

# Reading Comprehension Challenges: A Case Study of General Foundation Program (GFP) Students at International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM)

Saada S. Alhabsi

International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM), Oman

Fatima Z.

International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM), Oman

Abeer F. Jaradat

International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM), Oman

Said M. Al-Manthari

International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM), Oman

**Abstract**—Reading comprehension is critical for academic achievement, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students who often struggle with understanding academic texts. This research examined the specific reading comprehension difficulties faced by higher education EFL students, defined the strategies which students use to overcome the English reading comprehension challenges and found the impact that the General Foundation Program (GFP) had on students' English comprehension reading skills. Using a mixed-method approach, the study gathered data through quantitative surveys, from a sample of 114 students at the International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM) in Oman, and qualitative interviews with 10 students at this college. Over six weeks, targeted reading sessions incorporated these strategies to assess their impact on comprehension. The results confirmed that students face challenges when learning to read in English, most notably the inability to understand new and unfamiliar words, the pronunciation of new words, and difficulty understanding long sentences. The results indicated the possibility of relying on a set of strategies to overcome reading comprehension difficulties, including re-reading the text more than once, summarizing ideas, relying on key words to understand the context of the text, skimming and scanning. The results also indicated the role of the foundation in improving students' reading comprehension abilities and enhancing their motivation to learn. Findings from this research highlight the potential of integrating targeted reading strategies into EFL curricula to improve comprehension, promote self-directed learning, and enhance academic outcomes.

**Index Terms**—reading comprehension, autonomy, English as Foreign Language (EFL), the General Foundation Program (GFP), International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM)

## I. INTRODUCTION

Learning a new language is a vital requirement in the modern era, especially for English language, which is the most widely spoken language in the world. Therefore, countries strive to educate students in English from the elementary level, as language is the foundation upon which civilizations were built and the means through which individuals communicate.

Learning a language requires acquiring four basic skills; reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Nabeel, 2024). These skills must be taught appropriately throughout the educational process (Brahmi, 2022; Ahmad, 2024). Reading, in particular, is of paramount importance. Concepts cannot be learned and acquired without the ability to read and understand the meanings of words and the general context of a text (Satriani, 2018). Reading is a necessary skill that is inevitable for language learners. Students read text for various objectives like gaining information, for entertainment, etc. It supports EFL learners in enhancing their language proficiency and becoming familiar with the subject they specialize in. Salehi et al. (2014) and Kim and Anderson (2011) stated that reading is crucial for completing all courses at university.

Even though EFL students have a good command of their language, they often face significant challenges in understanding texts. Therefore, various factors influence the reading comprehension process of learners (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Almuslim (2020) indicated that mastering the reading skill is one of the most common problems among

English language learners, requiring the use of specific strategies to enhance students' reading comprehension and enable them to engage with the curriculum appropriately. Gedik and Akyol (2022) added that there is a weakness in English reading proficiency at the level of words and sentences, which necessitates enhancing teachers' ability to employ educational skills and strategies that help students master reading comprehension of words, and the distinction between them.

Based on this, and based on the current reality that indicates a weakness in reading skills among students learning English as a second language, this research aims to explore the challenges students face in reading comprehension at the foundation level at the International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM) and to suggest methods to address these issues. The essentials of this research come from its emphasis on the importance and responsibilities of the GFP instructors to strengthen their support towards GFP students in reading comprehension in order to better equip their students for future professional and academic development in reading skills. The importance of this research is also evident in its efforts to highlight strategies that are and can be used to reduce students' weak English reading comprehension skills. These strategies can enhance the student's motivation to address the difficulties and problems they face. It is hoped that this research will open up new horizons for researchers to address the concept of reading comprehension from different dimensions, thereby enhancing their desire to conduct further studies that support previous theoretical literature on improving students' reading skills.

#### *A. Research Problem and Questions*

Despite the great importance of reading when learning English. Despite the significant importance of teaching English reading comprehension skills in the current era of globalization, there are numerous challenges students face when reading in English. Studies have confirmed that students face numerous difficulties and challenges during this process (Satriani, 2018; Almuslim, 2020; Brahmi, 2022; Gedik & Akyol, 2022). Some of these challenges are related to the teacher, emphasizing the need to train and qualify them on how to teach reading to students and enhance their motivation. Other challenges are related to the learning environment and the lack of resources needed to enhance the learning process. Some of these challenges are also related to the curricula themselves, which focus on one skill over another. Brahmi (2022) found that students face a significant degree of difficulty in learning reading skills. These difficulties are related to the teacher and the learner, the characteristics of the English language, and assessment methods. Moreover, Satriani (2018) confirmed that students need a long time to read a text in English. They also face grammatical difficulties and difficulties when reading unfamiliar texts, which hinders their ability to comprehend texts.

