud. In this study, teachers selected students to read texts aloud while other pupils listen, and when there is a mispronunciation, the teacher corrected the reader immediately. This reading strategy was also observed in phase 2, where the investigator involved himself in the classroom reading. The investigator made the following observations and recorded them in the observation field note guide. The majority of the readers (pupils) who were selected to read skipped some words, and made some wrong pronunciations. Others also made a lot of stops. Few could read correctly but most of them had difficulties in reading.

Silent Reading

This approach relies on the reader's ability to mentally process and comprehend the text, eliminating the need to articulate the words audibly

(Richards, 2019). Moreover, Silent reading promotes the internalization of the material. In essence, by engaging with the text on a cognitive level without the mediation of spoken words, readers may find it easier to focus on comprehension and retain information (Hiebert & Daniel, 2019). The autonomy it provides empowers individuals to adapt their reading pace to suit their comprehension abilities and learning preferences (Schimmel & Ness, 2017). It caters to individual learning styles and is particularly beneficial in scenarios where self-directed study or personal reflection is emphasized, providing readers with the flexibility to engage with written material in a manner that suits their cognitive processes and preferences (Hiebert & Daniel, 2019).

Generally, one can define Silent reading as the process of reading text without vocalizing the words aloud. It is a skill that typically develops as individuals become more proficient readers. There are different types of silent reading, each with its own purpose and level of engagement:

Skimming: this involves glancing over the text quickly to get the general idea of its content. It is useful for finding specific information or determining the structure of the passage without reading every word.

Scanning: this involves searching for specific keywords or phrases within a text. It's basically used for fetching particular information or details.

Intensive reading: this silent reading type involves reading carefully and thoroughly, focusing on understanding every detail of the text.

Extensive reading: this type also involves reading larger amounts of text with the goal of gaining a general understanding rather than focusing on every

detail. This type helps in building vocabulary, enjoying leisure reading and improving reading fluency.

Critical reading: it involves analysing and evaluating the text, including its arguments, evidence, and underlying assumptions.

In the course of the interview, one respondent revealed that:

Silent reading is just like having quiet time with a book, and one cannot get lost in the story without any distractions. It helps students focus better on what they are reading, and they feel like they understand the material more when they read silently.

Model Reading

Model reading is a pedagogical approach where a proficient reader, often a teacher or an experienced individual, reads a passage or text aloud to demonstrate proper reading skills such as fluency, expression, and intonation (Baha, 2017). The purpose of model reading is to provide learners with a tangible example of effective reading habits. By presenting a clear and proficient example, model reading guides learners in developing their own effective reading habits (Brown & Pressley, 2023).

According to Browne (1998), there are three major models of reading which are the bottom-up, top-down, and interactive models. *The bottom-up model* (This model focuses on direct instruction and the teaching of phonics to further reading growth). *The top-down model* (In this model, the focus is whole-language learning through the exploration of literature. This method is adopted by instructors who feel that students learn by doing (Nadeau, 2022)). *The interactive model* (Baha, (2017) argued that this model gathers the features of the bottom-up and the top-down models and gives reading more

meaning. Now, the readers are more involved in reading. Ability to read new words composed of familiar grapheme-phoneme correspondences) results from single letter training than from whole-word training. Another teacher indicated that:

Model reading is a cornerstone of my teaching strategy. By reading aloud to the students, I aim to expose them to fluent and expressive reading, helping them develop their own reading skills. I choose a variety of texts to cater to different interests and reading levels. During the reading, I pause to discuss vocabulary, ask questions, and model effective reading strategies. It not only enhances their comprehension skills but also instils a love for reading

Questioning

A recent study conducted by Ayitey and Baiden (2020) presented the survey question of survey, question, read, recite, and review (SQ3R) strategy to reading. It was observed in their study that the survey is the first stage where the reader looks through the text to get a gist of it before the actual reading of the text. In this study, teachers were asked to share their views on some of the strategies that they often use to teach students reading comprehension. This section included strategies like questioning, reading tests, and teaching basic components. This result of the study confirmed that of Anthony and Raphael (2004) that questioning is a technique that most teachers frequently used to improve reading comprehension. In this study, it was also found that questioning is one of the strategies teachers adopt as the most frequent technique for teaching reading comprehension. Questioning includes teachers asking the pupils about the text they have read. All the teachers involved in this study mentioned ‘questioning’ as one of the reading

strategies and as a methodology for teaching reading comprehension. One teacher had this to say:

During my reading comprehension lesson delivery, I normally make sure that the classroom environment is conducive to good communication and a high level of concentration. Usually, I preview and predict what the title is about. I do this by looking at the various headings found in the story or text by identifying the highlighted or bold words. After making predictions, I take readers through vocabulary drilling. With this, unfamiliar and 'big words' are picked and treated for their pronunciation and meanings in the context of the text. The keywords in the text are treated for familiarization and understanding. I then engage readers in reading aloud where I first read the text for the learners to listen and read after me so that they can be familiar with the words in the text they will be reading. Learners are then given some time to read silently and then they read aloud in turns. Students are finally made to answer the comprehension questions. (JHS 1 Teacher, aged 38 years)

This denotes that, questioning as a reading strategy involves actively engaging with the text by asking oneself or others questions before, during, and after reading. This approach enhances comprehension, critical thinking and deeper understanding of the material.

