

**Establishing Foundational Principles for a Reading Comprehension Framework: A
Qualitative study of teachers' perspectives of Grade 4 Second Language Speakers in CBSE
International Schools of Dubai**

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Abstract

This research aims to establish the foundational principles for a structured and sequenced reading comprehension instruction tailored for Grade 4 second language speakers in CBSE international schools both in Dubai and India. While the CBSE curriculum provides a broad academic structure, it lacks specific, detailed strategies for fostering reading comprehension skills, particularly for second-language speakers. In India, the CBSE curriculum remains largely focused on functional English and exam-oriented outcomes, leaving a gap in addressing deep comprehension skills necessary for lifelong learning. In Dubai, CBSE international schools operate in linguistically and culturally pluralistic environments, where students often come from diverse backgrounds and exhibit varying levels and varieties of English proficiency. However, there are no tailored instructions within the curriculum to address the unique and specific needs of these second-language speakers in this international context. This gap highlights the need for research that can inform teaching practices and guide policymakers in developing context-specific foundational principles to enhance reading comprehension and support equitable learning outcomes in CBSE schools globally.

The study employs a qualitative interpretative phenomenological case (QIPC) methodological approach to explore and capture teachers' responses and experiences. The study involved the administration of a questionnaire to 32 teachers from six CBSE schools in Dubai, followed by semi-structured interviews with six teachers from the case study schools also in Dubai. The study is underpinned by a 'Combination Paradigm', a theoretical framework that integrates cognitive theories, socio-constructivism, and critical literacy explicitly developed to address the unique requirements of this research.

The findings contribute foundational insights that can inform the development of adaptable, culturally responsive reading comprehension practices. These include principles for effective literacy instruction, integration of cultural relevance, cross-curricular literacy strategies, and the importance of sustained teacher professional development. Rather than offering a prescriptive model, this study presents a conceptual starting point—a set of guiding principles—to support the future development of reading comprehension approaches for second-language learners in CBSE contexts globally (Dubai and India).

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Glossary of Terms and Organisations

CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education)

A national-level board of education in India oversees both public and private schools. CBSE prescribes curriculum and examinations for affiliated schools in India and abroad.

KHDA (Knowledge and Human Development Authority)

The educational quality assurance and regulatory authority in Dubai is responsible for overseeing the performance of private schools and enforcing international benchmarking standards like PISA and PIRLS.

PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)

A worldwide study by the OECD, measuring 15-year-old students' performance in reading, mathematics, and science, is often used in Dubai's school evaluations.

PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study)

An international assessment measuring reading comprehension in fourth-grade students was used as a benchmark in Dubai's education reform efforts.

TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study)

A global assessment examining math and science proficiency in students, referenced in the UAE national agenda targets for educational improvement.

Private School Ecosystem (Dubai)

A term referring to the network of over 200 private schools in Dubai offering curricula from various nations (e.g., British, IB, CBSE), catering to a multicultural expatriate population under market-driven conditions.

South Asian Teacher Demographic

Refers to the large group of teachers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka working in mid-tier international schools in the UAE.

Multilingual Educational Context

A setting where students and educators come from various linguistic backgrounds, common in CBSE schools in Dubai, requires pedagogical strategies to address diverse language proficiencies.

International Benchmarking Tests

Standardised assessments like PISA, PIRLS, and TIMSS are used by Dubai's education authorities to measure and compare student achievement across curricula and nations.

Teacher Agency

The ability of teachers to make instructional and curricular decisions autonomously is often limited in private school systems due to hierarchical structures and contract-based employment.

EAL (English as an Additional Language) is a central term in the thesis, contextualised within the multilingual, multicultural frameworks of CBSE schools in Dubai and India.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Thesis Aims

This thesis aims to identify and establish foundational principles that will inform the future development of reading comprehension instruction for second language speakers in Grade 4 students of Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) international schools in Dubai and India. While the CBSE curriculum framework sets the foundation for these schools, it does not provide detailed strategies for reading comprehension. Rather than presenting a complete framework, this study contributes essential theoretical groundwork by exploring the underlying principles and contextual factors necessary for developing effective approaches to reading comprehension instruction for second language speakers. This study does not present a complete, ready-to-implement framework but establishes foundational, context-responsive principles for future framework development. The research prioritises identifying theoretical foundations and contextual considerations that will inform subsequent comprehensive framework construction. The primary contribution lies in the development of the 'Combination Paradigm'—a novel theoretical integration that provides interpretive guidance for understanding reading comprehension challenges in second language contexts.

1.2 Thesis Objectives

1. To identify and establish essential foundational principles that will inform future development of reading comprehension frameworks tailored explicitly for second language speakers of Grade 4 in CBSE international schools across Dubai and India.
2. To analyse how teachers can utilise the identified foundational principles to enhance their curriculum planning, improve their pedagogical approaches, and better support reading comprehension development among Grade 4 students.

3. To establish foundational insights and considerations for policymakers when conceptualising guiding principles, formulating policies, and creating frameworks for reading comprehension approaches targeting second-language speakers

1.3 The Aims of the Research

This research seeks to examine the factors that affect the language acquisition and reading comprehension process of second language speakers of Grade 4 students in CBSE International schools in Dubai and India. These CBSE schools offer valuable insights into trends in English reading comprehension for second-language speakers from diverse educational backgrounds. The uniqueness of Dubai makes the exploration more significant as the context is characterised by unique cultural and linguistic diversity. This research aims to investigate teachers' experiences and perspectives on teaching reading comprehension to second-language speakers in Grade 4 in CBSE international schools in Dubai and India. By exploring the challenges and possibilities encountered, this study aims to inform the development of adaptable, foundational principles that support effective reading comprehension practices. These foundational principles will then manifest pedagogical knowledge and strategies that will address the practical needs of teachers within CBSE schools and potentially benefit similar educational contexts internationally.

1.3.1 Research Questions

1. What are the essential foundational principles for developing a reading comprehension framework for second language speakers of Grade 4 in CBSE international schools in Dubai and India?
2. How can the identified foundational principles provide insights for teachers in understanding and enhancing their curriculum planning and pedagogical approaches to support reading comprehension skills for Grade 4 students?

3. What key considerations should policymakers consider when developing guiding principles for a reading comprehension approach tailored for second-language speakers in CBSE international schools in Dubai and India?

1.3.2 Scope and Theoretical Contribution

This research makes a distinct theoretical contribution through the development of the 'Combination Paradigm'—a novel integration of cognitive science, socio-constructivist, and critical literacy theories specifically designed to address the complex needs of second language speakers in reading comprehension contexts. The study's scope is deliberately foundational rather than prescriptive, focusing on establishing theoretical groundwork and identifying context-specific principles that future researchers and practitioners can build upon to develop comprehensive reading comprehension frameworks.

The Combination Paradigm serves as an interpretive lens rather than a deductive framework, providing a conceptual tool for understanding and analysing the multifaceted nature of reading comprehension challenges faced by Grade 4 second language speakers in CBSE international schools.

1.4 Motivation for the research

I have had the fortunate opportunity as a Principal of a CBSE international school to observe how diversity plays out in the educational system in a global setting like Dubai. Currently, the city of Dubai is a truly cosmopolitan, multilingual city where residents from all over the world come to build a new life. In the past, I have also witnessed changes in the educational system and how the country, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has steadily developed a diverse spectrum of academic offerings for its people in the last five decades. Key among them is the establishment of the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in 2008 (Al-Karam, Al-Marri & Al-

Muhairi, 2009), and ever since then, the standards for educational achievement in Dubai have been set high enough to keep us continuously striving to meet them.

My school can be considered a community that mirrors the rest of the expatriate populace in Dubai. Our extensive school community consists of Indian, Bangladeshi, Filipino, and Pakistani families looking for an affordable school offering a CBSE syllabus that is familiar to their cultural background. However, this choice has its drawbacks. Even though the majority of students have been studying English since childhood, I estimate that about 90% of them still have difficulties with the English language as a second language. The reality of these challenges became apparent when the school received scores from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (2008) and the Programme in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (2011, 2016), respectively. When I analysed the International Benchmarking Test scores, a trend that I observed was that our CBSE school students lagged behind students of British and Australian curriculum schools in key reading comprehension skills. This observation was an abstract number, but it actually reflected the day-to-day challenges that I had observed in our classrooms.

All of these ideas have significantly impacted my thinking about educational leadership. I have begun to appreciate that the approach to teaching reading comprehension has to be embraced, rather than making students get ready for tests. It goes beyond testing, enabling comprehension skills for life. This realisation has led me to embark on a personal quest to discover better ways of helping second language speakers.

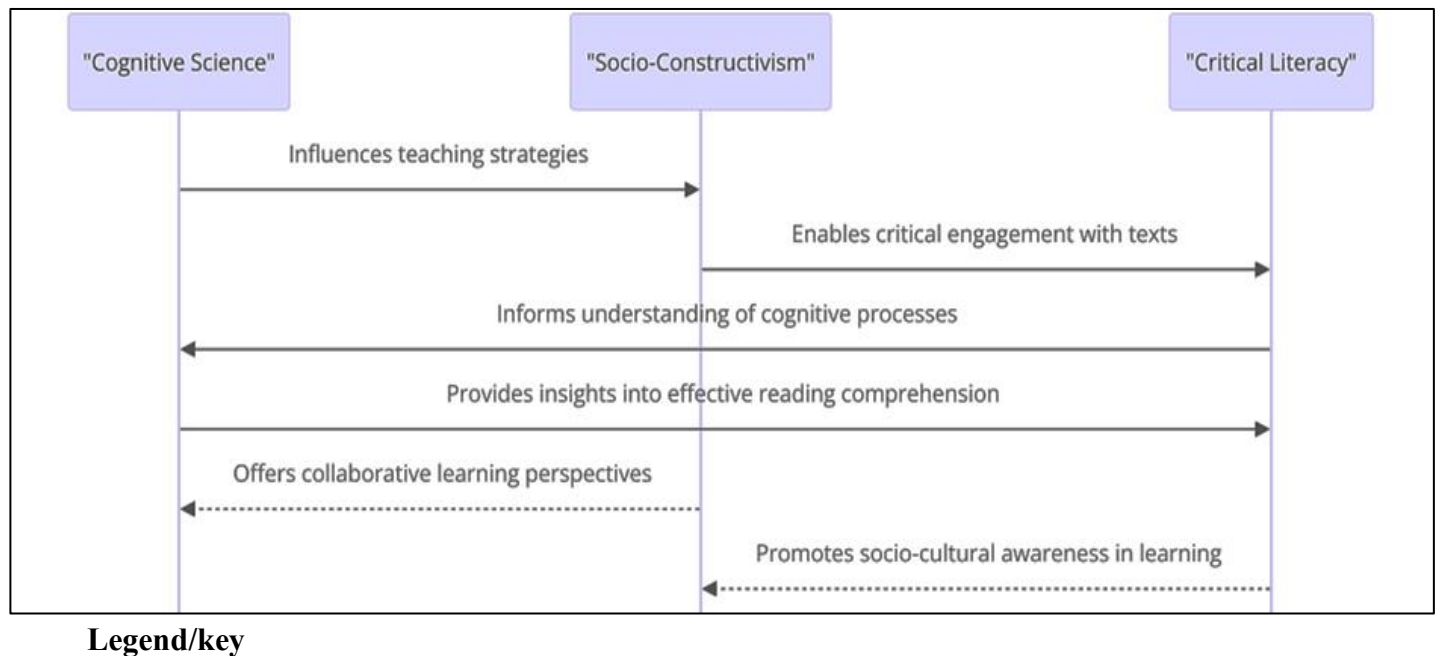
My path has taken me to embark on a qualitative case study not only as an academic assignment but as a way of solving practical problems in our classrooms. Since I am an educator managing a multicultural school, I highly appreciate the opportunity to focus on the best ways to help educators in similar contexts become more effective in assisting their students. My desire is

not limited to seeing our students do better only on assessments; I desire that every learner who enters our school practices sound reading comprehension enough for the complexity of global industries.

1.5 'Combination Paradigm'

This is a term coined by the researcher to refer to a hybrid theoretical framework combining cognitive science, socio-constructivism, and critical literacy to understand and interpret reading comprehension challenges in second language contexts. The 'Combination Paradigm' embeds these three literacy paradigms into a cohesive model, recognising the need for a systematic approach to building fundamental reading comprehension skills beyond the more elaborate models of balanced literacy. Such a synthesis is essential, as second language speakers not only need to be taught how to read but also to read with deeper knowledge to make sense of what is being read. The 'Combination Paradigm' functions as an interpretive lens rather than a prescriptive model, providing a way to analyse the complex interplay between cognitive, social, and critical literacy factors. This paradigm serves as a conceptual tool for understanding rather than a deductive framework for implementation. The illustration (Fig. 1) below simplifies this 'Combination Paradigm' theoretical framework.

FIGURE 1: THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, ‘COMBINATION PARADIGM’



Dotted Arrows: Suggest secondary, enriching influences where the application of one theory enhances or complements the understanding and implementation in other educational settings

Solid Arrow from cognitive science to socio-constructivism: "Directly influences teaching strategies."

Solid Arrow from socio-constructivism to critical literacy: "Directly enables critical engagement with texts"

Solid Arrow from critical literacy to cognitive science: "Directly promotes socio-cultural awareness in learning."

Solid Arrow from cognitive science to critical literacy: "Directly informs the critical literacy framework with cognitive science insights."

Solid Arrows: Indicate primary, direct educational influences where theoretical insights directly inform teaching practices and educational strategies

Figure 1 above explores cognitive studies; the premise argues that it is crucial to consider the mental processes that facilitate the learning of reading. Ertmer and Newby (2017) and Fiorella (2023)

provide evidence for the part that cognition plays in comprehending text, as both of their works stress the notion that memory, perception, and language development dynamically build meaning that regulates learners' engagement with artefacts. This understanding justifies the need for instructional strategies that address the mesosystem and the rhetoricity, especially in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. The arguments are also supported more specifically by the Cognitive Science approach, which defines learning as an active process of information processing. The Socio-Constructivist approach is notable for the assertion that knowledge acquisition always involves social aspects. This approach has helped to alter the researcher's view on how one gains knowledge because it takes into consideration the student-learning interactions as well as those between the students and instructors. Thus, the significance of classroom activities that encourage peer interactions and meaningful negotiations is crucial for developing reading in the L2 context.

Critical Literacy takes this paradigm even further by viewing reading as a form of empowerment and freedom. Pursuing this theoretical paradigm, this research posits that meaning making is not just the ability to decode and interpret but involves students actively interacting with texts for critiquing, thus being able to identify and contest the subtext, attitude, politics, or ideology of the texts' content. To help explore the combination paradigm, two important reading models will be examined: balanced literacy and structured literacy. Clements (2020) argues that the strategies for balanced literacy include a student-centred approach along with a focus on the variety of texts and exposure to reading, which has been evidenced in English as a Second Language (ESL) settings. A balanced literacy approach offers appropriate language experiences and develops readers' appreciation. Another study conducted by Willson and Falcon (2018), aimed at investigating the effects of balanced literacy processes in ESL classrooms in South Texas, concluded that this strategy improved students' interest and involvement, especially in learning reading and writing

skills. In addition, Clements (2020) explored the impact that balanced literacy has on ESL learners' vocabulary acquisition and proved that the various reading experiences that are promoted by balanced literacy pedagogy play a massive role in enhancing vocabulary depth and breadth. However, as noted by Pressley et al. (2023), the approach does not seem to incorporate or provide the required systematic instruction that is central to helping second language learners who have reading difficulties.

On the other hand, based on Spear-Swerling's (2019) findings, structured literacy implies the teaching of phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies in a structured manner. This approach is beneficial for learners with reading disabilities or impediments, including ESL students. Stevens et al. (2021) conducted a meta-analysis which observed that structured literacy has moderate to high positive effects on students with or at risk of developing learning difficulties in reading. In a study by Ray (2020) that evaluated a strategy of structured literacy for ESL learners experiencing reading challenges, it was claimed that students who were given the structured literacy intervention demonstrated a much higher increase in word reading, decoding/word recognition, reading comprehension, and overall reading fluency.

The conflict between the two approaches has resulted in some new blended models that integrate elements of both balanced and structured literacy approaches. For instance, Duwenhoegger (2021) developed an integrated approach relevant to ESL learners in fostering positive results in fluency and comprehension of texts. This also implies that the effectiveness of the above-stated approaches may differ from one ESL learner to another. Research conducted by the Mississippi Department of Education (2021) indicated that balanced literacy benefits comprehension and writing more than structured literacy. It was more effective for essential elements like phonemic awareness and word recognition. Teacher preparedness and support are

necessary to implement these methods effectively, especially for ESL students with reading difficulties. Teaching is a learning process, and cognitive sciences inform teaching strategies based on how the brain works by breaking down learning into mental processes. This knowledge of how cognition works makes designing teaching strategies and sequences more effective in meeting the students' learning and information-processing abilities. Thereby, cognitive science as an approach creates the strategies that are necessary for memory, language, and knowledge to be engraved, which are essential for the comprehension of text.

The other theory is affiliated with Cognitive Science and is called Socio-Constructivism, which suggests that learning occurs through knowledge construction in a social context (Vygotsky & Cole, 2018). This theoretical paradigm contributes to the understanding of cognitive processes due to the identification of social practices as critical learning processes. Integrated learning requires students to focus on each other and learn from one another, thereby increasing the depth of understanding and learning skills. Socio-constructivism is, therefore, the counterpart to the biological and neurological standpoint of Cognitive Science, with the social environment being the key to learning. Socio-Constructivism also supports the aspect of sociocultural cognitive development in learning. It appreciates the diversity of enrolment, and that diversity is a strength that should be harnessed to complement the learning process (Vygotsky & Cole, 2018). Educators who appreciate and recognise the existence of cultural attributes in the learning environment can create an effective environment for the students. This approach helps in producing not just the consumers of information but also the critics and producers of knowledge. Critical literacy helps students look at the text critically, identify inconsistencies, if any, consider different perspectives, and be in a position to view the text within a broader context.

In synthesis, this framework suggests an integrative model of reading comprehension that includes a cognitive perspective that is supported by a Socio-Constructivist approach integrated with Critical Literacy, giving the student a holistic educational approach/strategy. Both are conceptualised as providing different but indispensable components to the acquisition of reading and comprehension of texts. The relationship between these domains illustrates the nature of reading comprehension and its schematics, indicating the necessity to encompass various levels to address the problem. The link between these domains by suggestive arrows is to show how teaching and learning are processes that continually interact. As such, this diagram may be used allegorically to chart the course in the construction of solid and efficient educative spaces that are well-equipped and critically informed. Because the research conforms to the epistemological beliefs of virtue epistemology as presented by Siangchokyoo and Sousa-Poza (2012), it adopts a curious and exploratory approach. It adopts a qualitative interpretivist phenomenological case study research design, which is looked into in detail in Chapter 4 of the research methodology.

This kind of research approach is beneficial for conducting a comprehensive analysis of more complicated processes that occur in a second-language speaker's brain on their way to fluent reading. The management of the learning strategy plan aims to cultivate a balanced conceptual scheme integrating cognitive theory with a socio-constructivist theory and critical literacies. The quest is to consolidate all these diverse theoretical frameworks into a holistic, viable model of reading comprehension to help second language speakers in particular.

The study of reading comprehension as a concept has thus been a primary focus of educational research for a long time. Based on the literature, Shanahan (2019) conducted extensive research on the multifaceted cognitive skills that form the basis of reading. Their research focuses on essential aspects of comprehension, such as reader strategies and processes, contributing not

only to the enhancement of knowledge regarding these cognitive processes but also to the efforts aimed at improving teaching methods.

The Construction-Integration (CI) model put forward by Walter Kintsch in 1988 provides a framework for integrating the studies on readers' strategies and comprehension of text (Kärbla, 2020). According to Kärbla (2020), this model posits that reading comprehension occurs through two main processes: construction, which is a process of constructing representations of the text for the reader, and integration, which links the constructed representations with the prior knowledge of the reader.

Like the CI Model, the Metacognition Theory, primarily developed by John Flavell in the 1970s, emphasises the reader's knowledge and regulation of the cognition related to the text (Aflah, 2017). This theory can be connected to executive functioning, which is crucial for identifying and predicting how individuals with dyslexia will comprehend text and how they will monitor and adjust their cognitive strategies (Aflah, 2017). Referring to the Metacognition Theory, Mohseni et al. (2020) analysed the link between metacognition and reading comprehension frameworks, pointing out the positive correlation between metacognitive approaches and reading comprehension outcomes.

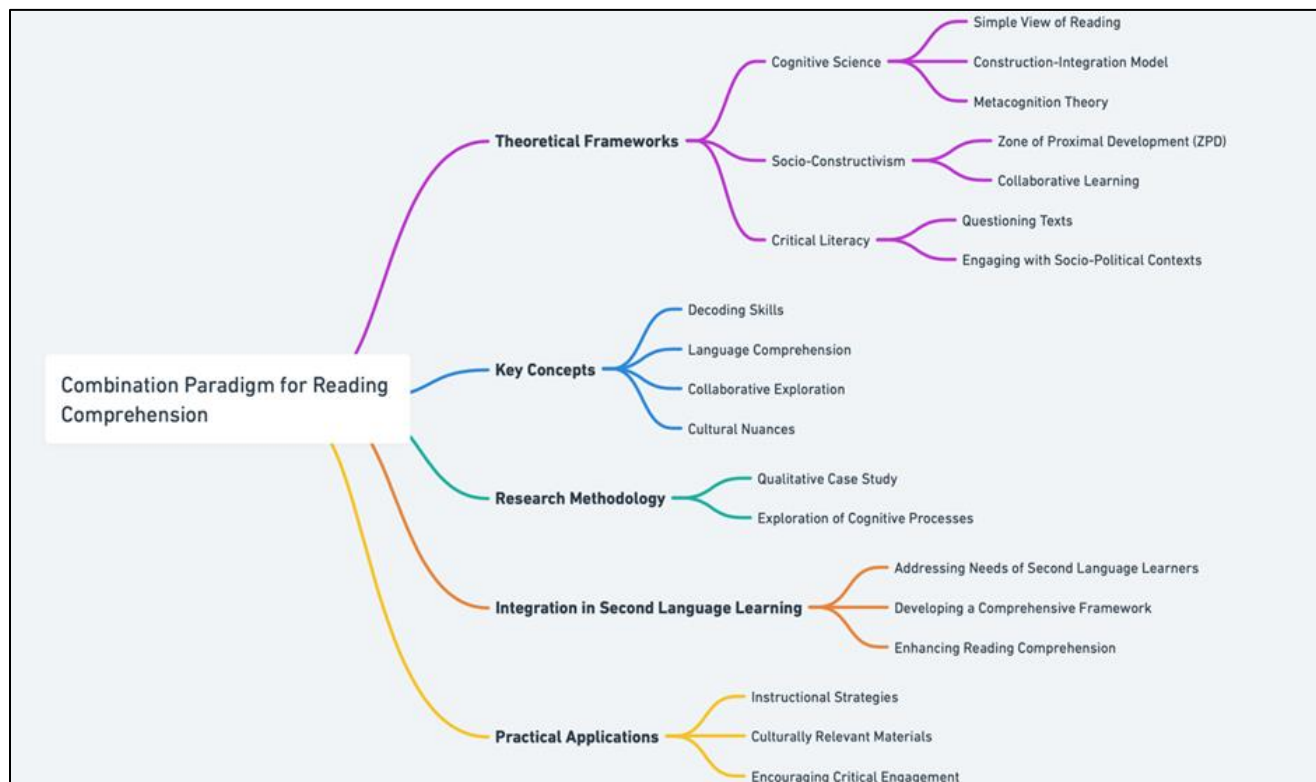
Further, Shanahan (2019) also mentioned that these theories help develop both theoretical and practical understanding of how to teach. Shanahan (2019) asserts that these frameworks provide a blueprint for cultivating teaching practices aimed at building students' reading skills. These theoretical perspectives have been integrated in a way that will offer the best conceptual framework for understanding reading comprehension among second language learners, which the study will attempt to establish through exploration. A synthesis of these theories in a single conceptual framework aims to develop sound and feasible instructional theories, which are the foundation of

this research. This integration is crucial for creating learning environments that respond to diverse learners, particularly in the context of reading comprehension in a second language.

Similarly, Afflerbach et al. (2020) highlight the importance of metacognitive strategies for comprehension, thereby establishing that comprehension is not only about decoding a text but also about reflecting on and being mindful of one's learning processes. Regarding specific socio-constructivist approaches, the research by Duke and Cartwright (2021) emphasised the significance of these approaches in the classroom environment, highlighting their connection with increased collaboration and cultural awareness among learners. These support the study's focus on adopting the socio-constructivist approach in the proposed reading comprehension framework.

Informed by the synthesis of cognitive theory, socio-constructivist, and critical literacy theory, the study's proposed reading comprehension framework is informed by an endeavour to offer a theoretical model for improving comprehension for second language learners in CBSE international schools of Dubai and India. This proposed framework aligns with innovations in educational research and meets the needs and context of second-language speakers. The chart outlined in Figure 2 helps expand on the analysis for the proposed theoretical framework- the 'Combination Paradigm' outlined in this study. This discussion describes how each of the parts of this framework will be expounded and revisited in the different sections of the analysis.

FIGURE 2: MAP SHOWING THE PATHWAY OF ANALYSIS OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – 'COMBINATION PARADIGM'



1.5.1 Connection between the research question and elements of the 'Combination Paradigm' framework

It is crucial to clarify that the Combination Paradigm serves an interpretive function in this research. Rather than providing a ready-to-implement framework, it offers a theoretical lens through which to examine and understand the multifaceted challenges of reading comprehension for second language speakers. This paradigm guides the analysis of findings and helps identify patterns and principles that can inform future framework development. The first research question, focusing on essential foundational principles, directly addresses the core of my framework. It seeks to identify principles that incorporate how students cognitively process reading information, which aligns with

my framework's cognitive science component that emphasises memory, perception, and language development. This question also implicitly acknowledges the socio-constructivist aspect by recognising that foundational principles must consider knowledge acquisition in social contexts, particularly relevant in international school settings where diverse cultural backgrounds intersect. Additionally, it touches on the critical literacy element of my framework by aiming to establish principles that enable students to engage meaningfully with texts beyond mere decoding.

The second research question explores how these foundational principles can enhance teachers' curriculum planning and pedagogical approaches. This connects to my framework's (Combination Paradigm) emphasis on how cognitive science informs teaching strategies based on brain functioning, allowing teachers to design effective instructional methods that address students' information-processing abilities. It also relates to the socio-constructivist component by examining how teachers can create learning environments that foster peer interactions and meaningful negotiations, which my framework identifies as crucial for developing reading comprehension in L2 contexts. The critical literacy aspect appears in this question through its focus on developing pedagogical approaches that help students become active critics and producers of knowledge rather than passive consumers of information.

The third research question addresses policy considerations, connecting to my framework's acknowledgement of cultural context in reading comprehension. This question examines how policymakers can support the integration of cognitive, social, and critical approaches in creating educational policies that appreciate diversity and recognise cultural attributes as strengths in the learning environment. It also relates to my framework's emphasis on creating systematic approaches to building reading skills that move beyond traditional literacy models, recognising the need for

policies that support solid and efficient educational spaces for second language learners in CBSE international schools.

Throughout these connections, the "Combination Paradigm " emerges as a comprehensive theoretical foundation that informs both research and practice. By synthesising cognitive science, socio-constructivism, and critical literacy, this framework provides a holistic approach to understanding and enhancing reading comprehension for second language speakers who need to develop not only technical reading skills but also meaningful cultural engagement with texts. This integration is particularly valuable for addressing the multifaceted challenges of reading comprehension in the unique contexts of international CBSE schools in Dubai and India.

1.6 Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Curriculum

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum is one of India's most respected and widely adopted educational frameworks, with a rich history dating back to 1929 (Gharami & Bhattacharyya, 2023). Originally established as the Board of High School and Intermediate Education in Rajputana (modern-day Rajasthan), explain that Gharami & Bhattacharyya (2023) was reconstituted as CBSE in 1952 under the Ministry of Education, marking the beginning of a unified national curriculum. The evolution of CBSE has been marked by continuous innovation and adaptation to changing educational needs. During the 1960s, the introduction of the 10+2 pattern revolutionised the structure of school education in India, followed by the 1970s and 1980s, which saw further reforms, including the implementation of the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) and the introduction of vocational education, making the curriculum more holistic and practical (Gharami & Bhattacharyya, 2023). There are several curricula in India, including CBSE, the ICSE (Indian Certificate of Secondary Education), State boards operating under different state governments to cater to regional needs and often teach in

local languages, as well as international boards like IB and Cambridge offering globally-oriented curricula but at a significantly higher cost (Gharami & Bhattacharyya, 2023; Meenakshi & Sheeba, 2022).

However, according to studies, CBSE has distinguished itself from other curricula. In their study of various curricula in India, Gharami and Bhattacharyya (2023) observed that under the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE), one of the state boards, English teachers follow the traditional lecture method owing to large classes, cultural disparity amongst the students (not factored in instruction) and teachers lack continuous professional development. Furthermore, Gharami and Bhattacharyya (2023) observed that under the same board, teaching aids were not found to be used in the schools, further noting that under the CBSE Board, teachers used different innovative ideas to teach students, including group work and outdoor activities.

However, like any educational system, Bhandari and Mathew (2023) observe that CBSE faces its share of challenges, the most notable being academic pressure, as the students often feel stressed about board examinations and competitive tests. Further, Meenakshi and Sheeba (2022) observe that cultural diversity and the need for continuous teacher training to keep pace with evolving pedagogical methods also present ongoing challenges. Even with all the challenges, CBSE has more than 24000 schools in India and approximately 240 schools in 26 countries across the world (CBSE, 2024).

1.6.1 CBSE-Specific Challenges

Despite the high academic standards that characterise the CBSE Board, which has been instituted to elevate students' ability to grasp all-around education, the CBSE has faced monumental challenges regarding the curriculum framework, cultural representation, multilingualism contingency, and definitive implementation factors that engulf the reading comprehension

teaching-learning in CBSE schools. The challenges facing reading comprehension instruction in CBSE schools manifest through several interconnected dimensions, each significantly impacting how reading is taught and learned in this institution, as outlined below.

1.6.1.1 Structural Constraints and Examination-Focused Learning

CBSE has structural limitations and examination orientation that create fundamental barriers that directly affect instructional approaches. As Lakhera (2018) stressed, due to the emphasis on the results of examinations, such a curriculum creates a systemic focus on measurable outcomes to such an extent that it changes the way teachers teach reading comprehension. It makes teachers follow practices that focus on passing a particular examination rather than enhancing students' capacities in terms of critical reading, leading to very poor enhancement of such skills.

This examination focus precipitates a more profound crisis as teachers tend to rely on personal practice rather than research-backed methods (Kumar & Lata, 2020; Meenakshi & Sheeba, 2022). According to Meenakshi and Sheeba (2022), this level of reliance influences assessment by endorsing a more conventional method of teaching that focuses on examinations rather than understanding strategies. The consequences of the importance of treatment on technical knowledge rather than thinking skills, which Bhandari and Mathew (2023) and Lakhera (2018) identify, permeate direct instructions by attesting that teachers should prioritise rote learning that is easily assessable rather than searching for more profound cognition skills.

These structural problems are made worse by time and management constraints. According to Kumar and Lata (2020) and Meenakshi and Sheeba (2022), CBSE teachers are constantly under pressure to complete syllabi and, therefore, mainly cover content haphazardly without any emphasis on a more profound understanding of the content, ultimately and grossly affecting second language learners who may require extra processing time.

1.6.1.2 Cultural Relevance and Text Selection

The cultural relevance of reading materials emerges as a critical factor affecting instruction effectiveness. Lakhera (2018) observes cultural diversity in CBSE classrooms, noting that cultural appropriateness has a close relationship with second-language reading comprehension instruction. However, Kumar and Lata (2020) and Lakhera (2018) lament that cultural diversity is not adequately captured in the CBSE curriculum, hence the difficulty of delivering culturally sensitive instruction. Expressly, Bhandari and Mathew (2023) point out that the CBSE curriculum's limited flexibility for incorporating culturally relevant materials directly hinders teachers from giving their learners meaningful, culturally appropriate lessons. This limitation, also noted by Gallagher and Jones (2023) and Lakhera (2018), necessitates additional instructional time for explaining cultural contexts, reducing the time available for actual comprehension instruction.

This is important because the diverse nature of the classroom, particularly with a multilingual learning environment, presents some of the biggest hurdles to instructional practices. Firstly, the study of Bhandari and Mathew (2023) and Lakhera (2018) shows that teaching English to non-native speakers in CBSE classrooms demands distinctive strategies that modify how the reading comprehension instruction is to be done. According to Kung (2019), code-switching management is mainly in the instructional domain since teachers need to switch from one language to another while also keeping instructions coherent. Further, Kumar and Lata (2020) and Meenakshi and Sheeba (2022) observe the issue of language barrier as a significant challenge in instructing, especially in classrooms with varying proficiency levels.

1.6.1.3 Teacher and Student Challenges

The particular needs of CBSE students have a significant effect on teaching methodologies. Bhandari and Mathew (2023) and Lakhera (2018) have noted that, in light of non-native English-

speaking students' inability to go beyond the literal level of reading, teachers have to make these alterations to their instruction, and the cueing of reading skills is often accompanied by the loss of other instructional and more advanced reading skills. Lakhera (2018) and Gallagher and Jones (2023) posit that contextual factors in the learning environment affect students' access to learning resources, meaning that teachers have to spend more time motivating the students who are already disadvantaged in terms of access to resources to get them interested in reading, time that could have been spent in giving instructions. This challenge is further compounded by the unequal language ability among the teachers, which, according to Kumar and Lata (2020), creates additional instructional complications. This is because teachers who are second-language English speakers themselves have to overcome two barriers: mastery of the pragmatic aspects of English language usage and handling diverse linguistic backgrounds in their classrooms. This has a direct impact on their capacity to model advanced reading strategies and provide sophisticated vocabulary instruction.

Further, Assessment alignment challenges, as observed by Kumar and Lata (2020) and Meenakshi and Sheeba (2022), create significant impacts on instruction. This is because while teaching, teachers struggle to balance adopting adaptive teaching techniques to suit the learners and the fixed need to meet students' assessment needs. This challenge extends the issues around one-to-one teaching and mass testing, which are the general concerns of second language acquisition, to both the learning and testing of reading comprehension. All these factors are compounded by numerous implementation challenges that teachers experience, which result in significant impacts on reading comprehension instruction. According to Kumar and Lata (2020), as well as Lakhera (2018), resource constraints limit teachers from applying a range of strategies to teach while addressing the course content. This crisis is precipitated by the limited access to professional

development opportunities, which affects teachers' ability to adopt new instructional approaches and adapt to changing student needs.

While the CBSE framework sets the foundation for these schools, it does not provide detailed strategies for reading comprehension. Therefore, this study analysed international practices to establish benchmarks and draw insights that could inform the foundational principles for CBSE schools in Dubai and India. In exploring existing research on Frameworks, the researcher has intentionally not included an in-depth focus on the CBSE framework, as this would shift the focus of the research away from addressing second-language speakers' challenges within the international context (Dubai). The priority was to examine how CBSE schools in Dubai and India, which are required to meet global benchmarks, address these challenges.

1.7 Dubai's Private School Ecosystem

Dubai's private school ecosystem is characterised by remarkable diversity, complexity, and a strong commitment to international benchmarking. According to the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) (2023), Dubai boasts 220 schools representing 17 different curricula and serving 365,572 students from 186 nationalities. This educational landscape represents one of the most rapidly evolving educational ecosystems globally, defined by exceptional diversity, privatisation, and internationalisation.

1.7.1 Structural and Economic Context of Dubai's Education Market

Dubai's private education sector operates within a highly stratified system that Bray and Ventura (2022) aptly compare to "airlines that offer economy, business, and first class." This tiered structure creates a market-driven educational hierarchy where school quality and resources vary dramatically based on fee structures. Elite international schools charge premium fees and cater primarily to

expatriate families from Western countries and wealthy locals, while the middle tier comprises schools following various international curricula, including CBSE.

This economic stratification manifests in significant resource disparities, particularly in teacher compensation. Western-trained teachers typically command salaries ranging from US\$2,750-4,100 monthly, while South Asian teachers receive substantially lower compensation of US\$700-1,400 (Bray & Ventura, 2022). This wage disparity creates concerning dynamics that directly impact instructional quality and teacher autonomy, with some teachers even "deliberately omitting curriculum content in regular lessons to create demand for their paid tutoring services" (Bray & Ventura, 2022, p. 12).

1.7.2 Cultural Diversity and Educational Challenges

Dubai presents educators with what Marquez et al. (2022) describe as "the most culturally diverse classrooms in the world." With over 90% of the population consisting of non-Emiratis representing more than 200 nationalities, schools function as microcosms of extraordinary multiculturalism, creating both rich opportunities and significant challenges for educational practice. Palmer (2015) identifies how cultural differences between Western instructors and students from various backgrounds can create substantial barriers to effective teaching. These cultural conflicts—"especially those in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, where the English language is sometimes the source of cultural barriers—can create a culturally hostile or insensitive environment that is not conducive to learning" (Palmer, 2015, p. 78). The challenge of cultural navigation is particularly acute in reading instruction, where text selection and comprehension strategies must account for widely varying cultural knowledge, values, and linguistic backgrounds. Instructional materials developed for Western contexts may lack relevance to students' lived experiences, potentially impeding comprehension development and engagement.

1.7.3 Assessment Pressures and Competing Priorities

Dubai's educational environment is characterised by multiple, sometimes competing, assessment regimes that create significant pressure on schools, teachers, and students. Schools must simultaneously satisfy curriculum-specific examinations, KHDA inspections, International Benchmark Assessments (IBTs) like PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS, and parental expectations (Marquez et al., 2022). These IBTs have played a crucial role in driving educational improvement. According to Buali et al. (2021), from 2011 to 2016, private school students demonstrated substantial gains, with average reading scores increasing from 490 to 527. Curriculum-specific performance reveals interesting nuances: National Curriculum for England schools scored highest at 555, International Baccalaureate (IB) schools followed closely at 554, while Indian curriculum schools achieved 537 (Buali et al., 2021). The pressure to perform well on IBTs is particularly intense, with "UAE's National Agenda targets revised to include a national PISA ranking of 20th position by 2021, PIRLS ranking in the top 10 and TIMSS ranking in the top 5 " respectively (Marquez et al., 2022, p. 8). To obtain a rating of "Good, Very Good, and Outstanding" during mandated yearly KHDA inspections, private schools must explicitly "report on how the curriculum was expressly modified to meet IBT (PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS) targets," creating direct constraints on instructional choices.

1.7.4 Teacher Agency and Status in Dubai's Educational Context

Within this complex ecosystem, teachers often find themselves in positions of limited agency and professional status, particularly those from South Asian backgrounds working in mid-tier schools. International school teachers in the Gulf region often operate within hierarchical structures that limit their decision-making power and instructional autonomy. This diminished agency is especially problematic for reading instruction, where teacher judgment and adaptation to student needs are crucial. The status of teachers is further compromised by market-driven employment conditions

that create job insecurity and dependency. Unlike public sector teachers, private school educators in Dubai typically work on limited-term contracts with few employment protections, making them reluctant to challenge administrative decisions even when these would better serve student needs. Professional development opportunities that might enhance teacher agency are often limited or misaligned with actual classroom needs. Massouti et al. (2024) identify "inadequate training opportunities for teachers" as a key challenge, noting that "professional development related to policy, curriculum modification, and understanding disabilities was highlighted as an ongoing need" (p.17). This multifaceted context—characterised by economic stratification, cultural complexity, assessment pressure, and limited teacher agency—creates both the need and the challenge for developing contextually appropriate approaches to reading comprehension, particularly in CBSE schools operating at the intersection of these complex forces.

1.8 Existing research

Lervåg, Hulme, and Melby-Lervåg (2018) defined reading comprehension as asking the reader to determine the words, make meaning of the words, and also engage different levels of thinking abilities. As for this study, L1 refers to the learner's first language or mother tongue, whereas L2 refers to the second language that the learner is seeking to learn (Mizza, 2014). Due to linguistic and cultural mediation in L2 learning, several theories, such as Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory (Sidik, 2020), Socio-Constructivist Theory (Sansone & Cesareni, 2019), and Critical Literacy theory, promote social justice of texts (Cai et al., 2023). These frameworks provide information regarding the strategies of reading and how they can be made effective. Some of these components are knowledge of strategy, metacognition, working memory, and background knowledge in matters concerning text comprehension (Michel et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2021). From the literature review, some of the challenges that have been identified in L2 readers include that

they possess little vocabulary and grammar knowledge (Teng, 2020) and slow processing speed (Hui& Godfroid, 2021), cultural influence in the interpretation of the text (Bonvillain, 2019) and of course presence of L1 (Grant et al., 2019).

Therefore, studying the process through which people develop their reading and understanding abilities is one of the main concerns of cognitive sciences (Such, 2021; Nation, 2019; Jose, 2018). Proficiency in comprehending is a person's readiness to learn, assess, and use information in learning and work, which is critical throughout people's lives (Nation, 2019; Jose, 2018). Although the demands and challenges of cognitive-linguistic need are shaded between print and speech, the reality of both cases is that the comprehender must extract meaning from encountered words (Wheldall et al., 2019). According to Nation (2019), Language proficiency, which refers to the interaction between language and cognitive processes supported by prior experience and contextual factors, has a significant impact on reading comprehension in terms of critical thinking, knowledge, and relations to any text type. This influence extends from academic success to general information processing, underscoring the importance of fluency in learning and everyday life, as noted by Duke and Cartwright (2021) and Snow (2021).

While studies like Michel et al. (2019) highlight the cognitive challenges faced by second-language speakers, including the simultaneous processing of new language while activating prior knowledge, their focus was not specifically on Grade 4 within CBSE settings. Similarly, Lin's (2024) work on cross-linguistic influence and Grabe and Stoller's (2019) research on dual processing in second language comprehension provide valuable theoretical frameworks but lack contextual application to CBSE schools in an international context. Current research predominantly addresses secondary education, as evidenced by Begum's (2020) study on ESL teachers' self-efficacy in Hyderabad's secondary schools, Kumar and Lata's (2020) examination of CBSE

secondary grade English syllabus. Lakhera's (2018) work on enhancing Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) skills among secondary students. When examining primary education, studies either diverge in focus, like Bhandari and Mathew's (2023) work on Grade 4 design education curriculum or take a broader approach, as seen in Meenakshi and Sheeba's (2022) study on differentiated instructional strategies across all grades.

The psychological aspects of second language reading comprehension have been well-documented by researchers such as Astuti et al. (2023), who identified significant hurdles in memory and processing speed. Christiansen's (2016) framework further elaborates on four vital functional limitations: working memory constraints, slow processing speed, limited attention span, and difficulties in information organisation. However, these findings, while valuable, have not been applied explicitly to the CBSE context or the unique challenges faced by Grade 4 second language speakers in international CBSE settings. While Gallagher and Jones (2023) focused on the use of English-medium instruction in the Arab Gulf States, they left out the education systems in Dubai, where Arabic is often the first language to be learned, as compared to the Indian CBSE schools in India. Afreen's (2020) study on the Indian education system adopted a generalised approach to teaching language without catering the teaching method according to the requirements of the primary-grade students. This systematic gap in the literature calls for systematic yet qualitative research that will offer an essential contribution to the body of knowledge because it will analyse reading comprehension barriers and approaches in both geographical areas while considering their respective different linguistic and educational systems. More specifically, this study seeks to fill the critical gap of translating available theoretical knowledge on second language reading comprehension into practice in CBSE international schools, particularly in relation to Grade 4 speakers' learning in both Dubai and Indian settings.

The study is also appropriate because studies like Kumar and Lata (2020) highlight this gap for second-language learners, particularly in Grade 4. The Indian CBSE framework is implemented in Dubai as part of the curriculum for CBSE international schools, although the Indian framework does not provide specific guidance on developing reading comprehension skills, particularly for lifelong learning (Lakhera, 2018). In Dubai, CBSE international private schools follow the Indian CBSE framework, as fully affiliated members and representatives of the main CBSE board of India. At present, Dubai does not have nor prescribe a national curriculum or framework for English or reading comprehension guidelines for private schools affiliated to a specific international home curriculum. Therefore, private schools in Dubai have the autonomy to develop their own approaches to meet international benchmarks such as PIRLS, TIMSS and PISA, which are emphasised in the UAE's educational landscape (Gallagher & Jones, 2023). Therefore, although the sample schools for this study are located in Dubai, they operate under the CBSE framework prescribed by the CBSE board of India, which follows uniform policies across India and international CBSE schools. This further ensures that the findings are applicable to CBSE classrooms in both Dubai and India.

1.9 The Significance of The Research

The significance of this research lies not in providing immediate, implementable solutions but in establishing essential theoretical and contextual groundwork for future framework development. By introducing the Combination Paradigm and identifying context-specific foundational principles, this study creates a foundation upon which subsequent research can build more comprehensive and implementable reading comprehension frameworks for second language speakers in CBSE international schools. In essence, this work aims to solve a research problem of identifying and addressing the unique needs of Grade 4 second-language speakers in CBSE international schools. Lervåg, Hulme, and Melby-Lervåg (2018) observe that comprehending text

is not an easy or singular task but a combination of several abilities. This is even more challenging for second language learners as they are confronted with extra language and cultural conditions (Kormos, 2020). This makes the findings of this study contextually applicable, considering that the CBSE curriculum is one of India's most respected and widely adopted educational frameworks, adopted in over 26 countries, including Dubai (CBSE, 2024).

The study's emphasis on establishing flexible, adaptable foundational principles rather than rigid frameworks aligns with contemporary educational theory. This approach is supported by Sansone and Cesareni's (2019) socio-constructivist perspective, which emphasises the importance of sociocultural interaction in learning, and Cai et al.'s (2023) work on critical literacy theory. Such flexibility is crucial when addressing the diverse cognitive-linguistic needs that Nation (2019) and Jose (2018) identify as critical throughout people's lives.

The research gains additional significance from its potential to address the specific challenges faced by L2 readers, including minimal vocabulary and grammar knowledge (Teng, 2020), slow processing speed (Hui & Godfroid, 2021), and cultural perspective differences (Bonvillain, 2019). These challenges are compounded by L1 interference, as documented by Grant et al. (2019), making the need for targeted research more urgent. Moreover, the study addresses a notable gap in current research. While studies like Michel et al. (2019) and Smith et al. (2021) have examined components of reading comprehension, including metacognition and working memory, their focus was not specifically on Grade 4 CBSE students. Similarly, while Begum's (2020) work on ESL teachers' self-efficacy and Kumar and Lata's (2020) examination of the CBSE English syllabus provide valuable insights, they primarily focus on secondary education.

The research's cross-cultural significance is particularly relevant given the findings of Gharami and Bhattacharyya (2023), who observed that CBSE schools employ more innovative

teaching methods compared to other curricula. However, as Bhandari and Mathew (2023) and Meenakshi and Sheeba (2022) note, CBSE faces ongoing challenges in addressing cultural diversity and maintaining effective teacher development. The practical implications align with Duke and Cartwright's (2021) emphasis on cognitive science in reading development and Wheldall et al.'s (2019) findings on the interaction between language and mental processes. As Castle and Nation (2018) argue, fluency in reading comprehension significantly impacts academic success and general information processing. The study's methodological approach is strengthened by considering the psychological aspects of second language reading comprehension documented by Astuti et al. (2023), including working memory constraints, processing speed issues, and difficulties in information organisation.

The research's significance is further enhanced by its potential to address the challenges identified by Gallagher and Jones (2023) in English-medium instruction in the Arab Gulf countries, though with a specific focus on the CBSE context. As Afreen (2020) notes in their study of the Indian education system, there is a pressing need for specialised approaches to language teaching, particularly at the primary level. The emphasis on teacher development aligns with Mizza's (2014) research on L1 and L2 learning dynamics and Sidik's (2020) application of Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory to language learning. This comprehensive approach to teacher preparation and professional development could help address the performance gaps observed in international assessments.

1.10 The Methodology

The qualitative interpretivist phenomenological case study methodology is particularly appropriate for this foundational research, as it allows for deep exploration of lived experiences and contextual factors that must inform future framework development. This approach prioritises

understanding and interpretation over prescription, aligning with the study's aim to establish foundational principles rather than deliver complete solutions. The methodology supports the development of the Combination Paradigm as an interpretive tool rather than a deductive framework. My positionality is fundamentally shaped by personal experience, being born and raised by South Asian parents, and attending CBSE school from early years in Dubai. My background of having navigated through CBSE English-medium schools in Dubai, combined with fifteen years of teaching experience in Dubai CBSE International School, has fostered a deep understanding of the educational inequities affecting second language learners and drives the study's aim to develop practical solutions for reading comprehension challenges.

This research is grounded in a co-constructivist ontological and epistemological framework (Pauli et al., 2015), which recognises that knowledge is socially constructed through interactions between the researcher and participants. Rather than attempting to eliminate what positivist approaches might term 'bias,' I embrace what Finlay (2002) describes as 'critical subjectivity' – a reflexive awareness of how my lived experiences, cultural background, and professional position actively shape the research process. My subjectivity as a South Asian educator with extensive experience in CBSE schools is not a limitation but rather a valuable interpretive lens that enriches the analysis (Sabnis & Wolgemuth, 2023). Through what Pillow (2003) terms 'reflexivity of discomfort,' I continuously interrogate how my positionality influences data collection, interpretation, and the co-construction of meaning with participants. This approach aligns with Handa's (2022) and Pillow's (2003) assertion that researcher subjectivity is an essential component of qualitative inquiry that enhances rather than diminishes research quality.

Further, the study employs Lincoln and Guba's (1989) authenticity and credibility criteria rather than positivist notions of validity and reliability (Stahl & King, 2020). Credibility is established

through prolonged engagement in the research context, persistent observation, and triangulation of data sources (Riazi et al., 2023). Authenticity is achieved through what Lincoln and Guba term 'fairness' – ensuring all stakeholder perspectives are represented – and 'catalytic authenticity,' which measures the study's potential to stimulate action (Stahl & King, 2020). These criteria reflect the study's transformative aims and co-constructivist methodology, acknowledging that research quality in qualitative case studies is demonstrated through transparency, reflexivity, and meaningful impact (Ahmed, 2024). By prioritising these benchmarks, this research produces findings that authentically represent participants' experiences while generating actionable insights for educational practice (Riazi et al., 2023).