Based on the previous, the problem of the research can be summarized in the following questions:

1. What are the reading comprehension challenges that students at International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM) face when reading English?
2. What strategies do students use to overcome the English reading comprehension challenges?
3. What impact has the General Foundation Program (GFP) had on students' English comprehension reading skills?

#### *B. Research Objectives*

This study aims to investigate the specific difficulties that the Foundation students at ICEM encounter in reading comprehension. More specifically, the research seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To define the reading comprehension challenges that students at International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM) face when reading English.
2. To investigate the strategies that students use to overcome the English reading comprehension challenges.
3. To find the impact that the General Foundation Program (GFP) had on students' English comprehension reading skills.

#### *C. Research Importance*

One of the important rules in learning English is distinguishing between intransitive and transitive verbs. The results of the current study will contribute to enhancing students' language proficiency by helping them overcome the difficulties they face when trying to distinguish between intransitive and transitive verbs. Students cannot construct a balanced sentence without being aware of the differences between the structure of intransitive and transitive verb (Jaradat, 2025). Furthermore, the current study can contribute to improving the teaching methods and strategies used in classrooms to bring the distinction between intransitive and transitive verbs closer together. This will reduce the difficulties students face during learning and stimulate their desire to learn effectively and positively. It will also enhance students' self-confidence by distinguishing between intransitive and transitive verbs, and consequently, their communicative abilities within verbal contexts.

The current study represents an important contribution to the field of language education, thereby enhancing students' ability to acquire fluent language. It also offers useful suggestions for improving and developing the learning strategies provided to students. The current study is considered an important aid to enabling students to improve their linguistic and communicative abilities in English.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is one of the most important skills for students in higher education to complete their courses. Many researchers mention that reading comprehension is a complex skill that requires various factors such as the level of the reader and task. According to Catts and Kamhi (2005) reading comprehension is an intricate, multidimensional process which depends on readers abilities, the text and specific reading objectives. Additionally, Galloway et al. (2020) stated that reading comprehension encompasses cognitive skills and sociocultural features such as understanding academic language forms, familiarity with social norms surrounding the interpretation and using texts within a specific society, aligning with or resisting reader identities implied by the text. Oakhill et al. (2019) argued that reading comprehension depends on two broad skills, language comprehension and word reading. However, this perspective may not be enough especially when it involves online reading comprehension, which requires extra skills for locating, evaluating, synthesizing and exchanging information on the internet (Coiro, 2011).

### B. Factors and Challenges Affecting Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a demanding process affected by a range of personal as well as environmental factors, which could be either enhancing or hindering a reader's ability to understand written materials. Likely, Dennis (2008) cited in Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) stated that complexity of reading text, environmental influences, interest and motivation, decoding or word recognition speed, anxiety during reading and medical issues are factors that influence students in reading comprehension. Therefore, these factors might have a significant impact on students who learn English as a foreign language. On the other hand, challenges appear when there are deficiencies in these elements such as limited vocabulary, issues making conclusions or poor motivation which could make it more challenging to get meaning from the text. In addition, Nurhayati et al. (2023) investigated difficulties that EFL learners face and possible solutions. The difficulties were lack of grammar, vocabulary limitation, difficulties in translating the text and low motivation from the teacher. The study provided some suggestions for students to read more vocabulary, practice questions and get more information by asking classmates and teachers. Teachers had to change teaching methods. Moreover, Alharbi et al. (2022) also investigated the issues that hinder reading abilities for Arabic EFL learners and suggests some solutions to minimize the barriers of reading comprehension. The results of the study presented that challenges were knowledge of language, vocabulary limitation, student interest and curriculum issues. The study recommended the following, providing a comfortable learning environment, ensure students involvement and curriculum must be designed based on teachers and student feedback.

