

Theories and Concepts of Arabic Text Reading Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Reading strategies are a crucial aspect of second language acquisition, including Arabic, especially in the context of higher education which requires students to deeply understand academic texts. This article examines the theories and concepts of Arabic reading strategies through a review of three main frameworks: cognitive theory, metacognitive theory, and schema theory. These theories explain that reading is not merely a mechanical process of recognizing letters and words, but a complex, interactive mental process that requires readers to construct meaning from the text. In the context of Arabic, reading strategies serve as the primary medium for connecting students' existing knowledge with new texts, in addition to helping them critically structure their understanding. This article also discusses practical strategies such as skimming, scanning, chunking, and the SQ3R technique, which have proven effective in enhancing student comprehension. Emphasis on reading strategies is seen as capable of overcoming the weaknesses of traditional approaches like the grammar-translation method, which tends to be passive. Therefore, mastering reading strategies is not only important for understanding academic texts but also serves as a foundation for self-directed learning, increased motivation, and the development of critical thinking skills. This article concludes that Arabic reading strategies need to be systematically integrated into the higher education curriculum to produce students capable of accessing, understanding, and analyzing Arabic texts more effectively.

Keywords: reading strategies, Arabic language, cognitive theory, metacognitive theory, schema theory

INTRODUCTION

Arabic is the language of knowledge, civilization, and revelation, playing a crucial role in the intellectual and civilizational development of the Muslim Ummah. Since the early development of Islam, Arabic has served as a medium for disseminating knowledge in various fields such as theology, philosophy, science, and literature. Proficiency in this language not only provides access to original sources of Islamic scholarly heritage but also forms an essential basis for understanding classical and contemporary texts that are primary references in the Islamic academic world (Qutb, 1992; al-Marāghī, 1946). In the current higher education context, the skill of reading Arabic texts is one of the core competencies for students pursuing Islamic studies, Arabic language programs, and related fields.

However, reading in Arabic should not be viewed merely as a mechanical activity involving the process of recognizing letters and understanding the literal meaning of a word. It is a complex and interactive process that requires readers to combine existing knowledge, linguistic skills, and the ability to think analytically and critically to construct meaning from the text (Goodman, 1971; Anderson, 2005). Reading also involves a psycholinguistic process that connects language symbols with the reader's experience, context, and inferences about the text (Islami et al., 2024). In other words, reading is an active process where readers do not just passively receive meaning but also contribute to the construction of meaning through the interaction between text, context, and cognition.

Previous studies indicate that many Arabic language students face difficulties in understanding academic texts due to weaknesses in using effective reading strategies (Nooraihan, 2020, Nurazan, 2015; Nik Farhan, Nik Hanan, & Abdul Rahman, 2010). Most students rely on traditional approaches such as the grammar-translation method, which involves reading by literally translating every word without understanding the semantic and pragmatic structure of the text as a whole. Such an approach leads to students poorly grasping the author's intended message and failing to connect new information with existing knowledge. Furthermore, this traditional method does not encourage students to use cognitive strategies like guessing meaning based on context or metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating their comprehension during reading (Rosni Samah, 2012; Chamot, 2005). Consequently, reading becomes a passive activity and does not build the self-directed skills necessary for second language learning.

In this context, reading strategies anchored in cognitive, metacognitive, and schema theories play a crucial role. These strategies help students plan their reading approach, identify key information structures, make inferences, and reflectively evaluate comprehension (Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Through systematic reading strategies, students can interact with texts more deeply, understand explicit and implicit messages, and adapt reading techniques according to the purpose of reading. This approach also emphasizes the principle of active learning, where students become the primary subjects in the learning process rather than mere recipients of information (Suhaila et al., 2025).

This article is structured to achieve several main objectives. First, it aims to explain the basic theories that underpin Arabic reading strategies, particularly cognitive, metacognitive, and schema theories, which are frequently used in the field of second language acquisition. Second, this article elaborates on the literature analysis methodology used to identify the relationship between reading theories and reading strategies in the context of Arabic texts. Third, it presents theoretical findings and reading strategy models suitable for the learning characteristics of Arabic language students in higher education institutions. Finally, this article discusses the practical implications for Arabic language teaching and learning practices and their importance in enhancing students' reading proficiency.

