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King Faisal University Students' Challenges and Problems in Reading Comprehension

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### **Abstract**

The four language skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing are taught to English language learners. One of the hardest skills for EFL students to master is reading comprehension, and many of them lose marks on reading comprehension questions because they don't know how to respond to the questions in the exam.

The researcher administers a questionnaire to all male and female English 101 and 102 students enrolled in the Applied College at King Faisal University in the third semester of 2023 to learn about their most frequent reading comprehension issues. This survey was created by the researcher. The questionnaire is 20 questions long and asks several questions about the respondent's reading process, linguistic proficiency, and psycholinguistic difficulties.

**Key words:** reading comprehension, limited vocabulary, lack of background knowledge, sentence structure, cultural differences, reading speed.

### **1. Introduction**

English language proficiency is a requirement for success. These abilities fall under the receptive or productive categories. Writing and speaking are productive skills, but reading and listening are receptive skills. Receptive skills are acquired by language learners through exposure to oral or written material. Learners in this instance decode



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the meaning in order to understand the receptive material. Reading is a language ability that should never be taken for granted. It is one of the most important ways to get knowledge, especially for educational purposes. One of the most often used language competence abilities around the world is reading. Additionally, students that struggle to read fare poorly academically. Due to their reading deficiencies, they also encounter a number of difficulties outside of the classroom.

Students who struggle with reading comprehension cannot enjoy reading. Also, a lack of language proficiency may contribute to a lack of understanding. This suggests that language knowledge and reading comprehension have a significant relationship. ESL students must consequently acquire sufficient vocabulary knowledge in order to understand the material. EFL students who have a propensity of disliking the language often struggle to understand reading items that are related to the language. Additionally, past knowledge aids in comprehension and meaning construction for learners when reading. ESL students may have trouble understanding the material if they are unable to predict the text's likely meaning or connect their prior knowledge to it. This can be because of a lack of thorough understanding of English derivation. The most noticeable issues faced by the teachers today are insufficiency in reading comprehension among students of higher institutions of learning. This deficiency might affect their academic performance.

Many students struggle with reading comprehension because they lack adequate language knowledge or suitable study techniques. Due to poor experiences they have from the start, they typically face a string of ongoing failures while studying. Given that students require a strong vocabulary to understand reading content, this connection makes sense. Researchers have noted that some of the major challenges affecting reading comprehension are the level of learners' lexical knowledge, prior knowledge, and grammatical expertise. Researchers proposed that some of the key



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elements impacting reading comprehension are the depth of vocabulary knowledge, syntactic awareness, and metacognitive recognition.

Understanding grammar is essential for reading comprehension. Additionally, a learner's level of syntactic understanding affects how well they comprehend reading information. In other words, students who lack the necessary information may not be able to read at a higher level. In order for readers to connect their background information and word meaning, they need L2 syntactic expertise.

Reading is essential to our daily life. It is such a vital component of daily existence that it is impossible to conceive life without it. Reading is a crucial ability that students should possess. Students read literature for a variety of reasons, from learning to pass the time to having fun. It benefits students to gain more knowledge and become more familiar with the subjects that make up their majors.

Reading is a discussion between the author and the reader as they navigate a text. Reading is defined as a communication, a mental process, the reader's active engagement in the formation of meaning, and the manipulation of tactics by Barnett (1989), referenced in Omaggio (1993). Additionally, reading is the process of constructing meaning from a printed or written message, according to Day & Bamford (2000).

As seen by the use of the internet, reading is crucial because it is one of the most often used language skills in daily life. The majority of the content that pupils find online is written in English. "As a skill, reading is clearly one of the most important. In fact, in many situations around the world, we might argue that reading is the most important foreign skill, particularly in cases where students have to read English material for their own specialist subject but many never actually have to speak the language".

(McDonough & Shaw ,1993,p.89)



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According to Pressely (2002), "a good reader" has the following qualities: are engaged readers who have specific goals for the book they are reading. a) Scan the content before reading, and while they are reading, they constantly predict what will happen in the following session. b) Make use of their prior knowledge to validate their comprehension. c) Rephrase the meaning, state it again, and pose doubts about it.e) Read the texts and make educated guesses about the word meanings and word structures based on the context) When reading fictional materials, consider the characters and events. d) Assume that reading is a useful activity.

In order for students to become effective readers, they must have strong reading comprehension abilities. These abilities enable us to read well and learn well (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). While reading a material, most EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners may experience difficulties with comprehension; nevertheless, good readers would handle these difficulties by using efficient reading techniques to overcome the difficulties (Tobing, 2013)

This study seeks to analyze reading comprehension issues among EFL learners, notably Saudi students at King Faisal University, based on the condition mentioned. The study is anticipated to offer reliable results that can aid in identifying the issue and offering potential remedies.