To sum up, the previous studies on comprehension of reading indicate that students frequently face some barriers, which include lack of vocabulary, challenges with curriculum, issues with environment, low motivation and interests. Instructors can play an important role in enhancing reading skills by implementing various effective reading strategies.

### C. Reading Strategies

Reading comprehension is a complex process that requires the use of different types of reading strategies. It is very crucial that students develop their abilities of reading technique through out of their learning process. According to Ali and Razali (2019); reading strategies include cognitive Reading Strategies, such as planning and setting goals, activating prior knowledge, asking questions, making predictions, summarizing key ideas, monitoring comprehension, revising understanding, reflecting, and making connections. Additionally, Metacognitive Reading Strategies, such as problem-solving strategies, global reading strategies, and support strategies, these strategies play a great role in promoting reading comprehension. Moreover, Agustin et al. (2023) conducted an experiment on 30 senior high school students -EFL students attending English club. The experiment was designed into two phases; the first one was reading using the standard method before the pre-test. Then the experiment introduced skimming (quick reviewing the text to get general ideas) and scanning (quick locating of specific information) for post-test. The results showed significant improvement in reading comprehension using skimming and scanning strategies. Furthermore, Castillo and Bonilla (2014) examined the effect of Implementation of three reading strategies (skimming, scanning and making predictions) to topics selected by learners on improving reading comprehension and autonomy. The target group was 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, with elementary English level, age 14 to15 and belonging to farming families (parents cannot read or write). The researchers had used strategy training program – 11 sessions of 2hr each. The result of this study presented those students developing autonomous features such as making decisions and doing assigned homework, increasing reading awareness and motivation.

Wiriyakarun (2008) examined the influence of training in 2L strategies on the learners' beliefs and uses of the strategies (case study). The study illustrates how effectively a systematic approach could enhance reading comprehension among pre-university students. The students were able to improve their abilities to read by identifying necessary skills they needed, create a strategic plan and practice independently. The research results demonstrated improved understanding as well as increased confidence and autonomy in learning.

In short, many researchers state that combining various techniques, readers can maximize comprehension while reading efficiently. They reinforce that teaching different types of reading strategies is crucial for developing students reading skills and encouraging independent learning. Nevertheless, demonstrating and implementing various reading

strategies might be time-consuming and occasionally difficult for students. Therefore, Language instructors are required to teach reading techniques that are suitable for students' skill level and the various types of texts.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a mixed – method approach that incorporates quantitative and qualitative research approaches to fully understand the reading comprehension challenges encountered by Foundation Students at International College of Engineering and Management.

#### A. Participants

In this study consist of students who have been learning English since they were six years old. After finishing high school, these students enroll in higher education, beginning with the General Foundation Program (GFP). This program aims to improve their skills in the four main areas of language: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Within the General Foundation Program (GFP), students advance through three levels: Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3. The GFP curriculum is based on the UNLOCK Cambridge Syllabus: Reading, Writing and Critical Thinking, which is divided into three levels to meet the language development needs of the students. Furthermore, at Level 3 of the GFP, students utilize the Cambridge English IELTS Book as part of their studies to enhance their academic English abilities. Upon completing the Foundation Program, a randomly chosen group of students is selected to take the IELTS exam, which evaluates their English language proficiency and their preparedness for academic pursuits in higher education.

#### B. Ethical Considerations

This study consists of research procedures in which ethical considerations have been given high priority. Informed consent was obtained from all participants by making them aware of the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time.

#### C. The Quantitative Approach

A systematic questionnaire was used to collect data on the experiences of students with reading comprehension, covering aspects such as making predictions, skimming, scanning, vocabulary understanding and general text interpretation skills. 114 students from levels 1, 2 and 3 were included in the study sample.

#### D. The Qualitative Approach

The sample of participants for qualitative data collection is carefully chosen in order to provide deep, context specific insights in reading comprehension difficulties experienced by foundation students at ICEM in Higher education in Oman. A purposive sampling strategy was employed, selecting 10 students who had previously completed the questionnaire survey. These individuals were chosen based on criteria such as diversity in academic disciplines, levels (1, 2 and 3), year of study, and reading proficiency levels, aiming to capture a broad spectrum of experiences and perspectives. The objective intentions were to ensure that the result accurately reflects the varied reading comprehension challenges across different student demographics. Additionally, to enhance the qualitative data collection, classroom observations were conducted to examine the teaching methods and activities used by instructors to support students' reading comprehension.

