Power of inference: The impact of reading between the lines on reading comprehension in University of Namibia's bridging course

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Abstract
This study, grounded in the Schema Theory, highlighted the critical role of activating and expanding students' background knowledge for deeper text comprehension. It employed a qualitative study that aimed to explore the challenges students faced in applying reading between the lines in reading comprehension among students enrolled in a bridging course at the University of Namibia's Oshakati Campus. The study further sought to understand the perspectives on its relevance in enhancing text comprehension and explored strategies that could assist students in improving their reading between the lines skills. The study employed purposive sampling to select 15 participants from a population of 132 students. Focus group interviews were used to collect data and a thematic analysis to analyse the data. The findings of the study revealed three key themes including challenges in applying reading between the lines strategies, perceived benefits of reading between the lines and strategies to enhance reading between the lines skills. The results indicated that students faced challenges in using reading between the lines because of limited prior exposure to topics under discussion and complex academic texts, and insufficient support from instructors. Despite these challenges, students acknowledged that reading between the lines enhanced comprehension and fostered critical thinking. The study recommended that educators incorporate more focused reading between the lines strategies, increased reading comprehension practices, peer collaboration and structured guidance to improve students' inferential reading between the lines' skills.

Keywords: *reading between the lines, inference, schema theory, text comprehension, bridging course*

Introduction and background

Reading has for long been considered a cornerstone of language proficiency. Reading comprehension is a dynamic process of learning and meaning construction from written texts (Kintsch, 2012). Reading is not a simple decoding of words but, it is integrating a reader's previous knowledge with new information, summarizing important details, making generalisations and drawing logical conclusion and generating critically questions (Kirmizi, 2010). Reading comprehension, as a multidimensional system involving both the identifying of written symbols and the comprehension of their meaning, plays an important role in the success with international language exams like International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) or Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (Paris & Hamilton, 2009; Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012; Hung, 2015). According to Kendeou et al. (2014) comprehension operates at two interconnected levels, first, elements of texts are translated into linguistic concepts; and second, meaningful higher-level interpretations are constructed. Central to the reading comprehension process is the reader's ability to see meanings that are not overtly expressed. Inferential reading involves reading between the lines, understanding underlying relationships that are not explicitly stated, and drawing assumptions from the text (Hamouda & Tarlochan, 2015). This ability is further reflected in reading standardised tests, considering that learners are presented with relatively low-level and high-cognitive levels of reading tasks that demand the simultaneous activation of multiple skills (Jang, 2009). The task of inferencing requires that readers have knowledge of difficult vocabulary and sentence structures, and that they are able to build inferences by connecting background knowledge with information in a text to create new meaning (Graesser et al., 1994; Van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). For instance, as Jang (2009) also points out, testing students' ability to make inferences also enables teachers and reading specialists to gain better insight into the reader's general reading performance, which says much about their critical and analytical abilities. Background knowledge also plays an important role in facilitating inferential reading. Readers with greater prior knowledge process information more deeply and

experience lower cognitive load during the act of comprehension (Scheiter et al., 2009). However, traditional reading instruction in the classroom often restricts opportunities for students to make use of these cognitive resources. Without adequate practice in making inferences and constructing meaning for themselves, students may find it difficult to engage fully in conversation or be independent readers. By emphasising inferential knowledge, educators can provide the tools that students need to engage critically with texts, improve their reading comprehension, and cultivate a life-long disposition for learning. Despite that, the study of inferential reading comprehension skills, also known as "reading between the lines" strategy, has been challenging for many students.

Emerging research suggest that explicit instruction on how to make inferences, along with metacognitive scaffolding, can greatly enhance students' comprehension performance (McNamara, 2007; Duke et al., 2021). Thus, understanding both the challenges students experience and effective strategies that work best is essential for designing interventions that can bridge the gap between literal comprehension and deeper interpretative skills.

