

## Metacognitive Strategy for Arabic Writing among Students in Arabic Departement

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### Abstract

This study aims to delve deeper into the understanding of metacognitive strategies in students' Arabic writing. Metacognitive strategies in Arabic writing are crucial because this language is not their mother tongue in their habits. Moreover, there are substantial differences between sounds and writing symbols in Arabic that have distinct characteristics compared to foreign languages, like European languages in particular. Using the non-experimental method, we used 40 samples of mid-year students studying in the Arabic Language Study Program. They are given instructions to write an Arabic essay within the allotted time. We tested the data from the questionnaire using statistical descriptive and Pearson's correlational techniques. Meanwhile, the results of student essay writing were assessed according to the criteria of Holly L. Jacob. Through statistical descriptive tests, it was found that the average use of metacognitive strategies (MS) was 71.70, while the average essay score (ES) was 80.60. Based on Pearson's correlation test, it was found that Sig. (2-tailed) MS and ES were 0.078 and Pearson correlation was 0.282. Through these calculations, it shows that there is no correlation between the x and y variables, positive correlation values, and weak degrees. Meanwhile, based on the observation of the assessment results, it shows that there are repeated errors in organizing, language use, and writing techniques. These findings show that MS that is good at writing Arabic without adequate writing knowledge will produce less quality writing. And vice versa, adequate author knowledge without a good MS will result in less structured and coherent writing.

**Keywords:** Metacognitive strategies; Arabic writing; essay

## Introduction

Arabic writing skills are often regarded as among the most intricate and demanding linguistic competencies.<sup>1</sup> Scholars frequently place writing at the apex of language proficiency due to its requirement for the simultaneous mastery of two distinct yet interrelated skills. Firstly, there is the necessity to navigate and apply a complex array of grammatical and syntactic rules. Secondly, writing serves as the visual embodiment of spoken language, where abstract speech is transformed into concrete symbols.<sup>2</sup> This dual demand makes constructing coherent, structured sentences a formidable challenge for many, underscoring the heightened cognitive load associated with Arabic script and expression.

Metacognition, a concept related to awareness and control of one's thought processes, has been in the spotlight in educational research over the past few decades. Metacognition is involved in various aspects of learning, including writing. In the context of writing, metacognitive strategies include the ability to plan, organize, and evaluate the writing process. This involves not only setting goals for writing but also constantly monitoring progress and making necessary adjustments.<sup>3</sup> Rosdiana *et al.* believes that the use of effective metacognitive strategies can improve writing skills, as individuals become more skilled at organizing their thoughts, overcoming weaknesses, and improving their drafts.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, cultivating metacognitive awareness in students can empower them to become self-directed learners who can overcome the challenges of writing independently and achieve academic success.<sup>5</sup>

The use of metacognitive strategies is closely related to critical thinking skills, which are the main capital in writing Arabic as a foreign language. In this 21st century digital era, critical thinking skills are becoming increasingly vital for

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<sup>1</sup> Xing Wei, *Exploring the Cross-Language Transfer of L1 Rhetorical Knowledge in L2 Writing: Cognitive and Metacognitive Perspectives* (Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-7637-9>.

<sup>2</sup> Mohd Azizul Rahman Bin Zabidin et al., "Talazumiyah Al-Rabth Fi al-Kitabah al-Insyaiyyah Baina al-Uslub Wa al-Taushif Wa al-Maharah: Dirasah Fi Maharah al-Kitabah Li al-Nathiqin Bi Ghair al-Arabiyyah," *Arabic: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 5, no. 2 (October 25, 2021): 173, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v5i2.2607>.

<sup>3</sup> Erkan Cer, "The Instruction of Writing Strategies: The Effect of the Metacognitive Strategy on the Writing Skills of Pupils in Secondary Education," *SAGE Open* 9, no. 2 (April 2019): 215824401984268, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019842681>.

<sup>4</sup> Lilis Amaliah Rosdiana et al., "The Role of Metacognitive Strategies in Academic Writing Skills in Higher Education," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 22, no. 6 (June 30, 2023): 328–44, <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.22.6.18>.

<sup>5</sup> Lijuan Han, "Metacognitive Writing Strategy Instruction in the EFL Context: Focus on Writing Performance and Motivation," *Sage Open* 14, no. 2 (April 2024): 21582440241257081, <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241257081>.

every student.<sup>6</sup> With a continuous flow of information from various sources, learners must be able to analyze, evaluate, and interpret data effectively to distinguish valid information from what is not. These skills enable them to make smart decisions, solve complex problems, and adapt quickly to technological and social changes.<sup>7</sup> In addition, critical thinking also encourages innovation and creativity, which are urgently needed in this ever-evolving world.