### IV. RESULTS

#### A. Analyzing the Quantitative Data

SPSS was used for statistical analysis and results. The reliability of the measurement tool's items was verified using internal consistency (Souza et al., 2017). Cronbach's alpha is one of the most widely used measures for reliability (Vaske et al., 2017). Statisticians generally agree on accepting a value of 0.6 as a reliable value (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The reliability of the measurement increases with increasing the coefficient value. Table 1 showed the study reliability results. The result meets the cut-off of 0.70 and above, which confirms the reliability of the tool and its items.

TABLE 1  
RELIABILITY RESULTS

Construct name	Items numbers	Reliability	Status
Reading comprehension challenges	30	0.897	Reliable

The demographics of the sample are given in Table 2 which presented their demographics characteristics. The results found that the majority of the study sample was male about 62.6% of the overall sample, meanwhile the female samples were 37.4%. On other hand, the study results regarding the age showed the majority of the participants were in 18-20 years old about 79.1%, The results about the length of time in foundation program showed 46.1% of the participant have more than 2 semesters ,35.7% less than 1 semesters and 18.3% from 1-2 semester, regarding language learning, the results showed that 93% of participants had previous experience learning English, although the primary language of the majority of the sample was Arabic.

TABLE 2  
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage%
Age		
18-20	91	79.1
21-23	14	12.2
24-26	2	1.7
27 and older	8	7
Gender		
Male	72	62.6
Female	43	37.4
Primary Language Spoken at Home		
Arabic	111	96.5
English	3	2.6
other	1	0.9
Length of time in foundation program		
Less than 1 semester	41	35.7
1-2 semester	21	18.3
More than 2 semesters	53	46.1
previous English language learning experience		
yes	107	93
no	8	7

The research further aims to examine the specific reading comprehension difficulties faced by higher education EFL students and evaluates the effectiveness of skimming, scanning, and prediction strategies in enhancing their understanding and autonomy. The research examined the descriptive statistics of the main variables using the mean and standard deviation SD to conduct this analysis as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3  
ARITHMETIC MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE STUDY SAMPLE REGARDING THE PREVALENT READING COMPREHENSION CHALLENGES

No.	Statement	Mean	SD
1	I find it difficult to understand the main ideas in academic texts.	3.95	1.083
2	I struggle with the vocabulary used in my reading assignments.	3.31	1.195
3	I often need to re-read sections of a text to understand them fully.	3.55	1.086
4	I have trouble understanding complex sentence structures in academic texts.	3.30	1.131
5	I find academic reading materials too lengthy to finish in one sitting.	3.25	1.255
6	I often find myself losing focus or interest when reading for class.	3.13	1.239
7	I struggle with time management when completing reading assignments.	3.28	1.239
8	I use context clues to understand unfamiliar vocabulary in a text	3.52	1.142
9	I take notes or highlight key points while reading.	3.66	1.176
10	I summarize information in my own words to improve comprehension.	3.30	1.179
11	I use graphic organizers (like outlines or charts) to help structure information.	3	1.243
12	I discuss difficult readings with peers or instructors to improve understanding	3.54	1.164
13	I relate new information from readings to my prior knowledge.	3.50	1.071
14	I set specific goals (e.g., understanding the main idea) before starting a reading task.	3.35	1.200
15	I believe my reading comprehension skills have improved since joining the foundation program.	3.50	1.238
16	I feel motivated to complete my reading assignments for class.	3.19	1.099
17	I feel confident in my ability to understand academic texts in English.	3.32	1.144
18	I am aware of the different strategies that can help improve my reading comprehension.	3.37	1.021
19	I believe reading comprehension skills are essential for my success in higher education.	3.87	1.196
20	I feel that my reading challenges are primarily due to language difficulties.	3.43	1.236
21	My instructors provide guidance on how to approach complex reading materials.	3.52	1.195
22	I receive feedback on my reading comprehension skills from my instructors.	3.47	1.202
23	My instructors encourage me to use specific reading strategies to improve comprehension.	3.48	1.165
24	My classes include activities that help me apply reading comprehension strategies.	3.33	1.168
25	I feel that my reading skills have improved due to the teaching methods used in my classes.	3.31	1.142
26	My reading comprehension difficulties impact my performance in other subjects.	3.37	1.300
27	I often perform poorly in assignments or exams due to reading comprehension issues.	3.22	1.269
28	I find that reading comprehension challenges make it harder to keep up with class discussions.	3.08	1.101
29	I believe that improving my reading comprehension skills will enhance my overall academic success.	4.07	1.153
30	I would benefit from additional support or resources to improve my reading comprehension.	3.90	1.084
	<b>Reading comprehension challenges</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>0.586</b>