## **2. Statement of the problem**

The most common reading comprehension issues experienced by King Faisal University students are not well understood. The students must meet academic expectations while also working to improve their English language skills.

Many investigations have found that students still struggle with reading comprehension since they are quite weak in both reading and English in general. When reading English, they also rely on word-for-word translation. According to Al Ma'ani (2007), there are two key causes for students' subpar comprehension abilities.



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First off, rather than focusing on teaching reading comprehension, the majority of EFL teachers assess students' comprehension at the word and sentence levels while teaching reading. Second, it is believed that one of the main causes of pupils' subpar comprehension abilities is their lack of reading comprehension strategies. Reading in an EFL is far more challenging and complex than reading in an L1, as evidenced by the hurdles and difficulties of doing so, particularly the cognitive, cultural, and linguistic components. Students must first recognize their problems with reading comprehension before coming up with appropriate solutions in order to help learners enhance their reading comprehension and address their reading comprehension issues.

### **3. Objectives of the study**

This study looked into the difficulties with reading comprehension that King Faisal University students sometimes have. Additionally, the study seeks to shed additional light on the variables influencing students' reading comprehension.

### **4. Research questions**

1. What are the main problems encountered by King Faisal University students in reading comprehension?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences between male and female students in their reading comprehension challenges?
3. How can we help students to improve their reading skills?

### **5. Significance of the study**

The results of this study shed light on King Faisal University's difficulties with reading comprehension. This knowledge could serve as a manual for students on how to interact with texts using the right approaches and strategies in order to increase their reading comprehension skills. In order to determine the best method of reading



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instruction, the study may also assist teachers in better understanding the reading comprehension issues that their students are experiencing.

## **6. Review of related literature**

Tanzin A.(2023). Reading Comprehension Challenges Confronted by Saudi EFL Learners. This study is based on action research carried out in King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. The purpose of this study is to identify the major reading comprehension problems confronted by Saudi EFL learners. Some major problems include limited vocabulary, less exposure to target language, unrelated and monotonous reading material, increasing anxiety due to lack of understanding and poor teaching strategies. The research is conducted among the first year Business Administration, Chemistry, computer science and Mathematics majors of King Khalid University, studying intensive English Program (Blended Course)as university requirement for 12 hour a week for 12 weeks.84 non-English major students and 9 EFLteachers participated in this research . The study proposes some recommendations which might be beneficial for the teachers, moderators and policy makers.

Taha H. & others (2022) did a study on challenges and problems of reading comprehension experienced by EFL learners. The study aims to explore reading comprehension problems that EFL learners encounter in an intensive English program and ascertain any significant differences between male and female learners regarding these challenges at the University of Bisha, KSA. The study followed a quantitative paradigm in which the researchers distributed an online questionnaire pertinent to reading difficulties to 301 male and female Saudi EFL students. It consisted of two parts: the first was students' background information, and the second was on reading comprehension challenges (language, reading process, and psycholinguistic challenges).The results showed that most students have the same problems, i.e., lack of vocabulary and recognition of the words. Vocabulary is one of the biggest problems when trying to work out the meaning and general idea of the text. Findings



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also exhibited that male and female EFL learners experienced challenges in a similar way which shows that all students of both genders face identical problems when reading English. The study concluded that healthy intervention is needed to help students improve their reading comprehension in particular and English language in general.

Dita S. & others (2022) conducted a study on an analysis of students' difficulties in reading comprehension at SMA Negeri 4 pematangsiantar. There are four English skills that must be mastered by every student, reading is one of the most important skills to learn and master because through reading activities students can absorb the information the author wants to convey through reading texts. Reading is not just the ability to say words or sentences, but must be able to interpret the essence of the text. But in reality, students are less able to process, understand, and absorb information from what they have read. This research used qualitative data. This research was conducted on students of X PMIA 7 Students of SMA Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar in January 2022. The reason the researcher chose this class as the research subject was because they were detected as having difficulty in reading comprehension .the technique of collecting the data were interviews. The result of the research showed that some difficulties that student's faced in reading comprehension were difficult to understand the meaning of word, difficult to understand long sentences, difficult to determining the main idea, difficult to understand the grammar ,difficult in inference.

Tasneem A. &others (2021) did a research on reading comprehension problems encountered by EFL students at Ajloun National University. The study aims also to provide more insight into the factors affecting the students' reading comprehension. For this purpose, the researchers used a questionnaire that includes general statements about the main problems that face students in reading comprehension. The participants of this study were 20 EFL students (10 males &10 females) from the department of English Language and literature at Ajloun National University the



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study results indicate that students have high estimated to certain problems they encounter in reading comprehension s a result of the complexity of the texts, anxiety, and word recognition (decoding). The findings of the study also revealed that there were statistically significant differences between male and female students in their reading comprehension challenges in favor of female student.