Metacognitive strategies, which involve awareness and control over their own thought processes, help writers to be more effective in planning, monitoring, and revising their writing. Arabic writing that has a unique structure and grammar makes the writer to understand the nuances and the right meaning that makes him/her have to think critically.<sup>8</sup> Metacognitive strategies invite writers to recognize their thinking characters, improve sentence structure, choose the right vocabulary, and ensure the clarity and coherence of writing. This strategy can encourage writers to actively reflect on their learning process, identify strengths and weaknesses, and develop more effective approaches to improving writing skills.<sup>9</sup> Thus, metacognitive strategies can be a bridge of critical thinking that not only contributes to the quality of Arabic writing, but also equips writers to be able to learn through experience and adapt sustainably.

Writing in Arabic has a number of special characteristics. Bin Zabidin *et al.* assume that the grammatical system in Arabic is complex and the vocabulary is very rich. This means that the writer must have a deep understanding and high awareness. In addition, writing in Arabic is heavily influenced by the cultural and social context in which the language is spoken. Writing in Arabic also often prioritizes the beauty of language and the use of rhetoric, which requires special skills from the writer.<sup>10</sup>

Metacognitive strategies in Arabic writing include various essential aspects. For example, writers in Arabic must be able to plan the content of their writing by considering appropriate sentence structure and proper use of

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<sup>6</sup> Silvia F. Rivas, Carlos Saiz, and Carlos Ossa, "Metacognitive Strategies and Development of Critical Thinking in Higher Education," *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (June 15, 2022): 913219, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.913219>.

<sup>7</sup> Mark Feng Teng and Mei Yue, "Metacognitive Writing Strategies, Critical Thinking Skills, and Academic Writing Performance: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach," *Metacognition and Learning* 18, no. 1 (April 2023): 237–60, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11409-022-09328-5>.

<sup>8</sup> Rustamaji Rustamaji et al., "A Need Analysis for Developing Arabic Writing Materials: A Study at Higher Education Institution," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 8, no. 1 (2024): 255–80, <http://dx.doi.org/10.29240/jba.v8i1.9825>.

<sup>9</sup> Dina Ramadhanti and Diyan Permata Yanda, "Students' Metacognitive Awareness and Its Impact on Writing Skill," *International Journal of Language Education* 5, no. 3 (October 31, 2021): 193, <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v5i3.18978>.

<sup>10</sup> Bin Zabidin et al., "Talazumiyah Al-Rabth Fi al-Kitabah al-Insyayiyah Baina al-Uslub Wa al-Taushif Wa al-Maharah."

vocabulary. In addition, writers must also be able to monitor their writing process, ensuring that each piece of the writing supports the entire argument or narrative that they want to convey. In the final stage, the evaluation of the writing that has been created is also an important part of the metacognitive strategy, where the author assesses whether the writing goals have been achieved and whether there are areas that need improvement.<sup>11</sup>

Several studies on metacognitive strategies, such as those conducted by Zunairoh, show that individuals who use metacognitive strategies tend to be effective in improving the quality of learning. Metacognitive strategies that are carried out consciously can focus attention, organize, and plan the learning process. Individuals can also better understand and manage information well. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the learning process allows for the identification of weaknesses and strengths, so that appropriate corrective steps can be taken. Such strategies not only help in achieving better learning outcomes, but also develop critical and reflective thinking skills, which are essential for long-term success in various areas of life.<sup>12</sup>

More deeply in this discussion, Han explained that there was a significant increase in students' motivation and writing skills. These strategies allow students to think about their own thought processes, such as planning before writing, monitoring progress, and revising based on feedback, as well as resulting in more structured and coherent writing.<sup>13</sup> This skill is becoming increasingly important given the complexity in Arabic writing. However, there are several challenges faced in practicing metacognitive strategies in Arabic writing, such as the lack of adequate educational resources and less relevant teaching approaches.<sup>14</sup>

Writing in Arabic presents unique challenges due to the nature of its script, which is largely consonantal. Unlike many European languages that use alphabets representing both vowels and consonants, Arabic relies heavily on consonants, with diacritical marks (*harakat*) used to indicate short vowels. This distinct feature of Arabic adds a layer of complexity that is not as prevalent in European languages, where vowels are explicitly represented in the written form.