The results regarding normality distribution of the data showed a normal distributed dataset with ranged of  $\pm 1.00 - \pm 2.00$  of the normality distribution measure of skewness and kurtosis respectively. The result about prevalent reading challenges, as showed in Table 3 found about 36.3% of the sample find it difficult to understand the main ideas in academic texts with mean 3.95 and standard deviation 1.083 and 44.3% of them always struggle with the vocabulary used in their reading assignments with mean 3.31 and standard deviation 1.195.

Also, 53% of the respondents confirmed that they often need to re-read sections of a text to understand them fully with mean 3.55 and standard deviation 1.086, which indicates that they have difficulties in understanding text using

interpretation skills. The findings revealed a high agreement with 40.9 % of the sample and with a mean of 3.30, 3.25 and standard deviation 1.131, 1.255 accordingly in having trouble understanding complex sentence structures in academic texts, and in finding academic reading materials too lengthy to finish in one sitting. The results also found 42.6% of the participants struggle with time management when completing reading assignments with a mean of 3.28 and standard deviation 1.239.

Regarding methods and strategies of improving comprehension and understanding; 55.6% of the sample confirmed use context clues to understand unfamiliar vocabulary in a text with a mean of 3.52 and standard deviation 1.142. 62.7% of them take notes or highlight key points while reading with a mean of 3.66 and standard deviation 1.176. Meanwhile, 46.9% summarize information in their own words with a mean of 3.30 and standard deviation 1.179, and around 38.3% use graphic organizers (like outlines or charts) to help structure information with a mean of 3 and standard deviation 1.243. 57.4% discuss difficult readings with peers or instructors to improve understanding with a mean of 3.54 and standard deviation 1.164.

Moreover, 51.3% of the sample confirmed that they always relate new information from readings to their prior knowledge with a mean of 3.50 and standard deviation 1.071, and 45.2% of them set specific goals like understanding the main idea before starting a reading task with a mean of 3.35 and standard deviation 1.200.

Regarding the perceptions about the role of joining the foundation program and the role of instructors in improve reading comprehension skills, the results found that 53.9 % of the sample believe that their reading comprehension skills have improved since joining the foundation program with mean 3.50 and standard deviation 1.238. 52.8% of the participants confirmed that their instructors provide guidance on how to approach complex reading materials. 56.5% receive feedback on their reading comprehension skills from their instructors and 52.1% of them their instructors encourage them to use specific reading strategies to improve comprehension with mean 3.52, 3.47, 3.48 and standard deviation 1.195, 1.202, 1.165 accordingly. This makes them more motivated to complete their reading assignments and increases their confidence in their ability to understand academic texts in English.

About the reading comprehension difficulties impact, around 45.2% of the sample confirmed that reading comprehension difficulties impact on their performance in other subjects and 40 % of them assured they perform poorly in assignments or exams due to reading comprehension issues mean while only 34.7% of them found that reading comprehension challenges make it harder to keep up with class discussions with mean 3.37, 3.22, 3.08 and standard deviation 1.300, 1.269, 1.101 accordingly.

The results also showed that approximately 47.9% of the sample were aware of various strategies that could help improve their reading comprehension, and that their classes included activities that helped them apply reading comprehension strategies with a mean of 3.33 and standard deviation 1.168. The results also confirmed that improving the reading comprehension skills will enhance the overall academic success where 73.9% of the participant believe that improving their reading comprehension skills will enhance their overall academic success with a mean of 4.07 and standard deviation 1.153, while 67.8% of them confirmed that they would benefit from additional support or resources to improve their reading comprehension with a mean of 3.90 and standard deviation 1.084.

### B. Analyzing the Qualitative Data

10 students who had previously completed the questionnaire survey were interviewed. 5 of them were male (p1, p2, p3, p4, p5) and 5 were female (p6, p7, p8, p9, p10). Using the content analysis; the data were analyzed. This method relies on coding and comparing respondents' answers to determine similarities and differences between the answers.