Ikrar R. (2020) conducted a study on investigating EFL learners' reading comprehension problems and strategies in Tidar University. This study is to investigate the problems and to determine the strategies of reading that the learners use to help them according to their reading problems. The study seeks to answer two research questions. (1). what are the problems of reading comprehension at Tidar University? (2).what are the strategies that EFL learners use to help them in reading comprehension problem? This study adopted a descriptive qualitative approach that used a questionnaire to complete this research. The aims of this study are to know the factors of reading comprehension factors and to know EFL learners' strategies that they use to help their in reading comprehension in Tidar Universty YYY.

Gita S. (2020) did a survey on students' perception on reading comprehension problems of narrative text. The sample participants were randomly selected from the tenth grade students of SMAN2 Jember in academic year 2019/2020. Questionnaire adopted from Xiubo & Zhang (2006) was used to collect the students' perception and it was translated into Indonesian. The result showed that the students still experienced some problems in reading narrative text. Based on the result of the questionnaire, the most problematic aspect that hinders the students reading comprehension was motivation (65.6%), followed by strategies (63.7%) background knowledge (63.3%), reading process (60%) and language knowledge (55.4%). The result implied that the teacher should focus on fostering students motivation by giving intensive course and reading assignment based on the students interests.in order to see further into the





problem faced by the students, future researcher could use direct assessment by using diagnostic test or other measurement.

Buhari M. (2019) did a research on students' problems in reading comprehension at junior high school in Indonesia. The objective of the study is to describe reading comprehension problems that faced by the students at junior high school in Indonesia. In this study, the writer used descriptive research. Moreover, the writer took students in urban area as the research subject. Result showed that students' have problems in reading comprehension. Analysis showed that the students' problems are in prior knowledge, interest, decoding, text type, vocabulary, literacy instruction quality, independent practice, answering question in reading, understanding the question in reading, and interested in the text, and being an active reader.

Nur I. & Hamza J. (2018) did a study about reading comprehension difficulties among EFL learners in higher learning institutions. The study employed quantitative method, 100 out of 281 Arab students of university Sultan Zainal Abidin (Uni SZA) and university Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) were selected to participate in responding to the questions. Cross tabulation was used to analyze data from the test. Findings from the test indicated that the major difficulty faced by the Arab EFL learners is inability to recognize the types of text. This study concludes that the reading comprehension difficulties faced by Arab EFL learners in the selected institutions could affect their English language proficiency and academic performance. To find solutions to these difficulties, there is a need for shared efforts of English language teachers, instruction policy makers, public and private bodies responsible for educational policy learning and implementation, and EFL learners.

Estika S. (2018) conducted a research on reading comprehension difficulties encountered by English students of university Islam Riau. The aim of this research is to find out the difficulties of reading comprehension faced by the first semester of students in FKIP UIR Pekanbaru. Qualitative research design in case study used in



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this research by using the instruments were questionnaire and interview ,the researcher found most of students’’ difficulties in reading comprehension because they have no motivation in reading habit ,they read a little or nothing. It is considered to be a problem for the students to comprehend a reading text. Another students’ difficulties in reading comprehension was the low reading skill. The students complained about the fact that they found, they need to study hard to remember the information they just read. They also need much time to read the text to overcome their problem. Too difficult reading material is also one of students’ problems in understanding the reading text. The material of reading is unfamiliar for them and grammatical complexity is also a reason why the students failed to comprehend the text correctly. The sentences in reading text too long or uses complicated sentences. Related with these problems, new words and long texts are seen by the students as a major obstacle to comprehend a reading text.

## **7. Difficulty of reading comprehension**

### **-Limited vocabulary:**

A person with a limited vocabulary is unable to use a variety of words and expressions when speaking or writing. Communication may become difficult as a result because they may find it difficult to adequately express their views and ideas. Lack of exposure to language, restricted educational possibilities, or linguistic difficulties can all lead to a limited vocabulary. However, reading, picking up new words, and using them in regular discussions all help to increase vocabulary. EFL students frequently have trouble understanding what they are reading because of their limited vocabulary. They might not be familiar with the definitions of specific words, which can make it challenging for them to understand the content.



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### **-Lack of background knowledge:**

Lack of background knowledge describes a situation when a person or group is lacking in knowledge or comprehension of a specific subject or issue. This may make it more difficult for them to understand, think about, or successfully interact with the subject matter.

There are a number of causes for someone to lack background information. It can be because of a lack of educational options, exposure to particular events or cultures, or simply because they haven't had the chance to learn about a particular issue.

Background ignorance can result in a variety of negative effects. It could result in misconceptions, erroneous interpretations, and assumptions. People may find it challenging to contribute to conversations or make wise decisions as a result.

People might actively look for learning and self-education chances to get past this obstacle. This could entail reading articles, books, or research papers on the subject, going to workshops or seminars, conversing with experts, or enrolling in courses that are relevant.

