

**Exploring the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian secondary school History educators in teaching reading comprehension**

**By Absalom N Kambindji**

**2025**

**Exploring the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian secondary school History  
educators in teaching reading comprehension**

**Absalom N Kambindji**

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**Master of Education in English Language Teaching**

**Department of Secondary Education and Post- Schooling**

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**Rhodes University**

**Makhanda, South Africa**

**Supervisor: Professor Nhlanhla Mpofu**

**Co-Supervisor: Prof Clement Simuja**

**2025**

## **Dedication**

I am dedicating this dissertation to five beloved people who have meant and continue to mean so much to me. My dear children, Ruusa, Wilhelm, Absalom, Magano and Monika Israel, my dear wife. These people have never left my side, even when I doubted myself. They are very special. A special feeling of gratitude to my mother, Magdalena Nyanya.

I also dedicate this thesis to my friends at Rhodes University (NIED) and my former principal, Mr Mutumbo, whose gentle wisdom and kind encouragement helped me navigate the challenges of graduate school and life.

I further dedicate this work and give special thanks to my best friend Naamelenga.

Both of you have been my best cheerleaders.

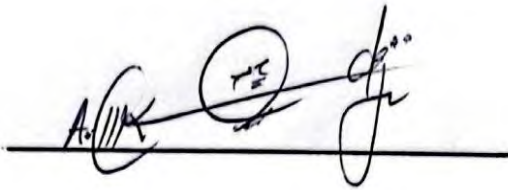
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Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 16 June 2025

## Declaration – Language Editor

Nikki Watkins

Editing/proofreading services

Cell: 072 060 2354

E-mail: [nikki.watkins.pe@gmail.com](mailto:nikki.watkins.pe@gmail.com)

10 June 2025

### To whom it may concern

This letter confirms that Nikki Watkins has copy-edited and proofread the master's thesis

**Exploring the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian secondary school  
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**Absalom Kambindji**



**Nikki Watkins**

Accredited Text Editor (English)

Eastern Cape regional committee; Secretary

Membership number: WAT003

Membership year: March 2025 to February 2026

072 060 2354

[nikki.watkins.pe@gmail.com](mailto:nikki.watkins.pe@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

Language is central to learning as it is a conduit for conceptualisation, critical thinking, discourse and cognitive engagement. This suggests that despite the content focus, all learners in Grade 4 to 12 assimilate knowledge by listening, speaking, reading and writing about the new concepts. Consequently, the importance of language in learning has led to a continuous inquiry into instructional practices that simultaneously enhance language development and content learning. In Namibia, where learners use English as a second language as a medium of instruction, Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) has been advanced as a possible solution to developing learners' language competence. In contexts where English is used as a medium of instruction and the language of learning and teaching (LoLT), LAC is usually referred to as English Across the Curriculum (EAC) and Reading Across the Curriculum (RAC). The initial teachers' preparation curriculum rarely focuses explicitly on preparing preservice content teachers on how to infuse reading and content learning in Namibia. To address the paucity of studies emanating from the Namibian context, this study explored the pedagogical strategies used by History educators when teaching reading comprehension. Purposive sampling was used to select five experienced Grade 8 History educators for this study. Data was collected using document analysis, classroom observation and two types of semi-structured interviews, namely interviews focused on the participants' lesson planning process and interviews focused on the participants' actions and decisions during practice. Inductive thematic analysis was also used as a framework to analyse the data. The study findings indicate that the participants activated learner's linguistic schema in pre-reading activities using dictionaries to define new words and emphasis on pronunciation of the names of people and places correctly. Importantly, schema theory suggests that content educators often use schema-driven instruction to activate students' prior knowledge, and reflective practice suggests that teaching experience with thoughtful reflections can foster awareness, development, and personal growth. The findings from this study could be beneficial for policymakers, other researchers in the field, Grade 8 History educators and other content subject educators.

**Keywords:** content educators; English Across the Curriculum; History educators; Reading Across the Curriculum; Reading Comprehension; Namibia

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## **List of Acronyms/Abbreviations**

ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
BETD	Basic Education Teacher Diploma
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CPD	Continuous professional development
EAC	English Across the Curriculum
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
EMI	English-Medium Instruction
ESL	English as a Second Language
LAC	Language Across the Curriculum
LoLT	Language of learning and teaching
MEAC	Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
NSAT	National Standardised Achievement Test
NSSCO	Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary
RAC	Reading Across the Curriculum
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics
NCBE	National Curriculum for Basic Education

## Terminology

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
History educators	These are educators who educate learners about the past, helping them to understand how societies and events have evolved over time.
Experienced educators	Educators who have substantiate amount of teaching experience and expertise, typically having worked in the field for several years.
Reading strategies	These are the processes readers use to understand and comprehend the meaning of what is being read (Bartz, 2016).
Reading comprehension	The ability to understand the meaning of what is being read.
Grade 8	The eighth grade in the Junior Secondary Phase and focuses on a set of compulsory subjects, including English as a first or second language, Mathematics, Life Science, Physical Science, Geography, History and another language (National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2016).
Initial teacher training	The foundational training and education that individuals receive before they can become qualified educators.

# CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

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## 1.1 Background and Rationale

The English language is regarded as a global language, having the status of an international lingua franca. As a result of this status, it is widely used in the study of science, engineering and technology, medicine, trade and commerce, scientific research, education, tourism, banking, business, advertising, the film industry, transportation, pharmacy and on the internet, to name a few (Rao, 2019). However, English is not the mother tongue for most of the world's population (Guo, 2018). According to Flores and Rosa (2019), 33% of the world learns English as their second language. For most African students, including Namibia, the study of English as a second language and language of learning encompasses four macro skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Burns & Siegel, 2018). Of these language skills, reading is regarded as fundamental in helping learners find and convey information (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2020). This is because every child and young person must leave school able to read proficiently for both pleasure and purpose. According to Castles et al. (2018), building a reading culture is the first step in getting all learners to become great readers.

The current status quo of low performance in Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary (NSSCO) and (NSSCAS) levels has not been improving for years now. And History is one of those subjects learned by all learners in grades 8 and 9 in all state and private schools in Namibia. It is an optional subject at grades 11 and 12, and it is taught in English as the medium of instruction. Which means learners learn History content through the English language. History is among other poor-performing subjects that are taught in English as a second language. History is a participation in the social, civic, political, economic, cultural and natural environment, and is central to the Social Sciences area of learning (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture [MEAC], 2021). It includes understanding and interpreting past and present human behaviour and experiences, and how they influence events, circumstances and the environment. Siefert et al. (2019) state that for learners to engage successfully with the secondary school

curriculum, they must have a range of literacy abilities that allow them to connect with each subject or learning area for a range of purposes.

In the context of my study, reading comprehension is not one of the topics in History in Grade 8. Reading comprehension is not just an English skill; it is the gateway to learning in every subject. It is therefore critical for learners to acquire literacy skills in English (Namibia History syllabus for Grade 8-9, 2015). The ministerial documents, such as (National Curriculum for Basic Education [NCBE], 2016), state that learners listen with understanding for information, interact effectively in ways of communication, read and understand youth literature and other texts, and write factual and imaginative texts of up to two pages in which errors do not confuse meaning. They can use English adequately for official purposes.

### **1.1.1 Reading in English classrooms in Namibian high schools**

English is the official language of Namibia, instituted after independence in 1990 to unify the country linguistically. As a result, it is the medium of instruction from Grade 4 upwards in all public schools (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture [MBESC], 2003). The National Curriculum for Basic Education (MEAC, 2016) emphasises the development of four core English language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. The curriculum is designed to enhance learners' proficiency in English, which is the medium of instruction and a core subject in Namibia. These skills are taught through a communicative approach, with the emphasis on both functional and academic English to prepare learners for higher education and employment. In Namibian schools, Grade 8 History typically focuses on introducing students to past social, economic, and political developments. This allows learners to practice language skills through projects, investigations and studying for tests at school. The emphasis on these aspects prepares learners for advanced studies and enhances their ability to use English effectively in daily communication and future academic pursuits. In Namibian high schools, the Grade 8 English curriculum is structured to develop learners' proficiency in English as a second language. The focus is on building foundational skills for effective communication, academic success, and critical thinking. The curriculum emphasises the following key areas, discussed below.

### **1.1.2 The state of reading among Namibian high school learners**

The Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ, 2018) explains that there are serious gaps in reading comprehension among learners in the upper primary phases throughout high schools in Southern Africa. The NCBE (MEAC, 2016) has added a reading lesson to all disciplines in the Namibian secondary school curriculum. To enhance learners' reading comprehension. Accordingly, Reading Across the Curriculum (RAC) refers to a curricular enrichment programme that allows learners to use their skills in languages other than English in non-language courses (Barkat et al., 2018). RAC is a language approach which is referred to by different names such as LAC, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) or English Across the Curriculum (EAC). In Namibia, as in most countries where English is used as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT), and as a subject of learning in the curriculum. The term EAC is used to refer to English used as the official language and as the medium of instruction in schools from Grade 4 upwards (MEAC, 2016). This means that all educators must develop learners' core communication skills. This entails developing the learners' familiarity with and ease of using subject terminology when talking about the subject matter.

Reading comprehension is the ability to read a text, process it and understand its meaning (Elleman & Oslund, 2019). It relies on words, reading and language comprehension. In other words, good comprehension is vital if reading is to have a purpose, if readers are to engage with and learn from a text and, ultimately, if readers are to enjoy what they are reading. According to Clark and Fleming (2019), reading involves thinking, learning, and expanding a reader's knowledge and horizons. It has to do with building past knowledge, mastering new information and connecting with the minds of those you have never met. For social science classes, including History, reading is necessary for communication skills, critical thinking, answering questions for investigation and problem solving (Shatunova et al., 2019). For the Grade 8 learners to cope with this curriculum, they need to have good reading comprehension skills, because the current History content requires learners who have the skills to navigate, comprehend, analyse and evaluate social, civic, political, economic, cultural and natural environmental content. Without good comprehension skills, children gain no meaning from what they read. The Grade 12 Examiner's Report (Ministry of Education [MEAC], 2021) states that learners are expected to engage in several levels of understanding in History because of reading history texts.

Moreover, reading proficiency in Namibian schools remains a significant concern, with assessment indicating that many learners are not achieving the expected literacy level in the National Standardised Achievement Test (NSAT). The National Standardised Achievement Tests have been administered by the Namibian MEAC since 2009 for grades 5 and 7 to evaluate learners' competencies in English as a second language, Mathematics, Natural Science and Health Education. From Grade 4 through to Grade 12, the results have consistently shown that learners' reading comprehension skills are below grade level expectations (Alumbungu & Mpofu, 2025), reflecting challenges in early literacy development.

In addition to that, studies have highlighted that by Grade 4, many learners struggle with reading fluency and comprehension, indicating that foundational reading skills are not adequately developed in the early years of schooling (SACMEQ, 2018; Simasiku, 2021). For example, reading performance among Grade 4 learners in Namibian schools, particularly in English as a second language, presents significant challenges (Haufiku et al., 2022). Various studies have identified multiple factors contributing to these difficulties, including instructional methods, resource availability, and learner backgrounds. For example, a study in the Oshana region found that Grade 4 learners struggled with syllable pronunciation, word omission, and reading fluency (Lamek, 2023).

The NSAT have consistently highlighted low proficiency levels in English among Grade 7 learners. In 2015, the average score for English second language was 41%, a notable decline from 49% in 2014 (Nghuulikwa, 2023). Alarming, 87% of learners were classified within the "below basic" and "basic" achievement categories, indicating that the majority are not meeting expected literacy standards. Similarly, to Grade 4, Grade 7 learners are not doing well in reading proficiency, and eventually, these learners enter junior secondary school with a poor reading level. In 2024, approximately 53.7% of learners who sat for the NSSCO examinations qualified for tertiary education – an increase from 48.8% in 2023 (MEC, 2024). Performance in English as a Second Language (ESL) declined notably (Nghuulikwa, 2023). Several factors are noted as contributing factors to the low level of reading proficiency among Namibian learners: language of instruction, teacher proficiency, resource constraints and socioeconomic factors, among others (Haufiku et al., 2022).

### **1.1.3 Reading across the curriculum (RAC) in Namibian high schools**

Reading across the curriculum (RAC) refers to the practice of integrating reading instruction and strategies into all subject areas, not just language classrooms (Pham & Unaldi, 2022). Reading comprehension highlighted above refers to the language skill, not a topic in History, as it may sound. To address the poor performance in History due to reading comprehension, researchers and educators have proposed using the RAC approach. This approach aims to enhance learners' comprehension and critical thinking skills by encouraging them to engage with diverse texts, such as articles, novels, and technical documents, across disciplines. It fosters a holistic understanding of content while improving literacy skills, making reading an essential tool for learning in various subjects (Petty, 2023). The RAC approach in ESL contexts, where English serves as the medium of instruction, is philosophically grounded in constructivist, critical, and sociocultural paradigms that prioritise holistic, equitable education (Matiso, 2024). Rooted in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, RAC scaffolds language acquisition by embedding literacy within disciplinary content, enabling learners to navigate the zone of proximal development through contextualised, cognitively demanding tasks (Lundgren, 2023). This aligns with Freirean critical pedagogy, which frames literacy as emancipatory, empowering students to decode not only language but also the epistemic structures of power embedded in academic discourse (Ferreira da Costa, 2022). By integrating reading across subjects, RAC rejects the artificial compartmentalisation of knowledge, reflecting an epistemological commitment to the interconnectedness of disciplines. Halliday's view of language as a social semiotic tool further underscores how exposure to diverse textual genres fosters meaning-making capacities, enabling learners to internalise academic language organically (Batubara & Meisuri, 2024). Thus, RAC is not just a method; it provides tools to prepare learners to understand and change complex, multilingual, and interconnected worlds (Masson et al., 2022). For example, the History syllabus in schools often teaches both Namibian and global History. Topics like pre-colonial African societies explore how people lived, their social systems, and cultural traditions. By studying these topics, students learn to question dominant views of history, value marginalised voices, and connect ideas across languages and subjects. It also covers colonialism in Africa, such as the causes, impact, and resistance to colonial rule, including the scramble for Africa. The Namibian Grade 8 History syllabus also includes topics like Namibian history, the German and South African rule in Namibia, resistance movements, and the road to independence. Moreover, it extends to cover world history, emphasising broader events like World Wars I and II, the Cold War, and the rise

of global organisations. By integrating History content with English language learning, students not only gain knowledge about past events but also develop key language and literacy skills essential for academic and everyday communication (Ban et al., 2023). Studying History significantly enhances students' English language skills in the following ways: reading comprehension and analysing historical texts, primary sources, and narratives, all of which require understanding of the context, vocabulary, and ideas. Concerning writing skills, learners write assignments, essays, and project work in History that encourage them to construct coherent arguments, use formal language, and improve sentence structure. In addition, learners' critical thinking and analysis improve as they interpret events, identify causes and effects, and form opinions, which require clear articulation in English (Mogea, 2022).

Despite the importance of RAC, Namibian content educators, like so many educators in contexts where English is used as the medium of instruction, are not trained to integrate reading development into their teaching during initial teacher preparation; usually, they must develop the ability to integrate content and reading in the practice of teaching (Bacon, 2020; Rutt et al., 2021). Yet, researchers such as Mahan (2022) in Norway, Villabona and Cenoz (2022) in Spain, Mpofu and Maphalala (2021a) in South Africa and Pham and Unaldi (2021) in Vietnam have found that, despite these challenges, some educators were in fact using their reflective practice and their personal practical knowledge to integrate reading and content learning. However, the Namibian context is still unknown. Therefore, it is against this background that the study investigated the pedagogical strategies employed by Namibian secondary school History educators to teach reading comprehension, emphasising their professional agency and pedagogical reasoning.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Reading is a crucial skill in learning both language and content because it is fundamental for success and achievement in schools (Eino et al., 2019). Every child and young person must leave school able to read proficiently for both pleasure and purpose. However, UNICEF (2018) found that Namibian learners are not performing well academically throughout the school phases, despite some educators showing commitment to teaching and learning and efforts by the government to improve learning. The poor performance in History learning in Grade 8 is impacted by the ESL used to teach and learn History content. To enhance learners' performance in History Grade 8, the Namibian government, through the NCBE (2016), has implemented reading lessons in all secondary school subjects or which is termed RAC. In Namibia, RAC is

defined as an approach that intends to infuse language skills into content learning. However, most content educators are not prepared to use approaches like RAC to teach (Coyle, 2018; Kao, 2022; Mpofu & Maphalala, 2021b). Despite this lack of professional knowledge on how to implement RAC in the content subjects, Villabona and Cenoz (2022), Pham and Unaldi (2021), Mahan (2022) and Mpofu and Maphalala (2021a) indicate that some educators are using these strategies. There is, however, a paucity of studies exploring the pedagogical strategies used by History educators to teach reading comprehension within the Namibian context.

### **1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Study**

The Namibian curriculum for basic education is content based, with English used as a medium of instruction and as a subject. The Namibian NCBE (2016) has implemented reading lessons in all secondary school subjects to enhance learner reading proficiency as a strategy for academic success. While content area educators often perceive their primary responsibility as content delivery rather than language instruction (Jack & Jack, 2022), emerging research indicates some educators are nonetheless implementing strategies like the RAC approach through the exercise of professional agency (Mpofu, 2024). Thus, the purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the strategies Grade 8 History educators use to teach reading comprehension. Reading comprehension will be generally defined as the ability to use reading for the acquisition of new content in each discipline (Hyland, 2018).

Specifically, the study sought to

- i. explore the pedagogical strategies that experienced Grade 8 educators use to enhance reading comprehension in History as part of the Reading Across the Curriculum strategy, and
- ii. investigate the beliefs that inform experienced Grade 8 educators when integrating reading comprehension into History.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

The research questions were as follows:

- i. What are the pedagogical strategies that experienced Grade 8 educators use to enhance reading comprehension in History as part of the Reading Across the Curriculum strategy?
- ii. What are the beliefs that inform experienced Grade 8 educators when integrating reading comprehension into History?

## **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

### **1.5.1 Schema theory**

This study was guided by two theories, namely, the schema theory and reflective practice. A schema is a complex process involving the application and processing of linguistic knowledge and background information (Alahmad, 2020). Schema theory is very important in reading instruction as it advances educators' understanding of the interactions among readers, the reading context and the text (Brevik, 2019). In the context of my study, schema theory provided a framework within which to examine the pedagogical strategies that Grade 8 educators used for teaching reading comprehension. Using four types of schemata, namely, formal, content, linguistic and cultural, I was able to analyse the potency of each pedagogical strategy that the History educators used. Formal schema refers to the structure of text and the readers' understanding of the genre and the rhetorical techniques (Wenyang, 2022). These help readers recognise the general situation, analyse the structure and logical information, understand the author's ideas and make correct predictions and understandings. In the context of my study, this meant that I had to pay attention to strategies involving pictures, titles of the texts and topic sentences that the educators planned and used to enhance learner comprehension. Secondly, content schema refers to the background knowledge that learners have about the text. According to Bazyma et al. (2022), there are two types of content schema: background knowledge and subject matter knowledge. This study explored the reading strategies used by History educators to address content schema in teaching reading by documenting, through observations and document analysis, how they introduce their lessons and connect learners' prior knowledge to the text used in the lesson.

Thirdly, cultural schema is related to the cultural knowledge beyond the text: the generalised collection of customs and folklore that forms the cultural knowledge structure in people's minds and shapes how they interpret experiences (Cheng, 2022). The assumption behind this is that a reader's cultural background knowledge influences the interpretation of a text and that their performance on retelling is superior when presented with a culturally familiar text as opposed to a culturally unfamiliar text (Thirunavukarasu et al., 2020). This means that I observed how the educators incorporated the cultural knowledge of their learners to understand the text. Lastly, linguistic schema involves the general understanding of the language rules of a particular language, that is, the vocabulary, grammar, speech rules and so on (Wanying, 2022). According to schema theory, only by mastering these language schemas and possessing basic language skills can learners decode the text's messages (Ma, 2021). I analysed the lesson plans and observed in the classroom how educators develop their students' vocabulary to enhance their reading comprehension.

However, the use of schema theory alone to understand the pedagogical strategies that Grade 8 educators use for teaching reading comprehension in History was not enough for my data collection. Although schema theory provides a theoretical understanding of the pedagogical strategies that are required for learner reading comprehension, it fails to explain the process of how experienced educators develop their instructional practices. Thus, I used reflective practice to understand how experienced educators represent, organise and apply their knowledge to teach History and reading comprehension.

### **1.5.2 Reflective practice**

To provide an explanation of the History educators' pedagogical decisions based on the complexity of classroom practice when teaching reading (Geng et al., 2019), reflective practice will be used. Reflective practice is a theory about how knowledge is represented and organised and how that representation and organisation facilitate the use of a reader's prior knowledge to improve reading comprehension (Farrell & Macapinlac, 2021). Educators use reflective practice when drawing from their personal teaching experiences (Farrell, 2019). They also use it to plan their lessons and sequence their instructional activities in the classroom. The three types of reflective practice include reflection-in-action (thinking while doing), reflection-on-action (after the event) and reflection-for-action (thinking before doing). First, reflection-in-action refers to the active evaluation of thoughts, actions and practices during action. Farrell and Macapinlac (2021) explain that the classroom environment has many aspects that can be

observed simultaneously during the actual interaction, such as decision-making, adjusting to various circumstances, changing activities and using a reflective learning journal. Teaching is an interactive process, and through reflective practices, educators become aware of their own actions (Farrell, 2020). For my study and data collection, I observed educators in their classrooms while they were teaching. I focused on whether they presented what they planned to present and compared the sequences of their teaching and learning activities in their classrooms to their lesson plan. Secondly, reflection-on-action is the retrospective contemplation of practice to uncover the knowledge used in a particular situation by analysing and interpreting the information recalled (Kastina, 2018). For my study and data collection, I looked at educators' lesson plans to see what they planned to teach and how they reflected on the reading skill. I also looked at their own evaluation reports on their teaching. Lastly, reflection-for-action refers to thinking about future actions with the intention of improving a practice (Goldkuhl, 2019). For my study, I focused on the initial lesson plans prepared before the lesson was presented and the educators' beliefs about and justification for their plans for teaching. I also reviewed the teaching aids they intended to use.

## **1.6 Research Design**

### **1.6.1 Interpretivism paradigm**

This study is underpinned by an interpretivist orientation. This paradigm believes in the possibility of achieving a single correct interpretation and holds the view that there are no stable grounds for judgement (Maarouf, 2019). For this paradigm, reality is not objectively determined; it is socially constructed (Ray, 2019). Since reality is socially constructed, people are studied in their social contexts or natural environment (Fischer, 2021). The interpretivists' ontological position is that a single phenomenon may have multiple interpretations rather than a truth that can be determined by a process of measurement. According to Fakhimi (2021), an interpretivist perspective is grounded in several key assumptions. Firstly, it posits that human life can only be understood from within, emphasising the importance of personal experience and subjective interpretation. Secondly, social life is seen as a distinctively human product, shaped by interactions and cultural contexts. Additionally, the human mind is viewed as the purposive source of meaning, suggesting that individuals actively construct their understanding of the world. In addition, human behaviour is influenced by knowledge of the social world, indicating that our actions are informed by our perceptions and interpretations of social contexts. Lastly, the interpretivist perspective asserts that the social world does not exist

independently of human knowledge, highlighting the interconnectedness between individuals and their environments. In the context of this study, I interacted with the History educators to obtain an understanding of their personal experiences through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations.

### **1.2.1 Qualitative approach**

A qualitative research approach was applied to explore the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian Grade 8 History educators to teach reading comprehension. According to Maarouf (2019), a qualitative approach provides a chance for the researcher to get close to the participants and explore the views they hold of the phenomenon under study. This approach is used to understand how people experience the world and relies on data obtained by the researcher from firsthand observations, interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, participant observations, recordings made in natural settings, documents, case studies and artefacts (Leko & Cook, 2021). My study generated data using classroom observation and semi-structured interviews to gain in-depth information from my participants.

### **1.6.2 Exploratory case study**

This qualitative study applied an exploratory case study. Schoch (2020) explains that a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon or social unit. According to Alam (2021), a case study allows the researcher an opportunity to collect different kinds of data from interviews, document analysis, classroom observations and the like. There are three types of case studies: explanatory, descriptive and exploratory. In this study, semi-structured interviews, document analysis and non-participant observations were used to generate data to explore the pedagogical strategies that Grade 8 History educators use for reading instruction.

### **1.6.3 Purposive sampling**

Participants were selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is where the researcher makes specific choices about which people, groups or objects to include in a sample (Bertram & Christiansen, 2020). Purposive sampling is widely used for identifying and selecting information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Renjith et al., 2021). This means that the researcher will target a specific group, knowing that the group does not represent the wider population; it simply represents itself (Landers, 2018). The criteria for

selecting participants included several important factors. Firstly, participants needed to be experienced educators who had received training to teach History during their initial teacher preparation. Additionally, they were required to have a minimum of two years of teaching experience, ensuring they had a solid foundation in the field. Participants also had to be currently teaching in any secondary school within the Oshana region of Namibia. Finally, a willingness to engage in all stages of data collection was essential, as this commitment was crucial for the integrity and depth of the research.

#### **1.6.4 Data generation**

This qualitative exploratory case study generated data through document analysis, two special types of semi-structured interviews, stimulated recall interviews and classroom observation. One interview focused on the lesson planning process, and the second interview focused on the participants' actions and decisions during the lesson. In addition, non-participant classroom observations were conducted. Data from the interviews assisted me in examining the pedagogical strategies that the educators had been using to teach reading in History (from the lesson plan) and how they had been reflecting on them to generate their own teaching knowledge. Furthermore, the data gathered from non-participant observations allowed me to analyse the actual practices and reading strategies used by the Grade 8 educators in History.

In the context of my study, semi-structured and stimulated recall interviews are related, even though they serve slightly different purposes in qualitative research. Semi-structured interviews are interviews guided by a set of open-ended questions, but they allow flexibility for the researcher to probe further depending on the participant's responses (Husband, 2020). Stimulated recall interviews are special types of semi-structured interviews where participants are shown a stimulus such as a video of their teaching, an audio recording, a piece of work, or classroom observation notes to stimulate their memory and reflections (Busetto et al., 2020). The stimulus acts as a trigger for deeper, more accurate discussion. The relationship here is that stimulated recall interviews build upon the principles of semi-structured interviews. The point to note here is that both interviews share flexibility and open-ended questioning, but stimulated recall interviews provide concrete prompts that help participants articulate their thinking and decision-making process more clearly. In addition to that, all stimulated recall interviews are semi-structured, but not all semi-structured interviews are stimulated recall interviews. In the context of my study, I acknowledged semi-structured interviews but opted for stimulated recall interviews because of the stimulus I had used, and I interviewed each

participant twice, except for participant D, who did not have a lesson plan which we could use as a stimulus.

#### ***1.6.4.1 Stimulated recall interviews***

Stimulated recall interviews were used to generate data. According to Husband (2020), semi-structured interviews are interviews with open-ended questions, which allow for new ideas to emerge during interactions, even though a series of prepared questions is used (Busetto et al., 2020). These interviews allowed me to gain deep insights about the participants' subjective experiences, opinions and motivations as opposed to facts or behaviours. The interviews were also used to generate ideas to develop or change practice. For my study, semi-structured interviews were very important as they allowed for interaction and unexpected topics to emerge.

The first interview focused on the participants' lesson planning process. The purpose of this interview was to understand the reflection processes that participants undertake when planning for lessons that integrate History and language development. The formal Namibian lesson plan includes the following columns: routine information, topic, lesson objective, basic competence drawn from the national syllabus, teaching aids, introduction of the lesson, presentation of the lesson, consolidation activity or homework and evaluation. I paid attention to the lesson objectives to examine how the participants intended to integrate reading skills and History. Regarding schema theory, I discussed with the educators how they planned to activate learners' formal, linguistic, cultural and content schemas. I also engaged in discussions with the educators about the reflection column, which provided details on their personal evaluation of their pedagogical practices for reading instruction. The data from these interviews was documented using an audio recorder, a researcher's diary and transcripts of the interviews. All the participants participated in one 30-to-35-minute interview at their schools. Appendix A provides a detailed account of the questions that guided these interviews.