Statement of the problem

At the Oshakati campus of the University of Namibia, students enrolled in the English bridging course undergo immense challenges with inferential reading, often referred to as 'reading between the lines'. This constraint impedes students' ability to engage meaningfully with complex academic materials which results in students diminished self-esteem, hampered critical thinking development and increased instructional burden on lecturers, who often lack systematic framework to support the development of advanced reading approaches. Pretorius and Currin (2010) argue that students who experience challenges with inferential comprehension are less likely to excel academically because they do not read beyond literal interpretation of texts. In the same vein, Lesaux and Kieffer (2010) stress that students in multilingual contexts are deprived of instructional support in inferential reading and, as a result, remain at a disadvantage in higher education. Even though countries with established educational infrastructure have adopted specific reading comprehension programs to address such gaps (National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow, 2010), Namibia continues to lag in providing targeted interventions for struggling readers in higher education. In the absence of such support particularly in the development of inferential reading skills, large numbers of students continue to be under-prepared for higher education. Research further indicated that low levels of reading comprehension abilities have been identified as a significant predictor of dropout rates and low graduation rates at universities (OECD, 2019).

Over time, these challenges may negatively affect students' academic trajectories, institutional reputations and the readiness of graduates to contribute meaningfully to the professional environments. Within this context, this study aimed to examine the challenges that bridging course students experience with reading between the lines, and the impact of reading between the lines on reading comprehension. The results might help shape better teaching methods and curriculum design especially in bridging programmes to support student learning.

Research objectives

The study sought to fulfil the following research objectives:

1. To explore the challenges bridging course students experience when applying the reading between the lines approach in English text comprehension.
2. To examine bridging course students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the reading between the lines approach in enhancing text comprehension.
3. To identify and recommend effective strategies to strengthen bridging course students' ability to read between the lines.

Theoretical framework

This study is informed by the Schema Theory which provides an effective rationale for reading comprehension particularly in inferential understanding. The development of the schemata theory was first introduced by Frederic Bartlett (1932) who argued that prior knowledge shapes how people interpret and recall information. The theory was later applied to education and reading comprehension by David Rumehalt (1980). In line with these theoretical insights is Anderson's (1984) argument that a reader's prior experience is critical for understanding

and interpreting a text. Reading is considered as an interactive process between the text and the reader's pre-existing mental frameworks, or schemata, which assist the reader in filling in gaps and drawing inferences when information is implied rather than expressed. Through making connections between the information presented in the text and what the readers already know, readers are actively generate meaning through the processing they undertake while reading (Rumelhart, 1980). Based on this view, drawing conclusions is a crucial cognitive process that enables readers to build a coherent situation model by seeing past the text's surface presentation. Furthermore, understanding text-specific information and combining it with previously learnt context to create a comprehensive text model constitutes a complete interpretation of texts (Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978).

Literature review

A crucial aspect of academic literacy is reading between the lines, which call on students to deduce meaning from sources other than the text itself. The development of inferential reading skills is particularly crucial for students enrolled in bridging courses, which reinforce the fundamental academic skills necessary for success in college. Informed by Schema Theory, this review of literature investigates how prior knowledge impacts students' ability to comprehend texts as well as highlights the significance of inferential reading on reading comprehension.

Reading between the lines

Making inferences is widely recognised as a fundamental process in reading comprehension, a point strongly emphasised in the influential work of Walter Kintsch (1988) and Teun van Dijk (1978). Their research introduced the Construction-Integration model, which proposes that readers build meaning through an active process of connecting ideas in the text with their own prior knowledge. This model highlights that comprehension does not rely solely on the words explicitly written, but also on the reader's ability to fill in gaps, draw conclusions, and make sense of implied ideas. Without these inferences, texts often remain fragmented or misunderstood. In practical terms, this means that students who struggle to infer meaning may also struggle to understand the broader message or purpose of what they read. This is especially relevant in academic contexts, where complex texts frequently require readers to interpret nuance, identify underlying arguments, or connect abstract concepts, all of which depend on inferential reasoning. According to Gagné et al. (1993) inferential comprehension is a demanding cognitive task that involves three simultaneous sub-processes namely; integration, summary-making, and elaboration. Integration combines propositions to form mental representations, summarization involves extracting the main idea from a text, and elaboration entails applying background knowledge to extend comprehension. Collectively, these sub-processes allow readers to construct a coherent meaningful macrostructure for the text.

Some studies have investigated the nature of inferential reading across different types of texts. Narrative texts that have known structures and chronological sequence of events help induce inferences by activating background knowledge (Berman & Nir-Sagiv, 2007; Shapiro, 2004). On the other hand, expository texts, which are designed to inform the reader about a subject as opposed to entertaining them, are usually harder for readers with low knowledge of the subject (Medina & Pilonieta, 2006). Moreover, individual differences in vocabulary and lexical access are key to inference making. Studies have demonstrated that vocabulary is a robust predictor of narrative comprehension (Silva & Cain, 2015). In second language learning (L2) situations, like learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), vocabulary level is even more important because, below a certain vocabulary threshold, learners experience challenges generating inferences (Hatami & Tavakoli, 2012; Grabe, 2009). Strong inferential skills in turn benefit overall reading comprehension in first language (L1) as well as in L2 (Oakhill & Cain, 2012).

