READING COMPREHENSION OF EFL STUDENTS: A STUDY IN THE USE OF AI

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ABSTRACT

Becoming proficient readers is a key (though challenging) target for university students learning English as a foreign language (EFL), as higher education hinges on this. AI tools are fast developing to provide personalised and interactive reading support to learners, showcasing the potential of AI to engage and educate learners. This study investigated the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams Reading Progress in addition to ChatGPT in advancing university learners' English reading comprehension. Employing a quasi-experimental, pre-test/post-test model, the study was conducted with a sample of 60 students at Majmaah University to establish an initial baseline for comprehension proficiency. Thereafter, an intervention spanning_ twelve weeks was adopted, which integrated AI tools following a structured instructional session integrating the AI tools with prevalent classroom practices. The second assessment was designed as a post-test to measure gains, if any. Results showed a significant rise in group mean scores from 9.93 to 23.93 in the post-test, corresponding to a statistically large effect size (d = 3.34) and practical significance (h2 = 0.92). The independent t-test further confirmed the enhancement as statistically significant (t = 25.88, p < .01). Collectively, these analyses can be taken to indicate that the AI-mediated training can be credited for the change in performance. The study concludes with recommending that targeted AI technology provides learners with personalised, engaging, and readily accessible support, resulting in notable improvements in EFL reading comprehension at the university level. Hence, the recommendation is to integrate these into the prevalent curriculum.

1. INTRODUCTION

The EFL classroom is witnessing radical reshaping with the immense potential of AI creating new opportunities for novel experimentation. Mastery of reading in English, moreover, is not only an academic but also a lifelong need, as the biggest corpus of knowledge is available in that language. Applications such as ChatGPT and the Reading Progress tool in Microsoft Teams address many of the ailments that plague reading comprehension, especially in the EFL context. Manpower and infrastructural limitations that so far challenged EFL readers are well tackled by AI tools, as they make available a rich vocabulary, intricate grammar, and cultural reference points to them. By personalising practice, adapting materials on the fly, and engaging students in conversational feedback loops, AI can meaningfully lift the reading performance of university-level EFL students, as has been upheld by earlier studies too.

One flagship application, Microsoft Teams Reading Progress, has gained traction in classrooms as it bolsters fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. Research suggests that its targeted feedback on speed and mispronounced syllables nudges confidence, accelerates vocabulary growth, and spills over into speaking as well as reading (Al-Ahdal & Alharbi, 2021; Jose, 2025; Prasetya, 2022). Alongside that platform, ChatGPT, a cutting-edge large language model-generates custom texts, comprehension questions, and adaptive exercises that learners can explore at their own pace. Early evidence shows that pairing these advancements accelerates language acquisition while reinforcing problem-solving skills essential for lifelong English users.

Xiao et al.'s (2023) research suggests that content generated by ChatGPT can engage readers more effectively than some conventional human texts, marking it as a powerful aid for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Beyond overcoming language obstacles, these AI tools inject variety and novelty into otherwise routine lessons. However, the path to meaningful classroom integration is not straightforward, as educators continue to worry about data privacy, the potential for students to resort to AI for content generation, and the factual accuracy of content (Adeshola & Adepoju, 2023). In addition, empirical evidence that ChatGPT and Microsoft Teams Reading Progress enhance reading comprehension in higher education EFL learners remains scarce. Although preliminary reports link these applications to gains in pronunciation and spoken fluency, their influence on higher-order skills, such as critical analysis, inference, and

interpretation, still requires careful testing (Aljabr et al., 2023; Jose, 2025; Aljabr & Al-Ahdal, 2024;). Filling these research gaps will clarify how, or if, AI should become a standard component of EFL curricula.

This study is an endeavour in that direction as it examines how ChatGPT and Microsoft Teams Reading Progress enhance EFL learners' reading comprehension as evidenced in certain sub-skills, namely vocabulary use, inference-making, and critical thinking. By embedding vocabulary practice in real context and supplying almost instant corrections, these applications fortify learners' lexicons, a baseline for comprehension. Interactive features-from rating AI-generated text to tackling deliberately tricky prompts-push learners to question, reflect, and therefore, engage deeply with course content than passive reading allows, which in turn sharpens their critical faculties. Similarly, by guiding students to spot implied information and draw logical conclusions, the programs target persistent inference hurdles that frequently frustrate EFL readers. Collectively, personalised pathways, instant, anytime feedback, and visual progress dashboards render reading instruction more flexible, more appealing, and ultimately more effective as university learners strive for proficiency across genres and tasks (Zheng, 2022).