In conclusion, understanding reading theories and strategies is not merely a technical aspect of language learning but a conceptual and cognitive aspect that directly impacts the effectiveness of Arabic language teaching and learning processes. Reading should be understood as an active thinking process involving self-awareness, reflective capacity, and interaction with the text. Therefore, the explanation of reading theories and strategies in this article is hoped to provide a strong conceptual foundation for strengthening Arabic language teaching pedagogy and helping students become more aware and strategic readers.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a conceptual analysis and literature synthesis approach to gather and evaluate theories and concepts of Arabic reading strategies from various scholarly sources. This approach was chosen because the primary objective of the study is not to assess empirical data from respondents, but to build a robust theoretical foundation and explain the relationship between reading theories and Arabic text learning strategies. This approach is commonly used in qualitative research that is theoretical and conceptual, where the analysis focuses on systematically integrating, comparing, and interpreting existing literature (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The research design used is a library-based study. This method emphasizes the process of collecting information from secondary materials such as scholarly books, journal articles, research reports, academic theses, conference proceedings, and classical works in the fields of tafsir and Arabic linguistics. These sources were obtained from academic databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate, in addition to printed materials in university libraries. Islamic sources such as *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* (Qutb, 1992) and *Tafsīr al-Marāghī* (al-Marāghī, 1946) were also analyzed to integrate an Islamic perspective into the context of Arabic language learning.

The literature selection process was carried out through several structured steps. First, the authors identified key keywords such as reading strategies, Arabic reading comprehension, cognitive theory, metacognitive theory, and schema theory to ensure the search scope was relevant to the study's objectives. Second, the identified literature was critically reviewed to assess its validity, recency, and contextual suitability for Arabic language learning.

Third, each source was categorized according to themes of basic theory, learning strategies, and application in the context of Arabic as a second language.

For data analysis purposes, this study used the content analysis method. This method involves reading, encoding, and interpreting information thematically to identify patterns and relationships among the main theories supporting reading strategies. This analysis was conducted by examining how each theory — particularly cognitive theory, metacognitive theory, and schema theory — explains the reading process, and how these concepts can be applied in the context of Arabic texts. The results of the analysis were then synthesized to form a conceptual framework illustrating the relationship between reading theories and learning strategies.

Furthermore, to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the findings, source triangulation was performed by comparing literature from two main streams: Western scholars (Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Carrell, 1983) and Islamic scholars (Qutb, 1992; al-Marāghī, 1946). This step aimed to ensure that the study was not confined to a single paradigm but reflected a balance between modern theories and Islamic principles that emphasize aspects of meaning comprehension and reflection in reading.

This study also employed a qualitative descriptive analysis approach, where each finding from the literature was described and explained narratively without statistical manipulation. Theoretical and conceptual data were interpreted in the form of comprehensive explanations to demonstrate how certain theories can form the basis for reading strategies in the context of Arabic. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for explaining abstract and theoretical phenomena such as reading strategies and the cognitive processes occurring in the reader's mind (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In conclusion, this study's methodology serves as a foundation for building a comprehensive understanding of the theories and concepts of reading strategies in Arabic. The conceptual analysis and literature synthesis approach allowed the authors to critically evaluate various theories, integrate scholars' perspectives from two schools of thought, and subsequently produce a comprehensive theoretical framework suitable for reference in the field of Arabic language education at the higher education level.

FINDINGS

The results of the literature analysis indicate that reading theories play a significant role in forming the basis for Arabic reading strategies, especially in the context of students learning this language as a second language. The process of reading Arabic is found to involve not only the mastery of linguistic aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure but also complex mental processes encompassing observation, inference, and reflection. The main theories underpinning reading strategies are cognitive theory, metacognitive theory, and schema theory. These three theories complement each other in explaining how students effectively process, understand, and evaluate the meaning of Arabic texts (Oxford, 1990; Chamot, 2005; Anderson, 2005).