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<sup>11</sup> Mona J. Alfaifi, "A Suggested Model for Metacognitive Strategy Instruction in EFL Writing Classrooms," *Reading & Writing Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (July 4, 2022): 323–39, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10573569.2021.1954569>.

<sup>12</sup> Yuyun Zunairoh, "The Effect of Cognitive and Metacognitive Learning Strategies in Maharah Qiraah Based on Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language on Students' Learning Outcomes," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 7, no. 1 May (May 3, 2023): 257, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v7i1.6530>.

<sup>13</sup> Han, "Metacognitive Writing Strategy Instruction in the EFL Context."

<sup>14</sup> Muhammad Afthon Ulin Nuha and Nurul Musyafa'ah, "Implementation of Quality Management Curriculum in Arabic Learning," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 6, no. 2 (November 4, 2022): 417, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v6i2.5137>.

The research aims to explore in depth how students utilize metacognitive strategies when composing texts in Arabic, and to investigate whether there is a significant relationship between these strategies and the quality of their written products. Metacognitive strategies, which involve planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's cognitive processes, can play a crucial role in Arabic writing skills. These strategies may help students navigate complex grammatical structures, enrich their vocabulary, and improve the overall coherence and clarity of their texts. By examining the correlation between metacognitive strategy use and the outcomes of written work, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into how students manage their processes and improve their Arabic writing.

This study employed a non-experimental design with a sample of 40 students from the Arabic Language Education program at Al-Falah As-Sunniah University, located in Jember, East Java, Indonesia. The non-experimental approach was chosen to observe and analyse naturally occurring phenomena without manipulating variables,<sup>15</sup> allowing the researcher to gain insights into how metacognitive strategies were employed in writing. We utilized a questionnaire consisting of 22 items adapted from the instruments used by Razkane *et al.* which designed to measure the use of metacognitive strategies by the participants. The questionnaire was administered to the sample, who were also instructed to write an essay in Arabic. This writing task provided an opportunity to assess the actual writing performance of the students, which could be correlated with their responses in the questionnaire to investigate potential links between strategy use and writing quality.

For data analysis, we employed descriptive statistics and Pearson correlational analyses. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and describe the characteristics of the data, providing an overview of the metacognitive strategies most frequently used by the students. Pearson's correlation was applied to determine the strength and significance of the relationship between the use of metacognitive strategies and the quality of the students' written essays. This method allows for a deeper understanding students' strategy that might influence the students' overall performance and outcomes in Arabic language writing tasks.

## Findings and Discussion

### An Overview of Metacognitive Strategy in Writing

There is a different view regarding the concept of strategy in education. According to some literatures, the concept of strategy has a broad meaning and is used in various fields including education. This strategy has taken on a new

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<sup>15</sup> Michelle D. Young and Sarah Diem, *Handbook of Critical Education Research: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Emerging Approaches*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003141464>.

meaning and transformed into a learning strategy.<sup>16</sup> One commonly used technical definition states that a learning strategy is an operation used by learners to aid in the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information.<sup>17</sup>

With this more comprehensive definition, learning strategies include a variety of techniques and approaches that allow learners to master the material in a more efficient and effective way. While metacognitive consists of two combinations of words: meta and cognitive. Linguistically, meta is about something itself, while cognition is knowledge.<sup>18</sup> In metacognitive terms, it is defined as knowledge of knowledge;<sup>19</sup> strategies for thinking about something or planning a lesson;<sup>20</sup> knowledge of how cognition works.<sup>21</sup>

The majority of researchers cite John Flavell as a key figure in the development of the concept of metacognition. According to Flavell, metacognition can be defined as an individual's knowledge of his or her cognitive processes and outcomes or everything related to them. In his 1979 work, Flavell emphasized three main domains in metacognition: knowledge, experience, and metacognitive strategies.<sup>22</sup> Metacognitive knowledge includes an understanding of oneself and others as cognitive processors, including beliefs about an individual's abilities in various aspects, such as age, gender, intelligence, and educational background that affect learning. Knowledge of tasks refers to an understanding of how to manage tasks and the estimation of success in achieving certain goals. Meanwhile, strategy knowledge is related to the belief in an

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<sup>16</sup> Narges Saffari, "Metacognitive Knowledge and Its Effect on Second Language Writing: Students' Perceptions of Writing Task," *International Journal of Higher Education* 8, no. 5 (September 2, 2019): 221, <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v8n5p221>.