This research employs a Qualitative Interpretivist Phenomenological Case Study (QIPC) methodology to investigate reading comprehension frameworks for second language learners in CBSE International Schools in Dubai and India. The selection of the QIPC methodology was deliberate, given its demonstrated effectiveness in understanding how individuals engage with the world (and its proven value in educational research contexts (Burns et al., 2021). The theoretical underpinning of this study introduces a 'Combination Paradigm', a term coined by the researcher, depicting the integration of three distinct yet complementary perspectives: Cognitive theory (Alahmad, 2020), Socio-constructivist theories (Sansone & Cesareni, 2019), and Critical literacies (Cai et al., 2023).

The research design encompasses primary research, which begins with a pilot study as supported by scholars such as Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2019), leading to critical methodological refinements. The study adopted two types of sampling: purposive sampling, as recommended by Campbell (2020), and maximum variation sampling, as supported by Collingridge and Grant (2019). Data collection employs online questionnaires through Google Forms and

indicates the related benefits of cost reduction and suppression of participants' inhibition (Chen et al., 2023). The study involves 32 teachers from six CBSE schools. Subsequently, six primary teachers participated in semi-structured interviews, which collected further details on the set research questions following the protocol of Jain (2021) and Ahlin (2019). Using the six semi-structured interviews, this paper applies an analytical framework that identifies emerging themes using the thematic analysis approach by Braun and Clarke (2021).

The researcher also ensures that the study is conducted in line with BERA's (2024) ethical principles. Some of the moral issues considered include guaranteeing the autonomy of participants (Whitney & Evered, 2022), managing response bias, and promoting the reflexivity of the researcher (Yip, 2024; Sabnis & Wolgemuth, 2023). However, the current study has several limitations, including generalisation limitations, which may be attributed to the small sample size (Handa, 2022) and self-reported data (Bergen & Labonté, 2020) with various mitigation strategies implemented.

1.11 The Organisation Of The Thesis

This section will briefly explain what each chapter will contain and why in order to help the reader follow a logical progression of the information from the bare bones of the structure to the details of the research method, findings, conclusion, and recommendations.

Introduction (Chapter 1): Provides the background for the study, the research aims, objectives, and research question, and discusses the significance of the study. **Literature Review (Chapter 2):** Carries out a thorough examination of the existing body of knowledge related to reading comprehension, language, and power, including the impact of the English language on second language speakers (L2), considering the cognitive, cultural, and social dynamics of English language proficiency. It also extensively discusses literacy and reading comprehension with a focus on the 'Combination Paradigm', a term coined by the researcher to depict the integration of

cognitive, socio-constructivist, and critical literacy theories, and concludes by discussing challenges with reading comprehension in second language speakers. **Research Methodology (Chapter 3):** The research methodology employed in this research is the Qualitative Interpretivist Phenomenological Case Study. This chapter outlines the research design, justifies the selection of a case study approach, explores the key learning from the pilot study, and outlines the data collection methods, namely questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Additionally, this chapter outlines participant selection, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations that underpin the authenticity and credibility of the research. **Research Findings (Chapter 4):** Presents a comprehensive overview of the research findings from the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews before conducting thematic analysis to establish codes and, ultimately, present the emergent themes. **Discussion and recommendations (Chapter 5):** This chapter synthesises key findings, emphasising the study's theoretical contributions and foundational insights. Rather than prescriptive recommendations, it presents principles and considerations that can inform future framework development. The discussion is organised around research questions and emergent themes, suggesting directions for policy and practice while acknowledging the need for further research and comprehensive framework development. **Conclusion (Chapter 6).** Finally, this chapter concludes by summarising the entire study as a way of enriching the reader's understanding of effective reading comprehension frameworks. The chapter also shares the limitations of the study. It also suggests contributions of the current study to the field and context of developing language comprehension for second language speakers.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review contextualises the study by placing it within the context of the current, respected literature concerning reading comprehension. In addition, it positions the competence-based subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge related to students' prior knowledge and experiences, thereby creating a solid foundation for the subsequent analysis and findings (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). The research focus of this chapter was further broadened to include the global role of English using the perspectives of Smith et al. (2023). This exploration acknowledges the place of English in the worldwide education system and the consequences/impact that affect second language speakers. The chapter is intentionally curated to engage the present use and future value of literature reviews in the scholarly investigation, as endorsed by the literature by Smith et al. (2023) and Turner and Baker (2020). Thus, the chapter provides a critical examination of the existing knowledge while identifying areas that require further exploration to enhance reading skills among second-language speakers in the CBSE context.

2.2 Global Impact of English, Power Relations, and Second Language Speakers

English is often described as a global or international language, occupying a prominent position in facilitating international business and global interconnections through trade and diplomacy (Baker, 2011). It provides a platform that links one nation's people with people from another place (Kirkpatrick & Schaller-Schwaner, 2022). Like its international counterparts, the CBSE, the official national curriculum of India, was established in 1929 by a resolution of the government (Gharami & Bhattacharyya, 2023). Although the board was initially set as an experiment towards interstate integration and cooperation in the sphere of secondary education, it has, over time, evolved various educational processes to further enhance the students' language

proficiency in functional and communicative English (Gharami & Bhattacharyya, 2023). One of the primary aims of the CBSE curriculum has been to equip learners with practical language skills (LSRW) that enable effective communication within international contexts (Kumar & Lata, 2020). However, this focus on the practical use of the English language often overlooks the importance of developing high-level reading comprehension skills. This points to the possibility that students may achieve basic proficiency in communicating and carrying out tasks but may struggle with deep understanding and critical analysis of texts (Majumdar, 2019).

2.2.1. Neocolonialism: English Power as a Global Tool in India and Dubai

In the UAE, English serves as an explicit "powerful gatekeeper" within the educational landscape that systematically determines access to quality education through institutional mechanisms (Siemund et al., 2021, p. 196). This gatekeeping manifests concretely through standardised testing: students scoring above 180 on the Common Education Proficiency Assessment (CEPA) gain immediate access to Federal Higher Education Institutions, while those falling short face mandatory "intensive English language courses" that delay their educational progression (Siemund et al., 2021, p. 196).

The consequences of this filtering mechanism are severe, creating what scholars have identified as "linguistic dualism," where educational pathways become stratified according to language proficiency rather than academic aptitude (Siemund et al., 2021, p. 196). Most concerning, many "students [drop] out because they tire of the year or more of English preparatory classes they need" (Siemund et al., 2021, p. 196). This dynamic creates conditions where "access to knowledge and academic advancement depends on mastery of a foreign language rather than intellectual capability" (Lukianenko, 2024, p. 45). In India, Kumar illustrates a similar dynamic, describing English as a "hegemonic language" in higher education that creates "language power relationships in multiple

spheres" (Kumar, 2020). This hegemony manifests in reading practices where students from regional language backgrounds struggle with English academic texts. The result is what Kumar calls "intellectual oppression," where "Hindi medium students are compelled to read English sources and write their answer in their language" (Kumar, 2020), creating an unequal cognitive burden.

Both contexts demonstrate what Razmjoo Moghadam and Barani (2025) describe as environments where "quality education becomes contingent on English proficiency" (p. 10) rather than intellectual merit or academic effort. Further, in the UAE, English serves as a determinant of economic opportunities. The linkage between English proficiency and economic opportunity is explicitly documented in both contexts. In the UAE, "without English, further education and career opportunities are not attainable" (Siemund et al., 2021, p. 195). Lukianenko (2024) identifies a "strong correlation between language proficiency and economic opportunities", where English speakers "tend to have better job prospects, higher salaries, and greater career advancement opportunities" (p. 45). Al-Issa and Sulieman (2024) confirm that in Dubai "expatriates with higher English proficiency are often more likely to secure better paying jobs, a fact well understood among both the expatriate community and Emiratis, especially those seeking jobs in the private sector." This awareness drives what they call "socioeconomic incentives associated with English," motivating residents to prioritise learning and using English over Arabic. They cite Leimgruber et al. (2022) who found that Emirati participants felt "that English is the language that will help them locate employment, achieve their goals, and get far in life."

In the Indian context, Kalia and Reese (2009) document how English has transformed from "the language of the elite" to "the language of opportunity and social mobility" (p. 126). Their research demonstrates how middle-class Indian parents navigate these economic pressures by ensuring their

children learn English while still maintaining cultural identity. They note that Indian parents' goal "is not to ensure that their children become 'native-like' users of English but that their children can access the opportunities available to English-educated people" (p. 141).

These linguistic requirements function as what Lukianenko (2024) describes as a "gatekeeping mechanism, influencing access to economic resources and opportunities" (p. 46). In addition, the dominance of English creates significant power disparities between native and non-native speakers. In the UAE context, Siemund et al. (2021) highlight "the consistent hiring of native speakers as teachers," where individuals are "hired with no teaching experience or education degrees, but solely based on being native speakers of English" (p. 196). This creates several inequities, including employment preferences regardless of pedagogical qualification and educational quality, and suffering when linguistic background outweighs teaching capability.

The UAE context reveals a complex linguistic stratification where "native English speakers from Western countries occupy the top position, speakers of 'nativised English varieties (Philippine English, Indian English, Pakistani English)' form a middle tier, and local 'speakers of English for whom it is a foreign, though increasingly second or additional language'" occupy lower positions (Siemund et al., 2021, p. 192). This creates a system where "language variety corresponds closely with economic and social power" (Siemund et al., 2021, p. 192).

The requirement to operate in English creates inherent educational disadvantages for non-native speakers. Assessment standards often reflect native speaker norms, creating what Razmjoo Moghadam and Barani (2025) term "evaluation bias," where "native-like proficiency becomes the standard against which all English usage is measured" (p. 10). Native speaker status often confers presumed expertise and credibility advantages, as "native speakers' linguistic advantage translates into presumed expertise, even in fields where subject knowledge should take precedence" (Razmjoo

Moghadam & Barani, 2025, p. 10). Kumar (2019) notes that in India, this creates psychological impacts where "Hindi/regional speaking students remain submissive and are excluded from the so-called equal space," demonstrating how ethnolinguistic reading practices shape students' academic identities and confidence. He cites Skutnabb-Kangas's argument that "language rights are prerequisite to many other human rights" (Kumar, 2019).

Moreover, the ascendancy of English has profoundly marginalised local languages and their associated knowledge systems. In the UAE, despite Arabic's status as the official national language, Siemund et al. (2021) identify a troubling transformation where "Arabic, the autochthonous and official language of the territory, has practically been relegated to a minority language or second language, especially in the educated strata of society and the education system" (p. 192). This status degradation manifests in several patterns: English emerges as "a symbol of esteem" while Arabic becomes confined to "the language of home, religion, traditions, and the more routine parts of life" (Siemund et al., 2021, p. 197); knowledge expressed in English acquires greater prestige regardless of content quality; and English becomes associated with modernity while Arabic becomes linked with tradition.

Educational policies actively contribute to this marginalisation. Parents in Abu Dhabi seeking Arabic-medium education must "seek out private fee-paying Arabic-medium schools" (Siemund et al., 2021, p. 195), despite evidence that "81.39 per cent of those surveyed wanted the option of choosing which language they wished to study in, either Arabic or English" (Siemund et al., 2021, p. 197). The marginalisation of local languages impacts indigenous knowledge systems through several mechanisms: Epistemological devaluation: Creating "the perception that knowledge conveyed through English is inherently more valuable or 'scientific'" (Razmjoo Moghadam & Barani, 2025, p. 12); Cultural influence: Affecting "societal norms, values, and beliefs, particularly

among younger generations exposed intensively to English" (Razmjoo Moghadam & Barani, 2025, p. 10); Educational material bias: Materials increasingly "promote the socio-cultural ideologies of English-speaking nations while alienating local cultures" (Razmjoo Moghadam & Barani, 2025, p. 12); Disruption of knowledge transmission: As younger generations become more oriented toward English, traditional knowledge transmission faces challenges including decreased fluency in specialised vocabulary for discussing traditional knowledge

These impacts align with Lukianenko's (2024) observation that "this erosion of linguistic diversity also leads to the loss of unique cultural knowledge and heritage embedded in these languages" (p. 46). In the Indian context, Kumar argues that "the hegemony of one language itself achieves the status of dominant or prestigious" (Kumar, 2020), showing how ethnolinguistic identity becomes hierarchical in educational contexts. Further, Kumar (2020) notes that the human mind imagines in the mother tongue, suggesting that English dominance may fundamentally alter conceptual thinking. Kalia and Reese (2009) present a more nuanced view, suggesting that Indian parents employ an "additive model" rather than a "duplicative model" of bilingualism where the mother tongue is maintained for cultural heritage while English is compartmentalised for educational and economic opportunities (p. 126).

2.2.2 Impact of Culture and Primary Language on Second Language Learners

English language acquisition, particularly as a second language, extends far beyond the simple act of learning a new language, especially in the context of Grade 4 CBSE classrooms across Dubai and India; it closely aligns with cultural capital and is vitally connected with language, culture, and understanding of context interactions (Kiley, 2019). It is essential to highlight that cultural capital could be viewed as a derivative of social capital, a concept advanced by Pierre Bourdieu in his 1986 articles, where he defines social capital as referring to the benefits individuals

derive from their social networks, including access to resources, information, and support (Grenfell, 2009). In this context, cultural capital, which refers to the non-economic capital assets accumulated in society that facilitate the change of social status (Huang, 2019), takes on unique significance in Dubai's CBSE international schools, where Indian students form a significant demographic. In these Grade 4 classrooms, students navigate multiple linguistic and cultural contexts simultaneously, creating distinct challenges for second-language speakers. The conflict between the learner's endowment and the valued cultural capital in the second language speakers' educational context tremendously hinders language learning and academic achievements.

Ethnolinguistic Identity Complexities in Indian and UAE Contexts

In the Indian context, ethnolinguistic identity is characterised by what Kumar (2020) describes as multiple languages and multiple language identities. This multilingual reality creates a situation where "language users in India are more flexible and widen their identity beyond usage of a particular kind of language (Kumar, 2020). However, this linguistic flexibility exists within hierarchical structures where English functions as a "hegemonic language" in higher education (Kumar, 2020). As discussed earlier in section 2.2.1.2, Kalia and Reese (2009) demonstrate how Indian parents navigate the economic pressures by ensuring their children develop English proficiency while maintaining cultural identity through strategic book-reading practices, exemplifying the complex relationship between language, identity, and educational advancement." This transformation in language status discussed earlier (see section 2.2.1.2) creates complex identity negotiations for UAE residents, particularly relevant for Grade 4 Indian students in Dubai's international schools who must navigate between multiple linguistic identities.

Al-Issa and Sulieman (2024) further elaborate on this tension, noting that while "UAE Arabic is the official language of the UAE, playing a crucial role in the nation's culture and identity,

the educational system simultaneously places significant emphasis on English, with English becoming a medium of instruction in most private schools and universities. This dual language policy creates complex identity negotiations for UAE residents, particularly relevant for Grade 4/Indian students in Dubai's international schools who must navigate between multiple linguistic identities. For instance, Ruiz (2023) observes that students who are second-language speakers from cultures significantly different from Western culture may face challenges. This is particularly evident in Dubai's international schools, where Indian Grade 4 students must reconcile their home culture with both local Emirati and international educational expectations. Ruiz (2023) and Bakhsh (2020) further argue that inherited cultural backgrounds, including linguistic practice, cultural beliefs, and patterns of reasoning, may not align with second language speakers' expectations. Such social cognition discrepancies can lead to academic problems, including difficulty in contributing to class discussions and comprehending culturally specific idioms (Vula & Tyfekã, 2024).

Power Dynamics and Linguistic Hierarchies in Educational Settings

As established in the discussion of English as a gatekeeper to quality education (section 2.2.1.2), English functions as a 'powerful gatekeeper' within the educational landscape, creating significant power imbalances in both contexts. This gatekeeping mechanism has direct implications for Grade 4 students who may face delayed educational progression if they fall short of English language thresholds. These power dynamics manifest in reading practices where, as discussed earlier, non-English medium students face what Kumar (2020) terms 'intellectual oppression' - a pattern that can begin as early as Grade 4, laying the groundwork for future educational challenges.

In the Dubai-Indian educational context, Huang's (2019) findings about students possessing cultural capital closer to the target language culture having better chances of success become particularly relevant. This manifests in Grade 4 classrooms, where students must navigate between

Indian English conventions and international English expectations while simultaneously engaging with the local Arabic environment. The impact extends beyond the classroom, as Jiang (2009) argues, affecting learners' interactions with English-speaking communities and their access to resources. In the multicultural setting of Dubai, this becomes particularly relevant for Grade 4 Indian students who require English medium literacy, who also try to relate to their Indian roots and, at the same time, immerse themselves in a local Arabic setting.

Beyond the binary between English and local languages, both contexts reveal complex hierarchies among language varieties. In the UAE, Siemund et al. (2021) describe a stratification where "native English speakers from Western countries occupy the top position, speakers of 'nativised English varieties (Philippine English, Indian English, Pakistani English)' form a middle tier, and local 'speakers of English for whom it is a foreign, though increasingly second or additional language' occupy lower positions" (p. 192). This stratification creates a system where "language variety corresponds closely with economic and social power" (Siemund et al., 2021, p. 192), directly affecting how Grade 4 students perceive their linguistic abilities and identities.

Reading Practices as Sites of Identity Negotiation

Identity negotiation involves a complicated process of navigating and balancing between the various and sometimes conflicting parts of the identity of individuals (Edward & Burns, 2016). This constant negotiation of cultural heritage identity versus emerging academic identity on the part of Grade 4 Indian students in English-medium international schools is a continual balancing act in which the former is grounded on Indian traditions, languages, and values, and the latter in English-medium schooling and international learning expectations. This negotiation is not a mere option; it is not just the lack of clarity within the events, but it is an active, tactical process through which the students and their families both consciously and unconsciously make decisions concerning aspects

of their identities they will highlight, maintain, or adjust in certain circumstances. The process of reading can turn into an interesting venue of this trade-off (Compton-Lilly et al., 2017) due to the twofold nature of the reading process, consisting of not only the intellectual processing of information but also the cultural location of a reader about the social and educational contexts on a large scale.

Kalia and Reese (2009) give details on how reading practices can be used as a platform for negotiating these power issues between parents and students. They demonstrate that middle-class Indian parents critically undertake the practice of encouraging a child to read, which they adopt strategically to make their children ready to cope with English-medium education without losing their home languages to maintain their cultural identity. The practices indicate a type of cultural agency in that parents reject linguistic assimilation and, at the same time, guarantee the success of their children at school (Crutchley, 2024). This strategic take indicates the way reading becomes a critical site for identity positioning- parents read to show not only their adherence to the requirements of the educational system but also their assertion of resistance to entirely abandoning their culture.

This result shows how the practice of reading books mediated the influence of the degree of English spoken towards the child on the scores of children on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) (Kalia and Reese, 2009, p. 140), implying that reading could serve as an instrument through which to traverse power relations that are established in language. More importantly, these reading practices can be seen as a kind of dialogue between two, quite distant, identity positions, that is, between the cultural identity, which appreciates multilingualism and traditional forms of knowledge, and the academic one, which is more concerned with fluency in English and success within the Western education system. Toomey et al. (2013) identify negotiation as the process when

parents and students have to choose which texts to focus on, how to interpret the material that could be controversial to their cultural values, and how to provide cultural identities and remain adaptable to educational demands.

Continuing with the concept of knowledge devaluation introduced earlier (in 2.2.1.2), reading practices in such settings strengthen the view of English-language knowledge being ultra-valuable, and curriculum, along with teaching materials, are structured to reflect in such a way that Western, instead of local, cultural views. This may cause the devaluation of knowledge that is highly noticeable in the kind of texts employed in such learning environments (Heggernes, 2021). In case of an average Grade 4 Indian student, reading materials may contain much more Western fairytales, European history texts, Anglo-American cultures and traditions, and little to virtually no Indian folktales, Indian history and Indian customs and cultures as prologues, epilogues or "cultural diversity" alerts. This establishes lived bipolarity where students grow to appreciate the stories of Shakespeare and simultaneously diminish the role of the Panchatantra, or where they are fully conversant with speaking about how western scientists have made discoveries but are unversed in Indian roles in mathematics and astronomy.

This shapes the transmission of knowledge through Western-centric textbooks and curricula that prioritise Euro-American scientific and cultural content over local Indian or Arab perspectives. The manifestation of this imbalance is the practical reality which every day faces the students because they have to live among the home realities, where Indian knowledge systems are culturally appreciated, and the realities of schools, in which the Western knowledge systems are central. As an example, a student at home could write about Ayurvedic medicine principles, but in science class, they would be taught about Western medical methods only, which would cause a cognitive dissonance that would need continual identity negotiation.

Culture has a crucial role in the engagement and interest of the learners in education and the learning process (Darvin & Norton, 2023). The theoretical framework of identity, investment and power in language learning developed by Darvin and Norton offers invaluable perspectives on the attitude adopted by Indian students in applying to English reading (Darvin & Norton, 2023). In this framework, students are shown to express the idea of investment in English reading not just as a linguistic ability but also as the source of cultural assets and social mobility. This investment is, however, riddled by identity negotiations- the students have to invest in English literacy and at the same time negotiate the possible loss of their cultural identity. The reading practices are not only locations on which the students express their agency, but may also be resistant to total cultural assimilation and give themselves a very calculated fulfilment of educational demands with the intention of acquiring the social and economic benefits.

It is especially true of Grade 4 Indian students who may be afraid to lose their cultural identity at the same time pursuing the desire to demonstrate global learning results (Dama, 2023; Bhandari & Mathew, 2023). These students are experiencing the following particular fears: a loss of fluency in their mother tongue, a loss of connection to the cultural practices of their families, interests in the values of the West compared to Indian traditions, and an alienation from the extended family and networks of their communities. These tend to express these fears in different ways and manners by avoiding reading which goes contrary to the cultural values they hold to by some students, developing a fear of discussion by others given some issues are considered to demean their background and some adopt defensive reactions when the English reading content deems the western hues as better than the Indian ones. Also, such students are likely to complain that they experience inner conflict between doing what their parents expect about being accomplished and

staying true to their cultural heritage, which also builds up inner pressure that inclines them to be less motivated and interested in reading tasks.

Regarding these challenges, Softa and Gjergji (2022) emphasised the necessity to promote a supportive atmosphere that is particularly critical when presenting children with the chances to develop their cultural and language identity. This support environment is essential to Grade 4 students who are at such a developmental stage where they are most susceptible to external forces on their identity formation. The combination of the cognitive development stage, cultural awakening, and academic load forms a multidimensional field in which reading practices would either facilitate successful identity negotiation or lead to increased conflict between cultures.

When applied to the context of Grade 4 Indian students in international schools in Dubai, the patterns of learning performance in English language may be considered in terms of both linguistic and cultural variables, as well as the personal and social learning scenario, in which the progression of learning a second language for speakers is going to proceed. This practice promotes language inclination in students and, in the process, develops cultural capital in the students, which is essential to succeed in any English situation and to maintain the cultural values and ideologies. Focusing on Grade 4 is vital because Grade 4 approaches the end of primary schooling, when ethnolinguistic identity formation becomes even more critical in multilingual settings of education.

Conclusion

The role that language and power play, as well as the nature and purpose of education in CBSE schools in Dubai and India, contribute to the challenges and possibilities for the instruction of English. This analysis generates several vital findings regarding relations between language acquisition and cultural self-identification, relations between language education and power structures of institutions, and relations between language acquisition and children's developmental

progress, especially for the multiple languages and cultures in Grade 4 learners. English has greatly affected the education practices in both regions, though history has shaped the regions differently. While English is learned in India to overcome the colonial past, in the case of Dubai, the model of learning is a straightforward commercial one. These distinctions make it very interesting that CBSE schools in both places try to stick to the practical demands of learning English while at the same time respecting cultural and linguistic differences.

The effects on second language (L2) learners, especially Grade 4 students, are therefore realised in the following ways. The mental overload associated with translating content from English to the first language while working through the information in English poses considerable difficulties, according to Baddeley's (2021) findings regarding working memory. This means that these students need to perform content comprehension, language acquisition, and culture at the same time, which sometimes will cause 'cognitive overload and language anxiety. Further, Gardner's Socio-Cultural Model is illuminating in explaining the relationship between motivation and ability in formally and informally learned cultures. The model focuses on the independence of these factors in an explanation for why some students succeed while others fail despite their general linguistic skills. This understanding is quite applicable to CBSE schools as they formulate their policies in order to address learner heterogeneity.

Phonetic, syntactic, and semantic problems of L2 learners are compounded within the CBSE setting as the students have to comprehend English while at the same time being fluent in their first language. Cultural aspects intensify these difficulties as the students switch between different linguistic and cultural spheres, which is even more evident in Dubai. Beginning with the examination of the international school context, the concept of cultural capital is identified as a critical source of learning about the English language. Students need to conform to their learned

cultural norms and standards and, at the same time, to local and international education systems; the relationships between these elements determine students' learning and academic performance.

These perceptions have implications for the future of English instruction in CBSE schools, requiring a multifaceted understanding. Achieving success in these efforts depends on understanding both linguistic and cultural aspects and on effective technology and instructional modifications to serve multilingual English Language Learners (ELL). The dynamics of the CBSE school education will further develop in the near future, and the challenge of serving multiple demands of schooling while at the same time keeping quality standards intact will definitely play a key role in shaping its students to meet the global challenges of the future world.

2.2.3 Phonics, Syntactic, and Semantics Challenges for Second Language Learners

Addressing these cognitive and psychological issues requires careful consideration of the CBSE context. As Krepel (2021) emphasises, pronunciation is vital for fluency, and this becomes particularly relevant for Grade 4 CBSE students who often need to overcome interference from their first language. The phonetic issues described by Derwing and Munro (2022) are particularly significant because many CBSE students find difficulties in pronouncing English phonemes that have no equivalent in their native language. Syntactic difficulties have been highlighted by Uzair-ul-Hassan and Parveen (2022), which now appear more complicated in the CBSE learning environment, where students are required to complement their knowledge of English grammar with native-like syntactic patterns. According to Andriani et al. (2021), English grammar rules are more demanding, especially for Grade 4 students, since they struggle to develop logical and comprehensive techniques for sentence structure formation. Further, Vo (2018) identified several semantic difficulties affecting students, which Latif and Mat Daud (2021) expanded on. Thus, the cultural context that students, including CBSE students, need to comprehend English is critical. The

recent findings by Vula and Tyfekçi (2024) and Hossain (2024) concerning cultural connections and semantic loading seem most relevant for CBSE students who frequently switch between two cultures. Adhikary (2020) suggested that a content-based learning approach can address the needs of the CBSE curriculum, especially in enhancing the Grade 4 students' ability to interpret content. According to Zhang (2022) and Rajput and Shah (2021), technology can help improve the teaching of second language speakers, and technology integration is now more significant in CBSE schools.

These findings suggest that while general principles of second language acquisition apply to CBSE students, their unique educational context requires specific attention to the multilingual demands of the CBSE curriculum, the age-appropriate cognitive development considerations for Grade 4 students, cultural factors specific to Indian students in Dubai and India and integration of language learning with CBSE curriculum requirements. This contextualisation highlights the need for more targeted research, specifically examining the challenges and opportunities present in teaching English to Grade 4 CBSE students in Dubai and India.

2.3 Literacy and Reading Comprehension

2.3.1 Literacy and Its Significance

Literacy encompasses a set of competencies that include identifying and using a culture's dominant form of communication to enhance one's life and the lives of others (Montoya-Ávila, 2020; Monteiro, 2020). While the earlier paradigm locates literacy in its narrow sense in simple reading and writing skills, this broader perspective refers to the capability of learning and applying writing or symbolic systems for business, public, civic, or other purposes. Montoya-Ávila (2020) states that literacy serves the purpose of liberating the mental ability of people and communities by removing obstacles to human advancement. Spires et al. (2019) further noted that literacy today has evolved somewhat, meaning the type of skill and ability to comprehend is much broader now, given

today's individual, team, and social world demands. Spires et al. (2019) also point out that comprehension is a basic form of information processing task that goes beyond reading in an ability to review media, data, displays, and information content. Critical reading comprehension is beneficial for assessing the accuracy of information from the web and for comparing data extracted from various materials. This helps people distinguish between real and fake news, which is crucial in tackling the difficulty of the digital space. There has been a significant transformation of literacy learning permanently, especially in multicultural settings such as Dubai, where multiple language learners are facing multiple structuralisms (Montoya-Ávila, 2020; Monteiro, 2020). Therefore, literacy is not simply the acquisition of reading and writing; it is the ability to be literate within a culture of communication and meaning-making.

From this perspective, literacy in the digital age can be described or interpreted as a set of life skills that conform to the ability to use technology in the retrieval of information, as well as the ability to produce the kind of information that is relevant and necessary in shaping social opinions on important issues. The current debate about the meaning of literacy relates to the requirements and expectations of society of the individual. According to Mullis, Martin, and Sainsbury (2016), reading literacy is primarily described as the people's capacity to interpret and utilise all those written language or written language forms relevant to society and valued by the individual. Consequently, from the texts, the readers are able to build meaning in multiple forms, including reading to learn, to study and to engage in readers' communities at school and outside and for pleasure.

This explanation acknowledges that literacy involves more than just reading letters and words; it encompasses understanding and analysing information from different areas of life and formats. Embracing comprehension skills in traditional and digital media highlights the connection

between historical, educational tests and modern literacy concepts outlined by Spires et al. (2019). Consequently, mastery of literacy not only unlocks diverse opportunities across various life domains but also establishes a foundation for continuous learning, fostering the development of all four language skills: comprehension skills, including reading, listening, writing, and speaking. For Grade 4 students in Dubai, literacy represents a critical junction of linguistic, cognitive, and social development. Researchers like Spires et al. (2019) have expanded understanding of literacy as a comprehensive set of skills that address the complex demands of individuals and society in the twenty-first century. It is a powerful tool for mental liberation, empowering individuals to understand and engage with their complex, multilayered world (Montoya-Ávila, 2020).

2.3.2 Critical Theories- Integration of Cognitive, Socio-constructivist, and Critical Literacy Theories

Leu et al. (2018) demonstrated that knowledge of theoretical literacy frameworks helps define critical foundations of literacy activities. These theories explain literacy teaching methods from basic skills to critical thinking based on text interpretation, drawing from multiple perspectives relevant to second language speakers.

Cognitive Theories

Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory (1978, as cited in Sidik, 2020) provides an understanding of children's cognitive development and its effect on text comprehension (Alahmad, 2020; Levine, 1975). According to Sidik (2020), Grade 4 students (9-10 years) are typically at the concrete operational stage, capable of logical thinking about concrete objects, using inductive logic, and considering others' viewpoints. This theory helps identify suitable texts and comprehension

approaches for these students, supporting differentiated instruction for students at different developmental stages.

Text comprehension involves elaborate mental processes using schemata, working memory, and cognitive load (Bormanaki & Khoshhal, 2017). Schema activation methods include pre-teaching questions about text topics and recreational reading activities connecting text information to students' lives (Ebuta & Obiekezie, 2016). Afflerbach, Hurt, and Cho (2020) found that students comprehend better when encountering information related to existing knowledge, which is beneficial for CBSE schools with culturally diverse students. Teachers should select multicultural texts that build on students' knowledge schemas and enhance their world knowledge, using scaffolding techniques like graphic organisers and text prediction.

Poor readers struggle with recreational reading due to a lack of knowledge elements for integrating new information with existing knowledge, creating poorer situational models and affecting text meaning co-construction (Awan & Sipra, 2018). They find filtering irrelevant information difficult during comprehension construction. Support strategies include modelling comprehension monitoring procedures (McKeown, Beck & Blake, 2009) and pairing children with peers or adults who read to them while encouraging questions.

Awan and Sipra (2018) identify schemata factors: availability (knowledge stored in long-term memory) and accessibility (ability to recall such knowledge). Working memory is critical in storing information transferred from the construction-integration model to long-term memory (Sweller, Merrienboer & Paas, 2019). According to Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), working memory has limited capacity for storing new content, affecting students' learning of new texts or second language learners facing language and task complexity (Shadiev & Huang, 2020). Comprehension

is based on working memory's capacity to integrate new material with prior knowledge and is weakened when processing substantial information simultaneously.

Low-skilled readers with limited prior knowledge struggle to map text information to existing knowledge, with limited working memory capacity causing comprehension difficulties when heavily taxed (Shadiev & Huang, 2020; Sweller et al., 2019). Cognitive load management techniques include converting complex tasks into manageable sub-tasks and using multimedia support. Skilled readers with complex background knowledge and high reading processing abilities take more time but use less time to enlarge relevant information in working memory, reducing cognitive load.

For CBSE schools with diverse learners, texts should be carefully chosen (Lakhera, 2018) with teaching strategies comprehensible in second language classrooms while respecting cultural sensibilities. Using culturally responsive reading strategies allows engagement with cultural texts to introduce novel ideas and make cross-cultural comparisons. Teachers must determine the linguistic and thinking demands needed to analyse texts and match them with learners (Kumar & Lata, 2020).

Kaefer (2020) notes that background knowledge's impact on text comprehension varies with age and text type. Narrative texts use grammar and linguistic resources for organisational properties, coherence, and cohesion, while expository texts provide new descriptive knowledge. McCarthy et al. (2018) affirm that readers activate information to enhance existing knowledge when working with various texts. Kim et al. (2021) suggest that reading is a complex process using heuristic techniques and purposeful actions like decoding and paraphrasing to enhance understanding.

Specific comprehension strategies for narrative texts include character mapping, plot sequencing, and prediction exercises. Unlike traditional generic comprehension approaches, new approaches

focus on reading success (Shanahan, 2018; Muijselaar et al., 2018), representing promising comprehension approaches (Stevens et al., 2019). However, Stevens et al. (2019) argue that this potentially reduces the aims to promote instruction in creating knowledge from different purposes and texts through strategy construction.

Critical Literacy Theories

Critical literacy theories emphasise engaging with texts as active interpreters, questioning, analysing, and understanding power dynamics in language (Cai et al., 2023). Critical Literacy Theory focuses on questioning ideologies in texts, comprehending diverse perspectives, and using literate practices to raise awareness against injustices. For second language speakers, this means critically evaluating global information, appreciating cultural differences, and comprehending diverse perspectives.

Luke (2018) describes critical literacy as contrary to general language acquisition, focusing on critical analysis of texts and social realities by learners. Vasquez et al. (2019) included essential practices of literacy from K-12 classrooms for second-language learners. Hayik (2020) studied critical literacy practices with second language learners in Israel using multi-modal text. Merga et al. (2020) argue that multiple literacies must be individualised due to different language competency and literacy skill levels.

Begum (2020) extends Freire's (1970) work, proposing that reading involves not just words but "reading the world" to decode meanings. This aligns with Freire's argument (as cited in Nweke & Owoh, 2020) that people can engage with the world and potentially overthrow oppressive aspects of society through learning to read (Bolin, 2017). Cai et al. (2023) define critical literacy as reading from a crucial viewpoint, developing new meanings by engaging with power relationships in

language, negotiating the extraordinary, analysing different viewpoints, and reflecting on social/political dimensions.

The Four Resources Model (Luke & Freebody, 1999), considered by Olifant and Boakye (2022), includes code-breaking, text-participating, text-using, and text-analysing. Novianti et al. (2021) and Vasquez et al. (2019) suggested a synthesis model including power, access, diversity, and design for teaching critical literacy, helping learners appreciate how language is built and influenced by social and political worlds. Critical literacy in second languages helps students understand language, culture, and power relations, enhancing students' language and cultural capital to understand not just literal meaning but also cultural and power relations.

Building upon these critical literacy approaches, academic literacies theory offers another crucial critical pedagogy lens, particularly relevant for second language learners. Unlike skills-based approaches that treat reading as a neutral technical skill, academic literacies views reading practices as socially situated and embedded in power relationships (Kumar, 2020). This perspective is especially valuable in contexts like CBSE schools in Dubai, where students navigate multiple languages and knowledge systems simultaneously.

As illustrated in the UAE educational context, "English has become a potent factor in the differential power equation" (Kumar, 2020), functioning as what Siemund et al. (2021) term a "linguistic filter" that evaluates students primarily on their command of a foreign language rather than their comprehensive academic abilities. Academic literacies approaches challenge this dynamic by making language-power relationships visible to students, enabling them to understand how language influences knowledge construction rather than just passively absorbing content.

For second language learners, academic literacies' emphasis on identity is particularly crucial. Kumar (2020) highlights how "there is an identity crisis for regional medium scholars because of

the dominance of English language," a phenomenon also observed in the UAE, where linguistic requirements create what Lukianenko (2024) describes as a "gatekeeping mechanism, influencing access to economic resources and opportunities." By acknowledging students' linguistic identities, academic literacies approaches can transform reading from a site of alienation to one of empowerment, particularly for Grade 4/ students developing their academic identities.

The power imbalances embedded in educational language practices have profound implications for second language learners in Dubai's CBSE schools. As demonstrated in the UAE context, the dominance of English in educational frameworks has marginalised local languages despite their official status, creating what Siemund et al. (2021) identify as a troubling transformation where indigenous languages become "relegated to minority language or second language status, especially in the educated strata of society."

This dynamic creates what Kumar (2020) describes as "intellectual oppression", where non-dominant language students are "compelled to read English sources and write their answer in their language," placing an unequal cognitive burden on these learners. Critical literacy approaches directly confront these power imbalances by making them explicit subjects of study rather than implicit barriers to learning.

For Grade 4 students in CBSE schools, this means developing classroom practices that acknowledge language hierarchies while providing students with tools to navigate them successfully. Razmjoo Moghadam and Barani (2025) suggest that addressing these imbalances requires intentional policy interventions that "recognise the value of linguistic diversity" while finding ways to "utilise foreign languages in more rational and non-threatening ways." At the classroom level, this can include critically examining the language used in texts, discussing whose perspectives are centred or marginalised through language choices, and creating space for students

to express complex ideas in their strongest language while developing proficiency in the target language.

As Al-Issa and Sulieman (2024) observe in the UAE context, despite Arabic being the official language, "the dominance of English as a de facto lingua franca underscores the nation's international outlook and multiculturalism." Critical literacy approaches can help students navigate this complex sociolinguistic landscape by developing metalinguistic awareness of how language choices reflect and reinforce power relationships in educational and social contexts.

Socio-Constructivist Theory

Vygotsky's socio-constructivist theory views literacy as a meaning-making process embedded in social and cultural contexts (Sansone & Cesareni, 2019; Vygotsky & Cole, 2018). The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) - the zone between independent performance and desired development - is crucial for teachers helping learners, particularly second language learners (Saleem et al., 2021). Teachers teach language while training learners on culturally crafted texts through group work.

Socio-constructivism practices in CBSE Indian International Schools involve integrating language teaching with mutual and shared reading activities where students discuss text meanings in groups (Vygotsky & Cole, 2018). Ramu and Kumar (2020) examined reciprocal teaching methodology under socio-constructivism and proposed enhancements in comprehension abilities. Rawengwan and Yawiloeng (2020) support social learning environments for positive reading results. Jamali Kivi et al. (2021) define socio-constructivism as an integrated learning model in favourable conditions with interactive education. Eun (2019) noted dialogue and interaction's crucial roles in second language acquisition, viewing learners as active builders of learning environments.

The ZPD is particularly relevant in Dubai's multiple language contexts. Learning occurs through guided participation, with teachers supporting learners between prior knowledge and anticipated learning achievements. Zembylas (2019) emphasises dialogical learning between teachers and students, between students, or between students as readers and texts (Eun, 2019; Irshad et al., 2021). Gomez (2014) suggests peer pairing with dissimilar language abilities, mixed ability reading pairs, bilingual pairing for complex material decoding, and cultural discussions for exchanging perceptions.

This aligns with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory that learning is social and constructive as students rebuild knowledge acquired from others. Learner interaction is central to scaffolding, where teachers assist learners in applying increased effort for challenging tasks (Sansone & Cesareni, 2019). Shuib et al. (2020) describes scaffolding as teachers providing adequate, high-quality support for difficult tasks, implemented through partner reading and discussion, read-and-discussing activities, and collaborative teacher/student activities.

However, inadequate support can cause student demotivation and frustration (Sansone & Cesareni, 2019; Shuib et al., 2020). Kirkpatrick and Schaller-Schwaner (2022) argue learning environments promoting socio-interaction, socio-constructive meaning-making, and cultural relevance enhance reading comprehension. According to Sansone and Cesareni (2019), teachers' decisions determine learners' reading behavior, using top-down or bottom-up approaches to improve reading and comprehension (Irshad et al., 2021).

The top-down approach focuses on readers' prior knowledge, anticipation, and perceptive abilities, viewing readers as active users of language, context, and world knowledge. The bottom-up perspective views text as the primary information source, using decoding skills, phonics, and syntactic knowledge. Modern classroom practices embrace both through a balanced approach,

combining whole-word/top-down and phonics/bottom-up approaches for teaching reading comprehension. Balanced collaborative activities include shared elementary readers using mixed techniques in phonics practice with whole text interpretation.

Fernyhough and Borghi (2023) emphasize classroom interactions for making meaning, enhancing comprehension and internal voice through structured collaborative activities, brief team discussions about idioms, and cross-cultural discussion groups. From the Vygotskian framework, inner speech is a cognitive resource connecting prior knowledge and textual input. L2 readers face difficulties constructing meanings, sometimes misinterpreting idiomatic expressions or cultural remarks (Vula & Tyfekçi, 2024).

Martin et al. (2018) propose teachers explain readership as diverse construction of text meaning regarding purpose, context, and mode, supporting reading different texts with diverse purposes in social environments. When teaching academic writing, tutors should show appropriate referencing methods (Levrai & Bolster, 2019). Analyzing cultural backgrounds of learners in CBSE schools in India and Dubai will help identify how students read and perceive texts. Understanding ZPD encourages teachers to use scaffolding tools to develop students' comprehension abilities (Sansone & Cesareni, 2019). Cultural integration through collaborative reading can be achieved through shared reading, multicultural literature discussion, team assignments, and collaborative creation of cultural context guides.

For EAL students specifically, critical pedagogies can facilitate deeper learning by providing frameworks that make sense of their complex linguistic experiences. Kalia and Reese's (2009) research in multilingual Indian contexts demonstrates that EAL learners benefit from "compartmentalised" language experiences where reading practices in the school language can

compensate for limited spoken exposure. When integrated with critical pedagogies, this suggests several deep learning strategies for second language readers in CBSE schools:

First, explicit recognition of the "additive rather than duplicative nature of bilingualism" (Kalia & Reese, 2009) challenges deficit models of EAL learning and supports pedagogies that value multilingualism. Teachers can leverage this by creating reading activities that explicitly build connections between languages rather than treating them as entirely separate domains.

Second, the integration of culturally responsive reading materials with critical questioning techniques can address what Kumar (2019) calls "the relationship between knowledge and power." By analyzing how certain texts gain authority through language privilege, students develop deeper critical reading skills that question textual authority rather than simply accepting it - a crucial skill for second language learners navigating unfamiliar cultural contexts in texts.

Third, Kalia and Reese's finding that "teaching practices partially mediated the relationship between children's age and their print scores" (2009) supports the value of intentionally mediated literacy experiences where teachers guide students to recognize not just what texts say, but how language choices reflect particular worldviews and power structures. This approach transforms reading comprehension from surface understanding to deep engagement with texts as cultural artifacts.

In conclusion, a visual representation showing the interplay of cognitive, socio-constructivist, and critical literacy theories is shown in Figure 3 below

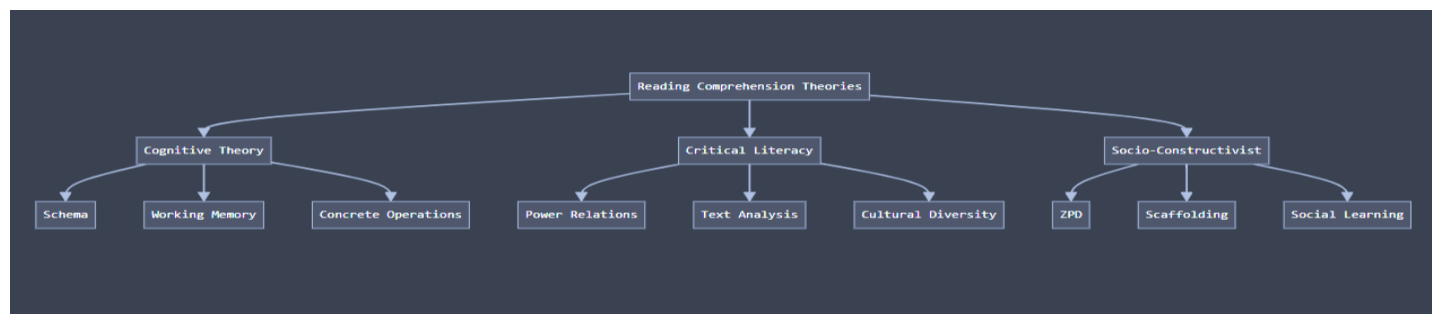


FIGURE 3: VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE INTERPLAY OF COGNITIVE, SOCIO-CONSTRUCTIVIST, AND CRITICAL LITERACY THEORIES

Teachers' Involvement in The Delivery of Literacy/Reading Comprehension

Teachers play a pivotal role in navigating these complex literacy landscapes. According to Aufderheide (2018), the National Council of Teachers of English (2018) maintains that teachers play a significant role in teaching literacy skills and providing reading resources and materials for students to develop their language skills. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2023) note that teachers, in collaboration with stakeholders and policymakers, can nurture young learners by encouraging participation, expression, and language skill development. Assessment approaches need similar transformation. Mullis, Martin, and Sainsbury (2016) acknowledge that literacy involves more than just reading letters and words. Innovative assessment strategies should recognise students' linguistic strengths and provide meaningful feedback that supports continued language development.

This goes beyond standard classroom practice of languages: it calls for a person-centred approach that affirms learners' language resources as they offer them systematic language learning. Professional development becomes crucial in this context. According to Connelly and Schooley (2013), the National Association of Elementary School Principals maintains that school leaders have the primary task of supporting literacy culture. They have to ensure that the teachers are empowered professionally and supported with literacy development knowledge and tools to pass knowledge effectively (Awan & Sipra, 2018). It must be noted that the current emphasis on these conceptions of literacy necessitates developments in curriculum design. Street's ideological models of Literacy make it clear that literacy is a non-technical tool for cultural meaning-making remedies (Purcell-Gates, 2020). In the multicultural context in which education occurs in Dubai, this means designing learning experiences that transcend language barriers and foster interculturality, as Flores and García (2020) propose the use of Multiple Languages as resources. The same applies to assessment approaches, which also require similar transformation. Mullis, Martin, and Sainsbury

(2016) admit that there is more to literacy than letters and words. It is, therefore, essential for innovative assessment strategies to reflect proactively on the languages that students bring to the classroom, as well as to offer feedback that would build on students' language.

The challenges are significant. Bayyurt et al. (2019) argue for a fair and culturally sensitive method of literacy education that helps overcome cultural barriers and enhance understanding among a diverse student body. Collaborative learning emerges as a powerful strategy, recognising language as a social practice, not just an individual skill to be mastered. The broader implications extend beyond individual student development. Baker and Fang (2021) emphasise that examining the foundational principles of literacy practices is crucial for understanding their core components. By supporting second language learners effectively, teachers contribute to creating global citizens who can navigate complex, multicultural environments with confidence and sophistication. Research continues to evolve, offering new insights into literacy development. Historical perspectives from Perry (2012) highlight literacy as both an empowering force and a tool of societal communication, emphasising how language embodies a civilisation's concepts and narratives passed down through generations.

2.4 Comprehension Development with Second Language Speakers

CBSE's anatomy, as revealed by Lakhera's (2018) doctoral thesis, is very instructive, and it is, therefore, easy to discern interconnected actions, which means skills, processes, and knowledge related to reading comprehension need to be harmonised within the CBSE context. In their doctoral investigation, the sample of which was restricted to the secondary school level of education, they noted that the role of a teacher is not only to teach a language and make a student understand it, but also to make the student grasp content in a particular cultural and educational setting.

According to Singh (2021), the CBSE schooling system necessitates cultural sensitivity, which is strongly related to socio-constructivism, where cultural sensitivity is central. Further, Gallagher and Jones (2023) observed that in the context of English as a foreign language in the CBSE Curriculum of international schools in Dubai and India, the issues that second language learners encounter are all closely interlinked with the various functions of reading. Therefore, reading comprehension not only transcends academic performance but also predicts one's sociocultural existence, where English is the medium of communication.

Gallagher and Jones (2023) argue that comprehension of a text should not be viewed in isolation but within a sociocultural framework that considers how texts are produced, disseminated, and understood. Lakhera (2018) builds on this argument and proposes ways to read or interact with texts in a way that is more socially critical: the first views are the vital and cultural perspectives, which emphasise the importance of studying texts within their cultural context, which significantly impacts both the creation of the text and its subsequent interpretation. Arguments by Gallagher and Jones (2023) highlight an underlying concept of the importance of paying attention to power dynamics within texts and how they may affect the content of the message and the perception by various readers. This enables a more profound way of comprehending a text to help uncover hidden layers beneath a plain interpretation. Further, the study by Meenakshi and Sheeba (2022) addresses various facets of social relations that shape the literacy process and text reading. This suggests that by assimilating these sociological dimensions while analysing text, readers are able to gain a better, critical perspective on those texts. While Gallagher and Jones (2023) focus on the general Arab Gulf States, proposing further studies on individual countries, Begum (2020), Lakhera (2018), Kumar and Lata (2020), and Meenakshi and Sheeba (2022) were keen on CBSE secondary school

students in India, laying a solid foundation for a more specific study on Grade 4/ CBSE students in Dubai and India.

2.5 Reading Comprehension Models

Considering the student's first language as L1 and second language as L2, terms found in the Glossary of TEFL Acronyms (2008), reading comprehension can be defined as a process for constructing meaning presented in the text during the reading process (Montes et al., 2009). This aligns with Gallagher and Jones's (2023) and Lakhera's (2018) assertion that the reader's understanding of the text is influenced by background knowledge, the expectation of making sense of the text, and the meaning the student seeks to unravel. This means that before reading, the reader's predictions and anticipation of the text mark the onset of reading comprehension and continue after reading begins as the student applies personal experience and expands upon it.

