**Al-Lahjah : Jurnal Pendidikan, Bahasa Arab dan Kajian Linguistik Arab**
Vol. 9 No. 1, Januari 2026, Halaman 1319-1329
E-ISSN: 2615-5656

# Effectiveness of Integrating Skimming, Scanning, and Close Reading in Arabic Instruction

**Rahmat Hidayat[1], Ulfa Muna Kamila[2*], Agus Yasin[3], Abdul Hafidz bin Zaid[4]**
[1,2,3,4]Arabic Language Education, Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Indonesia
*Email: ulfamunakamila17@gmail.com
Phone Number (WhatsApp): 0823 3859 5836

**ABSTRACT**
*Reading (mahārat al-qirā'ah) is the linguistic skill through which learners of Arabic as a foreign language gain the widest access to knowledge, yet it remains one of the most difficult competencies to develop because it demands the simultaneous coordination of decoding, vocabulary knowledge, and higher-order comprehension. This study examines the effectiveness of integrating three complementary reading strategies skimming, scanning, and close reading within Arabic reading instruction. Using a systematic literature review guided by the PRISMA protocol, the study synthesised twenty-two peer-reviewed articles published between 2021 and 2026 in reputable indexed journals addressing reading-strategy instruction in second- and foreign-language settings, with particular attention to Arabic. The findings indicate that skimming and scanning reliably improve reading speed and the efficient location of information, that close reading deepens inferential and critical comprehension, and that the greatest gains occur when the three strategies are taught as a sequenced, integrated repertoire rather than in isolation. In Arabic instruction specifically, integration helps learners manage the language's morphological density, unvowelled script, and register variation, while vocabulary knowledge and metacognitive awareness function as decisive mediating factors. The review concludes that an explicitly modelled, gradually released three-strategy sequence offers a coherent pedagogical framework for Arabic reading instruction and identifies the need for controlled experimental studies within Arabic classrooms to strengthen the evidence base.*

**Keywords**: *Arabic Reading Instruction; Close Reading; Mahārat al-Qirā'ah; Reading Comprehension; Reading-Strategy Integration; Skimming and Scanning*

**ABSTRAK**
*Membaca merupakan keterampilan berbahasa yang menjadi pintu utama bagi pembelajar bahasa Arab untuk mengakses pengetahuan secara luas. Kendati demikian, keterampilan ini tetap menjadi salah satu kompetensi yang paling sulit dikembangkan karena menuntut koordinasi simultan antara proses decoding (Pengodean), penguasaan kosakata, dan pemahaman tingkat tinggi. Penelitian ini mengkaji efektivitas pengintegrasian tiga strategi membaca yang saling melengkapi skimming, scanning, dan close reading dalam pembelajaran membaca bahasa Arab. Dengan menggunakan tinjauan pustaka sistematis yang dipandu oleh protokol PRISMA, penelitian ini mensintesis dua puluh dua artikel tertelaah sejawat yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2021 hingga 2026 di jurnal terindeks reputasi tinggi yang membahas pengajaran strategi membaca dalam konteks bahasa kedua dan bahasa asing, dengan perhatian khusus pada bahasa Arab. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa skimming dan scanning secara konsisten meningkatkan kecepatan membaca dan efisiensi dalam menemukan informasi, sementara close reading memperdalam pemahaman inferensial dan kritis. Keuntungan terbesar diperoleh ketika ketiga strategi tersebut diajarkan sebagai satu kesatuan repertoar yang terurut dan terintegrasi, bukan secara terpisah. Khusus dalam pengajaran bahasa Arab, integrasi ini membantu pembelajar mengatasi kepadatan morfologi, teks tanpa harakat, dan variasi ragam bahasa, di mana penguasaan kosakata dan kesadaran metakognitif berfungsi sebagai faktor mediasi yang sangat menentukan. Tinjauan ini menyimpulkan bahwa urutan tiga strategi yang dimodelkan secara eksplisit dan dilepaskan secara bertahap menawarkan kerangka kerja pedagogis yang koheren untuk pembelajaran membaca bahasa Arab, serta mengidentifikasi perlunya penelitian eksperimental terkontrol di dalam kelas bahasa Arab untuk memperkuat basis bukti yang ada.*

***Kata-kata Kunci**: Instruksi Membaca Bahasa Arab; Close Reading; Mahārat al-Qirā'ah; Pemahaman Membaca; Integrasi Strategi Membaca; Skimming dan Scanning*

## INTRODUCTION

Reading occupies a central place in the architecture of foreign-language competence because it is the skill through which learners most independently encounter authentic input, expand vocabulary, and internalise the grammatical patterns of the target language. In Arabic language education, the reading skill known as *mahārat al-qirā'ah* is widely regarded as the gateway to the classical and contemporary textual heritage, and its mastery is a prerequisite for advanced study in almost every Islamic and Arabic-medium discipline. Recent analyses of reading-skill standards for non-native learners emphasise that reading is not a single ability but a layered construct in which lower-level decoding processes and higher-level comprehension processes must operate in concert (Saadah & Baroroh, 2025). Where either layer is weak, comprehension collapses, and learners disengage from the very texts that would otherwise accelerate their acquisition.