The study findings are to serve as a beacon light for curricular and pedagogical resets while also adding to the existing body of literature. The study aims to demonstrate that targeted AI use can enhance reading comprehension in a conducive and acceptable environment, thereby enhancing learners' confidence, academic standing, and career readiness.

1.1. Statement Of the Problem

Many EFL learners stumble over some shared obstacles, such as limited vocabulary, novel syntax, and differing cultural frames-that impede fluid engagement with written material (Prasetya, 2022) in reading. This causes a chasm in learning objectives attainment, restricting access to scholarly articles, discouraging critical discussion, and ultimately masking broader progress in speaking, writing, and listening (Jose, 2025). Although educators have an array of strategies and digital tools, the field still craves fresh, data-driven solutions that adapt in real-time, elevate motivation, and guide EFL readers past long-standing hurdles. Microsoft Teams' Reading Progress feature delivers instant feedback on learners' pronunciation, word accuracy, and reading pace, potentially increasing the fluency and self-assurance of English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) students (Hadji, 2024; Prasetya, 2022). ChatGPT, as a

versatile language model, generates one-of-a-kind texts and comprehension drills that closely align with each learner's needs (Mhlanga, 2023). Although early evidence suggests that these platforms can strengthen vocabulary and refine speech, much less is known about their impact on higher-order skills, such as analysis, inference, and the critical evaluation of texts (Adeshola & Adepoju, 2023). Furthermore, scholarly guidance on integrating such tools into tertiary EFL programs in ways that enhance overall reading ability remains scarce.

The current investigation, therefore, explores how these AI applications shape university students' EFL reading comprehension, seeking to fill the evidence gap and illuminate practical strategies for educators who hope to use them as transformative instructional aids.

1.2. Research Questions

This study seeks to broadly assess the efficacy of artificial-intelligence applications in improving reading comprehension skills among university students in an EFL context. From this main inquiry, two specific questions emerge:

- Which reading-comprehension competencies do second-year university students need (or lack)?
- How can the use of AI applications (Microsoft Teams–Reading Progress and ChatGPT) improve the EFL reading comprehension skills of second-year university students?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Artificial intelligence, as Norvig and Intelligence (2002) put it, is the ability of a machine to simulate human thought to learn, reason, solve problems, and choose actions as a person does. Kaplan (2016, p. 7) offers a similar view, describing AI as a machine's capacity to mimic intelligent behaviour by learning from experience, adapting to new data, and handling tasks such as language comprehension and pattern recognition. Goodfellow et al. (2016), on the other hand, expressed that artificial intelligence involves developing computer systems in order to carry out tasks needing human intelligence, such as recognising images, making decisions, and understanding language. This often happens through machine learning and deep learning methods. These definitions offer a thorough comprehension of AI from several angles, emphasising how it can replicate human intelligence, carry out complex tasks, and utilise cutting-edge computing methods. Every definition is supported by a reliable academic source, ensuring its accuracy

and consistency.

Constructivist and socio-cognitive theories of learning form the foundation of this study, providing a strong basis for understanding how AI tools, mainly ChatGPT and Microsoft Teams Reading Progress, enhance EFL reading comprehension. These theories are highly relevant to the incorporation of AI in language acquisition, as they emphasise the active role that learners play in creating knowledge through interaction with their surroundings and social situations (Al-Ahdal, 2020). According to constructivism, knowledge is created by students via reflection and experience. This approach is supported by AI tools, which provide dynamic and flexible learning environments that enable students to engage actively with reading content.

Vygotsky's work laid the foundation for socio-cognitive theory, which emphasises the importance of social interaction and group learning in cognitive development. This is made possible by AI tools, which open up possibilities for teacher-student interaction and peer cooperation.