**The students were asked how often they read in Arabic an English.** Students' opinions varied regarding how often they read Arabic. Two students indicated that they read the Holy Quran (p2, p3). Some indicated that they read for 2-3 hours daily (p4). Some indicated that they read only once a week (p7) or once a month (p6). Overall, students did not show that they read Arabic regularly. Regarding reading English; Three students indicated that they read English once a month (p1, p3, p6). Two students indicated that they never read (p5, p7). P9 indicated that she preferred reading in Arabic to English, as she said;

*'not much, I prefer to read in Arabic'.*

Thus, the students' responses indicated a lack of direct interest in reading in English.

**Regarding asking the students about the Challenges they face when reading in English;** all students agreed that they face problems when reading new words (unfamiliar words) and understanding their meanings (pronunciation and spelling). P7 indicated that she has trouble understanding words and sentences, as she said:

*'words and understanding some sentences'.*

P4 and p10 indicated that they face problems understanding some terms, as they resort to using Google Translate to understand them. P4 said:

*'Sometimes I face difficulties understanding phrases. I use google translation or dictionary to overcome the issue'.*

**Regarding the strategies which students rely on when reading texts,** students presented more than one strategy. P3, p6, and p7 agreed that they read the text more than once to understand it, as p6 said;

*"I read more than one time. I divided it".*

P1 and p8 indicated that they try to understand the general meaning of the sentence first, as p1 explained that he relies on reading the beginning of the sentence to understand the general meaning of the paragraph, as he said;

*"I think I read the first sentences to find the main idea".*

P4 indicated that he uses skimming and scanning. P9 indicated that she relies on reading and summarizing. P10 indicated that she uses Google Translate to understand sentences and texts.

**The students were asked if they were familiar with skimming, scanning and predicting strategies Before foundation Program.** Six out of ten students indicated that they were familiar with these strategies before the foundation program (at the high school level) (p1, p2, p3, p4, p9, p10). Regarding the impact of these strategies on student performance, the results indicated that the majority of students (9 out of 10 students) emphasized the positive impact of employing these strategies in enhancing their reading skills. Students emphasized that the teachers' use of these strategies facilitated the learning process and enabled them to better understand texts. P4, p6, and p7 agreed that the teacher enabled them to identify the key word in questions, thus enhancing their ability to answer questions. P4 said:

*'The teachers helped me with key words of the question in the text to answer the questions'.*

Students also indicated that the foundation enhanced their level of knowledge of these strategies and improved their performance. Participants 6 indicated that the foundation provides them with many opportunities for practicing. P6 said; *'Foundation gives many chances to practice'.*

Overall; students in general did not show a high level of interest in reading Arabic or English. Students all agreed that the biggest challenge they face when reading English is reading unfamiliar (new) words (spelling), pronouncing new vocabularies, and understanding their meanings. Students often use Google Translate to understand new words and their meanings within the context of sentences. Moreover, the students indicated that they rely on a variety of strategies to understand sentences and texts, including reading the text more than once, relying on the beginning of sentences to understand the context, skimming, scanning, summarizing, and using Google Translate. Through the Foundation, students' reading abilities have been enhanced and their skills have been improved through the opportunities and training provided by the foundation to students.

Regarding the observation tool, the results showed that teachers used a variety of teaching strategies, including skimming, scanning, prediction, context clues and discussion. These strategies had a positive impact on students as they contributed to enhancing student engagement, motivating students to learn, and improving reading comprehension skills. However, the degree of this improvement varied for students in general, as some students showed better results than others. Weaker students certainly need more training and practice to be able to better distinguish between words and their meanings. Through observation, it was also evident that teachers used methods that supported the aforementioned teaching strategies to improve students' reading level, including; providing additional explanations and encouraging struggling students.

## V. DISCUSSION

The results indicated that students face a relatively high degree of difficulties and challenges when reading in English. The most prominent of these challenges are related to understanding the meanings of new words, their pronunciation, and understanding the context of long sentences. This result is consistent with the findings of Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016), which indicated that students' limited vocabulary makes it difficult for them to comprehend new words. This was confirmed also by Nurhayati et al. (2023) study, which indicated that students face difficulties in comprehending new words due to vocabulary limitation.