Despite its importance, Arabic reading remains one of the most persistently difficult skills for learners to develop. Empirical studies of Arabic classrooms repeatedly report that students struggle to identify main ideas, infer contextual meaning, and cope with unfamiliar vocabulary, and that these difficulties are compounded by features peculiar to Arabic: a largely unvowelled script that requires readers to supply short vowels from grammatical knowledge, a root-and-pattern morphology that packs dense information into single words, and a diglossic environment in which the written register differs markedly from learners' spoken exposure (Amin et al., 2026). Vocabulary limitations in particular have been shown to correlate strongly with reading difficulty, with one recent study reporting an association of $r = 0.82$ between vocabulary mastery and reading skill among Arabic literature students (Amin et al., 2026). Confronted with such obstacles, many learners default to a slow, word-by-word translation approach that exhausts cognitive resources before comprehension can be achieved.

Reading-strategy instruction has emerged across the wider field of second-language education as one of the most effective responses to precisely this problem. A substantial body of research demonstrates that when learners are explicitly taught to plan, monitor, and regulate their reading, their comprehension improves measurably. A large quasi-experimental study of academic reading in a second language found that strategy instruction built around overt teacher modelling produced significant gains in comprehension relative to conventional teaching (Masri et al., 2023). A Bayesian network meta-analysis of fifty-two intervention studies similarly concluded that strategy-based instruction is among the most productive interventions for struggling readers, and attempted to isolate which strategic ingredients carry the greatest weight (Peng et al., 2024). These findings have made strategy instruction a mainstream expectation rather than an experimental novelty.

Within this literature, three strategies recur as foundational. Skimming is rapid reading to grasp the gist and overall organisation of a text; scanning is rapid searching to locate specific information such as a name, date, or figure; and close reading is slow, deliberate, repeated reading that attends to language, structure, and inference in order to build deep and critical understanding. The first two are speed-oriented, selective strategies associated with the top-down processing of text, while the third is a depth-oriented strategy that engages both bottom-up linguistic analysis and top-down interpretation (Salsabila & Ratmanida, 2026). Studies of skimming and scanning consistently report improvements in both comprehension and reading rate (Husnul et al., 2025), and a systematic review of eleven studies published between 2020 and 2024 confirmed that these techniques remain evidence-based tools for improving comprehension across proficiency levels (Pido & Mubarokah, 2024). Close reading, for its part, has been linked not only to comprehension but also to the development of higher-order dispositions such as critical thinking and innovativeness (Baki, 2024).

What is far less settled is how these strategies should relate to one another in practice. In many classrooms they are taught as discrete techniques, drilled in separate lessons and rarely connected, which leaves learners uncertain about when and why to deploy each one. Reading theory, however, suggests that skilled readers do not use strategies in isolation but orchestrate them flexibly according to purpose, moving fluidly between fast selective reading and slow analytical reading within a single text (Fan et al., 2026). This orchestration is itself a metacognitive act, and metacognitive awareness of reading strategies has repeatedly been identified as a strong predictor of reading performance (Anggia & Habók, 2024a). The pedagogical question, therefore, is not whether skimming, scanning, or close reading is individually useful, but whether teaching them as a deliberately integrated sequence produces comprehension gains greater than

the sum of the parts and whether such integration is especially valuable in a morphologically and orthographically demanding language such as Arabic.

This question is under-explored in the Arabic context. While integrative approaches to *mahārat al-qirā'ah* have begun to attract attention, existing studies tend to describe the integration of methods, media, and skills in general terms rather than testing a specific, theoretically grounded combination of reading strategies (Linur et al., 2025). There is, accordingly, a clear gap between the robust general evidence for strategy instruction and the specific guidance available to Arabic teachers who must decide how to sequence and combine strategies for their learners. The present study addresses this gap by synthesising recent, reputable research on skimming, scanning, and close reading and interpreting it for the particular demands of Arabic reading instruction.

Accordingly, this study is guided by three research questions. First, what does recent research reveal about the individual effectiveness of skimming, scanning, and close reading for reading comprehension? Second, what evidence and theoretical rationale support integrating these three strategies rather than teaching them separately? Third, how can an integrated three-strategy framework be adapted to the specific linguistic and pedagogical demands of Arabic reading instruction, and what factors mediate its effectiveness? By answering these questions through a systematic review of literature published between 2021 and 2026, the study aims to offer Arabic-language educators a coherent, evidence-informed framework and to identify priorities for future empirical work.

## METHOD

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR), a rigorous and replicable method for identifying, appraising, and synthesising the available research relevant to a defined set of questions. Unlike a narrative review, an SLR follows an explicit and documented protocol that reduces selection bias and enhances transparency, allowing the reader to evaluate how conclusions were reached. The review was conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework, which structures the process into four sequential stages identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion and which has become the prevailing standard for systematic reviews in language-education research (Yulita & Napitupulu, 2023). Because the aim was to synthesise conceptual and empirical findings rather than to compute a pooled effect size, a qualitative synthesis approach was adopted rather than a statistical meta-analysis.

The three research questions stated in the introduction directed the search. Literature was retrieved from reputable indexed databases and repositories, including Scopus-indexed and Sinta-accredited journals, SAGE Journals, Taylor & Francis Online, MDPI, and established Arabic-language-education journals published by accredited institutions. Searches combined English and Arabic-context terms using Boolean operators, for example: ("skimming" OR "scanning" OR "close reading" OR "reading strategy") AND ("reading comprehension" OR "mahārat al-qirā'ah" OR "Arabic reading") AND ("instruction" OR "effectiveness" OR "strategy training"). The search was restricted to works published between January 2021 and 2026 in order to capture the most current evidence and to ensure that the synthesis reflected contemporary pedagogical conditions, including post-pandemic and technology-mediated reading environments.