Based on cognitive theory, reading is viewed as an active mental process where readers interact with the text to construct meaning (Piaget, 1970; Goodman, 1971). In the context of Arabic texts, this theory explains that students need to activate logical and analytical thinking processes when reading, especially because the morphological and syntactic structures of Arabic differ from their native language. Strategies derived from this theory include the use of chunking (dividing information into small units of meaning), contextual guessing (inferring word meaning through sentence context), and translation control (managing the tendency to literally translate every word). The use of these strategies helps students understand Arabic texts more effectively, as they can adapt new information to the language structures they comprehend. This process aligns with the concepts of assimilation and accommodation proposed by Piaget (1970), where students adapt new information into existing cognitive frameworks to build a stronger understanding.

Furthermore, the study's findings also indicate that metacognitive theory makes a significant contribution to the formation of effective reading strategies. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), metacognition is an individual's ability to be aware of, plan, and control their own thought processes. In the context of reading Arabic texts, metacognitive strategies are used by students to plan reading objectives, select appropriate techniques, monitor comprehension during reading, and evaluate comprehension outcomes after reading. For example, students encountering a long text such as an Arabic scholarly article will use a planning strategy by reading the

title and the first paragraph to identify the main theme before proceeding with detailed reading. While reading, they monitor comprehension by identifying difficult-to-understand sections, then consult a dictionary or notes before continuing. After reading, they evaluate overall comprehension by summarizing the text's key points. This process illustrates the application of metacognitive theory in reading strategies, where students not only read but also assess the effectiveness of their own reading (Chamot, 2005).

Based on the analysis of previous literature, the relationship between reading theories and Arabic text reading strategies can be summarized in Table 1 below. This table illustrates how cognitive, metacognitive, and schema theories — as well as Islamic perspectives on the concept of reading — are applied in the context of Arabic text reading by students in higher education institutions.

Table 1 Relationship between Reading Theories and Reading Strategies for Arabic Texts

Reading Theory	Core Principles of the Theory	Application in Reading Arabic Texts	Examples of Related Reading Strategies
Cognitive Theory (Piaget, 1970; Goodman, 1971)	Reading is an active process of information processing and meaning construction based on existing cognitive structures.	Students analyse morphological and syntactic structures to understand meaning relationships within sentences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chunking (dividing the text into small meaningful units) - Contextual guessing - Translation control (managing literal translation)
Metacognitive Theory (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Chamot, 2005)	Emphasis on awareness, control, and evaluation of the reading comprehension process.	Students plan reading goals, monitor comprehension while reading, and evaluate understanding after completing the text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning before reading - Monitoring comprehension - Self-evaluation after reading
Schema Theory (Carrell, 1983; Anderson, 2005)	Text comprehension depends on activating prior knowledge (content, formal, and linguistic schemata).	Students connect new information with prior experiences or knowledge to comprehend implied meanings in the text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activating prior knowledge - Semantic mapping - Connecting ideas
Islamic Perspective (Qutb, 1992; al-Marāghī, 1946)	Reading is a spiritual and intellectual activity based on reflection and contemplation of meaning.	Students read with the intention of understanding, reflecting, and internalizing the values of knowledge in Arabic texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflective reading - <i>Tadabbur al-ma'na</i> (meaning contemplation) - Integration of knowledge and values

The table above shows that each theory provides a different yet complementary basis for forming Arabic text reading strategies. Cognitive theory focuses on the information processing mechanism, metacognitive theory on the control and awareness of the reading process, while schema theory on the activation of prior knowledge. Meanwhile, the Islamic perspective adds spiritual and reflective value to the act of reading, making it not merely an intellectual process but also a scholarly endeavour based on intention (*niyyah*) and contemplation (*tadabbur*).