AI-driven reading programs provide students with immediate, data-rich feedback on where they excel and where they need improvement, allowing them to practice independently (Jose, 2025; Zamborova & Klimova, 2023). Moreover, AI tools are increasingly used to develop higher-order reading skills, including analysis, inference, and critique. ChatGPT, for example, can craft passages of varying complexity and follow-up questions that prompt learners to reason across sentences and draw broad connections (Kurban & Şahin, 2024).

AI applications lighten the workload of EFL teachers, easing lesson planning, content generation, and even day-to-day classroom management. For example, ChatGPT can quickly draft reading passages, create matching comprehension questions, and assemble fresh vocabulary drills, sparing educators hours they would otherwise spend labouring over material (Xiao et al., 2023). Meanwhile, AI-powered analytics dashboards enable instructors to track student performance in real-time, pinpoint persistent learning gaps, and craft precise interventions that target those needs directly (Jarrah, 2024). Tools such as Microsoft Teams-Reading Progress add another layer by measuring reading fluency and pronunciation, thus offering clear, individualised insights that help guide tailored instruction (Jose, 2024).

Microsoft Teams and ChatGPT were selected as the tools in this study because their features consistently enhance EFL reading comprehension.

With Reading Progress, students can read aloud, keep track of their progress, and get instant feedback on their pronunciation and fluency. Teachers benefit from detailed reports that show reading accuracy, speed, and comprehension, making it easy for them to track and encourage each learner's progress. Since the app operates within Microsoft Teams, both students and teachers find the platform familiar and easy to use. By recording specific metrics and offering personalised comments, Reading Progress also helps instructors identify strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to shape lessons that meet each student's needs (Jose, 2024).

On the other hand, ChatGPT is an AI-powered chat assistant that generates context-aware replies, joins interactive reading sessions, and tailors feedback for comprehension tasks. Its flexibility across diverse assignments and ability to offer live, responsive guidance make it a strong option for sharpening critical reading skills. Unlike fixed tools, ChatGPT encourages students to engage in deeper analysis by prompting them to participate in genuine discussions about the text. Because it can be fine-tuned to varying levels and contexts, it is particularly useful for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL).

Because of their distinct abilities to enhance specific facets of reading comprehension, such as vocabulary acquisition, critical thinking, and inference skills, Microsoft Teams Reading Progress and ChatGPT were selected over other AI applications, making them more suitable for this study (Chavez & Palaoag, 2024).

Zamborova and Klimova's (2023) study examined the use of modern mobile reading software in English business classrooms within Slovakian higher education. The study involved forty first-year students (control and experimental groups), University of Economics, Bratislava, Slovakia. Reading via the Blinkist reading app every two weeks was part of the experimental treatment, which lasted for a semester. The study found no connection between using reading apps to learn a foreign language and improving one's English reading skills. However, a SWOT analysis of focus group interviews showed that the app's use in business English classes was well received. The study recommended to incorporate reading applications into blended learning programs in higher education.

Zhang et al. (2024) investigated how students' reading of foreign language papers was affected by a reading platform based on ChatGPT. For this quasi-experimental investigation, 64 undergraduate students in all were enlisted. In order to assess participants' performance on dependent variables like academic reading achievement, cognitive load, critical thinking, and foreign language reading anxiety, questionnaires and reading tests were employed. After the intervention, two groups were found to differ significantly. Due to the features of the ChatGPT-based reading platform, students in the experimental group experienced a lower cognitive load and foreign language reading anxiety compared to those in the control group.

Zheng (2022) investigated the distinction between unwritten evaluations and assessments of reading behaviour driven by artificial intelligence. According to him, assessments of intelligent education are diagnostic tests of comprehension. Libraries offer a diverse range of reading materials and serve as venues for the dissemination and promotion of information. The intelligent classroom addresses challenges, extracts valuable insights, and enhances reading satisfaction by leveraging AI technology. In high schools, the intelligent evaluation display plan enables students to access audio feedback promptly and efficiently, alleviates teacher workload, and improves both subjective and objective evaluations.

The accuracy of feedback given to non-native English speakers using Microsoft's pronunciation module is investigated in Molenda and Grabarczyk's study (2022). They contrasted the responses with those of human raters and two university pronunciation instructors. Reading Progress is not yet prepared for use as a CAPT tool, according to the results. Moderate agreement was found in an inter-rater reliability study; however, issues, including false positives, were identified through qualitative analysis.