Studies were included if they satisfied all of the following criteria: (a) published in a peer-reviewed journal between 2021 and 2026; (b) focused on skimming, scanning, close reading, or the broader instruction of reading strategies in a first-, second-, or foreign-language context; (c) reported empirical findings, a systematic review, or a substantive conceptual analysis relevant to reading comprehension or its instruction; and (d) written in English or Arabic with an accessible full text or comprehensive abstract. Studies were excluded if they (a) predated 2021; (b) addressed reading only tangentially, without attention to strategy or comprehension; (c) appeared in non–peer-reviewed outlets such as blogs, opinion pieces, or unindexed proceedings; or (d) duplicated a study already included. Priority was given to sources that either dealt directly with Arabic reading or offered transferable evidence about the target strategies from cognate language-learning contexts.

The initial database searches returned a large pool of records. In the identification stage, duplicate records were removed. In the screening stage, titles and abstracts were examined against the inclusion criteria, and clearly irrelevant records those concerned with unrelated skills, non-educational contexts, or outside the publication window were discarded. In the eligibility stage, the full texts of the remaining records were assessed in detail, with attention to methodological adequacy, relevance to the research questions, and the reputation of the publishing venue. This process yielded a final corpus of twenty-two

articles that form the evidentiary basis of the synthesis. The corpus comprises experimental and quasi-experimental studies, correlational studies, systematic reviews and meta-analyses, and design-and-development studies, providing complementary angles on the same underlying questions.

For each included article, key information was extracted into a structured matrix: bibliographic details, research context and participants, the reading strategy or strategies examined, the research design, and the principal findings regarding effectiveness and mediating factors. The extracted data were then analysed thematically. Following an inductive coding procedure, recurring findings were grouped into analytic themes namely the effectiveness of skimming and scanning, the effectiveness of close reading, the rationale and evidence for integration, the specific application to Arabic reading, and the mediating roles of vocabulary and metacognition. These themes provided the organising structure for the findings-and-discussion section that follows. To enhance trustworthiness, findings were triangulated across multiple sources wherever possible, so that conclusions rest on converging evidence rather than on any single study.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

### Overview of the Reviewed Corpus

The twenty-two studies included in this review span a range of contexts, from English-as-a-foreign-language classrooms in East and Southeast Asia to Arabic-language programmes in Indonesian madrasahs and universities, and from primary through tertiary levels. Methodologically, they divide into four broad groups. The first comprises experimental and quasi-experimental studies that test the effect of a strategy or strategy package on measured comprehension. The second comprises correlational and survey studies that relate strategy use or awareness to comprehension outcomes. The third comprises systematic reviews and meta-analyses that aggregate prior evidence. The fourth comprises design-and-development and analytic studies that examine instructional materials and standards. Taken together, the corpus offers both breadth of context and depth of method, though as discussed below experimental evidence drawn specifically from Arabic classrooms remains comparatively scarce. A striking feature of the corpus is its consistency: across widely differing settings, the studies converge on the conclusion that strategic reading can be taught and that teaching it improves comprehension.

This convergence is important because it addresses a perennial worry about strategy research, namely that positive results might be artefacts of particular contexts. A bibliometric and content analysis covering three decades of strategy-based instruction and self-regulated learning confirms that the field has matured from isolated demonstrations into a coherent, cumulative research programme, with increasing attention to how strategies interact with technology and learner self-regulation (Chen et al., 2025). The present corpus, concentrated in the 2021–2026 window, reflects the current state of that programme and provides a defensible basis for the thematic synthesis that follows.

### The Effectiveness of Skimming and Scanning

Skimming and scanning are frequently taught together because both are rapid, selective strategies, yet they serve distinct purposes. Skimming moves the eyes quickly over a text reading titles, headings, first and last sentences of paragraphs, and salient content words to construct a provisional sense of the whole. Scanning, by contrast, searches a text for a specific target while deliberately ignoring everything else. The evidence for their effectiveness is robust and remarkably consistent. A systematic review that examined studies published between 2020 and 2024 concluded that explicit instruction in skimming and scanning reliably improves both reading comprehension and reading speed, and that the strategies are teachable across proficiency levels and text types (Pido & Mubarokah, 2024). This dual benefit faster reading without loss of, and often with gains in, comprehension is precisely what makes the strategies attractive for foreign-language learners who must process large volumes of text under time pressure.

Classroom studies put concrete figures to these gains. One quasi-experimental study of skimming and scanning instruction reported that mean post-test scores rose to 74.3 percent from a pre-test baseline of 45.7 percent, a substantial improvement attributable to learners' new ability to identify main ideas and recognise paragraph structure rather than labouring over every word (Husnul et al., 2025). Another study tracing performance across successive assessments found that the proportion of students reaching the passing threshold climbed from four percent before instruction to roughly seventy-six percent by the second post-test, a trajectory that suggests the benefits accumulate as learners consolidate the strategies through practice (Agustin et al., 2023). Qualitative work adds texture to these numbers, showing that instructed skimming and scanning help learners decode complex vocabulary in context and summarise texts more

accurately, because a clear grasp of the gist supplies the framework within which unfamiliar details can be interpreted (Agustin et al., 2023).