How questioning can be used as a reading strategy:

Before reading: Before diving to the text, readers can generate questions based on the title, headings and any introductory material. These questions will set a particular purpose for reading and activate prior knowledge related to the topic.

During reading: During this reading moment, questions are asked to monitor understanding, clarify confusing points, or make predictions.

After reading: These questions are asked to help reflect on the summarized key points, material, and evaluate ones' comprehension. Engaging the text actively through questioning, makes readers improve their retention and understanding of any available material.

Reading Test

According to Ayitey and Baiden (2020), reading is the strategy to enhance the comprehension of individual learners. As the learner reads, they underline or highlight key ideas; write notes, ask questions, comment, or write symbols in the margins; and try to answer their earlier questions. This is where the learner has to focus attention on details. In this study, the reading test was found to be one of the strategies teachers used to help pupils to develop reading habits and improve their reading strategies. This is what one teacher mentioned:

Okay, what I have noticed about the students is that, if you don't force them to read, they will not read. All they like to do is to talk and play in class. So, there are many instances that I organize a reading test for them. This is done to help pay attention to some students reading performance. While some students perform well, others perform badly so I tried to let those who can read or have reading skills pair with others who cannot read well just to help them also learn how to read.
(JHS1 teacher, aged 30 years).

Despite exploring the reading strategies from the perspective of the teachers, some of the pupils interviewed also shared their views that could define reading strategies. Some of the students had a sense of learning and adopted some form of cognitive strategies for reading comprehension. They mention some similar strategies from the teachers' views such as reading

aloud, skimming, scanning and guessing the meaning of certain words. Some of the pupils had this to say:

...Before reading, I skim the text before reading the text and sometimes too, I scan for the words I can pronounce first and try to predict whether I can pronounce the words and start reading the text... (JHS 1, aged 13 years)

...I first scan the word and try my best to read the text loud, when I do that, it sticks well in my mouth and my brain especially when the word is 'a big word.' (JHS 1, aged 13 years)

Another student aged 12 years who seems to dislike reading indicated his reluctance to read often.

Interviewer: *do you think reading is important?*

Pupil: *yes, please*

Interviewer: *How often do you read?*

Pupil: *not often, I don't even read at home and in school it is only when we are doing reading comprehension [English lesson] even with that, [if sir doesn't call me] I don't read.*

Interviewer: *Why don't you also try and read like your friends*

Pupil: *They will laugh at me if I pronounce a text wrongly.*

Interviewer: *So, what do you do when you try to read [reading strategy]*

Pupil: *Me, when I open the book and I see that I cannot pronounce the text I will not read.*

Factors Contributing to the Successful Reading Strategies

Adequate Teaching and Learning Materials

Yussif (2017) conducted a study on improving pupils' English reading comprehension through training teachers on effective teaching strategies in Ridge Junior High School "A", Sagnarigu District. The results showed that

poor teaching learning materials, a hostile classroom environment, a lack of a solid foundation in English language reading, and student absenteeism are among the issues that hinder the teaching and learning of reading. Similar findings were also found in this study. Adequate learning and teaching reading materials are needed for successful reading strategies. Teachers noted that one of the factors that can contribute to the success of learning and teaching reading comprehension is teacher motivational factor.

Teacher Motivation

The theoretical framework underpinning this study shows the recurring interactions between the teacher and the learner concerning reading development. The illustration showed the provision of motivation which Frankel et al. (2016) stated to be a principle of reading literacy. The motivation is provided based on the student's initial reading competence without the use of reading strategies. Through the motivation provided by the teaching and the teaching of reading strategies, the future reading response of the learners shows a development according to Frankel et al. According to Vygotsky (1978), the theory explains that in the reading strategy, the teacher identifies the relevant previous knowledge that is peculiar to the reading contexts and finds what reading strategy is useful to the text. The idea is that after completing the reading task with the help of the teacher, the learner will likely be able to complete the same task individually next time using the available reading strategies, and through that process of reading. In this study, teachers mentioned motivation as a factor that contributes to success in learning and teaching reading comprehension. Teaching strategy makes the development of proficient reading skills for learners even more essential, not

only for their academic success but for their daily lives as well. Unfortunately, reading is a skill that many children struggle to master. For students to be confident readers, teachers can provide students with effective teaching strategies for reading (Hadi, 2020). When students are motivated to learn, they are more likely to engage with texts, actively seek understanding, and persist through challenging passages. Usually, educators often emphasis creating a supportive and stimulating learning environment to foster intrinsic motivation, which can lead to improved reading comprehension skills over time.