Educational institutions and organizations also significantly contribute to addressing this issue by providing inclusive education that covers a wide range of subjects and perspectives. Additionally, promoting inclusivity and diversity in educational materials can aid in ensuring that individuals from varied backgrounds have access to the relevant background information.

Overall, lifelong learning and initiatives to create inclusive learning settings help close baseline knowledge disparities.

### **-Sentence structure:**

The method that words are grouped and organized to produce a complete sentence is referred to as sentence structure. It analyzes whether a phrase is grammatically correct



and clear, and contains components like the subject, verb, object, and modifiers. Effective communication depends on proper sentence construction. Reading comprehension can be challenging because of sentence form for a number of reasons:

a. Complexity: Complex sentences might have numerous clauses and words that must be comprehended and related. Finding the core idea or meaning of the sentence and following the flow of thoughts can be difficult due to this complexity.

b. Ambiguity: When it is not evident how certain sentence components connect to one another, ambiguity in sentence structure can occur. This ambiguity raises the risk of misunderstanding and incorrect application of the intended meaning.

c. Lack of familiarity: It's possible that some sentence constructions, particularly in more complex books or specialist areas, will be strange or odd. It may be challenging to comprehend the intended meaning and context due to this unfamiliarity.

d. Lack of explicit cues. Sometimes, links between words or phrases are not explicitly marked by cues or markers in sentences. Readers must rely on their knowledge of grammar and context without these hints to make connection.

Readers can use techniques like breaking complex sentences into smaller parts, identifying key words or phrases that indicate relationships between ideas, interpreting meaning from context cues, and practicing reading comprehension exercises that concentrate on sentence structure analysis to get past these challenges.

#### **-Cultural differences:**

In fact, reading comprehension might be made more difficult by cultural variations. People may come across unfamiliar concepts, references, or viewpoints when reading writings from other cultures, which can make it challenging to comprehend the intended meaning completely.



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One major aspect of cultural differences is language. Different languages have unique structures, idioms and expressions that may not directly translate into another language. This can lead to confusion or misinterpretation when reading texts in a foreign language.

Additionally, cultural norms and ideas influence how people express themselves and communicate. Some thoughts or ideas that are prevalent in one culture may be totally alien to another. For instance, readers from diverse cultural backgrounds might need more background information to comprehend the idea of "face" in East Asian civilizations or the significance of indirect communication in particular Middle Eastern societies.

In addition, historical and social settings have a big impact on how texts are understood. Readers from different cultures might not have the background knowledge or context essential to properly understand a text's intended meaning. Readers who are unfamiliar with certain events, people, or cultural symbols might not understand references to them.

Readers can use a variety of ways to get through these obstacles, including doing research on the cultural setting of a work, getting clarification from experts or native speakers, and actively engaging with various viewpoints by being exposed to varied cultural resources. Gaining cross-cultural literacy abilities can improve reading comprehension by allowing readers to more easily navigate and comprehend literature from multiple cultural perspectives.

### **-Reading speed:**

Reading comprehension might be difficult when reading speed is a factor. When we read too slowly, we may find it difficult to comprehend the text's general meaning or miss crucial details. On the other side, reading too rapidly can result in skipping over important details and failing to notice important facts .Effective reading methods must



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be developed in order to increase reading speed while preserving understanding. Here are some pointers:

- a. Practice active reading by underlining or highlighting important passages, making notes, or providing your own summaries of each paragraph. This keeps you on task and improves understanding.
- b. Before reading a piece in full, rapidly scan headings, subheadings, and any bold or italicized language. This helps your brain get ready for the material by giving you a general idea of what to anticipate.
- c. Eliminate distractions: by finding a quiet space free from noises that can interfere with your reading attention.
- d. Expand your vocabulary: increase your vocabulary since you will read more quickly and more accurately the more words you know. Engage in regular word exposure .through reading, articles, and exercises to expand your vocabulary
- e. Practice speed-reading strategies. For example, you could use a finger or a pen to direct your eyes along the lines to help you read more quickly without sacrificing understanding.
- f. Read regularly: like any skill, regular practice is crucial for improvement. Set aside dedicated time each day for reading and gradually increase the difficulty level of texts as you progress.

Do not compare yourself to others when reading; instead, concentrate on improving at your own rate. Keep in mind that everyone has a comfortable reading pace. Your reading comprehension and speed can both improve over time if you put in the effort and use smart tactics.



## 8. Methodology

### 8.1 Participants

The participants were all male and female English 101 and 102 students enrolled in the Applied College at King Faisal University in the third semester of 2023 to learn about their most frequent reading comprehension issues. They were 100 female students and 70 male students.

## 9. Methods of data collection

### 9.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is 20 questions long and asks several questions about the respondent's reading process, linguistic proficiency, and psycholinguistic difficulties. This survey was created by the researcher.