<sup>17</sup> D. Escorcía and M. Gimenes, "Metacognitive Components of Writing: Construction and Validation of the Metacognitive Components of Planning Writing Self-Inventory (MCPW-I)," *European Review of Applied Psychology* 70, no. 1 (February 2020): 100515, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erap.2019.100515>.

<sup>18</sup> Hassane Razkane et al., "The Impact of Explicit Metacognitive Writing Strategy Training in English (L3) on Arabic-French-English Trilingual Learners' Writing Outcomes," *English Teaching & Learning*, September 21, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42321-023-00156-7>.

<sup>19</sup> Mohammad Kazemian, Lalu Ari Irawan, and Haerazi Haerazi, "Developing Metacognitive Writing Strategy to Enhance Writing Skills Viewed from Prospective Teachers' Critical Thinking Skills," *Journal of Language and Literature Studies* 1, no. 1 (May 30, 2021): 15–28, <https://doi.org/10.36312/jolls.v1i1.499>.

<sup>20</sup> Tamer Mohammad Al-Jarrah et al., "The Role of Metacognitive Technique for Enhancing the Writing Skills of Arab EFL Students," *Journal of Education in Black Sea Region* 4, no. 2 (May 26, 2019): 191–205, <https://doi.org/10.31578/jeb.v4i2.179>.

<sup>21</sup> Sin Wang Chong, *Metacognitive Mindscapes: Understanding Secondary EFL Writing Students' Systems of Knowledge*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429503894>.

<sup>22</sup> M. Monika and Anitha Devi. V, "A Systematic Review on the Effectiveness of Metacognitive Strategies and Multimodal Tools in Blended Learning English Language Classroom," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 12, no. 11 (November 3, 2022): 2239–52, <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1211.03>.

effective strategy to achieve these goals. Flavell also elaborates that metacognitive knowledge often involves a combination of all three domains.<sup>23</sup>

In this definitive description, it can be concluded that metacognitive strategy is the strategy that a person uses to learn something, or in other words, metacognition is a person's knowledge of their cognitive processes. Metacognitive skills include a wide variety of traits that allow individuals to learn, identify problems, overcome challenges, or also evaluate their successes. Metacognitive is an effort to knit the accumulation of understanding so that it becomes an autonomous step in self-development in learning.

In the context of cognitive psychology, the concept of metacognition is an important subject of research. Metacognition allows individuals to monitor, organize, and assess their own thoughts and knowledge, which in turn influences their behavior.<sup>24</sup> By understanding and using metacognition, individuals can improve the quality of their thinking, learning process, and improve their ability to control themselves in a variety of situations. As a result of evolution, this ability gives humans a significant adaptive advantage in living their lives.<sup>25</sup>

Writing skills are abilities that focus on communication through writing. Writing is not just pouring out ideas, but it is also a creative process that transforms thoughts into written form. These skills involve not only technical aspects, such as grammar and sentence structure, but also the ability to convey ideas clearly and effectively. Therefore, writing becomes an important and valuable communication tool in a variety of contexts, allowing individuals to express themselves, share information, and communicate with a broad audience. These skills are essential in academic, professional, and everyday life, strengthening interpersonal interaction and understanding.<sup>26</sup>

Hacker *et al.* have a metacognitive strategy model that is used as illustrating writing practices. They described that at the Meta-Level, there is meta-procedural and meta-declarative knowledge. This knowledge includes models from the Object-Level that help direct and supervise the writing process. At this level, explicit control and explicit monitoring occur. Explicit control

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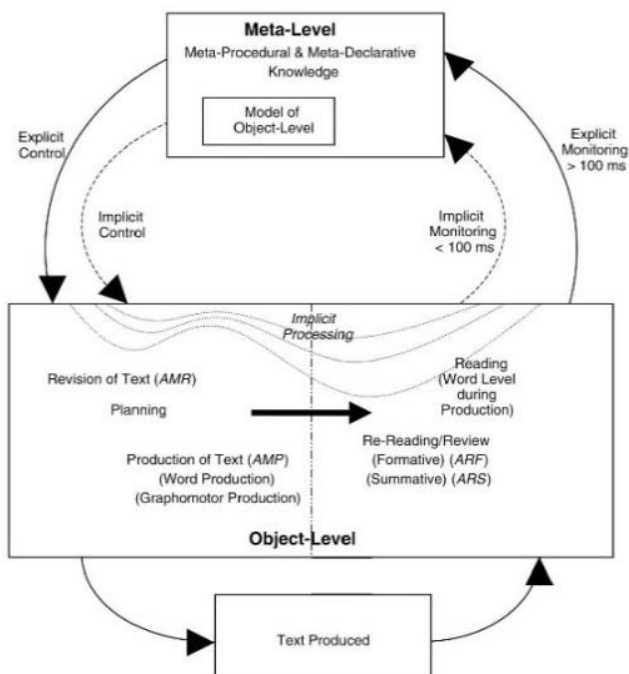
<sup>23</sup> Razkane et al., "The Impact of Explicit Metacognitive Writing Strategy Training in English (L3) on Arabic-French-English Trilingual Learners' Writing Outcomes."