However, poor readers generate fewer knowledge-based inferences than skilled readers (Carlson et al., 2014), demonstrating the crucial role of the importance of explicit inferential skill development. Reading comprehension entails not just decoding and memorising explicit text, but also the higher-order cognitive ability to understand information and read between the lines (Ku, 2009; Harvey & Goudvis 2007). Inferential reading necessitates cognitive effort and the use of critical thinking skills, especially when learners must infer sociocultural meanings

contained in texts, as in foreign language learning environments (Weinstein, 2000).

The impact of inference on reading between the lines

Empirical data suggests that inference generation accurately predicts global reading comprehension (Ahmed et al., 2016; Oakhill and Cain, 2012). Hall et al. (2020) found that inference competence is a significant predictor of good understanding. However, there is a lack of robust evidence on the impact of explicit inference instruction, particularly for English learners with comprehension difficulties. Elleman (2017), McNamara and Magliano (2009), define making inferences as connecting information within or between texts to form blended understandings. Students who don't have inference skills struggle with making meaning and understanding what they have read.

Hall et al. (2020) also note that, education policies have been placing more emphasis on developing students' inferential comprehension to support the higher-level requirements for college, workforce, and civic life (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). But typical reading instruction has focused more on literal comprehension and not enough on inferential comprehension (Bintz & Williams, 2005; Graesser & Person, 1994; McKeown & Beck, 2003). This has created a vacuum that must be filled if today's students are to successfully face the challenges of current academic and workplace demands.

Vocabulary remains an important facilitator of inferential comprehension. Estevez and Calvo (2000) observe that lexical access accelerates the process of inference making. Bridging the gap between inadequate vocabulary knowledge and the demand of inferential comprehension remains particularly challenging for learners reading in their second language. Fostering students' inferential comprehension represents a stage even more difficult to reach for L2 readers than for L1 readers (Feldman & Kinsella, 2005).

Implication for learning

The need to strengthen inferential reading skills is particularly relevant for bridging course students, including those in Namibia. Students entering bridging courses often do so because of gaps in their academic preparation, especially in critical reading and comprehension skills. In Namibia, many students in bridging programs come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, with English as a second or third language and inadequate vocabulary knowledge. This linguistic challenge has a direct impact on their ability to draw inferences, which in turn inhibits reading comprehension skills. Barreyro et al. (2025) found that students' prior knowledge greatly improves inferential comprehension. Bridging students must establish a broad base of previous knowledge and vocabulary to increase their literal and inferential comprehension of academic texts.

Given Namibia's sociocultural and educational setting, it is evident that reading instruction in bridging programs should be redesigned to focus on inferential comprehension skills. Explicit instruction on how to infer, coupled with vocabulary expansion and exposure to a variety of text genres such as expository texts, could help students fulfil the reading demands of higher education and professional life. Developing inferential reading is not merely a matter of academic convenience; it is a means to developing higher level thinking, critical analysis, and genuine engagement with text which are critical for lifelong learning in a knowledge-based society. Inferential comprehension is essential for reading comprehension because it integrates surface-level understanding to deeper cognitive engagement with texts.

Theories such as Schema (Bartlett, 1932; Rumelhart, 1980) as well as research on inference generation (Anderson, 1984), emphasise the significance of activating prior knowledge and employing inferential processes to interpret implicit meanings. While most of the literature emphasises the cognitive difficulties of inference-making, particularly among second-language learners, it also highlights gaps in training and support for students who struggle with this skill. In Namibian bridging courses, where students frequently encounter linguistic and academic obstacles, it is critical to design effective instructional strategies that encourage inferential reading.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to investigate students' perceptions on the role of reading between the lines in improving text comprehension in an English bridging course at University of Namibia,

Oshakati campus. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for a thorough understanding of participants' experiences, interpretations, and meaning-making processes (Creswell, 2014), which is critical when studying cognitive processes involved in reading. Purposive sampling was used to select 15 participants from a total of 132 students enrolled in the bridging course, ensuring that only students with relevant experiences and challenges in reading comprehension were included. The participants included those who engaged in reading comprehension texts and faced difficulties in interpreting the information conveyed in those texts. This sampling method is widely recognized for its ability to provide rich, relevant data in qualitative research (Patton, 2015).