A critical theory in this context is Cummins' threshold theory, which proposes that the degree to which bilingualism is developed in a child will trigger either positive or negative cognitive consequences (Montes et al., 2009). The theory, according to Montes et al. (2009), has been portrayed as a 3-floor house separated by two thresholds or levels where the first floor represents students with below-age-level bilingual competence, resulting in adverse cognitive effects with bilingualism. The second floor suggests that children with age-level proficiency in at least one of the two languages might experience both positive and negative cognitive effects. The third floor (which is also the top floor) symbolises children with age-level competency or proficiency in both languages enjoying positive cognitive, another closely related theory that simplifies L1 and L2 comprehension skills is the developmental interdependence theory or standard underlying proficiency (CUP), which proposes that there is a shared operating system between L1 and L2, the CUP (Montes et al., 2009).

The relationship between Cummins' Threshold Theory and Common Underlying Proficiency theory offers valuable insights into how second language learning actually works in Dubai—thinking of Cummins' Threshold Theory as a three-story building. On the ground floor, there are learners who have not yet developed age-appropriate skills in either their first or second language. These students might temporarily experience some adverse effects of trying to manage two languages. Moving up to the second floor, there are learners who have good skills in at least one of their languages – they're starting to see some benefits of bilingualism, though they may still face some challenges. Finally, on the top floor, there are learners who have strong skills in both languages, and these students typically experience significant cognitive advantages from their bilingualism.

This is where the Common Underlying Proficiency theory becomes particularly relevant. Rather than viewing first and second language skills as completely separate, CUP suggests they share a common foundation, like two branches growing from the same tree trunk. This means that when students develop strong academic or literacy skills in their first language, these skills can transfer to their second language. For instance, if a student learns how to analyse a story or solve word problems in their first language, they do not need to relearn these thinking skills in their second language – they just need to learn the new vocabulary and language structures to express what they already know how to do.

This has profound implications for second language learners and their teachers in Dubai as it suggests that maintaining and developing the first language is not a hindrance to learning a second language – it's actually a valuable resource. This implies that the Grade 4 students who are allowed and encouraged to use their first language as a bridge to learning their second language often develop stronger skills in both languages over time. This, therefore, explains why students with

strong academic foundations in their first language often become more successful second language learners, even if they start learning the second language later.

Additionally, Aldhanhani and Abu-Ayyash (2020) observe that the reader's competencies include not only smooth interaction with texts but also complex mental operations. These processes involve understanding simple and multiple meanings of the signs and words, constructing a cognitive text, assessing arguments, and understanding the symbolic intent of the text. To question the argument in terms of L1 reading and applying the strategies to the L2 environment, the study investigates and then closes the gaps.

Moving effectively from simply skim reading the headings, which are vital for occasional pleasure reading, the requirements of academic reading and comprehension are quite challenging. Gallagher and Jones (2023) argue that the integration of various textual features in L1 facilitates understanding of the formal written text, is substantive and comprehensive, and handles numerous complex academic concepts in L2. To read academically, one has to read much more actively and abstractly than is involved in processing information. In the context of education, the schools and the language curriculum they offer are central as far as the creation of advanced reading and comprehension abilities is concerned (Gallagher & Jones, 2023). Yet, traditional models fail to address the modern requirements of 21st-century competencies, which go beyond the literacy level in the classroom due to the diverse sociocultural contexts that second language speakers come from.

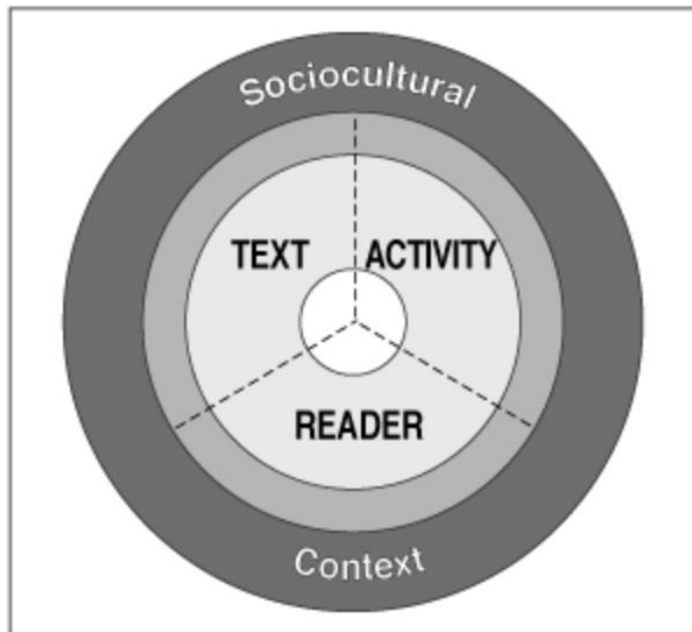
Gallagher and Jones (2023) are thus complemented by Montes et al. (2009) in observing the magnitude of problems that arise with second language learners L2 in the global context of education and in the power of leveraging L1 in boosting learning in L2.

2.5.1 Literacy Models

2.5.1.1 Heuristic Model

The heuristic model fosters the socio-cultural dimension of the readers and incorporates it within direct instructions in reading comprehension, as depicted below in Figure5.

FIGURE 4: HEURISTIC MODEL



SOURCE: COMPTON AND PEARSON (2016)

This model influences the processing of context during text interaction, provoking readers to engage their vocabulary and prior knowledge and experiences (Coiro, 2021). The reader's interaction with the text is further enhanced by the automaticity and proficiency of word recognition, which sustains the motivation for more meaningful word processing. This demonstrates that reading comprehension involves complex higher mental processes like previewing, comprehension monitoring, reasoning, and creating mental images of authors' intended meanings (Woolley, 2010). The above strategies, therefore, use prior knowledge and language skills, imagery to define content meaning, and reasoning based on the author's intent in the text.

Consequently, as proposed by Shanahan (2020), to establish how diverse population groups conceive representation and convey knowledge, it is crucial to contemplate how different communities perceive and transmit information.

The literature presents distinct but interconnected theoretical foundations that clearly justify the need for a framework in Dubai and India's CBSE schools. Cummins' Threshold Theory, visualised as a three-story building, demonstrates how varying levels of bilingual competence influence cognitive development - a crucial consideration in both contexts where students navigate between their first and second languages. This theory is complemented by the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) Theory, which reveals how L1 and L2 share a common cognitive foundation, particularly relevant in Dubai's Arabic-dominant environment and India's diverse linguistic landscape.

The Heuristic Model further enriches this theoretical base by addressing the socio-cultural dimensions of reading comprehension, emphasising the integration of vocabulary, prior knowledge, and experiences. This model's significance is underscored by Aldhanhani and Abu-Ayyash's (2020) research, which highlights the complex mental operations involved in L2 reading comprehension. Gallagher and Jones (2023) reinforce this by noting how traditional models fall short in addressing 21st-century competencies within diverse sociocultural contexts.

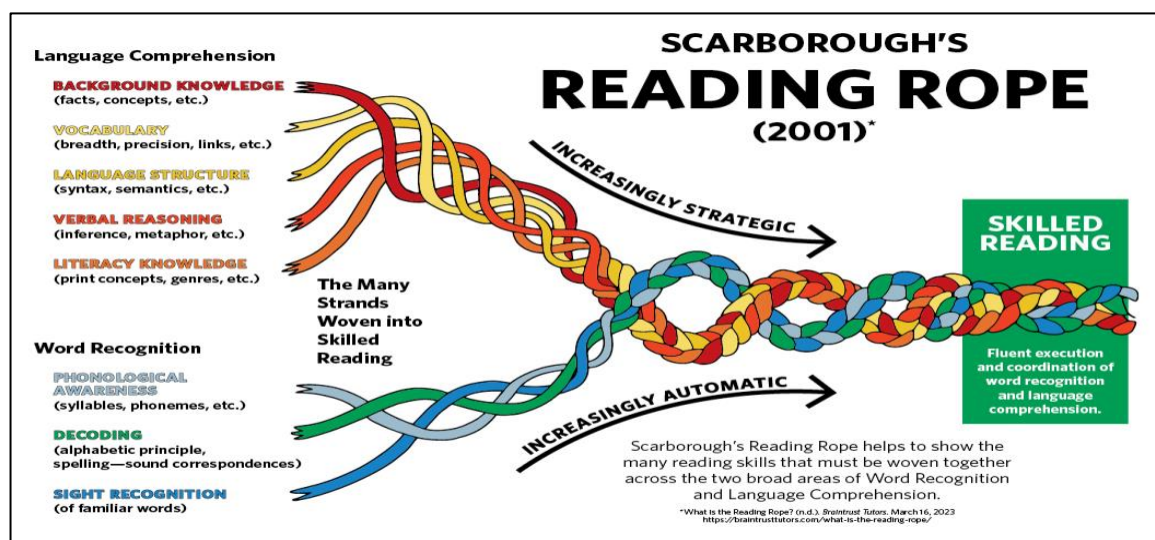
Therefore, while these theoretical models provide valuable insights into how learning occurs, they do not constitute a comprehensive framework for practical implementation. The distinction is crucial - models explain the learning process, whereas a framework would provide structured guidelines for teaching and assessment. The necessity for such a framework is particularly evident in the unique linguistic landscapes of Dubai and India, where Montes et al. (2009) identify significant challenges in L2 learning. Furthermore, Shanahan's (2020) emphasis on

community-specific knowledge transmission reinforces the need for a unified framework that bridges theoretical understanding with practical application in these specific contexts. Thus, the development of a comprehensive framework is not merely an academic exercise but a practical necessity to address the unique challenges faced by second language learners in CBSE schools across Dubai and India.

2.5.1.2 Reading Rope Model

The Reading Rope Model further adds to Gough and Tunmer's (1986) foundational ideas by illustrating how various elements, like decoding, language comprehension, and vocabulary knowledge, work together to strengthen reading proficiency. The visual presentation emphasises the idea that decoding and comprehension skills are not isolated but intertwined, supporting a more holistic approach to developing reading comprehension skills. Figure 6 shows the Reading Rope Model, as explained by Scarborough et al. (2001) and explained by Duke and Cartwright (2021) and Bishop and Preece (2024).

FIGURE 5 :SCARBOROUGH'S READING ROPE MODEL



Source: Scarborough et al.(2001)

Cognitive Theory, as asserted by Piaget (1981) in Sidik (2020), refers to how learners perceive, organise, and store data. Thus, according to Sreena and Ilankumaran (2018), Cognitive Theory also provides an understanding of the processes that occur when reading and the variety of cognitive functions, language repertoires, and social relations required for reading. For instance, the first research question seeks to unravel the essential components that can be adopted to develop a reading comprehension framework for L2 learners in CBSE international schools. Therefore, cognitive theory helps teachers isolate valuable features, such as phonemic awareness and vocabulary, that are imperative in shaping the second language learners' reading processes. In response to the second question, the cognitive theory emphasises the need for structure and sequencing in a curriculum that enriches the teacher's planning and teaching methods. Thus, such concepts as 'schemata' (Bormanaki & Khoshhal, 2017; Ebuta & Obiekezie, 2016) or complex patterns of action provided by the central meaning pay attention to the cognitive organisation of the curriculum. The rational discovery of cognitive theory in second language acquisition demonstrates how it impacts the essential aspects of reading methods.

This theory also establishes the need for comprehension of the cognitive variant, particularly for second language speakers, as acknowledged by Ebuta and Obiekezie (2016). A prerequisite to this is understanding the L2 reader's needs and concerns in an effort to establish suitable frameworks for reading. According to Cognitive Theory, it is paramount to gain a proper understanding of second language learners' cognitive processes. This understanding is important to pinpoint aspects of reading required for the child to hold on and develop their ability to read and comprehend better. This process is essential in building the framework of learning to read abilities based on learners' development and learning profiles of L2 students. In the light of this paradigm, fluency, as one of the aspects of the Reading Rope Model, cuts across the regular standard of speed.

According to Hanson (2022), the Reading Rope Model is a conceptual gauge of the process of learning to read in order to demonstrate how different skills and components interact and build up to form the ability to read. Automaticity refers to comprehensible, articulate, and effortless reading that is crucial for accuracy and a rich appreciation of text (Osuorji, P. I., 2006). Vocabulary development is another crucial ingredient of the Reading Rope, which has the added importance of boosting language understanding to enable learners to deal with complex texts appropriately.

The Situational Model within this paradigm includes another level, which shows that sociocultural contexts and learners' differences influence the reader's experiences. Child and this model also stress that the reader is not the isolated subject but is influenced by the context in which they belong. Such an understanding of the Reading Rope provides educators with a framework for moving from a skills approach to teaching and learning to a more complex view of reading that an integrated introduction to the aspects of a rope can meet. Thus, the Science of Reading (SOR), rather than being an attempt to use and describe various effective strategies, is, in fact, a comprehensive and research-based investigation of the nature of reading (Kellogg, 2024). This model presupposes that reading instruction based on specific elements, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies, facilitates proficient reading. This view negates the one-size-fits-all approach SOR adopts to call for learner-need-based differentiated instruction supported by data.

Comparison of the models

Comparing the Reading Rope Model, Heuristic Framework, and the Combination Paradigm (discussed in chapter 1) leads to the identification of different and distinct approaches to literacy instruction, particularly in their application to second language learners in CBSE schools. Each of the three models has something special but differs from the others regarding the range and

specificity of analysis. Scarborough et al. (2001) came up with the Reading Rope Model, which shows how decoding and comprehension are interrelated tasks. This model mainly focuses on word-level reading skills, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and reading speed. Though it tackles the operational aspects of the process of reading more than satisfactorily, its structure somewhat narrowly misses the social and cultural issues and the problem-solving features unique to second-language readers. On the other hand, the Heuristic Framework provides a more contextual approach since it deals with the process of interaction between the reader, text and context (Compton and Pearson, 2016). This model clearly recognises sociocultural aspects in meaning construction but stresses how readers use their lexicon and knowledge during reading comprehension. While it goes beyond the classroom context by embracing various sociocultural settings, it does not help account for second language acquisition processes at the cognitive level.

What makes the Combination Paradigm even more helpful for CBSE schools is that it fills in the gaps left by other models in the process. While the Reading Rope Model instructs teachers to work on technical skills and the Heuristic Framework to focus on context in teaching a second language, the ‘Combination Paradigm’ accepts the fact that second language learning is a complex process. It embraces more cultural practices, but it does so alongside uphold a close framework that is convenient, as it addresses the CBSE syllabus on reading comprehension frameworks. Such an integration provides the theoretical support that makes it adept at addressing the program’s diversified classrooms in CBSE. Therefore, in a way, the Combination Paradigm supports cultural diversity in class, gender issues, and student differentiation, respectively, while also vouching for teachers being allowed to apply culturally sensitive teaching approaches as they deliver their lessons with a quality that is typical of most CBSE schools. More than the others, the ‘Combination Paradigm’ may be said to hold a broad perspective of the strategies of reading, both the literal and

the social. While it maintains its focus on the reading processes, it simultaneously appreciates how the culture affects comprehension. This balance is essential with reference to second language learning in the CBSE schools, and the student's understanding of what they read needs both technical and cultural knowledge.

As far as its functionality is concerned, the 'Combination Paradigm' allows educators to focus on the fair distribution of learning environments for second language learners, addressing their difficulties. It challenges the teacher to look at the manner and way students go through when reading and making meaning of the text, but also to take a look at the cultural lens through which the students are reading. This approach assists in making the educational provision welcoming to students with learning challenges while enhancing rigour in learning. Where the Reading Rope Model and Heuristic Framework fall short in providing a comprehensive strategic framework for literacy instruction (Compton and Pearson, 2016), the 'Combination Paradigm', which employs all four perspectives, offers more depth and more complete information for use in the classroom. Because it attends both to individual learning development and sociocultural factors, it is especially suited to second language learners in CBSE schools; because critical literacy perspectives are inscribed within it, issues of equity are never far removed from the centre of learning. Table 2.1 below presents the Comparative Document Analysis of Literacy Models. The table is a summary of the discussion above.

TABLE 2.1 COMPARATIVE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS OF LITERACY MODELS

Aspect	Reading Rope Model	Heuristic Framework	Combination Paradigm
Core Focus	Integration of decoding and comprehension skills	Three-way interaction between reader, text, and context	Integration of cognitive, socio-constructivist, and critical literacy theories
Theoretical Foundation	Based on Gough and Tunmer's (1986) foundational ideas	Based on the RAND Reading Study Group's research	Synthesises multiple theoretical perspectives (cognitive, socio-constructivist, critical literacies)
Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonemic awareness • Vocabulary development • Reading fluency • Automaticity • Word recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader-text interaction • Sociocultural context • Prior knowledge application • Vocabulary integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal learning processes • Cultural factors • Power relations in learning • Multilingual considerations
Treatment of Context	Limited focus on sociocultural context	Strong emphasis on context beyond the classroom	Comprehensive integration of social, cultural, and power dynamics
L2 Learner Support	Limited specific consideration for L2 learners	Considers sociocultural backgrounds but lacks L2-specific strategies	Designed explicitly for L2 learners with a multilingual education focus

Aspect	Reading Rope Model	Heuristic Framework	Combination Paradigm
Cultural Integration	Minimal attention to cultural factors	Acknowledges cultural influence on reading	Extensive integration of cultural perspectives and power dynamics
Pedagogical Approach	Skills-based, sequential learning	Interactive, context-driven learning	Holistic, culturally responsive instruction
Assessment Focus	Technical reading skills and comprehension	Comprehension within the sociocultural context	Multiple dimensions, including cognitive, cultural, and critical literacy
CBSE Relevance	Aligns with technical skill development	Supports contextual understanding	Comprehensive alignment with CBSE's diverse classroom needs
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear skill progression • Strong foundation in reading mechanics • Systematic approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong contextual awareness • Recognition of social factors • Interactive learning focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive coverage • Cultural responsiveness • Integration of multiple perspectives
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited sociocultural consideration • Insufficient L2 focus • Narrow skill focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less emphasis on technical skills • Limited L2-specific strategies • Incomplete cognitive framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively new approach • Complex implementation • Requires teacher training

2.6 Gaps in literature review

Research Question 1's justification emerges from substantial gaps regarding essential foundational principles for reading comprehension frameworks. Literature demonstrates limited exploration of literacy's dual function in international contexts (Perry, 2012), creating gaps in understanding literacy's role in multicultural CBSE settings. Street's ideological models establishing literacy as cultural meaning-making have insufficient application to formal education (Purcell-Gates, 2020). Sreena and Ilankumaran (2018) provide cognitive functions for comprehension but lack second language application in CBSE contexts, despite Sidik's (2020) identification of Grade 4/ concrete operational capabilities. Alahmad (2020) notes "insufficient application of cognitive development theory to second language reading comprehension in CBSE contexts." Vygotsky and Cole's (2018) socio-constructivist perspective and Sansone and Cesareni's (2019) meaning-making approach lack implementation frameworks. Both Michel et al. (2019) and Smith et al. (2021) show limited Grade 4 CBSE focus, while Sweller, Merrienboer, and Paas (2019) identify working memory limitations affecting language acquisition. Christiansen's (2016) four functional limitations (working memory, processing speed, attention span, and information organisation) remain unapplied. Afreen (2020) identifies "pressing need for specialised approaches to language teaching at primary level," complemented by Begum's (2020) documented "limited focus on primary education in ESL teacher self-efficacy research" and Kumar and Lata's (2020) secondary education emphasis revealing primary gaps. This need intensifies considering Kormos's (2020) observation that second language learners face "extra language and cultural conditions when comprehending text," Adhikary's (2020) insufficient content-based adaptation to CBSE requirements, and Vula & Tyfekā's (2024) identification of social cognition discrepancies causing academic problems.

Research Question 2's justification arises from gaps in translating theoretical understanding into practical pedagogical approaches. Aufderheide (2018) emphasises teachers' literacy skill development role while identifying "lack of specific guidance for teachers in multilingual CBSE contexts on resource selection and implementation." Baker and Fang (2021) highlight "insufficient research connecting theoretical literacy foundations to practical application in multilingual CBSE settings." Majumdar (2019) notes that students achieve basic proficiency but struggle with deep understanding, indicating a "gap between functional language skills and higher-order reading comprehension abilities." Ramu and Kumar (2020) identify insufficient research on the optimal implementation of reciprocal teaching for young second language learners. Woolley (2010) examines complex higher mental processes but reveals insufficient research on developing these in young L2 learners. Teng (2020) notes, "L2 readers face challenges including minimal vocabulary and grammar knowledge," identifying vocabulary/grammar instruction approach needs. Grant et al. (2019) document "L1 interference challenges faced by L2 readers," highlighting the need for interference address. Shuib et al. (2020) emphasise the importance of scaffolding with "limited exploration of optimal scaffolding approaches specifically for reading comprehension in CBSE contexts," supported by Saleem et al.'s (2021) Zone of Proximal Development findings. Duwenhoegger's (2021) integrated balanced/structured literacy approach remains untested in CBSE contexts with diverse backgrounds. Clements (2020) advocates a balanced literacy student-centred approach, but with limited effectiveness exploration for CBSE L2 learners. Andriani et al. (2021) identify "insufficient investigation of developmentally appropriate grammar instruction." Singh (2021) notes the essentiality of cultural sensitivity, yet insufficient implementation research in international CBSE contexts. Palmer (2015) identifies cultural barriers creating hostile environments, with limited responsive instruction exploration. Bhandari and Mathew (2023)

emphasise "the need for culturally responsive teaching approaches," while Bonvillain (2019) documents "cultural perspective differences as challenges." Rajput and Shah (2021) note technology's improvement potential with limited comprehension-specific integration research, corroborated by Zhang's (2022) findings. Massouti et al. (2024) identify "inadequate training opportunities for teachers" in Dubai schools, supported by Meenakshi and Sheeba's (2022) "need for improved teacher development approaches." Zhang et al. (2023) highlight limited optimal collaboration model research for literacy development.

Research Question 3's justification centers on significant policy development gaps. Dama (2023) observes "Grade 4 Indian students fear losing cultural identity while striving to reflect global learning outcomes," indicating "tension between cultural identity preservation and global education standards." Kalia and Reese (2009) note middle-class Indian parents "navigate linguistic pressures by ensuring children learn English while maintaining cultural identity," suggesting a need for understanding bilingual literacy development in specific cultural contexts." Lukianenko (2024) highlights that "access to knowledge depends on mastery of foreign language rather than intellectual capability," identifying "need for addressing linguistic gatekeeping in educational systems." Razmjoo Moghadam and Barani (2025) argue that addressing language imbalances requires policy interventions recognising linguistic diversity's value while finding "quality education becomes contingent on English proficiency rather than intellectual merit or academic effort," highlighting the need for addressing evaluation bias in English-dominated educational systems." Siemund et al. (2021) document English functions as a linguistic filter in UAE education, relegating indigenous languages to minority status, with limited research on mitigating hierarchies. Spires et al. (2019) note literacy encompasses broader skills for media/data comprehension, showing limited exploration of expanded definitions in standardised CBSE contexts. Marquez et al. (2022) describe

Dubai classrooms as "most culturally diverse in the world" with significant assessment pressures, yet reveal limited exploration of reading assessment strategies for exceptional diversity. Buali et al. (2021) document PIRLS score improvements in Dubai private schools without analysing curriculum-specific reading instruction strategies. Gallagher and Jones (2023) identify "challenges in English-medium instruction in Arab Gulf countries," noting the need for context-specific approaches. Al-Issa and Sulieman (2024) highlight "limited research on how language policy affects classroom practice in multilingual educational environments," emphasising policy implementation impact gaps.

These comprehensive literature gaps substantiate critical research needs addressing cognitive, sociocultural, and pedagogical factors insufficiently explored for Grade 4/ CBSE second language learners (Lervåg, Hulme, & Melby-Lervåg, 2018; Kärbla, 2020), particularly within Dubai and India's exceptionally diverse educational contexts (KHDA, 2023; CBSE, 2024). The gaps directly justify Research Question 1's focus on essential foundational principles absent from existing frameworks, Research Question 2's exploration of practical pedagogical insights currently lacking for teachers, and Research Question 3's examination of policy considerations underrepresented in literature specifically tailored to second-language speakers in CBSE international schools.

Chapter 3- Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the methodological model used in this thesis study, focusing on the design and assessment of reading comprehension frameworks for second language learners at CBSE International School. The objective of this chapter is to outline the methodological strategy applied to achieve research authenticity and credibility. To provide a clear understanding of the research methodology used, the chapter includes three sections, a unique conceptual framework developed as a method to analyse positionality intricately. Next is the Theoretical Framework – 'Combination Paradigm', a distinctive conceptual framework developed as a method to intricately analyse existing theories and enhance reading comprehension instructions for second-language speakers in Grade 4 of CBSE schools in Dubai and India. Next is the Qualitative Interpretive Phenomenological Case study methodology, which provides a unique opportunity to comprehend teachers' viewpoints, contextual factors, and the real-life situations they encounter throughout the research journey. The following section is the research design, tools, and procedures for collecting, analysing, interpreting, and reporting data. Followed by a section on ethical considerations. Finally, the last section is the limitations of the study and the delimitation strategies.

3.2 Research Philosophy

A researcher is required to declare firmly their philosophical stance in terms of ontological and epistemological assumptions, especially so in the cross-sectional comparative education studies presenting customised international contexts (Siangchokyoo & Sousa-Poza, 2012). It is, therefore, critical to explicate this study's philosophical assumptions given the investigation of reading comprehension frameworks' nature and application across different learning environments. From

an ontological perspective, this study aligns with a relativist position based on the social construction of reality as opposed to one absolute reality. According to Dieronitou (2014), relativist ontology is especially important for research in education as outcomes and the processes leading to them are different in each learner and in different conditions. This ontological stance also acknowledges that reading comprehension experiences are holistically unique among second language learners, as are the ways in which teaching methods are displayed and shown across culture and geography (Cohen et al., 2017).

From an epistemological perspective, this research operates within a subjectivist-interpretivist paradigm (Dieronitou 2014). This position recognises the fact that knowledge is not just preset but constructed through a process of interaction between the researcher and the participants (Otoo, 2020). This position of the researcher as a person who investigates and a CBSE teacher herself is in harmony with what Yilmaz (2013) referred to as the ontology of qualitative research, and that is, the knower cannot be separated from the known. These epistemological principles justify the choices of the latter, particularly the qualitative approaches and more specifically the semi-structured interviews, which Kelle et al. (2019) classify as key instruments for co-constructing knowledge in educational contexts. Incorporation of multiple perspectives in sampling 32 teachers in six different schools conforms to Frost and Bailey-Rodriguez's (2020) argument that knowledge is pluralistic and context-dependent. This kind of approach is what, according to Otoo (2020), considers it proper to consider multiple perspectives when undertaking an analysis of educational phenomena. The chosen philosophical foundations substantiate the choice of the Qualitative Interpretivist Phenomenological Case Study as a method, which, according to Burns et al. (2021) and Miller et al. (2018), is suitable for exploring educational

phenomena from multiple perspectives. This philosophical underpinning, in turn, justifies the methodological decisions and ensures the consistency of research architecture.

3.3 Contextual Background and Positionality

As a South Asian graduate of a CBSE international English-medium school in Dubai and a professional with over 15 years in education, I bring both personal and professional insights to this study. My early experiences navigating multiple linguistic and cultural contexts inform my understanding of second-language learners' challenges. Progressing from English teacher to department head and later vice-principal and principal has given me unique access to systemic issues within CBSE institutions, including curriculum design, teacher training, and student engagement. My insider position as both a researcher and school principal create what Hellawell (2006) terms a 'continuum of insiderness' that requires careful navigation. This dual role affords unique insights into institutional structures but also introduces complex power dynamics that must be theorised and addressed. Drawing on Kerstetter's (2012) work on insider-outsider positionality, I acknowledge that my leadership position grants me privileged access and contextual understanding while simultaneously creating potential tensions in data collection and interpretation. As Yip (2024) argues, the binary distinction between insider and outsider is increasingly insufficient; instead, I position myself within what they term the 'third space' – a fluid position that recognises the multiple identities I embody as both practitioner and scholar. This theoretical framing of my positionality allows me to leverage my insider knowledge while maintaining critical distance through structured reflexivity.

3.3.1 Motivation for Doctoral Research

The choice to embark on doctoral research resulted from an accumulation of professional observations together with personal beliefs. Consistently in my teaching practice, I have come

across many gifted students whose academic achievements are limited by linguistic difficulties. One of the most memorable cases involved a student who was very good at mathematics but always received low results when it came to writing tests, despite his excellent problem-solving when discussing numbers in class. Observing the student made me interested in carrying out extensive research on the problem. After years of classroom observation and managing students, I have realised that reading skills, mainly reading comprehension skills, influence other skills that are needed in classroom study and other academic subject courses. The failure to adequately understand text in English invariably gives rise to a series of academic difficulties that may have adverse effects on a student's learning and personal esteem.

The years that I have spent in education have allowed me to experience different facets of educational injustices. This comprises high-performing students forced to be put in lower-performing groups and learning teams just because they do not understand the language used in communication. This also entails tests that very frequently test English comprehension or lack thereof, which then forms a hurdle to promotion to the next level, thus giving rise to assessment mechanisms that do not consider language diversity. In addition, I identified some cultural disconnect between the content of curricula and students' lives, which causes learning difficulties, inadequate provisions for teachers teaching second language speakers, and no restrictions placed on how schools implement good language support programs. In my experiences as the principal of an international school affiliated with the CBSE curriculum, I stand between a managerial role and that of an academic scholar. In this dual capacity, the researcher gets an almost unrivalled opportunity to gain insight into how institutional policies complement, interact with, and sometimes contradict the teaching strategies and the lived experience of the students. CBSE schools have a significant number of students with second-language learning experience, and this rich diversity

provides important clues about the possibilities and difficulties of promoting the development of language and academic skills.

3.3.2 Vision for Impact

This thesis is not just an academic endeavour – it is an expression of a call to ensure social justice in educational contexts. As a researcher with insider experience of institutions' frameworks and limitations and a practitioner with extensive knowledge of the cultural and learning environment, I can manage the tension between academic concepts and applied practices, enhance the transformation of the education system, and translate research outcomes into a domain and practice. As a principal, I recognise that the research entails a certain amount of power relations, which I would be part of by my position. To counteract this, it has been a practice of engaging in reflective journaling daily to be conscious of possible biases, implementing member-checking measures to ensure the views of participants are captured correctly, and finally, working with external reviewers to keep impartiality when reporting our findings and also constantly disclosing and discussing our dual role with all the participants and research partners involved.

My research fits into the participatory research tradition based on the personal firm notion that positive change in education can only come from a close study of the environment and the people in it. Of course, this approach aligns with my ontological belief on educational research, for academic research has to be informed by practice, but still has to meet specific standards of scholarly research (Dieronitou, 2014). By means of this thesis, I intend to construct differential pragmatic plans to foster L2 classroom discourse inclusion, the non-normative reading approaches for comprehension, and fair learner assessment. Additionally, I am set to continue to minimise the gap between research done in this area and implementation in classroom practice, equip teachers

and help them with valuable tools and strategies that may help in their teaching process, contribute to school and system policies, and build sustainable systems for students learning other languages. The intersection of my leadership and researcher roles presents both methodological opportunities and ethical challenges that require ongoing attention (Drake & Heath, 2010). As Humphrey (2013) notes, practitioner-researchers must navigate the 'hyphen-spaces' between their professional identities. In my case, this means acknowledging how my administrative authority might influence participants' responses while leveraging my systemic understanding to identify actionable recommendations. Following Ravitch and Carl's (2019) framework for relational ethics in qualitative research, I have adopted dialogic engagement strategies to mitigate power imbalances, including collaborative meaning-making with participants and transparent communication about how findings will inform institutional practices. This approach ensures my recommendations maintain credibility through what Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe as 'trustworthiness criteria' while honouring my ethical responsibilities as both researcher and educational leader (Stahl & King, 2020).

3.4 Theoretical Framework – 'Combination Paradigm'

In this QIPC Study, I propose the 'Combination Paradigm' (As explained in Chapter 1, Pg-7 sec1.5) – a theoretical lens that integrates Cognitive, Socio-constructivist, and Critical literacy perspectives. It is applied to analyse the data collected in this study, providing insights into how these theories interact and align with the challenges and strategies observed in the CBSE context for second-language learners. The paradigm explicitly amalgamates these three established theoretical perspectives into a cohesive framework, tailored to address the unique needs of Grade 4 students in CBSE schools in Dubai and India.

While there is the possibility of other frameworks having been explored previously in different combinations, the intentional integration of these three theories as applied to this particular scenario represents an exploratory approach (Kim et al., 2021). According to Peng and Goodrich (2020), cognitive theory underlines the idea that mental processes, language, and interpersonal skills are sufficient to attain adequate reading skills. This explanation aligns with Sidik 's (2020) explanation of the cognitive development stages and the effects of reading comprehension among young learners.

The reason for integrating these views is based on the complexity of second-language reading comprehension in the context of multilingual education. While the Cognitive Theory is concerned with personal learning processes (Alahmad, 2020; Levine, 1975), Socio-Constructivist pedagogy regards learning as influenced by social and cultural factors (Sansone & Cesareni, 2019), while Critical literacies focus on relations of power that affect learning in particular cultures (Cai et al., 2023). Although these theories may not have been combined in this manner before, their synthesis can potentially provide fresh perspectives for approaching and helping second-language readers absorb information at CBSE schools.

The rationale for this level of integration is grounded on the premise that effective literacy instruction requires multiple theoretical perspectives. Kim et al. (2021) explain how textual immersion helps second-language speakers achieve deep comprehension of texts read, and Flores and García (2020) further discuss the relevance of promoting learners' linguistic resources in the classroom instead of seeing them as a problem. Building on this intimation, Bayyurt et al. (2019) also endorse multiple theorizations in the form of elucidating the culturally mediated requirements for literacy teaching that can address cultural disparities while providing positive cultural experiences for learners.

The 'Combination Paradigm' seems to reflect the closest affinity with the interpretive research perspective, primarily regarding the subject of comprehending reading materials by second language speakers. Such alignment comes out whereby the paradigm highlights that meaning is a construction that is individual and social (Rowse et al., 2018; Purcell-Gates, 2020). As a continuation of the interpretivist perspective, Nielsen and Yeo (2022) explain context and meaning as central concepts for social science research. When used in an educational context, more so for second-language speakers, this then leads to the construction of a framework for such a learning environment that is sensitive to cultural diversity. For instance, knowing that language acquisition and cultural context affect the ability to read and comprehend enables tutors to implement ways and means that will welcome and enhance second language speakers' performance. It introduces opportunities to improve the educational material and gives more people the feeling that they belong to the community. Furthermore, this calls for gender discrimination in educational systems to be at least questioned and pushed for an improvement in the situation with the education of students of different genders.

When considering the cultural background that has an impact on understanding, Meenakshi and Sheeba (2022), Lakhera (2018), and Bhandari and Mathew (2023) believe that the gaps can be closed and ensure that every learner feels valued. Hence, the adopted interpretive ontological stance (Dieronitou, 2014) is a heuristic template for constructing a framework for educational practice with culturally diverse learners.

Not only does it engage educators to embrace the fact that cultural factors play a part in the comprehension process, but it also mainstreams this understanding into the teaching process, thereby enhancing the inclusive values of an equitable learning environment for second language learners. Through employing these theories, this research contributes to the knowledge of the

attitudes and experiences of second language learners. It advances the existing literature on Inclusive and effective instruction for all learners. It stresses the importance of using sound approaches that comprise assumptions regarding the variations of second language learning in comprehension, in conjunction with the application of effective and efficient problem-solving resolutions in general.

3.5 Qualitative Interpretivist Phenomenological Case Study Methodology

As stated by Burns et al. (2022), Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is a type of qualitative research that focuses on understanding how people engage with the world and how they make sense of that engagement. Further, Miller et al. (2018) argue that this methodology aims to understand what the experience looks like from that person's phenomenological position and how it influences a person's social world, with great relevance to sense-making. Therefore, the QIPC Study methodology qualifies as the foundational research methodology of this thesis because it corresponds to the investigative orientation of the thesis and the researcher's pledge to interrogate it. It further offers an unmatched chance to grasp the attitudes of teachers, the circumstances that surround them, and the scenarios they encounter in the course of research throughout this process. Since reading comprehension depends on nurturing good reading behaviours, this qualitative case study seeks to identify foundational principles to enable teachers and policymakers to develop a framework for reading comprehension for second language speakers in CBSE International Schools in Dubai and India.

QIPC is different from a simple qualitative case study and provides examples because QIPC integrates qualitative case study methodologies with interpretivist phenomenology to explore the lived experiences of teachers and students in CBSE schools. This approach is therefore particularly suited to understanding second-language speakers' challenges within a structured, multicultural

curriculum, and considering the scarcity of research on second language reading comprehension in Dubai and India, more so, in Grade 4 students. Scholars that have explored CBSE in the past include Meenakshi and Sheeba (2022), Lakhera (2018), Kumar and Lata (2020), and Bhandari and Mathew (2023), have predominantly centered around obstacles, strategies, and approaches in India and large Arab regions leaving a considerable gap in our understanding of the challenges second language speakers in Grade 4. This study, therefore, addresses this gap by investigating foundational principles for second language learners' reading comprehension in CBSE schools that must address cognitive, cultural, and linguistic challenges while supporting teacher-led, culturally responsive pedagogical approaches. Through the application of QIPC Study methodology, this study aspires to bridge the existing knowledge void and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the specific issues faced by second language speakers in reading comprehension.

According to Miller et al. (2018), apart from being merely exploratory, the QIPC Study also stands as a deliberate effort to contribute insights into the challenges faced by second language speakers and offers a pathway toward more effective instructional strategies. This methodological decision is entirely appropriate when studying reading comprehension instruction because it helps to carry out an extensive analysis of the teachers' lives and their experiences and, at the same time, stays within the framework of educational research. Burns et al. (2022) stated that the use of QIPC methodology can be a valuable tool in helping researchers achieve an understanding of those individuals within the context of education so as to assist educationalists in informing future policy and practice with learnings arising from student and educational needs and expectations.

Therefore, the QIPC approach developed for this study goes beyond mere exploration to provide substantive insights into second-language Grade 4 speakers' challenges and potential

instructional solutions. This creates a framework for understanding how reading comprehension instruction operates within the specific context of CBSE schools in Dubai.

To illustrate how the QIPC methodology operates in practice, consider this methodological mapping: When analysing data from a Grade 4 teacher describing their experience teaching reading comprehension to Arabic-speaking students, the QIPC approach examines this through dual lenses. The case study component analyses the bounded system (CBSE school context), examining how institutional policies and multicultural classroom dynamics shape instructional decisions across the educational setting. Simultaneously, the phenomenological component explores individual teachers' lived experiences and meaning-making processes—how they perceive student struggles and interpret their pedagogical role. Integration occurs when patterns identified across multiple teacher experiences are analysed while preserving the phenomenological depth of individual meaning-making. This methodological integration addresses limitations of using either approach independently: traditional IPA may inadequately capture institutional factors, while a pure case study might overlook subjective meaning-making processes. The QIPC methodology bridges this gap by maintaining phenomenological depth while acknowledging the bounded educational system that frames these experiences.

In this study, I have opted for a QIPC Study design, aligning with Creswell and Clark's (2011) proposition where tools and methods specific to qualitative case studies are thoughtfully planned and implemented from the outset. The 'case' in this study, therefore, becomes the CBSE International educational context in Dubai, which mirrors similar linguistic and cultural diversity found in CBSE schools in India. Thus, by using QIPC, the study captures both broader trends across schools and in-depth experiences from a focus school. The QIPC study methodology aligns with the objectives of this study, which intends to formulate the foundational pillars for developing a

reading comprehension framework tailored for second-language speakers. Below is a discussion of the phases navigated as part of this QIPC study. This case study, therefore, treats CBSE International schools in Dubai as a bounded system, exploring how instructional strategies align with the needs of second-language learners. By including six schools in the questionnaire phase and focusing interviews on one school, the study ensures both breadth and depth.

3.5.1 Primary Research Methods

The study targets all teachers at School Alpha (name anonymised for confidentiality), a CBSE international school in Dubai, which is also the school where the researchers are employed as the Principal. This institution epitomises a private educational setting, predominantly catering to second-language speakers, with approximately ninety per cent originating from India. These students are considered the first generation of second language speakers and have students from countries including Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Africa, and the Philippines. This diverse group of students is appropriate for this study as it exposes the different linguistic influences within this educational context.

To conduct an in-depth investigation into reading comprehension, my research targets six teachers of Grade 4. Grade 4 is the climax of the primary phase in the CBSE curriculum. The study focuses on teachers holding a bachelor's degree in education (B.Ed.), facilitating the assembly of a sample with comparable educational backgrounds, aligning well with Creswell's recommendation (2014) on the need to create homogeneity within participant groups.

3.5.1.1 Bounded Systems

The bounded system refers to the scope that defines the research (Dombi & Csiszár, 2014). In this case, locally, the research is situated in the Emirate of Dubai, one of the seven emirates of the country, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with a more focused emphasis towards Indian

curriculum schools that follow the CBSE system. This approach deliberately leaves out other international or even local education systems, which makes for a defined nexus of investigation. Institutionally, it is limited to only those schools that are affiliated with CBSE and officially recognised by both the Indian and the UAE emirates. The participant scope is intentionally as demographically wide as possible to include school administrators, teachers, academic coordinators and department heads that are actively involved in the CBSE education system. On the issue of the interview method, whereby the researcher conducted in-depth interviews within a single school while administering questionnaires in various institutions, is a balanced research approach. Single school interview approach enables rich and detailed explication of educational experiences as well as perceptions. When participants are recruited from an average-sized CBSE school, researchers have a large amount of qualitative data that provides a comprehensive and detailed investigation. Such an approach allows for gaining insight and focused understanding of experiences that are otherwise 'systemic'. At the same time, extending questionnaire distribution to a larger population within and outside the institution has the advantage of offering a broad view to avoid concentrating on institutional bias anew. The use of both in-depth interviews and broad-ranging questionnaires ensures that the research is built on a strong methodology that collects in-depth data from respondents, increasing the authenticity and credibility of the results. More pragmatic concerns also dictate this methodological decision. Focusing on one institution eliminates complications, invites higher levels of participant interaction and efficiently handles the concern of resource scarcity. It has implications for ethical protocols in a way that makes the process more consistent and consent even more manageable.

3.5.1.2 Participants within the Context

The study involved six educators purposively sampled from school Alpha who specialised in teaching the English Language in Grade 4. The inclusion criteria were a bachelor's degree in education (B.Ed.), over 5 years of teaching experience in Grades 4 at CBSE international schools in Dubai and India, and teachers who had guided at least one cohort of students for PIRLS. The selection criteria for participants were intentionally wide-ranging to capture a broad range of experiences and strategies. This approach was designed to enrich the data collected, ensuring comprehensive insights into the reading comprehension instruction practices. While the study aims to shed light on the essential foundational principles for developing a reading comprehension approach for second language speakers in CBSE international schools in Dubai and India, it also presents certain limitations. Firstly, the concentration on educators from one school might not have fully represented the wide range of teaching practices across the broader CBSE network. Additionally, the focus on teachers who had specifically taught Grade 4 might have limited insights into the continuity and progression of reading comprehension skills from earlier grades to later ones, with the strategy being to have diversity within the sample of six teachers selected.

3.5.1.3 Data Collection Tools

Questionnaires have been selected to collect data in this study because they offer scalability, making them suitable for a diverse group and providing numerically presentable data and contextually insightful information (Taherdoost, 2022). Further questionnaires were selected because they reveal valuable observations regarding participants' values, beliefs, preferences, and attitudes (Cohen et al., 2017). The three parts of the questionnaire (Appendix A) contain open-ended questions (and some closed questions with prompts) based on the themes that arise from literature and comparative document analysis. The questionnaire was divided into three parts that

correspond to the four research questions aimed at eliciting qualitative information on teaching practices and perceptions. These questions have been selected based on the theoretical background of the study, which encompasses cognitive theory, socio-constructivism, and critical literacies to approach the study of how mental, social, and essential factors of second language acquisition influence teachers' instructional choices. To operationalise the questionnaire as proposed by Cohen et al. (2017), the objectives and subtopics are specified, aiding in the thematic organisation of open-ended items. Ordinarily, a questionnaire requires respondents to choose pre-defined responses. However, by deliberately excluding predefined response options, the questionnaire encourages teachers to provide in-depth, descriptive answers, facilitating a more decadent, more delicate qualitative data collection. Braun et al. (2021) note that while questionnaires are often associated with quantitative research, a researcher can also leverage the open-ended format to emphasise the qualitative nature of the inquiry. This approach is instrumental in capturing the complexities and subtleties of the teachers' perspectives, going beyond mere numerical data to delve into their experiences, beliefs, and instructional principles. This is the reason why the Questionnaires shall be employed to gather data from thirty-two teachers in a sample of six CBSE schools, offering a broader perspective on the challenges faced by second-language learners. This approach aligns with qualitative case study methodologies, where questionnaires help validate, in-depth insights obtained from interviews.

In addition to the questionnaires, the study shall administer semi-structured interviews to six teachers to elaborate deeply on the issues emerging from the responses. According to Jain (2021), follow-up semi-structured interviews entailed engaging in in-depth conversations with participants, departing from the structured format of questionnaires that present standardised inquiries to numerous respondents. Additionally, Ahlin (2019) observes that in addition to a general

adherence to the interviewing framework, semi-structured interviews offer interviewers more flexibility in shaping the conversation. Specifically, Jain (2021) states that "it is possible to add explanatory comments and ask additional questions for increased clarification" (Jain, 2021, p. 544). This method accommodates supplementary questions, provides participants with opportunities to articulate their perspectives, and facilitates a more comprehensive exploration of emerging issues. It simulates an open-ended dialogue between the researcher and participant, fostering a profound examination of subjective meanings. In their case study on semi-structured interviews with expert practitioners, Ahlin (2019) observed that semi-structured interview tools enable researchers to understand how and why something happens, offering data to support more "rigorous testing of processes and expected outcomes" (Ahlin, 2019, p. 2). Further, Jain (2021) highlights that semi-structured interviews, conducted on a more intimate scale than structured interviews, prioritise unearthing subjective interpretations, aligning with the interpretive perspective inherent in social science research. The semi-structured interview guide is attached (Appendix B), and a summary of the responses is captured in Appendix E. While predetermined questions or prompts were provided, the unstructured component of the interview, participants were encouraged to delve into related topics more deeply. This level of flexibility, according to Dornyei (2013), benefits both the researcher and participant, often leading to unforeseen and valuable insights that complement patterns observed in the questionnaire.

Therefore, the combination of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews is for the sole purpose of facilitating data triangulation. Data triangulation is the research method that combines two data collection methods to further increase the study's authenticity and credibility (Kelle et al., 2019). The questions in both were selected based on the theoretical background of the study, which encompasses cognitive theory, socio-constructivism, and critical literacies to approach the study of

how teachers' instructional choices are influenced by cognitive, social, and essential factors of second language acquisition, and then the responses would complement each other. Open-ended questions help to analyse how teachers feel and think deeply about the issues of concern. While the questionnaire shall facilitate extensive qualitative data collection, it inherently possesses limitations that need acknowledgement. While enriching the data with detailed insights, Cohen et al. (2017) observed that open-ended questions introduced challenges related to data consistency and depth of response. This is because the nature of the responses shall be dependent on the respondent's engagement and articulation skills. This means that the quality and comprehensiveness of the responses may vary significantly, affecting the overall depth and reliability of the data collected. To counter this challenge, the researcher shall take the respondents through the questionnaire, promoting some level of uniformity in the understanding of the questions.

3.5.1.4 Sampling

The sampling strategy for this study was carefully designed to ensure appropriate representation while addressing the specific research questions related to Indian education within Dubai's context. A combination of purposive and maximum variation sampling techniques was employed to enhance sample diversity and richness of data.

From the population of 36 CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) schools in Dubai, six schools were purposively selected based on specific criteria essential to the research focus. Campbell (2020, p. 652) defines purposive sampling as a deliberate and criterion-based method that "is better at matching the sample to the aims and objectives of the research." This approach was particularly suitable for the study's specific focus on Indian education within Dubai's context.

The purposive selection criteria for schools included: (1) teacher composition (all faculty from India with Indian university qualifications), (2) school type (implementing full CBSE curriculum only),

(3) comprehensive school structure (including all phases from early years through higher secondary), (4) student demographics (90% Indian students who are second language speakers), and (5) school profile (established presence in Dubai). These criteria ensured that participating institutions represented the typical CBSE educational environment in Dubai while maintaining sufficient homogeneity for meaningful cross-case analysis.

Within these six selected schools, the study targeted teachers from Grades 3 to 8, with particular attention to those teaching Science and Mathematics to Grade 4 students. This grade range was selected to capture teachers working with students at critical developmental stages in primary and middle school education. The final sample comprised 32 teachers across the six schools, with an additional focus on School "ALPHA," from which six teachers participated in semi-structured interviews.

To enhance diversity within this purposively selected sample, maximum variation sampling was also implemented. As elucidated by Collingridge and Grant (2019) and Ahmed (2025), this methodology accommodates differences among participating educators, particularly in terms of sociocultural heritage within the broader Indian context and early exposure to literacy-rich environments. The integration of both sampling approaches resonates with the interpretive paradigm underpinning this study, ensuring that findings authentically represent the diverse facets of Dubai's CBSE educational context.

The study progressed from an initial pilot phase involving six teachers to the expanded main survey with 32 participants. This progression enabled refinement of research instruments, particularly the questionnaire, which was redesigned to be shorter, less ambiguous, and more inclusive of open-ended questions to capture participants' perspectives better. The final data collection included

questionnaires administered to all 32 teachers and six in-depth semi-structured interviews with selected teachers from School ALPHA.

All participants shared specific characteristics: Indian nationality, qualifications from Indian universities, and current employment in CBSE curriculum schools in Dubai. The selection criteria did not specifically consider demographic factors such as age or gender, instead focusing primarily on professional qualifications, teaching experience in relevant grade levels, and cultural background in terms of nationality and educational training. This approach was aligned with the study's primary focus on pedagogical practices within the CBSE system rather than demographic variables.