The study cautions academics and EFL teachers, particularly regarding the use of automated feedback. For manual feedback, the design might be helpful, nevertheless. Microsoft's intentions to add more accents could make Reading Progress a complete CAPT tool for EFL research and teaching.

These studies and the current research share several similarities, particularly in their emphasis on utilising AI technologies to enhance reading comprehension and language acquisition. For example, research by Zhang and Lu (2024) and Chea and Xiao (2024) both emphasised how AI-assisted tools, such as ChatGPT, can aid university students in improving their reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and critical thinking. These results supported the goal of the current study, which was to investigate how AI programs, such as ChatGPT and Microsoft Teams' Reading Progress, affect EFL reading comprehension. Similarly, Jose's

(2024) study emphasised the positive effects of Microsoft Teams–Reading Progress on pronunciation and reading fluency, which resonates with the current research's focus on leveraging AI tools to address specific challenges in EFL learning.

Though these studies share a common interest in artificial intelligence, they differ in focus and scope. The present investigation specifically examines how AI applications impact students' reading comprehension, whereas Chavez and Palaoags' (2024) project focuses on learners' motivations when selecting an AI-powered mobile app. In the same vein, Lin and Chen's 2024 work examines ChatGPT's ability to create multiple-choice items, a narrower question than the current study's exploration of higher-order reading skills. Molenda and Grabarczyk's (2022) analysis cautioned that Microsoft Teams Reading Progress is not yet a fully reliable CAPT platform, leaving some doubt about the accuracy of its feedback.

Although that review called for further validation, it offered a more tempered view than the current study, which took a cautiously optimistic stance on the tool's possibilities. By focusing on the integration of these AI resources into university-level EFL syllabuses and their measurable impact on reading, the present research aims to address a specific gap while benefiting from the insights provided by earlier literature.

3. METHODOLOGY

Following a quasi-experimental framework, the research employed a paired pre-test and post-test design to map changes in reading comprehension of a student sample at a Saudi University. The pre-test set a starting point for each student's ability. Once the baseline was set, the class used a set of artificial intelligence tools for focused instruction. The post-test then measured any improvements from that intervention, allowing a direct comparison with the pre-test scores.

3.1. Study Sample

The study involved 60 EFL students from the second year at Majmaah University, comprising 35 females and 25 males, aged 18–24, with a mean age of 21. Participants were stratified by English proficiency levels based on the Oxford Placement Test (OPT): 20 at A2 (elementary), 30 at B1 (intermediate), and 10 at B2 (upper-intermediate). All were native Arabic speakers, reflecting the linguistic challenges of transferring Arabic grammar to English.

The sample included students from both urban and rural backgrounds, with 70% reporting prior experience with AI tools like Microsoft Teams Reading Progress and ChatGPT, while 30% were first-time users. This diverse demographic profile ensures a comprehensive understanding of how AI tools impact learners with varying proficiency levels, technological familiarity, and cultural backgrounds, enhancing the generalizability of the findings to similar EFL contexts, particularly in non-Western settings.

3.2. Study Instruments and Materials

The study employed two tools for data collection, and they are as follows:

1. A list of the EFL reading comprehension skills required of second-year college students.
2. A pre-posttest on EFL reading comprehension skills. The test comprised 15 items, each designed to assess a distinct skill. Each item was allocated 2 points, resulting in a total maximum score of 30.

The EFL reading comprehension skills test was administered by applying it to a test sample of 20 university students. The test time was calculated by calculating the average time taken by each student on the test, and so Time = (total times) / number of students, see Table 1. Using this equation, the researcher found that the time needed for the pretest to be applied was 35 minutes.

Table 1: The Test Time.

Number Average Times	Total Times	Average Times	Time Required for Instructions	Time Required for Test
20	602	30	5	35

To assess the reliability of the EFL reading comprehension skill test, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the test scores, as presented in Table 2, which displays the reliability statistics. The test's Cronbach's Alpha is 0.832, as indicated in Table 2. Thus, the exam has a high degree of reliability. The test was dependable, according to the earlier findings.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics of The Scores of The EFL Reading Comprehension Skills Test.