Data were collected through focus group interviews, with three sessions consisting of five participants each. Focus group discussions were chosen to encourage interaction, allowing participants to elaborate on their thoughts while building on each other's ideas, thereby fostering deeper insights into their comprehension strategies (Morgan, 1996). Data were analysed according to Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework, which includes the identification of patterns, the coding system of responses, and the formation of themes that capture the common and unique experiences of participants. To ensure accuracy and completeness in the study, note-taking was used during the interviews to record important subjects in concert with audio recordings. This approach enabled the researchers to comprehensively interpret participants' points of view while maintaining their authenticity. Drawing on students' life experiences, the study explained how reading between the lines impacted knowledge acquisition in the bridging course and offered insights into effective teaching strategies compatible with constructivist principles.

Findings

Demographic information

The study comprised 15 students who were enrolled in the bridging course at the University of Namibia, Oshakati campus. The students included seven females and eight males, between the ages of 20-25. Thematic analysis of the focus group interviews revealed three key themes: (1) Challenges in applying reading between the lines, (2) Perceived benefits of reading between the lines, and (3) Strategies to enhance inferential reading skills. Each theme consisted of four subthemes, illustrating students' experiences and perspectives (see Table 1).

Table 1: Themes and sub-themes identified from the research findings

Theme 1: Challenges in applying reading between the lines	**Sub-theme 1.1:** Limited vocabulary and background knowledge **Sub-theme 1.2:** Difficulty in recognizing implicit meaning **Sub-theme 1.3:** Lack of exposure to inferential reading in prior education **Sub-theme: 1.4:** Time constraints in academic reading
Theme 2: Perceived benefits of reading between the lines	**Sub-theme 2.1:** Improved text comprehension **Sub-theme 2.2:** Development of critical thinking skills **Sub-theme 2.3:** Enhanced academic performance **Sub-theme 2.4:** Greater engagement with course material
Theme 3: Strategies to enhance inferential reading skills	**Sub-theme 3.1:** Classroom discussions **Sub-theme 3.2:** Guided reading by teachers **Sub-theme 3.3:** Exposure to different types of texts **Sub-theme 3.4:** Use of annotation and note-taking

Theme 1: Challenges in applying reading between the lines

Participants expressed difficulties in using inferential reading strategies, highlighting various obstacles that affect their comprehension of academic texts.

Sub-theme 1.1: Limited vocabulary and background knowledge

A major challenge identified by students was their limited vocabulary and background knowledge, which hindered their ability to engage with complex texts. One participant stated that *"sometimes, I don't understand the words, so how can I guess what the text is saying."* According to Anderson (2004), vocabulary knowledge and schemata (background knowledge) play critical roles in enabling readers to infer meanings beyond the literal text.

Sub-theme 1.2: Difficulty in recognizing hidden meaning

Another significant challenge expressed by students was their struggle to identify implicit meanings in texts. According to Brown (2019), reading between the lines requires the ability to understand nuances, context, and the author's intended message. However, many students found this difficult. One student reflected that *"the lecturer tells us to 'read between the lines,' but I just see words. I don't know how to find hidden meanings."* This is consistent with the findings of Tshabalala (2020), who discovered that students often struggle with recognizing inferences, as it demands a higher level of cognitive processing that many students have not yet developed.

Sub-theme 1.3: Lack of exposure to reading between the lines in prior education

Many students attributed their difficulties to a lack of prior exposure to inferential reading strategies. As one participant shared that *"back in high school, we were told to find the main idea, but no one taught us how to figure out what is not directly written."* Research by Adams and Clark (2020) supports this, suggesting that students who were not explicitly taught inferential reading strategies in earlier education often struggle when required to use these skills in higher education settings.

Sub-theme 1.4: Time constraints in academic reading

Several participants noted that time constraints limited their ability to read deeply and apply inferential reading strategies effectively. One participant explained that *"I try to analyse the text, but when we have so many assignments, I just read quickly and move on."* This finding aligned with studies that highlighted how academic workload can undermine the time students dedicate to reading and comprehension (Brown, 2019).