The second interview focused on the participants' class observations, looking particularly at actions and decision-making. The purpose of the second interview was to engage the participants in a critical reflective session to examine their actions and decisions while teaching in the classroom (Richit et al., 2022). I guided the participants in giving meaning to the actions and behaviours that I observed during the classroom observations. All the participants had one 30-to-35-minute interview at their schools or at any chosen venue. Appendix C provides a

detailed account of the questions that the educators engaged with in the conversation with the researcher. This interview was also documented using transcripts, the researcher's diary and an audio recorder.

I was aware that the participants might feel anxious and uncomfortable, which could have led to poor responses or unreliable information. In addition, interviews can also use up much of the participants' valuable time. To address these limitations, I ensured that all my participants felt comfortable and that the interview was conducted in a conducive atmosphere. I also asked the participants to decide on a convenient time for the interviews.

#### ***1.6.4.2 Non-participant observation***

Non-participant observation was used as a follow-up tool to observe how the educators implemented what they had planned in their lesson plans. Non-participant observation is a type of observation where the observer remains an outsider, looking at the situation without taking part in it (Busetto, 2020). During the class observations, I observed the strategies the History educators used during the pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading stages of the lesson (see Appendix B). I also documented how they prepared the learners for reading tasks and the prompts they provided to facilitate the reading activities. Lastly, I observed how educators attended to formal and summative assessments and how these were used to enhance learners' reading skills (Appendix B). The non-participant observations were documented using the researcher's diary and an audio recorder.

#### **1.6.5 Data analysis: Inductive thematic analysis**

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data (Scharp & Sanders, 2019). Peel (2020) defines thematic analysis as a method for describing data that always involves interpretation in the process of selecting codes and constructing themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), themes in thematic analysis can be generated either inductively or deductively. An inductive approach denotes that the themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves. As I intended to code the data "without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame or the researcher's analytic preconceptions" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 8), I specifically followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) inductive analysis steps. To begin the analysis process, I familiarised myself with the data by repeatedly reading the transcripts from the interviews and observations. This allowed me to gain a thorough understanding of the material. Following this, I identified and generated initial codes from the

collected data, which helped to organise my thoughts and insights. As I progressed, I categorised the raw data into suitable themes, allowing for a more structured approach to the information. I then reviewed and refined these themes to ensure they aligned with both the data and my research objectives. After establishing the themes, I wrote a detailed analysis for each one, carefully defining and naming them to encapsulate their essence. Finally, I conducted a comprehensive analysis and compiled the empirical findings into a cohesive report.

## **1.7 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the systematic rigour of the research design, the credibility of the researcher, the believability of the findings and the applicability of the research methods (Rose & Johnson, 2020). The following trustworthiness measures were applied: credibility, confirmability, dependability and transferability. Credibility refers to the assurance that the researcher's findings are, in effect, the results of the data (Nieuwenhuis, 2019a). In this study, I used triangulation to ensure credibility. Triangulation is a method used to increase the credibility and validity of research (Noble & Heale, 2019). I gathered thick data from my participants through interviews, observation and document analysis. Regarding credibility, I completed research procedures and kept a detailed record in my diary. Confirmability has to do with the level of confidence that the findings of the research study are based on the participants' narratives and words rather than potential researcher biases (Dahal, 2022). For my study, I used a diary to keep a record of my study process to help me distinguish between my personal beliefs and my participants' opinions. Kyngäs (2020) defines dependability as an assessment of the quality of the integrated processes of data collection, data analysis and theory generation. I used semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis – guided by reflective practice and schema theory – to collect data and develop a deeper understanding of the study context. Finally, transferability describes the degree to which the research findings apply to other fields and contexts (Kyngäs, 2020). I provide detailed descriptions of the research site and participants so that the findings can be applied to other similar contexts.

## **1.8 Ethical Considerations**

To ensure ethical standards were upheld in this study, I paid attention to the following: informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity. Informed consent means that participants are well informed about the study and agree to take part in it (Norman

et al., 2021). I gave the participants clear oral information about the study and written letters explaining the ethical considerations. Voluntary participation means that all research subjects are free to choose to participate without any pressure or coercion. I explained this to my participants, adding that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Confidentiality refers to the agreement that is formed between the researcher and the participant, via the informed consent process, ensuring that the participant's identity, personal information and responses will not be disclosed to anyone outside the research team. I have kept the participants' identities, personal information and responses private and have not disclosed this information to anyone. Anonymity meant using pseudonyms to protect the participants' information. Accordingly, I protected the participants' personal information, such as phone numbers, identity numbers, email addresses and photographs.

## **1.9 Chapter Summary**

The chapter presents the background and orientation to my study. I provided the study rationale, followed by the problem statement, the research purpose and the research questions, the study design and the methodologies that generated new insights into and parallels with the literature and theoretical frameworks in relation to the study findings. In addition, this chapter summarised the design and methodologies for my study. The chapter concluded with an outline of the study.

## **1.10 Outline of the Study**

The study is organised into six chapters, each interconnecting to elucidate how the research questions were addressed. These chapters are integrated for a better, comprehensive understanding of the study findings and their implications. The thesis is structured as follows.

**Chapter 1:** This chapter presents the background and orientation to my study. In addition, in this chapter, I outline my research purpose, research questions, the study design and the methodologies that generated new insights into and parallels with the literature and theoretical frameworks in relation to the study findings.

**Chapter 2:** In this chapter, I provide current and relevant literature related to my topic. I review the literature, which is based on teaching reading comprehension to Grade 8 History educators. I also review the theories and literature related to educators' self-developed pedagogical practices when teaching reading comprehension during History in Grade 8. The review is

organised around the following questions: What are the pedagogical strategies that experienced Grade 8 educators use when teaching reading comprehension in History? What are the beliefs that inform experienced Grade 8 educators when integrating reading comprehension into History?

**Chapter 3:** This chapter examines and discusses the two theoretical frameworks, namely, schema theory and reflective practice. These theories complement one another by aligning language educators' knowledge bases, personal beliefs and experiences. I also justify their selection for this study.

**Chapter 4:** Chapter 4 provides the paradigmatic perspectives and methodological choices employed in the data generation process, which commenced upon receiving ethical clearance from the Rhodes University Research Ethics Committee. In this chapter, the purposive sampling technique, data methods, quality measures and ethical considerations applied in the study are discussed. The data-generating tools employed included document analysis, semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations. The inductive thematic approach used to analyse the data is also explained.

**Chapter 5:** In this chapter, I present the findings of my study in relation to the research questions using the extracted themes. It focuses on the five broad themes that emerged from the data generated from the Grade 8 History educators' lesson plans, the non-participant observations, the semi-structured interview transcripts and the researcher's journal.

**Chapter 6:** The final chapter provides a summary of the study findings by discussing them through the lens of the theoretical frameworks. In this chapter, I make recommendations based on the main findings. In addition, certain suggestions are made to various education stakeholders with an interest in English language instruction, specifically ESL educators in Namibia. I also make recommendations for future studies.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

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### 2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the background to the study and highlighted key aspects of the study. This chapter reviews the relevant literature, focusing on the literature pertaining to EAC with a particular focus on RAC. The chapter will explore various key aspects, including the concept of reading comprehension, the EAC approach and the specific domain of RAC. Furthermore, this chapter delves into the objectives and purpose of the Namibia History syllabus, shedding light on the integral role of reading strategies in teaching History. I conclude the chapter with an examination of relevant studies concerning History learning and reading instruction. In addition, I provide references to studies conducted in other contexts for a broader perspective on the subject matter.

### 2.2 Reading Comprehension

Reading in general can be defined as a process to understand and obtain information from the text (Jones, 2022). Cohesion is the meaning relation that appears within the text to build connections among the different parts of the text (Septiyana & Aminatun, 2021). Decoding is the ability to recognise individual written words, and language comprehension is the process of interpreting words and connected discourse (Smith et al., 2021). Reading comprehension is one of the most important language skills today, and it is viewed as fundamental for the development of other language skills. Shanahan (2020) highlights that good comprehension is vital if reading is to have a purpose, if a reader is to engage with and learn from a text and, ultimately, if a reader is to enjoy what they are reading.

Researchers define reading comprehension in various ways. For example, Elleman and Oslund (2019), Jones (2022), Septiyana and Aminatun (2021) and Rogers et al. (2023) describe reading comprehension as the ability to read a text, process it and understand its meaning – saying it relies on words, reading and language comprehension. According to Clark and Fleming (2019), reading comprehension has to do with thinking, learning and expanding a reader's knowledge

and horizons. Muhid et al. (2020) define reading comprehension as the ability to process written text, understand its meaning and integrate it with what the reader knows. Coiro (2021) argues that reading involves the interaction between the skills and cognitive processes of the reader and the linguistic characteristics of a text. Reading comprehension is considered a key competence in our modern information society, and there are high demands for comprehension of complex texts throughout students' schooling, according to Magnusson et al. (2019). Smith et al. (2021) emphasise that reading comprehension is core to academic progress because it underpins content area learning in all subjects. Research in reading over the past 40 years has increasingly emphasised the importance of background knowledge as a significant contributor to the reading ability of middle school students. Namaziandost and Gilakjani (2020) define reading comprehension as the measure of producing and eliciting a message via communication with the text.

In contrast, Tavaréz DaCosta (2020) defines reading comprehension as a highly strategic process whereby readers constantly construct meaning while making guesses, drawing inferences, making inquiries and concluding. According to Harahap (2021), reading comprehension relies on two interconnected abilities: word reading, which is the ability to decode the symbols on the page. For my study, I used Muhid et al.'s (2020) definition, which states that reading comprehension is the ability to process written text, understand its meaning, and integrate it with what the reader knows. I complemented this with Clark and Fleming's (2019) definition, which states that reading comprehension has to do with thinking, learning and expanding a reader's knowledge and horizons. In the context of this study, then, reading is defined as a process of interpreting the given contextual meaning of a text. This means that the reader needs certain abilities, including word reading – the ability to decode the letters – and an understanding of basic language rules and structure to construct meaning from a text.

As a subject, History is within the social and economic area of learning in the curriculum, but has thematic links to other subjects across the curriculum (Namibia History syllabus for Grade 8-9, 2015). I found it more fascinating to focus on reading comprehension in the History classroom. Reading comprehension might sound like one of the topics in History Grade 8, but it is not. Reading comprehension is a crucial skill for History learning. In the context of my study, I chose to focus on History because History demands the ability to interpret, analyse, and evaluate texts. This means learners engage with diverse sources such as textbooks, archival records, newspapers, and personal accounts, all of which require strong comprehension skills

to understand meaning, bias and perspectives. Studying how learners comprehend these texts can help me understand the challenges students face in making sense of complex historical language and concepts. It also reveals how comprehension influences learners' ability to develop critical thinking, construct arguments, and draw connections between past and present. Furthermore, focusing on reading comprehension in History can allow me to explore strategies that improve not only literacy skills but also historical thinking skills, making it a rich area for interdisciplinary research. In addition to that, poor performance in History, which is closely linked to reading comprehension challenges, especially in schools where learners study History through ESL, also fascinated my choice of focus.

### **2.2.1 The state of reading proficiency among Namibian secondary school learners**

The state of reading proficiency among Namibian secondary school learners has been a catalyst for the adoption of the EAC approach in Namibian secondary schools (Haufiku, 2022). The recognition of limited reading proficiency levels among students has underscored the need for a comprehensive strategy to enhance their English language skills, not only in English language classes but across all subjects (Haifidi, 2019; Salmon, 2023). The findings from Alumbung and Mpofo (2025) highlighted that reading is one of the five language skills that should be acquired by all learners at the end of the primary school phase. However, some learners do not acquire these skills at this level, and they enter junior secondary unable to read and write at the appropriate level for their age. In addition, learning activities in reading literacy instruction arise from concerns about low reading proficiency levels in Namibia (Gabriel and Mpofo, 2025). Other findings from a study by Mataka et al. (2021) revealed a low level of reading as a serious concern in both primary and secondary schools in Namibia. The NSSCO Examiners Report (2022) noted that more emphasis is needed on reading comprehension, as most candidates could not respond appropriately to the reading comprehension questions. This report is compiled annually and sent to schools after marking the national examination for secondary school learners.

The Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ, 2018) explains that there are serious gaps in reading comprehension among learners in the upper primary phases throughout high schools in Southern Africa. To enhance the reading comprehension of Namibian learners, the National Curriculum for Basic Education (2016) added a reading lesson to all disciplines in the Namibian secondary school curriculum. Accordingly, RAC refers to a curricular enrichment programme that provides students with the

opportunity to use their skills in languages other than English in non-language courses (Barkat et al., 2018). RAC is a language approach which is referred to by different names, including LAC, CLIL or EAC. In Namibia, as in most countries where English is used as the LoLT, the term EAC is used to refer to the fact that English is used as the official language and as the medium of instruction from Grade 4 upwards (National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2016). This means that all educators must support the development of learners' communication skills in English, which includes developing their familiarity with and ease in using subject-specific terminology when talking about the subject matter.

To conclude on reading proficiency in secondary schools, the literature clearly indicates that the reading problems in secondary schools in Namibia do not start at the secondary school level; their roots can be traced back to primary school.

### **2.2.2 English across the curriculum (EAC) approach**

The LAC, CLIL and disciplinary language are related concepts that pertain to the integration of language and content knowledge in education. LAC is an educational approach that emphasises integrating language skills, such as reading, writing, speaking and listening across all subject areas or disciplines within the curriculum (Russel, 2020). The goal of LAC is to enhance learners' language proficiency and communication skills while simultaneously facilitating their understanding of subject-specific content (Mpofu & Maphalala, 2020). In LAC, language is not taught in isolation but is embedded within the context of various subjects, making learning more authentic and meaningful (Bauler et al., 2019; Bovill, 2020; Guay, 2022). CLIL, on the other hand, is an instructional approach where learners learn a subject or content area (e.g., Science or History) through a second or foreign language, which is not their native language (Mahan, 2022). According to Coyle and Meyer (2021), this approach involves the integration of language and content learning, where the language used for instruction becomes a vehicle for understanding and acquiring knowledge in that subject. CLIL aims to develop both content knowledge and language proficiency simultaneously, making it particularly valuable in bilingual or multilingual educational contexts (Espinar, 2019). Related to LAC and CLIL, some researchers refer to disciplinary language. Disciplinary language refers to the specialised language, terminology and discourse conventions used within specific academic or disciplinary fields (Russell, 2020). Each discipline, such as Mathematics, Science, or History, has its own unique language characteristics and communication norms that are essential for effective communication and understanding within that field (Bunch & Martin,

2021). Mastery of disciplinary language is crucial for students to engage with and excel in subject-specific contexts (Coyle & Meyer, 2021).

CLIL can be seen as a specific application of LAC in a bilingual or multilingual context. In CLIL, learners learn content in a language that may not be their first language, thereby integrating language and content learning (Morton, 2020). This aligns with the broader LAC approach, which emphasises the integration of language skills across all subjects (Mpofu & Maphalala, 2021). Disciplinary language is a critical component of both LAC and CLIL. In LAC, students need to acquire disciplinary language skills to engage effectively in various subject areas (Mpofu & Maphalala, 2020). In CLIL, learners must develop proficiency in both the target language and the disciplinary language of the subject they are studying. In summary, LAC is a holistic approach to integrating language skills across the curriculum, CLIL is a specific application of this approach in bilingual or multilingual settings, and disciplinary language is the specialised language used within distinct academic fields (Mpofu, 2023). All three concepts emphasise the importance of language and content integration in education to enhance learners' learning experiences and outcomes (Erdoğan, 2019). In the Namibian context, a holistic approach to integrating language skills across the curriculum is indeed emphasised, and this is commonly referred to as LAC. English serves as the medium of instruction from Grade 4 onwards in Namibia. Consequently, in this context, LAC is specifically termed "English Across the Curriculum" (EAC).

EAC is an educational approach in which the English language is integrated into the teaching and learning of various subject areas or disciplines outside of traditional English language classes (Kamonde, 2019; Mpofu, 2023). The EAC approach seeks to immerse learners in English, making it a medium for teaching and learning in various subjects (Rechards, 2023). By doing so, it aims to improve learners' language proficiency, comprehension and critical thinking abilities, ultimately bridging the gap in reading proficiency and equipping learners with the language skills necessary for academic success and future opportunities (Skerrett, 2020). This approach is a response to the pressing need to address language challenges in Namibian secondary school education, to foster more effective communication and better educational outcomes for the country's learners (Kela, 2022). In EAC, English is not solely the focus of language instruction but serves as a medium for understanding and communicating subject-specific content (Mpofu & Maphalala, 2021). This approach aims to develop learners' English language proficiency while enhancing their ability to comprehend and express ideas,

concepts and knowledge in diverse academic or disciplinary contexts (Monbec, 2020). EAC recognises the importance of language as a tool for learning and emphasises its integration across the entire curriculum to support learners in effectively engaging with subject matter in English-medium instruction settings (Mair, 2020).

One key aspect of EAC in Namibia is that English is used as the primary language of instruction in schools starting from Grade 4 (National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2016). This policy aims to enhance learners' proficiency in English and equip them with the language skills needed for academic success (Kamonde, 2019). Secondly, EAC ensures that English is not limited to English language classes but is integrated into the teaching and learning of all subjects (Mpfungu, 2023). This integration helps students to understand subject-specific content in English and communicate effectively in academic contexts (Mahan, 2022). Thirdly, EAC focuses on developing learners' English language proficiency, including their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills (Mpfungu & Maphalala, 2021). It aims to ensure that learners can use English competently across various disciplines (Mpfungu & Maphalala, 2020). By using English as the medium of instruction in all subjects, EAC aims to facilitate a deeper understanding of subject matter and promote critical thinking skills among learners. Lastly, the EAC approach aligns with the broader goals of the Namibian education system, including promoting multilingualism and preparing learners for further education and future careers where English is often a prerequisite (National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2016).

Writing Across the Curriculum and RAC are two integral components of the EAC approach (Santee, 2022). They both play a crucial role in fostering English language proficiency and enhancing subject-specific learning in the Namibian educational context (Kamonde, 2019). Writing Across the Curriculum involves integrating writing tasks and assignments into the curriculum of all subjects. The primary goal is to develop learners' writing skills in English while allowing them to express their understanding and knowledge of subject-specific content through writing (Montoya, 2022). In the EAC approach, educators incorporate various writing activities into their lessons. This may include essays, reports, journals, summaries and responses to prompts related to the subject matter (Mpfungu, 2023). Learners are encouraged to articulate their thoughts and demonstrate their grasp of subject-specific concepts through written communication (Bertrand & Namukasa, 2020). Writing Across the Curriculum not only enhances learners' writing proficiency but also reinforces their understanding of subject content

(Featherstone, 2020). It encourages them to think critically, organise their thoughts logically and effectively communicate their ideas in written form (Rashidov, 2022).

RAC is the practice of incorporating reading activities and strategies into teaching all subjects, not just English language classes (Kirsten, 2019). The primary objective is to develop learners' reading skills and comprehension abilities in English while engaging with subject-specific texts and materials (Lee et al., 2023). In the EAC approach, educators in various subjects encourage learners to read subject-related texts, such as textbooks, articles and primary source documents, in English (Kambonde, 2019). RAC helps learners become more proficient readers, enabling them to access and comprehend complex content across different subjects (Kennedy & Chinokul, 2020). It enhances their vocabulary, comprehension and critical thinking skills, making them more effective learners (Abdelrady et al., 2022).

In the EAC approach, RAC and Writing Across the Curriculum are seamlessly integrated into the teaching and learning of all subjects, aligning with the broader EAC goal of using English as the medium for instruction and communication (Lam & Moorhouse, 2022). Namibian high school educators in various subjects are encouraged to incorporate reading and writing activities that are relevant to their specific disciplines (Homateni & McKenna, 2023). This ensures that learners develop subject-specific language skills alongside their English language proficiency (Hardman, 2023). RAC and Writing Across the Curriculum not only support language development but also contribute to learners' overall academic growth by reinforcing their understanding of subject content, promoting critical thinking and facilitating effective communication (Lam & Moorhouse, 2022). In the context of this study, I focused only on how RAC is implemented in History lessons.

### **2.2.3 Reading Across the Curriculum (RAC)**

RAC refers to a curricular enrichment programme that provides students with the opportunity to use their skills (Barkat et al., 2018). According to Mpofu and Maphalala (2021), RAC is an educational approach that emphasises reading as a fundamental skill applicable across all academic subjects. It involves integrating reading activities and strategies into the teaching of various disciplines, enabling learners to comprehend subject-specific texts effectively (Rezat et al., 2022). According to Lee et al. (2021), the primary purpose of RAC is to enhance learners' reading skills, comprehension abilities and critical thinking skills in the context of various academic subjects. These definitions collectively emphasise the central idea that RAC involves

the integration of reading skills and strategies across the entire curriculum, highlighting the significance of reading as a cross-disciplinary skill for learning and critical thinking (Flaherty, 2023).

The literature suggests that some educators may argue that they are not language specialists and may feel completely indifferent about the language responsibility (Tirri & Kuusisto, 2022). According to Catts (2022), other content educators might see literacy integration and providing support for reading during reading comprehension as just one more time burden. It seems clear that a refocused emphasis on reading as a process of getting meaning from print for analysis, synthesis and evaluation is crucial. In the context of critical literacy across the curriculum, this approach could potentially address the students' difficulties, support educators' goals and meet the needs of the nation for an educated, informed and fully participatory democratic population. However, the concept that "every teacher is a teacher for reading" seems to have fallen on deaf ears. Simanjuntak and Suseno (2022) still believe that there is much room for improvement regarding literacy integration in content area subjects, arguing that RAC must move to the centre of all educational efforts. Ithindi (2019) asserts that the incorporation of RAC is highly relevant to teaching content subjects like History in Namibian secondary schools. By integrating reading as a fundamental element in History lessons, learners can access a wealth of historical sources, documents and narratives, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of Namibia's complex history (Hoog & Moore, 2022).

In contexts such as the United States, South Africa and Canada, History is learnt under the umbrella term called social studies, with broad goals such as the transmission of cultural heritage, method of inquiry, reflective inquiry, informed social criticism and personal development. In the Namibian context, History is referred to as a participation in the social, civic, political, economic, cultural and natural environment and is central to the Social Sciences area of learning. It includes understanding and interpreting past and present human behaviour and experiences, and how they influence events, circumstances and the environment. (Namibia History syllabus for Grade 8-12, 2018). The syllabus was also designed to meet the requirements of the curriculum guide for formal senior secondary education in Namibia. The purpose of the Namibian History syllabus for grades 8-12 is to:

- Promote democratic principles and practices at the school level within the educational system and civic life.

- Develop the learner’s social responsibility towards other individuals, family life, the community and the nation.
- Promote equality of opportunity for males and females, enabling both sexes to participate equally and fully in all spheres of society and all fields of employment.
- Enable the learners to contribute to the development of culture in Namibia.
- Promote wider intercultural understanding.
- Develop a lively, questioning, appreciative and creative intellect, enabling learners to discuss issues rationally, make careful observations and analysis, experiment, think scientifically, solve problems, and apply them to tasks. (Namibian History syllabus for Grade 8-12, 2018).

According to the midterm progress report on the implementation of the third phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education by the MEAC (2019), History is a subject in the Namibian curriculum. Other scholars, such as Auld and Morris (2019), argue that the primary goal for History education is to prepare young people to be human, rational, participating citizens in a world that is becoming increasingly interdependent. In History teaching, reading strategies play a pivotal role in helping learners engage with and comprehend historical texts effectively. Reading strategies, including those aligned with RAC, enhance learners’ ability to extract meaning from historical documents, narratives and sources (Meloche et al., 2020).

### **2.3 Reading Strategies in History Teaching**

The purpose of RAC in History lessons is to improve learners’ reading skills, historical literacy, critical thinking abilities and engagement with historical texts (Horning, 2023; Smith & Warren, 2023). This approach encourages critical thinking and analysis, as learners engage with diverse perspectives, ultimately fostering a deeper appreciation of the country’s historical context (Nganga, 2019). The RAC approach plays a pivotal role in Namibian History education by equipping learners with the necessary tools to explore and interpret their nation’s past with greater insight and proficiency (Fillemon, 2021).

The RAC method empowers learners to become more proficient and informed readers within the context of the study of History. The purpose of implementing RAC in History lessons is multifaceted. First, RAC in History lessons aims to improve learners’ historical literacy by exposing them to a variety of historical texts, including primary sources, secondary sources, articles and historical narratives (Rawlings, 2023). It helps learners become more proficient at

reading and understanding these texts, which are central to the study of History. Secondly, History often involves analysing events, ideas and perspectives from different time periods and regions (Confalonieri & Wagner, 2021). The RAC approach enables learners to access and engage with a wide range of historical sources, allowing them to explore diverse viewpoints and gain a deeper understanding of historical events and contexts (Rawlings, 2023). Through RAC activities, learners are encouraged to critically analyse historical texts, evaluate evidence and draw informed conclusions (Wineburg et al., 2022). This critical thinking skill is vital for historical inquiry and interpretation.

History lessons often introduce students to specialised historical terminology and vocabulary (Bartleds & Savenije, 2020). The RAC method helps learners build their historical vocabulary, enabling them to better comprehend and communicate historical concepts and ideas (Gultom et al., 2022). In addition, RAC encourages active engagement with historical texts (Brevik, 2019). Learners are not passive recipients of information but are actively involved in reading, interpreting and discussing historical materials (Kanon & Kafanabo, 2022). According to Wineburg et al. (2022), this engagement enhances their connection to historical content. By incorporating RAC into History lessons, educators aim to instil a love for historical reading and learning that extends beyond the classroom (Brant, 2023).

It was, however, noted by Inganah and Darmayanti (2023) that many educators face challenges when trying to integrate literacy into the curriculum, and some of those challenges include a lack of ability, confidence and training. The report on Oshiwambo educators' experience in Namibia (2013) indicated that educators who teach content subjects and other Namibian languages face several challenges when using English as a LoLT. Oshiwambo is one of the 14 first languages in Namibia, and more than 60% of the Namibian population uses it as their first language (Stell, 2023). Some possible reading strategies used in History when teaching reading comprehension are vocabulary development, comparison, summarising, guided reading and retelling the information (Bartz, 2016; Beek et al., 2019; Brevik, 2019; Filderman et al., 2022; Gaith, 2019). These are discussed next.

### **2.3.1 Vocabulary development**

Vocabulary development plays an important role in language learning and development (Karami, 2019). It refers to the teaching and learning of words in a foreign language; however, an item of vocabulary may be more than a single word. For example, terms like post office and

mother-in-law are made up of two or three words but express a single idea (Peters, 2019). According to Rasinski and Rupley (2019), vocabulary can be thought of as hooks that connect to background knowledge and concepts about the world, support the understanding of subject content, aid the integration of new learning with what is known and facilitate the representation of abstract understandings. Vocabulary skills in the content area would improve learners' general and discipline-specific reading and thinking skills and enable them to become independent readers and thereby achieve greater success in their courses (Quigley, 2019).

Teaching vocabulary development in History involves helping learners acquire and use specialised historical terminology and language relevant to the subject (Bunch & Martin, 2021). Effective vocabulary instruction enhances learners' comprehension of historical texts, improves their ability to articulate historical concepts and supports critical thinking (Dumitru, 2019). While developing vocabulary, History educators use techniques such as selecting key vocabulary terms, contextualising vocabulary, using mnemonics, word walls, contextual reading, word maps, analogies, comparisons and real-world connections (Beker, 2020). Incorporating these techniques not only builds learners' historical vocabulary but also facilitates their ability to comprehend historical texts (Bunch & Martin, 2021). Dilla (2023) explains that when learners are familiar with key vocabulary terms, can place them in historical contexts, and use mnemonic aids and visual references, they are better equipped to read and understand complex historical narratives and documents. These strategies create a strong foundation for improved reading comprehension in the History classroom (Beker, 2020).