From a theoretical standpoint, skimming and scanning exemplify top-down processing, in which the reader's purpose and prior knowledge drive selective attention to the text. Research contrasting top-down and bottom-up strategy instruction shows that foreign-language readers benefit from being taught to activate expectations and read purposefully rather than treating every word as equally important (Salsabila & Ratmanida, 2026). For Arabic learners in particular, whose word-by-word habits are reinforced by the challenge of the script, skimming and scanning offer a liberating alternative: they license the reader to move quickly, to tolerate local uncertainty, and to return for detail only where the reading purpose demands it. The strategies thus do double duty, improving immediate performance while also reshaping counterproductive reading habits.

**The Effectiveness of Close Reading**

If skimming and scanning are about speed and selectivity, close reading is about depth. Close reading asks the reader to slow down, to read a text more than once, and to interrogate its language, structure, and argument in order to build a thorough and defensible interpretation. It is inherently recursive: an initial reading establishes the literal sense, subsequent readings attend to word choice, cohesion, and inference, and the reader interacts with the text through annotation, questioning, and paraphrase. Because it engages the reader with the text at the level of individual words and sentences as well as at the level of the whole, close reading integrates bottom-up and top-down processing rather than privileging one over the other.

The evidence indicates that close reading produces outcomes that extend beyond literal comprehension. A recent mixed-methods study of preservice teachers found that a programme of close-reading strategies significantly enhanced not only participants' engagement with texts but also their individual innovativeness and life skills, suggesting that the deep, deliberate processing close reading demands cultivates transferable habits of mind (Baki, 2024). This aligns with the broader finding, from a Bayesian network meta-analysis of comprehension interventions, that strategies requiring active, effortful engagement with text meaning are among the most powerful ingredients of successful instruction for readers who struggle (Peng et al., 2024). Close reading, in other words, is not merely a comprehension technique but a vehicle for critical and creative thinking.

For Arabic reading, close reading has a special pertinence. The morphological richness of Arabic means that a single unvowelled written form may correspond to several possible words, and that the precise meaning of a sentence often depends on grammatical relationships that are not visible on the surface. Resolving such ambiguities requires exactly the slow, analytical, repeated attention that close reading formalises. Studies of integrative Arabic reading instruction note that learners comprehend texts most fully when vocabulary instruction, grammatical analysis, and contextual interpretation are brought together in a single process (Amin et al., 2026), which is a description of close reading in all but name. Close reading also supports the traditional Arabic pedagogical goal of *qirā'ah al-kutub* the careful reading of classical texts where accuracy of interpretation is paramount and where recent work has begun to explore how human AI co-regulation might scaffold the demanding analytical processes involved (Zubaidi & Habibi, 2026).

**The Rationale and Evidence for Integration**

The central argument of this review is that skimming, scanning, and close reading are most effective not as isolated techniques but as an integrated repertoire deployed flexibly according to reading purpose. The theoretical case for integration rests on a well-established account of skilled reading: proficient readers do not read every text the same way. They preview a text by skimming to establish its structure and gist, locate the sections most relevant to their purpose by scanning, and then read those sections closely to extract and evaluate meaning. This sequence mirrors the natural flow of purposeful reading and treats the three strategies as complementary phases of a single process rather than as competing alternatives (Fan et al., 2026).

Empirical support for integration comes from several directions. Studies of reading-strategy instruction that teach clusters of strategies rather than single techniques report broad gains not only in comprehension but also in strategy use, motivation, and self-efficacy, indicating that learners internalise a flexible strategic system rather than a mechanical routine (H. Li et al., 2022). A large-scale intervention study of academic reading found that instruction combining teacher modelling of multiple strategies with guided practice produced significant comprehension gains, precisely because it taught readers to select and coordinate strategies rather than to apply any one of them indiscriminately (Masri et al., 2023). Strategy-

training research further shows that combined training improves not only comprehension but also critical reading ability, an outcome that depends on the interplay between the rapid orientation provided by skimming and scanning and the analytical depth provided by close reading (Mekuria et al., 2024).

The mechanism that binds the three strategies together is metacognition. Deciding when to skim, when to scan, and when to read closely is a metacognitive judgement about the match between reading purpose and reading behaviour, and research consistently identifies metacognitive awareness of reading strategies as a strong correlate of reading performance (Anggia & Habók, 2024b). A systematic review of metacognitive reading strategies concluded that problem-solving strategies those by which readers adjust their approach when comprehension falters are especially predictive of success (Fan et al., 2026), and adjusting one's approach is exactly what integration requires. Another review reached the complementary conclusion that teaching metacognitive strategies improves not only comprehension scores but also students' reading behaviour, meaning the way they approach and regulate the task (Kan et al., 2024). Integration, on this account, is less a matter of stacking techniques than of developing the metacognitive control that allows a reader to move among them purposefully.

It is worth being candid about the limits of the evidence. Few studies have directly compared an explicitly integrated three-strategy programme against the isolated teaching of the same strategies, and fewer still have done so within Arabic classrooms. The case for integration therefore rests on convergent rather than decisive evidence: on the demonstrated effectiveness of each component strategy, on the superior outcomes of multi-strategy instruction over single-strategy instruction, and on the theoretical coherence of the integrated model. This is a strong foundation, but it also marks the clearest priority for future research, as discussed below.