### 9.2 Reliability test

Alfa Cronbach's value has been calculated to verify consistency and appropriateness of the items included in the questionnaire. If the result is greater than 0.70, the value is statistically acceptable and the closer it is to one (or 100%), the more stable the search tool (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). As shown in Table (1), Alpha Cronbach ranges from 0.71 to 0.86. In other words, the study tool is stable, and the data it produces are accurate and reliable in measuring variables. Reliability has been considered since independent and certified variables are more than 70%.

Table (1): Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.882	20



### Descriptive analysis of the study data

The researcher adopted the three-way Likert scale in the questionnaire to give more flexibility to the individuals in the choice, as the value ranged between (1-3) shown in table (1).

**Table (2):** three-point Likert scale to measure agreement

<b>No</b>	<b>I Don't Know</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

**Source:** By Researcher

Likert scale was processed according to the following equation

(Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

$$\text{category length} = \frac{\text{Maximum Substitute} - \text{Minimum Substitute}}{\text{number of level}}$$
$$= \frac{3 - 1}{3} = \frac{2}{3} = 0.67$$

Category length + less weight =  $0.67+1 = 2.33$  , The first degree of agreement (1-1.67) becomes the lower level, to move to the second category  $0.67+1.68 = 2.35$ , then the second degree of agreement (1.68-2.35) becomes the intermediate level, For the transition to the third category  $2.36+ 0.67 = 3$  then the third degree of agreement (2.36-3) becomes the high level. Based on the treatment, the relative approval was determined according to the table (3) of the averages of the agreement levels





Table (3): Likert scale processing

The degree of agreement	Average
Low	1-1.67
Medium	1.68-2.35
High	2.36-3

Source: By Researcher

### Descriptive statistical analysis

According to Table (4), the mean for the variable "Reading Comprehension Challenges " was calculated to be **1.827**. This indicates a **Medium** level of agreement among the respondents regarding this variable. Upon examining the individual item responses, it is evident that because I don't have any prior knowledge of the reading passage and certain passages are from foreign cultures, I have difficulty understanding it. I have some knowledge about these civilizations. Received the highest average rating of **2.171**. On the other hand, Paragraph "Even though I am familiar with all the words in the reading passage, I have problems understanding.", which lower average rating of **1.488**.



Table (4): Descriptive Statistics

Clause	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Importance
Because I don't have enough vocabulary, I have trouble understanding reading comprehension.	2.112	0.982	3	Medium
I have trouble with reading comprehension due of my grammar weaknesses.	1.735	0.907	12	Medium
I struggle to understand what I read because I don't understand how sentences are put together.	1.776	0.889	11	Medium
To grasp the reading passage, I must translate every word in the reading comprehension passage	1.776	0.921	11	Medium
I have trouble in understanding reading comprehension because I don't know how to pronounce words because I can't pronounce words correctly.	1.565	0.821	16	Medium
I have difficulty understanding reading comprehension because I can't determine what the reading passage's major point is.	1.935	0.937	6	Medium
Finding the reading comprehension's primary idea and the auxiliary ideas that supported the reading passage is challenging for me.	1.906	0.872	9	Medium
Even though I am familiar with all the words in the reading passage, I have problems understanding.	1.488	0.763	18	Medium
Because I don't have any prior knowledge of the reading passage and certain passages are from foreign cultures, I have difficulty understanding it. I have some knowledge about these civilizations.	2.171	0.904	1	Medium
Despite understanding the entire reading text, I am unable to respond to the questions.	1.518	0.779	17	Medium
I am unable to talk about the reading comprehension chapter in class with my instructor and a classmate.	1.694	0.910	14	Medium
I'm having trouble deciphering the reading passage's	1.965	0.883	5	Medium



new meaning.				
If the passage is lengthy, I have trouble understanding my reading comprehension.	<b>2.124</b>	<b>0.943</b>	2	<b>Medium</b>
I have trouble understanding the passage's conclusion.	<b>1.924</b>	<b>0.890</b>	7	<b>Medium</b>
I struggle to relate what I read to my knowledge and experience.	<b>1.912</b>	<b>0.849</b>	8	<b>Medium</b>
When I read new English reading comprehension, I get anxious.	<b>1.818</b>	<b>0.908</b>	10	<b>Medium</b>
If the reading paragraph is not interesting to me, I have trouble understanding it.	<b>1.735</b>	<b>0.839</b>	12	<b>Medium</b>
Despite my preparation for the reading passage, I still feel stressed in class	<b>1.682</b>	<b>0.893</b>	15	<b>Medium</b>
If I struggle with the English reading comprehension, I become anxious.	<b>2.024</b>	<b>0.960</b>	4	<b>Medium</b>
If the reading passage is unrelated to my subject, I have trouble understanding the reading comprehension passage and questions	<b>1.676</b>	<b>0.861</b>	13	<b>Medium</b>
<b>Reading Comprehension Challenges</b>	<b>1.827</b>	<b>0.493</b>	--	<b>Medium</b>