These are some of the views of the teachers:

...Yes, teacher motivation matters, it also contributes massively to a successful reading strategy. When the teacher is motivated with the right materials, a good environment, allowed to discipline students and good salary and allowances in teaching, it equips them to go an extra mile in assisting students in reading comprehension with a variety of strategies to improve their comprehension ability... (JHS 1 teacher, aged 30 years)

Research Question 2

Factors that Cause Reading Difficulties for Pupils

Several scholars have documented challenges that hinder the development of reading (Amidu, 2013). Amidu did a case study and examined the causes of reading and comprehension difficulties among students of Dambai College of Education in the Oti Region. He found that some of the causes are text difficulty, ineffective teaching approach and lack of reading strategies in basic schools. Some of the findings in the previous studies confirmed those in this study. It was observed in this study that the attitude of pupils in a learning environment is very crucial. Pupils spend most of their

time on non-educative activities. While others use their leisure time for reading activities to practice reading strategies to improve their reading skills and strategies. Some are rather fond of playing most time which affects their reading skills. Several observations were made during the period of the data collection and it was found that the majority of them roam about doing nothing in the absence of class teachers. Such an attitude made them perform poorly. Some of the pupils mentioned the following;

...As for me, I don't like big words and some of the words are big for me to pronounce. (JHS 1 pupil, aged 12 years)

Another student confirmed:

I don't like reading books with big words, I find them difficult to understand. It gets so boring and sometimes I feel lazy too.
(JHS 1 Pupils, aged 13 years)

These findings affirmed those found in the recent study by Nyanor (2019), that textbooks with interesting pictures generate interest in pupils to read. It also emerged from that study that the choice of words in textbooks also causes reading difficulties. Students sometimes feel frustrated and discouraged if they come across difficult words or unfamiliar words in reading. That is, if the words used in the reading materials do not interest learners, they feel reluctant to read.

Large Class Size

Studies have shown that a crowded classroom hinders the teacher who tries to adjust his or her instructions to meet the individual needs of learners opined by Aaron (2015). An overcrowded classroom does not allow the teacher to pay equal attention to learners. Another study conducted by Flesch (2014) confirmed that a large class can result in poor reading activities. Large

class size distracts pupils' attention from reading comprehension. This is because pupils are disturbed by others in the class. It emerged from the study that a large population or class size also affects the pupils' reading strategies. In the sense that teachers are not able to assess pupils during the reading comprehension class. Some pupils do not put in the effort to read. Some of the pupils play during the reading period. One of the teachers had this to say:

...The class size in my school is really large, JHS 1 class of 62 students is very large and stressful. Class control is always a challenge because of the size of the class. Some students do not pay attention whiles classes are ongoing. They rather choose to do their different things. The classroom furniture arrangement has no spaces between them where even the teacher can walk around for observation and supervision therefore, the teachers only stand in front of the class for any other assignment and cannot move around to check on them. With this large class, proper care and attention are not awarded to all individuals, only a few lucky ones are given attention for corrections and other observations. Reading in turns during the reading comprehension is a challenge because only a few students can be called randomly to read. At times, due to time constraints, good readers are given the chance to read for the classes to continue to control time availability. (JHS 1 Teacher, aged 30 years)

Another participant corroborated that;

I think not only me...most teachers prefer a class with a smaller size [number of pupils] to a class with a large number of pupils. Yes, when the class size is small, the supervisory role runs very well and the class control is smoothly experienced, ample time is shared among the few students in class. Since the class size is small, the teacher can attend to the individual student's needs and challenges and give out the deserving assistance. (JHS 1 teacher, aged 38 years)

The School Environment

A noisy environment cannot promote good reading because reading requires great attention. If the environmental conditions at home and in school are not conducive enough for pupils, reading becomes a problem (Nyanor, 2019). The result of the study also confirms that of the study by Nyanor that the school environment also causes reading difficulties. It was mentioned by all three teachers that one of the causes of reading difficulties among the pupils could relate strongly to the school's environment. A noisy environment in school also disturbs pupils reading. It was observed by the investigators that the nature of the school's environment was very noisy [noise pollution]. The investigator could hear noise from cars, and horns from buses which distract pupils' attention during lesson time. This makes others find it difficult to hear each other during reading lessons. One teacher had these views to share;

[Hmm]...my school is located in the centre of the town and is very close to the main highway just about twelve metres away from the school. The town folks make a whole lot of noise in and around the school. Some engage in a serious conflicting exchange of words just forgetting that they are within the school premises. Anytime these go on, students' attention is always divided and students turn to pay more attention to the noise than in the classroom. Due to the proximity of the school to the highway, cars blow horns to distract classes a lot especially Fridays when ambulance drivers pick up dead bodies from the mortuary and bring them into the community with a continuous blowing of their horns, which distracts classes a lot. Whenever there is an activity in the community that needs the community members to pull and support, they distract our classes because students sitting in the classroom can see the various activities that go on at the roadside. The information center open their radios to work but always their sound is heard in our school,

especially in the morning periods for reading comprehension. This distracts reading lessons and finds it difficult for a student to be engaging reading comprehension. (JHS 1 teacher, aged 30 years)

The Home / Parent

Literature has shown that children from homes with good educational backgrounds mostly develop an interest in reading more than children from poor educational backgrounds (Sheldon 2016). Children from homes with good backgrounds have a larger vocabulary than those from homes where the opportunity for verbal growth is restricted. A study by Southgate (2014) also affirmed that the home plays an important role in students' reading proficiency. A person might have good or bad effects from their house. Numerous elements within the family setting might lead to youngsters experiencing difficulty with reading.