**Application to Arabic Reading Instruction**

Translating the integrated model into Arabic classrooms requires attention to the features that make Arabic reading distinctive. Three challenges dominate the literature: the unvowelled script, which forces readers to supply short vowels from grammatical and lexical knowledge; the root-and-pattern morphology, which makes vocabulary both systematic and dense; and diglossia, which separates the written standard from learners' spoken experience (Saadah & Baroroh, 2025). Each of these challenges interacts differently with the three strategies, and an effective integration must take those interactions into account.

Skimming and scanning are well suited to mitigating the first challenge. Because they direct attention to high-information elements headings, repeated roots, cognates, and salient content words they allow learners to build a provisional understanding without first resolving every vowelling ambiguity, and this provisional understanding then constrains the interpretation of individual words. Studies of Arabic reading instruction report that when learners are taught rapid and repeated reading techniques alongside vocabulary development, their engagement and comprehension improve (Saepudin et al., 2024), and design-based work on interactive Arabic reading media similarly integrates gist-level reading with vocabulary enrichment and comprehension activities to support autonomous reading (Shakira & Zukhaira, 2026a). Scanning is especially valuable for the information-location tasks common in Arabic assessment, where learners must find specific facts, names, or Qur'anic references within a longer passage.

Close reading addresses the second and third challenges directly. The morphological density of Arabic rewards slow, analytical reading that unpacks roots and patterns, traces grammatical relationships, and reconstructs the vowelling that the script omits; and the gap between written and spoken registers is best bridged through repeated, deliberate engagement with authentic written texts. Research on integrative *mahārat al-qirā'ah* instruction confirms that learners comprehend most fully when vocabulary, grammar, and context are analysed together, and warns that neglecting any one component leaves comprehension incomplete (Linur et al., 2025). Culturally grounded materials, such as adaptations of classic folktales for Arabic learners, have been shown to sustain the motivation required for this demanding analytical work by embedding close reading in engaging, meaningful content (Dewi et al., 2025).

A practical integrated sequence for an Arabic reading lesson might therefore proceed as follows. The teacher first has learners skim the text to establish its topic, genre, and structure, activating relevant background knowledge and vocabulary. Learners then scan for specific target information framed by pre-reading questions, which gives their reading a purpose and a manageable initial focus. Finally, learners read the most important passages closely, unpacking morphology, resolving grammatical ambiguity, and evaluating meaning, supported by teacher modelling and collaborative discussion. Crucially, the teacher makes the strategic decisions explicit throughout—naming each strategy, explaining why it suits the current

purpose, and gradually transferring responsibility to the learners—so that students acquire not only the strategies but the metacognitive control to orchestrate them independently (Masri et al., 2023).

**Mediating Factors: Vocabulary, Metacognition, and Motivation**

The effectiveness of any reading-strategy programme is mediated by factors that lie partly outside the strategies themselves, and the reviewed literature identifies three as decisive. The first is vocabulary knowledge. Strategies can direct attention efficiently, but they cannot manufacture meaning for words the reader does not know, and in Arabic the relationship between vocabulary and reading is exceptionally tight, with one study reporting a correlation of $r = 0.82$ between vocabulary mastery and reading skill (Amin et al., 2026). This implies that strategy instruction and vocabulary development should proceed together rather than sequentially; skimming and scanning help learners infer and consolidate vocabulary from context, while close reading deepens the network of form–meaning associations that vocabulary knowledge comprises.

The second mediating factor is metacognition. As already noted, the ability to select and monitor strategies is itself a predictor of comprehension, and reviews of metacognitive reading strategies find that learners who plan, monitor, and evaluate their reading outperform those who do not (Kan et al., 2024). Factors such as learners' linguistic and educational background shape which metacognitive strategies they deploy and how effectively they do so (X. Li et al., 2024), which means that Arabic teachers must not assume a uniform strategic starting point but should assess and scaffold metacognitive awareness explicitly. The third factor is motivation and self-efficacy. Strategy instruction that raises learners' confidence in their ability to read has been shown to improve not only comprehension but also the sustained strategy use on which long-term gains depend (H. Li et al., 2022), and this is particularly relevant in Arabic, where early reading difficulty can quickly erode learners' willingness to persist.

These mediating factors reinforce the case for integration. An isolated strategy, taught mechanically, is unlikely to engage vocabulary, metacognition, and motivation simultaneously. An integrated programme, by contrast, exercises vocabulary through both selective and analytical reading, develops metacognition through the very act of choosing among strategies, and sustains motivation by giving learners early success with fast strategies before asking them to undertake the harder work of close reading. The strategies and their mediators thus form a mutually reinforcing system rather than a set of independent variables.

**Challenges and Pedagogical Implications**

The evidence reviewed here carries clear implications for practice, but also surfaces genuine challenges. The most significant challenge is instructional: teaching an integrated strategy repertoire is more demanding than teaching techniques in isolation, because it requires teachers themselves to be skilled strategic readers who can model expert decision-making and gradually release responsibility to learners. Studies of integrative Arabic reading instruction report that teachers encounter real difficulties in coordinating multiple strategies, managing classroom time, and assessing strategic reading, and they call for targeted professional development to build this capacity (Linur et al., 2025). Without such support, integration risks collapsing into a superficial sequence of activities that lacks the metacognitive transparency on which its effectiveness depends.