Concurrently, schema theory also provides an important foundation for understanding Arabic reading strategies. This theory is based on the concept that text comprehension occurs when readers connect new information with existing knowledge in their long-term memory (Carrell, 1983; Anderson, 2005). In reading Arabic texts, students often rely on formal schemata, content schemata, and linguistic schemata. Formal schemata refer to knowledge about text organizational structures such as the use of paragraphs, opening, and concluding sentences. Content schemata relate to knowledge about the reading topic, while linguistic schemata involve understanding grammatical structures, *nahw* (syntax), *sarf* (morphology), and vocabulary. Students with robust schemata will find it easier to understand texts because they can connect new information with existing experiences (Siha et al., 2025). For example, when reading texts related to Islamic law, students who already possess a background in fiqh knowledge will understand the concepts discussed in the Arabic text more quickly than students without such knowledge.

Apart from Western theories, the study's findings also indicate that the Islamic perspective on the concept of reading is closely related to modern cognitive and metacognitive principles. The concept of reading in Islam begins with the command *Iqra'* in *surah al-'Alaq*, which emphasizes that reading is an activity of thinking and contemplating (*tadabbur*), not merely recognizing letters (Qutb, 1992). According to al-Marāghī (1946), the command to read in that verse also contains elements of repetition and reflection on meaning as a basis for comprehension. This aligns with the concept of reflective reading in metacognitive theory, where readers re-evaluate the meaning of a text through contemplation and appreciation. Therefore, reading from an Islamic perspective aims not only to acquire information but also to strengthen understanding, faith, and awareness of the value of knowledge.

The results of the literature synthesis also found that the relationship between reading theories and Arabic text reading strategies can be comprehensively explained through four main dimensions. First, the cognitive dimension, which focuses on mental strategies such as identifying syntactic patterns and adapting meaning based on sentence structure. Second, the metacognitive dimension, which emphasizes self-regulation, strategy awareness, and comprehension evaluation during reading. Third, the schematic dimension, which emphasizes the activation of prior knowledge and the connection of new information with the reader's experience. Fourth, the Islamic dimension, which emphasizes the values of intention (*niyyah*), reflection, and contemplation (*tadabbur*) in reading. These four dimensions are complementary and form a framework for strategic understanding in reading Arabic texts, based not only on cognition but also on the values and ethics of knowledge.

From the perspective of cognitive theory, reading is understood as an active mental process in which learners engage with textual input by organizing, restructuring, and interpreting information based on existing cognitive structures (Piaget, 1970; Goodman, 1971). In the context of Arabic reading, the literature shows that students frequently encounter challenges due to complex nominal sentence structures and dense syntactic patterns. Studies reviewed, including Ali et al. (2023), illustrate that learners who apply cognitive strategies such as chunking are able to divide long Arabic sentences into smaller syntactic units—such as *mubtada'*, *khavar*, and modifiers—thus facilitating clearer identification of meaning relationships. Additionally, the use of contextual guessing allows students to infer the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary based on sentence context rather than relying immediately on word-for-word translation. These strategies have been shown to improve reading fluency and comprehension accuracy, supporting Piaget's notion of assimilation and accommodation in cognitive development.

The findings further reveal that metacognitive theory plays a crucial role in enhancing students' control over the reading process. Metacognitive strategies enable learners to plan, monitor, and evaluate their comprehension consciously (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Chamot, 2005). The reviewed literature indicates that when students are assigned to read complex Arabic texts—such as classical *tafsir* works—they tend to benefit from explicitly planning their reading purpose, whether for general understanding or detailed analysis of arguments. During reading, learners monitor comprehension by identifying ambiguous sections, rereading selectively, and adjusting reading speed accordingly. After completing the text, comprehension is evaluated through summarization and peer discussion. This reflective cycle aligns closely with the metacognitive framework reported in Ali et al. (2023) and reinforces the view that effective readers are those who actively regulate their cognitive engagement with the text rather than reading passively.

In addition, the analysis highlights the importance of schema theory in facilitating Arabic text comprehension. Schema theory emphasizes that understanding occurs when readers activate relevant prior knowledge stored in long-term memory, including content, formal, and linguistic schemata (Carrell, 1983; Anderson, 2005). The literature consistently shows that students with prior exposure to Islamic disciplines such as *fiqh* demonstrate faster and deeper comprehension when reading Arabic texts related to Islamic jurisprudence. Their existing content schemata enable them to anticipate arguments, recognize specialized terminology, and connect new information with previously acquired knowledge. This finding confirms that schema activation significantly enhances text engagement and meaning construction, particularly in content-heavy Arabic academic and religious texts.