The result of the research also indicated that students had trouble with the time available for reading assignments. These challenges certainly negatively affected their reading performance. This result is aligned with Satriani (2018) which emphasized that students need a long time to read due to their weak reading skills.

Regarding the strategies students use to overcome these challenges, the results confirmed that re-reading a text more than once is considered one of the most prominent strategies students use to enhance their reading skills and comprehend unfamiliar (new) words. Students also rely on identifying key words in a text to understand the overall meaning of a text or sentence, summarizing key ideas in their own words, and skimming. This result is consistent with the results of Ali and Razali (2019), which confirmed that relying on understanding a text through general meaning and summarizing key ideas enhanced their reading comprehension skills. It is also consistent with the result of Agustin et al. (2023), which emphasized the importance of skimming in English reading.

The results also confirmed students' awareness and understanding of the impact the institution had on their English reading comprehension performance. Joining the Foundation positively enhanced their level through the guidance provided by teachers and the continuous feedback provided by teachers. The institution increased students' motivation to learn to read and improve their skills. This result is consistent with Castillo and Bonilla (2014) findings, which confirmed that relying on skimming, scanning and making predictions improved reading skills and enhanced students' outcomes, as well as contributing to their motivation to read. The results are also consistent with the study of Wiryakarun (2008), which emphasized the importance of training and practice on reading comprehension achievement.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Reading is a means of learning and acquiring information. This skill helps readers grasp the direct meaning of texts and comprehend the underlying ideas. This means that reading requires the reader to recognize and understand the relationships between the text's vocabulary. The results confirmed that students face challenges when learning to read in

English, most notably the inability to understand new and unfamiliar words, the pronunciation of new words, and difficulty understanding long sentences. The results indicated the possibility of relying on a set of strategies to overcome reading comprehension difficulties, including re-reading the text more than once, summarizing ideas, relying on key words to understand the context of the text, skimming and scanning. The results also indicated the role of the foundation in improving students' reading comprehension abilities and enhancing their motivation to learn. However, they also indicated the need for more training to overcome students' weaknesses. Based on the research findings, the following are recommended:

1. Reinforce the training process with more examples, activities, and exercises that enhance the student's understanding of the information and help them overcome their weaknesses in reading skills.
2. Employ modern electronic technologies in teaching reading to enhance students' attention and promote their desire to learn.
3. Design training workshops for teachers to enhance their knowledge of the basics of using modern learning strategies.

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**Saada Salim Mohammed Alhabsi** is currently a lecturer in Personal and Professional Development (PPD) at International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM), Oman. She holds a Master's degree in Special Education and a Bachelor's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from University of Leeds, UK. Her academic and professional interests include inclusive education, Language development and student empowerment through soft skills and reflective learning practices. Email: [saada@icem.edu.om](mailto:saada@icem.edu.om)

**Zeb Fatima**, working as an English language teacher at the International College of Management and Technology, Oman, is a highly accomplished professional with twenty rich years of teaching.

She is committed to improving the English language learning experience of a wide variety of learners holding different backgrounds and cultures. She works to integrate technology in the classroom as an instructional tool and for personal productivity. She is an active member of TESOL Arabia, British Council Teacher's Association, and Toastmasters International. Eagerly involving herself in more research work to contribute to academia and develop her professional skills. Email: [fatima.z@icem.edu.om](mailto:fatima.z@icem.edu.om)

**Abeer Fawzi Jaradat** is a lecturer and Ph.D. student in Applied Linguistics at University Utara Malaysia. With over ten years of experience teaching English language and translation courses in Jordan and Oman, she currently works at ICEM College. Abeer holds a master's degree in English Language and Translation from Yarmouk University. Her research interests include grammar, semantics, and legal translation, and she has published articles in Scopus-indexed journals. Actively involved in academic development and quality assurance, Abeer is committed to innovative teaching and meaningful research in linguistics.

**Said Mahmood Said Al Manthari** is currently an English Lecturer at the International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM), Oman. He holds a Bachelor's degree with Honours in English Language from the University of Bedfordshire, UK, and is CELTA certified by Cambridge. His professional interests include communicative language teaching, student engagement, and learner autonomy in EFL contexts. Email: [saidalmanthari@icem.edu.om](mailto:saidalmanthari@icem.edu.om)