Theme 2: Perceived benefits of reading between the lines

Despite the challenges, students acknowledged the importance of inferential reading for academic success and discussed the perceived benefits.

Sub-theme 2.1: Improved text comprehension

Students reported that reading between the lines enhanced their overall understanding of texts. This is what one student said*"when I take time to think about the text beyond what is written, I actually understand it better."* In Anderson's (2004) view, this is the activation of the schema that has enhanced text comprehension.

Sub-theme 2.2: Develop of critical thinking skills

Students also noted that reading between the lines helped them develop critical thinking skills. One participant explained that *"it makes me ask questions about what I read instead of just memorizing facts."* This finding is supported by Brown (2019), who asserts that the process of inferring meaning encourages students to question assumptions and think critically about texts.

Sub-theme 2.3: Enhanced academic performance

Several participants linked their improved academic performance to their ability to read between the lines. This supports findings from Adams and Clark (2020), who argue that the application of inferential reading strategies is correlated with higher academic achievement. One participant shared that *"after practicing this skill, I started performing better in my assignments because I could understand the texts more."* This could suggest that students who applied inferential reading strategies might perform better in assessments that require deeper understanding.

Sub-theme 2.4: Engagement with course material

Students also mentioned that reading between the lines made them more engaged with course materials. Another participant noted that *"before, I found reading boring, but now I actually enjoy analysing what the author is trying to say."* This indicated that inferential reading could transform the students' experience from passive reception to active engagement with the material.

Theme 3: Strategies to enhance inferential reading skills

Students shared their perspectives on methods that could improve their ability to read between the lines. Their suggestions reflected the importance of structured and supportive learning environments in developing inferential reading skills.

Sub-theme 3.1: Classroom discussions

Participants suggested that classroom discussions would help them develop inferential reading skills. One participant said that *"when I hear my classmates explain their interpretations, I start to see meanings I didn't see."* This highlighted the value of peer interactions in deepening understanding and broadening students' perspectives on texts.

Sub-theme 3.2: Guided reading by teachers

Many students felt that guided reading sessions with instructor support would help them enhance their inferential reading skills. According to Snow (2010), instructor-led scaffolding during reading exercises can provide students with the tools they need to navigate complex texts. One participant shared that *"If the lecturer gives us hints and asks leading questions, I find it easier to understand the deeper meaning."* This suggested that explicit instruction and guidance were essential in supporting students' development of inferential reading strategies.

Sub-theme 3.3: Exposure to different reading texts

Participants also suggested that exposure to diverse types of texts would strengthen their ability to make inferences. One participant mentioned that *"I think we should read different types of texts and stories so that we get used to finding hidden meanings."* This showed the importance of reading various materials to improve students' inferential reading skills. This interpretation aligns with Samiei and Ebadi's (2021) suggestion that inferential reading comprehension improves when learners are engaged in structured reading tasks that expose them to a variety of texts, because inference requires both linguistic knowledge and background/contextual knowledge.

Sub-theme 3.4: Use of annotation and note-taking

Participants also suggested that annotation and note-taking would help them better engage with texts. One participant explained that *"when I underline important phrases and write what I think on the lines, it helps me figure out what the writer mean."* This suggested that annotation and active note-taking could support inferential reading by allowing students to engage directly with the text. A study by Lloyd et al., (2022) revealed that students who used annotation strategies achieved greater gains in comprehension and academic achievement compared to those who did not, likely because the strategy helps readers slow down, visualize key ideas, and focus attention

Discussions

The study found that students struggled to employ inferential reading strategies due to a lack of vocabulary, insufficient background knowledge, and prior educational experiences that emphasised surface-level reading. This is congruent with Schema Theory, which argue that when readers lack relevant schemata, they are unable to draw suitable inferences and hence fail to properly comprehend texts (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Anderson, 1984). Without sufficient prior knowledge, bridging course students struggled to "fill in the gaps" between what is directly stated and what must be inferred. Snow (2010) and Tshabalala (2020) observed similar findings, indicating that students with a limited vocabulary and prior knowledge are less likely to succeed at inferential reading tasks. This result is not uncommon as many students enrolled in bridging courses possess different educational backgrounds, which are frequently marked by a lack of prior exposure to inferential reading practices.

