Integrating Skimming and Scanning Strategies into ESL Classrooms: Improving Reading Performance of Pakistani Undergraduate ESL Learners

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ABSTRACT
This quantitative study explores the effectiveness of skimming and scanning strategies in enhancing the reading comprehension skills of undergraduate ESL students in Pakistan. The study involved 70 participants from the Department of English at a public sector university. A pre-test and post-test design was employed to assess students' improvement in reading performance after receiving focused instruction on skimming and scanning techniques. The statistical analysis of test results indicated a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension following the intervention. The findings demonstrate that incorporating skimming and scanning strategies into ESL instruction can effectively improve learners' ability to read purposefully and comprehend texts more efficiently. The study recommends that these strategies be integrated into undergraduate ESL curricula to foster better reading proficiency and academic success.

Keywords: Skimming; Scanning; Reading Strategies; ESL Learners; Pakistani Undergraduates.

Introduction
Reading is one of the four essential macro skills, alongside listening, speaking, and writing, necessary for effective communication in English. It plays a vital role in language acquisition as it enhances grammar, vocabulary, and writing proficiency (Parhadjanovna, 2023). Reading also serves as a means of gaining information and knowledge, offering both intellectual and emotional enrichment (Zaman, Jawad, & Buriro, 2025). In the academic context, reading comprehension requires students to process and interpret information through active cognitive engagement (Asmara et al., 2022; Destiara & Mutiarani, 2024; Khan et al., 2020).
Despite its significance, reading remains a major challenge for many students. Learners often face obstacles such as limited vocabulary, lack of motivation, inadequate reading materials, and insufficient exposure to an English-speaking environment (Ahmed, 2021;

Eriksson, 2023; Septia et al., 2022). These difficulties result in low comprehension and poor engagement with texts, particularly among ESL learners still developing academic proficiency (Vaughn et al., 2019). Therefore, teachers must adopt practical strategies that motivate learners and improve their reading comprehension.

One promising approach involves the use of skimming and scanning strategies. These techniques train students to read purposefully, skimming for general understanding and scanning for specific information. Previous research has demonstrated that applying these strategies enhances students' comprehension, vocabulary, and motivation while saving time and increasing engagement (Grabe, 2009; Ikhtiyarovna & Aziza, 2023; Sulaeman et al., 2021; Efrani et al., 2024; Nasution, 2023; Widyawati & Simanjuntak, 2023). Building on these insights, this study explores how integrating skimming and scanning strategies can improve the reading performance of Pakistani undergraduate ESL learners.

Problem Statement

Despite the growing emphasis on English language proficiency in Pakistan's higher education system, many undergraduate ESL learners continue to struggle with reading comprehension. These difficulties stem from limited vocabulary, lack of motivation, inadequate exposure to English texts, and ineffective reading strategies (Ahmed, 2021; Eriksson, 2023; Septia et al., 2022). As a result, students often read passively, fail to identify main ideas, and experience difficulty locating specific information within academic passages. This problem not only hinders their academic performance but also restricts their ability to engage critically with English-language materials required in university courses.

Previous research (Grabe, 2009; Ikhtiyarovna & Aziza, 2023; Efrani et al., 2024; Widyawati & Zaman, Chandio, & Noor, 2025).suggests that skimming and scanning strategies can significantly enhance reading comprehension by training students to read purposefully and efficiently. However, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the effectiveness of these strategies among Pakistani undergraduate ESL students in public sector universities.

Therefore, this study aims to address the gap by investigating the impact of integrating skimming and scanning strategies on improving the reading performance of Pakistani undergraduate ESL learners through a quantitative pre-test and post-test design. The findings of this research will contribute to developing more effective reading instruction methods in Pakistan's tertiary ESL classrooms.

Research Objectives

To examine the effectiveness of skimming and scanning strategies in improving reading comprehension among Pakistani undergraduate ESL learners
To compare students' reading performance before and after applying these strategies

Research Questions

How effective are skimming and scanning strategies in enhancing Pakistani undergraduate ESL learners' reading comprehension?
Is there a significant difference between pre-test and post-test reading scores after using these strategies?

Literature Review

Reading comprehension is a complex cognitive process that involves interpreting meaning through language symbols such as words and punctuation (Khan et al., 2020).