The dual sampling approach aligns with Frost and Bailey-Rodriguez's (2020) argument that knowledge is pluralistic and context-dependent, emphasising the consideration of multiple perspectives when analysing educational phenomena. By incorporating established sampling techniques into the study's design, this research connects with contemporary methodological trends that emphasise integrating various methods for data collection and analysis in educational research.

3.5.2 Ethical Consideration

This thesis diligently adheres to an ethical framework that is deeply rooted in the ethical guidelines set forth by Birmingham City University and the principles of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2024). Before initiating any aspect of the study or interacting with the participants, the researcher shall seek the University's ethical procedures and secure approval to continue with the study. This helped make sure that the research process is done responsibly and as per the set ethics. I, therefore, sought to obtain full permission from the heads of the schools and the specific heads of departments. I also ensured that all the stakeholders, including my supervisors,

heads of the respective schools, and the Director of Studies, always received all the necessary pre-, post-, and during-study information.

Another critical ethical issue is the principle of promoting participants' right to voluntary and informed choice, justifying the exclusion of children which would have required involvement of parents. Whitney and Evered (2022) point out that participant autonomy in qualitative research refers to making sure participants know what their rights are and that they are free to withdraw from the study without explanation. In this context, participant autonomy shall be operationalised by supplying more detailed information forms and easy-to-understand informed consent forms, empowering the participants to make informed decisions.

Another ethical consideration is the possibility of respondents providing skewed responses depending on the kind of answers they think the researcher expects to hear. This is in line with the findings of Smith, Smith and Johnson (2023), who postulated that bias must be well-controlled, especially in small-scale studies. To address this, I shall adopt a vigilant and aware stance, actively encourage open and honest answers and confirm to the respondent that the research is for academic purposes only (Bergen & Labonté, 2020). I shall also conduct a face-to-face informal briefing session in School Alpha, in line with recommendations by Harris and Brown (2019) to clarify the objectives and expectations, neutralise potential power imbalances, allow for more open and honest communication between the researcher and participants and ultimately ensure participants feel free to provide truthful and unbiased responses.

My dual role as a school Principal and a principal researcher poses another potential ethical issue challenge. Being in the education sector, there is a possibility of preconceptions of how things should be done, inadvertently influencing how I conduct the interviews and carry out data analysis. In response to this ethical challenge, I shall ensure that I seek input from colleagues and recruit

research assistance in data collection and analysis. This approach aligns with the evolving discourse on insider research, emphasising reflexivity and transparency in navigating the unique challenges and opportunities inherent in this role (Kim et al., 2021; Van den Bosch et al., 2020). I shall be particularly keen on my reflexivity as a researcher, a concept defined by Le Gallais (2008) as the continuous introspection and critical self-evaluation by the researcher regarding their potential influence on the research, which was a vital foundation of the study.

Another ethical issue is anonymity. Therefore, the questionnaires shall be designed to exclude any personal identifiers such as name, email, employee number and contact details. In the absence of such identities, the researcher shall give the teachers and schools unique identifiers to mask their real identities. Before data collection, the researcher shall remind the participants of the anonymous and confidential nature of the study. This shall further enhance transparency by allowing participants to acknowledge what to expect and give them a sense of being in charge. The effect of this step is evident in the participant interview, where they draw and explain specific instances during lessons and other related examples when discussing the interview questions.

Lastly, I ensured that all data collected was stored on encrypted devices such as password-protected laptops, continuously adhering to the data protection guidelines of the university. This ethical approach, grounded in participant autonomy, my reflexivity, and the inclusion of diverse voices, particularly those of teachers, shall help establish a robust foundation for the study.

3.5.3 Pilot Study

The pilot study was designed to test the effectiveness of the survey and interview protocols in schools offering CBSE to international students in Dubai and India, where second-language readers were a part of comprehension exercises. As supported by Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun (2019), Creswell (2014), Patton et al. (2021), and Maxwell (2013), a pilot study is helpful in evolving and

fine-tuning the specific research approaches in the case of bounded systems and private schools. After approval by the ethics committee, the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview guide were administered conveniently in one school that fit the inclusion criteria. Questionnaires were administered to five teachers in two CBSE schools that met the inclusion criteria, offering a broader perspective on the challenges faced by second-language learners. This approach aligns with Taherdoost's (2022) and Cohen et al.'s (2017) assertion that in qualitative case study methodologies, questionnaires help validate in-depth insights obtained from interviews. Similarly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two teachers in one CBSE school that met the inclusion criteria to delve into detailed instructional practices and contextual nuances. Case study research often relies on such interviews to explore subjective experiences and complex phenomena, as seen in similar studies by Ahlin (2019) and Jain (2021).

First, the pilot study established that conducting research in only one school significantly restricted the study's focus and depth. These findings, therefore, occasioned an increase in the sample schools from one to six and an increase in the sample size from six to thirty-two teachers, ultimately improving the authenticity and credibility of the research findings. These changes were consistent with Clandinin & Connelly's (2016) and Clift et al.'s (2023) idea of qualitative research oriented on flexibility and readiness, allowing for a more comprehensive exploration of teachers' experiences and practices of subject teaching. Also, the pilot study established that interviewing one teacher in one grade denied the researcher insights from other teachers. Consequently, teachers of the first five grades were especially sampled to contribute to understanding early and more basic comprehension in reading for children. Still, the researcher includes teachers of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades to shed light on the advanced foundational principles and the older students' comprehension development.

Secondly, the pilot study established difficulties in administering the questionnaires manually in the digital age. Consequently, the study adopted the electronic format of the questionnaire rather than being offered manually, a move that helped ease access and improve engagement. Switching to a digital format resulted not only in the ease of administration of the questions but also in enabling the participants to respond to the questions at their convenience. This was key because of conditions of restricted access to private schools and also considering the teachers' tight work schedules.

Thirdly, the pilot study established that the questionnaire was lengthy, and some questions were not straightforward, causing boredom and loss of interest in the participants. Therefore, the length of the questionnaire as a whole was restructured to avoid fatigue and keep the interest of the teachers. Further, the pilot study established that some questions were ambiguous and unclear. Consequently, the clarity of questions was reviewed and refined based on participants' response patterns, and the effectiveness of probe questions was also assessed. In addition, some words in the questionnaire were prone to misinterpretation owing to different cultures. Therefore, the cultural sensitivity aspect of questioning was improved. These elaborations enhanced an appropriate and irreproachable relationship between the research instruments and goals, as well as checking suitability for the cultural context of both Dubai and Indian schools.

About Semi-Structured Interviews, the pilot study established that there was a need to include Grade 4 teachers in different disciplines, especially considering the collaborative nature of education. Consequently, the researcher included teachers in 4th-grade Maths and Science, apart from the initial focus of only including teachers who taught English to broaden the scope of the study. This modification recognised the different conceptual and practical paradigms of faculties while staying with the outcome of identifying how comprehensive literacy learning occurs. This

decision was supported by (Duke & Pearson's 2002) assertion on the role of critical literacy in academic success and Turnerv & Baker's (2020) observation on the collaborative nature of education. Further, the inclusion of Math and Science teachers was supported by multiple factors: the reality of benchmark testing requirements across subjects, the necessity of working on students' retention issues through the development of literacy, and the necessity of working in terms of subject-literacy demands. This interdisciplinary approach was evidence of acknowledging that basic literacy skills are indeed the cornerstone of mastering all subjects, and not just the language and reading ones. The pilot study illustrated the potential of the project. It showed how individual subject teachers could bring a diversity of views within the student learning process with regard to literacy across subjects.

Also, the pilot study established that there was a need to separate the interviews of teachers in different disciplines to allow further exploration of emerging themes. Therefore, separate interviews were conducted to obtain English teachers' opinions and Maths and Science teachers' opinions, including different views. Hence, focusing on the types of probe questions improved the capacity to get more descriptive and detailed information regarding issues related to interdisciplinary literacies. Further, interview probes for the two sets of interviews were revisited and restructured to accommodate and attract detailed perspectives of the teachers (Appendix C). These changes have erased the gap that exists between educational policy and classroom practice, which is dovetailed by literature stressing interdisciplinary collaboration among educators (Savin-Baden, 2004).

With the questionnaire, the interview guide refined, and the sample size increased, enhanced authenticity and credibility emerged as a key benefit of the pilot study process. The use of refined questionnaire and interview data, multiple respondents for each subject, and a cross-section of

results confirmation over different contexts all added to high methodological validation. These triangulation strategies were further improved in the pilot phase to successfully portray the dynamic aspects of literacy learning across varied educational settings.

The pilot study proved exceptionally helpful in the overall scheme of the theoretical framework introduced for this research, primarily in the assessment of the 'Combination Paradigm' approach. The pilot phase of this study involved the use of research tools. It led to an adjustment in size and diversity in the group of educators sampled, clearly underlining the value of integrating cognitive, social, and critical literacy theories in the assessment of the development of literacy. This validation was necessary and justified the inclusion of Math and Science teachers in the main study, as suggested by both theoretical and practical factors. Further, the pilot findings helped understand the applicability of the combination paradigm and fine-tune the research tools. The pilot study also showed how various theoretical constructs are enacted in realistic classrooms, helping to bridge the gap between theory and application. This understanding guided the creation of additional questions and prompts which might more successfully identify potential interactions between cognition, social practices, and critical reading.

3.5.4 Implementation of the Actual Study

Following the pilot study, the sample was increased, and the questionnaire was redesigned to make it shorter, removing ambiguity and including more open-ended questions to capture participants' perspectives. First, the sample was increased from six to thirty-two teachers from Grades 3 to Grade 8 and teachers teaching Science and Maths to Grade 4 students, and the number of schools increased to six. Increasing the number of schools and the number of teachers employed, two sampling techniques were used to promote diversity in the sample as proposed in the pilot study: purposive and maximum variation sampling. Out of the 36 CBSE schools in Dubai, six were purposively

sampled, based on specific criteria: teachers (all from India with Indian university qualifications), school type (full CBSE curriculum only), school structure (must include all phases (early years through higher secondary), student demographics (90% Indian students, second language speakers), school profile (established presence in Dubai). Ultimately, the study involved the administration of questionnaires to 32 teachers (across the six schools) and the conducting of 6 independent semi-structured interviews at School (ALPHA). Table 3.2 A below provides details of the schools sampled.

TABLE 3.2: A COMPREHENSIVE TABLE OF THE SCHOOLS AND PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED.

School Name (Alias)	Establishment Year	Curriculum	School Level	Total Students	Total Teachers	Teacher Demographics
Pilot Study School (XYZ)	1990	CBSE	Early Years to Primary	800	70	90% Indian Teachers
Main Study School (Alpha)	1992	CBSE	Early Years to Grade 12	2100	150	90% Indian Teachers
Participant School (ABC)	1980	CBSE	Early Years to Grade 12	3500	200	90% Indian Teachers
Participant School (KKM)	1984	CBSE	Early Years to Grade 12	1500	110	90% Indian Teachers
Participant School (ABA)	1984	CBSE	Early Years to Grade 12	2200	155	90% Indian Teachers
Participant School (PIS)	1998	CBSE	Early Years to Grade 12	3600	250	100% Indian Teachers

SOURCE: AUTHOR (2024)

Additionally, the main inclusion criterion of the thirty-two teachers sampled was a teaching qualification from India. The increased number included teachers of the Grade three teachers (specifically sampled to contribute to understanding early and more basic comprehension in reading for children) and teachers of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, sampled to shed light on the advanced foundational principles and the older students' comprehension development.

With the sample in place, the redesigned questionnaires (more concise and shorter) were administered online to thirty-two teachers. The online questionnaires were made available to geographically separate groups of respondents through Google Forms, which follow GDPR requirements, and were used to share the questionnaire link. Chen et al. (2021) note that online administration offered scalability, eliminating travel costs, which also increased efficiencies and broadened the participants' pool. This position is supported by Evans and Mathur's (2018) assertion that online dissemination eliminates potential inhibitions participants might feel when receiving the questionnaire directly from the researcher or school Principal. This approach enabled participants to respond by accessing the documents remotely, eliminating subjectivity and systematised thinking caused by interacting with other research participants. Further, the online administration made it easier for the collected data to be exported in multiple formats for subsequent analysis using Excel, saving time and minimising the potential for human error.

The strategic employment of questionnaires electronically before conducting semi-structured interviews was a pivotal methodological decision. The questionnaire was multidimensional, ensuring a comprehensive data collection process (Appendix A). First and foremost, it allowed teachers to familiarise themselves with the reading comprehension program practised within their schools. This led to proper understanding and deeper conversations about their strengths and goals during the interview. Secondly, analysing trends in teachers' viewpoints led to uncovering the basic patterns in their perspectives (Ruslin et al., 2022).

Following the administration of questionnaires, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with six primary teachers, including four experienced English teachers and two specialising in Maths and Science, each with extensive primary teaching experience. Harris and Brown (2019) posit that such structured interviews were effective in extending the questionnaire

data and providing qualitative data that focused on the practicalities, difficulties, and advancements made in teaching reading comprehension to second language learners. In this manner, the collection of qualitative data targeted a wide range of educational practices, and the challenges related to them during the design process. Further, Harris and Brown (2019) argue that by combining the response data from the questionnaires with the findings of the interviews, the study offered a view of the determinants of reading comprehension instruction in CBSE schools. This approach provided a more comprehensive view of numerical changes and qualitative insights for better evaluation. All interviews were documented using a university-approved voice recorder and online video recording platforms, after which they were transcribed.

3.5.5 Thematic Analysis of the Actual Study

The thematic analysis included the actual examination of the data generated in the study through performing thematic analysis, which will create concrete suggestions for the identification of the essential foundational principles for developing a reading comprehension approach for second language speakers in CBSE international schools in India and Dubai. According to the theoretical framework of Miles et al. (2014) and Braun and Clarke (2021), thematic analysis is a systematic approach focused on the recognition and categorisation of patterns within qualitative information. The investigation process commences with the coding phase, where the pertinent phrases, concepts, and ideas are extracted systematically from the data obtained through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires.

After setting up the codes, the next step is to sort the codes into categories based on similarities and interrelationships. This process shall involve comparison; in other words, each piece of data shall be compared with the others to identify similarities and differences. Then, I shall distil these findings into organising themes (foundational principles for reading comprehension

practices among second-language learners, Grade 4 Learners). To elaborate on these themes, I shall adopt both the inductive and deductive approaches, guaranteeing that each of them corresponds to the study objectives and theory used.

This shall be followed by selection of the emerging themes (foundational principles) of course guided by the literature and the theoretical framework of the qualitative interpretive phenomenological case study approach that aims to elucidate participants' experiences. This approach shall help designate the methodological process of the analysis of teachers' and students' subjectivities while disclosing the challenges of reading comprehension frameworks application in various contexts.

The last step shall be aligning the selected themes with study objectives. The overall findings expected to emerge from the thematic analysis shall offer insights into the educational issues and practices of CBSE international schools. These identified themes shall be crucial in guiding the approach when looking for the participating teachers and school types, selecting and designing tools, and choosing the appropriate data collection methods to meet the laid objectives. This alignment shall be critical in making sure that what was discovered was actual and helpful in providing recommendations on how to teach reading comprehension to second language learners effectively. Apart from identifying how the themes emerge and are selected, the thematic analysis phase also expands the processes and offers a rationale and theory for the study's results.

3.5.6 Limitations of the Study

This study faces several noteworthy limitations. Firstly, the generalizability of the findings to all CBSE international schools in Dubai and India is limited due to the small sample size. Only six schools were included in the study, out of over 32 CBSE international schools in Dubai. Practical challenges, including workload concerns and administrative restrictions, influenced this

constraint. Similar limitations have been highlighted in previous research by Smith, Smith, and Johnson (2023).

The researcher shall mitigate this by ensuring that the sample is diverse enough from the diverse socio-cultural contexts prevalent in different regions and variations in historical and economic developments. Next, self-reporting in the collected data poses a potential source of bias. Based on their perceptions and interpretations, participants' responses might not fully capture the dynamics of the educational environment (Bergen & Labonté, 2020). This subjectivity in self-reported data could influence the authenticity and credibility of the study's outcomes, highlighting the need for cautious interpretation. The researcher shall mitigate this by communicating openly with respondents, thereby encouraging honest responses and confirming to the respondents that the research is purely academic.

Furthermore, my geographical location in Dubai introduces logistical challenges for organising face-to-face interviews with participant teachers from CBSE schools in India. The physical distance may impede direct engagement with participants, potentially influencing the depth and quality of data collected. To mitigate this constraint, I shall leverage virtual technology, which, according to Hewson (2008), not only facilitates inclusivity by broadening the sample size but also addresses the challenges posed by geographical constraints.

3.6 Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, my reflection as a researcher centers on the intricate journey of this qualitative case study. A pragmatic method was then used to develop the reading comprehension framework that CBSE schools' second language learners require. This approach also emphasises choosing the proper data collection tools, such as questionnaires and interviews, and data analysis methods, such as thematic analysis. Thus, the use of these tools enables the study

to provide comprehensive and realistic information on the difficulties of teaching reading comprehension to second-language learners and the foundational principles necessary for overcoming these difficulties – the objectives of the study.

The pilot study provided critical insights, revealing disparities in reading comprehension skills between native and non-native English speakers. The pilot study highlighted the necessity for targeted methodologies to enhance reading comprehension, especially for second-language learners within foreign national curricula. The pilot study underscored the importance of methodological rigour and flexibility, enabling adjustments to research tools and techniques based on initial feedback and data analysis.

Notably, the use of thematic analysis was critical in analysing qualitative data, adding depth and nuance to my understanding of these disparities. I employed thematic analysis as a technique for exploring the qualitative data and providing depth to this subject regarding these disparities. It also included steps of coding, categorisation, and synthesis of themes, which helped reveal the multiple layers of instructional practices and issues faced by teachers. First, I proceeded with qualitative analysis of interview and survey materials and assigned codes to them, with an emphasis on key phrases and patterns. These initial codes were then sorted into categories that felt more general and manageable, for example, teaching techniques, the participation of students, and resources for teaching. In this way, the main issues and regularities were revealed and generalised regarding the educators' experiences, as well as the specific difficulties of instructing reading comprehension to second-language learners.

The chapter also paid considerable attention to my position as a researcher. Recognising my dual role as both a principal and a researcher, it was crucial to consider how this could impact the study outcomes and to maintain strict ethical conduct throughout the research process. This

introspection was vital in ensuring the integrity and credibility of my research, particularly in navigating potential biases and power dynamics inherent in my dual roles. The insights gained from the pilot study were significant, leading to refinements in research tools and methods for the main study. For instance, the decision to move questionnaires to an electronic format improved accessibility and engagement, while the inclusion of more open-ended questions provided richer qualitative data; there were some closed questions, but with prompts. Additionally, the incorporation of teachers from various disciplines, such as Maths and Science, broadened the scope of the study, offering a multidisciplinary perspective on reading comprehension frameworks as discussed earlier in the decision to include in the study sample teachers teaching math and science for the main study.

This chapter provided a comprehensive understanding of the research context, extending beyond the pilot study. It encompassed the theoretical framework, methodological choices, and ethical considerations, all of which are integral to the study's success. The lessons learned and methodological insights obtained significantly contribute to the rigour, authenticity, and credibility of the research findings. Integrating the key learnings and refined methodologies from the pilot study into the broader scope ensures a seamless and informed transition. This approach is shaping the trajectory of the research, fostering a comprehensive and insightful exploration of reading comprehension within CBSE schools.

This chapter has also tried to effectively establish the foundation for deeper analysis in the upcoming sections, where I will apply thematic analysis to develop a framework tailored to the unique needs of second-language learners. Through constructive feedback from the initial pilot study and critical examination of various methods, I aim to identify the foundational pillars necessary for developing a reading comprehension framework. This groundwork is essential for the

subsequent analyses and discussions throughout the chapter, ultimately enhancing educational practice and outcomes for second language learners in CBSE international schools.

Chapter 4 - Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the data gathered from questionnaires and interviews conducted with 32 primary English teachers from six CBSE international schools across Dubai and India. The aim is to identify the key foundational principles required to develop a reading comprehension framework for grade 4 second-language speakers. The findings are subdivided into three main sections, each offering new perspectives on the multifaceted challenges associated with reading comprehension instruction and assessment for this specific cohort.

Section 4.2 explores the outcomes of the research questionnaire, focusing on comprehension of foundational principles, teachers' understanding of expectations at grade 4, and teaching methods for second-language learners. The qualitative data collected provides rich insights into the practices and issues experienced by educators in the targeted schools. Section 4.3 focuses on the qualitative insights from interviews, addressing domains such as foundational literacy components, multiple modalities, cultural competency, critical thinking, cultural representation, teachers' approaches, and reading applications in real-world contexts. The data collected from the responses and the insights from the educators' perspectives enable the researcher to uncover deeper meanings, motivations, and experiences that are essential to understanding and improving reading comprehension instruction.

4.2 Thematic Analysis - Questionnaire Findings

4.2.1 Respondent's Demographic Characteristics

This research examines the perspectives and practices of 32 teachers regarding reading comprehension instruction, with a focus on how educators interpret and implement the CBSE curriculum objectives within their specific contexts. This section presents the findings from the

questionnaires completed by 32 primary English teachers from six CBSE international schools, achieving a 100% response rate. The demographic characteristics of the 32 respondents provide crucial context for understanding their perspectives and approaches to reading comprehension instruction.

4.2.1.1 Participant

The study sought to establish the respondents' age distribution, as shown in Figure 7 below.

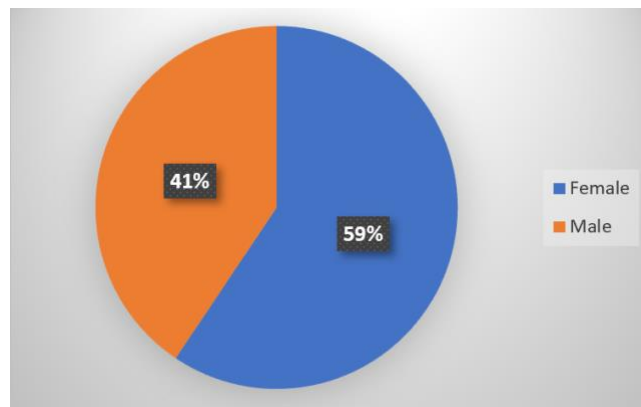


FIGURE 6: PARTICIPANT DISTRIBUTION BY GENDER

The study established a relatively balanced gender ratio among respondents, with 59.4% female and 40.6% male educators, as shown in the figure below. This distribution reflects the broader demographic patterns in primary education while ensuring diverse perspectives in the analysis. The gender balance among educators themselves becomes particularly significant when considering their observations about gender differences in student reading performance, as discussed in subsequent sections.

4.2.1.2 Age Group Distribution

The study also sought to establish the respondents' age distribution, as shown in Figure 8 below.

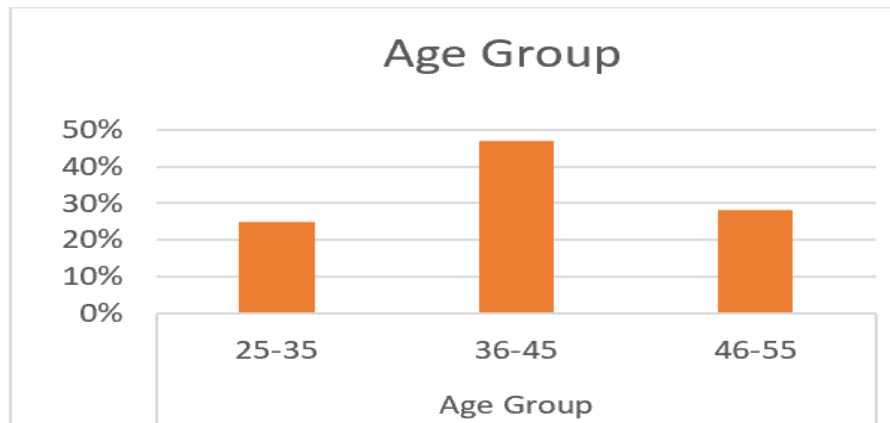


FIGURE 7 THE RESPONDENTS' AGE DISTRIBUTION

The faculty demonstrates a predominantly middle-aged profile, with 46.9% of respondents falling between 36 and 45 years old. This age distribution represents a valuable combination of teaching experience and exposure to contemporary pedagogical approaches. The maturity of the teaching force suggests that most educators have had sufficient time to develop and refine their reading instruction methodologies while remaining current with educational innovations.

4.2.1.3 Ethnic Distribution and Regional Training Background

The study further sought to establish the respondents' ethnic distribution. Although teaching in Dubai CBSE international schools, the regions of origin from India where they obtained their

teaching degrees play a crucial role in the version and level of their teacher education (B.Ed), and the findings are as shown below in Figure 9.

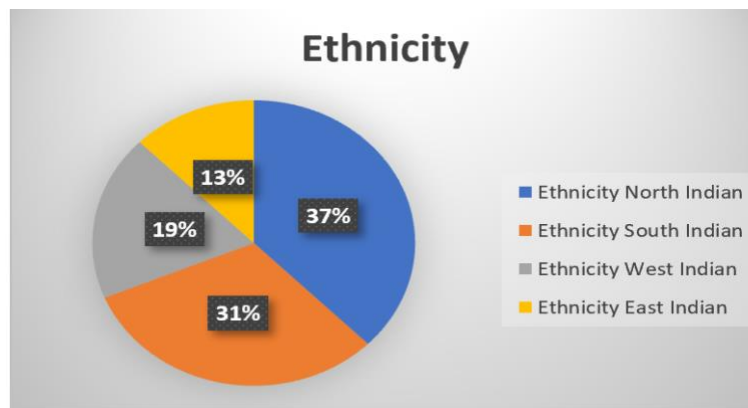


FIGURE 9: ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS.

The study revealed significant ethnic diversity within the teaching staff, with representation from all regions of India: North (37.5%), South (31.25%), West (18.75%), and East (12.5%). This distribution is particularly relevant because, although these teachers work in Dubai-based CBSE international schools, their regions of origin in India significantly influence their teacher education background (B.Ed programs). The researcher specifically examined whether training variations across different Indian regions affected teaching approaches and student outcomes, making this demographic characteristic crucial for understanding the diversity of educational perspectives within the sample.

4.2.1.4 Teaching Experience Profile

In addition, the study sought to establish the respondents' level of teaching experience, and the findings are as shown below.

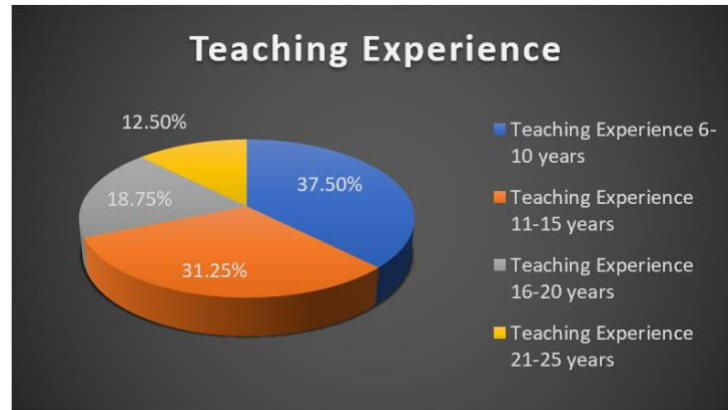


FIGURE 8 RESPONDENTS' TEACHING EXPERIENCE

The study established that most respondents demonstrate substantial teaching experience, with the largest group (37.5%) having 6-10 years of classroom experience. This experience level suggests that most participants have moved beyond the initial adjustment period of their teaching careers and have developed established practices and perspectives on reading instruction. The depth of experience across the sample provides credibility to their insights regarding the challenges and successes in reading comprehension instruction.

4.2.1.5 Grade Level Distribution

The study also aimed to establish grade level distribution among the respondents, and the findings are shown below.

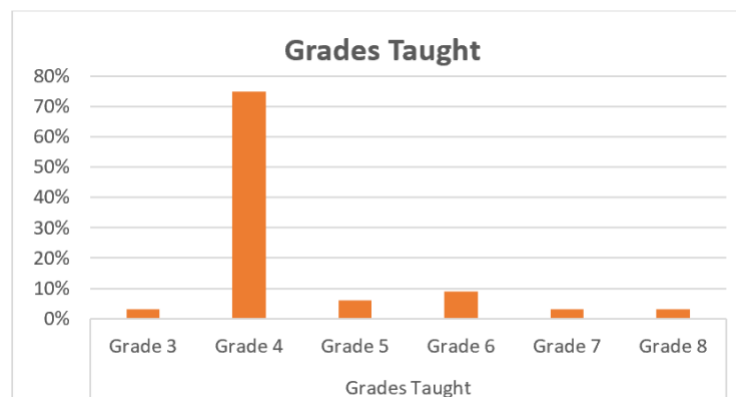


FIGURE 9: GRADES TAUGHT

A notable characteristic is shown in the figure above. A notable sample characteristic is the heavy concentration of teachers in Grade 4 (75%), while other grades have minimal representation. This distribution aligns with the research focus on Grade 4 students and may reflect either specific organisational structures within the participating schools or deliberate sampling to ensure adequate representation at the target grade level.

4.2.1.6 Student Achievement Context

Based on PIRLS achievement data from the participating schools, there is a modest 4-percentage-point difference between girls (52%) and boys (48%) among high achievers in reading literacy. While this difference is noticeable, it is relatively small and provides essential context for understanding teacher observations about gender differences in reading performance.

4.2.2 Foundational Principles for a Reading Comprehension Framework - Questionnaire Analysis

Questionnaire answers analysis identified five major concepts which describe reading comprehension instruction: gender dynamics and cultural responsiveness, assessment and monitoring frameworks, challenges and contextual factors, instructional strategies and approaches, and conceptual understanding of literacy skills. These ideas arose with a critical analysis of direct quotes made by participants, and they helped understand how teachers experienced their realities as they encountered the challenges of making students develop their reading comprehension abilities.

4.2.2.1 Gender Dynamics and Cultural Responsiveness in Reading

The answers to the questionnaire indicated that there is a considerable concern toward gendered gaps in reading achievement and interest, and therefore, how the cultural and social circumstances collide with the pedagogical practice. This consciousness seems to be a principal defining how

teachers teach reading, as well as the way they understand their curriculum objectives in their specific situations. Ms. Priya, a teacher with 8 years of experience teaching 4th grade, observed that.

"Girls outperform the boys" in her classroom, reflecting a pattern that appeared consistently across multiple responses. However, this observation extends beyond simple performance metrics to encompass deeper cultural and social dynamics that influence reading engagement.

Several educators with various geographical backgrounds gave analogous accounts of gender variations in performance. This view was corroborated by Ms. Kavitha (West India, 7 years' experience) and Mr. Suresh (East India, 9 years' experience), who stated that teachers do not perceive reading difficulty as a deficiency in skills but as a form of engagement that is linked to much wider social patterns and cultural expectations. Another teacher with more experience, Mr. Rajesh (experience of 12 years), mentioned that "There is some degree of imbalance between the levels with more boys being interested in sport and internet games."

The fact that this observation was consistent with the varied experiences and from different regional backgrounds shows that such gender-specific engagement patterns are not limited to particular cultures of the Indian teaching community in the Indian diaspora.

The sophistication of gender based analysis among teachers was manifested through the presentation of the institutional data by teachers to justify their observation. Having taught for 10 years of experience, Ms. Anita S gave some specific quantitative evidence: "According to our school data, we observe that 75% of girls fall within the high lexile level bracket, while 65% of boys are in the same category."

This statistic proves how experienced instructors are extending the paradigm of using anecdotal descriptions to the use of systematic study in the breakdown of the difference between men and women when it comes to reading skills. The 10-percentage-point disparities that she cites are consistent with larger studies on gender and literacy and give particular focus to her choice to instruct.

Teachers also showed subtle appreciation of the gender differentiation with regard to reading preferences, which showed an in-depth appreciation of the cultural aspects of reading habits and text selection. Ms. Deepika noticed that. "Girls read fiction and magazines more than boys, but boys are more likely to read newspapers and comic books."

This observation indicates that instructors are not only sensitive to reading capacity but they are also to reading preferences and habits, and such preferences and habits are directly related to their instructional decisions and text selection strategies. The awareness of these preference patterns indicates cultural responsiveness in pedagogy, which presupposes the fact that the good instruction of reading should take into consideration various interests and the diversity of culture. Other educators supported this assertion. Ms. Ritu observed that girls read more and longer compared to boys, and they also tend to like reading more than boys.

Such observations make one think of the emotional and motivational dynamics of reading that are identified by teachers as key to the development of comprehension. This consciousness places an emphasis that reading instruction should be aided by the level of cognitive skills, in addition to the affective elements that can maintain the reading interest on a long-term basis.

The multiculturalism of the gender relations in reading, however, became clear with the juxtaposed differences of diverse classroom experiences. Mr. Arjun, a teacher of over 15 years, gave a different trend in that; "Boys read better than girls in my classroom" and Ms. Meera is an East Indian teacher

with only 5 years of experience who said that; "Most of the boys read better than girls in the grade 3 in the sense of pronunciation, punctuation and voice modulation." Mr. Vikram, a teacher who has spent 11 years teaching, agreed with the observation, pointing to more male involvement in reading activities in his classroom situation, confirming an emerging trend.

These two opposing views demonstrate that educators are coming up with localised interpretations of the intersection of gender and reading development instead of adopting generalising assumptions. The multiplicity of observations implies that culture responsiveness in reading instruction needs to be contextually effective as opposed to broadly implemented techniques based on general gender tendencies. This conclusion has serious implications for the development of the framework as it recommends that the effective instruction of reading comprehension needs to be dynamic enough to suit the different gender relations in the context of multiple classrooms and at the same time sensitive to cultural issues that affect reading performances..

4.2.2.2 Assessment and Monitoring Frameworks

The results of the analysis showed advanced readings regarding assessment and monitoring of reading comprehension, combining the practices used internationally with local situational demands. Although standardised international testing, such as PIRLS, was not used more widely, there was a clear capacity on the part of teachers to be creative in adapting lesser-known frameworks and monitoring student progress well.

Ms. Sunita, with 9 years of experience, described how her school did it: "We do not use PIRLS as an assessment tool for reading. However, we do assess the students according to the Lexile reading level."

This was echoed by colleagues Mr. Anil (Delhi, 8 years' experience), Ms. Pooja (Haryana, 12 years' experience), and Mr. Kiran (Rajasthan, 7 years' experience), confirming a preference towards

systems that would measure reading levels continuously instead of at a specific point in time. Given the need for teachers to have assessment tools that can be used to make daily instructional decisions and monitor step-by-step progress over the course of the academic year, it seems that different schools were making decisions concerning the usage of Lexile levels, instead of PIRLS.

Implementation of extensive frameworks of assessment was notable in what a number of teachers described as having done. Ms. Lakshmi, an educator with 13 years of experience, and Mr. Ramesh, another educator with 6 years of experience teaching, alluded to using the VIPERS strategy that emphasises Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval, and Summarisation skills. The more experienced Ms. Lakshmi gave more details on how this framework informs her practice of assessment: "The VIPERS strategy allows us to systematically assess different dimensions of reading comprehension rather than treating it as a single skill."

Such a multi-dimensional idea points to an emerging trend of pairing reading comprehension with a practical framework in terms of classroom-based assessment techniques.

The level of knowledge of age expectations and benchmarking practices was also sophisticated. Dr. Sharma, an experienced educator with 16 years of experience, described and explained the full coverage of developmental assessment: "Age-related expectations communicate how a child is learning and progressing regarding their age. Essentially, the expectations compare children to the national standard and assess whether they're on track with the rest of the children in the country."

This discussion shows that the teachers are aware of comparative benchmarking as a method of assessment and the importance of developmental appropriateness as a concept regarding the teaching of reading. The stress on national standards is associated with the attempts of the teachers to remain aligned with the overall educational goals, but adjust to the local contexts.

The interaction of official curricular structure with assessment practice was also clear in the answers given by teachers who had more experience in the CBSE system. Mr. Gupta, a highly experienced teacher, gave particular grade-age correspondents: "CBSE frameworks specify KG 3 to 5 years, primary 6 to 11 years, secondary 12 to 14 years, higher secondary 15 to 18 years."

This extensive familiarity shows that regular instructors base their evaluation techniques within formal curricular frameworks but are adaptable enough to allow them to respond to their particular conditions and student bodies. A significant feature of effective reading instruction that has been brought into action is the formative assessment strategies. Several teachers (Ms. Jyoti, Maharashtra, 10 years' experience in teaching, Mr. Santosh, Karnataka, 11 years' experience in teaching and Ms. Radha, Kerala, 9 years' experience in teaching) said that doing literature circles (sometimes also referred to as reading circles) was a common practice in their classrooms. Ms. Jyoti gave the evaluation of this strategy: "Literature circles are conducted in class on a regular basis because they allow for ongoing monitoring of comprehension while students are actively engaged in reading and discussion."

Such inclination towards embedded evaluation that invariably is instructional, along with assessment, is an indication of advanced appreciation of authentic assessment. Assessment integration implies that future reading comprehension models should remain focused on the formative assessment that influences classroom instruction as opposed to monitoring paperwork to record student success.

4.2.2.3 Challenges and Contextual Factors in Reading Instruction

Educators listed many issues related to each other, showing highly connected knowledge regarding how cognitive, linguistic, social, and cultural factors influence the development of reading

comprehension. The answers reflect a great awareness of complex environments where second-language learners grow to be readers.

The predominant difficulty was found to be language barriers, and teachers were revealed to be highly sophisticated in their interpretation of the impact of linguistic diversity on the development of comprehension. With 14 years of experience, Ms. Shanti explicitly attributed the hindrances to reading comprehension to the presence of oral language deficit and limited vocabulary. This observation indicates her appreciation of the important relationship that exists between the effectiveness of oral language use and reading comprehension, meaning that she believes that teachers frame curriculum goals within a developmental linguistics perspective that emphasises the stability of language knowledge as the basis for interacting with language-based learning.

More specifically, it emerged that the situation of the multilingual environment within CBSE international schools in Dubai presents certain and special problems being navigated by teachers on a daily basis. With 12 years of experience working with different kinds of students, Mr. Ahmed gave the following explanation: "Students come from homes where English is not the primary language of communication, yet they are expected to demonstrate grade-level reading comprehension in English. This creates a gap between home language experiences and school literacy expectations."

This observation indicates the diversity of linguistic topography, which defines the international schools, pupils of which can speak Hindi, Arabic, Urdu, or other languages at home but study to read the English language. The fact that teachers are aware of this problem demonstrates a deep-seated appreciation of how home-school language discontinuities have an impact on the way that reading develops.

Additionally, many teachers were aware of differentiated instruction, as the actual heterogeneity of the learning needs of fellow students was recognised in individual classrooms. Based on her 8 years of experience, Ms. Usha observed that teachers have different strengths and weaknesses, pointing out the fact that there have to be individual approaches to reading instructions. This acknowledgement denotes that educators are scaling down curricular expectations to conform to the learning profile of different students, as opposed to uniform responses to all students.

This was elaborated by Mr. Naveen, an experienced educator with 15 years of experience: "In a single classroom, we have students who are heritage speakers of English, students who learned English as a second language from early childhood, and recent arrivals who are still developing basic English proficiency. Each group requires different instructional approaches and assessment strategies."

This descriptive analysis shows how pedagogically seasoned educators recognise the sensibility of occasion-specific second-language reading development and flexible instructional frameworks, which have the potential to adapt to various linguistic settings.

Outcomes of out-of-classroom social and environmental factors were also identified as a powerful influence in how reading develops. Ms. Geetha stated the presence of social factors and language development as one of the factors that lead to reading achievement gaps. Intuitively, with regard to reading difficulties, her observation implies a higher level of understanding that reading issues/problems exist beyond an individual's mental capacity, but also on a higher social and cultural level as well.

Among other aspects, some educators focused their attention on socioeconomic aspects of reading engagement. Based on their 13 years of experience, Mr. Prakash noted: "Reading habit is a problem with the majority sections within the society", which is an indication of awareness that reading

problems are not weak school or individual problems but others in society. This point of view suggests an advanced awareness of the role of cultural values on reading and access to books, as well as family literacy, as they affect student achievement.

The more context of social challenge was demarcated by Ms. Kamala, an educationist with 16 16-year of experience: "Many families prioritise academic subjects like mathematics and science over reading for pleasure. Students receive messages that reading is only valuable for examination purposes rather than for personal enrichment or critical thinking development."

This observation indicates that cultural perception about education often contributes to the sabotaging of reading comprehension development in that cultural thinking essentially places reading as an exercise of machine learning, and not as making meaning.

Several teachers also recognised the technological issues that contemporary reading instructions encounter. More specifically, Mr. Sunil pointed out: "Students are increasingly accustomed to digital media with immediate visual feedback. Traditional text-based reading requires sustained attention and internal visualisation that many students find challenging to develop."

This understanding is indicative of the knowledge of the influence of the modern media settings on reading preference and focus perceptions, indicating that conducting proper reading instruction needs to embrace such environmental developments.

Further, educators presented flexible strategies to deal with these difficulties as opposed to the view that they present insurmountable challenges. Ms. Rekha, a teacher with a decade of experience, described her contextual approach as follows: "Rather than applying standardised methods uniformly, we consider the specific challenges and opportunities presented by our particular student population. This might mean incorporating more visual supports for students with limited English

proficiency or providing additional cultural context for texts that assume specific background knowledge."

This adaptive approach implies that educators are not viewing curriculum goals prescriptively, and that cutting-edge reading comprehension models have to allow some room to be modified in the local context and uphold essential tenets of instruction.

4.2.2.4 Instructional Strategies and Approaches

The survey questionnaire showed a large and advanced range of instructional techniques used by instructors to create reading comprehension strategies. Professional knowledge, which can be seen to have been demonstrated by the teachers, is through training experiences, professional development centred on collaboration, as well as classroom experimentation. They incorporate the research-mediated practices and contextual adjustment to second-language students in their approaches.

The range of comprehension actions by teachers was possibly best illustrated with a case of Ms. Nandini, an experienced educator with 12 years of experience, who suggested a list of 22 various reading strategies they used in her classroom:

"We use multiple approaches including: Reread, Activate Prior Knowledge, Use Context Clues, Infer, Think Aloud, Summarize, Locate Key Information, Make Predictions, Use Word Attack Strategies, Visualize, Use Graphic Organizers, Monitor Comprehension, Ask Questions, Determine Importance, Synthesize Information, Connect Text to Self, Connect Text to Text, Connect Text to World, Analyze Text Structure, Evaluate Author's Purpose, Compare and Contrast, and Identify Main Ideas and Supporting Details."

Such a wide range shows that professional development affects teaching practice and indicates an advanced view of reading as a complex mental process that involves various strategic moves. The

fact that metacognitive strategies, such as Monitor Comprehension and Ask Questions, are mentioned together with cognitive strategies, such as Summarise and Infer, implies the recognition of the fact that students should be taught to be able to control their reading process.

Teachers who were trained in advanced techniques gave specific attention to the text analysis techniques. Mr. Ravi, a 14-year-experienced teacher, explained certain methods of analysis:

"We teach students to compare and contrast two texts from the same author, which helps them understand stylistic consistency and thematic development."

Analytical techniques were elaborated by Ms. Sita, a West Indian teacher, based on her 9-year experience:

"Students learn to infer the author's purpose, analyse the role of punctuation in meaning-making, highlight contextual grammar patterns, analyse character development, and understand plot structure to predict future events."

Such methods indicate change towards critical thinking and reasoning, and that teachers are adopting higher-order thinking skills in their reading lesson plans. Combining opinion analysis and critical thinking became noticeable in answers given by a number of professional teachers. But a more detailed explanation came from Ms. Bharti, an experienced educator with 15 years of experience. She explained her method of cultivating critical reading skills:

"We focus on understanding the power of opinions through analysis of the author's perspective and inference of underlying assumptions. Students learn to identify bias, evaluate evidence, and develop their own informed opinions about texts."

This level of critical engagement with the interpretation of texts, rather than a passive position of receiving texts, is indicative of a keen perception of reading comprehension as an active analytical process, making them ready to face academic and civic life.

Analytically, the frequency of the responses on the questionnaire was used to demonstrate the uniformity of execution of the strategy across the schools that participated in it. A large proportion of teachers said they applied basic comprehension skills regularly:

- Question development: 26 teachers said that they always/often use this strategy
- Summarisation: 29 teachers gave reports of regular use
- Prediction skills: 28 teachers said they did it regularly
- Developing vocabulary: 29 teachers said that much attention was paid to the development of vocabulary

Such high frequencies point to a close relationship between the teaching priorities promulgated by teachers and the fundamental goals of reading comprehension under the CBSE curriculum, as well as successful professional development on evidence-based practices and reading instruction procedures.

Professional development turned out to be an influential element defining repertoires of strategies in teachers. This included Ms. Lata (Delhi, 8 years of experience), Mr. Ashok (Haryana, 11 years of experience), Ms. Neeta (Punjab, 6 years of experience), and Mr. Vijay (Rajasthan, 13 years of experience), all of whom cited training in advanced comprehension practices. More specifically, Ms. Lata clarified the content and structure of the training:

"Our training covered compare-contrast analysis, text annotation techniques, inferring author's point of view, analysing setting and character development, comparing multiple texts, and highlighting grammatical concepts within meaningful contexts."

This wholesome professional development seems to have established uniformity in the instructional practices, besides equipping the teachers with advanced tools in teaching the comprehension of reading.

Improved use of the collaborative reading method was also observed throughout various classrooms. Mr. Mohan (10 years of experience), Ms. Saroja (12 years of experience), and Mr. Krishna (7 years of experience) further mentioned that Literature circles are systematically conducted in the classroom. Mr. Mohan goes into details about the instructional worth of this method:

Literature circles encourage student discussion and shared meaning-making. Students take on different roles—discussion director, vocabulary enricher, connector, illustrator—which allows them to engage with texts from multiple perspectives while developing collaborative skills."

This cooperative teaching strategy implies the application of principles of social constructivism in teaching reading, and this is with the understanding that comprehension will be achieved during joint interaction and conversation with other learners as opposed to individual learning in solitude.

4.2.2.5 Conceptual Understanding of Literacy Skills

The definitions of literacy skills articulated by teachers were sophisticated and reflect a highly theorised and philosophical school of thought in education far beyond what is traditionally considered as reading and writing. Their conceptualisations show the way they understand curricular objectives in terms of the modern research orientations, keeping up with the potential of the transformative power of literacy development.

The majority of the teachers described literacy as a whole system of communication and not a set of discrete skills.

Based on her 11 years of experience, Ms. Indira, a Grade 4 teacher, defined literacy skills as the capability to independently read, speak, listen, and write to communicate effectively. Such a definition describes a perception of literacy as a whole language area as an association with the

entire language arts rather than as individual subjects, implying teaching methods that focus on interrelatedness among the processes of reading, writing, talking, and listening.

A more detailed conceptualisation was suggested by a more experienced teacher, Mr. Harish (with teaching experience of 16 years), who focused on both skills and practice:

Literacy skills refer to a set of competencies and abilities that enable individuals to read, write, understand, and effectively communicate in a written language. These skills help students to communicate, write, and read well. Literacy skills are fundamental for individuals to access educational opportunities and participate fully in society."

This definition shows the recognition of literacy as a skill and as a social practice where the development of reading comprehension is not a tool to demonstrate success in the classroom alone. Social participation is emphasised because literacy is often conceptualised as the means of becoming involved in civic life and personal empowerment.

Incorporation of modern models could be observed in most of the answers, as demonstrated by the mention of the Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing (LSRW) model. Ms. Shobha is a 13-year veteran West Indian teacher who presented a breakdown of the components of literacy that indicate knowledge of early literacy development based on research:

"Literacy encompasses Print Motivation, Print Awareness, Letter Knowledge, Vocabulary, Narrative Skills, Phonological Awareness, and the integrated development of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing skills."

This thorough framework that evidences awareness of emergent literacy studies and proposes teaching methods that combine several domains of development instead of evaluating reading comprehension as an independent skill.

The fact that critical thinking and media literacy are represented in teachers' conceptualisations is evidence of knowledge of the modern information environment and the consequences of it on literacy teaching. Ms. Vandana, a teacher with 9 years of experience, observed:

"In today's digital age, media and information literacy skills are essential for evaluating and utilising information from various sources. Students must learn to critically analyse texts, identify reliable sources, and synthesise information from multiple formats."

This broadened definition implies that educators are interpreting the purpose of literacy through the lens of 21st-century concerns, acknowledging that successful reading comprehension instruction needs to equip students to deal with complex information environments they will face outside school.

The potential transformative power of literacy development was an especially significant topic of work by a number of educators, representing philosophical commitments that go well beyond instrumental concerns about reading instruction. Ms. Jayanti, a teacher of South Indian origin with 14 years of experience, also offered a rich conceptualisation of the wider meaning of literacy:

"Developing literacy skills facilitates effective communication throughout life. Over time, children develop their abilities to read, write, speak, listen, think, and respond critically—skills that unlock the world's secrets and provide unlimited possibilities. Literacy matters because of the endless doors it opens for personal growth, career opportunities, and civic participation."

This is an academic viewpoint, which asserts that literacy is not only a life-enhancing skill that transforms individuals and enables upward social mobility, but is also an academic requirement. The implications that literacy is power, as opposed to conforming to educational norms, are implied by the metaphor of secrets being unlocked and the door being opened.

Cultural responsiveness emerged in the definitions of a number of teachers, manifesting itself as awareness of the interaction between literacy development and identity and cultural background. With over a decade of experience in teaching, Mr. Deepak, a teacher who has 12 years of experience in teaching students of different groups, stated:

"Effective literacy instruction must honour students' home languages and cultural experiences while building bridges to academic English and global communication. Students should see their multilingual abilities as strengths rather than deficits in their literacy development."

This culturally responsive orientation means an advanced insight into the way that identity and language connect in the process of the development of reading comprehension. It proposes pedagogies which do not substitute existing knowledge and experiences of the students with school-based literacies.

The theoretical knowledge exhibited among teachers regards an integration of the conventional CBSE literacy goals and the modern-day educational theories and culturally responsive teaching. Although they are built upon the curricular requirements, definitions offered by teachers are cognizant of literacy as a functional skill as well as a transformative activity, of elementary skills and critical thinking, and of the sensitivity to linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the student population. This advanced theoretical basis implies that the development of reading comprehension systems should meet various aspects of literacy development and, at the same time, be flexible to adapt according to the situation.