A second challenge concerns materials and assessment. Integrated strategy instruction needs texts rich enough to reward skimming, scanning, and close reading, and assessments capable of capturing strategic reading rather than mere recall. Design-and-development studies point toward promising resources, including interactive digital media that combine gist-level reading, vocabulary enrichment, and comprehension activities within a single flexible environment (Shakira & Zukhaira, 2026b), and emerging work on AI-supported reading suggests new possibilities for scaffolding the analytical demands of close reading in Arabic (Zubaidi & Habibi, 2026). These tools should be adopted critically, as supports for strategic reading rather than substitutes for it, so that technology amplifies rather than replaces the learner's own strategic effort.

Three practical recommendations follow for Arabic-language educators. First, strategies should be taught explicitly and named, with the teacher modelling when and why each is used before expecting independent application; the evidence for overt modelling is strong and consistent (Masri et al., 2023). Second, strategy instruction should be woven together with vocabulary development, given the exceptionally close relationship between the two in Arabic (Amin et al., 2026). Third, instruction should deliberately cultivate metacognitive awareness through think-alouds, strategy checklists, and reflective discussion so that learners come to regulate their own reading rather than depending on the teacher to direct

it (Anggia & Habók, 2024). Implemented together, these recommendations convert the integrated model from an abstract framework into a workable classroom practice.

Finally, the review points to a clear research agenda. The most urgent need is for controlled experimental studies conducted within Arabic classrooms that compare an explicitly integrated three-strategy programme against the isolated teaching of the same strategies and against conventional instruction, using validated measures of both comprehension and strategy use. Longitudinal designs would clarify whether integration produces durable changes in reading behaviour, and studies across proficiency levels and educational settings would establish the boundary conditions of its effectiveness. Until such evidence accumulates, the framework advanced here should be understood as a well-supported, theoretically coherent proposal rather than a definitively proven prescription—a distinction that itself models the critical, evidence-weighing disposition that good reading instruction seeks to cultivate.

**Discussion**

The findings of this systematic review demonstrate that the effectiveness of reading instruction does not depend solely on the implementation of individual strategies, but rather on learners' ability to employ appropriate strategies according to their reading purposes. The integration of skimming, scanning, and close reading reflects the nature of skilled reading, in which readers continuously regulate the relationship between rapid text orientation and detailed meaning construction. From the perspective of reading theory, this integration represents the interaction between top-down and bottom-up processing. Skimming and scanning facilitate top-down processing by allowing learners to activate prior knowledge, identify text organisation, and establish reading purposes, whereas close reading engages bottom-up processing through detailed analysis of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and textual relationships. Therefore, the integrated framework provides a more comprehensive approach because it accommodates both global comprehension and local linguistic analysis.

The effectiveness of skimming and scanning identified in this review confirms previous research indicating that rapid reading strategies contribute significantly to improving comprehension and reading efficiency. These strategies are particularly valuable for foreign-language learners who often experience cognitive overload due to attempts to translate every word in a text. By training learners to identify main ideas, locate relevant information, and ignore unnecessary details during initial reading stages, skimming and scanning help reduce inefficient reading behaviours. This finding supports Pido and Mubarokah, who reported that explicit instruction in these strategies improves reading comprehension across different proficiency levels, and Husnul et al., who demonstrated that skimming and scanning instruction contributes to measurable improvements in learners' reading performance. In the context of Arabic learning, these strategies are particularly relevant because learners frequently encounter lengthy texts containing unfamiliar vocabulary and complex structures. The ability to obtain an initial understanding of a text before analysing specific linguistic elements allows learners to approach Arabic reading more strategically.

However, the findings also indicate that rapid reading strategies alone are insufficient for achieving comprehensive understanding, particularly in Arabic texts that require careful linguistic interpretation. Close reading provides the depth necessary for learners to analyse meaning beyond surface-level comprehension. Through repeated reading, annotation, and examination of linguistic features, close reading enables learners to interpret implicit meanings, grammatical relations, and contextual information. This finding is consistent with Baki, who found that close reading enhances not only comprehension but also higher-order thinking abilities. In Arabic instruction, this strategy has particular importance because Arabic texts often contain morphological complexity, omitted short vowels, and grammatical relations that cannot always be interpreted through direct word recognition. Consequently, close reading functions as a mechanism that allows learners to reconstruct meaning through the interaction between linguistic knowledge and contextual interpretation.

The most significant implication of this review is that skimming, scanning, and close reading should not be considered competing strategies but rather complementary components of a strategic reading process. Skilled readers rarely apply a single strategy continuously; instead, they adjust their reading behaviour based on textual demands and reading objectives. The integration of these strategies therefore represents a form of metacognitive regulation, where learners understand not only how to read but also when and why a particular strategy should be applied. This interpretation corresponds with Fan et al., who emphasised that strategic reading involves flexible movement between different approaches according to comprehension needs. Furthermore, research on multi-strategy instruction has shown that combining several strategies produces broader benefits in comprehension, strategy awareness, motivation, and self-

efficacy compared with teaching individual strategies separately. Thus, the contribution of the integrated model lies not merely in combining three techniques but in developing learners' capacity to manage the reading process independently.