Overall, the findings indicate that cognitive, metacognitive, and schema-based strategies function in a complementary manner in Arabic reading. Cognitive strategies support the processing of linguistic structures,

metacognitive strategies regulate comprehension and strategy use, while schema-based strategies connect textual meaning with learners' background knowledge. Students who employ these strategies demonstrate higher levels of comprehension, critical engagement, and reading autonomy compared to those who rely solely on traditional grammar-translation approaches. Consequently, the findings affirm that effective Arabic reading instruction must be grounded in an integrated theoretical framework that reflects the interactive and strategic nature of reading.

DISCUSSION

This discussion aims to critically elaborate on the relationship between reading theories and Arabic reading strategies derived from the literature analysis findings. Based on the synthesis of cognitive, metacognitive, and schema theories, it can be concluded that reading is not merely an activity of recognizing linguistic symbols but an active thought process involving information processing, reflection, and self-regulation. These three theories not only explain how readers process texts but also provide guidance on how reading strategies can be applied to enhance Arabic language students' comprehension and reading proficiency.

From the perspective of cognitive theory, reading is viewed as a process that connects existing knowledge with new information through structured mental processing (Piaget, 1970; Goodman, 1971). In the context of Arabic, reading strategies based on cognitive theory enable students to understand complex morphological and syntactic structures more systematically. For example, the chunking strategy allows students to break down long sentences into smaller parts to identify subjects, predicates, and complements, while the contextual guessing strategy helps them infer meaning based on semantic context. This approach indirectly encourages students to think analytically, aligning with the concepts of assimilation and accommodation in Piaget's theory (1970), which explain how individuals adapt new information to existing cognitive structures. In this regard, learning to read Arabic is no longer rote memorization but becomes an active and meaningful mental exercise.

From the perspective of metacognitive theory, students not only act as recipients of information but also as managers of their own reading process. This means that metacognitively aware readers are capable of planning, monitoring, and evaluating their comprehension throughout reading a text (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Chamot, 2005). In the context of Arabic language learning, this strategy is crucial because students often encounter texts of varying difficulty — whether classical religious texts, contemporary academic works, or modern articles. For example, students employing a planning strategy will determine the purpose of reading, whether to grasp the general content or to seek specific information. While reading, they monitor comprehension by identifying sections that require review, and after reading, they assess their level of understanding by summarizing key points. This approach makes reading more controlled, purposeful, and effective. It also demonstrates that metacognitive strategies serve as a bridge between theory and practice, as they guide students to build awareness of their own cognitive processes.

Furthermore, schema theory provides a significant explanation for the role of prior knowledge in understanding Arabic texts. Literature reviews indicate that students with extensive background knowledge of Arabic culture, religion, and language structure are better able to connect new meanings with their experiences, thereby achieving a deeper understanding (Carrell, 1983; Anderson, 2005). For example, when reading texts related to topics of *'aqidah* (creed) or *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), students with a religious background can activate content schemata and understand the text more easily compared to students without such a foundation. Similarly, with linguistic schemata, knowledge of Arabic sentence patterns such as *jumlah ismiyyah* (nominal sentence) and *jumlah fi'liyyah* (verbal sentence) helps students understand syntactic relationships in complex sentences. Therefore, schema theory emphasizes the importance of background knowledge as a key factor supporting reading comprehension and strengthening the effectiveness of reading strategies.

When examined from the perspective of integration among these three theories, it can be seen that effective reading strategies in Arabic cannot stand on a single theory alone. Instead, they demand a holistic approach that combines information processing (cognitive), self-awareness (metacognitive), and knowledge activation (schemata). These three theories complement each other in shaping active, strategic, and reflective readers. For instance, when reading academic Arabic texts, students use cognitive processes to identify structure and meaning, metacognitive processes to control comprehension and reflection, and schematic processes to connect

content with existing knowledge. This combination results in a more comprehensive and meaningful reading experience, where students not only understand the text but also construct new understandings that can be applied in other contexts (Anderson, 2005; Oxford, 1990).