4.3 Thematic Analysis - Research Findings (Interview Responses)

This segment outlines a thematic review of the results of interviews with six teachers serving in the international school, the CBSE curriculum framework, in Dubai. The following questions were

presented to these educators on their mode of teaching to second language students, their strategy of implementing the CBSE curriculum and how they meet the needs of different learners. They shared their experiences on being a professional developer and those concerning adaptive teaching practices and cultural contextualisation.

The respondents were:

- **Ms. Priya:** A physical science graduate (B.Ed.) originally from India, now teaching mathematics to grades 3-5 in Dubai, with experience in both Indian and international contexts
- **Mr. Ahmed:** A primary science teacher for grades 2-4, who joined his current Dubai school in 2019, with prior experience in kindergarten and Montessori settings
- **Ms. Sarah:** An experienced English teacher with expertise across grades 2 to tertiary level, working with both CBSE and ICSE curricula, specialising in native and non-native English speakers
- **Ms. Fatima:** A veteran educator with 15 years of experience, focusing on grades 3-4 reading comprehension in Dubai's international context
- **Ms. Rashid:** Originally trained in nutrition and dietetics before transitioning to teaching, with experience as a mother and newspaper education programs, based in India and a member of the Centre for National Teacher Recognition
- **Ms. Aisha:** A literature graduate with a strong linguistic background, specialising in second language learners across grades 1-5, with particular expertise in early childhood education

The identified five important concepts are the adaptive teaching strategies, professional development influence, various learner capabilities, multimodal and inclusive ways, and the contingency and cultural flexibility of the context. The teachers also portrayed themselves as

mediators of the curriculum who critically respond to the CBSE objectives as per the needs of the students who are placed in international classrooms with high language barriers and different levels of proficiency. The answers show advanced methods to negotiate between standardised expectations and required adaptations to the context..

4.3.1 Concept 1: Adaptive Teaching Strategies in CBSE Curriculum Implementation

The responses from the six educators show a much more sophisticated understanding of how to implement an adaptive approach to teaching, especially in situations where the students are, in the majority, from a second-language background. These teachers show the process of observing and applying CBSE curriculum goals through the lens of priority accessibility, involvement, and differentiated instructions depending on students' needs.

Assessment as Foundation for Adaptation

An important cornerstone of the adaptive teaching strategy by the educators is the preliminary testing of the students in terms of language proficiency and reading skills. This method of diagnosis enables the teacher to develop their lesson design based on specific learning requirements prior to making any efforts to attain more generic curriculum goals, following the principles of the zone of proximal development, in which instructional strategies should be matched to the level of readiness of the learner (Vygotsky).

Ms. Priya relies on her experience of a transition between a Science class and a Maths class and thus underlines the necessity of this preliminary assessment:

“Initially, it's essential to assess the reading levels of the children. In a classroom, students' abilities vary; some can easily read sentences, while others struggle with phonetics or spelling.”

This diagnosis-based practice reflects the way in which the teachers have perceived the CBSE curriculum not as a set of instructions but as the goal to be achieved with an understanding that it should be about student preparedness. The diagnostic aspect extends to the instruction, with Ms. Priya indicating that when students experience trouble with word problems, they will examine the reason a child knows how to read certain words but not others, as well as the particular difficulty that they are faced with. The current assessment method reflects the principles of formative assessment, permitting specific intervention between identified students and their literacy inhibitors to content knowledge.

And Ms. Aisha, a literature-trained professional with experience in second language acquisition, also writes about the role that assessment plays in their adaptive practice:

“Personally, my approach is heavily influenced by the student's language proficiency. By engaging in a brief conversation, I can gauge their vocabulary level, accuracy in language usage, and their capacity for extended thinking. My teaching methods, discussions, and critical thinking exercises are tailored around these observations.”

This assertion reveals how teachers are conceptualizing the execution of curriculum to denote individualized routes over standardized dissemination, a way of thinking that denotes the sociocultural learning theory on the significance of responsive pedagogy. The effective diagnostic technique these instructors use does not only test the surface but delves into cognition and language mechanisms.

Cultural Relevance and Student Background

The teachers always emphasise the relevance of cultures in making curriculum content usable, especially to second language learners. They view the CBSE curriculum objectives using the perspective which is sensitive enough to recognise the necessity to construct bridges between the

cultural backgrounds of the students and the new knowledge: this is the notion of multicultural education brought forward by Banks.

This method has been clearly stated by Ms. Aisha, who handled diverse international students:

“Teaching second language speakers indeed requires specific strategies that differ from those used for native speakers. For younger students, particularly in grades one and two, it's beneficial to use comprehension materials that resonate with their cultural backgrounds. This familiarity helps them connect more easily with the content, making it simpler for them to interpret and think critically.”

This viewpoint shows a view of curriculum objectives which places a premium on connection and engagement rather than trying to stick to standardised tasks. It is evidenced by the gradual implementation, or the start with the culturally familiar contents and move to diversified ones, which indicates how these educators consider the implementation of curriculum to be a matter of cultural sensitivity and situational awareness. Instead of viewing curriculum as culture-free, like other groups, they realise that learning is specifically rooted in culture and that successful instruction has to recognise and use such cultural ties.

Scaffolding and Progressive Skill Development

Consistently, the teachers reported the use of a scaffolded instructional strategy that broadly involves a systematic instruction that moves in steps, from the basic to the advanced. The interpretation of curriculum implementation acknowledges that the learning objectives should be divided into small, manageable steps and sequenced, especially in the instruction of second language learners.

The progressive approach defined by Mr. Ahmed, who has gone through a transition from Montessori to CBSE primary science, shows how he translated this into his primary science:

“In science, especially with lower primary grades, it is crucial to start with the basics, considering the students' second language background. We begin with the alphabet and phonics, progressing to blending sounds, which is a key step in my classes.”

This assertion indicates the way teachers believe a harder look at curriculum objectives as hard and fast goals rather than objectives that also need well-designed pathways. Scaffolded approach is also applicable to reading comprehension, where Ms. Fatima, as someone having 15 years of experience teaching overseas, explained a gradual process:

“My strategy involves initially reading the passage to them, focusing on skimming and scanning to identify the main ideas. I then encourage students to read the passage again, after which I explain it word by word and paragraph by paragraph. For students who find it challenging, I am prepared to explain it multiple times.”

This gradual manner shows how teachers build on instruction according to students instead of anticipating the same progress. This circularity in instructions shows perspectives into the fact that the process of language learning needs more than one exposure and a variety of methods to be mastered.

Mr. Ahmed also explains more about how they deal with simplifying difficult language:

“What I've been doing is breaking down words into smaller syllables, making them more manageable for the students. This approach has been very effective in boosting the confidence of children, particularly those who were initially reluctant readers.”

This systematic simplification will assist the students to circumvent the language barrier to reach the content notions, as instructors exercise the art of juggling between accessibility and academicity, in achieving the literacy goals the curriculum has.

Differentiated Instruction and Flexible Grouping

Different teachers explain how they have been using the differentiated instruction strategies, which enable them to accommodate the diverse excellence rates in their learning classes. Such a practice represents a vision of curriculum goals being universally applicable to all students, but with unique pathways and schedules based on student readiness that were consistent with the differentiated instruction model.

As outlined by Ms. Fatima, this is an advanced process of differentiation, which makes use of peer learning:

“I also engage advanced learners to lead parts of the class, facilitating peer discussions and generating questions. Even with character analysis, I encourage participation from all levels of learners, particularly the middle achievers.”

The methodology not only considers a lower/higher ability level but also facilitates activities that cultivate productive learning conditions, where pupils inspire one another to develop, which is in line with the more knowledgeable other concept as coined by Vygotsky. Strategic application of peer scaffolding has shown how teachers perceive the curriculum in terms of facilitating collaborative and not competitive learning situations.

Ms. Priya explains that the concept of differentiation runs through the instructional interventions:

“For children who struggle, I delve into the reasons behind their challenges, whether it's issues with phonetics or other aspects of reading.”

She further explains the effectiveness of these interventions stating:

“I am usually able to check improvement after a week of this concentrated training and I can decide the level of sentence understanding that each child can easily grasp.”

This strategy shows how teachers define pacing of curriculum as being flexible and responsive to growth of students as opposed to be time-bound.

Contextual Teaching and Real-World Applications

The teachers constantly stress the need to relate the material included in curricula to real life practice and practical settings. This perception of curriculum goals acknowledges that learning should not be confined to classroom activities and learning situations to be real and permanent, due to an experience-based learning theory that was postulated by Dewey.

This pragmatic orientation is stated by Ms. Rashida with references to her background in nutrition and dietetics, which she applied in her teaching practice:

“My teaching approach is primarily influenced by the belief that reading is a lifelong skill essential for navigating a multicultural and interconnected world. Understanding and applying comprehension skills are crucial for practical purposes, like following instructions or travelling.”

This view portrays a vision of curriculum goals that are not limited to academic performance but to life preparation and usable reading as well. She has an unusual background that enables her to relate learning to practical applications of health and wellness, which helps to show how the varied experiences of teachers can contribute to their understanding of curriculum.

This application-oriented orientation is a major form in which these teachers grasp curriculum aims not in the abstract as academic activities in and of themselves, but as a means to an end of successful operation in the real multilingual and multicultural world. Their directions indicate that they perceive the end goal of the curriculum as shaping competent citizens who can transfer their learning to other contexts and not merely prove competent learning in the classroom.

Grade-Level Adaptation and Evolving Strategies

The teachers are aware that the teaching methods that are adapted to these students have to change in the process of their acquisition of new classes. This view was a response to curriculum as a developmental continuum that demands a changing method to approach the curriculum, and no longer a fixed series of grade-specific goals.

This changing approach is well conceptualised by Ms. Sarah, who has extensive experience in primary to tertiary levels of studying:

“Strategies effective in lower grades may not work as well in higher grades. Often, I find myself creating unique techniques tailored to specific classroom situations. This is especially true when working with texts or classes that have lower inference skills, where different scaffolding methods may be necessary.”

In stating this, educators demonstrate an understanding of curriculum implementation as a process, in which active professional ingenuity and change are necessary as opposed to a process of formula use. This understanding that the special techniques have to be developed in special cases shows that there is an elevated level of professional judgment.

This view on grade-level progression indicates that these teachers view curriculum goals as spiraling and cumulative and each grade builds on and extends what was learned in prior grades instead of bringing in the completely new material. The approaches they use in the form of adaptation are aimed at making sure that the students obtain more and more complex skills keeping the students under proper support at every step.

However, teachers reiterate the need to have a strong language background before going on to pursue higher curriculum goals. This reading acknowledges that knowledge of the language is key

to tapping all other subject areas in the curriculum, which include basic interpersonal communication skills and cognitive academic language proficiency.

This dilemma is well put forward by Ms. Sarah:

“Teaching English to students whose first language isn't English requires distinct adjustments. The primary challenge lies in building a solid foundation in English for students who lack prior exposure.”

This assertion exposes the level at which teachers make language development a precondition before allowing students to utilise other curriculum contents as a distinct strand of instruction. The study established that a high-level interpretation of adaptive instruction is not merely making things easier, but rearranging the methods to reach students at their level of linguistic competence.

Ms. Sarah explained it:

“Teachers need to be acutely aware of where their students stand in terms of language comprehension and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. This understanding is essential for effective language teaching, as it guides teachers in choosing the right methods and materials to support their students' language development.”

Professional Judgment and Context-Specific Decision Making

The teachers constantly noted of professional judgment as a way of them coming up with locally situated decisions of how curriculum goals are to be constructed and applied in their own classroom settings. This indicated an understanding of the curriculum as a framework in which professional judgment should be applied as an alternative to the code to be read.

Ms. Sarah remarked: 'More often, I find that I devise my own techniques responding to certain situations in the classroom.' This utterance indicates the sense of educators towards the

implementation of curriculum as a problem-solving exercise, which involves solving problems in their contexts and not in a uniform way.

Likewise, Ms. Aisha discussed an adjustment of methods on the basis of observing students: My discussions, teaching methods and critical thinking exercises revolve around these observations. This personalised approach is a somewhat advanced understanding of curriculum outcomes that is more concerned with the needs of students than it is with strict adherence to methodology.

4.3.2 Concept 2: Professional Development Impact on Teaching Practices

Professional growth has become a catalytic force in the progressive pattern of instruction in a variety of learning circumstances. The interviewed teachers also made consistent emphasis on the ways instructive strategies have been developed in the past and how this has been achieved in the classrooms with the help of formal training, peer partnership, and individual research. Each of their stories leaves a common image of teachers striving to make constant advancement and adjustment towards the benefit of their student's development in terms of literacy.

Commitment to Continuous Learning

The study established that the teachers were well committed to continuous professional development through different ways, reflecting the principles of lifelong learning. Ms. Rashida's commitment was demonstrated by her willingness to switch from nutrition to education, and this dedication was further manifested in her frequent interaction with pedagogical studies:

“I regularly engage in researching instructional practices for teaching reading comprehension, usually on a weekly basis. I'm part of an educators' group, the Centre for National Teacher Recognition in India, and I've subscribed to several educational newsletters, including Smart Classroom Management. These resources provide me with updates and innovative ideas, which I often share with my colleagues.”

This level of commitment to keeping abreast of the developments in the field of education demonstrates how actively teachers are trying to expand their practice even beyond their official obligations. Further, the mention of exchanging ideas with peers evidences the knowledge of professional development as a group activity, not an individual one, which proves the theory of communities of practice by Wenger.

Likewise, considering her 15 years of experience accumulated abroad, Ms. Fatima outlined a systematic way of professional development:

“I dedicate time twice a week to research new reading strategies like tic-tac-toe and roll-a-dice activities related to comprehension passages.”

This constant investment in the process of finding new methods proves how professional growth is embedded in the teaching practice, instead of being a one-time exercise. The way new methods, such as playing tic-tac-toe and dice-rolling activities, are narrowed down displays an attempt by the teachers to find new inventive and invigorating ways, breaking out of the conventional methods of teaching.

However, based on her extensive cross-curricular experience, Ms. Sarah admitted that amidst competing demands, it was hard to remain committed to professional growth.

“As a teacher, I recognise the importance of continually updating and refining teaching methods, so I make it a priority to allocate time for research and reflection. It's a necessary part of the job to stay informed and adaptable, especially when working with students of varying levels and needs.”

The focus on research and reflection as a required element of an occupation and not an optional practice indicates how these teachers perceive professional growth as an effective part of teaching practice.

The Role of Formal Training and Workshops

Organised professional development programs have had a significant impact on the way teachers teach, and their participants have acknowledged the compound effect of structured learning chances. Mr. Ahmed, who started teaching in Dubai in 2019, outlined the revolutionary effect of participating in workshops:

“Since joining this school in 2019, I've participated in numerous workshops focused on reading strategies, decoding, scaffolding, and integrating literacy skills across various subjects. The support and training provided by the management have been instrumental in my development.”

The fact that this training represents a comprehensive experience that covers decoding, scaffolding, and integration across the curriculum proves that a systematic approach to professional enhancement has the potential to alter teaching practice on a multi-dimensional trajectory at once.

Ms. Rashida further noted the importance of structured training programs, too:

“Professional development and training sessions have been instrumental in my growth as a teacher, especially in the area of reading comprehension. They have provided me with various strategies and tools that I have successfully applied in my classes.”

The importance of the effective use of the learned strategies demonstrates the ways good professional development helps to eliminate the gap between theory and practice, as practice becomes the way in which a teacher can apply new approaches with certainty.

In the case of Ms. Priya, who was exploring the transition to teaching mathematics, after science, literacy-oriented training had significant consequences on her new field of study:

“The impact of literacy-focused training on my teaching of mathematics has been tremendous. Before this training, my approach and even my accent were quite different.

Learning about phonetics, sentence structures, and the appropriate usage of language elements has greatly enhanced my teaching methods in math.”

This assertion highlights the significance of specific professional development in transforming instruction, especially when it assists teachers to deliver literacy teaching in a range of courses. The inclusion of accent change allows for a thorough assessment of how well this change has been implemented: not only in the pedagogical processes, but in the delivery processes as well.

Collaborative Learning Communities

The social constructivist aspect of professional growth was also powerful in the reflection of the teachers, where most of them emphasised the fact that knowledge and strategies used are shared and developed through collegial dialogue.

This is the importance of this dimension of collaboration, as highlighted by Rashida:

“I make it a point to share these experiences and the positive outcomes with my colleagues in the primary reading team.”

This habit of sharing effective practices assists in establishing the culture of making pedagogical knowledge communal as opposed to being individualistic. The mentioning of a primary reading team presupposes the formal design of the process that promotes working-together professional learning.

The overall attendance to professional development was the point that Ms. Sarah considered in their school:

“My colleagues also exhibit a similar openness to various strategies, understanding that no single method is universally effective. This adaptability in our approach reflects our collective commitment to meeting the diverse needs of our students.”

This implies a collaborative professional learning context in which the strategies are constantly shared and mutually updated. The admission that there is no universal way of doing things indicates advanced knowledge of the complexity of educational theory and efficacy of adaptive techniques.

The value of collegial support is even greater, as Ms. Priya states:

“Absolutely, I believe professional development in literacy has been crucial, especially when dealing with students new to English. Thankfully, I received tremendous support from my colleagues and supervisor.”

The appreciation of the involvement of both colleagues and supervisor is clearly indicative of how relationships between professionals support a successful realisation of new practices, especially when the professionals move between situations or new subjects.

The Integration of Experience and Research

Teachers explained how their teaching is a combination of formal instruction, research, and experience in the classroom and a synthesis. It was this combination that gave Fatima the confidence in their teaching:

“My 15 years of experience have been instrumental in honing these strategies. While I learned some during my teacher education, many were developed and refined in my previous schools. Strategies like Vipers were particularly impactful, enhancing my ability to teach comprehension and critical thinking skills.”

The mention of the strategy of reading comprehension called a Viper shows how a teacher can implement and modify the example of evidence-based practices in her teaching practice with particular experience. The evolutionary process of the development of strategies demonstrates the process whereby professional growth manifests itself in terms of the combining of various sources of learning to advance over time.

Ms. Fatima listed the multiple components that shape the style of her teaching:

“My teaching practices are influenced by a combination of factors, including the supportive environment and training provided by the school, my personal research, and the continuous professional development I receive. This blend of factors helps improve my reading strategies and overall teaching approach.”

Similarly, Mr. Ahmed noted:

“Additionally, my personal efforts in research and exploring resources like the National Academy and other educational websites have furthered my skills. It's this combination of professional development, personal research, and practical experience that has enhanced my teaching abilities.”

These assertions emphasise that successful professional development incorporates a variety of learning styles as opposed to locating one source of knowledge.

International Standards and Global Perspectives

The cross-national influence of educational standards on professional priorities came out in more than one presentation and illustrates how national benchmarks can be used to influence local practice. Ms. Sarah noted:

“Our participation in competitive exams like PIRLS (Grade 4) and ASSET (Grades 3 to 9) that include a range of texts for comprehension underlines this.”

Such an appeal to the international evaluations exemplifies how world educational standards shape priorities of professional learning and teaching focus. The reference to PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) is specifically indicative of the international level of literacy awareness and the necessity to supply students with international assessment models.

From the perspective of Ms. Priya, she noticed that international professional development stands in stark contrast to the same topic in the domestic context:

“The main difference lies in the approach to training. In India, the training tends to be more generalised, often covering common topics for all teachers. However, in my current international setting, the professional development is more specialised and varied, focusing on specific subjects, sectors, and topics.”

Comparatively, therefore, the context of professional development produces its content and delivery, and an international setting may provide more focused and constructed learning that even satisfies the precise requirements of teachers and students better.

Evolution of Teaching Approaches

The reflection by teachers showed that professional development has also facilitated a gradual change in how teaching was carried out over the years in support of Fullan's change theory in education. Ms. Aisha observed:

“The teaching approach, particularly for English and developing comprehension skills, has significantly evolved over the past decade. Teachers today are more updated and quicker to understand new methods and strategies, especially those who have undergone recent training in teaching English. This change is a notable improvement from the teaching approaches observed 10 years ago.”

This observation points out that professional growth has brought about an increasingly dynamic transformation in teaching models to a greater extent, placing an emphasis on the implementation of critical thinking and problem-solving in language teaching. The change is part of the broader trend of leaving rote learning and moving toward student-centred and active, cognitively stimulating pedagogy, following constructive learning theory.

Building Teaching Confidence

Professional growth plays a vital role in the development of confidence among teachers, especially when they are to undergo teaching transitions or work under difficult teaching situations. Mr. Ahmed pointed to this connection explicitly:

“My involvement in literacy-focused training has significantly boosted my confidence as a science teacher. While I have always been confident, transitioning to primary education presented its own set of challenges.”

This implies that specific professional preparation assists teachers in negotiating pedagogical shifts in ways that enable teachers with tools and strategies to accommodate new teaching situations or subject matter. The recognition of difficulties despite earlier assurance proves the level of specificity that is necessary in various learning environments.

Interpreting the CBSE Curriculum and Overarching Objectives

The responses given by the teachers indicated that they constantly read and applied the CBSE curriculum in terms of their understanding of the curriculum as it is applied in their professional development. Although they did not specifically comment on curriculum frameworks, their remarks demonstrated how the course of targeted, professional development has influenced how they have conceptualised curricular aims, especially as they pertain to literacy development along subject boundaries.

Some of the teachers described the idea of teaching literacy skills as an integrated component of mathematics and science classrooms, implying one of the curriculum interpretations whereby transecting relations among disciplines would be of high value. Ms. Priya's remarks regarding the changes that literacy training brought to the way they taught mathematics indicate that the CBSE

curriculum may be seen as a way of looking at integration between different subjects instead of teaching each discipline in silos.

The recurrent references to critical thinking and techniques of understanding (like Vipera, as referred to by Ms. Fatima) make it clear that teachers are seeing the purpose of the curriculum as going beyond simple literacy to the broader learning of subject matter through higher-order thinking. This is in line with the recertification of CBSE to respond to competency-based education and the 21st Century skills.

The fact that Ms. Sarah brings up international assessment frameworks such as PIRLS and ASSET demonstrates how those teachers are anchoring their perception of CBSE curriculum in a global educational context and are relying on international benchmarks in order to interpret curricular goals.

4.3.3 Concept 3: Challenges with Diverse Learner Abilities: Teachers' Interpretations of CBSE Curriculum in Diverse Classrooms

Most of the teachers in various learning environments regularly indicated that meeting the different learning abilities was an overall challenge in their teaching process. This trend came out so clearly when it comes to reading comprehension, mathematics or science instructions. The analysis of the responses of the participants shows that there is a subtle realisation of diversity as it unfolds in their classrooms and how they perceive curriculum goals in terms of equity.

Maintaining Consistency Through Differentiated Expectations

Ms. Aisha, whose background is in literature and who has had significant experience working with students learning English as a second language, attending grades 1-5, explained how she could balance between having very similar but at the same time differentiated expectations:

“I maintain consistency in differentiation across all students. When posing a question, I expect answers that reflect varying levels of thought and understanding. For instance, a top-performing student might provide ten relevant and logical points due to their ability to think extensively. In contrast, a lower-performing student might provide five points, but they must reach this level with appropriate guidance.”

This mindset is what experienced teachers, such as Ms. Aisha, who has experience in learning about the requirements in early childhood education, realise that curriculum requirements are not meant to be a set of fixed standards all learners are to achieve equally. Rather, they act as flexible templates, where equity of achievement is possible. The fact that she focuses on bringing every student to an acceptable level with guidance is a more nuanced view of the CBSE curriculum goals, as an understanding that it is flexible to various needs of students, and not one that gives flexibility as an option. This solution questions the deficit views regarding the student capacity consideration and, instead, gives differentiation an associated role and status of professional practice rather than an accommodation.

Having crossed borders to work in Dubai, substituting the teaching subject of physics in India with mathematics in grades 3-5, Ms. Priya, a physical science graduate, talked more about this challenge in the context of cross-cultural adjustment:

“Integrating literacy into math teaching presents several challenges, primarily due to the varied student abilities. We have students with special needs and learning difficulties, each requiring different levels of support.”

The way that she considers diversity due to her experience in both Indian and international educational settings requires differentiated approaches without contradicting the main curriculum demands. This observation is rather important to make, especially taking into account the fact that

the classrooms of Dubai usually represent a mixture of students with various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The teachers in question are forced to deal not only with the diversity in the field of education but also with cultural and linguistic diversity within the framework of a single curriculum.

Categorising and Responding to Learner Differences

The most striking trend was in the way in which teachers group students in order to support different ability levels. Instead of perceiving it as opposed to the idea of inclusive education, they consider it a kind of pedagogical measure to achieve the proper support within the curricular structure.

Ms. Priya explained her tiered approach to student support:

“For high-achieving students, comprehension and problem-solving proceed smoothly. However, middle achievers often struggle with reading comprehension; they need additional guidance to understand and then solve the problems.”

Her experience of teaching in a multicultural setting in Dubai informs this kind of categorisation system and is based on a practical view of the ways in which such diverse abilities may be demonstrated in the process of teaching mathematics. Her approach therefore proves that teachers should always deal with the contradiction between a consideration of individual differences and preserving common movement toward curriculum objectives.

However, to work with students with significant challenges, Ms. Priya realised that even the simplest of things need special approaches:

“For those with language difficulties or slower learners, even basic problems like ' $3 + 4$ ' can be challenging. They may require repeated explanation and demonstration to understand that ' $4 + 3$ ' represents the same concept.”

This observation demonstrates how cognition complicates mathematical comprehension when language barriers are combined with differences in the ability to process information. Ms. Priya,

recording the commutative property of addition, which is a fundamental mathematical concept, involves a lot of scaffolded learning for some students, exemplifying how the purpose of the curriculum ought to be disassembled and assembled using a variety of pedagogies. Her identification of the need to explain and demonstrate repeatedly is a threat to efficiency-based instructional models, which recommend pacing regularity.

Ms. Fatima has 15 years of experience as a veteran educator working in the international setting of Dubai, who focused on 3-4-grade reading comprehension and presented a comprehensive tiered approach which preserves the integrity of the curriculum and takes into account different needs:

“My teaching philosophy leans towards a holistic approach. While performance is important, I prioritise catering to different types of learners in my class. I start by engaging advanced learners and then progressively involve others, including those at the basic level. By encouraging and supporting all students, even if they make mistakes, I help boost the confidence of lower achievers, gradually bringing them up to a higher level.”

The fifteen years of experience that Ms. Fatima has had have created a more refined perception of curriculum objectives as destinations, as opposed to standardised routes. The strategic progression model she shows demonstrates how experienced teachers adopt subtle strategies in reaching their pedagogical bottom lines that respect the classroom needs and learners as well. The importance of supporting and encouraging all students, who may need to make mistakes, evidences an apparent understanding of the necessity of error-making during the learning process, especially to those students who might otherwise feel negatively towards the established academic goals.

Language Proficiency and Second Language Learners

One aspect of diversity that emerged conspicuously through the responses of the participants involved language proficiency, especially with reference to second language learners. The CBSE

curriculum objectives are viewed by the teachers that language is a great barrier to understanding in all subjects.

This challenge, identified by Ms. Sarah, an expert in teaching English, who has experience in grades two and the tertiary level and has taught both CBSE and ICSE curricula, is the most crucial:

“In our school, we've identified that reading comprehension is a significant challenge, especially for second language speakers. Analysis using tools like QLA has shown that while children can understand basic concepts, their comprehension skills often do not progress adequately as they move to higher grades.”

The Question Level Analysis (QLA) reference of Ms. Sarah indicates how veteran teachers can use assessment results to make informed judgments about gaps in the curriculum and alter their approaches in response to those gaps. She is very specific in her interaction with native and non-native English speakers, and this gives her a very unique insight into the influence of language proficiency on the progress made academically at various grade levels. Such data-driven perception also predetermines her interpretation of CBSE goals, disclosing the tension between curriculum demands and schedules of linguistic development.

Ms. Aisha added more details about the cognitive processes of second language learners:

“Considering the challenge of catering to students who often translate from their native language to English, the strategies we use are comprehensive and well-suited. These methods help students focus on key points, understand vocabulary contextually, and identify specific language elements like nouns or pronouns.”

Such an observation demonstrates that Ms. Aisha is conscious of a mental translation process that most students have to pass through- a cognitive load that heavily influences the efficiency of learning. By noting that students are actually in a process of translating their native language to

English, evidence is seen of her understanding that second language learning is a complicated cognitive process, which should also be accommodated pedagogically. The aims of the curriculum are the same, but the means to their achievement have to address these linguistic and cognitive processes.

Specifically, highlighted the dynamic nature of language diversity:

“Integrating literacy into science presents real challenges, particularly with students who have limited language proficiency. Each year, we receive students with varying language backgrounds, so adjusting to their needs is a continuous challenge.”

The particular observation by Mr. Ahmed highlights the importance of the fact that the dynamics of demographic changes in the international schools of Dubai obligate constant readjustment regarding the interpretation of how the goals of the curriculum can be achieved. His experience with Montessori education, where students are treated differently in their individual educational goals, is probably the reason why he cares so much about the diverse language background of students in science teaching. The term continuous challenge indicates that linguistic diversity is not a one-time problem, but a reality that can be met by adaptive teaching practices.

Ms. Sarah also reported about the impact of proficiency on her choice of decisions regarding the instruction:

“My teaching approach is largely influenced by the varied proficiency levels of my students. For those with lower proficiency, the focus is on foundational skills like pronunciation, syllable understanding, and reading fluency. Diagnostic test feedback also plays a crucial role in shaping the strategies I use for different student groups.”

The professionalism of how she approaches language proficiency differences is systematically explained. This is how practicing teachers come up with responsive pedagogical frameworks. The

emphasis on skills such as pronunciation, syllable knowledge, and reading fluency shows that there have been an appreciation that higher-order English cognition needs good linguistic foundations. The method implies that the use of curriculum should be time-flexible, where a deep, established course can be involved before proceeding to the more abstract goals.

Innovative Instructional Strategies within Curriculum Framework

The participants illustrated effective ideas of meeting the various learner capabilities and at the same time adhering to the aims of the curriculum. Their creative approaches demonstrate the way they perceive the curriculum as the acting document, which provides the freedom of methods.

More specifically, teacher Ms. Rashida, a nutritionist and dietitian by training, brought in the experience of motherhood and experiences with newspaper education programs, recalls how there appeared to be a certain problem with teaching poetry and how she resolved it:

“One notable challenge I faced was introducing poetry to first-grade students. Transitioning from story paragraphs to poems can be confusing for them, as they find poems to be incomplete or unclear compared to the stories they're used to.”

The specialised background of Ms. Rashida, which comprises scientific training and experience in parenting and educational outreach, offers her an inimitable look at the process that children follow when reading various types of text. Her point is that students think that poems are incomplete or unclear, as compared to stories, and that they are used to exemplify higher-order comprehension of genre expectations in impacting reading comprehension. This understanding indicates that the curriculum task on appreciating poetry should take into consideration the previous student experiences with literature.

Then she went on explaining her innovative attitude:

“To tackle this, I started using a comparison approach. I would present a paragraph from a story alongside a poem and have the students read both. Then, we would discuss the differences in their structure and clarity.”

The comparative method is one creative way Ms. Rashida envisages the attainment of curriculum goals in poetry understanding. Instead of a given order of teaching, she identified the cognitive distance the students were in and devised a strategy to fill the gap. This action shows how instructors can respect the intentions of the curriculum in the processes of reacting commensurately when adjusting methods to the concerns of certain difficulties.

Another important strategic way of approaching diversity without altering the curriculum was the deployment of peer learning. Mr. Ahmed explained:

“While higher achievers can benefit from group reading, with lower-level students, I prefer to pair them with higher-level peers. This collaborative approach helps them overcome challenges in reading and writing.”

The strategic way Mr. Ahmed utilised peer grouping as done by him is a testimony to his Montessori background, which holds mixed-age groupings and peer learning as a basis. His strategy utilises the classroom diversity as an educational advantage in place of focusing on it as a problem of management. According to this perspective, squaring curriculum goals could be met by social learning modes that would be beneficial to both tutors and the tutees.

Ms. Fatima gave a detailed plan about her progressive engagement:

“I start with modelling the reading process myself, then involve advanced learners for guided reading to check their pronunciation and comprehension. This is followed by including mid-level and lower-level achievers in the reading process. By gradually involving all levels of learners, I help them progress in their reading skills.”

The gradual release of responsibility approach of her shows how experienced teachers reflect the objectives of the curriculum through the eyes of scaffolded learning. The logical steps of teacher modelling, moving to peer involvement and then applying it on an individual basis signify an advanced level of knowledge when it comes to the way learning happens within different classrooms. This strategy indicates that the curriculum implementation has to be modelled as a recursive process and not necessarily in a progressive sequence.

Growth Mindset and Equity-Focused Curriculum Interpretation

One major idea in the interpretation of the CBSE curriculum by the teachers is that teachers believe that all students will improve all the time. This growth mindset notion influences their understanding of curriculum goals as not absolute standards to which some students may never achieve, but rather as those that can and must be achieved due to proper support.

Ms. Fatima asserts that:

“I believe that with consistent practice, even the lower achievers can improve significantly, approaching the level of their peers in pronunciation and comprehension.”

This is a representation of the equity-centred understanding of Ms. Fatima about the objectives of the curriculum in that the aim is to enable all students to achieve high levels instead of being content with the preconceived setting of limits. Her expertise of fifteen years has clearly developed an ideology of belief system that sees the possibility of students being molded and not set by virtue of their abilities. This view opposes deficit thinking with regard to the capabilities of students, and it sees a teacher equally as a force of change and not as an architect of talent distribution.

This developmental view was repeated in Ms. Aisha's approach to her differentiation process, as she kept high expectations and increased awareness of the varying starting positions:

“A top-performing student might provide ten relevant and logical points due to their ability to think extensively. In contrast, a lower-performing student might provide five points, but it's crucial they reach this level with appropriate guidance.”

The focus on achieving the necessary levels through guidance indicates that Ms. Aisha thinks that any student can achieve progress with the right guidance. Her methodology implies taking a more fluid view of curriculum objectives, viewing them instead as goals that can be approached by a variety of non-standard means as opposed to standardised means of achieving them.

Balancing Consistency and Flexibility in Curriculum Implementation

The conflict related to the need for consistency of standards and the attempt to offer flexibility to various learners was identified as another central point of teachers in the interpretation of the curriculum. Instead of considering this as a paradox, respondents outlined considerate strategies towards reconciliation between these forces that only appear to contradict.

Ms. Aisha explained this balance in the following perceptible way: "I am consistent in differentiation to all students." This is apparently contradictory and discloses a very intelligent perception that uniformity in education does not imply exactly similar teaching or expectations, but rather exactly the same level of challenge and support that each student situation requires.

Ms. Sarah explained how this well-balanced approach is informed by assessment data:

“Analysis using tools like QLA has shown that while children can understand basic concepts, their comprehension skills often do not progress adequately as they move to higher grades.”

This method of diagnosis introduces planned flexibility under the unmoving standard of the curriculum expectations. Ms. Sarah analyses the usage of formal assessment tools included in her

efforts to show how data-driven decision making can contribute to consistency, as well as differentiation.

In the case of Ms. Priya, this balance can be shown in the sense that even basic mathematical terms may need a different explanation:

“They may require repeated explanation and demonstration to understand that ' $4 + 3$ ' represents the same concept.”

The curriculum goal is fixed, learning the basics of addition properties; however, the ways to achieve this goal remain open and multidirectional. This solution implies that curriculum fidelity should be assessed based on the learning outcomes and not the instruction consistency.

4.3.4 Concept 4: Multimodal and Inclusive Approaches:

Teachers' Interpretations of the CBSE Curriculum Educators in various international settings showed a sensitive use of a variety of teaching resources, aids and methods, indicating their subtle understanding of the multisensory learning philosophy of the CBSE curriculum.

These teachers showed elaborate pedagogical logic during our dialogues and not necessarily adherence to curriculum advice. The feedback gave a clear realisation that different learners need a different approach to teaching, and in the case of Dubai, a multicultural educational system, learners have diverse academic backgrounds in terms of languages, cultures and exposure to education.

A nutrition and dietetics graduate turned teacher, Ms. Rashida has had experience on the side of newspaper education programs, emphasising the importance of utilising the traditional teaching tools whilst being in a digital learning environment that is becoming ever more prominent. Her strategy is a strategic combination of the traditional and contemporary tools of pedagogy. To describe how we selected our resources, she stated:

Present-day children enjoy a lot of information sources at their disposal, and yet, papers are still very relevant in the teaching process. Newspapers and books are more tangible to the children and make them concentrate in a manner that cannot necessarily be achieved using digital media.

The views expressed by Ms. Rashida, more so on the "tangible nature" of Newspapers and books, evoke a greater pedagogical insight into the knowledge of the kinesthetic and the tactile modality of learning that cannot be replicated fully in the digital format. Such a reading of the multimodal demands of the CBSE curriculum shows the ways in which more experienced teachers can combine all the recent thinking about education and translate this into classroom practices. It is this understanding of the process of learning that Maria Montessori, an educational theorist, called the abstract approach, wherein concrete handling of objects forms the cognitive contact and pathways, which are not necessarily formed with purely digital interactions.

Further, Ms. Rashida's position is critical since she acknowledges that when using a non-official literacy activity (reading newspapers), one should consider its social and educational potential that should not be limited to a short-term instructional goal. The teaching philosophy that she offers implies that the implementation of the curriculum must not renounce the effective pedagogical tools in the name of technological novelty, but formulate the essential synergy between the traditional and the modern way of teaching.

Therefore, newspaper as a means of teaching greatly improves students' learning outcomes in terms of language comprehension ability and critical thinking ability. We could use the newspaper images and may ask students to imagine and share with others certain types of situations that could arise with the picture. This activity not only honed their intellectual capacity to think out of the box and expound on what they thought, but it also made them understand other points of view.

The practice is an indication of the ways in which instructors are addressing the curriculum requirement of critical thinking and language equality by being imaginative in their utilisation of the world outside materials and extending beyond the use of a textbook to instill a real-life practice with the texts.

Although Ms. Rashida has focused on the use of alternative materials, Ms. Aisha, a literature graduate who focuses on second language learners in grades 1-5, wrote about a more conservative yet equally effective means of resource selection. Using her vast experience in early childhood education, she stated:

“In my teaching practice, I primarily utilise the school curriculum as a base for instructing reading comprehension. I find that using textbooks as a primary resource for comprehension tasks is effective. This approach allows for a comfortable and familiar context for both students and teachers.”

The process by which Ms. Aisha approaches her instruction points to a more balanced approach to literacy learning that acknowledges the importance of both systematic and structured methods of teaching as well as the more creative methods of teaching. Her focus on familiar and comfortable context depicts advanced knowledge about the theory of cognitive load that is especially important to work with second language learners who react positively to predictable frameworks of instructions during the development of advanced literacy skills. Such a practical interpretation of the curriculum requirements aligns with the view that, in effective teaching, sometimes it would be necessary to work in forged settings instead of the need to continue searching for ways of doing things differently.

Multimodal Strategies for Diverse Learners

The responses by teachers showed advanced knowledge on the use of multimodal in a manner that can support or cater to the needs of different learners, in line with the goals of the curriculum. The implications of the CBSE structure show that there is an awareness that in order to be effective, instruction of understanding should appeal to the students through many sensory avenues.

Ms. Priya, a physical science graduate who teaches mathematics to 3 to 5-year-olds in Dubai, explained a strategy using intentional and active use of multiple modalities to avoid language barriers. In discussing with her how best to accommodate all learners, she noted:

"Students often come to realisations on their own, understanding concepts through visuals even without language."

The multimodal strategy provided by Ms. Priya squarely complies with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) concepts, in this case, the part of the framework focusing on multiple representations and engagement. The case that she makes is that students can gain understanding when they see visuals, and that this often takes place even when there is no language involved.

Such a strategy is especially meaningful in the international school setting in Dubai, where Ms. Priya has to come across students whose linguistic capabilities vary, yet whose visual-spatial intelligence could be formidable. The fact that she understands that various aspects of content must be taught differently shows sophisticated pedagogical reasoning: "As an example with addition problems, students respond to manipulatives, but they struggle in word problems."

This fact demonstrates high levels of cognitive sophistication. Research reveals that word problems entail not just mathematical cognition but linguistic decoding, cultural context reading, and abstract thinking, which would categorise as higher-order cognition processes that demand the application of more than one skill at a time. The differential approach that Priya recommends implies that

teachers are not implementing multimodal instructional delivery in a blanket decision-making process; they are critically investigating what elements of the curriculum stand to benefit based on them.

Mr. Ahmed, who started his current school in 2019, explained some of the methods he uses to facilitate reading comprehension, which indicate his experience with diverse learners. In one of our talks concerning the practical strategies, he explained:

“I use techniques like pointing to words while reading and encouraging students to do the same, which helps them track and understand the text better. We also use flashcards and labelling activities to develop vocabulary.”

These are concrete plans, which are interpretations of how propositions of curriculum literacy objectives may be rendered in classrooms that include second language students and show how teachers may interpret general curricular purposes by finding specific instructional practices.

Support of visual learning integration was identified as another prevalent theme among the respondents. Mr. Ahmed expounded on his multimodal course:

Picture comprehension plays a significant role, too. When they see images related to the content, it helps them understand and retain information. Listening to stories or news related to the subject matter also significantly enhances their comprehension skills.

This specification of multi-sensory teaching represents a model of curriculum intention, apprehending that cognition relies on a set of several types of information processing. Notably, teachers also thought that multimodal methods can be used to achieve more than a single curriculum aim. This manner not only makes their understanding of the subject they are involved in learning, listening to science, but also affects their general language proficiency, making the entire process a bit more interactive and practical, as Mr. Ahmed observes when addressing the question of science

vocabulary instruction. This observation points to the fact that teachers conceive curriculum areas as interdependent, not independent, with strategies that facilitate content knowledge, also developing language proficiency.

Student Agency and Engagement through Choice

Some respondents have interpreted the curriculum requirements, forcing them to engage students by giving them learner autonomy and choice, which implies that even CBSE objectives are being interpreted not only according to the content but also in terms of student-centred approaches to teaching.

One of them is Ms. Fatima, an experienced teacher (15 years) who teaches 3-4 grades in a grade reading environment with strategies that are expected to include student choice. She described when we were chatting about the new ways of teaching. The use of choice boards by Ms. Fatima is a method that places students on the receiving end of knowledge rather than as passive subjects who are fed with a pre-conceived form of knowledge. Agency in curriculum implementation. In her conception of curriculum implementation, she acknowledges that both engagement and understanding can benefit significantly by giving students agency in the learning experience, referring to the social constructivist principles which form the foundation of contemporary curriculum models.

One of the critical ways of engaging students more became the implementation of technology. Ms. Fatima mentioned: Teachers of such disciplines may also apply such measures, such as technology-based tools, such as Kahoot, Socrative, and Nearpod, to ensure that the learning situation will be even more interactive and engaging. Such an expression reflects the fact that the teachers have realised that the curriculum goals of engagement and interactivity can be successfully achieved by means of digital tools that allow getting feedback and being involved in active work immediately.

The choices of Fatima in terms of the interactive platforms seem to imply some knowledge about the fact that the incorporation of technology must help in improving the pedagogical objectives, instead of merely digitising the old systems.

Curriculum Evolution and Text Complexity

The response of teachers also showed a sense of understanding of how the CBSE curriculum has also changed to deal with more complex and versatile text types, which obviously led to the change in instructions. This implies that teachers are not identifying the curriculum to be a fixed entity but an evolving structure that is mutable to dynamic requirements in education.

Ms. Sarah is a master English teacher who has taught students at the grade 2 to tertiary levels with both CBSE and ICSE systems, and when we were discussing the evolution of curriculum, she explained it thus:

The curriculum increasingly incorporates complex reading materials that require advanced linguistic skills, such as interpreting graphs and making inferences... By the end of the curriculum, a variety of passages, both factual and fictional, are introduced.

This observation proves that educators are even monitoring the changes in the school curriculum and adjusting their teaching plans to meet the growing importance of multimodal literacy involving visual and graphical data.

An integrated plan regarding text choice was explained by Ms. Fatima, who paid much attention to keeping up to date with pedagogical innovations:

A strategic approach to text selection was described by Ms. Fatima, who emphasised staying current with pedagogical developments:

By exploring new sites and strategies, I keep abreast of the latest teaching skills that can be implemented in the classroom. For example, using scripts from Shakespeare or poems by William Blake offers a higher level of challenge to students.

This answer would tend toward a reading of curriculum goals that both appreciates exposure to canonical texts and embraces newer methods of teaching, a mixture of old and new content in education.

Ms. Sarah referred to the mentions of the early exposure to a variety of text types in terms of developmental consciousness:

Introducing a mix of fictional and factual content early on, including passages with data and graphs, is key. This gradual progression helps prepare students for the more intricate reading and interpretative skills required in grades 9 to 12.

The given developmental view suggests that educators are comprehending curriculum standards in the framework of a long-range sequence of skills building, not as grade-level expectations. Ms. Sarah is learning with an eye towards the realisation of the stages of reading construction.

The fact that various texts demand various forms of comprehension has been demonstrated in the thought of Ms. Sarah when she said:

The understanding of these texts has matured in the sense that there is increased sophistication and a multifaceted approach to reading comprehension that is more dependent on the materials being read.

The implication of this statement is that teachers know the curriculum demands flexible implementation of comprehension strategies based on text type and purpose, in a departure from one-size-fits-all strategies to the teaching of reading.

4.3.5 Concept 5: Cultural Contextuality and Adaptability in Teaching

The cultural elements in teaching were introduced as a key idea in the discussed question with all the interviewed candidates to show how teachers in the international schools understand and localise the CBSE curriculum in different cultural environments. In the analysis, the views of Ms. Rashida, Ms. Aisha, Ms. Priya, Mr. Ahmed, Ms. Sarah, and Ms. Fatima have been collated, and a unified picture of the way teachers go about addressing cultural and contextual complexities regarding the process of using curriculum guidelines is presented.

Cultural Familiarity as a Pedagogical Foundation

Educators have constantly stressed the importance of taking into consideration the cultural backgrounds of students as a way of effectively teaching them. It is a more advanced model of thinking and comprehension as it utilizes developmental changes in understanding things based on the well-understandable contexts to a wider scope or better global contexts.

Based on her background in literature and experience working with young learners in the early childhood stages, Ms. Aisha defined the reasons why a high cultural resonance is important, especially to younger learners. She told me about the following during our talk on the matter of culturally responsive teaching:

For younger students, particularly in grades one and two, it's beneficial to use comprehension materials that resonate with their cultural backgrounds. This familiarity helps them connect more easily with the content, making it simpler for them to interpret and think critically. Once students are comfortable with these initial steps, we can gradually introduce them to a broader, global range of materials.

The scaffolded instruction on cultural information that Ms. Aisha takes applies directly to respect the cultures of the students without limiting their world views. She takes their approach to learning

or instruction. Starting with the culture that they are accustomed to, the teachers establish the base of comfort and familiarity and then later broaden the horizon of the students to adjust it to the global culture.

A special adaptation method was the harnessing of languages that the students brought to the school. Given the way Ms. Priya outlined a careful practice of mother tongue support, her perception of multilingual pedagogy can be seen as follows:

With my supervisor's consent, I started incorporating one or two words in their native language, Malayalam, during one-on-one sessions. This approach wasn't about teaching entirely in their native language but using it strategically to facilitate understanding.

Such prudent application of the first language is cultural as well as practical pedagogy, and therefore, Ms. Priya internationally seeks to leverage their entire linguistic repertoire of her students to construct meaning. Her tactical code-switching symbolises the highly advanced knowledge that the first language is a cognitive scaffold, and not an impediment in acquiring the second one.

Language as Cultural Expression

The theme of language and culture is greatly represented in how teachers constructed their work. The respondents understood that grammar and reading comprehension take place in cultural paths of cognition, and educators ought to create a sense of linguistic diversity.

Ms. Rashida stressed this important connection when we discussed effective teaching methods:

An understanding of students' mother tongues and cultural backgrounds is crucial in teaching reading comprehension effectively, especially for second-language speakers. Language is fundamentally about communication, and if it becomes a barrier, the essence of learning is lost.

This view shows that teachers appreciate the fact that a successful teaching approach should consider the culture of language acquisition. Instead of dividing the process of language acquisition into the technical development of skills, these teachers perceive the process as highly cultural in its nature.

Mr. Ahmed explained particular plans of enhancing scientific literacy in various language contexts, and how diversity across language situations is handled by teachers in the subject area:

We discuss scientific terms and their synonyms in everyday language, like using 'observe' instead of 'see' or 'look.' This not only enriches their vocabulary but also clarifies the distinctions between scientific language and everyday English.

The constructivist model of the development of bilingual scientific literacy helps students in their linguistic and cultural transition to safeguard rigorous content requirements. Mr. Ahmed, therefore, was subtly adopting the vocabulary strategy that sought to address the linguistic abilities one needs to succeed in the settings of school-based learning.

Interpreting and Extending CBSE Curriculum Frameworks

Teachers do not simply follow curriculum guides but pay specific attention to the possible strengths and limitations of current guidelines through the perspective of their national and international settings. Their answers demonstrate that they carefully address the conflict between the standard and standardisation of the curriculum expectations, and the adaptation demands.

Ms. Aisha found a critical gap in existing curriculum guidelines in the process of discussing the recommendations of future policies:

The CBSE curriculum needs more specific guidance, particularly given the international nature of the English language. English learning varies significantly across different native and non-native speakers due to diverse linguistic backgrounds.

This observation indicates practitioners discern the requirement of additional culturally and linguistically responsive frameworks in order to serve diverse CBSE international schools settings.

Ms. The critique presented by Aisha is indicative of what postcolonial theorist of education, Homi Bhabha, calls the necessity of such thinking in the third space of education - education that goes beyond the conventional binary distinction of the native speaker/non-native speaker.

Ms. Aisha suggested an effective procedure to develop better guidance documents, relying on her experience in the classroom to help her:

For a guidance document targeting teachers of second language speakers, it's important to have a phased approach tailored to different grade levels... The document should stipulate the scope of teaching for each grade, like teaching complete subject and predicate by grade six, while focusing on basic subject-predicate concepts in earlier grades.

This elaborate advice shows that practitioners have taken huge initiatives to stretch existing curriculum frameworks to deal with linguistic diversity.