### **2.3.2 Compare and contrast**

Comparing and contrasting refers to looking at two things to spot similarities and differences. Bogaerds-Hazenberg et al. (2021) explain that when learners use a compare comprehension strategy, they are processing the meaning of a few words or ideas by comparing their meanings and applying them to real-life situations and previously acquired or familiar knowledge. Other researchers, such as Bartz (2016), state that the effective use of comparison has much potential for learners' comprehension in History classrooms. It is an effective strategy that has the power to help learners apply meaning to the material they are reading and discussing. The most effective way to incorporate a compare comprehension strategy in a History classroom is by using graphic organisers (Bartz, 2016), such as the Venn diagram and the comparison matrix. A Venn diagram is a diagram representing mathematical or logical sets pictorially as circles or

closed curves within an enclosing rectangle, with common elements of the sets being represented by intersections of the circles.

Compare and contrast is a valuable reading strategy in History because it helps learners analyse and comprehend historical events, figures or concepts by identifying similarities and differences (Suson et al., 2020). Comparing allows learners to identify patterns and trends in historical data. By examining multiple historical sources and events side by side, learners can recognise similarities and differences (Guan et al., 2020). This helps to discern recurring themes, societal changes or political shifts over time. For example, by comparing the French and Russian Revolutions, historians can identify common triggers and outcomes, shedding light on the nature of revolutions in different contexts (Grinin, 2022). History is rarely isolated, and events often occur within a broader historical context. According to Dozono (2020), comparing helps learners contextualise events by placing them within a larger framework. By understanding how different events relate to one another, learners can explain the causes and consequences of specific historical occurrences (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). Historical events are often interconnected, and the causes and effects of these events can be complex (Beker et al., 2021). Comparing and contrasting helps educators analyse cause-and-effect relationships. By examining multiple case studies or situations, learners can deduce the factors that led to a particular outcome (Halverson & Graham, 2019).

### **2.3.3 Summarising**

Summarising is a post-reading strategy that involves recalling the main points or ideas in each text. According to Bartz (2018), to summarise successfully, a reader must be able to select the key words in a paragraph, locate the topic sentence, articulate that idea in one sentence, and repeat the above sequence until they have worked their way through a text. Brevik (2019) found that summarising teaches learners how to discern the most important ideas in a text, how to ignore irrelevant information and how to integrate the central ideas in a meaningful way. In addition, teaching students to summarise improves their memory for what is read. A summarising strategy can be used as a reading strategy for the following reasons: 1) it enables learners to focus on key words and phrases in an assigned text, and 2) it teaches learners how to take a large selection of the text and reduce it to the main points for more concise understanding (Todd, 2020).

Summarising involves distilling complex historical information into concise and manageable chunks (Billur, 2023). This process requires learners to identify the most critical aspects of a historical text or event. Historians often encounter lengthy and detailed sources, such as primary documents or academic articles, and summarising allows them to extract the essential elements, making the information more accessible for analysis and future reference (Sturgeon, 2021). Secondly, history is replete with intricate narratives, intricate relationships and multifaceted events. Summarising helps historians clarify their understanding of these complexities (Carver & Convery, 2021). By summarising key points, learners can ensure they have grasped the fundamental aspects of a historical account. This, in turn, aids in the interpretation of historical events and the formulation of well-informed arguments (Raymond et al., 2020).

Summaries serve as organisational tools in historical learning. Learners often gather a plethora of sources and data when studying a particular historical period or topic (Bharadiya, 2023). Summaries help categorise and structure this information (Cypress, 2019). By creating concise summaries of each source or event, learners can create a structured framework that makes it easier to draw connections, identify gaps and build a comprehensive historical narrative (Alam, 2022). Lastly, history is built on the accumulation of knowledge, and summarising plays a crucial role in retaining and retrieving this knowledge (Smith et al., 2021). Summarised information is more memorable and easier to recall compared to lengthy texts. Learners can create summaries of their own research findings or key historical events, ensuring that they can access vital information when needed (Morse & Clark, 2019). These essential reading strategies in History are important as they allow learners to condense complex information, enhance comprehension, organise learning materials and facilitate the retention and retrieval of historical knowledge (Guo et al., 2020).

#### **2.3.4 Guided reading**

Guided reading is an instructional technique that involves a teacher working with learners who demonstrate similar reading and learning behaviours (Geng et al., 2019). The text provides opportunities for paraphrasing, summarising and answering evaluative questions. This is an effective strategy because the instruction is easily managed in small groups, and the teacher can give individual attention to the group members (Nicholas, 2022). During guided reading lessons, learners read a non-fiction text (Alexander, 2018), paraphrase or summarise it, and answer evaluative questions. According to Audina et al. (2020), in some contexts, guided

reading is referred to as a directed reading activity. This is a strategy that provides learners with instructional supports before, during and after reading (Magnusson et al., 2019). Guided reading is used as a reading strategy in History and entails the teacher grouping learners together with other learners who read at a similar instructional level (Bartz, 2016). This is seen as an effective strategy because the instruction is easily managed in small groups, and the teacher can give individual attention to the group members. Educators using guided reading aim to support each reader's ability to comprehend at a higher level by empowering learners with the skills to frame questions and make higher-order connections with the content of History.

Guided reading in History involves a structured approach where a teacher or experienced guide leads learners through historical texts, providing support and asking thought-provoking questions (Marangell, 2023). Researchers such as Marangell, Sullivan and Worrell (2023) emphasise that this strategy encourages critical thinking. By engaging in discussions and analysis guided by a knowledgeable instructor, learners are encouraged to think deeply about historical events and their causes and consequences (Coyle & Meyer, 2021). This process helps learners move beyond surface-level understanding to develop a more nuanced comprehension of historical narratives (Singh et al., 2021). Secondly, history is often complex, with numerous interconnected events and factors (Raymond et al., 2020). Through guided discussions and supplementary materials provided by the instructor, learners can gain a better understanding of the historical context in which events occurred (Pettersson, 2021). This contextualisation is crucial for appreciating the motivations and significance of historical figures and actions (Egea-Vivancos & Arias Ferrer, 2021).

Historical events are often open to interpretation, and different perspectives can exist on the same topic (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). Shearer (2020) states that guided reading encourages learners to explore these multiple viewpoints. This not only enhances comprehension but also fosters critical thinking skills, as learners learn to evaluate the credibility and reliability of different historical sources (Edwards & Ritchie, 2022). Guided reading also serves as a means of building historical literacy. Researchers emphasise that this strategy helps learners develop a solid foundation in historical research methods, including source analysis, citation and evidence-based argumentation. It also equips them with the skills necessary to engage with primary and secondary historical sources effectively. By working through historical texts with guidance, learners become more confident and capable in their historical research and

analytical abilities (Fitzgerald & Heinrich, 2020). Guided reading is a powerful reading strategy in History learning that aids learner comprehension by fostering critical thinking, contextualising historical information, encouraging the analysis of multiple perspectives and building historical literacy (Rudolph et al., 2023). It provides a structured and supportive environment for learners to navigate the complexities of the past, ultimately helping them develop a deeper and more meaningful understanding of history (Lee et al., 2023).

### **2.3.5 Retelling the information**

Retelling the information is a diagnostic tool for assessing comprehension of a text or story, the sense of the story structure and the language complexity (Vretudaki, 2022). Retelling the information is a reading strategy that involves summarising or recounting the main points or key details of a text in your own words (Rossalina, 2023). This strategy helps readers engage with and comprehend the material more effectively (Hurriyah, 2023). Firstly, when retelling the information, the learner mentally processes the content they have read. This process requires them to think about the text's main ideas, supporting details and overall structure (Merchie et al., 2021). Secondly, retelling involves summarising the key points of the text in your own words (Green & Holman, 2021). This summarisation process forces learners to distil complex information into a more concise and understandable form (Faff et al., 2023). Retelling the information is an active reading strategy because it involves mental processing, summarisation, comprehension checking, memory engagement and critical thinking when interacting with the text (Smith et al., 2021). It transforms reading from a passive activity into an active and engaging one, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of the content (Kimbell-Lopez & Manning, 2023).

Retelling historical information involves summarising and rephrasing what has been read in one's own words (Smith et al., 2021). By retelling, learners must process and internalise the information, which deepens their comprehension of historical events, figures and contexts (Boughton, 2021). In addition, retelling information serves as a memory reinforcement tool. Learners often encounter vast amounts of information, and Lundine (2020) and Johnson (2020) stress that retelling helps them to remember key details and concepts. When learners rephrase and articulate historical facts or narratives, they reinforce their memory of the material (Reerdon & Derner, 2023).

Historians often need to convey historical knowledge to others, whether through presentations, essays or discussions (Lucy et al., 2020). Retelling information helps learners practice expressing historical concepts clearly and concisely, improving their ability to communicate their understanding of history effectively (Rahayu, 2023). Retelling information encourages learners to think critically about historical narratives. Worrell and Bambrick-Santoyo (2023) argue that this strategy prompts students to select and prioritise key information, forcing them to analyse the significance of events and details. This analytical process is crucial in History, as it helps learners discern between essential and non-essential information and develop a deeper understanding of historical causality and implications (Krishnan, 2020). Retelling information is a valuable reading strategy in History because it enhances comprehension, improves retention, facilitates effective communication of historical knowledge and fosters the development of analytical skills (Murphy, 2023). It empowers learners to actively engage with historical content, making it an essential tool for learners and historians alike (Bruneau et al., 2023).

## **2.4 Pre-reading Strategies in History Teaching**

Pre-reading strategies refer to the exercises done before reading to prepare students for the act of reading (Oudjedane & Benhamlaoui, 2021). These activities focus on learners' ideas before reading, such as predictions about the content using prior knowledge. It refers to activities used by educators to support learners' comprehension of the text (Brevik, 2019). Possible pre-reading strategies when teaching History include vocabulary development and comparing. Vocabulary development plays an important role in language learning and development (Karami, 2019). According to Rasinski and Rupley (2019), vocabulary can be thought of as hooks for background knowledge and concepts about the world, understanding discipline content, the integration of new learning with what is known and the representation of abstract understandings. Aligning with the Namibia History syllabus (2016), Nithyanandam (2020) explains that lessons in social science are aimed at helping learners develop skills in reading a range of genres, including maps, graphs, expository texts, memoirs and poetry, as well as writing personal, persuasive and informative essays.

Hairrell et al. (2020) found that targeted vocabulary instruction leads to increased word knowledge for elementary students. In support, Ford-Connors and Paratore (2018) reported that wide reading contributes to vocabulary development. According to Bartz (2016), vocabulary-based comprehension strategies allow learners to both enhance and reinforce their

understanding of social studies, as they provide authentic interaction with history concepts. In line with this, the activation of prior knowledge is an effective tool in building vocabulary comprehension, as it provides learners with an opportunity to connect information and content that they are already familiar with to new concepts and ideas in History. Bartz (2016) studied effective comprehension strategies in the social studies classroom and found that vocabulary development as a comprehension strategy is effective because of the potential impact it holds for enhancing learner comprehension in a History classroom. However, its effectiveness depends on the individual classroom context, the type of learners and how the strategy is implemented. Considering this, in my study, I paid attention to how the educators incorporated vocabulary development into reading instruction in their History lesson.

## **2.5 While-Reading Strategies in History Teaching**

The while-reading strategies are the actual reading activities aimed at focusing on the text structure and organisation of the reading passage (Güzel, 2022). These activities focus on the text's content and the general and specific information it contains. They happen at the while-reading stage and mainly focus on decoding skills. While-reading strategies are used in lessons that aim to help learners develop receptive skills such as listening and reading. These strategies are aimed at helping students make connections, monitor their understanding, generate questions and stay focused. Possible while-reading strategies when teaching History include summarising and guided reading. Summarising refers to the process in which learners take a large selection of the text or material and reduce it to the essentials. It includes recalling the main points or ideas. Based on Nguyen and Boers (2019), learners must first learn to sequence a text, retell a text using the language of the text, then put it into their own words, and finally select the most important idea to sum up what the author has told them. Brevik (2019) found that summarising teaches learners to discern the most important ideas in a text, to ignore irrelevant information and to integrate the central ideas meaningfully. A summarising strategy can be used as a reading strategy for the following reasons: it enables learners to focus on the key words and phrases of an assigned text that are worth remembering, and it teaches learners how to take a large selection of the text and reduce it to the main points for more concise understanding (Brevik, 2019; Ehri, 2020).

## **2.6 Post-reading Strategies in History Teaching**

These are activities or strategies that follow while-reading activities, the third activity in the sequence of a lesson presentation. These activities or strategies are intended to check learners' comprehension and deeper analysis of text (Güzel, 2022). At this stage, learners can produce language related to the topic. They can make connections and review what they learnt in the pre- and while-reading stages. They can use the knowledge acquired in these earlier stages to deepen their understanding. In addition, these post-reading strategies allow learners to evaluate, synthesise and analyse the written text, and they can ask critical questions to construct the meaning in the text. Some possible post-reading strategies when teaching reading in History include summarising, creating a quiz, playing a game, doing further research, writing a story and retelling the information. Summarising is a post-reading strategy that involves recalling the main points or ideas in each text. According to Bartz (2018), to summarise successfully, a reader must be able to select the key words in a paragraph, locate the topic sentence, articulate that idea in one sentence, and repeat the above sequence until they have worked their way through a text. Brevik (2019) found that summarising teaches students how to discern the most important ideas in a text, how to ignore irrelevant information, and how to integrate the central ideas in a meaningful way. In addition, teaching learners to summarise improves their memory for what is read. A summarising strategy can be used as a reading strategy for the following reasons: it enables learners to focus on key words and phrases in an assigned text, and it teaches learners how to take a large selection of the text and reduce it to the main points for more concise understanding (Todd, 2020).

## **2.7 Gaps in the Literature**

While established reading strategies are viewed to be effective in History education, recent research conducted by a group of scholars, including Osman (2020), Pelletier et al. (2021), Schonert-Reichl (2019), Mpofu (2023), and Cranfield et al. (2019), has indicated that these strategies are not being consistently and effectively implemented within the educational landscape. This has raised concerns regarding the integration of these strategies into the teaching practices of History educators, as observed in the studies by Mhlanga (2021) and Pelletier et al. (2021). The applicability and implementation of these reading strategies in the Namibian context have remained largely unexplored, as noted by Mauta (2023). This significant gap in knowledge prompted the initiation of the present study, which is grounded in an extensive review of relevant literature, including the work of Weisberg and Dawson (2023).

The primary objective of this study is to provide insight into the specific ways in which History educators in Namibia are incorporating RAC strategies into their instructional approaches.

## **2.8 Chapter Summary**

This chapter began by discussing the EAC and how it is implemented in the Namibian educational context, with a particular emphasis on RAC. It expanded on these concepts, offering a comprehensive understanding of their significance within the scope of this study. Both the theoretical underpinnings and practical implications of EAC and RAC were thoroughly examined, making a compelling case for their relevance. An important aspect addressed in this chapter was the exploration of the purpose of the Namibian History syllabus, approached from various points, including its alignment with the broader national curriculum established by the Namibian MEAC. The specific objectives and goals of the Namibian History syllabus were derived from the current curriculum for History grades 8 to 12. This detailed examination provided essential context for understanding the objectives that guide History education in Namibia.

In addition, Chapter Two focused on a comprehensive discussion of reading strategies in teaching History. A wide array of potential reading strategies was meticulously reviewed, encompassing areas such as vocabulary development, summarisation techniques, comparative analysis, guided reading and the art of retelling information. These reading strategies were analysed considering their capacity to align with the overarching objectives of the Namibian History syllabus within the curriculum framework. This bridge between reading strategies and curriculum objectives underscores their pivotal role in enhancing history education. However, despite the thorough exploration of these critical elements, a knowledge gap was identified within the chapter. This gap pertained to the variation in the implementation of reading strategies across different History classrooms and other subjects within the curriculum.

Looking ahead, Chapter Three builds on the foundational knowledge laid out in the preceding chapter. It reviews the study's theoretical framework, with a specific focus on the two theories underpinning the research: schema theory and reflective practice theory. Chapter 3 aims to provide a more nuanced perspective, potentially yielding practical solutions or recommendations within the context of these two theoretical frameworks.

## CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a review of literature on the EAC and RAC approaches and highlighted the reading strategies used in History teaching. This chapter presents the theoretical framework for this study. It is a crucial chapter, as it explains the ground for making sense and meaning from the data collected (Lareau, 2021). The theoretical framework provides a structure that influenced my data collection process and guided me in evaluating my data and the discussion of the findings. The discussion in this chapter is divided into two parts: the first part presents a discussion of the schema theory and the types of schemata according to the schema theory. The second part of the discussion explores reflective practice theory, which is based on the work of two great scholars, John Dewey (1933) and Donald Schön (1987). This chapter also highlights the three levels of reflective practices, namely reflection-on-action, reflection-in-action and reflection-for-action.

### 3.2 Defining Schema Theory

Schema is a complex process involving the application and processing of linguistic knowledge and background information (Alahmad, 2020). According to Khartite (2021), schema theory is based on the belief that every act of comprehension involves one's prior knowledge of the world. Other scholars, such as Jaafar (2020) and Firdaus et al. (2023), believe that schema theory is a valid metaphor for explaining learners' knowledge and ability to recall information. Khartite (2021) describes schema theory as a model of human knowledge that accounts for the way knowledge structures are stored and organised in the human mind. Based on Yang's (2023) interpretation, schema theory mainly refers to introducing abstract knowledge directly into learners' minds and connecting people's perceived images and cognition in the form of graphics.

The schema theory is a crucial theoretical frame for this study, which explores the practices of content educators in high schools incorporating RAC for several reasons. Firstly, as content areas often demand specific background knowledge, schema theory provides insight into how

educators activate and leverage learners' existing cognitive structures (Jung et al., 2022). Understanding the role of prior knowledge in reading comprehension is essential for educators aiming to tailor their instructional strategies effectively (Einstein, 2023). By adopting schema theory, the study can probe into how content educators facilitate the connection between subject-specific content and broader reading skills, fostering a more holistic and integrated approach to literacy education (Porto, 2023). Secondly, schema theory allows researchers to investigate the cognitive processes involved in reading within diverse subject contexts. High school content educators engage learners with a range of materials, from scientific articles to historical documents, and the schema theory enables the examination of how these educators guide learners through the interpretation and assimilation of information within these varied content domains (Jung et al., 2022). This perspective contributes to a nuanced understanding of the challenges and successes content educators encounter when integrating reading practices across different disciplines (Fu, 2022).

Lastly, the schema theory aligns with the broader educational goal of equipping learners with transferable skills (Lim & Toh, 2020). The theory supports the exploration of how educators facilitate the transfer of reading skills from one subject to another, promoting a more versatile and adaptable approach to literacy that extends beyond specific content areas (Bensel, 2022). In essence, incorporating schema theory enhances the depth and applicability of research on content educators' practices in integrating reading across the high school curriculum (Zeng & Wang, 2022). The schema theory, a pivotal component of this study, comprises four distinct schemata, namely, formal, content, linguistic and cultural. In this study, each is examined to form the foundational basis for both the epistemological and methodological underpinnings of the research.

### **3.2.1 Content schema**

Content schema refers to the background knowledge that students have about the text (Smith et al., 2021). It contains conceptual knowledge or information about what usually happens within a certain topic, and how these happenings relate to each other to form a coherent whole. According to Revard (2021), this relates to the content of a text read. Content schema is an open-ended set of typical events and entities for a specific occasion. Content schema is a specific schema that describes the subject matter of the reading text (Smith et al., 2021). The cultural specificity of a text indicates that educators must be sensitive to potential comprehension difficulties that ESL or English foreign language (EFL) readers may encounter

with a text because of a lack of familiarity with the culture-specific content the text presumes (Rahmannia, 2020). Therefore, teaching second language learners to read is not achievable by simply choosing any text or reading materials and expecting the learners to make sense out of them. As pointed out by Carrell (1983), ESL reading educators should realise that the extent to which second language readers are familiar with the content of the text has a large impact on their reading comprehension. According to Bazyma et al. (2022), there are two types of content schema: background knowledge and subject matter knowledge.

Background knowledge encompasses a broad spectrum of information, constituting the collective reservoir of a learner's previous experiences, learning and exposure (Tan and Amiel, 2022). This multifaceted aspect of content schema plays a pivotal role in shaping the interpretative framework through which individuals engage with textual material, thereby influencing comprehension and cognitive processes (Karami, 2021). In the context of a study, the understanding of background knowledge, as a theoretical frame, is crucial. Background knowledge, encompassed within the broader concept of content schema, plays a pivotal role in shaping learners' understanding of historical texts (Karami, 2020). As history is inherently reliant on a foundation of historical facts, events and contextual nuances, learners' prior knowledge serves as the lens through which they interpret and comprehend historical narratives (Popa, 2022). Understanding how background knowledge influences the reading practices used by History educators is integral to unravelling the complexities of effective literacy integration within the discipline (Dickson, 2022). This theoretical framework allows for a nuanced exploration of how educators navigate the incorporation of reading strategies in History classes, considering the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the subject's reliance on historical context and prior knowledge (Reynold et al., 2021).

On the other hand, subject matter knowledge specifically pertains to the depth of understanding and expertise that students possess in the domain or field addressed by the text (Smith et al., 2021). This facet of content schema is essential for fostering a more nuanced and contextually rich interpretation of subject-specific material, enabling learners to connect prior knowledge to the intricacies of the text at hand (Dickson, 2022). Given the nature of History as a discipline that necessitates a profound understanding of historical events, contexts and interpretations, subject knowledge significantly influences how educators infuse reading into their pedagogical approaches (Park & Cho, 2022). By elucidating the role of subject knowledge within content schema, this study can provide nuanced insights into the strategies employed by History

educators to foster both historical understanding and literacy skills among Namibian high school learners (Set, 2021). In essence, the inclusion of both background and subject matter knowledge within the concept of content schema provides a comprehensive lens for examining how learners approach and make meaning of diverse textual content (Guo et al., 2020).

To examine the implementation of content schema by History educators in their teaching practices, I analysed their lesson plans, specifically focusing on the sections addressing assumed learner knowledge and learning objectives. This analysis aimed to determine if educators exhibited an awareness of the diverse background knowledge and experiences of their learners, acknowledging the influence of these factors on the learners' interpretation and comprehension of historical texts (Bazyma et al., 2022). In addition, classroom observations allowed me to evaluate the educators' capacity to identify and incorporate key historical themes, events and contextual nuances relevant to the curriculum (Kim, 2023). The integration of prior historical knowledge into reading activities, along with the ability to establish connections between different historical periods, emerged as crucial aspects of this assessment. Furthermore, interviews provided valuable insights into how educators employed pedagogical strategies to bridge the gap between learners' existing content schema and the objectives of the RAC strategy, thereby fostering a cohesive and meaningful learning experience (Andrew and Speer, 2022).

### **3.2.2 Cultural schema**

Another aspect of the schema theory is cultural schema. Cultural schema is defined as the total set of beliefs, attitudes, customs, behaviours, social habits, etc, of the members of a particular society. It concerns general aspects of cultural knowledge shared by larger sections of a cultural population. Gao (2021) defines cultural schema as the extent to which a reading text contains cultural elements from the target culture that the student is still trying to come to terms with. According to Murphy and Croninger (2022), cultural knowledge presupposed by a text interacts with the reader's own cultural background knowledge, making texts whose content is based on familiar culture easier to read and understand than syntactically and rhetorically equivalent texts based on a less familiar, more distant culture. It is important to be sensitive to cultural differences, particularly of the target culture, as without such cultural awareness, there may be no efficient and total comprehension.

Recognising the cultural context is essential in History education, as historical narratives are deeply intertwined with the cultural heritage and diverse perspectives of the learners (Popa, 2022). Thus, cultural schema allows for a nuanced examination of how educators navigate the infusion of reading activities, considering the cultural backgrounds and experiences of Namibian high school learners (Matthews, 2022). Understanding how cultural schema influences the interpretation of historical texts enables educators to tailor their approaches effectively, ensuring that reading strategies resonate with learners' cultural contexts and contribute to a more inclusive and enriching learning experience (Sun, 2022).

To explore how History educators incorporate cultural content into reading, I examined their lesson plans to ascertain whether they selected reading materials that resonate with the cultural heritage and experiences of the learners, ensuring alignment with their contextual realities to enhance reading comprehension (Demery, 2022; Conger, Krauss & Simuja, 2017). In addition, during classroom observations, I evaluated how History educators cultivated an inclusive classroom environment, encouraging students to share their cultural insights and interpretations as part of their reading strategies (Marti & Spencer, 2020). Using the reflection section of their lesson plans and stimulating their practices further in the interviews, I probed how History educators actively used learner feedback to refine and adjust reading activities, aiming for better alignment with the cultural contexts of high school learners (Kim, 2023).

### **3.2.3 Linguistic schema**

Given the intricate nature of historical texts and the diverse linguistic backgrounds of learners, the linguistic schema allows for an examination of how educators navigate the linguistic aspects of reading infusion (Lau, 2023). According to Gopal and Singh (2022), proficiency in linguistic elements forms the basis for effective comprehension and interpretation of historical texts. Understanding how linguistic schema influences the interpretation and comprehension of historical texts is essential for educators to tailor reading strategies effectively, ensuring that language proficiency is considered in their pedagogical approaches (Zhang, 2023). Through the lesson plan analysis, classroom observations and interviews, I examined how the History educators selected the reading materials that accommodate varying levels of language proficiency, ensuring accessibility for all learners (Clark, 2022). Secondly, from the lesson plans and during the classroom observations, I observed how the educators fostered an environment that encourages active participation, facilitating discussions that enhance learners'

understanding of historical concepts through language using appropriate reading strategies and activities (Choi & Chang, 2021).

### **3.2.4 Formal schema**

Grounded in cognitive psychology, formal schema denotes the structured knowledge frameworks individuals hold within specific domains (Wang et al., 2023). As outlined by Wenying (2022), the formal schema encompasses the text's structure and the readers' grasp of genre and rhetorical techniques. Carrell (1987) further elucidates formal schema as the background knowledge pertaining to the formal and rhetorical organisational structures inherent in various text types (Khartite, 2021). This involves the understanding of disciplinary-specific language, key concepts and historical reasoning (Mpofu and Maphalala, 2020). By applying the concept of formal schema, I explored how History educators strategically leverage their own subject expertise to design lesson plans, select relevant texts and employ instructional techniques that enhance learners' reading comprehension while fostering a deeper engagement with historical content (Alam & Mohanty, 2023; Conger et al., 2017). In exploring the formal structure employed by the participants, I examined the activities designed for reading sessions to identify distinctive linguistic features and discourse structures intrinsic to historical texts (Sun et al., 2021). This involved analysing how the participants customised the lesson plans to integrate the language requirements of the discipline and to aid reading comprehension (Ma et al., 2022). In addition, throughout classroom observations, I focused on the participants' communication of learning objectives and provision of explicit instructions on navigating historical texts as a strategy for reading comprehension (Wineburg et al., 2022).