Some participants found it challenging to establish underlying meanings, which is critical in inferential reading. These students' challenges in distinguishing subtle meanings suggest that strong scaffolding through guided reading and cooperative learning activities should assist them in developing these crucial reading skills. A good example is Vygotsky's 1978 scaffolding theory, which emphasises the role of more informed persons, such as teachers and peers, in enabling others to understand implied meaning. This also suggests that teachers should emphasise inferential reading abilities in their teaching gradually guiding students from surface-level knowledge to deeper comprehension.

The lack of prior experience with inferential reading techniques highlighted an educational gap. One participant stated that students were not taught inferential reading in previous educational contexts, which is consistent with Adams and Clark's (2020) findings, which show that many students enter higher education without the skills required to engage with texts that require such reading

abilities. If students have not met these strategies in earlier learning stages, they will have a cognitive gap when they embark on more challenging learning resources (Piaget, 1973). This gap emphasises the importance of implementing inferential reading practices at early educational stages to promote smoother transfer to higher education. Despite the difficulties, the participants acknowledged the significant advantages of reading between the lines.

Notably, they discovered that their understanding, critical thinking, and academic achievement improved when they were able to deduce meaning from sources other than the text itself. These findings are consistent with the work of Brown (2019), who argues that students can engage in deeper, critical analysis and move beyond surface-level knowledge by reading between the lines. Students that utilised inferencing were effectively creating new schemata, which improved their understanding and analytical skills. Reading between the lines allows students to actively interact with the content, making connections and uncovering deeper meaning, all of which improves their academic performance rather than passively absorbing in information. According to one student, the ability to infer meaning increased the task performance since it allowed them to understand the texts more deeply. This means that inferential reading approaches can improve academic accomplishment and cognitive engagement, which are both important outcomes of constructive learning.

Students recommended a variety of strategies for promoting their learning, including engaging classroom discussions, guided reading with teacher support, exposure to different text genres, and the use of annotation and note-taking to aid inferential reading. The concept of more interactive classroom debates in which students share their interpretations of reading demonstrates learning as a social process facilitated by peer and educator collaboration. This cooperative approach allows students to create meaning through communication and interaction, resulting in deeper understanding. Furthermore, students viewed guided reading with educator assistance as a useful method. According to Snow (2010), scaffolding helps the move from independent skills to increased achievements by providing support. Educators can help students advance towards more independence in reading comprehension by guiding them through texts and aiding them in the use of inferential reading skills. Overall, the findings highlighted that inferential reading is both challenging and essential for bridging course students. Students' struggles stem largely from gaps in background knowledge and previous reading practices. However, when inferential reading is practised and supported, it yields substantial benefits, improving not only comprehension but also critical thinking and academic engagement. Thus, incorporating explicit teaching of inferential strategies into bridging course curricula appears crucial to facilitating students' academic transition and success.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicated that reading between the lines, also known as inferential reading, is essential for increasing students' understanding of academic texts. The difficulties students have while reading between the lines revealed faults in the educational system that can be addressed by more targeted teaching strategies. The perceived benefits of reading between the lines, such as improved comprehension, critical thinking, and academic success, demonstrated the importance of maintaining reading between the lines in higher education. Furthermore, the approaches recommended by students such as interactive discussions, guided reading, exposure to many genres, and annotation stress the active involvement of students in building knowledge by social interaction and text engagement. These techniques should therefore be incorporated into lessons to increase students' inferential reading abilities and promote deeper interaction with academic texts.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to improve reading between the lines skills in English bridging courses at the University of Namibia's Oshakati campus:

- Educators need to prioritise the explicit instruction of inferential reading methods in remedial courses. This can be accomplished through guided reading sessions, during which instructors demonstrate how to derive meaning from texts. Scaffolding tactics, including think-aloud strategies and

peer conversations, must be integrated to assist students in acquiring these skills.

- Since many students cited limited vocabulary as a barrier to reading between the lines, it is crucial to implement vocabulary development initiatives within the curriculum. These programs should focus on expanding students' academic vocabulary, particularly texts commonly encountered in higher education.
- Encouraging peer-to-peer collaboration and group discussions around texts would allow students to share their interpretations and insights. This approach enhances cognitive engagement by allowing students to learn from one another's perspectives.
- Students should be exposed to a variety of texts across different subjects and genres. This exposure will help them practice inferential reading in diverse contexts, enhancing their ability to adapt their reading strategies to different types of academic materials.

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