The interviews presented subtle insight regarding the balance between guidance and teacher autonomy. This tension was an issue Ms. Fatima thought about when we talked about the policy development:

In my opinion, while a guidance document from CBSE could be helpful, it shouldn't be overly restrictive. Given the advancements in technology and the need for innovative teaching methods, teachers should be encouraged to conduct their own research and explore 21st-century learning skills.

The view of Ms. Fatima demonstrates that professional learning and adaptation are central to the successful implementation of the curriculum, which can be traced in her insistence on teacher

research. Teachers admitted that positive changes in the curriculum approach have been made lately. Ms. When we were talking about the changes in the curriculum, Sarah explained:

The recent changes in CBSE, specifically since 2019, have been encouraging, particularly the shift from literature-focused to language and structural development, preparing students for international educational opportunities. It shows a commendable shift towards enhancing language competency, not only for academic proficiency but also for global communication.

School Context and Curriculum Implementation

The respondents also exhibited a sharp understanding of the effect of particular school conditions on curriculum execution. They understand that effective teaching presupposes the capacity to apply the standardised guidelines to the local reality and keep the global standards.

During our discussion of institutional adaptation, Ms. Sarah explained this contextual approach:

I believe it's more effective for individual schools to develop their own reading comprehension guidance documents, considering their specific demographic situations. The English language proficiency and the educational background of students can vary significantly, especially when comparing urban and rural areas or international settings.

The fact that Ms. Sarah would place so much stress on demographic factors is a reflection of her awareness of how different educational settings may vary and that curriculum implementation should not be along universal lines but embedded in culture.

The international context of CBSE schools became a considerable factor that characterised implementation. Ms., when speaking of the global standards, highlighted:

It's essential for guidance documents to be inclusive of the diverse student populations in international schools, especially those with a significant number of second-language

speakers. Uniformity in teaching practices is vital to ensure all students can comprehend and meet international standards, which is especially important for those who may later pursue higher education in technical fields at international universities.

Her point of view shows in-depth appreciation of the role of the global movement of students, curricula, and pedagogical practices that characterise contemporary international education. Indeed, the fact that Sarah focuses on the process of training students so that they can attend higher schools abroad proves the understanding that the process of local curriculum implementation should take into account an international education course.

In discussing the notions of contextualization, Ms. Fatima mentioned flexibility in the curriculum structure:

What it [CBSE curriculum] does give is a general framework of what is expected by the end of primary for language, arithmetic and science. However, over the years, I've learned that skills, although not specified, being in an international country like Dubai, we have the opportunity to map out the way the skills should be achieved.

Such a finding demonstrates that educators perceive the curriculum as giving background demands, whereas permitting contextual modifications. Ms. The fact that Fatima mentions mapping skills implies what education researcher Michael Fullan refers to as implementation literacy, the professional expertise needed to move policy intentions into action at the classroom level.

Professional Identity Navigation in International Contexts

Interviews with these teachers disclosed a compound procedure of professional identity building that takes place in the crossbreed of the national course of study demands and the global teaching environments. This identity negotiation was shown as an important aspect of curriculum implementation, which is always taken lightly in the global learning environments.

It is in the discussion about international teaching that this aspect of identity complexity is best summarised by Ms. Priya when she talked about her role:

As educators, especially being and teaching in Dubai in a CBSE school, we are lucky because we are guided to look at the student not just as second language speakers learning in an Indian curriculum school, but as international students learning the national curriculum of India on international grounds.

This response indicates an advanced use of deeper conceptual thinking regarding education positioning. Ms. Priya had shifted to thinking about her students in the language of deficiency-based models of language learning to asset-based international learning paradigms. The fact that she reconceptualises students as international learners of the Indian curriculum displays a significant understanding of the role of education in defining self-identity.

This process of identity formation can be further understood through the experiences of Mr. Ahmed when it comes to professional development. In the discussion, he noted:

The main difference lies in the approach to training. In India, the training tends to be more generalised, often covering common topics for all teachers. However, in my current international setting, the professional development is more specialised and varied, focusing on specific subjects, sectors, and topics.

The comparison provided by Mr. Ahmed proves that the actual conditions in international environments require behaviour of professional development to be even more subtle. He suggests that as an educator, his experience must be thickly described as in knowing a lot about something, including contextual insights, rather than knowing a little about everything.

Being a veteran instructor with a wide range of experience with respect to the different curricula (CBSE and ICSE) and different sets of students, Ms. Sarah has developed a clear idea of what it entails to be adaptable as a professional:

While CBSE provides a general guideline, the implementation and adaptation should be tailored to meet the diverse needs of students. It's crucial not to limit students to a fixed set of expectations but to allow room for exceeding these benchmarks based on their capabilities and backgrounds.

Her view shows her capability to critically analyse and formulate teaching strategies dependent on contextual proof rather than insistence on rigid adherence to approaches as prescribed. Her professional confidence built out of teaching experience across cultures is seen in the way Sarah has interpreted curriculum guidelines, interpreting them as minimum standards and not a set of limitations.

Cross-Curricular Literacy Adaptations

Teachers described adapting literacy frameworks across subject areas in culturally responsive ways. These adaptations demonstrate creative interpretations of curriculum objectives to meet students' needs while maintaining academic rigour.

Mr. Ahmed described extending reading comprehension strategies beyond language classes during our discussion about integrated approaches:

We use the Vipers strategy in science, not just in English, to enhance reading comprehension and critical thinking.

Similarly, he employs culturally appropriate memory aids: "In our science classes, we use MISS GREN as a mnemonic device to help children remember the life processes." These examples show

how teachers integrate literacy development across content areas while considering cultural contexts.

The importance of institutional support for contextual adaptations was highlighted when Ms. Priya observed:

The guidance for developing comprehension skills in math and science within the CBSE curriculum requires a proactive approach. Our head of department encourages us to actively seek out and implement strategies that emphasise reading in math.

Balancing Standardisation and Contextual Adaptation

A core tension revealed throughout the interviews concerns how teachers balance standardised curriculum expectations with necessary contextual adaptations. Their responses demonstrate sophisticated navigation of this educational challenge.

Ms. Sarah observed during our conversation about curriculum flexibility:

While CBSE provides a general guideline, the implementation and adaptation should be tailored to meet the diverse needs of students. It's crucial not to limit students to a fixed set of expectations but to allow room for exceeding these benchmarks based on their capabilities and backgrounds.

This perspective reveals how teachers interpret curriculum guidelines as minimum standards rather than restrictive limitations. Ms. Sarah's approach reflects what educational researcher Michael Fullan describes as "implementation literacy" - the professional competence required to translate policy intentions into effective classroom practice while maintaining fidelity to educational objectives.

4.4 Interpreting Key Findings Through a Combined Paradigm

The findings across all five concepts can be meaningfully interpreted through a combination paradigm that integrates social constructivism (Vygotsky), culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay; Ladson-Billings), and critical theory (Freire). This theoretical framework provides a powerful lens through which to understand the complex dynamics of CBSE curriculum implementation in diverse international settings.

All the findings of the five concepts can be meaningfully explained in a combination paradigm, which is a form of social constructivism (Vygotsky), culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay; Ladson-Billings) and critical theory (Freire). The given theoretical framework is a great tool to interpret the dynamics of the implementation of the CBSE curriculum in a wide range of international contexts.

Concept 1: Adaptive Teaching Strategies

The dynamical methods of teaching unveiled in the first concept fit well within the construct of Vygotskian social constructivism of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). When Ms. Sarah, a long-term teacher of English, with experience teaching a variety of native and non-native speakers, explains how to use assessments in order to establish the answer to the question: why a child is able to read only part of the vocabulary, she is actually tracking down the ZPD of each child. Such a diagnostic attitude demonstrates her comprehensive insight into the idea that learning happens within design boundaries as laid down developmentally, and which are not uniform across the board.

The culturally responsive aspect comes out strongly through the conscious attempts by a teacher to cover the cultural gap. Ms. Aisha, a graduate in literature, who has vast experience in dealing with second language learners, stresses the need to have. Pedagogy or, rather, comprehension materials

that appeal to their cultural heritages when dealing with students who have diverse linguistic traditions, particularly children.

This habit is evidence of the approach maintained by Gay, which states that learning should always have relevance to what students experience on a daily basis and to their cultural contexts. Ms. Aisha does not limit herself to the shallow cultural allusions, but rather the establishment of authentic links between the curriculum and the different backgrounds of the students.

Critical theory surfaces in educators' acute recognition of power dynamics inherent in language learning contexts. This awareness is expressed by Mr. Ahmed, a teacher who has worked in various types of educational systems, when he states that usually some linguistic backgrounds are privileged through the customary curriculum strategies. His active attempt at bringing about fair accessibility is his deliberate action towards bringing out critical awareness, as synonymous with Freire- critical awareness is the understanding to perceive social, political and cultural contradictions and act against oppressive forces.

Concept 2: Professional Development Impact

The shared learning societies that are mentioned in the second concept embody the essential imperativeness of the social constructivism approach regarding the insight that we all possess insights that are socially constructed and not individually developed. Ms. Priya is a mathematics teacher, and she has experience both in India and overseas. She explains her experience.

And through this collegial interaction, knowledge and strategies are passed among each other and refined, creating an ever-changing learning environment where we learn together all the time.

This instructive process represents the idea of social mediation of learning advanced by Vygotsky, where professional development is not facilitated by individual effort but by constructive communication with peers.

The culturally responsive aspect is seen in the advanced level of understanding of the international norms and worldviews of teachers. Ms. Fatima, a long-term experienced educator who has been working in the area of reading comprehension for over 15 years, describes the necessity of the professional development sessions that assist the educator in adjusting the practice to modern cultural specifics without making the instructional process less rigorous. This flexibility is an indication of Gay's concerns about making cultural competence the key to effective teaching.

Critical theory also stands out in the increased trust of teachers to base their interpretation and modification of the curriculum instead of regarding it as a source beyond all doubt. This very critical approach is evidenced in the story of Ms. Rashida, who shifted her work field to that of a teacher after working in the field of nutrition and dietetics, where she explains how she has shifted towards interpretation instead of just implementing the curriculum. This change is an embodiment of the praxis, which is a perceptive action, criticising and transforming educational practice instead of just repeating it.

Concept 3: Challenges with Diverse Learner Abilities

The emphasis of the third concept (various learner abilities) relates strongly to the concept of social constructivism (learning is socially and individually constructed). As Ms. Sarah described, it is the way she learned to define curriculum goals as destination points which can be achieved in a variety of ways instead of as inflexible rules about what people should learn.

The consistent practice of culturally responsive pedagogy is demonstrated by more subtle awareness on the part of teachers that linguistic competence has a profound influence on the overall meaning of language that can hardly be reduced to familiarity with some specific vocabulary terms. Ms. Aisha presents this multi-dimensionality when she explains how culture-specific context

influences not only what students come to grasp, but also the means through which they receive, assimilate, and interpret information. This observation demands culturally-sensitive approaches that go beyond normal interventions of language support.

Critical theory is used when teachers interpret the goals of the curriculum in terms of equity. Mr. Ahmed criticises the expectations that the same modes can apply to a variety of people, stating that they reinforce disparities in education instead of alleviating the problem. This criticism manifests a certain familiarity of Freire with the idea that seemingly neutral educational practices tend to have preconceived notions behind them that discriminate against some groups and in favour of others.

Concept 4: Multimodal and Inclusive Approaches

The multimodal practices described in the fourth concept underscore the understanding of social constructivism that education takes place with the help of various systems of symbols and different representations. Ms. Priya explains how she premeditated the use of different supports, such as manipulatives, audio, and videos, to build several possible access points to the mathematical construction of concepts. This method takes into account that learners will have different ways to build up their meaning, and that teachers should adopt by offering various representational systems to promote comprehension.

Culturally responsive pedagogy can be seen in the advanced level of awareness of a teacher who understands the cultural backgrounds of different people and recognises that different cultural backgrounds mean their sensitivity to modes of delivery. Ms. Fatima reacts to her experience of 15 years of education as a lesson to understand that the learners of some cultural backgrounds are visual and can absorb information in a different way than auditory learners of other cultural backgrounds. This cultural sensitivity calls upon teachers to increase their pedagogical repertoire beyond their areas of comfort as far as their cultures are concerned.

The critical theory is used as a way of helping teachers understand that the common text-centred teaching methods usually work to favour some type of learning style and cultural background and disfavour others. The insight expressed by Ms. Rashida is to be encapsulated in her explanation of how her move to teaching made her realise the shortcomings of the traditional methods. This focus on a project of expanding representative systems is indicative of a critical awareness of the reproduction or resistance to extant inequities through the educational practices supported by teachers.

Concept 5: Contextual and Cultural Adaptability

The fifth concept of cultural adaptability closely relates to the fundamental principle of culturally responsive pedagogy, which is that effective teaching should be rooted in the cultural backgrounds of the students, but not enforced by external norms or criteria. Gay's principle that Ms. Aisha illustrates when referring to how she could use the culturally familiar material to establish a basis to introduce new concepts is considered a cultural scaffolding principle, Gay, which is characterised by new learning being introduced using the existing cultural knowledge and experiences.

Social constructivism manifests in the realisation by teachers that knowledge necessarily has a cultural mediation in terms of its construction. When Sarah discusses her careful use of the first language as a means to aid comprehension, she is actually speaking about the means of traipsing across the atmosphere between the school and home knowledge system. This is because this approach no longer views the cultural and linguistic resources of students as a weakness that needs to be conquered as if it were a disability.

The element of critical theory can be clearly seen when the curriculum guidelines, given to the teachers, are being critiqued at a higher level and are not specific to international contexts. Mr. Ahmed undermines the notion that the standardised curriculum is in a position to support various

international contexts, claiming that the absence of detailed guidance due to the international character of the English language imposes more difficulties and makes it locally adapted and critically interpreted.

This is a critical reflection of what Freire believed: educational materials can never be neutral, but they do have implicit assumptions concerning learners and learning situations.

Chapter 5: Discussion And Recommendations

5.1 Discussion of the research Findings

5.1.1 Research Question 1: What are the essential foundational principles for developing a reading comprehension approach for second language speakers in CBSE international schools in Dubai and India?

This comprehensive research identifies four essential foundational principles that emerge as critical for effective CBSE curriculum implementation in international contexts. These principles represent a synthesis of theoretical frameworks and practical implementation strategies that address the complex intersection of standardised curriculum expectations, cultural diversity, and contextual adaptation required in global educational settings. Significantly, this research challenges existing paradigms by revealing how effective implementation requires simultaneous rather than sequential integration of multiple theoretical frameworks, contradicting prevailing models that treat assessment, cultural responsiveness, scaffolding, and collaboration as discrete implementation strategies.

Assessment-Driven Cultural Scaffolding and Adaptive Teaching

The first foundational principle integrates systematic diagnostic assessment with cultural responsiveness, creating a sophisticated framework that builds new learning upon students' existing cultural knowledge, linguistic backgrounds, and assessed capabilities.

Ms. Anita's data-driven observation that three-quarters of girls were within the high lexile level bracket, while two-thirds of boys were in the same category, demonstrates how teachers use systematic assessment data to inform culturally responsive instruction, showing the practical application of assessment-driven scaffolding that accounts for gender dynamics. However, Dr. Sharma's observation that Age-related expectations compare children to the national standard,

confirming whether they're on track with the rest of the children in the country, demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of assessment as a tool for adaptive instruction that considers developmental appropriateness within cultural contexts.

While Gay's Culturally Responsive Teaching Model (2010) emphasises recognition of students' cultural contexts and engagement with prior knowledge (Dumbuya, 2024b), this research reveals a critical limitation in existing frameworks: they inadequately address how assessment practices themselves must be culturally responsive rather than merely informing culturally responsive instruction. This principle transcends superficial cultural acknowledgement and mechanical assessment practices to establish a dynamic pedagogical framework that recognises culture as cognitive infrastructure and assessment as the foundation for all instructional decisions.

Ms. Priya's experience illustrates this essential foundation: "Initially, it's essential to assess the reading levels of the children. In a classroom, students' abilities vary; some can easily read sentences, while others struggle with phonetics or spelling." However, contrasting with Franco et al.'s (2024) finding that theoretical frameworks for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy integration remain fragmented with "less than a third explicitly using the phrase 'culturally responsive' to describe the primary measurement construct," this research demonstrates how teachers naturally synthesize assessment and cultural responsiveness when working with diverse populations, suggesting that fragmentation may be a theoretical rather than practical limitation.

The cultural scaffolding dimension operates through what anthropologist Clifford Geertz referred to as "webs of significance" - complex meaning-making systems that shape how students process, interpret, and construct knowledge (Cai, 2024). Ms. Aisha's articulation demonstrates the sophisticated integration of assessment data with cultural responsiveness: "By engaging in a brief conversation, I can gauge their vocabulary level, accuracy in language usage, and their capacity for

extended thinking. My teaching methods, discussions, and critical thinking exercises are tailored around these observations." This approach extends beyond what Dumbuya (2024) describes as Gay's Cultural Validation principle by demonstrating how validation occurs through ongoing assessment rather than initial acknowledgement.

While Carney et al. (2022) reference Alt and Raichel's (2021) definition of culturally responsive assessment as "formative assessment that acknowledges learners' diverse cultural variances and meets the needs of diverse student populations," this research reveals the theoretical inadequacy of treating assessment and cultural responsiveness as separate constructs. The principle operates through what psychologist Lev Vygotsky conceptualised as the Zone of Proximal Development, where meaningful learning occurs in the space between independent and assisted performance (Kolly-Shamne, 2022). Ms. Aisha further elaborates: "For younger students, particularly in grades one and two, it's beneficial to use comprehension materials that resonate with their cultural backgrounds. This familiarity helps them connect more easily with the content, making it simpler for them to interpret and think critically. Once students are comfortable with these initial steps, we can gradually introduce them to a broader, global range of materials."

This assessment-driven approach challenges Duke and Cartwright's (2021) emphasis on cognitive science in reading development, demonstrating how diagnostic assessment must integrate with cultural responsiveness rather than operate as a separate pedagogical concern. The limitations of purely cognitive approaches become apparent when considering that comprehension is not culturally neutral but deeply embedded in students' existing knowledge systems, requiring teachers to understand and leverage these systems through ongoing assessment rather than circumvent them. The sophistication of teachers' data-driven cultural understanding is exemplified by Ms. Anita, a Grade 4 teacher with 10 years of experience from Mumbai, who provides specific quantitative

evidence: "According to our school data, we observe that 75% of girls fall within the high lexile level bracket, while 65% of boys are in the same category." This 10-percentage-point gender difference demonstrates how teachers use institutional data to inform both assessment practices and cultural understanding, moving beyond anecdotal observations to systematic analysis that guides instructional decisions. However, this finding contradicts O'Neill and Padden's (2022) suggestion that higher education's tendency toward norm-referenced criteria can be "particularly destructive" for students at the lower end of the hierarchy, as teachers in this study use comparative data constructively to inform differentiated instruction rather than ranking students hierarchically.

Dr. Sharma, an educator with 16 years of experience, further articulates the developmental assessment dimension: "Age-related expectations communicate how a child is learning and progressing regarding their age. Essentially, the expectations compare children to the national standard and assess whether they're on track with the rest of the children in the country." This sophisticated understanding of benchmarking reflects how assessment-driven approaches must integrate developmental appropriateness with cultural responsiveness, recognising that standardised expectations require contextual interpretation for diverse populations.

Yet, the weakness of existing assessment theory can be seen in the light of the finding of Goyibova et al. (2025), who indicated that students have different interests and areas of intellectual competence according to their gender and that natural differences should be taken into account, implying that even culturally responsive assessment methodology might be not sufficient to accommodate intersectional complexity and demand a more well-developed theory.

Multimodal Pedagogical Flexibility with Contextual Relevance

The second foundational principle is the use of a variety of teaching methods with the purpose of supporting various learning patterns and applying the real-world aspect and learning context related to the culture, such that the curriculum content becomes easy to grasp and relevant.

It is the response given by Ms. Rekha that she looked at how specific challenges and opportunities that can occur in any given student population, and not necessarily standardised and approached them uniformly, that embodies multimodal flexibility in a contextually relevant manner and how teachers respond to different situations and approaches depending on specific needs and scenarios of students perfectly.

The practical sophistication of this principle is observed in the implementation of Ms. Priya: we used a variety of aids, such as manipulatives, audio, and video. To a great extent, such a multimodal mode of teaching, particularly for visual learners, has been useful. Students are always ready to make discoveries and learn concepts by seeing, even when no language is involved. This reading of her description of how students are able, in her words, to gain an understanding using visuals "without even language," demonstrates the principle capable of eliminating language barriers whilst remaining conceptually sound.

This principle acknowledges that a successful international education cannot rely on the old-school approach to text-based learning because it should be transformed to accommodate what Allan Paivio, a cognitive scientist, referred to as dual coding theory, the realisation that visual and linguistic data are perceived via distinct yet interconnected cognitive pathways (Malakul & Park, 2023).

Nonetheless, unlike the Experience-Based Integration Model suggested by Shih (2022) in which local cultural experiences are introduced to form the basis of achieving greater educational

objectives, this study proves that the multimodal flexibility cannot be confined to local cultural experiences because different international backgrounds will always be present in individual classrooms concurrently. This multimodal treatment expounds on the definition by Spires et al. (2019) that literacy constitutes a broader skill set, including media, data, displays, and information content, showing just how these broader definitions are interpreted and produced vis-a-vis narrower definitions used in the CBSE model of teaching second language among learners.

The contextual relevance dimension is broader than visual representation to pedagogical issues of how students construct meaning out of content. Ms. Rashida holds experience in nutrition and dietetics, so her experience adds a special colour to this inclusion: "My teaching philosophy centers largely around the philosophy that reading is a life-long skill that is fundamental in the context of a global, multicultural society". Applying comprehension skills as well as being able to understand it are important because they can be used practically, such as when following directions or when going somewhere." This assertion illustrates the manner in which instructors bridge the gap between curriculum outcomes and real-life uses, and it proves that learning is appropriate beyond academic performance.

The dimension of contextual relevance questions the focus on socio-interaction and socio-constructive meaning-making proposed by Kirkpatrick and Schaller-Schwaner (2022) by revealing how, in the context of the CBSE international schools students, their cultural backgrounds should be used as cognitive resources by teachers and not only as socio-interactional opportunities. Although the socio-constructive approaches stated that it is important to focus on the process of meaning-making, the study has shown that to facilitate sense-making within a specific context, teachers have to conceptualise cultural knowledge systems as cognitive infrastructure that facilitates or limits learning processes.

Such a principle generalises Universal Design of Learning (UDL) guidelines, especially the focus on multiple modes of representation and engagement (Han & Lei, 2024). But the shortcomings of the conventional UDL strategies can also be realised based on cultural contexts that shape the reaction of students to various modalities. The principle, where Ms. Priya, as a mathematical concepts teacher, highlights a differentiation in the approach to concept by observing that students are good at engaging manipulatives with mathematical addition problems but are weak at word problems, shows that the principle provided requires a high degree of pedagogical judgment about when and how to use the different representational systems, and the need to connect student contents to cultural and practical experiences.

Multimodal flexibility is example given to illustrate it by a South Indian educator is Ms. Nandini who has 12 years of experience that illustrates comprehensive repertoire of 22 different strategies: We employ many strategies including: Reread, Activate Prior Knowledge, Use Context Clues, Infer, Think Aloud, Summarize, Locate Key Information, Make Predictions, Use Word Attack Strategies, Visualize, Use Graphic Organizers, Monitor Comprehension, Ask Questions, Determine Importance, Synthesize Information, Connect Text This huge spectrum denotes advanced knowledge that reading is too broad that it demands several strategic interventions and supports a variety of learning styles.

This finding raises objections to the conclusion made by Leu et al. (2018) that representational diversity is required to support a diversity of learning modalities without compromising curricular goals because, as shown in this investigation, effective teachers actually have highly developed repertoires that go far beyond theory recommendations. The dimension of contextual awareness is reflected one more time in the case in the example of Ms. Deepika, who is a North Indian teacher and has 6 years of experience wherein she notes that the girls are more likely to read fiction and

magazines as compared to the boys whereas, in comparison, boys are more likely to read newspapers and comic books. This appreciation of gendered reading preference shows that contextual relevancy has to be accompanied by knowledge of cultural trends that determine choice and approach to reading.

However, unlike mainstream opinions that seem to treat technology integration as an unconditional good, this study demonstrates that multimodal flexibility demands an advanced pedagogical decision-making regarding when and how different modalities should be used. The multimodal flexibility principle is also concerned with the cognitive complexity levels involved in word problems, which involve simultaneous mathematical reasoning, linguistic decoding, interpretation of cultural context, and abstract thinking. This knowledge places an even greater demand on teaching practitioners to build what educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom would describe as higher-order pedagogical cognition that can diagnose and address a variety of independent demands coming at the same time and remain culturally and contextually relevant (Lipnevich & Panadero, 2021).

Scaffolded Progressive Development through Adaptive Professional Interpretation

The third foundational principle combines systematic competency-building and advanced interpretive practice, placing teachers as the reflective professionals who go beyond delivery of the curriculum in a mechanical way towards contextually responsive implementation, which balances instructional standardisation and professional judgment.

The attention Ms. Bharti pays to decoding the power of the opinion by examining the point of view of the author and arriving at the major assumptions means teachers take students through the steps of basic understanding to advanced analysis, which is reflected through professional translation of the higher-order thinking skills. The methodology that is demonstrated by Mr. Ahmed is a case in

point; science, and particularly with the lower grades in primary school, is about beginning with the fundamentals, bearing in mind that the students would be second language learners. We start with reading the alphabet and phonics, going to sound combinations, as this is one of the points in my classes. This model acknowledges curriculum goals as destinations that can be followed using a variety of routes, as opposed to set routes where different students must take the same route.

This structured process of skill development counters the conclusion by Derwing and Munro (2022) regarding the issue of phonetics in CBSE students by showing how the development of literacy skills is organised in language classrooms by building on basic components to meet higher-level requirements, but still going beyond the phonetic aspect to the other components of the development of literacy.

The scaffolding dimension is well exemplified by Ms. Fatima when describing her multi-step reading comprehension process. She argues that her strategy is to first read the passage to them with emphasis on skimming and scanning to enable her students to know the main ideas. Then, she asks the students to read the passage again, and after which she explains each word and paragraph by paragraph in a way that accommodates students who are having difficulties many times. This cyclical process explains how the teachers give several chances to the learners to play with the content on different levels of difficulty gradually.

But unlike Sun (2022) Critical Period Considerations, which claims that it was easier to learn a foreign language before the age of 12, the results of this study indicate that scaffolded teaching is required in both groups, despite their cognitive success rates, as too much academic language skills do not follow cognitive preparedness automatically. Nevertheless, a systematic approach of scaffolded teaching, as illustrated by Ms. Fatima, underlines the role of patient, systematic acquisition of skills, as it has to accommodate a variety of learning rates.

The aspect of the adaptive professional interpretation is well explained by Ms. Rekha, a teacher with 10 years of experience. She asserts that instead of implementing universal approaches in a blanket-like manner, she looks at the individual issues and opportunities of a specific student body and decides whether to use more visual aids to the students who have low English status or even adding more cultural background to a reading that relies on background knowledge. This type of complex professional judgment is an illustration as to how teachers are challenged with the need of accessing curriculum expectations contextually, without violating the integrity of education.

Compared to the work of Kumar and Lata (2020), whose research on the scaffolded approach was mostly concentrated on secondary education, where the teachers lean towards personal practice, this article expands on that study by showing how primary-level teachers can build systematic scaffolding to incorporate a balance between systematic expectations and contextual adoptions. However, the theoretical boundaries note that the individualistic models of professional interpretation, when taking into account that it is rather collaborative professional communities that form the basis of effective adaptation, rather than isolated teacher judgment. This is significant because the adaptive professional interpretation component is defined as viewing teachers as what educational philosopher Donald Schon calls reflective practitioners who question and reform methods of teaching in response to evidence on the ground (Machost & Stains, 2023).

Even then, Ms. Sarah observes that the challenge of integration, noting that since CBSE gave a general guideline, the curriculum should be implemented and adapted to address the multifold needs of students. She posits that it is important not to confine students to a mere combination of standards and proposes a larger space to outperform these standards, depending on their capacities and background knowledge in some areas. Her arguments showed the professional confidence in her

ability to adaptively interpret the curriculum guidelines, reading them as the minimum standards instead of limiting restrictions.

The study criticises the statement by Pasha (2023) on the existence of a nexus of power-knowledge in global education that is taken dominantly by the West by showing how the bending of standardized curricula can be done by teachers in a way that does not undermine the integrity of education, which argues that perhaps the problem is not standardization but implementation strategies. Further, Ms. Sarah notes: "In many cases, I find myself constructing special methods to fit the teaching environment." This is particularly the case when dealing with texts/classes with lower inference ability, where different scaffolding practices might be needed. This response explains how educators exercise tension between standardisation, on the one hand, and sensitivity to context, on the other hand, and come to conclusions based on professional knowledge and in-depth understanding of the needs of students.

Michel et al.'s (2019) research into metacognition and working memory during reading comprehension is covered in the adaptive professional interpretation component that situates teachers as reflective practitioners and makers of informed choices regarding pacing and complexity by continuously assessing the abilities of students. Nevertheless, unlike the discovery of Alharbi (2022) that 98 per cent of the Saudi teachers supported the idea of including cultural references of students, the present study finds that the cultural inclusion is a delicate task that requires professional interpretation and not shared agreement, as different international environments are vastly different in terms of contexts.

This principle necessitates what is termed by educational researcher, Michael Fullan, as implementation literacy, the competency needed by the professional to convert policy intentions into effective instruction in the class, which includes adherence to educational goals (Quaicoe et

al., 2023). The study finds that effective teachers construe curriculum frameworks as giving general expectations but leaving room to apply context-specific adjustments that improve and do not undermine the standards of education using a system of scaffolding.

Collaborative Knowledge Construction and Professional Community

The fourth foundational principle acknowledges that learning is a social negotiated process in that learning itself is a socially mediated phenomenon that occurs with a meaningful interaction across levels, i.e. collaboration among students in learning, collaboration between teachers in professional development and collaboration between schools and the community in curriculum adaptation.

Ms. Priya's description illustrates this principle's application in professional contexts: "Knowledge and strategies are shared and refined through collegial interaction, creating a dynamic learning environment where we all grow together." This collaborative approach exemplifies Vygotsky's concept of learning through social mediation, where professional growth occurs through meaningful interaction with peers rather than isolated individual effort. However, contrasting with Sansone and Cesareni's (2019) socio-constructivist understanding that knowledge is co-constructed through social interaction, this research demonstrates how collaborative knowledge construction must extend beyond classroom contexts to encompass institutional and community levels.

The practical implementation of collaborative knowledge construction is demonstrated through structured classroom practices. Ms. Jyoti, a Maharashtra teacher with 10 years of experience, explains: "Literature circles are conducted in class regularly because they allow for ongoing monitoring of comprehension while students are actively engaged in reading and discussion." Mr. Mohan, a teacher with 10 years of experience, elaborates on the collaborative structure: "Literature circles encourage student discussion and shared meaning-making. Students take on different

roles—discussion director, vocabulary enricher, connector, illustrator—which allows them to engage with texts from multiple perspectives while developing collaborative skills."

These organised joint plans further the social mediated learning that Vygotsky proposes and offer concrete guidelines to follow to implement in the actual situation of multilingual and multicultural classes. The dimension of the professional community can be observed in terms of collaboration in professional growth. Ms. Lata remarks: "Our training touched upon the topics of the compare-contrast analysis, techniques of text annotation, inference to the point of view of the author, analysis of the setting and description of the characters, comparing different texts, and highlighting the grammatical concepts in the background of the meaningful contexts." The fact that this professional development is across a group of teachers illustrates collaboration and community learning, which promotes the consistency of implementation and adaptation by individual teachers (Dumbuya, 2024; Tekel et al., 2025).

The collaborative approach expounds on the socio-constructivist viewpoint of Sansone and Cesareni (2019) by revealing how this principle can be applied to various levels of operation, including student-to-student, teacher-to-teacher, and school-to-community collaboration in the contexts of the CBSE international school. Nevertheless, Yang (2023) cautions that shortcomings of the traditional collaborative theories are manifested in the fact that effective collaboration implies the presence of systematic frameworks and not the informal interaction typical of literature circles to come to specific roles and procedures that teachers use in literature circles.

The principle is much more relevant in relation to classroom diversity, where learners are put in supportive learning conditions by matching high and low ability learners. This is in line with Vygotsky's idea of the more knowledgeable other, where students are taught by students who are a little ahead in their knowledge (Eun, 2019; Irshad et al., 2021; McLeod & McCood, 2023).

However, based on the response by Ms. Lata, these research findings refute the conventional notions by uncovering the fact that, in the context of international scenarios, knowledge related to culture can make any student more knowledgeable, based on the topic or context, which demands more portable reasons for expertise allocation.

The collaborative component is also transferred to the professional practice, where teachers continue their conversations concerning culturally responsive tactics and contextual adjustments. The focus on technology integration evidenced by Ms. Fatima exemplifies the ways in which collaborative knowledge construction can be empowered by digital tools: the application of the so-called choice boards and the solution of the like such as Kahoot, Socrative, and Nearpod allows to obtain immediate feedback, construct the knowledge interactively through active participation, shaping the dynamics of the learning as an environment of the collaborative learning and not the knowledge consumptively.

The combination of technology tools translates the traditional ideas of collaborative knowledge building into cyberspaces and sustains the focus on meaningful interaction and instant feedback, responding to the current needs of multilingual learners' engagement. However, unlike O'Neill and Padden (2022), who present technology as always positive to diverse learners, the use of the article "we" by Ms. Nandini in response to the question on integration of technology highlights that technology should be integrated into collaborative systems to succeed.

Findings of the study demonstrate that to bring such collaborative communities of learning to the successful implementation, it should be systematically supported, enabling teachers to exchange culturally responsive strategies and improve their expertise using a continuous professional dialogue. This principle meets the research gap that Softa and Gjergji (2022) identified, where the creation of supportive environments is necessary when building cultural and language identities

and expands their work by illustrating how the development of professional communities can aid in developmental efforts, not only on student but on teacher levels as well, in multicultural situations.

This principle also reflects what educational researcher Andy Hargreaves describes as "collaborative professionalism" (Hargreaves, 2021). Further, the principle of collaborative knowledge construction integrates what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu referred to as the cultural capital (by which he meant knowledge, skills, and cultural competencies that allow people to negotiate the various social contexts with success) (Fowler, 2020). By adopting this principle, teachers grow international cultural capital by cooperating, thus being able to adjust standardised programs to national conditions without losing academic quality and integrity of education.

5.1.2 Research Question 2: How can the identified foundational principles provide insights for improving teacher preparation and instructional practices?

The study has established that there are five main approaches through which teachers can employ the identified principles, translating theoretical knowledge into practical pedagogical routines. These strategies are as diagnostic-responsive tools as well as assessment-first structures by showing that exhaustive evaluation and culturally responsive teaching go hand in hand in the current educational setting. The synthesis in these strategies, however, demonstrates a great conflict between theories and practice that have not been well-covered in the literature, especially as it concerns the delicate tension between prescribed curriculum and appropriate culturally responsive pedagogy.

Diagnostic-First Assessment and Instruction

Diagnostic-first approach requires teachers to use a comprehensive assessment initially at the start of every instructional cycle to determine the individual Zone of Proximal Development of each

student, followed by delivery of curriculum content. The methodology is extremely sophisticated, and Ms. Sarah implements it in a very structured manner: "Educators must be extremely conscious of the level of understanding of their students when it comes to language and adapt to their teaching practices. This knowledge is fundamental in teaching language because through it, a teacher is able to know the effective approach or practice that will aid his or her students in their language learning. Her focus on awakening the teacher calls into doubt O'Neill and Padden's (2022) distance and dependence model to demonstrate that familiarity with assessment cannot be dissociated from cultural and linguistic context. Although the distance-dependence framework directs attention to an educator's comfort level with assessment tools, this study shows that diagnosing demands teachers to cross cultural norms between their cultural background and those of their students, essentially recreating assessment literacy as intercultural competence.

The proposed approach directly fills in the research gap described by Kumar and Lata (2020), in that there is a lack of research into text-learner matching methodologies to suit a variety of linguistic backgrounds when operating in CBSE systems and, as a result, this research study provides minute details of how the teachers assess, diagnose, and modify instructions based on student linguistic profiles. But this diagnostic work is not as straightforward as is currently prescribed in teacher preparation programs, and will demand long-term professional learning that connects linguistic theory, cultural competence and assessment skills in combinations that would require changing traditional disciplinary demarcations.

Therefore, this study posits that the environment of effective teaching starts with diagnostic-first instruction, highlighting the importance of a thorough evaluation before the curriculum implementation. Though Franco et al. (2024) justify the need to focus on the contemporary frameworks focusing on self-awareness and consciousness of the influence of beliefs, attitudes, and

life experience on worldviews, this study shows that diagnostic-first should also be much broader in terms of teacher-centred reflections and integrated institutional assessment procedures that respond to multilingual and multicultural students. This strategy forces educators to practice advanced assessment literacy, which goes beyond the traditional forms of assessment to reach a thorough evaluation of the linguistic abilities of the students, their cultural contexts, and previous experiences of learning.

The shortcomings of the traditional assessment theory are realised when analysing the complicated diagnostic requirements of international CBSE environments. Although Carney et al. (2022) promote such concept as transparency in teaching and learning by explicitly stating the goals and criteria of evaluation, the present study is uniquely related to the expansion of theory because it shows that diagnostic assessment has to embrace the aspects of linguistic proficiency, cultural knowledge systems, and academic preparation applied to different languages and cultures at the same time. The focus on thorough evaluation can be connected to the statement claimed by Kumar and Lata (2020) that the teacher has to identify the linguistic and thinking requirements to interpret texts and correlate them with learners. Nonetheless, unlike mainstream assessment, which emphasises standardisation, the research under discussion adds to this theoretical background by offering certain diagnostic processes that portray the process of text-learner matching via unbroken assessment streams that recognise cultural and linguistic uniqueness as an asset rather than a drawback to be surmounted.

Expanding more on the aspect of culture in assessment, Ms. Sarah points out: I think it is very important to understand the mother tongue and the culture of students when teaching reading comprehension, in most cases, when they are speakers of a second language. Language is all about communication, and if it becomes a hindrance, then the spirit of learning is lost. This view provides

the evidence that the proper diagnostic assessment should take into consideration the cultural aspects of language learning instead of considering the language acquirability as a mere technical skill acquisition. On the one hand, it is evident that Goyibova et al. (2025) insist on the necessity of what they label as neuropsychological understanding and multi-modal expertise in designing the assessment; on the other hand, the present study indicates that diagnostic cleverness should also include what can be referred to as cultural neuropsychology, the knowledge of how cultural learning patterns affect cognitive processing and performance on standardized tests.

Such diagnostic sophistication can especially been seen in such cases as when teachers such as Ms. Shanti (Tamil Nadu, 14 years) present specific targets including, oral language deficit and limited vocabulary to second-language learners, and when Mr. Naveen (Teaching experience- 15 years) observes that In a single classroom we have students who are heritage speakers of English, students who learned English as a second language at a young age, and students who have recently arrived and are still learning basic English. The two separate groups need various instruction strategies and evaluation techniques.' Such complexity opposes the framework of comprehensive assessment proposed by Howard (2024) on cross-multiple domains because the assessment domains cannot be perceived as any universal categories and should be seen and interpreted in the corresponding contexts provided by language and culture. The work elaborates on the idea that Howard had on skill-specific assessment, exposing the idea that skills are also constructs that are culturally mediated and need a differentiated manner of diagnosis.

This cultural approach to this cultural context expands the conclusion made by Latif and Mat Daud (2021) that a cultural context is crucial to the development of student understanding of English when they are more likely to jump between cultures altogether, specifying the assessment techniques that help incorporate the culture into the process of diagnostics. Nonetheless, the

deployment of culturally responsive diagnostic assessment demonstrates a paradigmatic dilemma of teacher preparation: on the one hand, teachers require extensive cultural knowledge to perform effective diagnosis; on the other hand, they are not supposed to be culturally essentializing students and relegating them to stereotypical cultural types.

Diagnostic-first instruction needs the use of several assessment modalities, such as informal conversation and direct observations, performance-based tasks, and formal diagnostic instruments, and teachers require certain skills in these. The diagnostics relate to what reading expert Marie Clay found out as running records - an ordered examination of reading habits of students that indicate not only accuracy, but the very thinking processes used (Doyle, 2018). A successful implementation, however, expands the Clay framework to mandate that teachers take into account the role of cultural contexts in defining the strategic orientation of students towards text comprehension, which may necessitate a culturally inquiry interpretation of diagnostic information. Although Tekel et al. (2025) offer validated diagnostic models such as the linguistic competence measures and cultural adaptation assessment, the present study makes a theoretical contribution to the advancement of the field by showing how these measures need to be incorporated into continuous cycles of teaching and not presented as standalone assessment occasions.

Teachers illustrate refined diagnostic decisions, which put more weight on instructional usefulness, rather than standardisation. According to Ms. Sunita (Punjab, 9 years): 'We do not use PIRLS as a reading test. Nevertheless, we are testing the students based on the Lexile reading level.' Such a considered choice of diagnostic tools that are used to guide everyday instructions is an example of an assessment-first approach, with a critique of the applicability of international assessment schemes. In the same way, and according to his broad 13-year teaching experience, Ms. Lakshmi models multi-dimensional diagnostic thinking; 'The VIPERS strategy enables us to evaluate the

various facets of reading comprehension over and above perceiving reading comprehension as a singular skill.' This is a structure of searching certain skills areas, which indicates the high-level diagnostic understanding that parallels what Carney et al. (2022) in their statement of metacognitive facilitation skills miss by exposing that once curricula and tasks are completed, an instructor has to attain metacognitive abilities of assessment where they can compare and contrast the requirements of diverse individuals, cultures, and assess any task or instruction regarding its individual suitability and dimensionality to teach and to understand the academic material.

Kumar's (2019) findings regarding the practice of using assessment as diagnostics to determine routes to success instead of a gate-keeping tool in its application challenge what Kumar (2019) referred to as the practice of English as a linguistic filter to radically transform the assessment power balance between sorting and supporting student achievement through its practical application. It is an important conceptual contribution to the current conception of the role of assessment in multilingual education because it has gone beyond deficit models and looks at ways in which the examination of student linguistic and cultural capacities can become part of asset-based models.

The study postulates that proficient teachers lean on the use of these assessments not only as a means to determine deficiencies but also as an elucidation of the strengths of the student and cultural resources that may be implemented in the learning process. Using this method, teachers will need to make more advanced interpretations of the assessment information to inform learning planning, instead of diagnostic information being used to label the child in fixed ability groups. Such a dynamic diagnostic evaluation model is a paradigm shift to a more fluid, responsive pedagogical decision-making that acknowledges students' developing growth and cultural frameworks of knowing.

Cultural Bridge-Building and Strategic Cultural Integration

The educators in the current study demonstrated an advanced way to navigate the cultural characteristics of their students over and above what Dumbuya (2024) considers to constitute the lower-level concepts of cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. The answer of Ms. Priya makes it clear that there is a calculated risk of strategy behind the move: "I began using one or two words in their first language, Malayalam, with my supervisor approving it during one-on-one time. This was not a plan to teach them completely in their own language, but to work with it strategically to foster meaning. Such a reaction goes further than the cultural meeting recognized by Vula & Tyfekcici (2024) as having high relevance with CBSE students who often inter-switch cultures by showing institutional limitations needing the acceptance of supervisors, strategic diversely than mass adoption with the use of one or two words and definite pedagogical intent on supporting the realisation of meaning not cultural celebration.

Her reasonable employment of the first language expresses what applied linguist Jim Cummins terms as translanguaging, which is the occurrence that happens when people who are capable of communicating using more than one language use their full linguistic repertoire in order to construct meaning (Cummins, 2021). This application downplays the one-sided teaching methods, as well as exemplifying the politics of the use of languages, furthering the contribution of Franco et al. (2024) with regards to cultural humility by illustrating how educators must act across institutional policies to execute culturally-competent behaviour, displaying the politics with a barrier of culture on acceptable native integration.

A further dimension of responding in the context of contemporary cultural contexts is a response, given by Ms. Vandana with 9 years of experience: In the digital era, to be able to make decisions on the basis of using information provided by different sources, it is important to be media and

information literate. Students need to develop the ability to analyse a text, to find trustworthy sources and to be able to synthesise information of different formats." Her answer illustrates how the cultural bridge-building process now also involves more aspects and spheres of information existence and combines what educational researcher Luis Moll terms as funds of knowledge, the cultural practices and knowledge students and families can have (Gonzalez et al., 2007), with digital literacy, moving the traditional cultural responsiveness to technologies and media environments.

An acute sense of cultural dynamics to be negotiated also reveals the teachers, having transcended what Shih (2022) signals as the cultural inquiry skills into a complex cultural competence. Ms. Kamala, based on her 16 years of experience, observes: "Most families will give greater importance to academic subjects, such as mathematics and science, than they would give to reading, as a way of leisure reading". Students get such messages in that reading is not good after all, especially not to their personal enrichment or to develop critical thinking." These cultural understandings allow tactical approaches to family demands and the development of reading interest, and they form them in terms of how teachers have to create what anthropologist Clifford Geertz referred to as thick description (Munk et al., 2022) - depth of cultural knowledge about students, not simple cultural allusion.

The difference between the understanding of Ms. Kamala and the work of the teachers emerges in the fact that the latter works in traditions whose system has already been built and does not work against them: they know about the main priorities of the family as realities, which determine their decisions about the pedagogical activity. She indicates in her answer that she has learned how to negotiate with family expectations and establish a reading engagement, and she is even challenging the privileging of standardised Western cultural references and showing how teachers can rework

materials with inclusivity in mind, using different cultural knowledge systems as valid pedagogical content.

Mr. Prakash, despite his 13 years of working experience, admits that there exists a greater universal trend in the same way he claims: Reading habit is a challenge among most sections of society. What he answered means that teachers not only tend to consider the needs of individual students but also larger cultural trends that impact their learning, which shows the complexity of the negotiations that teachers have to make between the local cultural priorities and the global goals of education, overcoming the superficial values of multiculturalism that aim only to accept diversity and celebrate it but not challenge the power distribution.

What comes out of these responses is advanced cultural work that runs on a dual level of doing, at once addressing what Latif and Mat Daud (2021) noted as underrepresented in the literature, namely, the limited treatment of how cultural context influences semantic interpretation in young second language learners, by resorting to certain techniques that use the cultural background beyond mere nods of references to it. Teachers manage the institutional restrictions such as the requirement of the consent of the supervisor in case of Ms. Priya, make strategic pedagogic decisions with a purposeful utilization of cultural knowledge rather than mere embellishment, operate within family and community expectations rather than attempting to overcome them, negotiate with the realities of the contemporary culture such as digital literacy, and accept their own weaknesses such as Mr. Prakash does by admitting the wide-spread nature of reading difficulties.

Nevertheless, whereas Pasha (2023) proposes the pedagogies of sentiment that help to approach the emotional and spiritual realities of students, responses given by teachers indicate the issue of complexity in the application of such approaches to the secular and standardised education system, which might be unable to accept religious or spiritual levels. The study criticizes the conclusion

drawn by Alharbi (2022) that teachers are advised to enable students to engage in a debate and inquiry of the opinions and statements because the research demonstrated that the process of such activities has to be negotiated in the cultural charges where the relations of authority and family values might limit the possibility to provide critical discourse.

Teachers responses show some innate conflicts in cultural bridge-building practice, such as the conflict between cultural responsiveness and institutional shells as exemplified by Ms. Priya in waiting to secure the permission of a supervisor, the conflict between respecting cultural values and broadening horizons as seen in Ms. Kamala discussing family attitudes towards reading, and the conflict between local and global training as seen in the tendency of teachers to strike a balance between acknowledging local ways of doing things and preparation in an international academic environment. These tensions necessitate the teachers to devise culturally pedagogical intelligence - the capacity to analyse cultural context, make tactical choices on how to integrate cultures, how to make decisions within institutional restraints, and constantly evolve methods based on feedback and changing situations.

This elite methodology necessitates a staged process of moving between the known cultural context and a variety of global ones, which also necessitates what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu called cultural capital, as it increases the global competencies of the students (Pollman, 2021). Nevertheless, ethnic capital can serve as a possible deficit outlook to slot some cultural learning as more useful than others and may marginalise students, whose learning experiences do not support educational norms of authority. There should be a tension between respecting local cultural practices and getting students ready to immerse themselves in life worlds that might not acknowledge such knowledge systems, which must be keenly handled during implementation.

As opposed to a technique that is used by teachers, cultural bridge-building becomes a multidimensional, dynamic process that involves cultural negotiation in which teachers construct cultural responsiveness in their everyday dealings with students, families, institutions, and curricula.

Systematic Scaffolding and Cross-Curricular Literacy Integration

In systematic scaffolding, teachers must break down difficult learning outcomes into small, simple pieces without losing lines of enduring learning objectives. Mr. This is well proven in the strategy used by Ahmed; he would simplify words by grouping them into small syllables, which the student could then easily cope with. This strategy has been quite productive in enhancing the confidence of the children, especially those who were unwilling readers at first." His orderly deconstruction model depicts why proper scaffolding can make students feel confident as they acquire underlying skills. The given method is an instance of how educators incorporate the foundational framework of scaffolding by Shuib et al. (2020) into their practice and prove that in the context of CBSE, proper scaffolding includes not only the levels of linguistic decomposition but also of confidence-building in second language acquisition learners.

The cross-curricular aspect of systematic scaffolding is the use of literacy strategies across the curriculum with the understanding that literacy does not only exist in language arts but throughout academic and disciplinary domains and necessitates pedagogical responses across disciplinary lines. Mr. This sophistication on the cross-curricular implementation is reflected in the case of Ahmed: "We apply the Vipers strategy not only in English, but also in science in order to improve reading comprehension and critical thinking. In our science lessons, we apply MISS GREN as a kind of mnemonic so that the children can know the processes of life." This process expounds on the skill-specific assessment point made by Howard (2024), that skills are to be scaffolded in

different ways depending on the academic discipline, and that each discipline will need specialised literacy support practice needs.