### **3.2.5 Schema theory and content educators' instructional practices**

Schema theory and content educators' instructional practices highlight the theory's practical application in activating prior knowledge, addressing diverse learning styles, fostering deeper comprehension and guiding flexible and adaptive teaching approaches (Anis, 2023). Researchers such as Hermanns (2023) and Zhang et al. (2023) suggest that content educators often use schema-driven instruction to activate students' prior knowledge. By tapping into learners' existing mental frameworks, educators can build connections between new information and what learners already know, facilitating better understanding and retention of subject matter (Zheng & Qui, 2023). This is relevant to this study because it is through good harvesting of prior knowledge that a content teacher will be able to connect the new content to

the existing knowledge of the learner. These authors claimed that ideas can have meaning for an individual only when they can be related to something the individual already knows. In other words, meaning becomes simpler when the learners are familiar with the content they are taught. For schema theory, any text, either spoken or written, does not carry meaning by itself; rather, a text only provides directions for listeners or readers as to how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own previously acquired knowledge. It is suggested that content educators, such as History educators, need to ensure that all learners are familiar with the text before they start with a class discussion about the text. For schema theory, content educators play a crucial role in guiding learners to grasp the content being taught, as they need to understand the culture of the text during the prior knowledge stage. Sometimes, the schema is not well developed because the learners' culture is different from the text writers' culture. In this case, the teacher plays a crucial role by interacting with the learners, scaffolding learning and giving feedback and revision. In History, some texts may be particularly hard for learners to understand without a teacher's involvement.

Hattan and Lupo (2020) indicate that content educators leverage schema activation to address diverse learning styles within their classrooms. Recognising that learners bring varied backgrounds and experiences to the learning environment, educators strategically activate relevant schemas to create inclusive and engaging lessons (Carrell, 1983; Simuja & Shisheko, 2024). This adaptive use of schema theory aligns with the understanding that individuals construct knowledge based on their unique cognitive structures, allowing content educators to tailor their instructional practices to cater to a broad range of learners. For my study, this meant that recognising and considering all learners' prior knowledge is very important, as it is the first thing a History teacher must determine from the learners. Based on Alam (2020), history learning does not rely on one correct answer; instead, it considers learners' views, and these views may be different, as learners come from different parts of the country and have experienced aspects of history differently. In schema theory, History educators are regarded as facilitators who are there to provide a conducive classroom environment for learning. The learners contribute new ideas for discussion, and the History educators, as content educators, comment and encourage further exploration. Reading comprehension is vital for history learning and understanding for learners.

The role of schema-building activities is to provide a frame for fostering deeper comprehension and critical thinking skills among students (Relmasira et al., 2023). Content educators design activities that prompt learners to actively construct and refine their mental frameworks through discussion, analysis and the application of knowledge (Kim et al., 2023). This approach aligns with the idea that meaningful learning occurs when individuals actively engage with information and integrate it into their existing cognitive structures. Thus, schema theory becomes a guiding principle in shaping content educators' instructional practices toward more interactive and participatory learning experiences (Solomon, 2023). For my study, this means that for the History educators to teach reading comprehension, they need schema theory as their guiding principle. The schema theory provides a framework that outlines steps for teaching reading comprehension in History. It also guides content educators in designing activities that enable them to teach content through reading comprehension. The main aim here is to ensure that the students clearly understand the History text, which is written in their second language, English. It is further suggested that reading is a very important receptive skill. The interaction between the teacher and learners can also improve comprehension of the text read. This is because, through interaction, learners give their views about the text, and the teacher uses these views to direct the lesson. In addition, the teacher will give some clues that learners will pick up as a guideline for a better understanding of the text. For this study, I interviewed the History educators about their lesson planning before they went to teach, and I also observed their actual lessons in the classrooms. I particularly paid attention to the sequences of activities, starting with the prior knowledge stage and continuing through to the final stage of the lesson.

While the schema theory offers a foundational framework for understanding reading practices that contribute to enhanced comprehension, it falls short in providing theoretical insights into how educators develop their instructional strategies based on contextual sensitivities and realities. Specifically, it lacks a comprehensive framework to clarify the processes that encompass the broader historical, sociopolitical and moral contexts which educators draw on to shape their instructional practices, informed by both current and past teaching experiences. Recognising this gap, reflective practice emerges as a valuable framework that accommodates these nuanced dimensions. Therefore, the theoretical framework of this study integrates both the schema theory and reflective practice, aiming to explore how educators navigate and adapt their instructional approaches within the complex interplay of theoretical foundations and practical considerations, offering a more holistic understanding of reading practices in History teaching.

### 3.3 Defining Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is based on the work of Dewey (1933) and Schön (1987). Reflective practice in teaching involves a deliberate and systematic process through which educators critically examine and evaluate their teaching methods, instructional decisions and overall classroom experiences (Farrell, 2020). It goes beyond routine self-assessment, encouraging educators to engage in thoughtful contemplation about their beliefs and assumptions and the impact of their actions on learners' learning (Shaddad, 2023). This reflective process typically involves analysing classroom interactions, assessing the effectiveness of instructional strategies and considering the diverse needs of learners (Michalsky, 2021). By fostering a habit of reflection, educators can enhance their professional growth, refine their teaching approaches and ultimately contribute to continuous improvement in the quality of education (Gore, 2021). Reflective practice empowers educators to make informed adjustments, adapt to evolving educational landscapes and create a more responsive and student-centred learning environment (Birch, 2022).

Reflective practice in English language teaching is a dynamic and intentional process whereby educators systematically analyse and evaluate their teaching methodologies, language instruction and classroom dynamics (Farrell, 2021; Shambare, Simuja & Olayinka, 2022). English language educators engage in reflective practices to gain insights into their instructional choices, classroom management strategies and the effectiveness of language learning activities (Farrell, 2020; Guo et al., 2020). This process encourages educators to consider the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of their students, assess the impact of instructional methods on language acquisition and adapt their approaches to address the evolving needs of learners (Guo et al., 2021). Through reflective practice, English language educators not only enhance their own professional development but also contribute to creating more inclusive, engaging and effective language learning environments for their students (Kim, 2020). Reading educators engaging in reflective practice analyse the effectiveness of instructional methods, assess learners' responses to various reading activities and consider the impact of their pedagogical decisions on literacy development (Hawell, 2021). This reflective process enables educators to adapt their teaching approaches to address the diverse needs, learning styles and abilities of learners (Farrell, 2020). By reflecting on their own practices, reading educators can make informed adjustments, incorporate successful strategies into their repertoire and continuously refine their instructional techniques to foster a supportive and effective reading environment for learners (Park, 2021).

Dewey (1933) asserted that the amalgamation of teaching experience with thoughtful reflections can foster awareness, development and personal growth. He emphasised that such reflection requires an active, persistent and meticulous examination of one's beliefs or presumed knowledge, considering the grounds that underpin them and the potential consequences they may entail. Schön later revisited Dewey's work, expanding on it and highlighting three distinct instances in which reflective thinking should be applied (Schön, 1987). Although he derived his reflective practice theory from John Dewey's original concept of reflective practice, in Schön's view, professionals should not only reflect in action but also reflect on action. He defined reflection as "a way of approaching the world and its dilemmas." This implies that educators encounter various challenges during their instructional activities, and their approach to these challenges is influenced by the nature of the issues at hand. The reflective process involves not only thinking on the spot but also a subsequent analysis of one's actions and decisions in a broader context.

### **3.3.1 Three levels of reflective practice**

#### ***3.3.1.1 Reflection-in-action***

Reflection-in-action refers to the active evaluation of thoughts, actions and practices during action. Farrell and Macapinlac (2021) explain that the classroom environment has many aspects which can be observed simultaneously during the actual interaction, such as decision-making, adjusting to various circumstances, changing activities and using a reflective learning journal. Teaching is an interactive process, and, through reflective practices, educators become aware of their own actions (Farrell, 2020). History educators often navigate complex historical texts and engage with students in dynamic classroom environments, necessitating immediate and flexible adjustments to their instructional strategies (Herrera, 2022). Reflection-in-action allows researchers to probe into the moment-to-moment decisions educators make during the teaching process, providing insights into the strategies, pedagogical choices and responsive actions that contribute to effective reading instruction within a historical context (McCaw, 2023). This framework captures the dynamic nature of teaching, allowing for a nuanced exploration of how History educators navigate content-specific challenges and tailor their approaches to foster meaningful reading comprehension in the ever-evolving landscape of the History classroom (Layng, 2023).

To ascertain the integration of reflection-in-action in a History teacher's planning for reading and class activities with high school learners, a comprehensive examination through classroom observation, lesson plan analysis and interviews was conducted. During classroom observation, I observed the teacher's ability to dynamically adapt instructional strategies in response to students' needs and engagement levels, showcasing real-time decision-making indicative of reflection-in-action (Simasiku, 2021; Khene et al. 2021). The analysis of lesson plans was used to reveal intentional considerations for flexibility and responsiveness, demonstrating a forward-looking approach that incorporates reflective elements. Interviews provided an opportunity to explore the teacher's awareness of their in-the-moment decisions, their thought processes during instruction and their openness to adapting strategies based on observed outcomes (Beach et al., 2020).

### ***3.3.1.2 Reflection-on-action***

Reflection-on-action is the retrospective contemplation of practice to uncover the knowledge used in a particular situation by analysing and interpreting the information recalled (Kastina, 2018). Robson (2022) explained that reflection-on-action is the process that requires stopping for a while after performing our actions and reflecting on what happened. When educators engage in reflection-on-action, they are examining what happened in a lesson after the lesson was taught. This is a more delayed type of reflection than reflection-in-action (Farrell, 2020). When educators reflect on their own lives and how their past experiences may have shaped the construction and development of their basic philosophy of practice, they will be able to reflect critically on their practice because they will become more mindful and self-aware (Farrell, 2021).

History educators, faced with the unique challenges of historical texts and diverse learner needs, can benefit from examining past lessons to gain insights into the effectiveness of their instructional strategies (Perrotta & Bohan, 2020). This retrospective approach enables educators to identify successful methods, recognise areas for improvement and refine their future teaching practices (Malbas et al., 2023). By emphasising reflection-on-action, I uncovered the underlying thought processes, decision-making strategies and pedagogical considerations that contribute to effective reading instruction in History classrooms (Peel, 2020). Classroom observation, lesson plan analysis and interviews were used to highlight the use of reflection-on-action in planning and implementing reading in this study. Through classroom observation and lesson plan analysis, I focused on the teacher's ability to

retrospectively analyse their past instructional decisions and make informed adjustments during subsequent lessons, showcasing a reflective stance (Lee, 2021). In the lesson plan analysis, evidence of intentional modifications based on previous experiences and insights gained through reflection was taken as indicative of a teacher's use of reflection-on-action (Farrell, 2021). Interviews provided an opportunity to probe into the teacher's awareness of the effectiveness of past strategies, the rationale behind adjustments and the ongoing learning derived from reflective practices (Peel, 2021; Shambare, Simuja & Olayinka, 2022).

### ***3.3.1.3 Reflection-for-action***

Reflection-for-action refers to thinking about future actions to improve a practice (Goldkuhl, 2019). Reflection-for-action involves thinking about future actions to develop a practice (Chen, 2023). It also requires educators to use examples, insights and knowledge so that they can look at problems from different perspectives (Farrell, 2021). These insights can be used as an important driving force for the development of professional knowledge in teacher training programmes (Farrell, 2019). By considering past experiences and drawing on insights gained from reflection-for-action, educators can strategically plan reading activities, anticipate challenges and tailor their instruction to the unique demands of historical content (Farrell, 2021). This forward-looking approach enables History educators to make informed decisions, align instructional strategies with specific learning objectives and create a more responsive and effective learning environment for their high school learners, fostering continuous improvement in their teaching practices (Mahoney et al., 2021).

To underscore the implementation of reflection-for-action, I used the classroom observations and lesson plan analysis to reveal educators' deliberate consideration of potential challenges and the thoughtful adjustments made before and during lessons, demonstrating a proactive and anticipatory reflective stance (Sunra & Sahril, 2020). Interviews provided an avenue to explore the educators' intentional planning processes, how past reflections inform future actions and their capacity to proactively anticipate and address potential instructional challenges (Krist & Shin, 2023).

### **3.3.2 Educators as reflective practitioners**

Reflective practice among educators has been a subject of significant research, leading to the identification of four key findings that highlight the importance of educators as reflective practitioners. First and foremost, Dewey's (1933) assertion that combining teaching experience with reflective thinking can contribute to awareness, development and personal growth is a cornerstone in understanding the reflective nature of effective teaching. This finding underscores the transformative power of thoughtful consideration in refining teaching approaches and enhancing professional competence. Building on Dewey's foundation, Schön (1987) introduced the concept that reflective practice should not be limited to reflection-in-action but should also encompass reflection-on-action. This means that educators who become reflective practitioners are regarded as essential professionals. Reflective practitioners take the steps to participate in learning daily and recognise their responsibility for lifelong learning. Reflective practice is also concerned with the promotion of skills and competencies. It demands that educators go beyond reflection-in-action and extend to reflection-on-action and reflection-for-action, fostering continuous professional growth.

According to Farrell (2020) and Alam (2022), reflective practice emphasises the necessity for educators to critically analyse and learn from their past experiences and decisions. Schön's (1987) perspective broadens the scope of reflective practice, suggesting that educators can continually refine their approaches by revisiting and evaluating their actions in diverse teaching situations. In the context of my study, this implies that educators engage in ongoing learning, both through life and their professional practice. History educators are no exception in this regard (Russell, 2022). They are researchers who are faced with challenges in their daily practices. According to Schön (1987), teaching does not allow for routine responses, as challenges come in different forms and ways. These situations require unique responses based on the experience of the teacher, with each response offering an opportunity for learning. In this way, reflective educators continue to grow professionally.

In addition, Schön's (1987) delineation of reflective practice as "a way of approaching the world and its dilemmas" highlights the proactive nature of reflective practitioners, suggesting that educators should view challenges as opportunities for growth and actively engage in thoughtful analysis to navigate dilemmas effectively. This underscores the proactive role of educators in shaping their professional development through continuous reflection. This means that when educators reflect on their own lives and how their past experiences may have shaped

the construction and development of their basic philosophy of practice, they will be able to reflect critically on their practice because they will become more mindful and self-aware (Farrell, 2020).

Brown et al. (2021), Young et al. (2022), and Spott (2021) suggest that reflective practice is not a solitary endeavour but benefits from collaborative engagement. Collaborative reflection allows educators to share insights, perspectives and strategies, fostering a collective wisdom that goes beyond individual experiences. The emphasis is on the social dimension of reflective practice, reinforcing the idea that a community of reflective practitioners can contribute to a more robust and dynamic educational environment. This means that when a content teacher is in practice, they interact with learners while actively monitoring their own teaching (Karaman, 2023). Sometimes, the teacher pauses after the lesson to reflect on what occurred during the lesson. According to Somamora and Pasaribu (2023), the concept of reflective practice in general is advocated by most educators as an essential skill that needs to be nurtured by all educators, irrespective of the discipline.

### **3.4 The Intersection of Schema Theory and Reflective Practice**

The amalgamation of schema theory and reflective practice offers valuable insights for a study. The schema theory, rooted in cognitive psychology, provides a theoretical lens through which I analysed how History educators organise and structure their subject-specific knowledge, including language structures and content-specific vocabulary essential for reading comprehension (Dickson, 2022). Understanding the linguistic schema within the historical context allows for a more nuanced exploration of how educators infuse reading into their lessons, aligning with the broader goals of the RAC strategy (Ma, 2021). This theoretical framework enabled me to probe into the cognitive processes involved in the selection of texts, the design of reading activities, and the facilitation of comprehension within the historical discipline to enhance learners' reading comprehension (Colwell et al., 2021; Gills, 2014).

Moreover, the integration of reflective practice in this study added a dynamic dimension by encouraging a critical assessment of how participants adapt their instructional approaches to improve reading. Reflective practice allowed for an examination of how History educators draw on their schema theory knowledge in real-time, making on-the-spot decisions during instruction and reflecting on the outcomes afterwards (Alam, 2022; Darvin et al., 2020). This reflective process sheds light on the educators' awareness of the effectiveness of their

strategies, their responsiveness to student needs and their willingness to refine instructional practices based on ongoing experiences (Yuan & Yang, 2022). The combination of schema theory and reflective practice provides a holistic framework that not only explores the cognitive aspects of teaching reading in History but also probes the metacognitive processes, fostering a deeper understanding of how History educators integrate RAC in the Namibian high school context (Russell & Martin, 2023; Wells, 2022).

### **3.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter focused on the theoretical underpinnings of the study. These are a combination of schema theory and reflective practice, which are powerful tools for understanding the details of how high school History educators enhance reading comprehension. Beginning with an overview of schema theory, the chapter highlighted its roots in cognitive psychology, emphasising its application in understanding how educators organise language structures and the content-specific vocabulary essential for fostering reading comprehension. However, the schema theory falls short in aiding my exploration of the pedagogical strategies employed by Namibian secondary school History educators in teaching reading comprehension. While schema theory offers a framework to reveal the prerequisites for readers to comprehend text, it centres on the reading process itself. It outlines the conditions necessary for effective comprehension but lacks a foundation to outline how experienced educators draw upon personal experiences to shape their teaching methodologies. This gap is bridged by the incorporation of reflective practice as part of the study's theoretical framework. Reflective practice serves as a complementary counterpart to schema theory by directing attention towards educators' actions, theoretical considerations and practical applications in the context of teaching reading comprehension. It illuminates the intricate interplay between educators' experiences, theoretical knowledge and classroom practice. The next chapter centres on the research methodology employed to explore the pedagogical strategies used by History educators in their practice of implementing reading across the curriculum.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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### 4.1 Introduction

I presented the theoretical framework for the study in Chapter Three. The discussion revolved largely around two theoretical orientations, schema theory and reflective practice, which formed the basis for the theoretical framework of my research study. These two chapters complement each other. Chapter Three, the research methodology, would not make sense in a study that does not have a well-linked theoretical framework and vice versa. In other words, the theoretical framework sets the theoretical context for the study, while research methodology outlines how the researcher should practically implement the research design in line with the research questions. Rachman (2023) stressed that both chapters are essential for conducting rigorous and well-structured research.

This chapter focuses on the paradigmatic perspectives and methodological choices I employed in the data generation process. In this chapter, I discuss the research methodology followed in exploring the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian secondary school History educators in teaching reading comprehension. The research methodology gives research legitimacy and provides scientifically sound findings (Zhang et al., 2020). From the point of view of Ali (2023), research methodology provides a detailed plan that helps to keep researchers on track, making the process smooth, effective and manageable. In addition, chapter 4 allows the reader to understand the approach and methods used in carrying out the study from the beginning until the conclusion (Lester & Cho, 2020). Furthermore, this chapter presents the research paradigm, the research design, and the methods for collecting and analysing data and the ethical measures followed in this study.

### 4.2 Interpretivist Paradigm

A paradigm is a way of looking at or researching phenomena, a worldview, a view of what counts as accepted or correct scientific knowledge (Haigh & Withell, 2020). In a detailed way, Sterling (2021) explains that a paradigm is a system of beliefs, ideas, values, or habits for a way of thinking about the world. Based on Omodan (2022), the research paradigm is an

approach, model, or framework from which to conduct research. It helps form a research philosophy, in turn informing the research methodology. According to Khatri (2020), a paradigm comprises four elements, namely, axiology, epistemology, ontology and methodology. My research project is in an interpretivist paradigm, which I will discuss below.

The interpretivist paradigm encompasses the possibility of achieving a single correct interpretation and holds the view that there are no stable grounds for judgment (Maarouf, 2019). Interpretivists believe that different people in society experience and understand reality in different ways. Even though there might be one reality, everyone interprets it according to their own views. For this paradigm, reality is not objectively determined, but is socially constructed (Ray, 2019). Since reality is socially constructed, people are studied in their social contexts or natural environment (Fischer, 2021). Interpretivists interpret the studied phenomena by connecting with specific people, groups and institutions, being exposed to relevant interpretive materials such as documents and archives and conducting their research as insiders (Nangia, 2023). More so, Pervin and Makhtar (2022) explain that interpretivist scholars can use their diverse viewpoints on phenomena not just to describe objects, people, or events, but also to deeply comprehend them in their sociocultural contexts because they believe that they have shared belief systems in the society in which they live. In the context of my study, I chose my participants carefully, from different secondary schools in the Oshana region, because I wanted to explore the strategies they employed when teaching reading comprehension in History classes of Grade 8. Furthermore, interpretivist research design directed me to accept different views on how History educators understood the strategies for teaching reading comprehension.

The interpretivists' ontological position is that a single phenomenon may have multiple interpretations rather than a truth that can be determined by a process of measurement (Gillani, 2021). Interpretivists, in their ontological stance, reject the notion that there exists a singular, objective truth about any given phenomenon (Fuyane, 2021). Instead, they argue that a single phenomenon can be interpreted in various ways depending on the perspectives of those involved (Junjie & Yingxin, 2022). This perspective contrasts with positivist approaches, which typically seek to uncover universal truths through measurement and observation (Fuyane, 2021). Interpretivists contend that reality is subjective and socially constructed, shaped by the meanings individuals attach to their experiences (Acharya, 2024). Thus, rather than aiming to uncover objective truths, interpretivists focus on understanding people's

subjective interpretations of their realities. This approach acknowledges the complexity of human experiences and the influence of cultural, social, and historical contexts on individuals' interpretations of the world around them. By embracing multiple interpretations, interpretivists seek to capture the richness and diversity of human perspectives and experiences (Omodan, 2022).

In exploring the pedagogical strategies employed by Namibian Grade 8 History educators to teach reading comprehension, interpretivists' ontological stance suggests that there is not a singular truth or universally effective method (Maarouf, 2019). Instead, they contend that the phenomenon of teaching reading comprehension can be understood through various interpretations, shaped by diverse perspectives and contexts. Based on Wang (2020) interpretivists reject the idea that a definitive truth about teaching strategies can be determined solely through quantitative measurement. They argue that the effectiveness of pedagogical strategies is contingent upon subjective interpretations, influenced by factors such as cultural backgrounds, educational philosophies, and individual teaching styles (Mbonambi & Gamede, 2023). Thus, in my study, I embraced the notion that different History educators may approach teaching reading comprehension in unique ways, each valid within its own context and understanding. This perspective allows us to appreciate the complexity and diversity inherent in educational practices, recognising that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and learning. In addition, an interpretivist perspective is based on the following assumptions: human life can only be understood from within, social life is a distinctively human product, the human mind is the purposive source or origins of meaning, human behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world, and the social world does not exist independently of human knowledge.

In exploring the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian Grade 8 History educators to teach reading comprehension through an interpretivist lens, Fakhimi's (2021) assumptions provide valuable insights. Firstly, the notion that human life can only be understood from within underscores the importance of considering the perspectives and experiences of educators themselves in shaping their instructional approaches. This suggests that to truly understand the effectiveness of pedagogical strategies, we must delve into the subjective experiences and interpretations of the educators implementing them (Aguas, 2022; Porta et al., 2022). Secondly, the idea that social life is a distinctively human product highlights the role of cultural and social factors in shaping educational practices. This implies that the pedagogical strategies employed

by Grade 8 History educators are not isolated techniques but are deeply embedded within the sociocultural context of Namibia (Julius, 2020; Sabina, 2020). Thirdly, viewing the human mind as the source of meaning emphasises the significance of educators' intentions and purposes behind their chosen strategies. Understanding the motivations and intentions behind their instructional decisions can provide valuable insights into the rationale behind certain pedagogical choices (Chang et al., 202; Wang et al., 2023). Furthermore, Shah and Campus (2021) and Robison (2022) agreed that human behaviour is influenced by knowledge of the social world, suggesting that educators' understanding of educational theories, historical contexts, and societal norms may shape their teaching practices. Finally, acknowledging that the social world does not exist independently of human knowledge underscores the importance of reflexivity in research, prompting us to critically examine how our own perspectives and interpretations may influence the study of pedagogical strategies in Grade 8 History classrooms in Namibia (Correa et al., 2023).

Epistemological assumptions relate to research in terms of how one can know about reality, and on what individuals' knowledge is based (Fuyane, 2021). Epistemology asks how one knows something (Junjie & Yingxin, 2022). As an interpretive researcher, I interacted with the participants to hear what they viewed as personal practical knowledge through classroom observation and interviews. In the context of my study, this means that participants constructed knowledge of teaching reading comprehension from their own experiences of teaching History in Grade 8.

In the context of my study, I relied on experienced teachers' beliefs, expertise, perspectives and intuition in finding results pertaining to the phenomenon under study. From an epistemological standpoint, I managed to position myself as an insider researcher in discovering factual evidence and producing valid knowledge on pedagogical strategies used by Namibian secondary school History educators in teaching reading comprehension. I did so by directly interacting with the participants in their respective Grade 8 History classrooms through lesson observations, document analysis and two types of semi-structured interviews. Most importantly, I used the research questions, foregrounding the participants' experiences and reflections on their pedagogical practices, to understand the phenomenon under study.

### 4.3 Qualitative Approach

The interpretivist paradigm emphasises the subjective understanding of social phenomena through the lens of human interpretation, emphasising context, meaning, and lived experiences (Burns et al., 2022). A qualitative approach aligns with the interpretivist paradigm by employing methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis to explore these subjective understandings in depth, allowing researchers to capture the complexity and richness of human interpretations within their natural contexts (Busetto et al., 2020; Morgan, 2022).

Based on Thompson (2022), a research approach refers to the overarching strategy or framework that guides the study's design, implementation, and analysis. It provides a systematic way of approaching the research process, including selecting the methods, data collection techniques, and data analysis procedures (Alam, 2021; Dawadi et al., 2021). There are two primary types of research approaches: quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative research approaches involve collecting and analysing numerical data to quantify relationships, patterns, and trends within a population or sample (Dawadi et al., 2021). This approach often employs structured surveys, experiments, or statistical analyses to test hypotheses and generalise findings to a larger population. It emphasises objectivity, reliability and the ability to measure and predict outcomes with precision. On the other hand, Adedoyin (2020) explains that qualitative research approaches focus on exploring and understanding complex social phenomena through collecting and analysing non-numerical data, such as interviews, observations, and textual analysis. Qualitative research emphasises context, meaning, and subjective interpretations, aiming to capture the richness and depth of human experiences within their natural settings. It often employs flexible and iterative methods to uncover insights, patterns, and themes, providing a holistic understanding of the research topic (Dawadi et al., 2021). Qualitative research is a process of understanding social or human issues, and when conducted properly, can provide a meaningful understanding of people's experiences and perspectives in the context of their personal life setting (Adedoyin, 2020).

In my study, I used a qualitative research approach to delve deeply into the pedagogical strategies employed by Grade 8 History educators in Namibia to enhance reading comprehension among their learners (Ithindi, 2020; Shanyengana, 2023). Qualitative research, in essence, involves a comprehensive exploration of social or human issues, aiming to grasp the intricacies of individuals' experiences and viewpoints within the framework of their unique

life circumstances (Macharia, 2024; Su et al., 2024). By opting for qualitative methods, I sought to go beyond mere statistical analysis, instead focusing on rich narratives and detailed accounts provided by educators. Through this approach, I aimed to gain a profound understanding of the diverse strategies used by educators, considering their cultural, institutional, and personal contexts (Alam & Mohanty, 2023; Leko et al., 2021). This methodological choice allowed me to uncover nuances and complexities in teaching practices that quantitative approaches might overlook. By immersing myself in the qualitative data, I aimed to illuminate the lived experiences of Grade 8 History educators, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of teaching reading comprehension in the Namibian educational context (Bourn, 2023; Roch, 2022). My study thus contributes to the broader understanding of effective pedagogical strategies tailored to enhance reading comprehension skills, particularly within the specific cultural and educational landscape of Namibia. As Mohajan (2020) explains that qualitative research is undertaken to explain or predict events by analysing data with statistical methods.

Qualitative research is fundamentally distinct from quantitative research in its aims, methods, and approaches (Djafar et al., 2021). While quantitative research typically involves the use of statistical methods to explain or predict events through numerical data analysis, qualitative research is concerned with understanding phenomena in depth, often exploring complex social processes, meanings, and experiences (Dawadi et al., 2021). In the context of exploring the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian Grade 8 History educators to teach reading comprehension, qualitative research would involve gathering rich, non-numerical data through methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. Rather than seeking to quantify relationships or predict outcomes, qualitative research would aim to uncover the diverse strategies, perspectives, and challenges faced by educators in their practice, providing insights into the nuances of their instructional approaches and the contextual factors influencing them. Through qualitative analysis techniques such as thematic coding, pattern recognition, and narrative interpretation, researchers would explore the complexities of teaching reading comprehension within the Namibian educational context, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of pedagogical practices and informing educational policy and practice. According to Maarouf (2019), a qualitative approach provides a chance for the researcher to get close to the participants and explore the views they hold of the phenomenon under study.