However, many students in ESL contexts struggle with comprehension due to limited vocabulary, lack of motivation, and minimal exposure to English (Ahmed, 2021; Eriksson, 2023; Septia et al., 2022). Vaughn et al. (2019) highlighted that English learners often face persistent reading difficulties, particularly when transitioning from basic to academic English. To address these challenges, educators have emphasized the need for effective reading strategies that encourage active engagement with texts.

Skimming and scanning are two strategies proven to enhance reading comprehension. Skimming involves reading quickly to grasp the main ideas or overall structure of a text (Grabe, 2009). Ikhtiyarovna and Aziza (2023) suggested that effective skimming requires attention to elements such as titles, introductions, topic sentences, subheadings, and summaries. Similarly, Sulaeman et al. (2021) emphasized that successful skimming demands full concentration to comprehend key points efficiently. On the other hand, scanning focuses on locating specific information within a text. Efrani et al. (2024) described it as a quick-reading technique used to find particular details, while Aslam (1992) noted that scanning requires readers to know what they are looking for and to use visual cues like headings and keywords. Nasution (2023) further added that both strategies rely on swift eye movements and focused attention to process information effectively.

Several studies support the positive impact of skimming and scanning on students' reading proficiency. Widyawati and Simanjuntak (2023) found that using these techniques enhances reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. Hanggara Rosa and Marsuki (2023) stressed their importance for teachers, university students, and researchers, while Yanti et al. (2022) observed that improved comprehension contributes to greater classroom participation. Additional research has shown that strategy-based reading instruction fosters motivation, confidence, and engagement (Arifitriyanti et al., 2021; Banditvilai, 2020; Fatmawan et al., 2023; Wandira et al., 2023). Moreover, studies by Agustin et al. (2023), Azmi et al. (2019), Fauziana (2019), Nirwana Gulo (2020), and S. M. Sari (2023) confirmed that these strategies improve comprehension and sustain student interest. Mawarni and Usman (2022) highlighted their time-saving benefits, while Mala et al. (2023) demonstrated that integrating digital tools like Kahoot! further enhances engagement.

In sum, the reviewed literature establishes that skimming and scanning are effective reading strategies that can significantly improve comprehension, vocabulary, motivation, and time management. Their integration into ESL classrooms has been shown to create a more interactive and student-centered learning environment. Therefore, implementing these strategies in Pakistani higher education settings may help overcome common reading difficulties and strengthen students' overall English proficiency.

Research Methodology
This study employed a quantitative research methodology to measure the impact of skimming and scanning strategies on reading comprehension.

Research Design
A pre-test and post-test experimental design was used to evaluate students' improvement after the intervention.

Target Population
Undergraduate ESL students enrolled in the **Department of English at a public sector university in Pakistan**.

Sampling Technique
A purposive sampling technique was applied to select participants with similar academic backgrounds in English.

Sample Size
The study involved **70 undergraduate students**.

Data Collection Tools
A reading comprehension test (pre-test and post-test) based on reading comprehension texts was used to collect data.

Data Analysis Technique
The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including mean scores and paired sample t-tests, to determine the significance of improvement in reading performance.

Data Analysis
Standard statistical tools and procedures were employed to conduct the analysis for this study. After the completion of data collection, the obtained data were processed and entered into a statistical software program for analysis. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used to analyze the quantitative data. The main purpose of data analysis was to address the research questions and determine the effectiveness of skimming and scanning strategies on students' reading comprehension.
Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied to analyze the results. Descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation, were used to describe the overall pattern of students' performance in the pre-test and post-test. Inferential statistics, specifically the paired sample t-test, were employed to examine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the participants after the intervention.
The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess the normality of data distribution. According to González-Estrada and Cosmes (2019), if the significance value (Sig.) of the Shapiro-Wilk test is greater than 0.05, the data are considered normally distributed; if it is less than 0.05, the data significantly deviate from a normal distribution. The results of the paired sample t-test were then interpreted to determine the impact of the skimming and scanning strategies on the reading performance of Pakistani undergraduate ESL learners.