Skill	Cronbach's Alpha
Literal comprehension	0.810
Inferential comprehension	0.809
Critical comprehension	0.807
Creative comprehension	0.811
Appreciative comprehension	0.812
EFL reading comprehension skills	0.814

3.3. Reliability By the Re-Application Method

For checking the reliability by the re-application method, two weeks after the initial application, the test was administered again. Then the correlation coefficient between the scores of the two applications was computed. This served as a gauge of the test's reliability. As shown in Table 3, the scores drawn affirmed the stability of the test and its validity for application.

Table 3: Correlation Coefficient Between the Two Applications.

Skill	Correlation coefficient between the two applications
Literal comprehension	0.821
Inferential comprehension	0.824
Critical comprehension	0.835
Creative comprehension	0.811
Appreciative comprehension	0.848
Total scores of EFL reading comprehension skills	**0.855**

3.4. Adjusting The List of Skills

In order to assess the reliability of the checklist for EFL reading comprehension skills, a questionnaire was distributed to a sample group of 20 participants. The reliability statistics, computed using Cronbach's alpha for the checklist scores, are shown in Table 4. The resulting Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.801 suggests a high degree of internal consistency, affirming that the checklist exhibits strong reliability.

Table 4: Reliability Statistics by Calculating Cronbach's Alpha.

Skill	Literal comprehension	Inferential comprehension	Critical comprehension	Creative comprehension	Appreciative comprehension	EFL reading comprehension skills
Cronbach's Alpha	0.791	0.792	0.790	0.797	0.796	0.801

4. DISCUSSION

RQ1: Which reading-comprehension competencies do second-year university students need (or lack)?

This question was addressed by describing and summarising the data using the Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation calculated from the EFL reading comprehension abilities checklist. It is evident from Table 5 that the sample was strongly in agreement (Strongly agree = 85.20%).

Table 5: Impact Of the Checklist of EFL Reading Comprehension Skills.

Main skills	Sub skills	1 (**Slightly important**)	2 (**important**)	3 (**Very important**)	Mean	Percentage %	Percentage % main skills
		Freq	Freq	Freq			
1- Literal	1- Determining the meaning of words from the context.	11	19	70	2.59	86.33%	84.89%
	2- Recognising the main idea.	21	18	61	2.4	80.00%	
	3- Identifying supporting details.	9	17	74	2.65	88.33%	
2- Inferential	4- Inferring cause and effect relationship.	16	18	66	2.5	83.33%	85.22%

					Mean	%	
	5- Inferring the author's intended message.	11	15	74	2.63	87.67%	
	6- Relating information from the text to background knowledge.	11	24	65	2.54	84.67%	
3- Critical	7- Recognising the author's purpose.	9	22	69	2.6	86.67%	87.00%
	8- Identifying relationships between sentences.	10	15	75	2.65	88.33%	
	9- Drawing a logical conclusion.	13	16	71	2.58	86.00%	
4- Creative	10- Producing new ideas.	17	19	64	2.47	82.33%	82.89%
	11- Agreeing or disagreeing with the author.	12	23	65	2.53	84.33%	
	12- Reacting to ideas presented in the passage.	14	26	60	2.46	82.00%	
5- Appreciative	13- Gaining an emotional or other value response from the text.	10	17	73	2.63	87.67%	86.00%
	14- Identifying with characters and incidents (show sympathy, empathy, or sensitivity to characters and incidents.	12	14	74	2.62	87.33%	
	15- Giving a personal response to a character or a situation in a text.	16	19	65	2.49	83.00%	
Total					2.56	85.20%	85.20%

Regarding the reading comprehension abilities needed by second-year university students, the sample is mainly in agreement. A reading comprehension skills test was created based on these abilities and administered to a sample of sixty pupils both before and after.

It was hypothesised that a significant difference would exist between the average scores of the study group on the EFL reading comprehension skills pre-test and post-test, with the post-test scores being higher, due to the implementation of AI applications. To assess this hypothesis, both descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (paired-samples t-test) were utilised to evaluate the pre- and post-test outcomes for EFL reading comprehension skills. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Results Of Pre-Test and Post-Test in EFL Reading Comprehension Skills.