Some of the pupils had this to say:

All that I do in the house is cook. I don't get any time to read because When I close from school and get home it is already late so I will help my mother to cook. After that, I bathe and sleep
(Aged 13 years, female, JHS 1)

...When I am in the house I don't read, my mother only asks me to go errands for her... (Aged 12 years, JHS 1)

Another pupil confirmed:

When we close from school, I remove my uniform and go to the park to play football so I don't get time to read unless I come back to school before I read. My mother also sends me to buy things for her so I don't get time to read. (Aged 13yr, JHS 1)

Findings from a previous study by (Scaldof, 2013) noted that in a community or home where poverty is high and most of the parents are not

educated and enlightened do not recognize the importance of wards education. This finding confirmed those in the present study. The result revealed that the majority of parents prefer the children to follow them on the farm especially in the farming communities while those in the fishing communities also asked the wards to assist in their fishing business than attending school. Some pupils mentioned the following;

My mother cannot read so when I send my homework home, I find it difficult to do it. Sometimes I don't even do it because there are always house chores for me to do at home. (Aged 12 years, JHS 1)

This was corroborated by another child aged 12 years whose parents are illiterates.

My mother and my father didn't go to school [illiterates] so they don't help me to read at home. I don't read at home unless I come to school. My brothers who will help me to read have all travelled out of town to do business. (Aged 11 years, JHS 1)

Similar issues were mentioned by the teachers that most parents could not assist their wards academically since most of them are not educated. This is what one teacher had to say;

Most of the parents are farmers and kenkey sellers here so they always prefer their wards to follow them on the farm and others assist with the sales of kenkey. Few of them that like their children to attend school also can't help their children to read at home. This makes teaching difficult. You teach a child something today and the next day he or she can't recall anything. Oftentimes pupils do return their homework books to school without doing it. It is very difficult to handle such pupils, especially in government schools. (JHS 1 Teacher; aged 40 years)

Another teacher corroborated that;

Most parents do not assist their wards to read because they cannot read or write. Unlike other urban areas where most parents are educated to help their wards to read and do their homework, children in our rural community face difficulty in reading because they only read when they are in the classroom. (JHS 1 teacher; aged 38 years).

Inadequate Reading Materials

Findings from an earlier study by Nyanor, (2019) revealed that the inadequate supply of reading materials contributes to reading difficulties. It is through the reading materials that pupils can help pupils to practice reading to develop reading skills. A study by Shonel (2010) also corroborated that effective reading requires the availability of adequate reading materials. Inadequate reading materials do not promote effective reading. Reading materials need to be adequate to enable students to get access to them. Classes with large class sizes are likely to face problems with the distribution of reading materials like textbooks. Pupils in the class are usually more than the reading materials. As a result, pupils are compelled to share in ratios for instance three pupils is to a textbook. This does not enhance successful reading (Nyanor, 2019). Findings in the earlier studies confirm those found in this study. The following view was shared:

One of the pupils shared her view that;

due to inadequate reading materials, we are made to sit in threes to share a book which create so much inconveniences. At times some of us may wish the book is placed in front of us and so we do drag or pull the book on the desk during the reading periods. Sometimes times too, some of us prefer using our hands as pointer to the reading text which distract the others from

observation of the reading text. These situations make some of us lose concentration in the course of learning reading comprehension. Some too resort to play on their own whiles teaching and learning is on-going. (JHS 1, aged 12 years)

One teacher also has this to say;

Very often, as teachers, we try our best to make sure students do well to read and comprehend whatever they read. Unfortunately, the number of students in a class always outpaces the reading books available. Sometimes we have to pair them in groups. For instance, three or five pupils read from one textbook. This makes it difficult for us. (JHS 1 teacher, aged 30 years)

It was noted by the teachers that reading comprehension strategies become successful when there are enough reading materials for each student to be reading or looking through for follow-ups, referencing and full class participation. Adequate teaching and learning materials also make teaching very easy and understandable. Students are guided and taught well with the aid of the learning materials. This is what one teacher had to say;

There are no reading textbooks to support reading comprehension. After the introduction of the new curriculum, my school has not been given any reading textbooks. Reading comprehension becomes a challenge due to the inadequacy of the reading materials. Also, student reading ability goes down because they do not have the books available. Without reading materials, how do you ensure good reading comprehension? so all schools must be provided with enough reading materials. Yes, because reading materials are not enough, it makes reading lessons difficult. I think the ministry or government should supply or add up to the existing one to make it enough for the students. We kept the books for years so some of the books get torn. Sometimes rats get into the room and the lockers where books are kept and chew them. Students also tear some when

they are struggling over them because they are unlimited. I think books should adequately be made available, especially for JHS 1 and Final year students. (JHS 1 Teacher, aged 40 years)

Research Question 3

Perspectives on Reading Strategies

According to Dardjito (2019), when readers face difficulties in reading, they then decide to choose the appropriate strategy to tackle the obstacles, which means they have been aware of their reading. Their perspectives of such situations comes from their awareness to manage and monitor the cognition process in their reading (Dardjito, 2019). When readers can solve a problem, they have utilized the strategy of self-monitoring in reading (Shih & Huang, 2018). From the review so far, it can be deduced that reading strategies are mental processes or plans which are used deliberately during reading as reading strategies. This study explores from the teacher's and pupils' perspectives;