### Number and percentage of student responses

A total of 170 participants completed the online survey. The majority of student (54.21%) reported that they have trouble understanding reading comprehension. Because they don't have enough vocabulary, with no significant difference between male and female ( $p > 0.05$ ). almost of the students (57.65%) reported that they have trouble with reading comprehension due of my grammar weaknesses, with significant difference between male and female. students also showed a higher percentage of



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positive response (52.94% or more) to the questions related to understand what they read because they don't understand and how sentences are put together with no significant difference between male and female, translate every word in the reading comprehension passage and understanding reading comprehension because they don't know how to pronounce words, with significant difference between male and female. Participants indicated that they have difficulty understanding reading comprehension because they can't determine what the reading passage's major point (47.06%) and Finding the reading comprehension's primary idea and the auxiliary ideas that supported the reading passage is challenging for them (42.94) and they have problems understanding although they are familiar with all the words in the reading passage, with no significant difference between male and female ( $p>0.05$ ), About 50.59% of participants reported that they have prior knowledge of the reading passage and certain passages are from foreign cultures, they have difficulty understanding it. They have some knowledge about these civilizations with no significant between male and female. Results also indicated that the survey response rate was highly related to Despite understanding the entire reading text, I am unable to respond to the questions (65.88%), (61.18%) of the students unable to talk about the reading comprehension chapter in class with my instructor and a classmate and having trouble deciphering the reading passage's new meaning (40.59%) with significant difference between male and female ( $p<0.05$ ). When asked 51.18% of participants agreed that they have trouble understanding my reading comprehension. If the



passage is lengthy; 43.53% of participants have not trouble understanding the passage's conclusion. About 40.59% participants agreed that they struggle to relate what I read to my knowledge and experience. (51.76%) of participants agreed that they get anxious When they read new English reading comprehension. Only 60.59% of participants still feel stressed in class when they Despite the preparation for the reading passage. (47.06%) of participants become anxious If they struggle with the English reading comprehension with significant difference between female and male. (58.24%) of the students have not trouble understanding the reading comprehension passage and questions If the reading passage is unrelated to the subject. Table (5)

Table (5): The number and percentage of student responses

Items		No	I Don't Know	Yes	Total	$\chi^2$	P-Value
Because I don't have enough vocabulary, I have trouble understanding reading comprehension..	male	32(45.71)	0(0)	38(54.29)	70	3.71	0.156
	female	41(41)	5(5)	54(54)	100		
	Total	73(42.94)	5(2.94)	92(54.12)	170		
I have trouble with reading comprehension due of my grammar weaknesses.	male	12(17.14)	8(11.43)	50(71.43)	70	11.44	0.003
	female	41(41)	11(11)	48(48)	100		
	Total	53(31.18)	19(11.18)	98(57.65)	170		
I struggle to understand what I read because I don't understand how sentences are put together.	male	17(24.29)	16(22.86)	37(52.86)	70	4.49	0.106
	female	35(35)	12(12)	53(53)	100		
	Total	52(30.59)	28(16.47)	90(52.94)	170		
To grasp the reading passage, I must translate every word in the reading comprehension passage	male	13(18.57)	9(12.86)	48(68.57)	70	11.94	0.003
	female	44(44)	9(9)	47(47)	100		
	Total	57(33.53)	18(10.59)	95(55.88)	170		



I have trouble in understanding reading comprehension because I don't know how to pronounce words because I can't pronounce words correctly.	male	6(8.57)	8(11.43)	56(80)	70	13.84	0.001
	female	30(30)	16(16)	54(54)	100		
	Total	36(21.18)	24(14.12)	110(64.71)	170		
I have difficulty understanding reading comprehension because I can't determine what the reading passage's major point is.	male	32(45.71)	6(8.57)	32(45.71)	70	2.19	0.334
	female	37(37)	15(15)	48(48)	100		
	Total	69(40.59)	21(12.35)	80(47.06)	170		
Finding the reading comprehension's primary idea and the auxiliary ideas that supported the reading passage is challenging for me.	male	21(30)	15(21.43)	34(48.57)	70	1.54	0.462
	female	36(36)	25(25)	39(39)	100		
	Total	57(33.53)	40(23.53)	73(42.94)	170		
Even though I am familiar with all the words in the reading passage, I have problems understanding.	male	11(15.71)	9(12.86)	50(71.43)	70	.979	0.613
	female	17(17)	18(18)	65(65)	100		
	Total	28(16.47)	27(15.88)	115(67.65)	170		
Because I don't have any prior knowledge of the reading passage and certain passages are from foreign cultures, I have difficulty understanding it. I have some knowledge about these civilizations	male	38(54.29)	7(10)	25(35.71)	70	3.08	0.214
	female	48(48)	20(20)	32(32)	100		
	Total	86(50.59)	27(15.88)	57(33.53)	170		
Despite understanding the entire reading text, I am unable to respond to the questions.	male	10(14.29)	15(21.43)	45(64.29)	70	2.58	0.275
	female	20(20)	13(13)	67(67)	100		
	Total	30(17.65)	28(16.47)	112(65.88)	170		
I am unable to talk about the reading comprehension chapter in class with my instructor and a classmate.	male	16(22.86)	3(4.29)	51(72.86)	70	7.23	0.027
	female	36(36)	11(11)	53(53)	100		
	Total	52(30.59)	14(8.24)	104(61.18)	170		