Skill	Application	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Paired Differences Mean	Std. Deviation	t. value	Sig. Value
1. Literal comprehension	Post-test	60	4.58	0.87	**2.52**	**1.14**	**17.07**	**0.01**
	Pre-test	60	2.07	0.69				
2. Inferential comprehension	Post-test	60	4.78	0.90	**2.87**	**1.20**	**18.51**	**0.01**
	Pre-test	60	1.92	0.81				
3. Critical comprehension	Post-test	60	4.77	1.05	**2.87**	**1.29**	**17.15**	**0.01**
	Pre-test	60	1.90	0.82				
4. Creative comprehension	Post-test	60	4.88	0.96	**2.95**	**1.25**	**18.22**	**0.01**
	Pre-test	60	1.93	0.82				
5. Appreciative comprehension	Post-test	60	4.92	1.01	**3.00**	**1.22**	**19.03**	**0.01**
	Pre-test	60	1.92	0.81				
Total scores of EFL reading comprehension skills	Post-test	60	23.93	3.76	**14.20**	**4.25**	**25.88**	**0.01**
	Pre-test	60	9.73	1.40				

Table 6 indicates that the posttest mean score for EFL reading comprehension skills was 23.93, significantly higher than the pretest mean score of 9.93. Additionally, it showed that the use of AI applications resulted in a higher homogeneity (Std. Deviation / Mean) of the posttest grades compared to the pretest grades.

According to the scores in Table 6, the total mean scores of the EFL reading comprehension skills test administered before and after differ significantly in

favor of the posttest. The t-value for the posttest was 25.88, which is significant at the 0.01 level. Additionally, the mean EFL reading comprehension

scores of the experimental group's students before and after the test differ significantly as depicted in Figure 1.
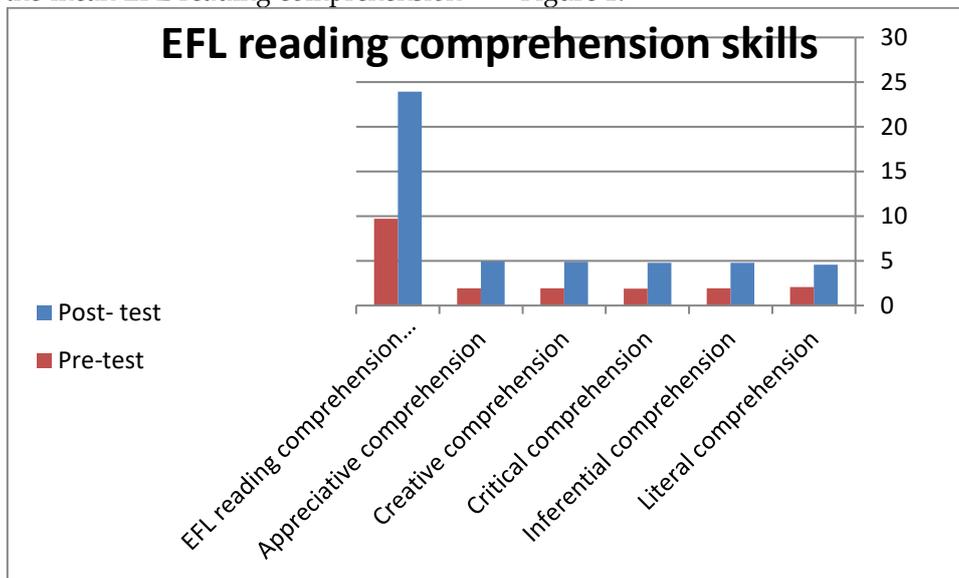

Figure 1: The Mean Scores of The Pre- and Post- Test.

To examine the impact and educational significance of the findings, the effect size (d) and the value of ETA squared were computed by using an

equation, see Equation 1, and Table 7 expresses the reference standards.

$$\eta^2 = \frac{t^2}{T^2 + d.f}$$

Cohen's d = $\frac{t}{\sqrt{n}}$

Equation 1. The effect size (d) and the value of ETA squared

Table 7: Reference Standards Of (H2) And (D) Values.

Test	Effect volume		
	Small	Medium	Large
η^2	0.01	0.06	0.14
D	0.2	0.5	0.8

The practical significance was reflected in the ETA squared of 0.92, depicted in Table 8. With an impact

size (d) of 3.34, considering the height effect and educational importance of enhancing and

strengthening EFL reading comprehension skills, it can be concluded that 92% of the differences in student results may be attributable to the use of AI applications.