Such a cross-curricular integration includes what can be considered as the ability of an individual to read, speak, listen, and write by oneself to communicate effectively, according to Ms. Indira (Kerala, 11 years). Communication skills interventions over subject, with units or modules that cut across subjects, not only cross subject boundaries but also demand that teachers become experts in more than one literacy of a subject. Although Goyibova et al. (2025) focus on the concept of multi-modal expertise in the assessment design, according to the results of the present research, scaffolding is required to be multi-modal as well, covering visual, auditory, and kinesthetic support regardless of the disciplinary context of the given task.

Scaffold techniques used by teachers illustrate systemic development since they start with simple skills and complicate analysis. Referring to his 14-year teaching experience, Mr. Ravi illustrates such progression: 'We teach students to compare and contrast two texts by the same author, which helps the students learn stylistic consistency, and theme progression and development.' Such a systematic progression in analysis abilities is also evident through Ms. Sita (9 years teaching experience), who builds on simple to advanced skills: Students are taught to identify a purpose of an author, use of incorrect punctuation in making meaning, identification of the contextual patterns of grammar, examination of character development and a student is taught to discover plot structure that will enable him or her to deduce about future of the story. Having 15 years of experience, Ms. Bharti says the end objective of the scaffolding is to think critically: 'We aim to learn how an opinion can be strong by analysing the point of view of the author, drawing conclusions concerning the assumptions that he has made.'

The cross-curricular solution expands on Spires et al. (2019)'s claim of more extended skills in literacy to understand media, data, displays, and information content by exhibiting certain multimodal skills practised throughout CBSE subject areas, as a little investigation of expanded meanings of literacy in standardised curricular settings. Further, the concept of collaborative scaffolding described in this context can trace its application back to the concepts developed by Zembylas (2019) that state that the discourse (dialogical) system of learning between educators and learners is effective in second language learning in terms of developing the ability to comprehend and goes furtherance by including peer mediated dialogical learning systems where individual cultural learning behaviour and styles of communication are respected.

This high level of gain in cross curricular integration of literacy also comprises what an applied linguist, Mary Schleppegrell, defines as academic language development, i.e., that linguistic aspect which allows success in school-based learning environments (Schleppegrell, 2013). It meant that the task of teachers is to ensure that students acquire disciplinary discourse competencies by embracing the linguistic resources that they already have as cognitive resources instead of being obstacles to be rid of.

Differentiated Pathways and Collaborative Professional Learning

Differentiated pathways are not only a method of individualised instruction, but it is also a professional system of collaboration that demands a product of systematic participation in professional dialogue and shared inquiry to work out culturally responsive tactics. This two-fold conceptualisation indicates the realisation that proficient differentiation both needs the personal teacher component and the professional capacity within a group. Although Rawengwan and Yawiloeng (2020) cite that there is not much literature on the best form of the social learning environment to adopt in forcing a CBSE curriculum, in this study, it has been observed that

differentiated pathways should be complemented by compatible professional learning communities sufficient to support the fascinating challenges of implementation of a culturally responsive pedagogy within the standardized model of education.

Building the differentiated pathways would involve the teachers creating various pathways to the same learning destinations depending on the student's readiness, interests and learning profile. This model opposes the orthodoxy of one-size-fits-all teaching and at the same time operates under high expectations for all students. Ms. This principle has been demonstrated in the case of Fatima: she begins by involving highly competent learners and then gradually includes others, including the learners at the basic level. Even with an inspired performance and ease in understanding, a lot can be done in the contribution of increasing the self-confidence of low achievers by lifting them up to a higher standard, though slowly but progressively." Nevertheless, this step-by-step manner of distinction can unintentionally support the idea of the status quo in the ability levels and restrict the possibilities of various students to offer diverse contributions at the start of a teaching sequence.

Students, therefore, require teachers to realise that differentiation can be successfully applied by noting individual differences as opposed to generalisations. As Ms. Usha (West India, 8 years) states, they are different in terms of strengths and weaknesses, and it is necessary to treat them in a particular way. This realisation is essential owing to the fact that the presence of contextual influences introduces variation, which questions universal assumptions- Boys read better than girls according to Mr. Arjun (Teaching experience- 15 years), but according to Ms. Priya (Teaching experience- 8 years), Girls are found to be better than the boys. Ms. Meera (East India, 5 years) suggests special awareness of the differentiation based on skills: 'Most of the industrial boys in the Grade 3 are better than the girls in terms of pronunciation, punctuation, and voice modulation.' Such situational effects necessitate such responses as must be differentiated and require in-depth

knowledge of literacy formulation. This fact refutes the essentialist theories of gender and learning and illustrates that the reality of differentiation is more variable than thought. This research builds on the Goyibova et al. (2025) differentiation skills hierarchy by showing that differentiation should be context respectful and not doctrinaire, but should constantly be re-evaluated by the teacher and adjusted according to their beliefs about what students are able to do and their behaviours.

This means that adoption of differentiated pathways will demand that teachers acquire flexibility in grouping, differentiated instructional materials, as well as multilateral assessment tools. Moreover, teachers should also be able to come to terms with the complexity of offering various degrees of assistance and preserving classroom unity and common learning objectives. Although O'Neill and Padden (2022) identify resource management and innovation abilities as fundamental skills, this study finds that differentiated instructions go beyond individual teacher skills and also need institutional support structures where teachers have time, resources, and opportunities to collaborate and execute the instructional model in practice. Thus, professional structures should aim at not only assisting individuals in terms of expertise but also encouraging teachers to exchange knowledge and develop their differentiation practices.

Nevertheless, such a varying strategy is directly opposed to the results of the investigation carried out by Afreen (2020) in relation to the Indian education system, in that it showed how professional development assists teachers in establishing grade-specific and context-sensitive means of CBSE implementation. The contribution of research findings to theory is a demonstration of how professional learning communities may both confront the systemic obstacles to differentiation and sustain teachers in the design of practices that respond to local needs within standardised models.

The reporting provided by Ms. Priya of the role of the institution is indicative of the working of proper collaboration structures: "The head of our department encourages us to give our best to

search and implement relevant strategies regarding the emphasis on reading in math." This managerial assistance generates what educational researcher Michael Fullan has termed as implementation literacy - institutionalised organisational practices which facilitate the personal innovation of individual teachers to attain the capacity of collective professional knowledge. In their study, Franco et al. (2024) focus mostly on multi-informant approaches, but reveal how collaborative professional learning needs a multi-faceted perspective that integrates teachers, administrators, students, and community members' views to achieve differentiated instruction.

This integrated approach to differentiated paths is solidified by sophisticated knowledge of the role of literacy in educational and social engagement. Building on his vast 16 years of teaching experience, Mr. Harish describes: Literacy skills entail a bundle of competencies and skills that empower individuals to read, write, comprehend, and clearly communicate in a written language. Such literacy competencies are essential so that individuals can enjoy educational opportunities and integrate into society.

Context-Responsive Flexibility and Multimodal Instruction

Context-responsive flexibility is the adaptive instruction as well as the complex multimodal framework that offers a variety of representational systems, taking into account the way in which the cultural preferences of processing contribute to the way in which students react to the various modalities. This holistic design appreciates that to teach effectively, it is necessary to make constant back-and-forth adjustments according to student feedback and changing conditions, and it is also necessary to recognise different cognitive pathways in learning.

Flexibility, context-responsive involves the ability of the teachers to change their approach depending on the assessment and current understanding of the needs of the students and classroom dynamics and have consistent expectations of growth. This is because this approach acknowledges

that teaching is an adaptive process that must be altered according to the reaction of students and the evolving situations. His way of teaching, as explained by Ms. Aisha, indicates this flexibility: "My teaching strategies, class discussions, and thinking exercises are designed based on these observations." This assertion captures the responsive nature of teaching since teaching decisions are not pre-determined; they are given in the light of real-time assessment of learners' needs and their interests. The study augments the findings of Tekel et al. (2025), who were focused on "sociocultural adaptation", demonstrating that the instructional adaptation needs to be a process that will keep iterating instead of being a financial payoff at a specific period, and presupposes that teachers need to enhance their observational and analytical abilities to make receptive pedagogical judgments.

Although Sansone & Cesareni (2019) state that there is a lack of studies in implementing the socio-constructivist approach into formal classroom CBSE, this study found that context-responsive come-what-may needs to absorb the socio-constructivist approach with both cultural responsiveness and multimodal instruction, resulting in teachers needing to develop more nuanced pedagogical decision-making faculties beyond the traditional model of instruction.

This multimodal development matches the research results represented by a high degree of complex integration of different learning strategies used by teachers when meeting the fact discovered by Sansone & Cesareni (2019) of the lack of research on the implementation of socio-constructivist teaching methods into formal CBSE classes. But unlike other socio-constructivist approaches that support the collaborative development of knowledge, this study shows that successful multimodal instruction should also keep in mind individual learning preferences and cultural types of knowledge that can be more focused on various forms of social interaction or personal reflection.

Teachers also exhibit situational learning, which necessitates adaptive teaching styles as opposed to generalised approaches. Ms. Ritu (West India, 14 years) says that Girls read more than boys and for longer periods than boys, Girls like reading more than boys, and Girls get more satisfaction than boys. Mr. Rajesh (Teaching experience- 12 years) says there is a slight imbalance as boys are more active in sports and online games. Such situational differences must be contextually adapted, as illustrated in the differences in classroom population- Mr. Vikaram (Teaching experience- 11 years) responds with 'Yes, more male readers.' This reveals that competent teaching needs flexible responses rather than hard presuppositions regarding the tendencies of student engagement activities. Nevertheless, it is important not to oversimplify these observations on gender differences in reading engagement to perpetuate gender stereotypes but to admit possible valid contextual differences that have to be accounted for through instructional adaptation.

The multimodal aspect will entail the provision of a variety of representational systems (visual, auditory, kinesthetic), with an issue of how cultural processing preference might inform students towards the various modalities. This flexibility necessitates the teachers to inculcate what the educational psychologist Howard Gardner has referred to as multiple intelligences awareness- understanding that learners can enter the pursuit of learning by utilising different mental avenues. This multimodal literacy is an elaborate notion which is described by Ms. Shobha (West India, 13 years): The study contributes to the theory of multiple intelligences formulated by Gardner because it demonstrates the necessity of allocating the intelligences in modalities to the context of each culture, as some cultures may focus more on certain intelligence and ways of learning than others would.

The implementation supports the results of Ramu and Kumar (2020) that a socio-constructivism approach to the reciprocal teaching methodology can positively affect the understanding skills of

people in CBSE environments, as it exposes the procedure of educators adopting socio-constructivism learning using particular strategies such as the use of choice boards, multimedia content, and culturally sensitive content. Nevertheless, the application of reciprocal teaching to multicultural settings should take into account the possible contradictions between group learning strategies and cultural values, which could promote individual success, knowledge flow based on hierarchy, or alternative interaction strategies among peers.

The level of sophistication of this approach, depending on Ms. Priya's multimodal implementation, is as follows: For example, in using addition problems, students work rather well with manipulatives; however, they have difficulty with word problems. The differentiation of her use of multimodal strategies according to the complexity of content depicts the aspect of the method in need of pedagogical judgment as to which representational systems may be utilised and at what time. This evidence goes further than Goyibova et al. (2025) in focusing on the concept of multimodal assessment design by demonstrating that the concept of multimodal instruction should not apply universally but strategically through the teachers being aware of the given affordances and limitations of each of the modalities, depending on the form of the learning goal.

The elastic teaching is based on what cognitive scientist Allan Paivio had previously dubbed the dual coding theory - awareness that the visual and linguistic information are transferred by separate but interrelated cognitive tracks (Luo, 2022). The instructors adopting this method need to be aware of the way in which a cultural situation affects the preferred channels through which the students want to process the information, and at the same time, make content accessible to the students in more than one way.

Nevertheless, dual coding theory was established mainly on Western populations, and cannot be completely applied to cultural differences involving visual-linguistic preferences processing, hence

the need to adapt and universalise to various forms of civilisation. This dual coding practice responds to the idea promoted by Kirkpatrick and Schaller-Schwaner (2022) about learning environments that facilitate learning through socio-interaction, socio-construction of meaning, and cultural relevance by demonstrating certain methods that teachers utilise to achieve these goals in their multimodal and culturally responsive teaching. The research results thus develop the theory in showing how socio-constructivist learning environments need to be at once multimodal and culturally responsive, which forces the teaching profession to combine and coordinate numerous theoretical perspectives in its everyday activity.

Also situated in the context, flexibility considers the model of technology integration addressed by an educational researcher, Ruben Puentedura, called the SAMR model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) (Stagg et al., 2022). It means that educators should leave the mere replacement of educational materials with digital ones and turn to learning experience transformation that will improve pedagogical objectives with the help of cultural responsiveness.

Thus, the introduction of context-responsive flexibility and multimodal instructions will guarantee the teachers the ability to modify their teaching strategies in response to the real-time evaluation, as well as offering options to the various learners. This involves learning to have an ear to the responses made by students and the adaptability of changing the teaching method and approach when students are not responding well to it. This combined effort indicates

5.1.3 Research Question 3: What key considerations should policymakers reflect on when developing guidelines for CBSE curriculum implementation in international contexts?

Demographic Contextuality and Professional Development Infrastructure

The research work identified great ethnical diversity among the teaching personnel, with the representation of all parts of the Indian region South (31.25), West (18.75), North (37.5), and East (12.5). The given distribution is especially applicable, as such teachers may operate in the CBSE international schools that are currently established in Dubai, yet their regions of origin in India largely affect their background in terms of their education as teachers (B.Ed programs). This shows that the demographics of the teachers influence the style of teaching directly, and it is necessary that policymakers take notice of the various regional training backgrounds and how they influence the implementation of the curriculum.

Also, the reflection of Ms. Sarah stresses the vitality of this consideration: I think it is more efficient to have separate schools create their own reading comprehension guidance documents, taking into account their demographic conditions. Language skills in English and general level of education might be very different, particularly between the urban and the rural or international contexts." A systematic review carried out by Franco et al. (2024) shows that the existing systems of measurement do not include valid measurement invariance (MI) testing in cross-cultural settings, and none of the 27 measures have sufficient evidence. This study, thus, goes further than criticising Franco et al.'s (2024) by actually showing real-life scenarios of how a teacher is resisting the problems of measurement by adapting to the situation with some contextual adaptations of the curriculum that do not injure the integrity of the curriculum, but recognise the diversity inherent in the population.

Such awareness of the population has to be accompanied by what the research will reflect as a coherent system of professional development infrastructure, transcending traditional training approaches. Ms. Rashida's case exemplifies the value of continuous professional learning: Constant professional development and training sessions played a big role in my professional growth as a

teacher and in the specific area of reading comprehension. They have offered quite a number of strategies and tools through which I have been able to apply in my classes." In contrast to the finding of Dumbuya (2024), which indicates that, in most cases, standardised testing and pedagogical frameworks may undermine culturally responsive education, the presented study shows how adaptive professional learning communities can overcome such a tension according to their ability to intercalate standardisation and contextualization.

Literacy development is a complex task, and taking into consideration the specificities of diverse demographic contexts, its multi-faceted nature needs to be acknowledged. Of paramount importance is that Ms. Jayanti focuses on the fact that literacy development is a holistic, multilateral package of skills comprising reading, writing, speaking, listening, thinking, and the ability to critically respond to situations that evolve continuously and open the door to learning. Although Shih (2022) suggests such a form of assessment as the multi-stakeholder evaluation that would include educators, parents, and community members, this study, on the contrary, presents the shortage of these methods in the case of demographic complexity that surpasses the short list of traditional stakeholders. This study shows that demographic contextuality dictates that there should be a departure from the traditional concept of a stakeholder to more refined approaches to how linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic factors overlap, causing them to create a conundrum of theories unable to capture their holistic relationship with each other.

The relevance of the demographic contextuality can be justified by the research by Meenakshi and Sheeba (2022) devoted to the influence of social relations on the literacy process. Nevertheless, although their study draws attention to the overall effect of social processes on literacy formation, this paper develops their work by capturing particular methods of dealing with various social relations in international CBSE environments applied by various educators. The present study

presents practical findings of the way in which teachers intentionally differentiate students not to confine or segregate but to give special attention in curriculum structures, as opposed to the abstract approach of Meenakshi and Sheeba.

The continued support is essential, as Ms. Rashida participates in these professional learning communities: "I am a part of a group of educators, the Centre for National Teacher Recognition in India, and I have subscribed to a number of educational newsletters, such as Smart Classroom Management. It keeps me updated and brings creative ideas, and I normally share them with my colleagues using these resources." The analysis of critical pedagogy implementation provided by Nyamekye et al (2024) shows how top-down reforms in education are opposed by the entrenched socio-cultural norms. Nonetheless, the present study demonstrates that this resistance can be redirected to a positive working relationship when professional development infrastructure allows teachers to be cultural mediators, and not policy carriers, implying a drastic change in the notion of a teacher in foreign surroundings.

2. Alignment of Cultural Asset Orientation and Assessment System

An orientation transformative significance is exemplified by the reconceptualization of Ms. Priya: "Because we are educators, and being and teaching in Dubai, in a CBSE school, we are fortunate in the fact that we are directed to think about the student not only as a second language speakers who are learning in an Indian curriculum school but as international students studying the national curriculum of India, on the international territory." Pasha's (2023) criticism of the way Pakistan is borrowing its policies based on the aid-driven ideas that inform the creation of the external structures without consulting the locals is extremely valuable in contextualizing the reframing by Ms. Priya. Nevertheless, whereas Pasha concentrates on the macro-level policy criticism, the study shows that in the attempt to fight neo-colonial structures, individual educators also resist them at a

classroom scale by changing the way students are perceived, which implies that the decolonization process involves not only policy changes but also teaching practices.

Nonetheless, this cultural asset orientation will present a lot of challenges when it is challenged by the traditional assessment methods. The conflict between the philosophy of asset-based and standardized assessment assumptions has been observed, as noted by Ms. Sarah: "The analysis tools based on models such as QLA have revealed the fact that although children are capable of grasping simple concepts, the level of their understanding skills may not develop properly as they advance to secondary grades." In its systematic review, Franco et al (2024) find that two of 27 culturally responsive measures would be proposed based on sufficient evidence to reach the threshold of fully supporting consequential validity, leaving underlying issues with existing assessment systems. The present study, therefore, suggests that the seeming inconsistency between assessment results and asset-based approaches could be symptomatic of measurement inadequacy and not pedagogical breakdown, problematizing attempts at Comprehension of assessment results in varied assessments. The challenges associated with the evaluation in multi-cultural environments can be illustrated by the assessment of the demographic information, which demonstrates the hidden nature of the traditional evaluation techniques that can conceal the students' abilities instead of helping to identify them. The data provided by Ms. Anita in her school indicates that there are gender-differentiated achievement patterns in reading, showing that 75 percent of girls perform at the high lexile level compared to 65 percent of boys, showing that culturally responsive assessment practices should be considered, as it allows them to specify such patterns, instead of reporting the aggregate score. The findings of research conducted by Tekel et al. (2025) on international students in Turkey prove that language proficiency is largely affected and preceded by sociocultural adaptation, and culture shock and interpersonal stress are two examples of factors affecting the development of

language skills. Although Tekel et al. (2025) study the contexts of universities, this study complements their results to the K-12 contexts and shows that gendered patterns in outcomes achievement possibly reflect differences in cultural adaptation processes that might necessitate assessment schemes that can differentiate between linguistic and cultural adjustment difficulties.

Moreover, Dr. Sharma expresses that age-related expectations can be utilized as a parameter in which individual student grades are compared with the national levels of development, but such parameters might not be enough to identify the peculiarities of the cultural and linguistic diversity of international school students. The study by Howard (2024) on the acquisition of a second language underlines the fact that, on the one hand, proficiency expectations should be developmentally adjusted and recognize age peculiarities of language acquisition, and, on the other hand, the proficiency should be developed not on the basis of a monolingual norm but on the basis of a multilingual repertoire. This study identifies the core contradiction between developmental adequacy and multilingual sophistication, where age criteria need to be redefined and they need to incorporate the cognitive benefits of multilingualism as opposed to the analysis of multilingual proficiency using monolingual developmental standards.

This observation directly contradicts Kumar's (2020) development that English operates as a language filter, which assesses students mainly based on their foreign language proficiencies as opposed to academic skills. Although the point of linguistic gatekeeping is noted by Kumar (2020), the present study adds to his findings by reporting the appropriate strategies that teachers employ to lessen this filtering effect. This study reveals that teachers are critical of linguistic gatekeeping and that they actively engage in ensuring that the curriculum remains coherent and that they adapt the instruction based on the level of language proficiency, indicating that the deterministic approach to English as a filter, written by Kumar, can be actively opposed by using correct pedagogy.

Mr. Deepak indicated that successful teaching of literacy had to value the languages and cultural experiences of students at home. Such cultural-asset orientation also compels policymakers to obtain the knowledge about what Geneva Gay, an educational researcher, terms the cultural wealth, or all the types of capital students with various backgrounds possess and which they can transfer into educational environments (D'Andrea Martinez et al., 2023). Although the theoretical framework advanced by Gay promotes the distinction among different types of cultural capital, this study enhances her findings as it empowers teachers in the systematic transformation of cultural wealth recognition within the parameters of standardized curriculum implementation indicating that cultural asset orientation represents a phenomenon that necessitates not only conceptual recognition but redesigning its systematic assessment. Policy models, thus, should not oversee these types of capital as an impediment to the normative curriculum delivery but should emphasize and exploit them. But this recognition will be useless without some kind of assessment system that is able to acknowledge and legitimise this wide variety of capitals.

The orientation also includes what theorist of postcolonial education, Homi Bhabha, calls third space thinking, or practices that abandon inherited binary terms and formulate new educational identities, which enables respect of local and global perceptions at the same time (Al Braifkani & Gnce, 2025). The study produced by Sun (2022) concludes that students who had daily foreign language instruction did better than those who did not on the language arts portions of such standardized tests on the third, fourth, and fifth grades, which points to the conclusion that learning a second language makes academic performance better, not worse. But this study shows that third space thinking needs assessment models that can measure learning in cross-cultural and cross-linguistic situations and not just single determinants of success, taking the Bhabha theory into the realm of practical measurement planning.

Yet, the balance between the cultural asset orientation and standardized assessment strikes a chord with the issues highlighted by Siemund et al. (2021), who write about the role of English as a linguistic filter in the UAE education system, which places indigenous languages in the category of minority ones. Nevertheless, this study offers a more positive explanation by recording how educators actively counteract such filtering effects in the form of sustaining growth mindset attitudes that do not deprive individuals of starting-point differences yet believe in the universal potential to grow. Nevertheless, this expands on the criticism provided by Siemund et al. (2021), providing practical examples of how one can resist linguistic marginalization in terms of standardized curricula.

Policymakers have to put in place assessment systems where there are several pathways to the accomplishment of the curriculum, rather than thinking that one size fits all students under uniform methods of doing things. According to the study of Molway, Arcos, and Macaro (2022), the prevalence of L1 use is recorded by 44 percent of teachers in England, as the participants mentioned, leading to the statement that it is worrying, as it is unlikely to create the most comfortable conditions to develop communicative competence. But this investigation has disproved those apprehensions by showing that strategic L1 use can have a positive as opposed to an inhibitory effect in educational accomplishment when used in cultural asset frameworks that view students' multilingual abilities as potential assets as opposed to educational problems.

Professional Autonomy Balance and Teacher Autonomy Parameters

This balance need is perhaps just what Ms. Fatima is referring to when she says: "As I see it, a guidance document provided by CBSE can be useful, but it should not be over restrictive." Considering the development in the technological sphere and the requirement of a new approach toward the teaching process, teachers can be urged to organize their research and investigate the

21st-century learning skills." A study by Nyamekye, Asare-Danso, and Ofori (2024) on the situation of critical pedagogy implementation in Ghana highlights that teachers are being pressured to implement something they do not wish to do in the presence of a policy that disregards the long-standing social-cultural norms of the region. Their research has also been expanded in this study by indicating that not only is professional autonomy necessary in order to be culturally responsive, but also necessary in order to uphold pedagogical integrity in areas where standardized policies may contradict local realities of education.

To exemplify the practical reality of professional autonomy, teachers have to fashion themselves complex pedagogical repertoires that are capable of addressing the varied needs of students without losing sight of curricular coherence. Ms. Rekha promotes what she calls contextually adaptive teaching, which goes beyond uniformity and standardisation by helping non-English speakers using visual means and giving English language learner students background knowledge on culture so that they can learn to understand the text being read. A systematic review by Franco, Bottiani, and Bradshaw (2024) indicates that the barriers to culturally responsive practice include logistical ones and the lack of evidence that such practice includes systematic community engagement in the current theories. But this study has shown that this can be addressed when college instructors use professional autonomy to develop local approaches to community engagement, and this means that a systematic community involvement might need bottom-top as opposed to top-bottom formation strategies.

As indicated in Ms. Rekha's approach, professional autonomy cannot be divorced from a profound pedagogical knowledge that would help teachers make more informed decisions about when and how to differentiate instruction based on student needs and go beyond accommodations to more

advanced but differentiated instruction that not only provides accessibility but also maintains academic rigor.

This view is congruent with the study by Merga et al. (2020) that highlights the scarcity of research on how to individualise literacy instruction in standardised curriculum settings such as CBSE. But this study takes their issue further by giving real-life examples on how teachers can uphold curricular integrity against flexing to the needs of different learners. This research provides a relevant model of differentiation in standardised contexts, filling the gap that Merga et al. (2020) identified, since it showed that it is indeed possible to have individualization inside the framework of structured curricula as long as educators obtain proper professional autonomy.

However, this autonomy should come hand in hand with accountability of the student learning outcomes, and hence policy policymakers should draw the scope within which the professional judgment can be exercised. The study by Shih (2022) focuses on so-called collaborative curriculum development in which community members are considered as cultural consultants and curriculum co-designers. Shih concentrates on formal structures of collaboration, whereas the answers of Ms. Rekha and Ms. Fatuma show that professional autonomy empowers teachers so that they become informal mediators of culture in which they use their pedagogical decision making to enable constant dialogue between the community and the curriculum. Such a differentiation is especially important in multicultural or international settings where the presence of cultural and language diversities can necessitate considerable modifications in the instructional practice without violating the integrity of the curriculum.

The necessity of such a balance is brought out by the findings of Kumar and Lata (2020), who noted that teachers should make decisions on the linguistic and thinking requirements they would want to be incumbent in order to interpret texts and select suitable learners. This study, however, goes

beyond their findings and records the manner in which teachers undertake such matching, but still in ways that preserve curricular integrity. That research demonstrates that the teachers rely on assessment records and expert judgment to be flexible, within the generalised scheme, by offering particular methodologies to match their texts to those they learn.

Finally, crucial as it might be, teacher autonomy should be complemented with professional development and the continuous process of mentoring, since teachers should possess the skills and knowledge enabling them to make the correct decisions regarding curriculum adaptation. According to the work by Howard (2024), the successful SLA in international settings is based more on setting up the most conducive environment to use the language than following some methodological strategies. This study builds on the evidence provided by Howard by proving that the establishment of favorable conditions presupposes professional autonomy in making real-time decisions about the use of language several times, depending on the contextual information that cannot be established in advance with regard to the policy frameworks. This need for support links professional independence with system-oriented professional development, and this is how closely these policy issues are interrelated.

Flexibility of resource allocation and support of implementation structure facilities

The study shows that the implementation of the curriculum in various contexts needs substantial resources, such as special materials, a more comprehensive learning time, and more support from personnel. Ms. Priya's example demonstrates that adaptive teaching is a resource-intensive phenomenon: "When it comes to children experiencing difficulties, I explore the underlying causes of the problem, be it problems with phonetics or another part of reading." According to the study, carried out by Tekel et al. (2025), the aspect of holistic guidance of the students requires the consideration of the linguistic and cultural elements, as well as psychological ones, implying the

assessment system, support service system, instructional system, and professional development system. Although Tekel et al. (2025), were dealing with situations at the university level, this study applies their framework of infrastructure to K-12 environments and discovers the policies on the allocation of resources that need to take into consideration the differences between the experience of students when it comes to adapting to their cultural and linguistic environments.

The consideration demands the formation of collaborative learning communities and support of organizational contextual curriculum adaptation, as the proper implementation of the curriculum cannot depend only on individual teacher efforts and must rely on planned organizational investments. Although Dumbuya (2024b) cites "budgetary constraints" as one of the primary considerations of the policy and its necessity to be accordingly financed by providing sufficient amounts of funding to facilitate the process of culturally responsive curriculum development, this study discovered that the resource allocation issues are not limited to the funding decisions as well as the organization should possess enough capacity to support the complex pedagogical strategies. The infrastructure should deal with both technical and pedagogical problems of the international curriculum implementation and introduce financing streams that could accommodate differentiated learning resources and increase the learning time of diverse groups of learners.

The strategy of Ms. Priya demonstrates that responsive teaching involves investment of time as well as resources of special knowledge, and it is very costly in terms of time and funds. The intensive character of successful differentiated instruction can be well illustrated by studying the pedagogical complexity of responsive teaching in the contexts of varied groups. Ms. Nandini demonstrates an outstanding use of pedagogical resources with her huge collection of 22 different kinds of reading strategies, including such basic ones as rereading the text, to some more complex: synthesis and evaluation skills, which show that quality teaching needs serious investment in the

knowledge and skills of teachers. The systematic review conducted by Franco, Bottiani, and Bradshaw (2024) indicates that culturally responsive practice also demands such "multi-informant frameworks involving family as well as teacher and student reports" and a cultural inquiry procedure involving key informants, but especially students themselves.

International Context Recognition and Systematic Adaptation Framework

The statements of Mr. Ahmed that “The students have homes in which English is not the predominant language of communication, but they are assumed to possess grade-level reading comprehension in English” point to the issues that are unique to international settings and cannot be resolved through the transplantation of the existing strategies of domesticated curriculum but need the systematic adaptation framework instead. Also, the finding by Ms. Kamala that most families give preference to academic subjects in education, such as mathematics and science subjects, over reading for pleasure, as a research finding shows that there are varying cultural values towards learning, which policies must take into consideration and think through in a holistic manner.

These findings illustrate the necessity to consider that the world educational environment necessitates the various approaches of implementation in comparison with the home environment, and due to this, specific policies have to be developed to take into consideration various challenges and opportunities that international education environments provide. Although the concept of neo-colonial, neo-imperial or even neo-patriarchy systems being deliberately globalist in their neoliberal ideologies as outlined by Pasha (2023) is an educative insight into the study, it is important to note that this study moves further than such critique, by showing that some specific modes are being used to resist such structures with the educators remaining connected with educational standards on

a global level. The policymakers should get to know that any curriculum models that are designed in a domestic setting might have to be largely changed in order to apply in an international setting. This is the basic significance of this consideration as characterised by the comparative observation of Ms. Priya: "The significant distinction here is in the training approach. In India, the training has a more general character and usually has general themes regarding the trainee-teachers. Nevertheless, in the present international environment, professional growth is narrower and more differentiated and deals with certain topics, industries, and subjects. According to the analysis provided by Nyamekye, Asare-Danso, and Ofori (2024), NaCCA unveiled SBC unpreparedly on a cultural level, which resulted in the phenomenon of teacher resistance and disconnection with culture. This study follows their finding further in showing how international situations demand more than simply cultural preparation, but rather a generalised appreciation of the fact that at the global-local interface, distinctive pedagogical challenges exist which cannot be met by global or local ways alone.

The comparison of the generalised and specialised approach that Ms. Priya provided shows how international settings need more advanced professional development structures that recognise the complexity of context.

This result delves deeply into the same finding by Singh (2021) of the absence of research in the implementation of culturally sensitive means in international CBSE settings. The study demonstrates how standardised curriculum is modified by teachers to suit it to different cultural and linguistic settings, and it gives specific examples of culturally sensitive ways of implementation that Singh has sought. This research shows that even apparently more traditional teachers perceive curriculum goals as destinations or intended destinations, presenting practitioners with a template

of culturally responsive curriculum delivery that does not undermine academic integrity but does consider cultural circumstances.

Recognition of the needs in terms of the international context involves the comprehension of the specific requirements for the professional development of teachers operating in a global environment. Such educators may reduce the requirement of special training in multicultural studies, second language learning, and cross-cultural communication, which would not be essential in the more homogenous local settings. The study conducted by Alharbi (2022) dwells upon the necessity of introducing dialogical interactions between critical researchers, policymakers, and Saudi English educators, as well as a culture of voice that critically analyses current educational practices. Nevertheless, this study demonstrates that these dialogical strategies need a formal scaffolding for a cross-cultural professional learning beyond episodic exchanges to sustained inquiry across cultural boundaries.

The comment of Mr. Ahmed, Kamala, and Ms. Priya indicates the necessity to take into account various cultural circumstances, whether one knows languages or not, and a diverse experience of education that also imposes its own understanding of curriculum and approach to curriculum implementation. This perception should not be merely at the surface level, but real policy formulation to counter such differences by means of variation guidance and support systems. Investigations by Molway, Arcos, and Macaro (2022) prove differences in the use of the second language in various national contexts, where 44 per cent of teachers in England reported about "L1 predominant use" as opposed to the patterns in Spain. Their comparative research is further developed in the study to show that the differences in cross-national practice indicate more distinct differences in the conceptualisation of pedagogical decision-making processes in the international

context, which demands adaptation plans that consider cultural differences of language learning philosophy and not a universal approach to second language acquisition.

The necessity of systematic adaptability abroad is also dependent on the results of the fact that teachers display an advanced navigation through the varying environments of the classrooms, which, in most cases, fail to meet the demands of the standardised curriculum. Instead of taking this as a conflict, the teachers show how curriculum objectives may be interpreted under flexible interpretation and still with integrity. This contributes to Lukianenko's (2024) argument that little research has been done to elaborate on the mitigation of linguistic gatekeeping effects in the environment of international schools where CBSE is studied, including particular strategies that the teachers use to achieve their requirements, even though linguistic diversity presents a challenge.

5.2 Recommendation

The detailed analysis of the research on CBSE international schools demonstrates the already existing pedagogical sophistication that takes place in various global locations. These recommendations are not aimed at introducing new interventions but are directed at institutional capacity to develop around practices that are already yielding successful results in multicultural educational settings. This is not about developing new methods but using the best efforts already being done and adopting a systematic approach so that it becomes scalable and sustainable. The five evidence-based recommendations for scaling successful CBSE international practices are discussed below.

Formalise and Scale Existing Diagnostic Assessment Excellence

Teachers in CBSE international schools have created very advanced diagnostic assessment strategies that go beyond the traditional forms of standardised testing. The step-by-step evaluation of linguistic knowledge, cultures, and levels of academic preparation in several languages, Ms.

Sarah and others make, suggests the high level of professionalism that regards multilingual skills as educational advantages. Such practitioners instinctively make cultural responsiveness a part of their assessment practices and consider detailed diagnosis as a basis of effective instruction and not as part of the beginning process.

In principle, this Evidence demonstrates that effective teachers realise their potential regarding assessment, in the sense that assessment is conceived as culturally responsive pedagogy in accordance with the concept beyond deficit-based ideas to an understanding of performance as an asset-based evaluation and acknowledges the various forms of cultural capital. This principle is a direct result of what is actually practised and not imposed by theory.

Schools, therefore, need to record and codify the evaluation processes these instructors have come up with, to establish the framework in the form of contracts that can be shared with more advanced diagnostic methods. This is to be done through professional learning communities where teachers are able to define their assessment plans, collectively improve their diagnostic practices with inquiry and supervise others on culturally responsive procedures of evaluation. The institutional issue is to develop a system to support the practices which are already showing success.

Policy makers should also support this, but based on a deeper understanding that the existing regulatory systems tend to restrain rather than assist the more advanced assessment processes already in place. Documented excellence should be developed further through policy development by generating flexible systems of accountability that confirm comprehensive diagnostic systems developed by the teachers. These involve investment in the purchase of more specialised evaluation tools, the provision of professional development opportunities that build on what teachers already know, and the creation of evaluation systems that acknowledge that there can be more than one pathway to curriculum outcomes, all of which effective teachers are already doing successfully.

Institutionalise the Collaborative Professional Excellence Already Demonstrated

The study established that there is already a lot of knowledge-sharing among teachers who do it informally, and it assumes that it is very successful; administrators supply significant support in cross-curricular strategy deployment. Most teachers are already participating in a complex professional discourse on contextual interpretation of the curriculum, with a notable capacity to integrate various theoretical perspectives in their day-to-day work. They follow the CBSE guidelines as minimum standards and not limiting, thus portraying a degree of professional discretion, which requires systematic institutional backup.

This evidence demonstrates that successful international educators also have what might be called cosmopolitan competence, that is, the proven capacity to mediate between international standards of education and local activity and cultural sensitivity. This competence is a result of joint professional practice and not individual preparation, and, therefore, excellence in international environments has not been an individualistic affair.

Schools should therefore formalise the professional learning communities which are already serving informally and offer structured time, resources, and administration support to allow collaborative inquiry as is naturally undertaken by effective teachers. Such will entail designing mentorship initiatives where new and mature culturally responsive practitioners can be matched, developing action research designs that allow an analytical gaze into effective methods, and creating documentation networks that allow the transfer of innovative methods in the CBSE networks across borders.

Policymakers need to remember that the current policy frameworks largely do not acknowledge the expertise needed in international education situations. Policymakers ought to operate on the professional excellence that is already in place to develop encompassing professional learning

systems that can recognise the complex training such environments require. It entails encouraging distributed forms of leadership that can integrate the various cultural orientations, investing in sustaining collaborative inquiry, and developing assessment practices that can identify and reward the already effective culturally responsive practices.

Systematise the Sophisticated Pedagogical Integration Already Occurring

Educators such as Mr. Ahmed displayed disciplined use of literacy practices across all subjects but without losing disciplinary objectives, and they show high-order knowledge of the links between disciplinary learning across the curricular divisions. The pedagogical shrewdness between the context-responsive shifting of Ms. Aisha and the multimodal application of Ms. Priya involves teaching flexibility largely informed by real-time student involvement observation, with the ability to make dynamic teaching decisions. These teachers have also cultivated long repertoires of teaching tactics--the study describes 22 teaching approaches employed by the teachers--and use them according to the cultural situations and learning habits.

The evidence is proof that the teachers are able to perform pedagogical duties in different contexts involves a concurrent combination, as opposed to a combination, of several pedagogical approaches. Teachers inherently synthesise scaffolding, technology integration and cultural responsiveness and show good educational practice to be a complex combination of theoretical frameworks and not a simple adherence to a simplified model.

Schools should therefore record and codify the broad repertoires of strategies that good teachers have been able to develop, developing systematic systems that describe their use: at what point, by which practitioners, and using which strategies. This includes creating cross-curricular collegial arrangements through which teachers will be able to coordinate the advanced pedagogical methods they intend to use, establishing resource systems that will supply the varied resources that these

methods will need and developing professional development to be built on existing knowledge and not inculcating external models.

Also, policy makers should explore the pedagogical sophistication that has already been performed and should be identified and favoured by policy-makers through establishing provisions that are flexible in the curriculum that will enhance the responsive adjustment, which teachers are already making effectively. This will entail the financing of elaborate materials in terms of scaffolding, aid to integration of technology that helps in boosting cooperation in engagement and setting up of assessment schemes that can review the integrated pedagogical strategies so far showing desirable results.

Build Policy Frameworks Around Demonstrated Cultural Translation Excellence

The study established that teachers in CBSE international schools are already doing proficient "cultural translation" work, converting curriculum instructions into legitimate learning adventures that respect both world and local levels. They show incredible professional ability to interpret within a localised context and do not compromise educational integrity as they have the ability to traverse global-local pressures via intensive strategic integration of cultures that goes beyond surface allusions to real cultural competency.

The Evidence demonstrates that the implementation of an international curriculum entails expert decision-making to ensure that there is a compromise between the global standards and the local dexterity. This ability is already being exhibited by teachers in their situationally adapting interpretations of CBSE requirements so as to achieve consistency in the learning objectives and responsiveness to cultural and linguistic contexts.

Scholl should convert this into institutional practice through the systematic support of the work of cultural mediation that began to be provided by teachers and through the structuring of modalities

that allow the true engagement of the community without compromising academic rigour. This includes creating specific context-based guidance material, using successful adaptation at the local level to create professional growth that reinforces and adds on to cultural competency that has already been there, and initiating collaborative systems that allow continual dialogue between the international principles and the reality on the ground.

Well aware that the conventional policy frameworks are usually unable to consider the intricacy of the cross-border educational environment, policymakers ought to come up with responsive approaches based on proven excellence in cultural translation through developing tiered guidance systems that can uphold curriculum integrity and allow contextual adaptation, which is already successfully pursued by teachers. This involves dynamic funding arrangements that take into consideration the needs of different populations, allocation of resources that enhance the advanced cultural work that is already underway, and evaluation frameworks that have the capacity to measure results in a variety of settings.

Establish Institutional Support that will facilitate the existing Excellence of Integration.

The study established that teachers were already automatically establishing third space learning settings where the students often fill the knowledge gap between their cultural and scholarly knowledge as they acquire global competencies. From the study, it is also clear that teachers are exhibiting expert skill in integrating assessment, cultural responsiveness, scaffolding, and collaboration at once, proving that effective learning practice consists of complex integration and not the step-by-step implementation of independent strategies. These teachers have consistent methods of cultural mediation with them, which allow them to engage with the community as real and at the same time sustain curricular integrity.

It is therefore clear that the implementation of the concept of sustainable curriculum is the result of interdependent methods that are based on the dynamic interface of numerous aspects of education. This integration is already evident among teachers who have proven that theoretical sophistication can become practical effectiveness in the case of practitioners, given sufficient professional autonomy and institutional support.

Therefore, schools ought to build institutional capacity on the integration of excellence that teachers have already established, effectively establishing institutional support around the complicated work that such natural practitioners do. This includes the development of the full implementation infrastructure that acknowledges the integration of multiple theoretical frameworks, developing the community involvement processes that extend the existing experience of cultural mediation, and creating the evaluation systems that permit evaluation of the integrated as opposed to isolated educational elements.

Policies in many cases divide educational activity into segments that are not in line with effective practice. Policymakers ought to design a more cohesive support infrastructure that highlights the already identified excellence of concurrent strategies implementation, promoting the provision of broad structures of funding to match the sophistication of the practices, and formulating methods to evaluate the complex competencies that teachers are already successfully displaying.

5.3 Reflective Action Plan: Advancing Reading Comprehension for L2 Speakers in CBSE

International Schools

Through the 'Combination Paradigm' framework - integrating cognitive science, socio-constructivism, and critical literacy approaches - my investigation into reading comprehension approaches for second language speakers in CBSE international schools has yielded notable results. The theoretical integration addressed Baker and Fang's (2021) concern about the lack of research

that links the theoretical literacy foundation to the implementation in the multilingual setting. Several strengths of the approach used in the study were demonstrated. By capturing authentic classroom implementation strategies in teacher perspectives, I was able to capture sophisticated adaptations made by educators when using the CBSE curriculum for inclusive classes. The findings generated by this context-specific understanding are indicative of CBSE international schools in Dubai and India, which have a literature gap in literacy instruction, especially in these unique educational environments that are faced with the intersection of traditional curricular frameworks with international contexts.

Key findings related to critical literacy principles often failed to translate into systematic integration by teachers, and teachers conceptualised literacy broadly, not narrowly, while navigating tensions between standardisation and differentiation skillfully. Standardised measures and embedded classroom in assessment practices are blended, and there is inconsistent practice for multimodal teaching strategies.

However, limitations were apparent to a great extent. The emphasis on teacher perspectives, in particular, in research left little room for that of the students, the parents, and, most importantly, the school leadership: the literacy ecosystem was left incomplete. While I wasn't able to document the implementation of 'the Combination Paradigm' or clearly define metrics by which effectiveness may be evaluated in relation to different student populations, 'the Combination Paradigm' was identified as a theoretical framework. Furthermore, the generalizability is possible only to the specific research settings given the geographical and contextual constraints.

Action Plan: Advancing Through Enhanced Stakeholder Engagement

The absence of student perspectives was the most critical gap in my research. To leverage this limitation as a chance for the enrichment of students' learning, I intend to achieve a comprehensive

student voice integration: through three connected approaches: first, I will organize age-appropriate focus groups with 8-10 Grade 4/ students per session, combined with visual thinking tools aimed at helping young learners to articulate their reading experiences and preferences. Directly, these sessions will change my methodology from research about students to research with students—that is, from treating students as passive objects to active participants.

Second, I will establish student advisory panels, which I will refer to as "literacy consultants," and who can reflect authentic feedback on the text selection and activity design. On a broader scale, this ongoing mechanism ensures that instruction is not about adult assumptions of student needs but about students' genuine and essential needs. Third, I will create age-appropriate reflective journals and visual affordance mechanisms that allow students to document their encounters with reading comprehension activities. By making these tools, the continuous data on student experiences and metacognitive awareness will be simultaneously developed to address Begum's (2020) identified gap in access to critical literacy approaches.

Although young students face challenges in defining metacognitive processes or in collecting comprehensive data, gaining student voice in curriculum development outweighs these challenges. The complete integration should take place within 3 to 6 months from the day of implementation. Second, based on this student voice initiative, I will form groups of teachers and students to work in groups, reviewing and redesigning reading comprehension units together. This acquires the value of both teacher expertise and students' experience in providing good literacy materials. For instance, I will: Train participating students to function as "literacy consultants" capable of offering valid feedback on text selection and activity design, incorporate co-teaching occasions in which advanced students tutor their classmates who develop text choices and activities, and document the collaborative design procedure in order to develop transferable models.

Given this, critical literacy approaches —an area of conceptually understood yet inconsistently implemented work among teachers—will be primarily targeted in these collaborative teams. I will engage teachers in reading texts with an eye toward critical literacy principles and work as a support in examining power structures embedded within texts and promoting student agency for questioning the dominant narratives of those texts. The collaborators will develop a platform as an implementation laboratory where collaboratively designed materials are piloted in structured observation and documentation of student engagement and comprehension outcomes. Through this approach in the laboratory, iteration and refinement can be performed much faster and based on evidence, rather than assumption.

Starting with 2-3 classrooms over one semester, implementation will occur only after two key success indicators are documented: the production of student-informed curriculum materials, increased student ownership of learning, and alignment of instructional approaches with student needs.

Finally, I will provide extensive guidance on how to operationalise the Combination Paradigm into classroom practice in order to address the implementation documentation gap. Consequently, detailed rubrics for implementation fidelity will be included across cognitive, socio-constructivist, and critical dimensions for teacher use to self-assess and engage in continuous improvement. Based on this research, the implementation guidance will feature gender responsive approaches for reading patterns, which are complex and non-universal. Rather than forcing stereotypes, the guidance will lay out a template for systematic reading choice and engagement pattern observation, followed by multiple-hue interpretation of that based on the binary gender.

The reading instruction and materials presentation will be iteratively tested via an action research model, wherein different approaches to reading instruction will be tried and then implemented after

a successful cycle of testing. It provides empirical evidence for effective practices and develops differentiated access points to texts based on interest rather than gender. It will take 6-12 months to build the initial documentation and pilot, and judge success by evidence of increased teacher confidence in using the framework and resulting student reading comprehension outcomes improvements.

Fourth, research revealed that teachers value multimodal approaches but that they are inconsistently implemented. For this, I will push a comprehensive curriculum mapping initiative that will take into consideration these approaches in an explicit manner, integrated into the reading comprehension curriculum. First, in this process, there will be a detailed study of the existing curriculum documentation, and some instances of the development of multimodal components will be identified, and how they were implemented systematically rather than depending on the teachers. Based on this audit, which I will use to create a modality skill matrix that matches comprehension skills with modalities that will be clear on guidance and instructionally flexible.

Finally, I shall also build a searchable repository of multimodal teaching tools that are aligned with curriculum objectives for the sake of implementation, thereby clearing the way and facilitating consistent use between classrooms. Significantly, I will develop assessment techniques that permit proof of comprehension in several modalities, such that efforts to circumvent traditional CBSE evaluation methods through reason-backed advocacy. It takes teachers through this systematic approach that is based on teachers' already successful practices and is consistent with the classroom. Despite the complexity it will bring to curriculum planning, there are implementation barriers to technology access that will be present, but the functionality of addressing multiple diverse needs makes the investment worthwhile.

Finally, I will set up research partnerships with CBSE international schools in other regions (in Southeast Asia and Africa), in order to compare implementation approaches across a variety of different international curricula (CBSE, IB, Cambridge). It will document context-specific adaptations and universal principles and make context-specific implication recommendations.

I will also simultaneously use a multilayered evaluation framework in order to address the previous lack of clear metrics. The student assessment data that will be included in this framework in comparison between reading comprehension metrics pre and post implementation; student, perception surveys will convey regular feedback about engagement and agency; teacher reflection journals in which changes in practice and results will be recorded and observed; classroom observation protocols using structured tools that focus on critical literacy indicators; and in place of the parent feedback devices, will be parent feedback mechanisms will provide perceptions of reading engagement at home.

To achieve this comprehensive approach, 12-24 months of partnership development and comparative research are required, followed by measurement of success with international research partnerships, the production of comparative case studies, and the development of evidence-based implementation guides.

In conclusion, this reflective action plan allows curriculum development to be a collaborative process between teachers, students, and researchers by leveraging the unique contributions from each perspective. In order to promote understanding of effective reading comprehension instruction for second language speakers in international educational settings, I centre student voices, design processes in collaboration, systematize critical literacy and multimodal approaches, and build robust evaluation mechanisms.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The chapter presents a synthesis of the research findings on successful reading comprehension strategies among the second language learners in CBSE international schools within Dubai and India. The chapter addresses significant theoretical contributions to English as additional language instruction and international education, challenging existing paradigms through the development of the Combination Paradigm.

The chapter opens with a comprehensive reflection on the three main research questions that provided the framework for this study, a consideration of pedagogical principles for effective teaching, a translation of these principles into teaching practice, and major policy considerations in support of second language learning. By using systematic analyses of teacher experiences, classroom dynamics, and pedagogy, this research discovered that the best way to implement it involves complex incorporation of assessment-based cultural scaffolding, intentional cultural bridging, systematic cross-curricular literacy integration, and collaborative building of knowledge.