I'm having trouble deciphering the reading passage's new meaning.	male	18(25.71)	17(24.29)	35(50)	70	6.92	0.031
	female	45(45)	21(21)	34(34)	100		
	Total	63(37.06)	38(22.35)	69(40.59)	170		
If the passage is lengthy, I have trouble understanding my reading comprehension.	male	32(45.71)	6(8.57)	32(45.71)	70	2.39	0.302
	female	34(34)	11(11)	55(55)	100		
	Total	66(38.82)	17(10)	87(51.18)	170		
I have trouble understanding the passage's conclusion.	male	32(45.71)	13(18.57)	25(35.71)	70	0.367	0.833
	female	42(42)	22(22)	36(39)	100		
	Total	74(43.53)	35(20.59)	61(35.88)	170		
I struggle to relate what I read to my knowledge and experience.	male	16(22.86)	21(30)	33(47.14)	70	4.47	0.107
	female	38(38)	26(26)	36(36)	100		
	Total	54(31.76)	47(27.65)	69(40.59)	170		
When I read new English reading comprehension, I get anxious.	male	9(12.86)	14(20)	47(67.14)	70	22.871	0.00
	female	48(12.86)	11(20)	41(67.14)	100		
	Total	57(33.53)	25(14.71)	88(51.76)	170		
If the reading paragraph is not interesting to me, I have trouble understanding it.	male	18(25.71)	10(14.29)	42(60)	70	5.453	0.065
	female	25(25)	29(29)	46(46)	100		
	Total	43(25.29)	39(22.94)	88(51.76)	170		
Despite my preparation for the reading passage, I still feel stressed in class.	male	14(20)	9(12.86)	47(51.79)	70	4.637	0.098
	female	35(35)	9(9)	56(56)	100		
	Total	49(28.82)	18(10.59)	103(60.59)	170		
If I struggle with the English reading comprehension, I become anxious.	male	41(58.57)	3(4.29)	26(37.14)	70	9.85	0.007
	female	35(35)	11(11)	54(54)	100		
	Total	76(44.71)	14(8.24)	80(47.06)	170		
If the reading passage is unrelated to my subject, I have trouble understanding the reading comprehension passage and questions	male	44(62.86)	11(15.71)	15(21.43)	70	1.35	0.509
	female	55(55)	16(16)	29(29)	100		
	Total	99(58.24)	27(15.88)	44(25.88)	170		

According to the independent t-test results, a significant difference was found for reading comprehension challenges of male and female (see Table 4).



Table (6): Independent t test between male and female students in their reading comprehension challenges

Group Statistics	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
reading comprehension challenges	Male	70	1.70	0.47	0.06	2.965	0.003
	Female	100	1.92	0.49	0.05		

Table 6 shows that the mean responses for reading comprehension challenges by female was (1.7), and the mean responses for reading comprehension challenges by female was (1.92). Although the average number of responses for reading comprehension challenges by female was higher than the average number of responses for reading comprehension challenges by male, this result is statistically significant ( $t= 2.965, p < 0.01$ ). There is a significant difference between male and female in reading comprehension challenges in favor of females.

## 10. Discussion of results

The proposed research question was aimed at examining the reading comprehension challenges practices upon students in King Faisal University. The research findings provide important new information about what students think of reading. The tables include the percentages, frequencies, averages, comprehension challenges, as well as standard deviations for every answer made by the research sample for every question from the questionnaire. The items have been ranked from top to least according to the degree of agreement. Additionally, the level of agreement is mentioned, going from “yes” till “no.”

The item Reading Comprehension Challenges approval ranking, having a mean as 1.82 with a standard deviation at 0.493, which is an interesting result. This implies that students have reading comprehension challenges in English, resulting in a favorable effect upon their happiness.





The results showed that, for participants to learn, they struggled with reading texts due to anxiety and frustration. The main language problems were lack of knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, poor language performance, and confusion. In terms of method, it was reported that basic knowledge and lack of interest in the subject matter of the text were the main sources of comprehension problems. As well as the reasons that students have proven to influence their understanding of English texts depending on the time and size of the class.