Table 8: T-Test Results, η^2 And Cohen's D.

Skill	t. value	d.f	Sig	η^2	d	Effect size
Literal comprehension	17.07	59	at (0.01)	0.83	2.20	Large
Inferential comprehension	18.51	59	at (0.01)	0.85	2.39	Large
Critical comprehension	17.15	59	at (0.01)	0.83	2.21	Large
Creative comprehension	18.22	59	at (0.01)	0.85	2.35	Large
Appreciative comprehension	19.03	59	at (0.01)	0.86	2.46	Large
EFL reading comprehension skills	25.88	59	at (0.01)	0.92	3.34	Large

Since Cohen's d is greater than 0.80, the effect size (d) is substantial. These improvements demonstrated the effectiveness of certain AI tools in enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension. The hypothesis is accepted since there is a statistically significant difference between the group's mean scores on the pre-post-test overall EFL reading comprehension skills.

Three primary components are responsible for the notable enhancement in EFL reading abilities, as demonstrated by the increased posttest scores and statistical significance. First, students may promptly recognise and rectify mistakes thanks to AI technologies' instantaneous, individualised feedback, which includes real-time corrections and customised recommendations for grammar, vocabulary, and structure. Second, by being available around the clock and offering dynamic, captivating tasks that promote regular and consistent practice—both of which are essential for skill development—these applications expand practice opportunities. Third, AI technologies help students develop self-assurance by providing positive reinforcement, progress tracking, and a non-judgmental learning environment, which enables them to observe quantifiable improvements in their reading. The effectiveness of ChatGPT in this research corresponds with results by Chávez and Naranjo (2024), which demonstrated a notable enhancement of various language skills, thus confirming its value as an all-encompassing language learning resource.

5. CONCLUSION

The investigation found that AI-powered features in Microsoft Teams Reading Progress and ChatGPT noticeably raise reading comprehension scores among English-as-a-foreign-language university students. The finding aligns with the study by Alhalangy and AbdAlgane (2023). A large effect size, consistent improvement across diverse readers, and robust statistical tests all confirm that these applications meaningfully advance proficiency.

Their strengths in offering personalised, motivating, and 24-hour support created a learning atmosphere where students practised more and learned faster. Grounded in these results, educators can view AI not as a substitute but as a powerful ally in helping reluctant readers, managing large classes, and driving equitable learning gains.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the evidence, the following are the recommendations:

- Professional-development programs that train instructors to analyse AI feedback, design blended lessons, safeguard data, and uphold academic integrity need to be developed and introduced.
- Policymakers need to establish clear ethical rules and operational standards that guide the responsible and effective deployment of artificial intelligence in schools.
- Public agencies and educational leaders must commit resources toward the infrastructure required for widespread AI adoption, ensuring dependable Internet service, appropriate devices, and accessible software for all learners and instructors.
- Students should actively utilise AI-driven platforms to practice reading, receive tailored feedback, and monitor their progress; regular, intentional engagement with such tools can significantly enhance comprehension and fluency.
- Every new application should feature an intuitive interface, reducing the initial learning curve for both teachers and children. Supporting documentation and brief tutorials empower users to leverage the advantages these systems promise fully.

7. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The current study lays the groundwork for a range of

follow-up investigations that could clarify how artificial intelligence influences English-as-a-foreign-language instruction, particularly in reading comprehension. Researchers may wish to pursue the following lines of inquiry:

- Examine how AI-powered tools promote higher-order reading abilities, including critical reasoning, inferencing, and analytical judgment.
- Assess the impact of professional development programs designed to train teachers in effectively integrating AI resources into classroom practice.
- Investigate the ways AI applications facilitate self-regulated learning strategies among EFL students, such as goal-setting, monitoring, and reflection.
- Test the efficacy of AI interventions across diverse learner profiles, including learners with disabilities, beginning students, and adult language practitioners.

8. LIMITATIONS

The sample size, which could impact the generalizability of the findings, and possible biases in students' self-reported impressions are just two of the study's shortcomings, even though it provides insightful information.

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