Empirical literature consistently indicates that traditional grammar-translation methods, which dominate Arabic instruction in many institutions, often fail to develop deep comprehension skills. This approach emphasizes word-for-word translation and grammatical accuracy but neglects meaning construction and strategic awareness. In contrast, strategy-based reading instruction, as reported in Ali et al. (2023), demonstrates measurable improvements in students' comprehension, confidence, and reading autonomy. Students trained in reading strategies showed greater ability to identify main ideas, infer implicit meanings, and evaluate texts critically compared to peers relying solely on grammar-translation techniques. These findings align with broader second language acquisition research, which confirms that active strategy use leads to more sustainable reading proficiency.

Furthermore, this discussion also highlights the value aspects and Islamic dimension in Arabic reading strategies. The Islamic perspective on the concept of reading, as explained in the command *Iqra'* in *surah al-'Alaq*, imparts a profound meaning about the essence of reading as a process involving both intellect and heart (Qutb, 1992). The act of reading in Islam is not merely to acquire information but also aims to contemplate, understand, and reflect upon meaning (*tadabbur*). This principle aligns with the metacognitive approach that demands reflection on the meaning of what is read and awareness of the purpose of reading. Therefore, reading strategies in the Arabic context should be structured in accordance with Islamic values that emphasize intention (*niyyah*), appreciation, and reflection on knowledge. This adds a spiritual dimension to the act of reading, making it a form of intellectual worship that produces readers who are thoughtful, cultured, and ethical.

In the contemporary higher education environment, the implementation of Arabic reading strategies can be significantly enhanced through digital tools and blended learning approaches. Digital platforms allow students to practice reading strategies independently while receiving guided support from instructors. For instance, online Arabic dictionaries and morphological analyzers help students verify hypotheses formed through contextual guessing. Annotation tools and PDF readers enable learners to highlight key ideas, segment sentences (chunking), and insert reflective comments, thereby supporting both cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Moodle or Google Classroom can be used to structure pre-reading tasks, guided reading activities, and post-reading reflections, reinforcing strategic reading cycles as recommended by Ali et al. (2023). Blended learning environments also facilitate self-paced strategy practice, where students can replay instructional videos on reading strategies or engage in online discussion forums to activate schemata before reading complex Arabic texts.

This discussion also carries important implications for the pedagogy of Arabic language teaching in higher education institutions. Arabic language instruction needs to shift from traditional teacher-centered approaches to student-strategy-based approaches. Lecturers should guide students to explicitly identify and use reading strategies in the learning process. For example, pre-reading activities such as predicting text content or identifying keywords can help students build a cognitive framework before reading. During reading, lecturers can encourage students to mark important sections, ask themselves questions about the text content, and make inferences. After reading, students can be directed to evaluate their comprehension by summarizing main points and discussing implicit meanings. Such teaching approaches not only encourage students to think critically but also strengthen their motivation and confidence in their ability to read in Arabic (Oxford, 1990; Green & Oxford, 1995).

For effective implementation, Arabic reading strategies must be systematically embedded into curriculum design rather than treated as incidental skills. Instructors can integrate strategies through the following practical steps:

1. Pre-reading phase: Activate schemata through topic discussion, keyword prediction, or guiding questions.
2. While-reading phase: Explicitly model cognitive strategies such as chunking and contextual guessing; encourage metacognitive monitoring through self-questioning.
3. Post-reading phase: Require summarization, reflective journals, or peer discussion to promote evaluation and deeper comprehension.

Lesson plans should clearly state strategy objectives alongside content objectives, ensuring that students are aware not only of *what* they read but *how* they read. This systematic approach aligns with the instructional framework proposed in Ali et al. (2023) and strengthens the pedagogical value of Arabic reading instruction.