The relevance of this integrated framework becomes more apparent when applied specifically to Arabic reading instruction. Arabic possesses distinctive linguistic characteristics that create particular challenges for non-native learners, including an unvowelled writing system, root-and-pattern morphology, and differences between written and spoken registers. These characteristics require learners to combine rapid comprehension with careful linguistic analysis. Skimming and scanning allow learners to establish a general understanding of the text by identifying key information, repeated lexical patterns, and contextual clues, while close reading enables deeper examination of morphological forms, syntactic relationships, and implied meanings. Therefore, integrating these strategies provides a pedagogical response to the specific demands of *mahārat al-qirā'ah*, where successful reading requires both efficiency and accuracy. This interpretation supports previous findings that Arabic reading comprehension improves when vocabulary, grammar, and contextual analysis are incorporated into an integrated instructional process.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the integrated approach is mediated by several learner-related factors, particularly vocabulary knowledge and metacognitive awareness. Reading strategies can guide learners' attention and regulate their reading behaviour, but they cannot replace sufficient linguistic knowledge. In Arabic learning, vocabulary mastery is especially important because understanding word roots, patterns, and contextual meanings determines learners' ability to interpret texts accurately. Therefore, strategy instruction should be implemented alongside systematic vocabulary development rather than treated as an independent intervention. In addition, learners need explicit support in developing metacognitive awareness so that they can evaluate their comprehension, recognise difficulties, and select appropriate strategies. As indicated by Anggia and Habók and Kan et al., learners who possess stronger awareness of reading strategies tend to demonstrate better reading performance because they actively monitor and regulate their comprehension processes.

From a pedagogical perspective, this review suggests that Arabic teachers should move beyond traditional word-by-word translation practices and introduce explicitly structured strategy instruction. Teachers should model the use of each strategy, explain the reasons behind strategy selection, and gradually transfer responsibility to learners. An effective classroom sequence may begin with skimming activities to introduce the general topic and structure of a text, followed by scanning tasks to locate specific information, and finally close reading activities to analyse important sections in detail. Such an approach enables learners to experience reading as an active process of meaning construction rather than passive translation. However, implementing this framework requires adequate teacher preparation, appropriate instructional materials, and assessment systems that measure strategic reading abilities rather than only final comprehension outcomes.

Although the evidence presented in this review strongly supports the theoretical and pedagogical value of integrating skimming, scanning, and close reading, several limitations remain. Most existing studies examine individual strategies or general strategy-based instruction, while direct experimental comparisons of an integrated three-strategy model within Arabic classrooms are still limited. Therefore, future research should conduct controlled classroom experiments to evaluate the effectiveness of this framework compared with isolated strategy instruction and conventional teaching approaches. Longitudinal studies are also needed to investigate whether integrated strategy instruction produces sustainable changes in learners' reading behaviour and metacognitive development. Accordingly, the present framework should be understood as an evidence-informed pedagogical model that requires further empirical validation within diverse Arabic learning contexts.

## CONCLUSION

This systematic review set out to examine the effectiveness of integrating skimming, scanning, and close reading in Arabic reading instruction, and to interpret the wider evidence on reading-strategy instruction for the particular demands of *mahārat al-qirā'ah*. Three conclusions emerge. First, each of the three strategies is individually effective: skimming and scanning reliably improve reading speed and the efficient location of information while supporting comprehension, and close reading deepens inferential and critical understanding and cultivates transferable habits of mind. Second, the strategies are most effective when taught as an integrated, flexibly deployed repertoire rather than as isolated techniques, because skilled reading consists precisely in orchestrating fast selective reading and slow analytical reading according to purpose—an orchestration that is fundamentally metacognitive. Third, integration is especially

valuable in Arabic, whose unvowelled script, dense morphology, and diglossia reward the combination of rapid orientation and deep analysis, provided that instruction is tightly coupled with vocabulary development and the deliberate cultivation of metacognitive awareness.

For practice, the review recommends an explicitly modelled, gradually released sequence in which learners skim to grasp structure and gist, scan to locate purpose-relevant information, and read closely to analyse and evaluate meaning, with the teacher making strategic reasoning visible throughout and integrating vocabulary and metacognition at every stage. This framework offers Arabic educators a coherent alternative to the slow, word-by-word translation that so often stalls learners' progress. For research, the review identifies the design and testing of such integrated programmes within Arabic classrooms as the clearest priority, since the present case rests on convergent evidence and theoretical coherence rather than on direct experimental comparison in the Arabic context.

In sum, integrating skimming, scanning, and close reading provides a principled and evidence-informed response to the enduring difficulty of Arabic reading. By teaching learners not only how to read quickly and how to read deeply, but when to do each and why, such integration aims to develop the flexible, self-regulating readers that mastery of the Arabic textual heritage ultimately requires.

## REFERENCES

Agustin, L., Wisudaningsih, E. T., & Fatmawati, R. (2023). Exploring How Skimming and Scanning Fosters EFL Students' Reading Comprehension at an English Club Senior High School in Indonesia. *Tamaddun*, *22*(1), 20–27. https://doi.org/10.33096/tamaddun.v22i1.309

Amin, N., Nurjannah, & Nurhalisa, S. (2026). Arabic Vocabulary Mastery and Its Relationship with Reading Skills (Mahārat al-Qirā'ah) Among Arabic Literature Students: Penguasaan Kosakata Bahasa Arab dan Hubungannya dengan Kemampuan Membaca (Mahārat al-Qirā'ah) di Kalangan Mahasiswa Sastra Arab. *ELOQUENCE : Journal of Foreign Language*, *5*(1), 239–255. https://doi.org/10.58194/eloquence.v5i1.3277

Anggia, H., & Habók, A. (2024a). University Students' Metacognitive Awareness Of Reading Strategies (MARS) In Online Reading And MARS' Role In Their English Reading Comprehension. *PLOS ONE*, *19*(11), e0313254. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0313254