### **What are the main problems encountered by King Faisal university students in reading?**

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations were extracted for each question as shown in Table (2) so that the phrase was "Because I don't have any prior knowledge of the reading passage and certain passages are from foreign cultures, I have difficulty understanding it. I have some knowledge about these civilizations. Trouble understanding my reading comprehension" was in second place with an arithmetic mean (2.124) and standard deviation (0.94), and the phrase "Because I don't have enough vocabulary, I have trouble understanding reading comprehension." In the third rank, with an arithmetic mean (2.11) and a standard deviation (0.98), the fourth rank was for the phrase "If I struggle with the English reading comprehension, I become anxious. With an arithmetic mean (2.02) and a standard deviation (0.96). The phrase was "I'm having trouble deciphering the reading passage's new meaning." ranked fifth, with an arithmetic mean (1.96) and a standard deviation (0.88).

The phrase, "I have difficulty understanding reading comprehension because I can't determine what the reading passage's major point is." In sixth place, with an arithmetic mean (1.93) and a standard deviation (0.93), while the phrase "I have trouble understanding the passage's conclusion." It came in the seventh place with an arithmetic mean (0.92) and a standard deviation (0.89). In the eighth place was the phrase "I struggle to relate what I read to my knowledge and experience." With an



arithmetic mean (1.91) and a standard deviation (0.84), as for the phrase "Finding the reading comprehension's primary idea and the auxiliary ideas that supported the reading passage is challenging for me." It came in the ninth rank with an arithmetic mean (1.90) and a standard deviation of (0.84), while the tenth rank was for the phrase "When I read new English reading comprehension, I get anxious." With an arithmetic mean (1.81) and a standard deviation of (0.90).

The two phrases "I struggle to understand what I read because I don't understand how sentences are put together." and "To grasp the reading passage, I must translate every word in the reading comprehension passage" ranked eleventh, with an arithmetic mean of 1.776, with a medium rank., as for the statements "I have trouble with reading comprehension due of my grammar weaknesses." and "If the reading paragraph is not interesting to me, I have trouble understanding it." It was in the twelfth rank with an arithmetic mean (1.73) and a standard deviation (0.90), and the phrase "If the reading passage is unrelated to my subject, I have trouble understanding the reading comprehension passage and questions" was in the thirteenth rank with a mean (1.76) and standard deviation (0.86). The fourteenth place was for the phrase "am unable to talk about the reading comprehension chapter in class with my instructor and a classmate." With an arithmetic mean (1.69) and a standard deviation (0.91). It was "Despite my preparation for the reading passage, I still feel stressed in class." It ranked fifteenth with an arithmetic mean (1.86) and a standard deviation (0.89). "I have trouble understanding reading comprehension because I don't know how to pronounce words because I can't pronounce words correctly." It ranked sixteenth with an arithmetic mean (1.56) and a standard deviation (0.82), while the phrase "Despite understanding the entire reading text, I am unable to respond to the questions." It came in the seventeenth place with an arithmetic mean (1.51) and a standard deviation (0.77), and in the eighteenth place was the phrase "Even though I am familiar with all the words in the reading passage, I have problems understanding." With an arithmetic mean (1.48) and a standard deviation (0.76).



### **Are there any statistically significant differences between male and female students in their reading comprehension challenges?**

The difference between the The results showed that there is a significant difference mean scores of males and females is in favor of females. Therefore, it is important to the results do the treatment for both categories. After distributing the questionnaire, showed that the average score for males was 1.70 and for females 1.92. The t-test was computed from both categories using an independent samples t-test and furthermore showed that the signature ( $P= 0.00$ )  $< 0.05$  which means that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted. That can be said there was a significant difference between the mean scores of classes for males and females based on the result.

### **11. Conclusion**

The results show that Saudi students had a number of reading challenges when reading materials written in English. To grasp the English material, students should refrain from translating words or sentences into their own tongue, yet the majority of them do so when reading. English language teachers, instruction policy makers, public and private agencies responsible for learning and implementing educational policy, and EFL learners must all work together to discover answers to these problems.

### **12. Recommendations**

1. To minimize students' difficulties in reading comprehension, students are expected to enrich their vocabulary in a way that if they don't understand the meaning of the words from the text they are reading, they must be diligent in finding out through a dictionary and diligently practicing their pronunciation.



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2. Teachers should provide variations of reading to students so that they don't get bored, because if students are interested in reading, students will be more proficient, teachers must also change strategies or teaching method which is more able to attract student's interest in reading texts, and if student's reading interest decreases, the teacher should provide motivation in learning English.

3. Researchers are expected to be able to dig deeper into student's difficulties in reading comprehension, on how to overcome reading comprehension difficulties, understand texts and how to solve them.

4. Teachers should provide students with useful on line references to encourage students to practice reading comprehension.



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