I am aware of Model reading which I usually use to help overcome pupils' reading difficulties, I read for students first to listen and read after me. I think with model reading, the student will be able to familiarize the words and their pronunciation as the teacher does. The exact pronunciation with the correct accent used is depicted and followed in use by students. The student grows to be conversant with continuous reading of the text, they can read on their own even when left alone to read. I make pupils read paragraphs one by one in class. This strategy helps the student to have hands-on reading to be able to try reading the text being modelled by the teacher. With the reading of paragraphs, students become conscious of what paragraph he/she will be reading, therefore making them alert and open up to learn the reading well. (JHS 1 Teacher, aged 38 years)

Reading Strategies to Overcome Students' Reading Difficulties

This section of results presents some reading strategies teachers adopt to overcome reading difficulties. Teachers share their knowledge and awareness concerning how and what they do to remediate the reading difficulties that pupils face in reading comprehension. Apart from conducting a one-on-one interview with the students, the investigators employ non-participant observational methods to assess reading strategies in reading comprehension. One of the critical observations made on the pupils' reading strategy was that they seem to lack the basic skills of reading. Some did not know and never made effort to adopt and apply any reading strategy to decode and blend words or sounds of letters to read. Pupils lack basic skills of reading thus vocabulary, reading comprehension, speaking and writing. Wrong pronunciation, skipping of words, making a lot of stops, and difficulty understanding what they read.

However, some teachers indicated drilling keywords as a strategy to improve pupils reading strategies to overcome reading difficulty.

Drilling Methods

Another teacher had these views to share:

During my reading comprehension lessons, I usually use a lot of strategies to teach students for their understanding. One of them is drilling of keywords; I write the keywords from the passage or text on the chalkboard and then take pupils through the pronunciation of the words. The keywords being treated are then used in forming sentences each. Here, students' level of understanding grows higher since they use the words in constructing meaningful sentences.

Drilling keywords and using the keywords in sentence construction assist the student with correct pronunciation and spelling as well as the understanding of the keywords provided. This makes the drilling of keywords one of the best strategies for reading comprehension. This strategy makes students read exactly as the teacher does. In other words, the student imitates the teacher and this guides the student to exercise some confidence in the reading since the teacher has already taken them through. (JHS 1 teacher aged 30 years)

Making Predictions

A responded that:

Making predictions; sometimes I give a brief story that surrounds the title of the reading text and open it up for students to predict the title so that I link it to the day's reading text (story). Usually, I serve as a guide to assist the students and at times they can predict the exact title. More times too, student's prediction may be close to the correct title and some too, very far away from the expected answers. I like making a prediction strategy because students' interest is usually aroused and be wanting to predict the correct title, therefore, making the class lively.

Teacher perspectives on reading instruction vary, with one advocating for model reading and another for silent reading.

Model Reading

One teacher, a 40-year-old JHS 2 instructor, advocates for model reading. In this approach, the teacher reads aloud to the class, prompting students to repeat exactly what was read. This method aims to reduce pronunciation errors among readers, as the teacher models correct

pronunciation. Additionally, individual students are encouraged to read aloud simultaneously, further reinforcing comprehension and fluency.

Silent Reading

On the other hand, a JHS 1 teacher, also aged 40, promotes silent reading. Following individual and whole class reading sessions, students are allotted time to read silently. Evaluation occurs at the lesson's conclusion, where students are tasked with answering comprehension questions related to the passage. This method emphasizes independent reading and comprehension skills development.

Reading Aloud

The primary purpose of reading aloud lies in its ability to enhance comprehension by engaging both visual and auditory senses simultaneously (Bartolucci & Batini, 2020). The advantages of exposure to reading aloud extend throughout an individual's lifetime, with particular significance in early childhood, where children exhibit exceptional speed in learning new words (Cabell et al., 2019). Students were also asked to share their views on the approaches that the teachers used to help them overcome reading difficulties and this is what one of the students mentioned:

Sir [Our teacher] writes the keywords from the book or text on the chalkboard and then asks each student to pronounce the words and make sure we all read the text correctly so this helps us to overcome some of the difficulties we face when reading. (JHS 1, aged 13 years)

Difficulty in Reading

Difficulties in reading or lack of reading strategies impose serious and potential life-long challenges for students. Pupils who do not read well or

develop any reading strategies are more likely to drop out of school. A study by (Jimmy 2012; as cited in Street, Pishghadam, & Zeinali, 2015) observed that improving and remediating reading difficulties early in pupils has potential long-term benefits to the individual as well as the society. The findings in the previous studies corroborated those findings in this study. The study found out from pupils some of the best strategies teachers can use to help them overcome reading difficulties. Here are couple of quotes from the students...

Sometimes when I am reading and I cannot pronounce a word, my teacher helps me to mention it. He even asks me to repeat it several times to be able to pronounce it correctly before he asked me to proceed. (JHS1 pupil, aged 12 years).

Another student had this to say:

...I don't like English because I don't know how to read... (JHS 1, aged 11 years).