Baki, Y. (2024). The Impact of Close Reading Strategies on Individual Innovativeness and Life Skills: Preservice Teachers. *Behavioral Sciences*, *14*(9), 816. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14090816

Chen, R., Wang, X., & Zhu, K. (2025). A Bibliometric And Content Analysis Of Strategy-Based Instruction And Self-Regulated Learning In Second Or Foreign Language Teaching From 1994 To 2024. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *16*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1474689

Dewi, I. S., Ridwan, M. M. R., Hamimy, M. F. A., & Filefil, A. A. H. A. J. (2025). Classic Mataraman Folktales for Improving Qira'ah among Arabic Language and Literature Students: A Local Cultural Approach. *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab*, *9*(2), 569–590. https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v9i2.14912

Fan, L., Razali, A. B., & Noordin, N. (2026). A Systematic Review on the Relationship between Metacognitive Reading Strategies and English Reading Performance. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *25*, 439–463. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.25.5.19

Husnul, Putra, B. K., Azmi, M. U., Wati, K., & Ernawati, N. (2025). The Effectiveness of Skimming and Scanning Strategies in Improving Reading Comprehension Among EFL Learners. *Penelitian Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial*, *2*(2), 109–131. https://doi.org/10.61511/pips.v2i02.2025.1999

Kan, T., Noordin, N., & Ismail, L. (2024). Implementation of Metacognitive Reading Strategies to Improve English Reading Ability: A Systematic Review. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *23*(7). https://www.ijlter.org/index.php/ijlter/article/view/10681

Li, H., Gan, Z., Leung, S. O., & An, Z. (2022). The Impact of Reading Strategy Instruction on Reading Comprehension, Strategy Use, Motivation, and Self-Efficacy in Chinese University EFL Students. *Sage Open*, *12*(1), 21582440221086659. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221086659

Li, X., Ahmad, N. K., & Jamil, H. B. (2024). Factors Influencing EFL/ESL Students' Use of Reading Strategies: A Systematic Review. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *23*(11). https://www.ijlter.org/index.php/ijlter/article/view/11527

Linur, R., Rusdi, R., Agung, N., & Sandi, A. (2025). The Implementation of Integrative Strategies in Teaching Maharah Qirā'ah: Challenges and Pedagogical Implications. *Jurnal Naskhi Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Dan Bahasa Arab*, *8*(1), 102–110. https://doi.org/10.47435/naskhi.v8i1.4340

Masri, A., Al-Abdullah, N., Al-Qasim, Y., & Al-Zahran, T. (2023). Effects of Reading Strategy Instruction in English as a Second Language on Students' Academic Reading Comprehension: A Study in Jordan. *Research Studies in English Language Teaching and Learning*, *1*(5), 243–254. https://doi.org/10.62583/rseltl.v1i5.26

Mekuria, A., Bushisho, E. W., & Wubshet, H. (2024). The effects of reading strategy training on students' reading strategy use and critical reading ability in EFL reading classes. *Cogent Education*, *11*(1), 2310444. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2310444

Peng, P., Wang, W., Filderman, M. J., Zhang, W., & Lin, L. (2024). The Active Ingredient in Reading Comprehension Strategy Intervention for Struggling Readers: A Bayesian Network Meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, *94*(2), 228–267. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543231171345

Pido, N. W., & Mubarokah, A. (2024). The Effectiveness of Using Skimming and Scanning Techniques in Improving Reading Comprehension: A Systematic Literature Review. *VISA: Journal of Vision and Ideas*, *4*(2), 995–1001. https://doi.org/10.47467/visa.v4i2.2885

Saadah, B., & Baroroh, R. U. (2025). Unlocking Reading Skills (Maharah Qira'ah) Mastery: an Engaging Analysis of Ma'āyīr Mahārāt Al-Lughah Al-'Arabiyyah Lil Ghairi Nāthiqīn Bihā. *Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research*, *3*(1), 55–64. https://doi.org/10.30762/ijomer.v3i1.4977

Saepudin, S., Pabbajah, M. T. H., & Pabbajah, M. (2024). Unleashing the Power of Reading: Effective Strategies for Non-Native Arabic Language Learners. *Alsinatuna*, *9*(2), 116–138. https://doi.org/10.28918/alsinatuna.v9i2.7826

Salsabila, S., & Ratmanida, R. (2026). The impact of Top-Down vs Bottom-Up Strategies on Reading Comprehension at SMK Negeri 7 Pekanbaru. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, *15*(1), 160–165. https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v15i1.21

Shakira, W. A., & Zukhaira, Z. (2026a). *Designing Interactive Digital Media for Arabic Reading Learning: Development and Validation of Ayo Qira | Journal of Arabic Language Learning and Teaching (JALLT)*. https://ejournal.iain-palangkaraya.ac.id/jallt/article/view/527

Yulita, D., & Napitupulu, M. H. (2023). Metacognitive Reading Strategies in EFL Context: A Systematic Literature Review. *Indonesian Educational Research Journal*, *1*(1), 18–25. https://doi.org/10.56773/ierj.v1i1.13

Zubaidi, A., & Habibi, M. M. (2026). Beyond Translation: Can Human-AI Co-Regulation Improve Qira'ah al-Kutub Instruction? *Jurnal Al Bayan: Jurnal Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab*, *18*(1), 63–86. https://doi.org/10.24042/frc4c156