Finally, this discussion reveals that Arabic reading strategies are not merely technical skills but also profound cognitive and reflective processes. The integration of cognitive, metacognitive, and schema theories enables students to understand texts more holistically, while Islamic values provide direction and meaning to the act of reading. This approach not only enhances academic proficiency but also shapes students who possess knowledge awareness and responsibility towards the meaning read. Therefore, reading strategies anchored in theory and values should be made the basis for Arabic language curriculum development, so that students become not only proficient readers but also knowledgeable and cultured individuals.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this enhanced analysis reinforces that Arabic reading strategies are most effective when taught explicitly, supported by digital tools, and embedded systematically within curriculum structures. The integration of cognitive, metacognitive, and schema theories—supported by empirical evidence—offers a robust foundation for developing strategic, reflective, and independent Arabic readers.

This study demonstrates that reading strategies are a crucial component in mastering Arabic reading skills and form the basis for the effectiveness of the learning process in higher education institutions. Based on theoretical analysis and literature synthesis, it can be concluded that reading in Arabic involves an active and layered mental process, where cognitive theory, metacognitive theory, and schema theory play complementary roles in forming a deep understanding of texts. These three theories provide a clear picture that reading is not a mechanical or passive activity but a process that requires critical thinking, self-awareness, and the activation of prior knowledge to construct meaning effectively.

Cognitive theory explains that text comprehension occurs through an information processing mechanism, where students need to adapt new information to existing cognitive structures. In the context of Arabic, this theory outlines the importance of strategies that can help students master complex linguistic structures such as chunking, contextual guessing, and translation control. Metacognitive theory, on the other hand, focuses on students' awareness of how they read and think during reading. Through strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluation, students are able to control their own comprehension and become more strategic and reflective readers. Meanwhile, schema theory emphasizes that text comprehension is influenced by the reader's background knowledge and experience, thereby asserting that students need to activate their prior knowledge before and during reading to build meaningful connections with the text.

Furthermore, this study also reveals that Islamic values and principles provide a deeper dimension to the concept of reading. The Islamic perspective, through the first verse revealed, *Iqra'*, outlines that reading is not merely for acquiring knowledge but also for understanding the meaning of life, thinking, and contemplating Allah's creation (*tadabbur*). This indicates that reading strategies in Arabic are not only based on cognitive aspects but also anchored in spiritual and moral values. Students who read with this awareness not only understand texts scientifically but also build intellectual and spiritual connections with the knowledge acquired.

In terms of implications, the findings of this study offer several important recommendations to strengthen Arabic language teaching and learning. First, reading strategies need to be taught explicitly in class, not merely as supplementary skills, but as a core component of the curriculum. Lecturers should guide students to identify and apply appropriate reading strategies according to the text's difficulty level. Second, reading exercises should be designed with a theory-based approach, for instance, by allowing students to use metacognitive strategies such as reflection and self-assessment after reading. Third, Arabic reading instruction needs to be supported by diverse and contextual reading materials so that students can connect new information with existing schemata. Fourth, the value and philosophical aspects of Islam in reading need to be integrated into learning activities so that the reading process is not only academically oriented but also contributes to character and intellectual development.

From a theoretical perspective, this study reinforces the understanding that reading strategies based on cognitive, metacognitive, and schema theories can help students master Arabic reading skills more effectively. From a

practical perspective, it demonstrates the need for systematic pedagogical training to produce students who are not only capable of understanding texts but also of thinking and evaluating meaning deeply. This approach is crucial in the current era of higher education, which demands students to think critically, independently, and be problem-solving oriented.

In conclusion, Arabic reading strategies should be viewed as a comprehensive intellectual process — involving the interaction among language, thought, experience, and values. The integration of cognitive, metacognitive, and schema theories in reading practices not only helps students better understand texts but also fosters high reflective and self-directed capabilities. When linked with the Islamic perspective on the importance of reading, these strategies do not merely produce proficient readers but also individuals who are thoughtful, knowledgeable, and ethical. Therefore, the teaching of reading strategies must be made a primary agenda in Arabic language education at the university level, so that future generations of readers can access knowledge with deep comprehension and use it as a guide in building a civilization of knowledge based on revelation and reason.

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