A student corroborated that;

...Anytime I read in class they laugh at me so I don't feel happy during English lessons time... (JHS 1 aged 12 years)

Teachers' Strategies to either Motivate or Frustrate Pupils to Read

Aimer (2010) stated that for many students, textbooks are too difficult, dull and frustrating to read. The study explained that children of today have an interest in materials they love to read and their choice of reading materials may be different from what the syllables require or what was used some years ago. Also, some textbooks do not suit the level of the learners hence children feel reluctant to read or involve themselves in reading (Aimer, 2010). The findings in the earlier study corroborate some of the findings from this study.

In this study, teachers indicated that some of the textbook they use recently have little or no pictures in some sections page of the book which make reading difficult. This is what one teacher mentioned:

Sometimes, the strategies come naturally, anything that comes to mind that you think will help the student read without any difficulty comes naturally. Sometimes I do model, read after me or look and say or write some text on the board and ask the student to lead the class to read. However, I think, the education ministry or Ghana education service can organize workshops for the English language teachers. We are in the modern world and children capture things faster and easier through the use of modern technology and books. Teachers at the basic school level also need some training and more knowledge and skills to teach the students, especially with the English language. This will help us to also learn new or modern reading skills and strategies to help the student to overcome reading difficulties or challenges. (JHS 1 Teacher, aged 30 years)

Some of the students during the interview were asked to share their views on how the teachers also motivate them or frustrate them to read in class. This is what some students had to say:

It is frustrating and difficult for me to relate the meaning of the past tense of the words I read and because I don't pronounce it well my teacher always corrects me but sometimes, I get confused when words are in the past tense, present tense and future tense. That is the difficulty I face but I'm improving now because my teacher is making me understand the difference. (JHS 1, aged 13 years)

Other students had similar views to say to corroborate the earlier view mentioned;

My teacher will always ask me to read even if my mates laugh at me so I think it is a way of motivating me to read but seems a bit frustrating (JHS 1, Aged 12 years).

Sometimes, Sir promises to buy toffee for anyone who reads a sentence nicely [correctly]. (JHS 1, aged 13 years)

In a recent study, Fauzi and Ashadi (2019) explained that global strategies are intentional and planned techniques by which a student manages his or her reading. Drawing from the scholars' perspectives, such techniques include using relevant previous knowledge, skimming and using the text structure. In this study, similar techniques were used as a reading strategy. Skimming was one of the strategies teachers used to facilitate reading. These were mentioned;

I try to put some seriousness into the student, some of the students if you leave them, will not learn how to read. I try and use any possible strategies to let them read. Nowadays we don't lash students so during reading you help them skim or get patience for them to read aloud, read after you and possibly let students over-read a text several times to stick. It becomes frustrating for both learning and teaching. (JHS 1 teacher, aged 38 years)

The results of this study also seem to support those of Amuah-Sekyi et al. (2015), who gave examples of how to improve comprehension when reading becomes difficult or easy. These included rereading the text and attempting to get back on track when one loses focus, as well as varying one's reading speed.

Pupils who were not able to read were asked to take their time and with the help of the teacher adjust the pupils reading speed and make sure they re-read the text correctly. The following are some observations made in the field;

Teacher: *take your time and read it okay*

Pupil: *okay sir, he read and pronounced the word wrongly*

Teacher: *mentioned and ask him to read after he had pronounced the words correctly*

Pupil: *finally pronounced it correctly and proceeded.*

From the perspective of the pupils, there is the use of assistance systems to aid the reader to understand the text as part of the reading strategies they adopt. This makes them responsive to the text they read. Such assistance includes breaking words, pronunciation, using a dictionary, underlining and using reference materials or allowing others to pronounce words for them than skipping or making a lot of stops in reading.

Summary

The chapter section presents a comprehensive overview of a study conducted in three selected schools in Yamoransa, focusing on various facets of reading instruction. Through the analysis of socio-demographic characteristics of both pupils and teachers, the study sheds light on key factors influencing reading abilities and instructional practices. The balanced representation of gender among sampled students underscores the importance of inclusivity in learning environments, while insights into pupils' ages and subjects of interest provide valuable guidance for tailoring reading materials and instructional approaches. The prevalence of frequent reading among students highlights a positive reading culture, yet the recognition of a minority reporting less frequent reading underscores the need for targeted interventions to ensure equitable opportunities for all students.

Furthermore, the demographic characteristics of selected teachers reveal a workforce equipped with foundational training and varying levels of experience, suggesting a potential wealth of pedagogical expertise to draw upon in enhancing reading instruction. The collective experience among English Language teachers signifies a solid foundation in education, which can positively impact teaching methods and address the diverse needs of students.

Overall, the findings underscore the significance of understanding socio-demographic factors in shaping reading instruction and highlight opportunities for educators to tailor approaches to meet the needs and interests of students. By leveraging the expertise of experienced teachers and fostering a supportive reading environment, educators can effectively promote literacy skills and cultivate a lifelong love for reading among Junior High School students in Yamoransa. This study offers valuable insights for informing educational practices and interventions aimed at enhancing reading proficiency and fostering academic success.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The chapter begins with a brief overview of the research. The findings in terms of the research objectives guide the study. This is followed by a conclusion and recommendations on the implications for further or future research, and recommendations for policy and practices.