<sup>24</sup> Raden Ahmad Barnabas, Zainal Rafli, and Yumna Rasyid, "Cognitive And Metacognitive Strategies In Arabic Listening Learning And Relationship With Students' Personality," *Arabiyat : Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaan* 6, no. 2 (December 20, 2019): 254–71, <https://doi.org/10.15408/a.v6i2.11771>.

<sup>25</sup> Ahmad Nurcholis et al., "Strategies to Improve the Quality of Arabic Language Education at the Public Service Entity (BLU) State Islamic Higher Education," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 7, no. 1 May (May 3, 2023): 241, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v7i1.5707>.

<sup>26</sup> Anisatu Thoyyibah, "Analysis of Arabic Orthographic Errors of Arabic Language Education Students of the University of Muhammadiyah Malang," *Arabiyatuna: Journal of Arabic Language* 3, no. 2 (November 13, 2019): 215, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v3i2.1017>.

refers to conscious actions taken to direct the writing process, such as setting writing goals and strategies. Explicit monitoring is conscious monitoring of the writing process to ensure the quality and consistency of the text (see **Figure 1**).<sup>27</sup>



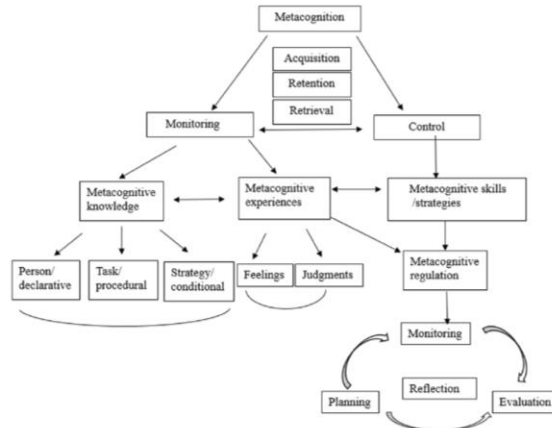
**Figure 1.** Metacognitive models of writing by Hacker *et al.*

Observing the metacognitive strategy model of Hacker *et al.* in the paper actually does not only focus on the aspect of knowledge itself, but also involves the aspect of experience and metacognitive skills. Metacognitive experiences include an individual's awareness and feelings when processing information related to an upcoming task. For example, this includes feelings and judgments about comprehension, effort expended, accuracy of solutions, difficulty of the task, familiarity with the task, and confidence level. These experiences form the basis for individuals to be aware of the tasks to be performed, as well as incorporating important affective and cognitive aspects in self-regulation. The affective aspect includes subjective emotions and feelings, while the cognitive aspect involves objective thinking and judgment. The two work together in self-regulation mechanisms, helping individuals plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning process and performance.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Douglas J. Hacker, Matt C. Keener, and John C. Kircher, "Writing Is Applied Metacognition," in *Handbook of Metacognition in Education* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>28</sup> Mark Feng Teng, Chenghai Qin, and Chuang Wang, "Validation of Metacognitive Academic Writing Strategies and the Predictive Effects on Academic Writing Performance in a





**Figure 2.** Multi-faceted elements of metacognition by Teng *et al.*

When faced with a new task, a person may feel anxious (affective aspect) but also assess the difficulty of the task and their ability to complete it (cognitive aspect), which then affects their actions, such as how much effort to devote or strategies to use. Understanding and developing metacognitive experiences is essential for improving learning effectiveness and performance, as it allows individuals to recognize their strengths and weaknesses and make necessary adjustments to achieve better outcomes.

While in metacognitive skills, Teng *et al.* added that those skills include strategies for planning, conflict resolution, error detection, and inhibition control, which aid in effective learning and executive functioning. These skills are divided into orientation strategies, planning, cognitive processing, monitoring, and evaluation. Planning involves selecting the right strategy and allocating resources, while monitoring ensures task performance is observed, and evaluation assesses the learning process. Additionally, debugging strategies help correct misunderstandings and performance, and information management strategies facilitate efficient processing, organization, elaboration, and summarization of information.