In the context of exploring the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian Grade 8 History educators to teach reading comprehension, Maarouf's (2019) assertion underscores the value of qualitative research in facilitating a deep understanding of the perspectives and experiences of these educators. By adopting a qualitative approach, I had the opportunity to establish close rapport and engage in meaningful interactions with the participants, gaining insight into their beliefs, practices, and challenges related to teaching reading comprehension (O'Leary et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2021). Through methods such as interviews, I delved into the nuanced strategies employed by educators, exploring the rationale behind their instructional decisions and the factors influencing their approach (Wong & Moorhouse, 2021). Observations of classroom interactions further allowed me to witness firsthand the implementation of these strategies, capturing the complexities of teaching and learning in real-time. By immersing myself in the participants' world, I managed to uncover the tacit knowledge and implicit theories that informed their pedagogical practices, enriching our understanding of effective teaching methods within the Namibian educational context (Mareka, 2020; Nyavor, 2023). Ultimately, this intimate exploration enabled me to identify patterns, challenges, and opportunities for improving reading comprehension instruction, informing the development of targeted interventions and educational policies that better support educators and enhance student learning outcomes (Liu et al., 2023; Morgan, 2022).

Overall, this approach emphasises the importance of gathering rich, contextualised data to gain a nuanced understanding of human experiences and behaviours (Leko & Cook, 2021). Hence, my study generated data using classroom observation and stimulated recall interviews focused on the lesson planning, and a face-to-face interview focused on the observed lesson.

#### **4.4 Qualitative Design**

Qualitative research designs focus on gaining insight and understanding about an individual's perception of events and circumstances (Ruslin et al., 2022). According to Muzari and Shava (2022), there are six common types of qualitative research: phenomenological studies, ethnographic, grounded theory, historical, case study and action research. Phenomenological studies, based on Williams (2021), examine human experiences through the descriptions provided by the people involved. These experiences are also called lived experiences (Aguas, 2022). The goal of a phenomenological study is to describe the meaning that experiences hold about a phenomenon. In such a study, respondents are asked to describe their experiences as they perceive them. The second type of qualitative design is an ethnographic study, which

involves the collection and analysis of data about cultural groups (Madden, 2022). According to Khoa and Hung (2023), ethnographers try to show how actions in one world make sense from the point of view of another world. In ethnographic research, the researcher frequently lives with the people and becomes a part of their culture (Balcom & Daucet, 2021; Reyes, 2020). They also interview people who are most knowledgeable about the culture. The knowledgeable people are known as key informants. They also collect data through participant observation and interviews. Next, a grounded theory study is a qualitative research approach developed by two sociologists, Glaser and Strauss (1967). Grounded theory studies collect data and analyse it, and then a theory is developed that is grounded in the data (Ray, 2023; Zhang et al., 2020). Other scholars, such as Nelson (2020) and Makri and Neely (2021), believe that historical studies concern the identification, location, evaluation and synthesis of data from the past. It seeks not only to discover past events but also to relate the past happenings to the present and the future.

An action research study is a type of qualitative research that seeks to take action to improve practice and study the effects of the action that was taken (Clark et al., 2020). In this type of research, both the participants and the researcher are co-researchers throughout the entire study. Lastly, Fong (2020) and Dusdal and Powell (2021) explain that a case study has its roots in sociology and could be used to examine institutions, such as a school. A case study was the most suitable qualitative approach for the nature of the study.

#### **4.4.1 Qualitative case study**

Schoch (2020) explains that a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit. A qualitative case study is defined as an in-depth socio-contextual investigation of cases conforming to a contemporary phenomenon – “the case” – such as individual(s) organisations or programmes (Hilali & McKinley, 2021). According to Alam (2021), a case study allows the researcher an opportunity to collect different kinds of data from interviews, document analysis and classroom observation. A case study was appropriate for my study since it enabled me to conduct my study within the boundaries of one social system (the case of secondary school History educators) in detail and to become acquainted with the (Schoch, 2020). Moreover, my study encompassed some of the commonly used methods of data collection, including non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. An evidence-based research project was enabled by capturing participants’ multiple viewpoints and meanings in relation to managing and

obtaining evidence pertaining to teaching reading comprehension – this was vital in developing the empirical findings and the conclusions of my study (Greasley & Thomas, 2020). Below, I discuss the different types of case studies.

Explanatory case study is an initial explanation of the how or why that is behind something (Chen et al., 2021). This study is commonly used when studying a real-life phenomenon or event. The explanatory case study, based on Warren and Bell (2022), aims to answer “how” or “why” questions with little control on behalf of the researcher over the occurrence of events. The other type of case study is a descriptive case study, which starts with descriptive theory (Peel, 2020). In this case study, the subjects are then observed, and the information gathered is compared to the pre-existing theory (Toyon, 2021). According to Diop and Liu (2020), descriptive case studies mainly focus on analysing the sequence of interpersonal events and giving voice to the voiceless in a single case, for instance, the life history of an individual, a single organisation or specific events. The third type of case study is an exploratory case study. This research type is a methodological approach that investigates research questions that have not previously been studied (Alam, 2021). For exploratory case studies, the main data collection method is often accompanied by additional data collection methods such as interviews, questionnaires and experiments. According to Mulryan-Kyne (2021), exploratory case studies are sometimes used as a prelude to further, more in-depth research. This allows researchers to gather more information before developing their research questions and hypotheses (Landy et al., 2020). In this study, an exploratory case study was adopted, which included using semi-structured interviews, document analysis and non-participant observations to generate data to explore the pedagogical strategies that Grade 8 History educators use for reading instruction.

#### **4.4.2 Exploratory case study**

Exploratory case studies are a qualitative research method used to investigate a phenomenon in its natural context, particularly when little is known about the topic or when existing theories are insufficient (Swedberg & Schoch, 2020). Key characteristics are that its primary aim is to explore and gain insights into a particular phenomenon or problem (Dawadi & Shrestha, 2021; Makri & Neely, 2021). They are often used in the early stages of research to generate hypotheses or refine research questions (Makri & Neely, 2021). Furthermore, an exploratory case study contextualises the understanding of the phenomenon within its real-life context. Based on Welch et al. (2022), researchers immerse themselves in the setting where the

phenomenon occurs to gain a holistic understanding of the situation. In addition, the qualitative approach of the study typically relies on qualitative data collection methods such as observations, interviews, and document analysis (Morgan, 2022). In addition, Casula et al. (2021) emphasise that the process of conducting exploratory case studies is often flexible and iterative.

In this study, that meant adapting the methods or research questions based on emerging insights or unexpected findings during data collection and analysis (Dawadi & Shrestha, 2021). Exploratory case studies involve in-depth analysis of the collected data. I looked for patterns, themes, and relationships within the data to develop a comprehensive understanding of the pedagogical strategies used by the Grade 8 History educators when teaching reading comprehension (Jiang et al., 2021; Waters, 2021). While exploratory case studies are primarily focused on exploring a specific phenomenon, they can also contribute to theory development or refinement. Insights gained from the study may lead to the formulation of new theoretical frameworks or the modification of existing ones (Swedberg, 2020).

#### **4.5 Selection of Participants**

Qualitative research recognises participants as primary research tools in constructing meaning for a study by sharing their perceptions, beliefs and behaviours. Sampling involves making decisions about which people, settings, events or behaviours to include in the study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2020). There are two types of sampling: non-random/purposive sampling and random/probability sampling. In random sampling, every member of the population to be studied has an equal chance of being included in the sample (Wang & Cheng, 2020). Based on Bertram and Christiansen (2020), random sampling is commonly used in quantitative research, which aims at drawing conclusions representing a wider population and includes experimental research or surveys. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), purposive sampling means specifically choosing participants or sites that are beneficial to the research purpose, questions and goals. Purposive sampling is widely used for the identification and selection of information-rich cases in cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Renjith et al., 2021). This concurs with Alam (2021), who suggests that the participants and sites in case study research need to correspond with the research questions and purposes.

Non-random sampling can also be referred to as purposive sampling (Bertram & Christiansen, 2020). In purposive sampling, unlike random sampling, not every part of the whole population has an equal chance of being selected, but inclusion is deliberately decided with sites and individuals who are most useful to the phenomenon under study and the research purpose (Hong & Francis, 2020). There are four types of non-random sampling, namely purposive sampling, convenience sampling, voluntary response sampling and snowball sampling (Vicente, 2023). I identified the study population and, using purposive sampling, selected five experienced Grade 8 History educators from five state-owned secondary schools in the Oshana region. My sample consisted of experienced secondary school educators, as I perceived them as knowledgeable about teaching reading comprehension in History. I believed that their expertise helped them to be cognisant of the effective strategies they used in teaching non-readers reading comprehension, reflecting on the years they had spent in service, interacting with learners and meeting their unique needs (Mpofu & Mavambe, 2023).

To be included in the sample, the participants had to meet the following criteria: they had to be a qualified History secondary school teacher, have at least two or more years of teaching History in Grade 8 and teaching at a state-owned school in the Ompundja Circuit, Oshana region. Hence, for the purpose of gathering exhaustive data, I verified that the participants were professionally experienced History secondary school educators. According to the MEAC (2016), experienced educators refer to those who have served continuously for four years or more. In the Namibian context, state-owned schools are generally public schools owned by the government, which accommodate learners from all walks of life free of charge (Paulus, 2022).

#### **4.6 Data Generation**

Qualitative researchers use methods that generate verbal, rather than numerical data, during their fieldwork. Similarly, Hungo and Francis (2020) explain that data generation methods aim to collect data regarding participant behaviour and understanding perceptions or experiences of and within the phenomenon of interest. Data generation is a systematic way of gathering quality information to answer research questions. Data generation can also be defined as the data source for addressing the research questions and the identified problem of a study. According to Cheng et al. (2022), the nature of data generation can include multiple data sources and real-world events. These enabled me as a researcher to triangulate and present unbiased data, which was dependable and credible (Hayre, 2021). Campbell and Goodman-Williams (2020) define triangulation as a method used to increase the credibility and validity

of research findings. This study used three data generation tools document analysis, two special types of semi-structured interviews: stimulated recall interviews and classroom observations, to generate data to explore effective strategies used by the Grade 8 History educators to teach reading comprehension at the secondary school level.

#### **4.6.1 Stimulated recall interviews**

According to Young (2022), stimulated recall interviews are a qualitative research method used to gain insights into participants' thought processes, decision-making, and experiences during a specific task or situation. These interviews involve participants reflecting on their actions, thoughts, and feelings while reviewing a recording or transcript of the activity they are engaged in (Aihong et al., 2024). Cheung (2023) outlines several key characteristics of stimulated recall interviews. Firstly, these interviews have a retrospective nature, occurring after the task or activity has been completed. During these sessions, participants are invited to recall and discuss their thoughts and actions, often supported by recordings or transcripts. Secondly, the interviews are probe-based, with interviewers using specific prompts to encourage participants to explore their thought processes and experiences in greater depth, eliciting detailed descriptions and reflections. In addition, stimulated recall interviews generate rich qualitative data, offering valuable insights into participants' cognitive processes, decision-making strategies, and emotional responses. This approach allows for a contextualised understanding, as participants can replay or review the task, leading to a more accurate and nuanced account of their thoughts and actions within that context. Finally, it is important to note that participants' interpretations of their actions may vary, influenced by factors like memory biases, self-perception, and social desirability, adding a layer of subjectivity to the findings. In the context of my study, stimulated recall interviews were integrated as a complementary method to the other data collection techniques, such as observations. I conducted these interviews to gain a deeper understanding of participants' practices and decision-making in specific situations.

##### ***4.6.1.1 Stimulated recall interview focused on lesson planning***

The first type of interview focused on the participants' lesson planning process to understand the reflection processes that participants undertake when planning for lessons that integrate History and language development. Using lesson planning as a data collection tool in this study is very important for the following reasons: firstly, it is necessary to understand the process

that the participant went through to come up with the lesson plan (Farrell & Ashcraft, 2024). It is also used to understand the participant's theory of practice and individual practices. Experienced educators are believed to be reflective practitioners (Farrell, 2020). Also, Sunra and Sahril (2020) explain that lesson planning includes a reflection section is a necessary aspect in the lesson planning of every teacher who intend to improve personal practice and for professional development of educators. Drawing from Farrell (2020) educators who engage in reflective practice can develop a deeper understanding of their teaching, assess their professional growth, develop informed decision-making skills, and become proactive and confident in their teaching. Reflective practice is commonly acknowledged as an important part of teacher professional development. Sunra and Sahril (2020) viewed it as a fundamental feature of learning from experience. While reflective practice is the broad term for what is expected from educators. Reflection as part of the lesson planning was drawn from reflective practice. Farrell (2020) argued that teacher have a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Lesson planning may serve as a critical tool to collect quality data, because much of what happens in the classroom is the transformation of the lesson planning (Ndukwe & Daniel, 2020).

In other words, it is like a plan being implemented. And for my study, this is anchored in the work of Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983). Dewey's work focused on several key themes in education, including reflective thinking. According to Hassen (2021), Dewey emphasised the importance of reflection in the learning process. Believed that students should not only acquire knowledge but also learn to reflect on their experiences, think critically, and make informed decisions (Holdo, 2023). Schön's (1983) work extends from Dewey (1933); he is based on reflective practices and learning (Tan, 2020). He also stressed the three types of reflection practice, namely, reflection-for-action, reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action (Ramage, 2021). Both have significant implications for lesson planning as they both emphasise the importance of experimental learning, reflection, and adaptability in teaching.

The formal Namibian lesson plan includes the following columns: routine information, topic, lesson objective, basic competence drawn from the national syllabus, teaching aids, introduction of the lesson, presentation of the lesson, consolidation activity or homework and evaluation (Ashipala, 2021; Majawa, 2020). I paid attention to the lesson objectives to examine how the participants intend to integrate reading skills and History. With reference to schema theory, I discussed with the educators on how they plan to activate learners' formal, linguistic,

cultural and content schema. I also engaged in a discussion with the educators on the reflection column, which provides details on their personal evaluation of their pedagogical practices for reading instruction (Admiraal & Vermeulen, 2020). The data from this type of interview was documented using an audio recorder, a researcher's diary and transcripts of the interviews. All the participants participated in one 30-to-35-minute interview at their schools. Appendix A provides a detailed account of the questions that guided this interview.

#### ***4.6.1.2 Stimulated recall interviews focused on classroom observation***

The second type of interview focused on the participants' class observations, looking particularly at actions and decision-making. The purpose of the second interview was to engage the participants in critical reflective sessions to examine their actions and decisions while teaching in the classroom (Richit et al., 2022). This was a research technique involving the replay of videotape or audiotape of a teacher's lesson, to stimulate a commentary upon the teacher's thought processes at the time (Brauns, 2021). According to Cheung (2023), it is very important as it produces both insightful and useful data for examining the way people experience a specific event of interaction in education. In the context of my study, I could not use video to record the lessons during lesson observation because I did not acquire the rights from ethical clearance from my university, Rhodes University. I was only granted the right to audio record the lesson as I observed the teacher teaching. The lesson plan was my first data tool for data generation because it enabled me to have a clear picture of how the participants planned their lessons to include the integration of schema theory and reflective practice when teaching reading comprehension in History Grade 8.

I also used a researcher's diary and made copies of the lesson plans for the participants (Farrell & Ashcraft, 2024). The importance of reflection in classroom observations may not be clear without discussing the two aspects of reflective practices: reflection-in-action and critical thinking. According to Farrell (2022), reflection-in-action is the process that includes the decision we make at that moment while performing an action. It is also known as thinking on your feet during action (Ariza & Armenteros, 2024; Russell & Martin, 2020). In addition, reflection-in-action is the ability to make decisions when faced with situations without thinking about what to do before reacting (Cattaneo & Motta, 2021). In other words, reflection-in-action requires the ability to make the right decisions when an unexpected situation is encountered. Chen (2023) states that it is imperative that, in most cases, educators use their personal

experiences to react to these situations. In the context of my study, I needed to observe the participants while in their respective classrooms.

Post the classroom observation, I guided the participants to give meaning to the actions and behaviours I observed during the classroom observation from the recorded audio. All the participants had one 30-to-35-minute interview at their school or any venue decided by them. Zhang (2020) suggested that the participants may feel anxious and uncomfortable, and this might lead to poor responses or unreliable information. In addition, interviews can also use up much of participants' valuable time. To address these limitations, I ensured that all my participants felt comfortable, and the interviews were conducted in a conducive atmosphere. I asked the participants to decide on a time that was most convenient for them for the interview. Appendix C provides a detailed account of the questions that the educators engaged with in conversation with me. Both interviews were documented using transcripts, my diary and an audio recorder.

#### **4.6.2 Classroom observations**

Classroom observation serves as a crucial qualitative method in this study. Firstly, classroom observation allows researchers to directly observe and document the instructional practices implemented by educators in real-time (Leko et al., 2021; Ndukwe & Daniel, 2020). By immersing themselves in the classroom environment, researchers can gain valuable insights into the specific strategies, techniques, and approaches used by content educators to effectively convey historical content to students (Biasutti et al., 2022; Ma, 2021). Such firsthand observations provide a rich and nuanced understanding of the actual teaching practices that may not be fully captured through other research methods (Hendren et al., 2023; Davidson et al., 2020). Secondly, classroom observation enables researchers to assess the alignment between the intended curriculum (i.e. the planned instructional strategies) and the enacted curriculum (i.e. the actual instructional practices) (Peel, 2020; Reynders et al., 2020). By comparing educators' intended strategies with their observed practices, researchers can identify any gaps or variations, which can shed light on the factors that influence instructional decisions and implementation in the classroom (Alam & Mohanty, 2023; Rodriguez-Abitia, 2020). This information is particularly valuable for understanding the complex dynamics of teaching History as content educators navigate the challenges of interpreting historical events, fostering critical thinking skills, and promoting historical understanding among students (Blevins, 2020; Hendren et al., 2023). Classroom observation thus provides researchers with a unique

opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies employed by content educators and their impact on student learning in the context of history education (Chen et al., 2021; Leko et al., 2021).

In the context of this study, I directly observed the classroom environment to gain an authentic understanding of how reading strategies are implemented as they happened (Wong, 2023; Brown & Pressley, 2023). I observed the specific instructional techniques employed by educators to enhance students' reading comprehension, such as pre-reading activities, text analysis, questioning techniques, and scaffolding strategies (Febrianti & Arifinet, 2022). By witnessing these strategies in action, I gathered rich data on the actual practices, adaptations, and variations that occur in the Namibian high school History classroom context (Hakutumbulwa, 2021; Simasiku, 2021). Secondly, through classroom observation, I examined the interaction between educators and students during reading activities. I observed how educators provided guidance, support, and feedback to learners as they engaged with historical texts while analysing the level of student engagement, participation, and comprehension demonstrated during reading tasks (Nguyen, 2022; Samiei & Ebadi, 2021). By observing the classroom dynamics firsthand, I captured the nuances of how reading strategies are implemented and how they impact learners' reading skills, historical understanding, and overall learning experience (Baker et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2020).

During the class observation, I was observing the strategies the History educators used during the pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading stages of the lesson (see Appendix B). I took notes on everything that was happening in the classrooms. Afterwards, I transcribed the observation notes into observation protocols. I also documented how they prepared the learners for reading tasks and the prompts they provided to facilitate the reading activities. Lastly, I observed how History educators attended to formal and summative assessment and how these were used to enhance learners' reading skills (see Appendix B).

#### **4.7 Inductive Thematic Analysis**

Data analysis involves organising raw data into a system that reveals the basic results of the research. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data (Scharp & Sanders, 2019). Peel (2020) defines thematic analysis as a method for describing data that always involves interpretation in the process of selecting codes and constructing themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), themes in thematic analysis can

be generated either inductively or deductively. Deductive analysis is applied when a researcher uses a set of predetermined categories to analyse data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2020). In deductive analysis, evidence is sought for the existence of a priori themes in the data, which are determined in the literature (Casula et al., 2021). While in inductive analysis, a researcher starts with raw data that they have collected and then begins to look for patterns and regularities to formulate some tentative claims that can be explored (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To add to that, Peel (2020) states that in inductive analysis, themes are allowed to emerge from the data itself, which is more likely to help the researcher identify the multiple realities potentially present in the data.

I used inductive analysis as its purpose is to describe and understand participants' experiences and the way they construct meaning (Kyngäs, 2020). In the context of my study, I used inductive analysis to understand what participants described as reading comprehension practices and how they used their own experiences to create self-developed pedagogical practices that enhance Grade 8 learners' reading of History content with good comprehension skills. Secondly, inductive analysis helps to describe the diversity and variety of the participants' experiences (Kyngäs, 2020). This means that using inductive analysis, I gained an understanding of where participants' teaching experience was acquired, for example, teacher training or through their own educators' experiences. Lastly, inductive analysis was used to study individuals in their natural context. In the context of my study, I observed five participants inside their classrooms to understand what they said they would do in their lesson plans, and why they said they would do it during the semi-structured interviews. In the context of my study, the six steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) were followed in analysing the data (see excerpt in Appendix). Below are the steps typically used for inductive thematic analysis, along with justifications for their application in this study that explored the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian Grade 8 History educators to teach reading comprehension.

First is familiarisation with the data. Williams and Culter (2020) and Lofland et al. (2022) suggest that researchers immerse themselves in the qualitative data, which may include transcriptions of interviews, field notes, and observational records. This step allows researchers to become acquainted with the content and context of the data, gaining a holistic understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives. This enabled me to identify recurring patterns, key themes, and noteworthy variations in educators' approaches to teaching reading

comprehension (Byrne, 2022; Chen et al., 2020). The second is generating initial codes. Researchers systematically identify and label meaningful units of data, or “codes,” that capture important concepts, ideas, or patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Reyes et al., 2024). These codes are generated inductively, emerging directly from the data rather than being predetermined. This allowed me to break down the qualitative data into manageable units and identify salient themes and patterns (Liu, 2023; Olapane, 2021). By coding the data inductively, I remained open to unexpected insights and variations in educators’ pedagogical strategies, ensuring that the analysis was grounded in the participants’ perspectives.

Third is searching for themes. Researchers organise the generated codes into potential themes or patterns that capture central ideas, concepts, or experiences present within the data. Themes emerged through an iterative process of comparing, contrasting, and clustering codes that shared commonalities or connections (Hong et al., 2022; Wood et al., 2020). This helped me to identify overarching patterns and trends in educators’ pedagogical practices related to reading comprehension instruction. Brown and Collins (2021) explain that by systematically organising codes into themes, researchers can distil the essence of educators’ experiences and perspectives, providing a structured framework for analysis and interpretation.

The fourth step was reviewing and defining themes. In this step, I reviewed and refined the identified themes, ensuring that they accurately reflected the content and meaning of the data. Themes were defined in clear, concise terms that captured the essence of the underlying concepts or patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Lockmiller, 2021). The fifth step is writing the narrative (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This is when I wrote a narrative account that synthesised the identified themes and provided a coherent interpretation of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Lockmiller, 2021). My narrative may include illustrative quotes, examples, and contextual details to support the interpretation of the findings (Eldh et al., 2020). By weaving together, the identified themes with supporting evidence from the data, I have provided readers with a comprehensive understanding of the pedagogical strategies employed by Grade 8 History educators to teach reading comprehension in Namibia. The last step was ensuring rigour and trustworthiness. This step focused on the analysis process. Researchers employ strategies to enhance the rigour and trustworthiness of the findings, such as member checking, peer debriefing, and maintaining an audit trail of decisions made during the analysis (Amin et al., 2020; Hailton, 2020). This maintains the credibility and validity of the findings. By engaging in methodological reflexivity and employing validation strategies, I demonstrated the

transparency of and accountability in the analytical process, enhancing the reliability and robustness of the thematic analysis (O’Kane et al., 2021; Zhang, 2023).

## **4.8 Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is a prevalent concept in interpretivist research, and involves the criteria outlined by Guba and Lincoln (1994) of credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability and authenticity (Bertram & Christiansen, 2020). In a qualitative study, trustworthiness relates to the quality and extent to which data analysis is believable and trustworthy (Nieuwenhuis, 2019c). To ensure trustworthiness in my study, I implemented these criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability to ensure the quality of the study. Trustworthiness concerns the truth value of qualitative data, analysis and interpretation (Rose & Johnson, 2020).

### **4.8.1 Credibility**

Credibility refers to the assurance that the researcher’s findings are in effect the results of the data (Nieuwenhuis, 2019b). Based on Noble and Heale (2022), credibility refers to trustworthiness and how believable a study is. In simple terms, credibility in research means that the findings can be trusted and are believed to be accurate representations of the data collected. It is ensuring that what the researcher presents as results truly reflects what was observed or discovered during the study. Therefore, if a study is credible, it means that the researcher has done a thorough job in collecting and analysing data, and the findings accurately reflect the reality of the situation being studied. For the research to meet credibility standards, it should have quality data that is attained through multiple perspectives throughout data collection. In simple words, this means that credibility may be done through data, investigator or theoretical triangulation, participant validation or member checks or the rigorous techniques used to gather the data (Rose & Johnson, 2020). In the context of my study, I assured credibility by collecting data from five participants. I also recorded their perspectives when they were responding to the interviews, and audio recorded them when they were busy teaching.

### **4.8.2 Confirmability**

Confirmability has to do with the level of confidence that the findings of the research study are based on the participants’ narratives and words rather than potential researcher biases (Dahal, 2022). Amir et al. (2021) explain that confirmability refers to the degree to which the findings

of the study are shaped by research participants rather than the researcher's bias. Confirmability refers to neutrality and the potential for congruence between two or more people about data accuracy, relevance, or meaning (Heyns, 2023). In simple words, Johnson et al. (2020) define confirmability as confidence in the truth and interpretation of the data. Some criteria for confirmability are to document every step of the research process using a diary. It can also be achieved through a member check, which involves sharing the findings with the participants to ensure accuracy in interpretation. Lesitsi (2022) explains that to ensure confirmability, the researcher must make use of reflective journals to record memories of the research process as it is being undertaken. To attain convergent evidence in the context of my study, I triangulated the data by using multiple data sources such as document analysis, two stimulated recall interviews and lesson observations to identify successful techniques used by the Grade 8 History educators when teaching reading comprehension.

#### **4.8.3 Transferability**

Transferability describes the degree to which the research findings apply to other fields and contexts (Kyngäs, 2020). Similarly, Wang et al. (2020) define transferability as the extent to which findings can be transferred to other setting or groups, while Rose and Johnson (2020) explain that transferability in qualitative research concerns the external validity of qualitative research findings. As a researcher, it is most important to consider the matter of transferability in research studies by providing the readers with evidence that the research study's findings could apply to other contexts, situations, times and populations. I have provided this evidence to the readers of my study through quality descriptions and reasons for choosing the appropriate methodology. To attain transferability, I used purposive sampling: I purposefully chose experienced educators as my study participants since I strongly believed that they would inevitably bring in multiple perspectives.

#### **4.8.4 Dependability**

Dependability is an assessment of the quality of the integrated processes of data collection, data analysis and theory generation (Kyngäs, 2020). Dependability refers to stability of data over time and conditions (Wang et al., 2020). Dependability entails the transparency of a study by ensuring its relevance compared to similar studies (Pratt & Kaplan, 2020). It can also mean comparing my study to previous studies in the field of reading comprehension teaching practices and explaining the key differences (Bertram & Christiansen, 2020). To ensure

dependability in this study, I documented my observations, made notes on the document analysis, and audio taped the interviews to ensure that I did not deviate from accurately interpreting and analysing the data. I was also supervised by two supervisors who checked the process from the start until the results were found and analysed.