Summary of the Study

The general objective of the study was to explore students' reading strategies among Junior High Schools in the Yamoransa in the central region of Ghana. This study explored the reading strategies (RS) in teaching and learning comprehension lessons in context and explain the difficulties and coping strategies in light of the difficulties that both teachers and students face in adopting strategies in reading comprehension. It also assessed teachers' and students' awareness of reading strategies to overcome classroom, and environmental-related challenges or reading difficulties and the methods they use to overcome the frustrations and success of the strategies they use in teaching the pupils in classrooms. The employed phenomenological design under qualitative approach. The theoretical basis for the investigation was based on Vygotsky's 1978 theory of constructivism. Thirty-three (33) people were interviewed in-depth and data was gathered using observational techniques.

The study was conducted in two phases. In phase 1, teachers were interviewed to share their views on the reading strategies (RS) they use in teaching reading comprehension. For this study, three English instructors from each of the three junior high schools were purposefully chosen as participants.

A one-on-one in depth-interview was also conducted with the 30 students. In-phase two, the non-participant observational method was used by the investigator to explore the reading strategy of the student in the classroom. The teacher allowed the selected students to read their English textbooks while the investigator sit at the back of the class and observe the reading strategies following the observational field note guide.

Major Findings

Here are the key findings from our study:

Variety of Reading Strategies: Through extensive discussion, we uncovered numerous reading strategies employed by students during their reading sessions. Notable strategies identified among Junior High School (JHS) pupils included reading aloud, silent reading, and utilizing model reading techniques.

Impact of Resources and Motivation: We found that these reading strategies significantly contribute to successful reading outcomes when supported by adequate teaching and learning resources, as well as teacher motivation. Our study echoes Shonel's (2010) assertion that effective reading hinges on the availability of sufficient reading materials. Therefore, ensuring students have access to ample reading materials is crucial for their development.

Challenges in School and Home Environments: Despite the importance of resources, our research also highlighted the impact of unsafe school and home environments on teaching and learning, particularly during reading periods. Factors such as large class sizes, noisy school environments, and responsibilities at home (such as farm work and household chores) create

obstacles to effective reading instruction. Southgate (2014) and Nyanor (2019) further emphasize the influence of the home environment on students' reading abilities, underscoring the need for conducive learning environments both at home and in school.

Lack of Basic Reading Skills: A critical observation from our study is that many pupils appear to lack fundamental reading skills. Some students demonstrate a deficiency in basic reading skills, including the ability to decode and blend words or sounds. This deficiency manifests in various reading difficulties, such as poor vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, pronunciation errors, and challenges in understanding text.

To address these difficulties, teachers recommend various strategies, including drilling methods, prediction-making, and employing different reading models like the bottom-up, top-down, and interactive models, alongside reading aloud and silent reading practices.

Minor Findings

Here are the additional findings uncovered in our study:

Effective Teacher Strategies: Pupils shared valuable insights into strategies teachers can employ to help them overcome reading difficulties. One method highlighted by students involves teachers writing keywords from texts on the chalkboard, prompting each pupil to pronounce the words and ensuring correct reading of the text. This approach was found to be beneficial in addressing reading challenges among students, particularly in junior high school settings.

Impact of Home Environment: It was observed that pupils who engage in regular reading at home and have less distracting environments tend to

develop effective reading strategies. Access to reading materials at home, coupled with support from teachers and siblings, facilitates the cultivation of these strategies.

Research by Sheldon (2016) supports this, suggesting that children from supportive home environments tend to have larger vocabularies compared to those from less conducive environments.

Teacher Practices: Teachers employ various methods to address reading difficulties, including drilling techniques, look and say methods, administering reading tests using available materials, and employing appropriate strategies for teaching reading comprehension.

Reading Comprehension Challenges: Difficulties in reading comprehension were attributed to issues such as decoding, fluency, comprehension, and phonics. Additionally, challenges were linked to factors such as large class sizes, inadequate reading materials, and the overall school environment.

Root Causes of Reading Difficulties: The investigator identified several factors contributing to reading difficulties, including teacher practices, student factors, the school environment, the availability of teaching materials, and inadequate methods or strategies for teaching reading comprehension. These observations underscore the multifaceted nature of reading challenges and the need for comprehensive intervention strategies.

Implications of the Study

The implications of the study are manifold:

Diverse Teaching Approaches: It underscores the importance of incorporating a variety of teaching methods, including drilling techniques,

prediction-making, and model reading strategies such as the bottom-up, top-down, and interactive models. This diversity caters to the different learning preferences among Junior High School (JHS) students, potentially enhancing their reading abilities.

Resource Provision and Teacher Motivation: The study suggests that interventions focusing on providing adequate resources and motivating teachers could have a positive impact on students' reading skills. This highlights the need for investments in educational resources and initiatives to support and inspire educators.

Addressing Classroom and Home-related Challenges: Efforts to reduce class sizes, create conducive learning environments, and collaborate with parents to overcome home-related obstacles could significantly improve reading experiences for students. Recognizing the factors contributing to reading difficulties underscores the importance of comprehensive approaches to foster a culture of reading in JHS.