Table .1
Tests of Normality

Group & Test Type	Kolmogorov–Smirnov			Shapiro–Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Experimental Group Pre-Test	0.097	70	.200*	0.978	70	0.412
Experimental Group Post-Test	0.121	70	0.071	0.971	70	0.289
Control Group Pre-Test	0.110	70	.200*	0.976	70	0.356
Control Group Post-Test	0.128	70	0.064	0.969	70	0.241

Note. This is a lower bound of the true significance. The results indicate that all Sig. (p) values are greater than 0.05, suggesting that the data are normally distributed for both the experimental and control groups. Therefore, the assumption of normality required for the

paired sample t-test is satisfied (González-Estrada & Cosmes, 2019).

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Pre-Test Reading Scores of Control and Experimental Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental Group	35	24.45	2.075	0.351
Control Group	35	24.25	2.560	0.433

Note. The pre-test mean scores of both groups are nearly identical, suggesting that the control and experimental groups were comparable in reading ability prior to the application of skimming and scanning strategies.

Table 3
Independent Samples t-Test of Control and Experimental Groups in the Pre-Test

Test	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	1.368	0.246	0.384	68	0.702	0.20	0.521
Equal variances not assumed			0.384	66.798	0.702	0.20	0.521

Table 3 shows the results of the independent samples t-test comparing the pre-test reading scores of the experimental and control groups. The p-value (0.702) was greater than the significance level of 0.05, indicating no statistically significant difference between the two groups before the intervention. This confirms that both groups had comparable reading proficiency levels at the start of the study.

Table 4 Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Control Group

Test	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control Group Pre-Test	24.25	35	2.560	0.433
Control Group Post-Test	25.20	35	2.937	0.497

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of the control group's pre-test and post-test reading scores. The mean score increased slightly from 24.25 to 25.20, indicating a minor improvement in reading performance. However, since this group did not receive the skimming and scanning intervention, the improvement can likely be attributed to natural learning progression or repeated exposure to test materials rather than targeted strategy instruction.

Table 5

Paired Samples t-Test for Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Control Group

Pair	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control Group Pre-Test – Control Group Post-Test	-0.95	1.484	0.251	-1.457	-0.443	-3.783	34	

Table 5 presents the results of the paired samples t-test comparing the pre-test and post-test reading scores of the control group. The analysis shows a statistically significant difference between the two sets of scores (t = -3.783, p = 0.001 < 0.05). This suggests that the control group demonstrated a slight but significant improvement in reading performance, possibly due to natural academic progression or repeated exposure to similar reading assessments rather than the intervention itself.

Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Experimental Group
To compare the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group, a paired samples t-test was conducted. This statistical test is suitable when each participant's score in one condition (pre-test) can be paired with their score in another condition (post-test). It determines whether there is a statistically significant mean difference between two related sets of scores taken from the same group over time.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Pre-Test and Post-Test Reading Scores of Experimental Group

Test	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental Group Pre-Test	24.45	35	2.075	0.351
Experimental Group Post-Test	26.85	35	1.942	0.328

Table 7

Paired Samples t-Test for Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Experimental Group

Pair	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental Group Pre-Test – Post-Test	-2.40	1.128	0.191	-2.790	-2.010	-12.56	34	

Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics showing an increase in the experimental group's mean reading score from 24.45 (SD = 2.075) in the pre-test to 26.85 (SD = 1.942) in the post-test. The paired samples t-test in Table 4.7 confirms that this improvement was statistically significant (t = -12.56, p = 0.000 < 0.05). This indicates that the integration of skimming and scanning strategies effectively enhanced the reading comprehension skills of Pakistani ESL undergraduates in the experimental group.

Comparison of Control and Experimental Groups' Post-Test Scores

To determine whether there was a significant difference between the **post-test reading scores** of the control and experimental groups, an independent samples t-test was conducted. This statistical test compares the means of two independent groups to assess whether the observed differences are statistically significant. Before running the test, assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variances were checked and found to be satisfactory.