## **4.9 Ethical Considerations**

No qualitative research study would be possible without proper consideration of ethics (Shaw, 2023). Ethical issues are considered important and should be adhered to during the whole research process. Nandra (2020) defines ethics as morals and obligations that allow participants to voluntarily participate or withdraw from the research at any time, if they want to do so. It was imperative for me, before commencing with data collection, to apply for ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee at Rhodes University. Therefore, upon submitting my research proposal, I received an Ethics Clearance Certificate from my university before embarking on the data generation process. Ethical considerations encompass principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity in data collection, analysis, and reporting. I was granted permission by the gatekeepers: the learners, parents/guardians, educators of History, school principals of the five schools I intended to use as sites for my study and the director of education. The parents/guardians, learners, History educators, and school principals all responded positively to my proposal. The consent letters to parents/guardians clearly stated the purpose of the study, that the learners were going to be audio recorded and that safeguarding of the minors was assured – parents had the right to withdraw their children from the study at any time.

### **4.9.1 Informed consent**

Informed consent means the participants will be well informed about the study and will be asked to agree to take part in the study (Norman et al., 2021). It also refers to the process by which a research participant voluntarily confirms their willingness to participate in a particular study after being informed of all aspects of the research relevant to their decision (Nwali, 2021). In addition, informed consent refers to the researcher contacting all participants and informing them about the purpose and objective of the study (Shaw, 2023). Informed consent is used to ensure that participants are not coerced or deceived into participating in a study (Mumford et al., 2021). It also upholds the principles of autonomy and respect for persons by recognising and affirming the rights of individuals to control what happens to them (Mathews, 2022).

Furthermore, informed consent helps to protect the researcher and the institution conducting the research by providing evidence that participants have voluntarily agreed to participate and understand the nature of the research and how the researcher intends to conduct the research study (Xu, 2020).

#### **4.9.2 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Confidentiality and anonymity are the most important aspects of ethical practice applied in research studies to protect the participants' identity from readers or the public. According to Cheng et al. (2022), it is imperative that a researcher consider these two aspects when intending to conduct a research study in which participants will take part. Confidentiality refers to the agreement created between the researcher and the participant, via the informed consent process, that ensures the participant's identity, personal information, and responses will not be disclosed to anyone outside the research team (Surmiak, 2020). Based on Yang et al. (2020), confidentiality means that the researcher protects the identity and information of their participants from unauthorised access or disclosure. More so, confidentiality refers to separating or modifying any personal identifying information provided by participants from the data. Anonymity means that the researcher removes any identifying information from their data and reports, such as names, location, or characteristics. Similarly, Zheng and Cai (2020) refer to providing anonymity to the information collected from research participants.

In my study, I adhered to ethical rules and maintained confidentiality and anonymity by not providing any of my participants' identities or information in the data I collected. I kept the school's identity confidential; instead, I named them with letters from the alphabet A to E and used pseudonyms for participants. In addition, I assured the participants that the information they shared would remain confidential and only my supervisor and I would be able to access the data. Furthermore, all the audio recordings were saved in a password-protected file. I also clearly wrote in the letters I presented to my participants that their privacy was guaranteed when taking part in my research. All five participants gave me their consent by signing an informed consent document.

#### **4.9.3 Right to withdraw from the study**

Voluntary participation means all research subjects are free to participate without any pressure or coercion (Goltz, 2020). According to Xu et al. (2020), one of the research ethics is that individuals have the right to choose whether to participate or not and any individuals who

initially agree to participate in a study have the right to withdraw from the study at any point, the right to refuse to answer to any particular question/s or to participate in a particular set of procedures. I ensured this right by informing participants in the consent letters that their participation in the study would be voluntary, and that they had the right to withdraw at any time without it being held against them (Husband, 2020).

#### **4.10 Positionality**

Positionality describes an individual's worldview and the adopted position about a research task and its social and political contexts (Andrew, 2020). Positionality refers to a researcher's awareness and understanding of and response to the changing balance of power that pervades and impacts the research process (Secules et al., 2021). Shaw et al. (2022) explain that positionality refers to the position a researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study. To add to the definitions above, Hampton and Reeping (2021) note that research positionality is the act of making the invisible decisions and interpretations of the researcher visible in the study. Yang et al. (2020) noted that it is important that the nature of the relationship between the researcher and research participants, the researcher's background, including class, gender, ethnicity, age, ideas, commitments and national identity, needs to be made explicit.

As a senior teacher of ESL and well-known in the district, and as an MEd student at Rhodes University, I was fully aware of the power dynamics between the participants and me. My participants might have perceived my educational and professional background as 'persuasion' for them to agree to be part of my study. Secondly, the educators who were my colleagues in the district might not highlight their experiences truthfully, instead choosing to follow my views. To minimise the influence, I might have on the participants, the letter of informed consent clearly stated that they had the right not to participate in the study and withdraw at any given time without any repercussions.

#### **4.11 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I discussed the research methodology and design underpinning my study. Through my discussions, I explained that my study followed a qualitative approach using an exploratory case study. This chapter described a research paradigm and justified the selection of an interpretivist paradigm for my study. It also discussed the research design, sampling, data

collection methods and how data were analysed. I also explained trustworthiness and the ethical considerations that pertained to my study. Chapter Five presents and interprets the data.

## CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

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### 5.1 Introduction

In Chapter Four, I explained the methodology used in the study and discussed the data generation techniques I employed for gathering data. I presented this alongside the data analysis techniques I used. Furthermore, I discussed the trustworthiness and ethical considerations pertinent to my study. Chapter Five provides a detailed descriptive account of the data generated, aligning with the research questions. In addition, the findings are coded and presented in thematic form. This chapter conveys the data findings collected from the research sites, aimed at exploring the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian secondary school History educators in teaching reading comprehension. The profile of the participants is presented in this chapter, along with a brief overview of the background of the research sites where teaching occurred and data were collected. All five schools involved in the study were accessible, with three situated in town and two located in the villages surrounding the Ompundja Circuit in the Oshana region. The Oshana region is one of the 14 regions in Namibia, each of which has a directorate of education. The Ompundja Circuit is one of the five circuits within the Oshana Directorate of Education.

### 5.2 Research Sites

Five secondary schools were selected as the research sites for the study, and all five are state schools where learners do not pay school fees. All Namibian state schools receive educational grants to cater for stationery, administration and curriculum attainment needs (Education Act, Act 16 of 2001). In Namibia, the basic education is subdivided into four phases namely: junior primary (pre-primary and grades 1–3) learners are 6–9 years, senior primary (grades 4–7) learners are between 10 and 13 years, junior secondary phase which runs grades 8–9, learners are 14–15 years and senior secondary phase with grades 10–12, learners in this phase are 16–18 years. All these schools are combined schools with two to three phases in one school, and some schools are in rural areas, while others are in urban areas. In the context of Namibia, any school with a combination of primary phases and a secondary phase or two secondary phases

is regarded as a combined school. I particularly focused on the junior secondary phase; grades 8–9 targeted the integration of language into History learning. The structure of education in Namibia has made a provision for an inspector of education who is responsible for inspecting about 20 to 50 schools in the area. A circuit can cover both town and village schools, depending on their geographical location. The schools in the Ompundja Circuit are both state and private, and most of the schools in the Ompundja Circuit are in urban areas.

For confidentiality and anonymity reasons, all five secondary schools were labelled A-E, and I used pseudonyms for the study participants and school names: Katongo, Bongile, Lee, Rossy and Monis. In my descriptions, I have used the following names to describe the schools: school A (Mopane Secondary School), school B (Winter Fields Secondary School), school C (Etemo Combined School, School D (Efuta Secondary School) and school E (Zebra Combined School). I purposefully selected these schools across socioeconomic contexts to explore the pedagogical strategies used by secondary schools' History educators when they teach reading comprehension. All these schools offer History as a subject in Grade 8, which falls under the secondary school curriculum. For assurance of thick data, I considered the participants' teaching experience and professional qualifications to ensure they were qualified to teach History at the secondary level. Table 5.1 shows the participants' demographics, including their schools, teaching experience and professional qualifications.

**Table 5.1: Participants' profiles**

Participant's pseudonym	School pseudonym	Gender	Professional qualification	Years in service
Katongo	Mopane Secondary School	Male	BETD and ACE	17 years
Bongile	Winter Fields Secondary School	Male	BETD and ACE	13 years
Lee	Etemo Combined School	Male	Bed Honours Degree	8 years
Rossy	Efuta Secondary School	Female	Bed Honours Degree	7 years
Monis	Zebra Combined School	Female	Degree	5 years

*Keys:* B Ed Hons – Bachelor of Education Honours; BETD – Basic Education Teacher Diploma; ACE – Advanced Certificate in Education

### **5.2.1 Mopane secondary school**

This is a newly renovated state school, located near the main road that connects the two main towns in the region. It is 5km away from the nearest town. This public school started operating in 1974 and offers the secondary curriculum from grades 8-11. At the time of the study, there were 489 learners at the school; it had no hostel, and all learners were day learners. Learners commute from the nearby villages and towns every day. All learners at this school were registered for Oshindonga as their first language. Although learners at this school hailed from different ethnic groups, they were all registered for Oshindonga as their first language. Oshindonga is the most spoken language in the region. However, it is compulsory for all learners to learn ESL at this school, and it is the medium of instruction. This aligns well with the Namibian language policy (MBESC, 2003). There is a small library at the school, but it is not open because of limited resources, and there is no librarian. Based on the information I got from Katongo (a teacher), there is no library close to the school, which makes it difficult for the learners and community people to have the opportunity to read books or newsletters.

#### **Participant Profile (A)**

Katongo was a male secondary phase teacher in his late thirties. His qualifications were a BETD and an ACE, equivalent to a degree level 8. He specialised in History and Geography education, grades 8-11 and had 18 years of teaching experience in History grades 8-10. Katongo has been a teacher at the school since he started his teaching career. He is currently responsible for teaching History in grades 8, 9, 10 and 11.

### **5.2.2 Winter Fields Secondary School**

This is a secondary school (grades 8-11). The school is in the middle of a well-developed town. All the learners at this school reside in the township. The school is mostly surrounded by modern townhouses and town infrastructure, such as tarred roads on both sides of the school. It has many sports facilities and a school garden with different crops near the school gate. At the time of the study, the school had 920 learners and 36 educators, four hygiene officers and one secretary. English is used as a medium of instruction and as a second language subject. The school library is very small and does not operate.

## **Participant Profile (B)**

Bongile was a male participant from Winter Fields Secondary School. He had been a teacher of History for 13 years and had been at the school for eight years. He held a BETD, Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), majoring in History and Geography education, grades 8-11. Bongile had been a History teacher at his current and previous schools. He was a senior teacher at the school and responsible for sports and cultural activities.

### **5.2.3 Etemo Combined School**

This is a public school situated in the village, about 11 km from the town. At the time of the study, the enrolment was 520 learners, and the curriculum ran from grades 5-9. There was a gravel road that connected to the small, underdeveloped settlement. Most educators at this school commuted from the nearby town. The school was very old, and the buildings and the furniture in the classrooms were in a dire state. Oshindonga was the only language used as a first language, while English was a subject and the medium of instruction.

## **Participant Profile (C)**

Lee was a male participant from Etemo Combined School. Lee graduated with an honours degree in History and ESL, grades 8-12. He had been a teacher of Grade 8 History since he joined the school seven years ago. Lee had a passion for teaching History, appearing enthusiastic about his teaching. He was the only teacher at the school who specialised in History education at the secondary level.

### **5.2.4 Efuta Secondary School**

Efuta Secondary School is a government secondary school in town, and all learners who attend the school are from the town. It had grades 8-11 and was established in 2004. At the time of the study, the enrolment was 643 learners and 27 educators. The school offered both Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga as first languages. English was used as the medium of instruction and a subject, as per the National Curriculum for Basic Education (MEAC, 2016). The school had a well-managed, stocked, and operating school library where learners read books of different genres. There were also some sports facilities, but they were not well taken care of.

### **Participant Profile (D)**

Rossy is a female participant from Efuta Secondary School. She was a young lady in her early thirties and appeared to have good subject knowledge of History. She had seven years of teaching experience in History and Geography, grades 8-11. She has a BEd honours, specialising in History and Geography, grades 8-11. At the time of the study, she was teaching History in grades 8 and 9.

#### **5.2.5 Zebra Combined School**

Zebra Combined School is a state school and offers free education throughout. The school curriculum runs from Grade 0 (pre-primary) to Grade 9. Previously, it had offered Grade 10 until November 2018. At the time of the study, the enrolment was 1 324 learners. It is a multicultural diversity school with Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga native speaking learners. These two languages were offered as first languages at the school, while English was taught as a subject and used as the medium of instruction. The school had 37 staff members, 26 female and 11 males, including the school principal, head of the science department, an administration officer and a hygiene officer. The physical setting of the school was appealing as it was surrounded by a landscape where communal animals grazed. The school has never excelled in English, but has had a good record in sports and culture as extracurricular activities. The community had a strong influence on the school.

### **Participant Profile E**

Monis is a female participant from Zebra Combined School. Monis had been teaching for 10 years. She holds a degree in teaching History and Geography, grades 8-12. Monis had been a teacher at Zebra Combined School for five years.

### **5.3 Findings and Discussions Based on Themes**

The following discussion is based on the themes that emerged from an integrated analysis of the data I generated from the participants' lesson plans, non-participant classroom observation, and the semi-structured interviews. Table 5.2 summarises the themes and sub-themes that will be discussed.

**Table 5.2: Summary of themes and sub-themes**

Themes	Sub-themes		
Question 1: What are the pedagogical strategies that experienced Grade 8 educators use to enhance reading comprehension in History as part of the Reading Across the Curriculum strategy?			
<p>Theme 1:</p> <p>Practices for planning reading comprehension instruction in History teaching.</p>	<p>Sub-theme 1.1:</p> <p>Learning objectives as the initial step for planning for reading comprehension in History.</p>	<p>Sub-theme 1.2:</p> <p>Sub-theme 1. 2: Activities planned to address reading comprehension in History learning.</p>	
<p>Theme 2:</p> <p>Process-based practices used for reading comprehension instruction in History teaching.</p>	<p>Sub-theme 2.1:</p> <p>Pre-reading strategies in History teaching.</p>	<p>Sub-theme 2.2:</p> <p>While-reading strategies in History teaching.</p>	<p>Sub-theme 2.3:</p> <p>Post-reading strategies in History teaching.</p>
<p>Theme 3:</p> <p>Assessment practices used for reading comprehension instruction in History teaching.</p>	<p>Sub-theme 3.1:</p> <p>Strategies and methods employed to assess students' reading comprehension skills</p>	<p>Sub-theme 3.2:</p> <p>Types of assessment employed to assess understanding of historical texts.</p>	
Question 2: What are the beliefs that inform experienced Grade 8 History educators when integrating reading comprehension into History?			
<p>Theme 4:</p> <p>Educators' beliefs based on the need to foster learners' historical literacy and critical thinking.</p>	<p>Sub-theme 4.1:</p> <p>Integration of reading comprehension in History teaching to enhance learners' historical literacy.</p>	<p>Sub-theme 4.2:</p> <p>Educators' beliefs to promote critical thinking in History teaching.</p>	
<p>Theme 5:</p> <p>Educators' beliefs based on promoting interdisciplinary connections and literacy integration.</p>	<p>Sub-theme 5.1:</p> <p>Educators' interdisciplinary connections between literacy skills within the study of History.</p>	<p>Sub-theme 5.2:</p> <p>Educators' initial education and continuous professional development.</p>	

### **5.3.1 Theme 1: Practices for planning reading comprehension instruction in History teaching**

The practices for planning reading comprehension instruction in History teaching that participants used from their lesson planning varied depending on their specific context and individual preferences. Planning effective reading comprehension instruction in History teaching involves several strategies to help learners engage with texts and enhance their understanding. This theme highlights practices that will ensure students engage with texts effectively and deepen their understanding of historical content. Practices for planning reading comprehension instruction in History teaching include choosing a diverse range of texts, setting clear learning objectives, teaching reading strategies, using graphic organisers, incorporating discussion, contextualising content and encouraging critical thinking.

In the context of my study, there was a need to understand the practices for planning for reading comprehension during History lesson planning. Most History educators, if not all, are informed by individual education philosophies and the learning content. To get this understanding, I used the three data collection tools, namely, the lesson planning process, interviews and classroom observation. In this study, the following important sub-themes emerged from the data: learning objectives that serve as the initial step for planning reading comprehension in History, and the activities planned to address reading comprehension in History learning.

For these reasons, it is very important that I study these practices because the History educators were experienced educators and were very creative in integrating language skills into History content teaching.

#### ***5.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Learning objectives that serve as the initial step for planning for reading comprehension in History***

In the context of the History syllabus for Namibia, the general learning objectives refer to those derived from the topic/skills and include the general knowledge, understanding and demonstration of skills on which learners will be assessed. The participants used different practices for planning reading comprehension instruction in teaching History. For example, Katongo and Bongile had objectives that addressed the need to integrate language and History content. For example, the general learning objectives in Katongo's lesson plan stated: "learners will understand why Maharero decided to declare his protection treaty no longer valid and understand why the German government needed to send more troops to Namibia". Bongile had

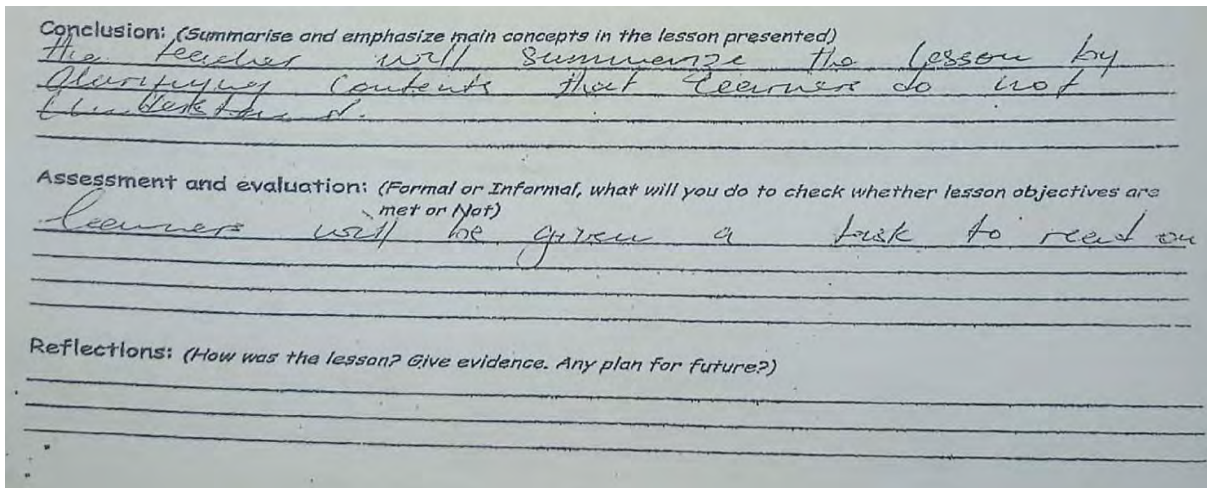
general learning objectives that stated: “learners will understand the origin and development of the Zulu kingdom”. Lee had a general learning objective which stated: “learners will understand the motives behind European powers in the decision to take control of Africa”. Rossy had a general learning objective that stated: “learners will understand that African people reacted in various ways to the European invasion of their land”. Participant D, Monis, did not have a lesson plan.

### ***5.3.1.2 Sub-theme 1.2: Activities planned to address reading comprehension in History learning.***

When I closely analysed the lesson plans for the four participants, I noticed that there were similar and unique activities planned to enhance understanding of the History content. For example, Katongo had planned that learners read the text about Maharero’s cancellation and German troops; he also planned for learners to answer questions based on the text they read. He further planned to emphasise that learners read the names of places and people in the text with the correct pronunciation. Katongo planned this activity as part of his opportunity to develop learners’ English reading activities in his lesson plan template. In addition, Katongo planned a homework assignment activity which required the learners to Google the facts about Chief Maharero’s death.

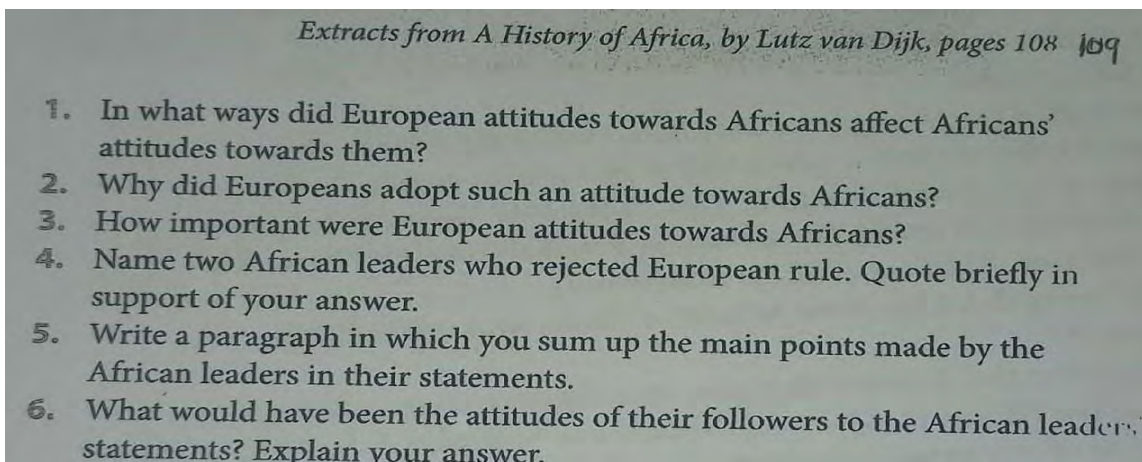
I noted that Bongile planned to engage learners in a discussion of the causes behind the expansion of the Zulu Kingdom, and have learners evaluate the leadership of Shaka Zulu. He also planned to give them an investigative activity on the Zulus today. Although this seemed to be a good activity, it was not clear how learners were to carry out this investigation. To address the RAC, Bongile planned a reading activity where learners had to read the handouts and notes.

From Lee and Rossy’s lesson plans, I noticed that they had some reading activities, but did not plan to address RAC in their plans to teach History. Lee planned activities which allowed learners to read why Africa was colonised and answer questions asked by the teacher. In addition, he planned to give a reading task to the learners, but did not state what type of reading task or how learners would carry it out.



**Figure 5.1: An excerpt from Lee's lesson plan**

Rossy planned an activity where learners had to read an extract from the History textbook about the protest of African leaders from the early years of European colonial rule on pages 173–174 in the textbook. She also planned that the learners do homework based on the extract they read on page 174.



**Figure 5.2: An excerpt from Rossy's lesson plan**

Monis did not have a lesson plan; however, when I observed her lesson, she gave the learners some questions about a text and later asked them to find the answers by reading their textbooks. I observed that learners gave answers orally while the teacher was writing on the board. She further asked learners to classify good and bad things about Shaka Zulu.

From the interviews that focused on lesson planning processes, I interacted with only four participants who had prepared for the reading lessons they were teaching. These participants were Katongo, Bongile, Lee and Rossy. Katongo indicated that he preferred asking learners to read a certain statement or reason, emphasising the nouns and ensuring that the names of important places and people in the text or statement were read correctly. He also indicated that as a teacher, he would ask for the synonyms of the difficult words in the text and ask learners to explain how they understood what they read. Bongile explained that he would introduce the lesson by engaging all learners and letting them use dictionaries to look up key words. Bongile explained to me that he believes that his class is learner centred, which means the learners are the ones at the centre of learning, while the teacher is the facilitator. He further indicated that he would come up with activities so that he could assess learners individually and in groups. Similarly, Rossy told me that she would give dictionaries to learners to work out the meaning of the key words in the text and activate the learners' prior knowledge. Lee told me that he preferred giving learners more time for more dense readings and giving them the readings early in the lesson. She explained that the short readings are to be done in the classroom and stressed that she likes learners to work in groups because she believes they help each other when working together.

In all the classroom observations, I noticed the following. Katongo asked questions orally, and learners read from the handouts and responded orally. I also observed that he mostly lectured and moved around the classroom. He also emphasised the names of important places and people in the text and the correct pronunciation of these names. I observed Bongile presenting some notes on the projector and responding to learners' questions orally. He asked questions and emphasised some vocabulary, such as the meaning of absolute power and used a lecturing technique. Lee was observed throwing sweets and snacks to introduce his lesson objective, which was meant to illustrate the scramble to colonise Africa, with learners grabbing them. He later asked them to explain what had just happened. Learners read from the handouts to offer answers orally, and he used a questioning style most of the time. Even though he indicated that he would allow more time for reading and preferred learners working in groups, in the interview, he focused on his lesson planning process; he did not motivate the learners to work together to give answers. Rossy asked the learners to read the names of African countries and match them with their European colonisers. Learners read aloud the text about African leaders given to them in handouts. I also observed Rossy asking questions based on the colours of the state or area on a map. She also tried to interpret the text to the class.

From the stimulated recall interviews that focused on the educators' reflection post-classroom observation, Katongo revealed that he was very confident that his lesson achieved its objectives because learners' reading was the main objective of the lesson. He responded as follows, *"To read is to understand, they understood because they gave the answers to the questions asked by the teacher"*. He also explained that he listens to the learners and guides them when they mispronounce the words or when they fail to read well. He also told me that he always adjusts his reading activities if he realises that learners are not comprehending what he asks of them. In most cases, he uses either the simple tense or rephrases his questions so that they can be better understood. Bongile revealed to me that he was also confident that his lesson objectives were met. He said this while smiling at me. He emphasised the learners' involvement in the lesson and the questions he asked to ensure that the learners were following. Responding to the question on whether there were any adjustments made to his instructions during the reading process, he replied as follows, *"Yes, sometimes when I posed a question, and learners are not responding, it prompted to adjust the activity"*. This helped me understand his theoretical point of view, which is reflected in his practice. Rossy indicated that she was confident that her lesson objectives were achieved through these activities. She stressed that the time given was enough, that she gave opportunities to all learners, corrected learners on their pronunciation and tested learners' reading skills. Monis felt that her reading objectives were achieved because the learners were expected to read and answer the questions, which they did. She indicated that she involved the learners in participating. Responding to the question of whether she had made any adjustments to her reading activities, she indicated that she did not make any adjustments because it was a continuation of the lesson she had taught the previous day.

### **5.3.2 Theme 2: Process-based practices used for reading comprehension instruction in History teaching**

Process-based practices used for reading comprehension instruction in History teaching refer to a set of instructional strategies and approaches that focus on reading comprehension processes rather than solely on the product. These practices aim to develop learners' ability to comprehend and analyse historical texts by emphasising the strategies, skills, and cognitive processes involved in understanding and interpreting such texts. This theme recognises that reading comprehension is an active and dynamic process that requires learners to engage with the text, make connections, and construct meaning. Process-based practices for reading comprehension instruction in History teaching in this study included pre-reading activities,

while-reading activities and post-reading activities: text annotation and close reading, explicitly teaching learners a range of comprehension strategies, such as summarising, questioning, making inferences, identifying main ideas, and drawing conclusions.

### ***5.3.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: Pre-reading activities in History teaching***

Although some participants indicated in the interviews focusing on their lesson planning processes that they had planned for reading comprehension, they were observed asking learners to read statements on the chalkboard during pre-reading. They stated in their post interviews, focusing on their reflection on the observed lesson, that they taught reading comprehension, but it was not sufficiently observed in the classroom. Other participants, such as Bongile and Rossy, indicated in the interviews focusing on their lesson planning process, that they pay attention to the key words in the text and use dictionaries during the pre-reading stage. For Bongile, learners were observed reading points on the overhead projector and discussing them with him. When I observed these educators, I noticed that their questions were based on the text, and were all asked orally, which appeared like a mere discussion between the teacher and learners. All educators stated that they gave handouts with notes to learners in advance, like during the first school term. I observed that even though these educators did not plan for teaching reading comprehension, they at times taught it when learners used dictionaries to learn about the key words of the text.