After this reflection, the chapter examines implications on various stakeholders such as students, teachers, policymakers, curriculum coordinators, and consultants showing how educational practice is interconnected. The discussion presents major theory-related advances to English as Additional Language teaching and global education, disrupting current paradigms by contributing to the formulation of the Combination Paradigm.

The chapter upholds the standards of scholarly practice by noting limitations in the study and yet outlines opportunities and promising dimensions of future research. Key input that goes into efficacious international education should be ecosystem-level development, not local interventions.

6.2 Reflection on Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the essential foundational principles for the design of a reading comprehension approach to be implemented in Dubai and Indian international schools?

This study identifies four essential foundational principles for effective implementation of the CBSE curriculum in international and heterogeneous learning contexts that defy the conventional way of viewing pedagogical strategies as distinct, sequential institutions.

The first is assessment-driven cultural scaffolding and adaptive teaching. This is an approach in which systematic diagnostic assessment is merged with cultural responsiveness; the practice uses students' cultural knowledge and linguistic background as cognitive scaffolding. Ms. Priya and other teachers will begin by checking the level of reading before setting up a program, and Ms. Aisha will differentiate students according to their vocabulary tests and familiarity with the culture, and start using international materials after developing cultural connections.

The second is cultural bridge-building, and strategic cultural integration involves the use of various teaching modes that suit various learners and also has the application of the real world. This is an extension of more text-based methods, providing the use of visual aids, manipulatives and technology to evade linguistic constraints, yet retain conceptual integrity. The teachers exhibit rich strategy sets, and some use more than 20 strategies.

The third is systematic scaffolding and cross-curricular literacy integration, which unites methodical development of skills with highly refined professional judgment, making up scaffolded progressive development. Teachers are not just curriculum implementers but mediators of the curriculum, leaving the educational integrity, but adapting the standardised curriculum. This is by

introducing the basics to second language learners and proceeding in steps to teach advanced applications.

The fourth is collaborative knowledge construction and professional community acknowledges learning as being socially mediated in two levels: on the one hand, student-to-student level of learning, on the other hand, teacher-to-teacher level of learning, and on the other hand, school-to-community collaboration level of learning. This cannot be just simple cooperative learning, but it is also taking the form of professional development and institutional adaptation support.

The study discloses that a coordinated combination of all four principles is essential in order to make successful implementation, but not an alternating procedure. This is a shift which opposes established paradigms in that teachers inherently formulate complex theoretical structures in their work with diverse populations. The results indicate that effective study abroad takes a step beyond the dichotomous terms of standardisation versus localisation, with the need to provide more complex frameworks to remove the competing interests using the inquiry of collaborative professional practice, whereby the universities sustain competence and cultural sensitivity.

Research Questions 2: How can the identified foundational principles provide insights for teachers in understanding and enhancing their curriculum planning and pedagogical approaches to support reading comprehension skills for Grade 4/ students?

This study established that the five major approaches can help transform the identified foundational educational principles into teaching practice to enhance teacher education and instruction, especially in multicultural CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) settings.

Diagnostic-first assessment and instruction were the first approach. It pays more attention to extensive preconditioning and emphasises the whole evaluation. The effectiveness of this approach depends on how well teachers are taught advanced assessment literacy beyond the standardised

testing to include the linguistic knowledge, cultures, and previous learning experiences of the students. Further, this approach's effectiveness is dependent on the extent to which a teacher has a deeper understanding of each student's Zone of Proximal Development and modifies instruction accordingly, especially with multilingual learners.

The second approach is strategic cultural bridge-building and cultural integration, which deals with the integration of students' cultural backgrounds as a strategic form of getting curriculum content in. Instead of the superficial strategies of multiculturalism, this necessitates the need to teach profound cultural competence and the thick description of the frameworks of the students. Cultural knowledge is something that is interwoven between teachers as a strategy as they move the learning to a wider level with a global view.

The fourth approach was differentiated pathways and collaborative professional learning, which creates multiple pathways to learning destinations according to student readiness, student interests, and student learning profiles. This professional practice on the individual level should be supplemented with the collaborative professional structures that allow teachers to exchange strategies using professional learning communities, with shared inquiry and improvement being the characteristics of those.

The last approach is context-responsive flexibility and multimodal instruction, a system that one must constantly be able to change depending on the reaction of the students to give a variety of representational systems (visual, auditory, kinesthetic). The teachers should also take into account the individual preference in cultural processing and should be flexible in the motivation strategy adopted by the students toward different-handed modalities of responses.

These strategies are a major departure from the traditional instructional process to address culturally responsive, assessment-based, and collaborative instructional delivery that equally embraces the diversity of the students without undermining their academic strengths.

Research Question 3- What key considerations should policymakers consider when developing guiding principles for a reading comprehension approach tailored for second-language speakers in CBSE international schools in Dubai and India?

The study focuses on important aspects that policymakers should consider when coming up with a guideline on CBSE curriculum implementation in international environments. The research identifies five key issues that go beyond the customary one-size-fits-all paradigm to recognise the interaction of international standards of education with the local conditions.

The first is demographic contextuality and professional development infrastructure, making it imperative on the part of policymakers to realise that English proficiency, educational background, and cultural context differ greatly in different international contexts. This requires advanced evaluation plans coupled with elaborate teacher development networks that help teachers to operate in the demographic complexity and surpass curriculum integrity.

The second is cultural asset orientation and assessment system alignment, which means the redistribution of the various linguistic and cultural backgrounds of learners as an educational asset and not as an issue. Nevertheless, asset-based philosophy has serious conflicts with using standardised assessment systems that are focused on homogeneous populations and basic redesign of assessment by identifying many ways to achieve curriculum goals.

The third is professional autonomy balance and teacher autonomy parameters covering the necessity to set some specifications regarding cultural and linguistic diversity and keep teachers free in case of adaptation to the context. Teachers should know what aspects of the curriculum are

not negotiable and where professional judgment may be applied, guided by continuous professional learning.

The fourth is resource flexibility of allocation and the implementation support infrastructure, acknowledging the need to implement in a systematic appropriation supported by the organisation, not just by the teaching effort. This involves invested spending on diverse materials, special staff, additional time for learning, and shared learning communities that allow Customising the curriculum to the contexts.

The last is international context recognition and a systematic adaptation framework, realising that the global situations of learning and educational settings should be appropriately implemented in different ways, as opposed to local contexts. Cross-cultural communication, second language acquisition, and multicultural professional growth as specialised trainings are required in international contexts.

The study finds that the key to sound policy is to fundamentally change to a non-prescriptive framework of flexibility and responsiveness to the global educational complexity, able to sustain high-quality learning outcomes. The process of transformation requires the reimagining of the correlation between international educational standards and local conditions, viewing the internationalisation of curriculum practices as a separate discipline that presupposes its own theoretical apparatus and policy.

6.3 Implications of Research Findings and Recommendations for CBSE International Education Stakeholders

For L2 Speakers

The findings of the research present the implications of enormous magnitude to second language learners, which indeed shakes the rhetoric of educational practices that are traditional in

multilingual teaching. Instead of investing linguistic diversity as a problem which needs to be overcome, the evidence used proves that L2 speakers tend to thrive most when the underlying education system designs their multilingual skills as cognitive assets that amplify rather than impede academic success. This asset-based acknowledgement alters the schooling process that used to be based on a deficit model into the process of resource leveraging when the cultural and linguistic heritage of the students becomes the springboard for the complex academic activity.

The scaffolded progression pathways discovered through the research offer the L2 speakers' systematic routes between culturally familiar materials and globally diverse content. This strategy takes into consideration the fact that such students might need systematic basic training that respects their language developmental needs, but at the same time, they also have a need and a right to conceptual work that is at grade level and one that does not represent a lowering of academic standards. The study shows that effective teachers, such as Ms. Priya and Mr. Ahmed, are able to find the balance between it by starting their work with the available knowledge of the students and opening their scholarly world step by step.

The multimodal learning environments are especially crucial among L2 speakers, who enjoy various representational systems that avoid using language, but at the same time do not lose the connectiveness. These findings indicate that visual, auditory, and kinesthetic strategies facilitate academic practice in the context of the continuing language development process, but also enable students to be able to reflect on their comprehension and engage in classroom communication, although their linguistic expertise still progresses.

The bridge-building between cultures that is evidenced in effective international schools can open up schooling conditions to L2 speakers so that their cultural knowledge is given tactical extensions as access points to curriculum matter. It enables students to bridge the gap between known cultures

and universal horizons without losing cultural identity and confidence in academic activity, which, according to the researchers, results in the so-called third space learning settings, admiring the preservation of the past and achievement of academic prospects.

For Teachers

Through the research, it is clear that to create successful international implementation of CBSE, teachers are obliged to build integrated professional abilities which combine diagnostic evaluation, cultural responsiveness, multi-modal teaching and collaborative construction of knowledge. This is a paradigm shift from the traditional methods of viewing these components as isolated, temporal methods of practicing the profession to the holistic professional practice of integration and combination of the intricate ideologies in daily classroom decision-making.

Educators have to accept the role of mediating between cultures through translating the global curriculum needs into those that are locally significant learning in terms of experience. Such mediation involves profound cultural competence that surpasses benign ignorance of other cultures and engaged utilisation of students' funds of knowledge and incremental organisation of the learning experience to assume a global scope. It shows that successful teachers, including Ms. Aisha and Ms. Sarah, are already doing the culturally sophisticated work of translation, and institutional support systems should be more aware of these skills and the need to make them systematic.

Effective international teaching entails the adaptive professional judgment, which amounts to knowing the curriculum guidelines as suggestions that guide professional decision-making processes as opposed to being prescriptions. Teachers need to become able to read the requirements of the CBSE contextually without imposing limits on education and consider the standards as the lowest possible expectations. This involves advanced knowledge of how to maintain the essence of

the learning content and still accommodate the various needs of students by making changes to teaching strategies.

The teacher professional development implications are not limited to the traditional training frameworks, but they are extended to work in collaboration with professional learning communities by creating a culture of systematic exchange of culturally responsive interventions and pursuing the ongoing evolution of adaptive practices. The study demonstrates that excellent teachers already interact through collegial exchange of knowledge through intense collaborative ties that were found to be rarely converted into well-organised professional development systems by institutional arrangements.

The development of assessment literacy is of great importance to the teachers who will be required to establish extensive diagnostic skills that will involve linguistic code, cultural backgrounds, and previous learning experiences in proper cultural contexts. The expertise acquired in the field of multicultural assessment will help teachers in making an informed decision about instructional delivery on the basis of comprehensive knowledge concerning the capabilities of students, as opposed to the use of standardised measures, which do not necessarily capture the potential that the diverse students have in school.

For Policymakers

The results of the research require policymakers to seriously rethink the methodology of curriculum implementation, severing ties with the prescriptive framework to adopt a responsive system that would act in response to the complexity of global educational realities. Recent indications in the international CBSE schools indicate that teachers are already managing to sail through these challenges with creative practices that should be promoted through a series of carefully designed policies instead of being tied with strings.

Policymakers need to come up with graduated direction systems that will not only keep intact the integrity of the curriculum but also allow contextual adjustment. The education policies ought to set common learning objectives rather than standardise them across various international settings; the schools should be left to realise the objectives through locally relevant routes. This strategy acknowledges the fact that curriculum designs that have been used at the domestic level might need a lot of adjustments when applied internationally to an audience whose students present a wide range of linguistic, cultural, and educational experiences and backgrounds.

The philosophy of asset-based policy that has been developed as a result of the research necessitates policymakers to place it in a way that the cultural and linguistic diversity is viewed as an asset that needs scholarly instruction, as opposed to remediation that sees it as a problem. This marks a paradigm shift in policy considerations in the direction of resource-focused policies that take cognisance of educational abundance and diversity introduced to international school communities. Policymakers will need to recognise the international contexts as they are vital in ensuring that the international educational context must have its own theoretical or rather dissimilar approach that helps to address the global-local tensions. The study proves that the implementation of international curricula is a unique sphere of educational performance and needs special assistance as opposed to mere adjustments of domestic education systems.

The resource implications of resource allocation on policymakers go beyond the traditional funding formula to appreciate the fact that effective global implementation of international curriculum requires systematic organisational support in the form of differentiated materials, specialised personnel, additional time to learn and learning communities. The resource-intensive quality of responsive teaching is reflected in the pedagogical sophistication that responsive teaching demands

to be able to teach in a wide variety of settings that cannot be solved through a single one-time investment.

Redesigning assessment systems becomes an urgent policy priority, and policymakers have to come up with assessment systems that take into account several test routes to curriculum goals, as opposed to a single measure of accomplishment. The existing assessment practices need to be verified against the different kinds of cultural capital and the need to differentiate between linguistic growth and the mastery of the content, beyond the accommodationist models, to appreciate the fact that diversity has its educational benefits in cases where the right pedagogic strategies are followed.

To Curriculum Coordinators

The research implications concerning curriculum coordinators focus on the aspect of helping to coordinate the integration of the systems in an orderly manner that targets to meet all these aspects synergistically, without considering them as different tasks that follow one another. This should be achieved by the creation of general implementation frames that capture how competent teachers inherently combine sophisticated methods in everyday practice.

Literacy leadership across the curriculum is also important to the curriculum coordinators, who should make sure that all subject disciplines use the same strategies and follow the same approach to literacy strategies by coordinating them through common planning formats. The study establishes that good teachers, such as Mr. Ahmed, are able to use literacy strategies across disciplines and that there should be coordination in the institution so that the students have consistent support in the building of academic language over their years of academic studies.

The process of cultural competency development demands that the curriculum coordinators assist the teachers in developing sound knowledge of the cultural setting of students and systematically establishing effective cultural integration strategies through authenticity. This entails the

overcoming of superficial multiculturalism to the thick description idea of understanding the frameworks of students that allow for the strategic integration of cultural knowledge without stereotyping or cultural essentialism.

The task of context-responsive benchmarking serves as a value-added activity of the curriculum coordinators, which requires the formulation of a systematic method of translating curriculum pacing to the level of student readiness, but remains, at the same time, developmentally appropriate and applicable to diverse populations. This entails developing context-related rather than universal best benchmarking practices that reflect the fact that the international student census is a complex issue.

The formal writing of the professional practice plays a significant role in the curriculum coordinators, who should organise and publish effective integration models in order to establish the common knowledge of the profession. The study has revealed that excellent teachers already practice advanced procedures, and these should not be left alone in the classrooms but should be recognised and shared systematically.

For Consultants

The results of the research demand that consultants construct complex understanding frameworks that understand how effective teachers traditionally combine several theoretical frameworks in instructing diverse groups. This possibility implies the shift in simplistic pedagogical paradigms to the understanding of multicultural competence that adequately reflects the comprehensiveness of the professional synthesis, enabling international and multicultural education.

Joint professional assistance is becoming one of the primary roles that should be afforded to consultants who are expected to support professional learning communities and collaborative inquiry processes instead of imposing the previous model that might not be related to local needs

and peculiarities of multicultural environments in the fields of education. The study reveals that successful international education needs cooperative professional strength instead of dependence on the personal abilities of the teachers and their innovation.

Promoting an evidence-based practice is a central point requirement for consultants who have to make recommendations based on practices that have already been documented as happening and not on theoretical actions that cannot be validated at the contextual level. This is through the scientific study and sharing of successful integration practices that have been tested elsewhere in the global community.

Professional autonomy balance needs the consultants to assist schools in establishing frameworks that offer certain guidance on cultural and linguistic diversity without teacher flexibility to adjust according to context awareness. This entails the establishment of transparency regarding curriculum items that are not negotiable and issues of reaching where professional judgement is attainable using continuous professional development that enhances teacher expertise in making advanced judgement.

Collaborative Ecosystem Development

The study shows that effective implementation of CBSE internationally needs coordinated support agencies where all involved parties would collaborate to establish learning ecosystems that enhance complex professional practices of multicultural education. Such cross-traditional boundary coordination allows delivering systematic but not fragmented support to culturally responsive practices that are already known to deliver good results in different international settings.

The principles of shared accountability models are identified to be crucial in ensuring that success is pre-determined by joint commitment to asset-based approaches that celebrate and put effective utilisation of diversity into practice without compromising academic rigour. The study

demonstrates that once all parties pull in the same direction in terms of promoting instead of limiting culturally responsive innovations, schools can deliver an impressive performance in regard to serving a variety of cultural individuals across international communities.

The culture of continuous improvement is needed as the international CBSE implementation is complex enough to be continuously adapted and improved, rather than comprising a set of written policies and practices. The stakeholders should be constantly learning and changing as situations and groups evolve since effective international education is rather a dynamic mark than a set of preset practices.

The paradigm shift found in the study pushes all the stakeholders out of binary thinking about which stands standardisation over localisation and vice versa as mutually exclusive alternatives. Rather, the data are also corroborated by complex schemes that consider various competing interests by integrating professional practice across professions, while still experiencing academic rigour and cultural responsiveness.

The recognition of professional capacity develops as one of the most basic needs among the stakeholders who have to recognise the fact that accomplished teachers have already acquired supreme capabilities that do not require replacement through simplified models but institutional backing. The study illustrates that very effective international educators are already adopting outstanding breakthroughs inside regularised systems, and this should be the route to go, through systemising and expanding efficient current strategies as opposed to applying foreign theoretical concepts.

Global-local integration becomes the final frontier facing all stakeholders who need to come up with methodical ways of coping with tensions between international educational standards and domestic cultural orientations. The research takes this position as a specific area of educational

practice that needs its own theoretical frameworks and support system, and should not be an adaptation of conventional domestic educational models. To be successful in such integration, one should reconceptualise the interaction between global standards and local realities and see implementation of the international curriculum as a complicated profession that needs systematic support and constant development.

6.4 The Significant Academic Contributions to the Present Day Knowledge of Teaching English as an Additional Language (EAL) Students, Education in the International Contexts, and Education as a Whole

The eight consolidated contributions that are then presented in the study summarise the key theoretical and practical contributions of your research, but they also remove all repetitiveness. Each of the contributions is a specific yet interrelated development of the educational theory and practice, progressing along the line of broad concepts of theory integration towards specifics of multicultural, multilingual educational practice application.

Theoretical Framework Revolution

This study essentially questions the current educational basics by proving that efficient adoption of curriculum involves integrated and not sequential incorporation of various theories of thought. Unlike hard models that view assessment, cultural responsiveness, scaffolding, and collaboration as separate strategies, this research uncovers a theoretical boundary that is acting at each of the dimensions simultaneously. Such a revolutionary model of synthesis is quite a radical change away from compartmentalised models of employing holistic pedagogical integration.

Based on the notion of third space as developed by Homi Bhabha, the study gives realistic implementation models that go beyond theoretical postulations. This elaboration of the postcolonial education theory shows how teachers develop new educational identities out of the established

native/non-native speaker dichotomies in pedagogical practices through systematic methodological pedagogy and gives practical strategies to navigate complicated sites of intersectional cultural exchanges in the contemporary international education zone.

Reconceptualisation of EAL Assessment and Instruction

The study presents a concept of cultural neuropsychology that is critical to successful diagnostic evaluation, revealing that assessment literacy cannot be divorced from cultural and linguistic contexts. This is new compared to traditionally used distance-dependence to demonstrate how cultural learning behaviour affects cognition and performance in assessments and makes a teacher bridge cultural gaps between their own and the students' experiences.

The study demonstrates a severe theoretical gap: Assessment practice should be culturally responsive, not just the precursor to culturally responsive instruction. This disrupts conventional theory of assessment by envisioning assessment as a culturally-mediated practice instead of a dispassionate measure and essentially redefines the concept of diagnostic evaluation in most diverse settings using elements of what the research refers to as assessment-driven cultural scaffolding.

Continuing the work by Jim Cummins on the translanguaging concept, the study offers a very practical implementation of how the complete linguistic repertoire of multilingual students can be considered strategically useful in the learning process. A documented careful usage of the native languages in the process of teaching proves the implementation of the translanguaging method in institutional contexts, besides questioning and challenging monolingual teaching procedures on expanding the theory of academic language development introduced by Mary Schleppegrell by respecting the linguistic stack already available to the students as a resource to work with.

International Education Novelty

The study responds to the notion of educational flows introduced by Arjun Appadurai in his work, and it shows how instructors navigate through the complicated processes of negotiation between prepackaged curricula and culturally sensitive pedagogy. This offers viable guidelines in handling conflicts between standardised international practices and local cultural sensitivity levels, developing the theoretical knowledge on relationships between multilateral as opposed to linear cultural adaptation practices.

The research defines the concept of cultural pedagogical activism - the step beyond ordinary cultural awareness to direct application of cultural expertise to resist prevailing educational discourses and establish inclusive learning spaces. This is a great improvement over the historical cultural sensitivity models into transformational teaching models that creatively redefine the discourse of education.

As a continuation of the traditional models of scaffolding, the study also gives rise to the concept of multicultural scaffolding literacy, the aptitude to conduct instructional aid without prejudice to varied learning patterns and cultural methods of building knowledge. This calls into question general developmental patterns because it demonstrates that successful scaffolding needs to be culturally sensitive, which entails highly complex knowledge about culturally constructed styles of learning.

Transformation of the Professional Practice

The analysis transforms teachers into savvy mediators of the curriculum rather than gears of the implementation machine and introduces a notion of implementation literacy, i.e. the professional expertise that would allow interpreting the intent of the policy into effective teaching practice without compromising educational experience. This criticises deficit-based frameworks in that it shows that teachers engage in highly connotative tasks, the information about which indicates the

idea of teachers as being like a cultural mediator that transforms policy intentions into innately suitable practices.

This study draws on the concept of a professional learning community proposed by Richard DuFour and demonstrates that collaborative professionalism in the face of international collaboration should take into account the differences in the cultural values of relationships in terms of authority, style of communication, and ways of analysing criticism. What this demonstrates is that collaborative knowledge construction should take place in several forms of institutions and not at the centre of student interaction, but multi-level collaborative-based structures should be advanced to Vygotsky's social constructivist theory.

The results reveal that the international conditions necessitate specialised, not generalised, professional growth, as the assumptions made concerning universal teacher preparation imply the necessity of the so-called cosmopolitan competence that implies remaining locally relevant and relating to global standards via the comprehensive methods of professional growth.

Reconceptualisation of the assessment system

The study gives empirical support to systematic criticisms of existing culturally responsive measures of assessment and shows that few of such measures adhere to sufficient standards of validity. This hints that visible contradictions between asset-based practices and assessment performance demonstrate measurement incompetency over pedagogical incompetency, which calls into question basic principles of assessment efficacy in various contexts.

The analysis shows that Western-made educational theories should be culturally adapted and cross-validated in different contexts, which is part of decolonising educational research through analysing how the Western theories of universalism should be tested according to the specific culture. This methodological contribution suggests particular guidelines on how to perform culturally responsive

diagnostic assessment that includes extensive evaluation of linguistic abilities, cultural backgrounds, and previous learning activities by students.

Confronting Educational Inequality

The study is categorically transitioned from the deficit-based to the asset-based, where linguistic and cultural diversity is perceived as an obstacle to the strategy of identifying resources that students already have and working on them in order to increase and use them in the learning process. Such a paradigm change evidences the transformation of fixed ability monitoring to flexible and responsive pedagogical intervention, with a major contribution to the educational paradigm shift of equity in the study of hierarchical divisions between academic and everyday language, possibly demeaning and bearing little value on the home language practices of students.

Expanded definitions of literacy offered by the study are that the concept of multimodal literacy scaffolding needs to be systematically combined across disciplines and not as isolated abilities, and therefore supports the view that disciplinary literacy is mediated through cultural packages and not universal. This contradicts the Universal Design for Learning models by showing how culture impacts the reactions of students to various modalities.

Innovation of Policy and Implementation

The study suggests policy systems of standard and flexible instructional strategies by clearly separating the non-negotiable core learning objectives with a view of providing a middle of the road that balances between standardisation and total localisation. It takes the full concepts of support infrastructure and applies them to the K-12 international environment to expose the developmental variations in requirements in cultural adaptation at the tiered guidance systems.

The results build knowledge regarding the policy-practice nexus as it illustrates how teachers need systematised flexibility, prescriptive overall goals with flexible procedures for applying them. It

criticises the overly prescriptive and the fully autonomous models and replaces them with the bounded professional discretion and shows that culturally responsive education necessitates an entirely different resource distribution model that considers long-term durations and specific materials distribution and robust support systems.

Methodological and Theoretical Implications

The study expands the concept of distributed leadership to the arena of international settings and illustrates that the successful application of this framework necessitates not coordination within any given cultural framework but across different cultural realms. Following the implementation research, the results illustrate particular techniques through which teachers cope with performance decreases when putting into practice the new practice without compromising the demands of the state and the essential pedagogical objectives.

These contributions serve as a whole unit of progress in concept and knowledge that teaching in different contexts involves a delicate synthesis of cultural competence, linguistic awareness, and pedagogical know-how to conduct itself skillfully. The study shifts the field to more inclusive and responsive educational approaches that take student diversity into account without sacrificing academic rigour, putting basic tenets about standardisation, equity and educational quality in international contexts to the test and offering practical parameters to negotiate these challenges.

This detailed paradigm implies that the international usage of curriculum is an independent sphere of educational practice that has its own frameworks of theories instead of some direct transfers of local ones and provides an opportunity to offer not only theoretical contributions to the modern international education challenges, but also practical approaches to the problems of implementation.

6.5 Limitations of the Study

Although the study offers key insights into approaches to reading comprehension for second language speakers in CBSE international schools, it has several limitations. First, the study focused on optimisers' perspectives and instructional practices, without the substantial voices of other stakeholders in the educational ecosystem. This single perspective approach does not account for the whole complexity of factors in play in reading comprehension development, which makes teachers' voices critical. Nevertheless, perspectives of students who experience these approaches, of parents who support literacy at home, and of school leaders who define priorities in the institution could add other lenses to view effective reading comprehension instruction.

Secondly, the study was carried out in a specific geographic setting (Dubai and India) and educational system (CBSE international schools), which might restrict the generalisability of the study to other international educational contexts. Despite the curricular frameworks of CBSE international schools, the implementation of these differs significantly depending upon the local context, demography of students, the available resources, and the regulatory requirements. Thus, the findings may correspond to the context-specific adaptations rather than the universal principles, and hence, they should be highly considered when transferred to other settings.

Third, although the research reported the Integration of cognitive science, socio-constructivism, and critical literacy approaches in the 'Combination Paradigm', the framework, little or no consideration was given to the implementation process or variation in outcomes resulting from the Integration versus more traditional ways. On the teacher's part, intuitive integration of multiple perspectives was demonstrated. However, the study was not able to determine which particular combinations of approaches generated optimal results with respect to different populations of

students or learning objectives. This makes it challenging to deliver prescriptive advice on how to use the Combination Paradigm in a variety of classroom settings.

6.6 Potential for Further Inquiry

There are several areas for further research into reading comprehension approaches for second language speakers in international educational contexts. First, future research should incorporate multiple stakeholder perspectives and studies that triangulate data from the teachers, students, parents, and school leaders. In particular, studies would focus on student experiences of reading comprehension instruction, such as their perceptions of engagement, difficulty, cultural relevance, and personal agency in how they learn. Some of the research questions could be: How do second language students perceive using different instructional approaches to reading comprehension? What supports can they access in order to move between their home language literacy practices and school-based English literacy? How do they find their strategy most supportive of their comprehension development? Such research could provide more student-centred adaptations of the Combination Paradigm.

Second, comparative studies from different international educational contexts can further investigate how the identified foundational principles appear in a variety of curricula, geographic settings, and student populations. Such research could help determine what elements of an effective reading comprehension instruction are setting-dependent and what are not. So, it could be looking at international CBSE schools between various regions (Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa) or the same international schools with different curricula (CBSE, IB, Cambridge) for a similar student population. Comparisons of these could indicate whether an institutional, cultural, or regulatory context causes the implementation of reading comprehension instruction for second language learners to be different from that in other contexts.

Third, intervention studies could experimentally test and evaluate the Combination Paradigm through controlled design-based research. Such studies would trace, document, measure, and possibly optimise the combination of cognitive, socio-constructivist, and critical literacy postures for specific student populations and learning objectives. This research could address questions such as: What are the most effective particular combinations of approaches for building different components of reading comprehension (literal understanding, inference, critical analysis)? How do the student factors, such as language proficiency, cultural background, and prior educational experiences, affect how different student approaches the curriculum? What implementation challenges arise in the process of combining these theoretical perspectives systematically, and what can be done about them? The results of this research could help convert the Combination Paradigm into more concrete guidance on how to operationalise the Combination Paradigm in diverse classroom contexts.

Based on the findings of this study, researchers could subsequently expand on the foundation laid here to develop more and more refined and efficient means to assist second language speakers in international educational contexts with reading comprehension. Finally, continued research would fill significant understanding gaps and offer concrete guidance to the perplexing territory of multilingual literacy instruction for educators.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Teaching of Reading Comprehension Questionnaire for Teachers

This appendix provides the questionnaire used to gather insights from CBSE teachers on reading comprehension practices for second language learners.

Please note that your responses to this questionnaire will be confidential and used only for the research study. Your identity and any additional personal information will remain anonymous—estimated time to complete is less than 30 mins.

Part A. This section will gather information on your background, knowledge and training.

1. Gender (circle the appropriate response) **M F**
 Age group (circle the appropriate response) : Below 25, 25 – 35, 36 - 45, 46 – 55, 56+
 Ethnicity _____
 How long have you worked as an English teacher? _____ years.
 Specify the grades taught: _____
2. How long have you taught in Grade 4? _____ years
 In which country did you obtain your teaching degree? _____
3. How many students do you currently teach in Gr 4? _____ (number) M: ____ F: ____
4. How many are High Achievers based on data from PIRLS? _____
 b) How do the boys' and girls' PIRLS data compare? For example, is there an imbalance in reading outcomes between males and females? Please explain the reason:

5. How many students have Special Educational Needs? _____
6. How often do you consider students' cognitive and emotional development when developing appropriate instructional interventions for Second Language speakers

 b) Give a reason for your answer

7. How aware are you of any age-related expectations for each grade in CBSE or school-based?

8. Why is it important to understand any age-related expectations for each grade in CBSE or school-based?

9. What do you understand by the term 'literacy skills'?

10. Did your teacher training include strategies to develop reading, e.g. reading comprehension? If so, what training did you receive? Has any follow-up training from your school occurred?

11. What strategies for teaching comprehension skills are you aware of for each age group? Are any specific to Grade 4 students?

Section B. This section seeks to draw further information on your instructional practices when teaching reading comprehension. While answering this section, try to recall your reading comprehension lesson in the current term and your degree of confidence in implementing reading comprehension strategies.

19.

The lesson includes teaching these reading comprehension skills to students:	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
To develop questions around the test				

To summarise the information from the text				
To develop meaning by relating to past experiences				
To be able to predict around /within a text being read				
To be able to create visual representations of the text				
To be able to identify and build on new vocabulary				
To be able to analyse the text				
To be able to read for the purpose set by the author				
To develop knowledge of grammar and sentence structure				
To recognise and decode new vocabulary.				

20.

I engage in using the following strategies: (If you use more than one tick the one you use most in often then rank the other in other categories)	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
Reciprocal teaching				
Vipers				
Graphic organizers, e.g mind maps or charts,				
Small group teaching/discussions				
pre-reading activities				
Narrative mapping				
Individual Instructional teaching				
incorporation of videos, songs, and images				

b) Give a reason for the ranking you gave above

21. How often do you provide individualised support to the learners?

b) Give a reason for you answer _____

22. How often do you use using activities that are particular to the language in which the children are conversant with?

b) Give a reason for you answer _____

23. How often do you offer second language learners extra language assistance?

b) Give a reason why _____

24. How often do you incorporate second language learners' different cultural aspects when teaching?

b) Give a reason why _____

Section C. This section attempts to draw out general information around your school's training and curriculum provision

25. Do you feel that the school provides adequate resources and training to teach and enrich reading comprehension skills?

Always Usually Sometimes Never

26. Do you feel the reading texts prescribed by CBSE are appropriate for effectively developing reading comprehension skill in grade 4?

Yes No

Please give reasons your choice: _____

27. How often do you incorporate reading comprehension skills prescribed as per school policy to also include writing in your lessons?

Daily 2- 3 times per week Once per week Less than once per week

29. Are you aware of how many students in your grade experience difficulties in understanding the language of the text?

Yes, No

30. What strategies did you use to identify this and intervene?

31. Is there provision available in the CBSE curriculum and practice for teachers to enrich their knowledge and understanding of developing students' progression in reading comprehension

Yes No

if yes, please specify: _____

31. How often do you integrating reading strategies across subjects helps students apply comprehension skills more broadly (Tick)

Never	Rarely	Often	Always

b) Give a reason for decision as you have noted in question above _____

32. When carrying out literacy lessons, how often does the reading instruction include the following resources as per the CBSE curriculum teaching practices?

	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
Prescribed textbook				
External Novel series				
Workbook / work sheets				
Computer assisted reading programs				
External reading materials				
Rich variety of literature options (Fiction and non-fiction)				
Genres of children's book from around the world				
Reading written work of peers				

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses will contribute to the research and development of a reading comprehension framework that aims to enrich instructional practices.

Kiran Mathai. Research Student. Education Department. Birmingham City University.

Appendix B: Interview questions for reading comprehension for teachers:

This guide outlines the semi structured interview questions used to explore teachers' experiences with reading comprehension frameworks.

Questions

1. How confident do you feel in the teaching of reading comprehension frameworks with students of Grade 4?
2. How often do you get the opportunity to research instructional practices for the teaching of reading comprehension?
3. Have you been supported to employ new practices to teach reading comprehension? what prompted you to incorporate these practices? (Experience, case study report, student result, training)
According to your experience in CBSE schools do you feel there is explicit guidance
4. on how to develop reading comprehension skills for specific grades?
What factors do you think influence your teaching practices for developing teaching of reading and reading comprehension?
Prompt: (School policies, varied ability of students, need for comprehension as life/ social skill, personal background of experience, training, management of student behaviour, promoting student enjoyment and motivation)
Have you come across guided reading or reciprocal teaching strategies for teaching reading comprehension?
Would a document that provides more clarity and guidance on developing reading comprehension and writing empower you teaching instruction?

Additional probe questions:

1. **Follow-up on Confidence:**
 - a. Can you share a specific instance or example where you felt particularly confident in implementing a reading comprehension strategy in your class?
2. **Exploring New Practices:**
 - a. Could you elaborate on any specific challenges you faced when incorporating new practices for teaching reading comprehension? How did you overcome these challenges?
3. **Explicit Guidance:**
 - a. In your experience, how has the lack of explicit guidance affected your approach to teaching reading comprehension? Can you provide a specific example or scenario?
4. **Factors Influencing Teaching Practices:**
 - a. Among the factors you mentioned earlier, which one do you find most influential in shaping your teaching practices? Can you share a situation where this influence was particularly evident?
5. **Awareness of Strategies:**
 - a. For strategies like guided reading or reciprocal teaching, have you observed any notable impact on student engagement or comprehension? Can you share a specific success story or challenge you encountered?
6. **Need for Clarity and Guidance:**
 - a. If a document providing clarity and guidance were available, what specific elements or information would you hope to find in it? Can you give an example of a situation where such a resource would have been particularly helpful?
7. **Reflecting on Professional Development:**
 - a. How has your involvement in professional development or training sessions contributed to your growth as a teacher in the context of reading comprehension?
8. **Balancing Varied Student Abilities:**

- a. Dealing with varied abilities in students can be challenging. Can you share an experience where you successfully tailored your teaching approach to meet the diverse needs of your students in reading comprehension?
9. **Motivation for Teaching Instruction:**
 - a. Among the motivations you mentioned, which one resonates with you the most personally? How does this motivation translate into your daily teaching practices?

Interview probes and questions for Science and Maths Teachers

Purpose and context:

The purpose behind the post focus group discussion is to consider teacher ideologies on reading comprehension. The reason being prior studies show that if the research intends to develop a framework to transform pedagogical/ instructional practices then it must be able to capture the practitioner's experiences and decision-making based on their values and beliefs around reading comprehension. Exploring how teachers' practices are transformed.

1. **Confidence in Integrating Literacy:**
 - How confident do you feel in incorporating literacy practices, especially reading comprehension frameworks, into your math/science lessons for Grade 4 students who are second language speakers?
2. **Professional Development in Literacy:**
 - How often do you engage in professional development activities related to literacy, especially focusing on second language speakers in math/science?
3. **Support for Literacy Integration:**
 - Have you received support or training to integrate literacy elements, including reading comprehension, into your math/science curriculum? What motivated you to incorporate these practices?
4. **Awareness of Explicit Guidance:**
 - From your experience, do you think there is explicit guidance on developing reading comprehension skills specifically tailored for math/science subjects in the Grade 4 curriculum?
5. **Factors Influencing Teaching Practices in Math/Science:**
 - What factors, within the context of teaching math/science, influence your approach to incorporating reading comprehension frameworks?
 - (e.g., the role of language in understanding scientific concepts, interpreting mathematical problems, etc.)
6. **Familiarity with Reading Strategies:**
 - Have you come across or utilized any specific reading strategies in your math/science classes to enhance students' understanding? (e.g., using texts, diagrams, or other literacy elements)
7. **Utilizing Literacy for Conceptual Understanding:**
 - How do you believe literacy skills, including reading comprehension, contribute to students' conceptual understanding in math/science? Can you provide an example from your teaching experience?
8. **Challenges and Solutions:**
 - What challenges do you face in integrating literacy practices into math/science, and how have you addressed or overcome these challenges?
9. **Professional Growth in Literacy Integration:**
 - Reflecting on your professional growth, how has your involvement in literacy focused training or workshops influenced your teaching practices in math/science?
10. **Engagement and Motivation:**
 - How do you think incorporating literacy practices, specifically reading comprehension, enhances student engagement and motivation in your math/science classes? Can you share a specific instance where you observed this impact?

Appendix C: Changes Implemented from the Pilot Study

Below is a summary of all the changes that were inspired by the pilot study

Aspect	Original Approach	Changes Implemented
Focus of Research	Limited to 4thgrade English teachers	Expanded to include 4th-grade Maths and Science teachers to provide an interdisciplinary perspective on literacy and critical literacy across different subjects, as well as other teachers.
Questionnaire Format	Manually distributed	Moved to an electronic format for ease of access and engagement.
Questionnaire Structure	Three main parts with few open-ended questions	Refined to include more open-ended questions to elicit detailed responses, restructured to avoid fatigue, and increased sample size to 32 teachers for improved validity and reliability.
Semi Structured Interviews	Included only English teachers	Expanded to include separate sets of interviews for Maths and Science teachers, with restructured interview probes to attract detailed perspectives, addressing the gap between educational policy and classroom practice.
Participant Size	Smaller, less diverse sample	Increased participant size and included only teachers from my school to maintain focus and depth, ensuring experiences and practices of subject teaching are explored expansively.

Appendix D: Summary of the Paper's Academic Contribution

Main Category	Sub-categories
Theoretical Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Combination Paradigm" (structured + balanced literacy) • Integration of cognitive science, Socio-Constructivism, and critical literacy
Pedagogical Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally relevant teaching • Differentiated instruction • Cross-curricular integration • Technology integration • Metacognitive strategies development
Language Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading comprehension progression • Vocabulary acquisition across languages • Oral language and text comprehension connection • Multilingual approaches and translanguaging
Assessment and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formative and summative strategies for EAL learners • Content-area reading comprehension assessment
Contextual Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental and community involvement • Sociocultural aspects of reading comprehension
Policy and Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum development recommendations • Teacher training and continuous professional development • Implications for international education policies

Appendix E: Thematic Analysis Coding Table: Questionnaire

Theme 1: Gender Dynamics in Reading Performance

Code	Description	Participants
Female Reading Achievement	Observations of higher performance among girls in reading tasks	#13, #18, #22, #23, #24, #26
Male Reading Achievement	Contrary observations of boys outperforming girls in reading	#27, #28, #30
Gender-Based Reading Preferences	Differences in reading material choices between genders	#21, #22
Reading Frequency and Duration by Gender	Patterns in how often and how long students read by gender	#22
Explanations for Gender Differences	Identified causes for gender disparities in reading performance	#14, #15, #16, #17, #18, #26

Theme 2: Assessment and Monitoring Frameworks

Code	Description	Participants
Standardized Assessment Knowledge	Awareness and use of formal assessment benchmarks	#1, #5, #6, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18, #26, #28
Alternative Assessment Frameworks	Use of frameworks beyond standardized assessments	#1, #3, #14, #15, #16, #17
Embedded Assessment Practices	Classroom-integrated evaluation methods	#3, #7, #28, #29, #30
Data-Informed Assessment Practices	Evidence-based approaches to student evaluation	#2, #7, #18

Theme 3: Challenges and Contextual Factors in Reading Instruction

Code	Description	Participants
Language and Vocabulary Barriers	Obstacles related to language proficiency and vocabulary knowledge	#24, #25, #26
Social and Environmental Factors	External influences impacting reading development	#8, #19, #26
Individual Learning Differences	Recognition of varied learning needs and capabilities	#8, #11, #18, #29

Theme 4: Instructional Strategies and Approaches

Code	Description	Participants
Text Analysis Techniques	Methods for examining and interpreting text features	#14, #15, #22, #28
Higher-Order Thinking Skills Development	Strategies promoting critical and analytical thinking	#1, #2, #3, #18
Frequency of Strategy Implementation	Regularity of employing specific reading strategies	Multiple participants
Professional Development Influence	Impact of training on teaching approaches	#1, #2, #3, #14, #15, #16, #17, #28
Collaborative Reading Approaches	Group-based methods for text engagement	#2, #7, #8, #14, #28, #29, #30

Theme 5: Conceptual Understanding of Literacy Skills

Code	Description	Participants
Comprehensive LSRW Framework	Holistic approach incorporating Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing	#2, #3, #4, #25, #27, #29, #30
Beyond Basic Skills	Expanded literacy definitions including critical thinking/media literacy	#3, #18, #21, #28

Code	Description	Participants
Literacy as Functional Communication	Focus on practical communication applications	#5, #8, #10, #11, #29, #30
Literacy as Transformative Capability	View of literacy as empowering life opportunity	#8, #9, #22

Appendix F: Thematic Analysis Coding Table: Interviews

Code	Description	Participants
Assessment-Based Adaptation	Using diagnostic assessment to inform teaching approach	XY, VXL
Cultural Relevance	Connecting curriculum to students' cultural backgrounds	VXL
Scaffolded Instruction	Building progressively from foundational skills to complex applications	MX, PYK
Differentiated Instruction	Adapting teaching methods based on student proficiency levels	PYK, XY
Real-World Application	Connecting curriculum content to practical contexts	RYV
Grade-Level Adaptation	Evolving strategies as students' progress through grades	MYM
Language Foundation Building	Prioritizing language development as gateway to curriculum content	MYM, MX
Professional Judgment	Making context-specific decisions about curriculum implementation	MYM, VXL

Theme 2: Professional Development Impact on Teaching Practices

Code	Description	Participants
Continuous Learning	Regular engagement with pedagogical research and resources	RYV, PYK, MYM
Formal Training Impact	Influence of workshops and structured training programs	MX, RYV, XY
Collaborative Knowledge Sharing	Learning through collegial interaction and community	RYV, MYM, XY
Experience-Research Integration	Synthesizing formal training, research, and classroom experience	PYK, MX
International Standards Influence	Global educational benchmarks shaping professional learning	MYM, XY
Teaching Approach Evolution	Progressive shift in practices over time due to PD	VXL

Code	Description	Participants
Teaching Confidence Building	Professional development increasing teacher self-efficacy	MX
Cross-Disciplinary Integration	Applying literacy training across subject areas	XY

Theme 3: Challenges with Diverse Learner Abilities

Code	Description	Participants
Differentiated Expectations	Maintaining appropriate yet varied standards for different learners	VXL, XY
Learner Categorization	Strategic grouping of students to address varied needs	XY, PYK
Language Proficiency Barriers	Addressing second language challenges across curriculum	MYM, VXL, MX
Assessment-Informed Intervention	Using data to identify and address learning gaps	MYM
Peer Learning Strategies	Leveraging student collaboration to address diversity	MX, PYK
Growth Mindset Approach	Belief in potential improvement for all students	PYK
Cognitive Process Adaptation	Accommodating mental translation processes of L2 learners	VXL
Progressive Engagement	Gradually involving different learner levels	PYK

Theme 4: Multimodal and Inclusive Approaches

Code	Description	Participants
Traditional-Digital Balance	Integrating traditional tools with modern approaches	RYV
Authentic Materials Usage	Using real-world materials like newspapers for learning	RYV
Multi-Sensory Teaching	Employing visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches	XY, MX
Content-Specific Adaptations	Varying approaches based on subject matter requirements	XY
Visual Learning Supports	Using images and visual aids to enhance comprehension	MX

Code	Description	Participants
Student Choice and Agency	Providing autonomy through choice boards and options	PYK
Technology Integration	Using digital tools to increase engagement	PYK
Text Complexity Progression	Recognizing curriculum evolution toward complex texts	MYM, PYK

Theme 5: Contextual and Cultural Adaptability in Teaching

Code	Description	Participants
Cultural Familiarity Scaffolding	Using students' cultural backgrounds as entry points	VXL, XY
Strategic L1 Integration	Judicious use of mother tongue to support understanding	XY, RYV
Curriculum Gap Identification	Recognizing limitations in existing frameworks	VXL
School-Specific Implementation	Adapting curriculum to local institutional contexts	MYM, PYK
International-National Balance	Negotiating between global standards and national curriculum	XY
Cross-Curricular Cultural Adaptation	Extending literacy approaches across subjects in culturally responsive ways	MX
Leadership Support for Adaptation	Institutional backing for contextual curriculum adjustments	XY
Minimum Standards Interpretation	Viewing curriculum guidelines as foundations rather than limitations	MYM

Appendix G-Participant Consent Form

Name of Researcher: Kiran Mathai

Project Code:

Participant identification number:

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Initial box

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my legal rights being affected.	
3. I understand that relevant sections of my data collected during the study may be looked at by individuals from Birmingham City University and from regulatory authorities, where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records.	
4. I understand that personal data about me will be collected for the purposes of the research study including name, date of birth, and that these will be processed in accordance with the information sheet	
5. I agree to audio recording and the use of anonymised quotes in research reports and publications.	
6. I agree to take part in this study.	
7. I agree for my anonymised data to be used for teaching purposes.	

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Person taking Consent

Date

Signature

** Please note the last date to withdraw participation is 15th march 2023*

**1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher site file;*

Appendix H- Access Request Letter

To:

[Name of Manager or Head of the setting]

[Address of the setting]

[Date]

Access Request Letter

Researcher: Kiran Mathai

Dear [Name]

Thank you for agreeing for your setting to participate in my study which is to be completed as part of my Education Research to PhD (Education) at Birmingham City University. In order for me to progress with my data collection I will require authorisation from yourself as the person with managerial responsibility, to grant me access to the setting. I have outlined below all the relevant information for you to be able to make an informed decision in this regard, this information will also be provided for all participants and those with legal responsibility for them. The title of my study is:

Establishing Foundational Principles for a Reading Comprehension Framework: A Qualitative Case Study of Grade 4/ Second Language Speakers in CBSE International Schools of Dubai and India

Research Questions:

1. What are the key components to consider when developing a sequenced and structured reading comprehension framework for second language speakers in CBSE international schools in Dubai?
2. Can a structured and sequenced reading framework aimed at second language speakers motivate and guide teachers in improving their curriculum planning and pedagogy and raise reading comprehension levels of students in Grade 4/ ?
3. What are the issues that policy makers need to consider when developing a reading framework for second language speakers?
4. Is there a continuum of reading skills that can identified to help teachers build the reading stamina for second language speakers to improve their reading comprehension performance by the end of Grade 4 / ?

As primary years educator working in this setting, your expertise and knowledge of the environment, children and families that you have a relationship with, would be invaluable to me within the context of this study and I appreciate the input and support that you have to offer.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, you have the choice of non-participation, and this choice will have no impact or adverse effects.

I will be spending 3 months, 4 days a week in your setting. During this time, I will be conducting narrative and time sample observations that will not require any of your time. I aim to carry out 2 semi structured interviews with practitioners at the beginning of the study and a review of the answers at the end of the study (each approximately 20 minutes). I intend to audio record the semi structured interviews and will provide practitioners with the opportunity to read the transcript of the audio recording prior to any data analysis.

There are many benefits of participation for the practitioners, of this setting as the results of this study have the potential to influence practice and policy for teaching reading comprehension skills.

The potential risks of participation are minimal within the context of this study. I will constantly monitor the wellbeing of all participants, with particular regard to the child participants. Continued assent for participation of the children will be adhered to and at any time if the child demonstrates body language or behaviour that shows discontent with participation, my activity as a researcher will cease.

All of the participants identity and anonymity will be protected at all times. Pseudonyms will be used and no information that could identify the participant will be used in the study. These principles will be adhered to throughout the study, from data collection, analysis, interpretation and writing up of the study. All information will be stored safely and destroyed on completion of the study. Please note as mentioned above participation is voluntary. Nonparticipation will not have any adverse effect on your role or professional practice with the organization. The last date to withdraw your participation will be march 15th 2023.

All data will comply with the current GDPR law. Data will be stored on the one drive of Birmingham City University and will be encrypted, and password protected. Physical data will be stored in locked cabinets and will be destroyed via BCU's confidential waste facilities.

If you would like to contact the Data Protection officer at BCU, please use the following address:

informationmanagement@bcu.ac.uk

Or telephone:

+44(0)121 331 5288

Or write to:

Data Protection Officer, Information Management Team, Birmingham City University, University House, 15 Bartholomew Row, Birmingham, B5 5JU.

Any complaints may be directly referred to the:

Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Further information available at:

www.ico.org.uk

You have the right to informed consent, the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without prejudice, and the right to anonymity and data protection.

The study will be continually monitored and reviewed by my supervisors who are involved in an advisory role. They are:

Dr. Tony Armstrong

Dr Louise Wheatcroft

Dr . Simon Cook

If you have any complaints please contact the university at:

HELS_Ethics@bcu.ac.uk

My contact details are:

Kiran.mathai@mail.bcu.ac.uk

A consent form will be provided for participants to actively opt into the study. I will be available to discuss the contents of this information sheet and any other queries or concerns prior to participants signed consent. Only when I have all the consent letters safely stored will I commence my study in the setting.

If you are happy to grant me access to your setting could you please sign and date below.

Many thanks for your support.