Teacher Training and Professional Development: The findings emphasize the importance of enhancing teacher training and professional development programs to equip educators with effective reading strategies. This would better prepare teachers to address the diverse needs of students and implement targeted interventions for those facing severe reading challenges.

Personalized Instruction and Support Systems: The identification of students with severe reading problems highlights the necessity for implementing personalized interventions and support systems tailored to individual learning needs. This underscores the importance of differentiated instruction to accommodate diverse reading abilities among students.

Parental Involvement and Access to Reading Materials: Encouraging parental involvement and facilitating access to reading materials are crucial for fostering improved reading habits and skills among students. Collaboration between schools and parents can create a supportive environment conducive to enhancing students' reading proficiency.

Conclusion

The study explored the reading strategies employed by Junior High School students in Yamoransa, Central Region, Ghana, and assessed the challenges they face in reading comprehension. It also examined teachers' awareness and use of strategies to overcome these challenges. The findings revealed a variety of reading strategies such as reading aloud, silent reading, and model reading, which contributed to improved reading outcomes when supported by adequate resources and motivated teachers. However, external factors like noisy environments, large class sizes, and home responsibilities posed significant barriers to effective reading instruction.

Additionally, the study identified a lack of basic reading skills among many pupils, including difficulties with decoding, fluency, and comprehension. Teachers recommended strategies like drilling, prediction-making, and using interactive models to help students overcome these challenges.

The findings underscore the importance of providing adequate resources, motivating teachers, and addressing both school and home-related challenges to improve reading proficiency. Furthermore, the study highlights the need for personalized instruction, teacher training, and parental involvement in supporting students' reading development. By addressing these

issues, educators and policymakers can create a conducive environment for fostering a culture of reading and enhancing literacy outcomes among Junior High School students.

Recommendations

Here are the recommendations and suggestions based on the study's conclusions:

Resource Provision and Teacher Motivation: Based on the study's findings, inadequate resources and teacher motivation significantly impact students' reading proficiency. Therefore, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ghana Education Service (GES), and relevant stakeholders prioritize the provision of sufficient teaching and learning materials in Junior High Schools (JHS). These resources will support the variety of reading strategies identified in the study, including reading aloud, silent reading, and model reading techniques. Additionally, teacher motivation should be enhanced through professional development opportunities and recognition for effective reading instruction practices.

Addressing External Barriers: The study found that external barriers such as noisy environments, large class sizes, and home responsibilities hinder effective reading instruction. Schools should implement strategies to mitigate these barriers. For instance, efforts should be made to reduce class sizes, minimize distractions in the school environment, and collaborate with parents to address home-related obstacles that impede students' reading progress.

Integration of Diverse Teaching Approaches: The findings revealed that students benefit from varied reading strategies. Teachers should be trained and encouraged to incorporate a range of methods, such as drilling, prediction-

making, and interactive reading models (bottom-up, top-down, and interactive). Professional development programs should focus on equipping teachers with these diverse approaches to better address students' reading difficulties.

Addressing Basic Reading Skills Deficiency: The study highlighted the lack of basic reading skills among students, including challenges with decoding, comprehension, fluency, and phonics. Schools should adopt targeted interventions, such as drilling methods and model reading strategies, to enhance students' foundational reading abilities. Regular assessments and follow-up activities should be integrated into the curriculum to monitor progress and address any persistent reading challenges.

Promoting Parental Involvement: The study showed that students who engage in regular reading at home, with support from parents and siblings, demonstrate stronger reading skills. Schools should foster greater parental involvement in students' literacy development by organizing workshops for parents, encouraging them to create reading-friendly environments at home, and providing access to reading materials.

Personalized Instruction and Support Systems: Given the varying levels of reading ability identified in the study, it is essential to provide personalized instruction for students facing severe reading difficulties. Schools should implement support systems tailored to individual needs, such as one-on-one tutoring or small group interventions, to ensure that students with the most significant reading challenges receive the necessary assistance.

Suggestions

For Practice

Schools should implement comprehensive reading enhancement programs that go beyond traditional classroom instruction. These programs can include reading clubs, literacy events, and extracurricular activities that encourage students to engage with various genres of literature and develop a love for reading.

Collaboration between schools and parents is crucial to promoting a reading culture at home. Parental involvement programs can provide resources, guidance, and strategies for parents to support their children's reading habits outside of school, significantly impacting students' overall literacy development.

Creating an environment that promotes reading, both in and outside the classroom, is essential. Establishing well-equipped libraries, providing access to a variety of reading materials, and designing spaces that encourage quiet and comfortable reading can enhance students' reading experiences.

For Research

Investigate the effectiveness of incorporating technology-based reading strategies in the classroom. Explore the impact of digital resources, educational apps, and online platforms on students' reading engagement, comprehension, and overall literacy development.

Explore the influence of cultural factors on students' attitudes toward reading, preferred reading genres, and the effectiveness of various instructional methods in diverse cultural settings.

Evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives involving parents in supporting their children's literacy development, examining outcomes such as improved reading proficiency and a positive attitude towards reading.

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