### ***5.3.2.2 Sub-theme 2.2: While-reading activities in History teaching***

These activities focus on text content and general and specific information from the text. They happen at the while-reading stage and mainly focus on decoding skills. While-reading strategies are found in lessons that aim at helping learners develop receptive skills such as listening and reading. These strategies help learners make connections, monitor their understanding, generate questions, and stay focused. Possible while-reading activities when teaching History include summarising and guided reading. Summarising refers to the process in which learners take a larger selection of the text or material and reduce it to the essentials. It can also include recalling the main points or ideas.

Monis did not have a lesson plan, which is why I did not conduct an interview based on her lesson planning processes. It was also very difficult for me to know whether she had planned to teach reading comprehension in her History lesson. The other four participants in the study used while-reading activities differently as follows.

Katongo described that he mostly picks difficult words and asks learners to give the synonyms and then asks them to explain how they understand the text. He believes that it allows him to measure exactly whether the learners understand the text they read. Bongile used his post-reading activities by coming up with questions aimed to be answered individually or in groups. These questions are mostly asked orally, and the responses are oral. Lee preferred using a flyer with a few written facts about a prominent leader. He sits learners in groups and gives handouts where the learners read together. He believes that learners help each other well when they work in groups. Rossy prefers to give learners an extract to read, and she notes down errors as the learners pronounce some words and corrects them.

All five participants in the study were observed and presented their lessons based on their unique planning processes and available resources. For example, Katongo and Bongile were observed presenting points to learners from a handout and on the overhead projector, while Lee and Rossy were observed engaging learners in reading the text.

Although Monis was observed teaching a lesson about Shaka Zulu, she did not plan for reading comprehension in her History lesson plan. She merely asked learners to take their textbooks and follow, while she read. It appeared as if she was conducting a presentation on a known topic. Learners followed in their textbooks, and later, she asked them to read short paragraphs about Shaka Zulu one by one.

The five participants in the study were all interviewed after they presented their lessons, and they responded as follows. Katongo, Bongile, Rossy and Monis indicated that they were confident that their while-reading activities had achieved their objectives. However, Lee was not so sure that his while-reading activities achieved their objectives. He responded as follows:

*Yeah, I would say so, but some as you observed so they have problem pronunciation of words. But overall, all they did good. You will find that sometimes. In the delay time, you have to control the learners. No, this is not how you pronounce the word. How you pronounce it. (Participant C, Interview Transcript, 4 August 2023)*

Katongo, Bongile and Monis indicated that they monitored their students' involvement and comprehension by asking questions orally during the History lesson. On a different note, Lee and Rossy responded that they try to give clues and support by giving other learners who struggle with reading skills opportunities to read while they correct pronunciation errors.

Unlike other participants, Monis did not make any adjustments to her while-reading activities or instructions during the reading process in History teaching. She explained that she could not adjust the lesson activities because the lesson was a continuation of a lesson she had already planned; however, she did not have a lesson plan to prove what she said. Other educators in the study adjusted the while-reading activities based on the situation in the classroom and learners' responses to other activities, such as pre-reading. The while-reading strategies are the reading activities that aim to focus on text structure and organisation of the reading passage (Güzel, 2022).

### ***5.3.2.3 Sub-theme 2.3: Post-reading activities in History teaching***

These are activities or strategies that follow while-reading activities, the third activity in a sequence of lesson presentation. These activities or strategies are intended to check learners' comprehension and deeper analysis of text (Güzel, 2022). At this stage, learners can produce language-related topics. Learners make connections and can use the prior knowledge acquired from the pre- and while-knowledge reading stages. In the context of my study, post-reading activities are crucial in History teaching, as these strategies allow learners to evaluate, synthesise and analyse the written text; they can ask critical questions to construct the meaning of the text. Some possible post-reading activities when teaching reading in History include summarising, creating a quiz, playing a game, doing further research, writing a story, and retelling the information.

None of the five participants in the study wrote that they planned for teaching post-reading activities in their lesson plans, but they did indicate that they had planned for post-reading activities in their lesson plans during the interviews. However, when I observed them in their History classrooms, I noticed that some of them gave post-reading activities even when they did not plan for them. When I analysed their History lesson plans, I noticed that all their lesson plan formats did not have the three stages used in teaching reading comprehension, as they should be in a language teaching lesson plan. I also noticed that some of my participants did not know what post-reading activities were, and as a result, they did not respond well to the questions about post-reading activities in History teaching.

### **5.3.3 Theme 3: Assessment practices used for reading comprehension instruction in History teaching**

Assessment practices used for reading comprehension instruction in History teaching refer to the strategies employed to assess learners' reading comprehension skills and understanding of historical texts. These assessment practices aim to evaluate students' ability to comprehend, analyse, and interpret historical content through reading, and provide feedback to guide instructional decisions and support learners' growth in reading comprehension. Assessment practices used for reading comprehension instruction in History teaching in the context of this study include formative, summative, self-assessment, and reflection.

#### ***5.3.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: Strategies and methods employed to assess students' reading comprehension skills in History teaching***

All the participants in the study employ different strategies and methods when assessing their students' reading comprehension in History teaching. Katongo and Bongile stated that they use formal and informal activities as strategies to assess learners' reading comprehension skills in History teaching. They all indicated that it was an easy way to know the strengths and weaknesses of learners and how they progress with their learning of the objectives and topics in History teaching. When I observed the five participants, I found that they most used question-and-answer, interactive strategies in their classrooms. These educators were observed initiating discussions by asking and answering questions based on the historical topics. Bongile stated that topics in History are broad – assessment cannot be completed in one lesson, but can be done after a week or when they finish learning a specific objective. However, he used tests that involve reading. Lee stated that he normally gives learners a topic to research, and they present their findings in class. Sometimes, the educators asked learners to work in groups to complete a reading task. Rossy asked learners to read an extract about the various ways the African people reacted to the European invasion of their land.

#### ***5.3.3.2 Sub-theme 3.2: Types of assessment employed to assess understanding of historical texts in History teaching***

The participants in this study employed a similar assessment type to assess learners' understanding of historical texts. Katongo, Bongile, Lee and Ross told me that they use formal and informal assessments. Monis did not have a lesson plan, and I could not interview her based on her lesson planning processes. Rossy indicated in her lesson plan assessment section

that she planned to give homework, but did not specify what type of homework learners should do and how they would do it – whether it was as individuals, pairs or group work. Katongo indicated that he planned to assess how learners explain Maharero’s reasons for cancelling his protection treaty. He also had an activity to develop learners’ English reading skills. Bongile indicated that he planned to investigate the Zulu. He also did not state clearly what the learners were going to do and how they were going to do the investigation. Bongile’s lesson plan had an activity of reading for the EAC section. He planned that the learners were going to read the handouts and notes, but did not indicate the reading in the assessment section. Lee planned to give a reading task, but did not indicate clearly how the reading was going to be done.

When I observed these educators in their classrooms, I noticed that most of them had changed what they had indicated they would assess in the lesson plans. They also did not plan for reading comprehension in their lesson plans. I also observed that these content educators did not consider the three stages of teaching reading when they planned for reading lessons in History teaching.

During the stimulated recall interviews that focused on the educators’ reflection post-classroom observations, all participants told me that they use informal assessment through questioning and answering and formal assessment through written work, homework and group work.

#### **5.4 Theme 4: Educators’ Beliefs Regarding the Need to Foster Learners’ Historical Literacy and Critical Thinking in History Teaching**

This theme encapsulates the beliefs of secondary History educators regarding the integration of reading comprehension into History teaching as their commitment to enhancing learners’ historical literacy and critical thinking. These educators firmly believe that reading comprehension skills are pivotal in enabling students to engage effectively with historical texts, primary sources, and secondary literature. By incorporating reading comprehension activities into their instructional practices, they aim to cultivate students’ capacity to analyse, interpret, and evaluate historical information critically. They perceive these skills as essential for empowering students to be well-informed citizens who can navigate and comprehend complex historical narratives.

#### **5.4.1.1 Sub-theme 4.1: Integration of reading comprehension into History teaching to enhance learners' historical literacy**

All the participants in this study revealed that they gave historical readings in advance so the learners could read the topics before they came to school. The handouts with the topics were given out in the first semester, and the data for this study were collected during the second semester. Bongile and Rossy indicated that they consider learners' prior knowledge and use dictionaries when learners encounter difficulties with keywords in the text. Lee revealed that he does a short reading in class and gives the long reading for homework. Katongo and Bongile revealed that they give written extracts from the historical topics and ask learners to read them and interpret their meaning. Regarding how they incorporate different reading levels and learning needs into their lesson plans, the participants had the following to say:

*I ask learners to read a certain statement or reasons, for example, and then by reading I will ensure that the nouns, and all other important places and people in the text are or statement are read correctly. (Participant A, Interview Transcript, 02 August 2023).*

*OK, for instance, let me say during the presentation of the lesson, when you introduce the lesson to learners. learners should be able in the introduction to read or to know what the topic under discussion is during the introduction they should know the topics already. When I'm projecting, allowed a times and the during the presentation of the lesson, I will engage them like when I'm presenting that they can also read if the attempts that need to be explained, we try then let me say I first give them opportunity like if there are key words they will read them. If they are unable to explain them, you know it is learner centred, so learners first need to be engaged looking at their level of understanding. If they were able to know what it means, it's fine. But once they are done also come in as a teacher. (Participant B, Interview Transcript, 08 August 2023).*

*OK. I would say on that it depends, sometimes you find that as I said, it can be time consuming, so if the reading content is so dense I give it as a homework sometimes. So that learners would go on they read on themselves during study time or their free time. They understand the context and then in the next lesson, I would come and ask them to present what they understood in their reading. If is just the other what they are reading is less so we can do it in the class. We give few minutes. They'll read it, then they'll ask them right away. What do you guys understand? By what you read. There are those vocabularies that they don't understand. They would sometimes ask on how sometimes clarify to them as to what. Does that weight mean? (Participant C, Interview Transcript, 04 August 2023).*

*OK. Yeah, I can say that first I will do distribute dictionaries where it's needed dictionaries. So, we get to look at certain way that I will know that it will we can say these main words, keywords for example if they were to define certain words or first, I will read the text. And then if I found that there are certain words in this text that will hinder the understanding of these learners. Then I will give them dictionaries and then they will read or get to find out more about these definitions in the dictionary and then now after that is when I will give them the text that I have prepared for them, knowing that they have a prior knowledge to certain ways that are displayed in this text. (Participant D, Interview Transcript, 09 August 2023)*

*Participant E, Monis did not have lesson plan. (Study journal, 2 August 2023)*

#### **5.4.1.2 Sub-theme 4.2: Educators' beliefs informing critical thinking in History teaching**

To describe the educators' beliefs that inform critical thinking in History teaching, one needs to consider facts such as contextual understanding, multiple perspectives, critical thinking, connecting the past and present and inquiry-based learning.

Participants in the study proved that they were keen to help learners understand the historical events within their broader social, political, and economic contexts. This approach encourages learners to think critically about cause-and-effect relationships and the complexities of historical narratives. Monis indicated that she believes that she presents History from multiple viewpoints, including those of marginalised groups. This revealed that she was helping learners to recognise biases and develop a more nuanced understanding of historical events.

Critical reflection is when a History teacher encourages learners to reflect critically on historical interpretations and their implications for understanding the present. This includes examining how history shapes current societal and political contexts. For example, Bongile, Monis and Lee used historical topics and asked learners to apply them in the present context; through this, learners engaged in critical thinking because the present is not like the past – the current political context and society in general are completely different.

Regarding connecting the past and present, some participants were observed emphasising the relevance of historical knowledge to current events. This was done through discussions between learners and educators. The educators drew connections between historical events and contemporary issues. Bongile and Monis asked learners to evaluate the leadership of Chief Shaka Zulu and compare it to the current leadership and political context in Namibia. I am convinced that these participants have a purpose for engaging with the learners, which is to

instil an understanding and appreciation of the significance of history in understanding and addressing current problems.

Regarding inquiry-based learning, I observed some educators motivating learners to pose their own questions and asking learners to conduct research and seek answers. Lee explained that this process of inviting questions from learners and conducting research about historical issues benefits learners in developing critical thinking skills, as they learn to investigate and analyse historical matters independently. Regarding the mixed responses from learners based on their personal feelings about Chief Shaka Zulu's leadership, Monis responded as follows:

*When it comes to History, it's very difficult to make the learners to be at the same level, because what we are encouraging in History is for learners to have different views even when we are marking. You will find this child is supporting the other child is not supporting. So, all the views we take them as important. So, that's why we are encouraging the learners to have critical thinking. Now that critical thinking can be either the child is supporting, or the child is not supporting. So, we don't say now because this group is supporting the other group is not support is not supporting. Can we now agree to one point? No. We let it to be like that. Yes, it's like that in History. (Participant E, Interviews Transcript, 15 August 2023)*

## **5.5 Theme 5: Educators' Beliefs Based on Promoting Interdisciplinary Connections and Literacy Integration**

Another theme that resulted from the findings was the educators' beliefs about fostering interdisciplinary connections and integrating literacy skills within the study of History. Secondary History educators, informed by their initial teacher education and continuous professional development, acknowledge the inherent interdisciplinary nature of history and the value of integrating literacy competencies. They believe in incorporating reading comprehension activities alongside other literacy skills, such as writing, speaking, and listening. By blending these skills within the context of history, they aim to augment learners' historical literacy, foster connections across diverse subject areas, and equip students with the proficiency to read and write effectively within the discipline of history.

### ***5.5.1.1 Sub-theme 5.1: Educators' interdisciplinary connections between literacy skills within the study of History***

In the interviews based on the process of lesson planning with the History educators, some educators in the study revealed that they plan to integrate reading in teaching History content.

Katongo's lesson plan had a section for opportunities to develop learners' practice in English reading and writing skills. Similarly, Bongile's lesson plan had a section for EAC. He planned that his learners would read the handouts, notes, and write notes. Rossy and Lee did not indicate anything that has to do with literacy skills being integrated in the teaching of History. Monis did not have a lesson plan.

I observed in their classroom practices for History that, although some participants, such as Katongo and Bongile, indicated in their lesson plans that learners would be doing reading comprehension during the History teaching, it was not reading comprehension but simply reading statements and points on the projector aloud. The findings revealed that these History educators have limited understanding and knowledge of reading comprehension. In contrast, Lee and Rossy did not indicate literacy skills, reading and writing in their lesson plan; however, I observed them integrating reading comprehension into History teaching. For example, I noted this about Rossy:

The findings from educators' reflections based on the observed classroom indicated that some educators for History were not trained to integrate reading and writing skills in teaching History. I can use the example of participant D, Rossy she explained to me that teaching reading in content subjects like History is neglected in Namibian schools.

#### ***5.5.1.2 Sub-theme 5.2: Educators' initial education and continuous professional development***

In qualitative research, participants are selected based on purposive sampling. This means that all five participants and the research sites in the study were specifically chosen because they were beneficial to the research purpose, questions and goals (Wang & Cheng, 2023).

The educators in the study were all trained and qualified to teach History at secondary school level in the Namibian Oshana Region Directorates of Education. The sites chosen were all schools offering Grade 8 History. This meant I chose these sites to benefit my study's data collection. I documented the participants' profiles, including their professional qualifications and years of teaching experience, in Table 5.1.

All the participants revealed that they were unfamiliar with teaching reading comprehension in their History lessons during their initial educators' training. However, they have used their personal experiences to try to teach the RAC because of their learners' backgrounds and

contexts. For example, Katongo and Bongile had planned for reading and writing skills as shown in their unique lesson plan formats at their respective schools, not because they were trained to do so, but because they saw the necessity.

## **5.6 Chapter Summary**

The main purpose of Chapter Five was to explore the pedagogical strategies used by the Grade 8 History secondary educators in Namibia. I analysed and presented data that I obtained through semi-structured interviews that focused on the History teacher's processes of coming up with a lesson plan that incorporated reading comprehension in History teaching, the classroom observation, and semi-structured interviews that focused on the Grade 8 History teacher's reflections on the observed History lesson. Five themes were used to describe the pedagogical activities used by the secondary school History educators when teaching reading comprehension in History. The findings in this study were aligned with the literature review and theoretical framework, schema theory and reflective practices. The findings revealed that although all five participants were qualified and experienced History grades 8-12 secondary school educators, they did not receive training on integrating reading comprehension into History teaching. Chapter 6 will explore the significance of these results and offer recommendations.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 6.1 Introduction

In Chapter Five, I presented and discussed the research findings, revealing the efficacy of experienced educators through reflective practice and schema theory in promoting reading comprehension to Grade 8 Namibian History educators in the secondary phase. I further discussed and elaborated on the five themes that emerged from my study by describing the effective reading strategies that the experienced Grade 8 History educators implement when teaching reading comprehension during History lessons. This is the final chapter of the research, and it presents and interprets the data generated in accordance with the research questions as highlighted in Chapter One, situating them within the theoretical framework. I also conclude my study, pointing out the pedagogical implications of the study. Finally, this chapter discusses the study limitations and makes several recommendations for future research.

### 6.2 Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian secondary school History educators in teaching reading comprehension. In Namibia, educators remain largely invisible in policies that have to do with pedagogical practices; if seen at all, they are considered only as technicians through whom educational content is delivered (Alumbungu & Mpofu, 2025). As a result, educators' own-developed knowledge and skills in teaching reading comprehension are under-researched. Thus, the focus of this study was to explore how History educators think about integrating reading comprehension into their teaching. For a clear overview of the study, each chapter of the research is briefly discussed as follows.

Chapter One provided the rationale for my study. I presented the problem statement, highlighting the worrying issue of Grade 8 History educators and their integration of reading comprehension, which was the focal point of my study. Thereafter, I formulated and provided primary and secondary research questions, which guided my study and presented a study overview.

Chapter Two of this thesis commenced by defining the crucial matter of the EAC approach within the Namibian educational context, with a particular emphasis on the literature on the RAC approach. This chapter expanded upon these concepts, offering a comprehensive understanding of their significance within the scope of this study. I also presented the purpose of the Namibian History Syllabus for grades 8–12 and aligned it with the broader national curriculum established by the Namibian MEAC. The chapter concluded by highlighting reading strategies in History teaching.

Chapter 3 focused on the theoretical underpinnings of the study based on the integration of the schema theory and reflective practice as powerful tools for understanding the details of how high school History educators enhance reading comprehension. Beginning with an overview of schema theory, the chapter highlighted its roots in cognitive psychology, emphasising its application in understanding how educators organise language structures and content-specific vocabulary essential for fostering reading comprehension. It further discussed the two parts of the theoretical framework: the first part presented the discussion of the schema theory and types of schemata, and the second part of the discussion dwelt on reflective practice based on the work of the two great scholars: John Dewey's (1933) theory of reflective practice and Donald Schön's (1987) theory of reflective practice. This chapter also highlighted the three levels of reflective practices, namely reflection-on-action, reflection-in-action and reflection-for-action.

Chapter 4 outlined the design, methodological choices and decisions that directed my inquiry during the study. It also provided the paradigmatic perspectives employed and the methodological choices made in the data generation process. I elaborated on the data-generating techniques guiding my study, which included document analysis, non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Moreover, this chapter explained the criteria used to select the participants for the study and the significance of purposive sampling and the data analysis procedure.

Finally, Chapter Five's main purpose was to explore the pedagogical strategies used by Grade 8 History secondary educators in Namibia. I analysed and presented data that I obtained through semi-structured interviews that focused on the History teacher's processes of coming up with a lesson plan that incorporated reading comprehension in History teaching, the classroom observation, and semi-structured interviews that focused on the Grade 8 History teacher's reflection on the observed History lesson. Five themes were used to describe the pedagogical strategies used by the secondary school History educators in teaching reading

comprehension in History. The findings were then aligned with the literature review and theoretical framework, schema theory and reflective practices. All five participants were experienced and qualified History secondary school educators who did not receive any training on how to integrate reading comprehension into History teaching during their teacher training.

### **6.3 Conclusions of the Study in Terms of the Research Questions**

This study aimed to explore the pedagogical strategies used by experienced Grade 8 educators when teaching reading comprehension in History. In pursuit of this objective, two research questions were formulated and outlined in Chapter One. These questions guided the study inquiry and were subsequently addressed through thematic analysis of the collected data. The first research question aimed to identify the pedagogical strategies used by Grade 8 educators when teaching reading comprehension in History. The second research question explored the beliefs that inform experienced Grade 8 educators when integrating reading comprehension into History. The results presented here align with the study's research questions posed in Chapter One, and each theme contributed to a deeper understanding of the central phenomenon under investigation.

#### **6.3.1 Research question 1: What are the pedagogical strategies that experienced Grade 8 educators use to enhance reading comprehension in History as part of the Reading Across the Curriculum strategy?**

This question sought to understand the pedagogical strategies that experienced Grade 8 History educators use when teaching reading comprehension in History. To generate data that can be used to answer this question, I used three themes as they emerged from the study: practices for planning reading comprehension instruction in History teaching, process-based practices used for reading comprehension instruction in History, and assessment practices used for reading comprehension in History teaching.

All participants explained that learning objectives are similar because they are taken from the History syllabus for the Namibian curriculum. The participants acknowledged that they used different practices for planning reading comprehension instruction in teaching History. Some participants had objectives that addressed the need to integrate language and History content, while others had general objectives that only focused on content. These findings revealed that some experienced History educators did not have lesson plans when teaching reading comprehension during History lessons. The findings also indicated that participants' learning

objectives were not very clear about how they intended to teach reading comprehension. Their objectives stated that learners would understand but did not overtly state that learners were to engage with a text and understand it through reading comprehension.

When I analysed the participants' lesson plans, I noticed that there were similar and unique activities intended to address reading comprehension in History learning. It appeared that some learners were made to engage with the text and respond to questions based on the text. Some learners were ordered to discuss the text to develop understanding, but not through reading comprehension. However, one participant wrote in their lesson plan that it was through reading comprehension. It was evident that some of these participants did not possess sufficient understanding of the RAC approach in a History teaching setting. The findings further indicated that reading activities used by some participants were not merely planned to address RAC during practice. Some evidence emerged from participants' lesson planning, which indicated that even though participants planned to give reading activities to learners, they failed to indicate how they intended to carry out these activities. One of the salient findings was that all the participants in the study made use of different texts during History lessons, even though reading comprehension was not explicitly stated in the lesson plan.

The following findings emerged from the participants: participants asked learners to read aloud statements on the chalkboard during the pre-reading stage; they reported that they paid attention to the key words in the text and used dictionaries. Learners were observed reading points on the overhead projector, which they discussed with the teacher. Participants asked questions based on the text were done orally which appeared like a mere discussion between the teacher and learners.

### **6.3.2 Research question 2: What are the beliefs that inform experienced Grade 8 History educators when integrating reading comprehension into History?**

This question sought to understand the beliefs that informed experienced Grade 8 History educators when integrating RAC into History teaching. These participants revealed they gave historical reading texts to learners in advance, for the learners to read through before they come to class. When I asked them why they gave the readings in advance, they indicated they believed that learners' prior knowledge and using dictionaries were very important, especially when learners encountered difficulty or key words in the text. They believed that learners should read the historical text and interpret its meaning. The participants further revealed that

the longer reading content was given for homework and study time, and the shorter reading texts were done in the classroom. These texts were assessed orally, by answering questions like “What do you understand from the text?” The participants believed that it is crucial for learners to understand the vocabulary used in the historical texts for a better understanding of the content taught. Participants also indicated that they would change the activities if they found out that there were certain words in the text that hindered the learners’ understanding. Then they gave dictionaries to the learners even though they had not planned to use dictionaries. They had a belief that dictionaries were used only when preparing learners for reading a historical text.

Another belief that participants possessed was that history was presented from multiple viewpoints, including those of marginalised groups. This revealed that the participants tried to help learners recognise biases and develop a more nuanced understanding of historical events. Participants gave past historical topics for learners to apply to the present context. Engaging learners like that helped to encourage learners’ critical thinking, as much of the present is unlike the past. It appeared that the participants motivated learners to draw connections between historical events and contemporary issues. Participants also believed that if they motivated learners to pose their own questions, engaged learners to conduct research, and promoted critical thinking, it would allow learners to investigate and analyse historical issues independently.

Participants showed limited knowledge and understanding of RAC. The findings indicated that some History educators taught reading aloud when they planned for reading comprehension during History teaching. The findings further indicated that these participants did not have adequate beliefs about promoting interdisciplinary connections during History teaching. Some participants did not plan to integrate reading into History teaching, but were integrating it during their teaching, while other participants did not bother to plan for reading comprehension in History. All participants revealed that they were unfamiliar with RAC as it was not part of their initial course during teacher training at colleges and universities. Participants also indicated that continuous professional development was ineffective in providing them with sufficient professional development on RAC in content subjects like History.

## **6.4 Situating the Findings Within the Theoretical Framework of the Study**

The theoretical framework of my study was drawn from schema theory and reflective practice. Schema is a complex process involving applying and processing linguistic knowledge and background information (Alahmad, 2020). Khartite (2021) claims that schema theory is based on the belief that every act of comprehension involves one's prior knowledge of the world. Schema theory consists of four different schema categories, namely content schema, cultural schema, formal schema and linguistic schema. Reflective practice is based on the work of Dewey (1933) and Schön (1987). According to Farrell (2020), reflective practice in teaching involves a deliberate and systematic process through which educators critically examine and evaluate their teaching methods, instructional decisions, and overall classroom experiences.

Corresponding to the theoretical framework, content schema, four participants' lesson plans had sections that addressed learners' prior knowledge and learning objectives. The participants showed the integration of prior historical knowledge into reading activities by asking questions, writing terms on the board and asking learners to use dictionaries to work out meaning. All the participants believed that reading activities were aligned with the ability to establish connections between different historical periods. This agrees with the explanation of Smith et al. (2021) that content schema refers to the background knowledge that students have about a text. After engaging with the participants in the interviews, I gained insight into how educators employed various pedagogical strategies to bridge the gap between the students' existing content schema and the objectives of the RAC strategy.

In addition, classroom observations allowed me to evaluate the educators' capacity to identify and incorporate key historical themes, events, and contextual nuances relevant to the curriculum. Cultural schema and the findings of Sun (2022) ascertain that understanding how cultural schema influences the interpretation of historical texts enables educators to tailor their approaches effectively, ensuring that reading strategies resonate with learners' cultural contexts and contribute to a more inclusive and enriching learning experience. In agreement, my participants agreed that cultural schema was crucial for understanding how cultural schema influenced the understanding of historical texts during History teaching. They also affirmed to me that they had carefully selected their reading materials that resonated with the cultural heritage and experience of the learners to enhance reading comprehension. Through classroom observation, I observed educators cultivating an inclusive classroom environment by encouraging learners to share their cultural insights and asking learners to interpret the text

based on how they understood it. According to the linguistic schema, the participants revealed that they considered learners' proficiency in linguistic elements when choosing reading materials. Cultural schema advocates that the reading materials that accommodate varying levels of language proficiency among learners are the best materials. Lastly, formal schema is grounded in cognitive psychology and denotes the structured knowledge frameworks individuals hold within specific domains (Wang et al., 2023). It further describes the text structure and the reader's grasp of genre and rhetorical techniques. Aligned with the findings from participants, they explained that their teaching practices varied, and that personal preferences played a crucial role in how they imparted their own subject expertise when designing lesson plans and selecting relevant texts. For the schema theory, History educators are regarded as facilitators who are there to provide a conducive classroom environment for learning. The learners are the ones who contribute new ideas for discussion, and the History educators, as content educators, comment and seek learners' approval of the new ideas. Reading comprehension is vital for learners' History learning and understanding.