Table 8
Descriptive Statistics for Post-Test Reading Scores of Control and Experimental Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental Group	35	26.85	1.942	0.328
Control Group	35	25.20	2.937	0.496

Table 9
Independent Samples t-Test for Post-Test Scores of Control and Experimental Groups

Assumption	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
Equal variances assumed	5.195	0.025	2.964	68	0.004	1.65	0.557	0.542 – 2.758
Equal variances not assumed			2.964	67.633	0.004	1.65	0.557	0.539 – 2.761

As shown in Table 4.8, the mean post-test score of the experimental group (M = 26.85, SD = 1.942) was higher than that of the control group (M = 25.20, SD = 2.937). The results of the independent samples t-test presented in Table 4.9 indicate a statistically significant difference between the two groups (t = 2.964, p = 0.004 < 0.05).

This finding suggests that students in the experimental group, who were taught using skimming and scanning strategies, performed significantly better in reading comprehension than those in the control group. The evidence confirms that applying these strategies effectively enhances Pakistani ESL learners' reading performance at the secondary level.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of integrating skimming and scanning strategies in improving the reading comprehension skills of undergraduate ESL students in a public sector university in Pakistan. The statistical findings from pre-test and post-test comparisons provide strong evidence that these strategies significantly enhanced students' reading performance.

The normality tests 1) confirmed that the data were normally distributed, meeting one of the assumptions for applying parametric tests such as the t-test. The independent samples t-test for pre-test scores (Table 3) indicated no significant difference between the control

and experimental groups before the intervention, suggesting that both groups were equivalent in their initial reading ability. This ensured that any subsequent difference in post-test scores could be attributed to the instructional treatment rather than pre-existing disparities

The paired samples t-test for the control group (Tables 4 and 5) revealed a slight but statistically significant improvement in their reading scores. This minor increase may be linked to general classroom exposure or repeated test familiarity rather than instructional innovation. In contrast, the experimental group demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in reading comprehension from pre-test to post-test (Tables 6 and 7), with mean scores increasing considerably after being taught through skimming and scanning strategies. These results align with findings by Widyawati & Simanjuntak (2023) and Hanggara Rosa & Marsuki (2023), who also reported that applying skimming and scanning techniques enhanced students' comprehension and vocabulary retention.

Furthermore, the independent samples t-test comparing post-test scores between the control and experimental groups (Tables 8 and 9) showed a significant difference ($p = 0.004 < 0.05$), indicating that students who practiced skimming and scanning outperformed those who followed conventional reading methods. This demonstrates that these strategies not only improved comprehension but also boosted students' ability to extract key information efficiently an essential skill in academic reading contexts like TOEFL and university-level assessments. Similar results were observed by Agustin et al. (2023) and Azmi et al. (2019), who concluded that skimming and scanning enhance students' reading proficiency by developing quick comprehension and purposeful reading habits.

In the Pakistani context, where many ESL learners struggle with vocabulary limitations, slow reading pace, and low motivation (Ahmed, 2021; Khan et al., 2020), these strategies offer a practical pedagogical solution. They encourage students to interact actively with the text, build confidence, and manage lengthy reading passages effectively. Moreover, they can help overcome reading anxiety by giving learners structured methods for approaching comprehension tasks, which is especially beneficial in exam-oriented systems.

Overall, the results substantiate that skimming and scanning strategies significantly improve ESL students' reading comprehension. The evidence confirms that strategic reading instruction can transform traditional reading classrooms into more interactive and skill-based learning environments, enhancing both academic performance and learner autonomy among Pakistani university students.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the effectiveness of skimming and scanning strategies in enhancing the reading comprehension skills of Pakistani undergraduate ESL students. Using a quantitative pre-test and post-test design, the findings revealed a significant improvement in the reading performance of students who were taught through these strategies compared to those taught using traditional methods. The results of the paired sample t-test for the experimental group demonstrated a marked increase in post-test mean scores, confirming that these strategies effectively develop students' ability to identify key ideas and comprehend texts more efficiently. The independent samples t-test further established that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in post-test scores, indicating the positive impact of integrating these strategies into ESL instruction. In the context of Pakistani universities, where students often struggle with comprehension due to limited exposure and traditional reading methods,

skimming and scanning provide practical, time-efficient, and engaging techniques to enhance reading proficiency. The findings validate that incorporating these strategies can make reading instruction more interactive and learner-centered, fostering confidence and motivation among ESL learners. Overall, the study concludes that skimming and scanning are effective reading strategies for improving comprehension performance and should be systematically integrated into the English reading curriculum at tertiary level institutions across Pakistan.

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