Finally, reflective practice theory empowers educators to make informed adjustments, adapt to evolving educational landscapes, and create a more responsive and learner-centred learning environment (Birch, 2022). Schön defined reflection as "a way of approaching the world and its dilemmas". This implies that educators encounter various challenges during their instructional activities, and their approach to these challenges is influenced by the nature of the issues at hand. Corresponding with the theoretical framework and the findings of Farrell (2018) and Farrell and Guz (2019), the participants agreed that they reflected on their practices before (reflection-for-action) and after (reflection-on-action) the lesson presentation. As experienced educators, they reflected on their teaching practices, often intending to improve their practices. The participants agreed that they reflected on their teaching practice every day, weekly or after they finished the topic. When I observed their lesson plan documents, I noticed that the reflection section was left blank. This meant that the History educators did not note their reflections after they had implemented their lessons. Aligning these findings to the reflective practice theory, this is called reflection-on-action. Based on Zhang (2023), reflection-on-action is defined as the retrospective contemplation of practice to uncover the knowledge used in a particular situation by analysing and interpreting the information recalled. They revealed that whenever they noticed that learners did not understand, as they were busy presenting the content, they immediately changed their activities to meet learners' needs. Even though the participants assured me that they were aware of their immediate actions during practice, they

could not explain to me that it was reflection-in-action because they were doing it without knowing what they were doing. Corresponding to reflection-on-action, the study participants confirmed the importance of distinguishing their lesson shortcomings by clearly stating them in their lesson plans and finding other methods to remediate their mistakes.

## **6.5 Limitations of the Study**

This was qualitative research, and the findings may not be generalisable to other settings, such as all secondary schools in Namibia, because of the small size of sample. Qualitative studies do not intend to generalise findings. The issue of bracketing and subjectivity could have been a limitation, as I might not have picked up all the valuable information. Lack of experience in research could also have compromised my engagement with the research. The findings, however, could inform educators' practices of teaching RAC and policymakers and teacher trainers. More so, the whole project was a humbling experience that enlightened and broadened my knowledge of the RAC and led to much reflection on my own perceptions and practices of teaching reading comprehension in History at the secondary school level.

The multiple data tools I employed, for instance, document analysis, non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews, assisted me in acquiring sufficient information regarding the effective reading strategies for teaching reading comprehension in History in Grade 8, enabling me to conduct an inductive analysis of the results. However, I believe that the inclusion of a learner's questionnaire as a research tool would have provided me with more tangible data on the strategies that work best for learners, instead of relying on the experienced educators' perceptions alone. Hence, I recommend that a learner questionnaire be employed as a method for gathering data in future research.

## **6.6 Recommendations for Practice**

As a researcher and an ESL educator in the co-construction of RAC knowledge at the secondary level, I subsequently reflected on the literature reviewed and the research process, together with the findings on RAC, allowing me to gather concrete evidence. From these findings, I drew up these recommendations pertaining to the teaching of reading comprehension during History teaching.

### **6.6.1 Recommendation 1: Appropriate reading activities to address Reading Across the Curriculum (RAC) in History teaching**

The distinctive nature of English as a language makes it a unique discipline in the curriculum of education, particularly in the Namibian context. Thus, one cannot achieve the language objectives without using appropriate reading activities. It is recommended that History educators employ appropriate activities during History teaching. The present study's findings highlighted the need for appropriate reading activities to enhance grasping historical content and promote language proficiency across the curriculum of the basic education landscape.

### **6.6.2 Recommendation 2: Implementation of pre-, while- and post-reading stages in History lesson planning documents to address Reading Across the Curriculum (RAC)**

The current study's literature review presented the integration of these three reading stages into a History lesson plan that intends to infuse reading comprehension. These three reading stages aimed to develop learners' ability to comprehend and analyse historical texts by emphasising the strategies, skills, and cognitive processes involved in understanding and interpreting such texts. Reading comprehension is an active and dynamic process that requires learners to engage with the text, make connections, and construct meaning. I recommend that the MEAC should revise the current format of the History curriculum to include pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading. The reading comprehension activities should include text annotation, close reading, and explicitly teach learners a range of comprehension strategies such as summarising, questioning, making inferences, identifying main ideas, and drawing conclusions.

### **6.6.3 Recommendation 3: Integration of common methods and types of assessment in assessing Reading Across the Curriculum (RAC) in History**

I acknowledge that the History educators in this study had used various methods and types of assessment when assessing reading comprehension during History teaching; however, I should point out that these methods and assessment types were not intended to assess reading comprehension. There is a need to integrate common methods and types of assessment as these assessment practices aim to evaluate learners' ability to comprehend, analyse and interpret historical content through reading, and provide feedback to guide instructional decisions and support students' growth in reading comprehension. It is suggested that formative, summative,

self-assessment and reflection should be used when assessing reading comprehension in History teaching.

#### **6.6.4 Recommendation 4: Adoption of effective reading strategies in teaching reading comprehension in History at the secondary school level**

Bartz's (2016) findings suggest that the four comprehension strategies are summarising, vocabulary development, comparing, and guided reading. These are effective reading strategies in teaching reading comprehension in History. I recommend that secondary schools in Namibia use these strategies when teaching reading comprehension during History teaching. In my opinion, I believe these strategies have the potential to enhance learners' comprehension in History classrooms. Furthermore, these strategies are proven to be effective because they lead to successful results in classrooms of History classrooms if they are integrated appropriately.

#### **6.6.5 Recommendation 5: Adequate teacher training on how to integrate Reading Across the Curriculum (RAC) for secondary school History educators**

The high rate of low literacy among learners who enter secondary school level from junior primary school through Grade 7 to Grade 8 is a call to action, which necessitates the recommendation of adequate training for educators on how to integrate RAC into History lessons. This is because these educators have learners whose language proficiency is not yet at the expected grade level; hence, educators should be equipped with RAC language skills to be able to scaffold these learners. They could assist these low-performing learners and overcome the limitation of not being trained to infuse language during their initial teacher training. For better performance in both content and language proficiency, I recommend that experienced educators receive adequate training from the MEAC through their regional directorate of education.

### **6.7 Recommendations for Future Research**

In relation to the findings of the study, in this section, I suggest areas for future research relating to the recommendations made in the previous section.

### **6.7.1 Recommendation 1: Integration of teaching RAC strategies into teaching History at the secondary school level**

Reading Across the Curriculum (RAC) is proposed by other researchers as a solution to persisting poor performance in ESL and content subjects taught in English. The recently revised curriculum inherited the legacy of poor performance across the curriculum. I, therefore, strongly recommend that more research be conducted on how experienced secondary educators integrate reading comprehension strategies into other content subjects in the Namibian context.

### **6.7.2 Recommendation 2: An action research study on developing experienced educators' knowledge on integrating RAC into content subjects**

I am convinced that an action research study should be conducted on the integration of RAC into content subjects such as History, Geography, Sciences and Mathematics. This is because there is limited literature on this field in the Namibian context. I further recommend that the findings from the action research should be implemented and used in the literature reviews of future scholars of RAC.

## **6.8 Concluding Remarks**

This study explored the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian secondary school educators in teaching reading comprehension in History. The study demonstrated that integrating RAC strategies into teaching History improves language proficiency and promotes a deeper understanding of historical content. By applying schema and reflective practice theories, the research revealed the challenge of integrating the reading comprehension approach into History teaching. These findings contribute to a new approach of integrating reading comprehension in History at the secondary school level. By implementing these effective reading strategies while teaching History to secondary school learners, my work will fill the gap between English language teaching and content subject teaching, like History. Importantly, schema theory suggests that content educators often use schema-driven instruction to activate students' prior knowledge, and reflective practice suggests that teaching experience with thoughtful reflections can foster awareness, development, and personal growth.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: Stimulated Recall Interviews

#### Stimulated recall interviews (focused on the process of lesson planning)

##### Purpose of this interview

The purpose of this first interview is to learn about your process of creating lesson plans for reading in Grade 8 History lessons. The interview will take about 30 minutes, and I encourage you to be as honest and detailed as possible. Your response will be kept confidential and anonymised.

Stimulated recall interview component	Questions	Interviewer's comments
Lesson plan creation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can you describe the process you go through to create a lesson plan for a History lesson that involves reading?</li> <li>2. What type of materials do you use to develop your lesson plan (i.e., textbooks, primary sources, digital resources, etc.)?</li> <li>3. How long does it usually take you to develop a lesson plan for a History lesson involving reading?</li> <li>4. How do you incorporate different reading levels and learning needs into your lesson plans?</li> </ol>	
Reading strategies used in the History classes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Can you describe how you incorporate pre-reading activities into your lesson plans for History learning involving reading, and how do these activities prepare students for the reading?</li> <li>6. During-reading activities are critical to monitoring the comprehension of learners, can you describe how you utilise during-reading activities in your plans?</li> <li>7. In what ways do you use post-reading activities to assess and reinforce understanding of the reading material or to create opportunities for follow-on work?</li> <li>8. Can you think of an example of a successful lesson plan you developed that effectively utilised pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities, and what made it successful in your opinion?</li> <li>9. How does your use of pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities change depending on the age group or skill level of your learners?</li> </ol>	
Assessment of the reading lesson	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. What type of assessments do you use to evaluate students' reading comprehension in History learning?</li> </ol>	

	11. How do these assessments inform your lesson plans for future History lessons that involve reading?	
Reflections and adaptations	12. How often do you reflect on your lesson plans after they have been implemented? 13. What factors do you consider when making adaptations to your lesson plans? 14. Can you think of a time when you had to make an adaptation to a lesson plan on reading in History learning? Can you describe what you did?	

## APPENDIX B: Classroom Observation Guide

### CLASSROOM OBSERVATION GUIDE

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_ Observation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: 8\_\_\_\_\_

Subject: History Number of learners: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Purpose of the classroom observation

The purpose of this observation is to learn how you incorporate pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities in your History teaching in Grade 8 classes.

Components of the lesson plan	What are you going to observe during each stage of the lesson and why?	Researcher's reflection on the observed classroom teaching actions
Introduction of the reading lesson	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does the teacher introduce the reading text?</li> <li>2. Does the teacher provide any background knowledge or context?</li> <li>3. Does the teacher set any objectives or provide a roadmap for the lesson?</li> <li>4. How does the teacher actively engage the students in the learning process?</li> <li>5. Are the learning objectives for the lesson plan connected logically to previous lessons and future instruction?</li> </ol>	
Pre-reading activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Does the teacher employ any pre-reading activities to prepare the students for the text?</li> <li>7. Does the teacher provide any visual aids, such as images or maps, to aid in the interpretation of the reading material?</li> <li>8. Are there any anticipatory discussions or brainstorming sessions to generate prior knowledge about the topic?</li> </ol>	
During-reading activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Does the teacher facilitate the reading process by providing support or guidance?</li> </ol>	

	<p>10. What activities are carried out during the reading process to promote comprehension?</p> <p>11. What techniques does the teacher employ to monitor comprehension during the reading process?</p>	
Post-reading activities	<p>12. Does the teacher provide any post-reading activities to assess or reinforce understanding?</p> <p>13. Are there opportunities for students to engage in discussions or collaborate on projects based on the reading material?</p> <p>14. What activities are carried out to facilitate reflection or personal connections with the reading material?</p>	
Assessment	<p>15. How effectively does the teacher utilise the assessment results to improve the teaching of the students?</p> <p>16. Does the teacher provide regular feedback to the students to improve their performance?</p> <p>17. Are there any modifications made to lesson plans or teaching methods based on the assessment data?</p>	
Use of learning and teaching materials	<p>18. How frequently does the teacher incorporate technology into the history lessons?</p> <p>19. Are there any multimedia material such as videos, images, or audio clips used to support the teaching?</p> <p>20. Are the teaching material and resources used age-appropriate and align with the curriculum objectives?</p>	
Conclusion of the reading lesson	<p>21. How does the teacher conclude the reading lesson?</p> <p>22. Does the teacher summarise the main points or learning objectives of the lesson?</p> <p>23. Are there opportunities for students to ask questions or clarify any misconceptions regarding the reading material?</p>	

Lesson + Topic \_\_\_\_\_

Observer's name: Mr A Kambindji      Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C: Stimulated Recall Interviews

### Stimulated recall interviews (focused on the teachers' reflection post-classroom observations)

#### Purpose of this interview

The purpose of this interview is to gather your reflections of the reading activities you used in your history lessons. To aid in this discussion, I will be playing an audio recording of the lessons I observed as a prompt for important points to consider. The interview will take about 30 minutes, and I encourage you to be as honest and detailed as possible. Your response will be kept confidential and anonymised.

Reflection components	Guiding questions	Interviewer's notes
Introduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can you describe your thought process or overall perception of the observed lesson?</li> <li>2. Do you feel the lesson achieved its learning objectives?</li> <li>3. Were there any unforeseen events or challenges that affected the lesson outcome?</li> </ol>	
Pre-reading activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. How did you approach the pre-reading activities?</li> <li>5. Did you use any specific resources or materials to support the pre-reading instructions?</li> <li>6. What was the students' response to the pre-reading activities?</li> </ol>	
During-reading activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Did you feel the during-reading activities achieve its objective?</li> <li>8. How did you monitor the students' engagement and comprehension during the reading process?</li> <li>9. Were there any adjustments made to the activities or instructions during the reading process?</li> </ol>	
Post-reading activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. What was the rationale behind the post-reading activities chosen?</li> <li>11. Did you incorporate any collaborative or reflective activities in your post-reading instructions?</li> <li>12. What were the major concerns any involvement around students?</li> </ol>	

Reflection on the lesson	<p>13. If you could make any changes to the lesson, what would they be?</p> <p>14. What were your major highlights of the lesson?</p> <p>15. Did the lesson appeal to students and enhance their understanding?</p>	
Assessment	<p>16. What formal and informal assessments did you use during the lesson?</p> <p>17. Were the assessments sufficient to evaluate students' comprehension of the reading material?</p> <p>18. How effectively did the results inform ongoing instruction and future lesson planning?</p>	

## APPENDIX D: Ethical Clearance Letter



Rhodes University, Education Faculty  
Research Ethics Committee  
PO Box 94, Makhanda, 6140, South Africa  
Tel: +27 (0) 46 603 8393  
Fax: +27 (0) 46 603 8028  
email: [e.rosenberg@ru.ac.za](mailto:e.rosenberg@ru.ac.za)

<https://www.ru.ac.za/researchgateway/ethics/>

27 July 2023

Dr Clement Simuja

Education Department

C.Simuja@ru.ac.za

Dear Dr Clement Simuja and Mr Absalom Kambindji

**Re:** Exploring the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian secondary school History educators in teaching reading comprehension

APPLICATION NUMBER: 2023-7335-7797

This letter confirms that your research ethics application has been reviewed and **APPROVED** by the Education Faculty Research Ethics Committee (EF-REC). Your permission letter(s) where applicable have been received and you are free to proceed with your study.

Approval is granted for 1 year. An annual progress report is required in order to renew approval for an additional period. You will receive an email notifying you when the progress report is due.

Should any substantive change(s) be made during the research process, that may have ethical implications, you should notify the Education Faculty REC Chair via email. This includes changes in investigators. The REC Chair will advise as to whether a new application is necessary.

Do keep this clearance letter secure and accessible throughout your study and after its completion. It will be needed when a thesis is examined and when publications are submitted to journals.

Please also submit a brief report to the REC Chair on the completion of the research. This can be done via email. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether the research was conducted successfully and whether any ethics-related matters arose that the committee should be aware of, in order to guide future studies.

Sincerely,

**Prof Eureka Rosenberg**

**Chair: Education Faculty Research Ethics Committee**

## **APPENDIX E: Request for Permission: Director of Education**

From: Absalom Ndamutala Kambindji

Cell: +264812191615 / +264818002208

P O BOX 7040

Oshakati-West

Namibia

### **To: The Director of Education**

Oshana Regional Office

Private Bag 5518

**11 July 2023**

**Subject: Request for permission to conduct an educational study at five secondary schools in Oshana region as from 1 August 2023.**

My name is Absalom Ndamutala Kambindji, currently a registered MEd student (full thesis) English Language Teaching (ELT) (student number: 19K9416) at Rhodes University, in South Africa and a teacher based at Evululuko Secondary School. I would like to ask for permission to conduct my project at five different secondary schools in Ompundja Circuit during the period of August 2023. My research topic is: Exploring the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian secondary school history educators to teach reading comprehension. The purpose of my project is to explore the strategies that the Grade 8 History teachers use to teach reading comprehension in their teaching. My project will be conducted under the supervision of Professor Nhlanhla Mpofu from Rhodes University. Her email is [nmpofu@sun.ac.za](mailto:nmpofu@sun.ac.za)

My project requires me to work with experienced Grade 8 History teachers. Firstly, I intend to meet with Grade 8 History teachers for two 30-minute interviews each (to be done separately) about the pedagogical strategies used in teaching reading. Secondly, I will observe them twice each and audio record them in class as they teach. Lastly, I will analyse their lesson plans paying attention to their pedagogical strategies in teaching reading comprehension. I will not interact directly with learners; however, their participation will mean being observed while learning in class. Most importantly, both schools and teachers will be assured of confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time. Teachers and learners who choose not to participate in the study will not be prejudiced in any way. It is my presumption that the research findings will make a credible

contribution to the use of pedagogical strategies used by Grade 8 History teachers and other content teachers when teaching reading comprehension in their classes.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact me on 0812191615 or on lomoh44@gmail. This study has met the standards laid down by Rhodes University and has received ethical clearance. I have attached the provisional ethics clearance I obtained from Rhodes University approving this study. The Rhodes University Research Office can be contacted on [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za) if any concerns arise during the data collection process.

Yours sincerely,

Absalom Ndamutala Kambindji

lomoh44@gmail.com

+264812191615

Rhodes University, Research Office, Ethics

Ethics Coordinator: [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za)

t: +27 (0) 46 603 7727 f: +27 (0) 86 616 7707

Room 220, Main Admin Building, Drostdy Road, Grahamstown, 6139

## APPENDIX F: Permission Granted: Director of Education



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA  
OSHANA REGIONAL COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

ASPIRING TO EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION FOR ALL

Tel: 065 - 229800/25

Private Bag 5518  
Oshakati

Enquiries: Hileni M. Amukana  
Ref. 13/2/9/1

Mr. Absalom N. Kambindji  
P.O. Box 7040  
Oshakati West

Cell: 0812191615 / 0818002208

**SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN OSHANA REGION**

Your letter dated 11 July 2023 on the above caption bears reference.

Kindly be informed that permission is hereby granted to conduct research interview to the schools in Ompundja Circuit, Oshana Region.

This permission is subject to the following strict conditions; (i) There should be minimal or no interruption on normal working schedule (ii) Ethical issues of confidentiality and anonymity should be respected and retained throughout this activity i.e. Voluntary participation, and consent from participants

Both Parties should understand that this permission could be revoked without explanation at any time.

Furthermore, we humbly request you to share your research findings with the Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture, Oshana Region. You may contact Ms. Hilma Nuunyang-George, the Deputy Director; Programs and Quality Assurance (PQA) for the provision of summary of your research findings.

We wish you the best in conducting your study.

Yours sincerely,

  
HILENI M. AMUKANA  
REGIONAL DIRECTOR



Cc: Inspector of Education: Ompundja Circuit

*All Official Correspondence must be addressed to the Regional Director*

## **APPENDIX F: Request for Permission: Principal**

From: Absalom Ndamutala Kambindji

Cell: +264812191615

P O BOX 7040

Oshakati-West

Namibia

**To: The principal**

**14 July 2023**

**Subject: Request for permission to conduct an educational study at \_\_\_\_\_ School**

My name is Absalom Ndamutala Kambindji, currently a registered MEd student (full thesis) English Language Teaching (ELT) (student number: 19K9416) at Rhodes University, and a teacher based at Evululuko Secondary School. I hereby request permission to conduct a research study at your school over a period of two days.

The purpose of this project is to explore the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian secondary school history educators to teach reading comprehension. The project will be conducted under the supervision of Professor Nhlanhla Mpfungu from Rhodes University. Her email is [nmpfungu@sun.ac.za](mailto:nmpfungu@sun.ac.za)

Participating in this study means the Grade 8 History teachers will meet with me for two semi-structured interviews about their experience of teaching reading comprehension in Grade 8 in history. The interviews will last for about 30 minutes. The semi-structured interviews will be audio recorded. I will not directly interact with the learners. The teachers and the school are assured of confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time. Teachers who choose not to participate in the study will not be prejudiced in any way. It is our presumption that the research findings will make a credible contribution towards understanding teachers' self-developed pedagogical practices for enhancing English reading comprehension in Grade 8.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact me on 0812191615 or on [lomoh44@gmail.com](mailto:lomoh44@gmail.com). This study has met the standards laid down by Rhodes University and has received ethical clearance. The Rhodes University Research Office can be contacted on [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za) if any concerns arise during the data collection process.

Yours sincerely,

---

Absalom Ndamutala Kambindji

[lomoh44@gmail.com](mailto:lomoh44@gmail.com), Cell: +264812191615

Rhodes University, Research Office, Ethics

Ethics Coordinator: [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za)

t: +27 (0) 46 603 7727 f: +27 (0) 86 616 7707

Room 220, Main Admin Building, Drostdy Road, Grahamstown, 6139

## APPENDIX G: Request For Permission: Parents/Guardians

From: Absalom Ndamutala Kambindji

Cell: +264812191615 / +264818002208

P O BOX 7040

Oshakati-West

Namibia

To: The parent

17 July 2023

**Subject: Request for permission to observe your child in the History classroom**

Name of parent/guardian..... Grade 8.....

Name of learner.....

Name of school.....

Dear parent/guardian

My name is Absalom Ndamutala Kambindji, currently a registered MEd student (full thesis) English Language Teaching (ELT) (student number: 19K9416) at Rhodes University, and a teacher based at Evululuko Secondary School. I hereby request permission to conduct a research study at your school during the period August 2023.

The purpose of this project is to explore the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian secondary school history educators to teach reading comprehension. Participating in this study means that your child will be observed and audio recorded in the history classroom, but I will not communicate with them directly. Your child is free to terminate their consent to be part of the study, and no punishment or victimisation will be instigated if they decide to withdraw. If you allow your child to participate, please complete the form below.

The project will be conducted under the supervision of Professor Nhlanhla Mpofo from Rhodes University. Her email is [nmpofu@sun.ac.za](mailto:nmpofu@sun.ac.za). Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact me on 0812191615 or at [lomoh44@gmail.com](mailto:lomoh44@gmail.com). This study has met the standards laid down by Rhodes University and received ethical clearance. The Rhodes University Research Office can be contacted at [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za) if any concerns arise during the data collection process.

Yours sincerely

---

Absalom N. Kambindji 0812191615

Rhodes University, Research Office, Ethics

Ethics Coordinator: [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za)

t: +27 (0) 46 603 7727 f: +27 (0) 86 616 7707

Room 220, Main Admin Building, Drostdy Road, Grahamstown, 6139

## **APPENDIX H: Informed Consent – Participants**

From: Absalom Ndamutala Kambindji

Cell: +264812191615

P O BOX 7040

Oshakati-West

Namibia

**17 July 2023**

**To: The teacher**

---

**Subject: Invitation to participate in an educational research study**

My name is Absalom Ndamutala Kambindji, currently a registered MEd student (full thesis) English Language Teaching (ELT) (student number: 19K9416) at Rhodes University, and a teacher based at Evululuko Secondary School. I am requesting permission to conduct a project at five different secondary schools in the Ompundja Circuit during the period of July – August 2023. My research topic is: Exploring the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian secondary school history educators to teach reading comprehension. The purpose of my project is to explore the use of pedagogical strategies used by Namibian secondary school history educators to teach reading comprehension. My project will be conducted under the supervision of Professor Nhlanhla Mpofo from Rhodes University. Her email is [nmpofu@sun.ac.za](mailto:nmpofu@sun.ac.za)

My project requires me to work with you as an experienced Grade 8 History teacher. Firstly, I will analyse your lesson plans paying attention to how you plan to start your lesson, considering learners' prior knowledge, the reading strategies you plan to use in your lesson, the types of formal and summative assessment you plan to use, the teaching aids and your reflection section in your lesson plan. Secondly, I will observe and audio record your Grade 8 History reading lessons. Lastly, I intend to meet with you twice for 30 - 35 minutes interviews each to be recorded (to be done separately) the first interview focusing about your lesson planning process and the second interview focusing on your class observation. I will not directly interact with learners; however, their participation will mean being observed while learning in class.

You are assured of confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time. If you choose not to participate in the study, you will not be prejudiced in any way. It is my presumption that the research findings will make a credible contribution towards the understanding of the use of pedagogical strategies used by Grade 8 History teachers when teaching reading comprehension in history.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact me on +264812191615 or [lomoh44@gmail.com](mailto:lomoh44@gmail.com). This study has met the standards laid down by Rhodes University and has received ethical clearance. I have attached the provisional ethics clearance I obtained from Rhodes University approving this study. The Rhodes University Research Office can be contacted on [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za) if any concerns arise during the data collection process.

Yours sincerely,

Absalom Ndamutala Kambindji

[lomoh44@gmail.com](mailto:lomoh44@gmail.com), cell: +264812191615

## CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

---

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking for my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty. I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

Through this consent, I agree to be interviewed, for my lesson to be audio recorded and for my lesson plan to be analysed.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Full name of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Rhodes University, Research Office, Ethics

Ethics Coordinator: [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za)

t: +27 (0) 46 603 7727 f: +27 (0) 86 616 7707

Room 220, Main Admin Building, Drostdy Road, Grahamstown, 613

## **APPENDIX I: Letter Of Assent**

From: Absalom Ndamutala Kambindji

Cell: +264812191615

P O BOX 7040

Oshakati-West

Namibia

**17 July 2023**

**Subject: Request for permission to observe you in the History class**

Dear Learner,

My name is Absalom Ndamutala Kambindji, currently a registered MEd student (full thesis) English Language Teaching (ELT) (student number: 19K9416) at Rhodes University, and a teacher based at Evululuko Secondary School. I hereby request permission to observe you in your history classroom.

The purpose of this project is to observe how your history teacher teaches reading comprehension in your class. I have asked for permission from your principal and your parents for you to participate in this project, but you are still free to terminate your consent to be part of the study if you wish to do so. If you decide to withdraw, you will receive no punishment or victimisation. If you want to participate, please complete the form below.

Should you require any further information or want to contact me about any aspect of this study, please call me on 0812191615 or email me at [lomoh44@gmail.com](mailto:lomoh44@gmail.com). This study has met the standards laid down by Rhodes University and has received ethical clearance. The Rhodes University Research Office can be contacted on [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za) if any concerns arise during the data collection process.

Yours sincerely,

Absalom Ndamutala Kambindji

[lomoh44@gmail.com](mailto:lomoh44@gmail.com)

+264812191615

Rhodes University, Research Office, Ethics

Ethics Coordinator: [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za)

t: +27 (0) 46 603 7727 f: +27 (0) 86 616 7707

Room 220, Main Admin Building, Drostdy Road, Grahamstown, 6139

# INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Learner participant's assent form)



**Project Title:** Exploring the pedagogical strategies used by Namibian secondary school History Educators to teach reading comprehension

**Researcher's name:** Absalom Ndamutala Kambindji

**Name** **of** **Learner:**

.....

Has the researcher explained what he will be doing and wants you to do?

YES

NO

1. Has the researcher explained why he wants you to take part?

YES

NO

2. Do you understand what the researcher wants to do?

YES

NO

3. Do you know if anything good or bad can happen to you during the research?

YES

NO

4. Do you know that your name and what you say will be kept a secret from other people?

YES

NO

5. Did you ask the researcher any questions about the research?

YES

NO

6. Has the researcher answered all your questions?

YES

NO

7. Do you understand that you can refuse to participate if you do not want to take part and that nothing will happen to you if you refuse?

8. Do you understand that you may pull out of the study at any time if you no longer want to continue?

9. Do you know who to talk to if you are worried or have any other questions to ask?

10. Has anyone forced you or put pressure on you to take part in this research?

11. Are you willing to take part in the research?

YES

NO

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**Signature of learner**

**Date**



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