### Crucial Arabic Writing Appearance

Writing is the manifestation of symbols that are recognized by memory to be displayed in a form that can be observed, representing the sounds themselves. Writing in Arabic presents unique challenges due to the characteristics of the language. Compared to European languages that have vowels represented by letters, vowels in Arabic are indicated by harakat, which

are often omitted in writing. Furthermore, the representation of the consonant sound /a/ does not always appear in the same form when written, influenced by syntax and morphology. Here, we will address some common mistakes that frequently occur in its practice, namely:

## Hamzah

In Arabic, hamzah (ء) represents a glottal stop and follows a complex set of rules, often leading to mistakes in both writing and pronunciation.<sup>29</sup> One common issue is the misplacement of hamzah within words. The positioning of hamzah varies depending on whether it appears at the beginning, middle, or end of a word, each governed by specific grammatical rules. For instance, when the hamzah appears at the beginning of a word, it is called *hamzat al-qat'* and is always pronounced. However, learners often confuse it with *hamzat al-washl*, which is only pronounced at the beginning of speech and omitted when connected to a previous word. This distinction is crucial in formal writing and reading, but many make errors by either incorrectly omitting or including the hamzah in positions where it shouldn't appear, leading to a misunderstanding of the intended meaning.

In the middle of words, the placement of hamzah becomes more intricate, often determined by the strongest vowel between *fathah* (a), *kasrah* (i), and *dammah* (u). For example, if a hamzah follows a *kasrah*, it is written on a *yā'* (ي), while a *fathah* requires it to be placed on an *alif* (أ), and a *dammah* on a *waw* (و). However, errors frequently arise when writers fail to correctly apply these rules, leading to incorrect spellings. An example is the word "يقرا" (*yaqra*), where the hamzah is placed on the line after the vowel preceding it (*fathah*). Some learners may erroneously place the hamzah on an inappropriate letter, such as *yā'* or *waw*, distorting the word and, consequently, its meaning.<sup>30</sup>

At the end of a word, hamzah poses yet another challenge. Its position in final form is influenced by the preceding letter's vowel. For instance, in the word "مبتدئ" (*mubtadi*), the hamzah sits on a *yā'* because it follows a *kasrah*. A common mistake occurs when learners forget to add this final hamzah or incorrectly place it on an *alif* instead of a *yā'*, particularly when dealing with different dialects or script styles that omit or alter the hamzah. This mistake can cause a

<sup>29</sup> Fikriyah Mahyaddin, Hamzah Hamzah, and Zulaeha Zulaeha, "Tahlil Al-Akhtha' al-Lughawiyyah Fi Maharah al-Kitabah Li Thullab Syu'bah al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah Wa Adabiha / Analysis of Linguistic Errors in the Writing Skill of Students of the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program," *Loghat Arabi: Jurnal Bahasa Arab Dan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 5, no. 1 (June 20, 2024): 209, <https://doi.org/10.36915/la.v5i1.260>.

<sup>30</sup> Nurhikmah Sani et al., "Malay Arabic Influence in Arabic Writing Skills," *Kalamuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaaraban* 5, no. 1 (January 31, 2024): 43–57, <https://doi.org/10.52593/klm.05.1.04>.

mispronunciation or a change in the meaning of the word entirely, underscoring the importance of correctly identifying the hamzah's appropriate form.<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, hamzah rules become more complex with verbs, especially when conjugating across tenses or forms. For example, verbs like "بدأ" (bada'a, to begin) and "يبدأ" (yabda', he begins) change the *hamzah's* position based on tense and conjugation, demanding careful attention to grammatical structure. Misplacing hamzah in such cases can lead to errors in both form and function, making verbs difficult to recognize or conjugate properly. These mistakes are particularly prevalent among non-native learners, who may not have fully internalized the vowel-based rules governing hamzah placement, leading to frequent errors in their written and spoken Arabic.

Mahyidin *et al.*, Sani *et al.*, and Pimada *et al.* agreed that the misplacement or omission of hamzah is one of the more complex challenges in Arabic writing. Whether at the beginning, middle, or end of a word, applying the correct rules for hamzah is essential to maintaining clarity and meaning in both written and spoken Arabic. These difficulties emphasize the need for rigorous training and attention to detail, especially for students learning Arabic as a second language.

## Collocation

Collocation refers to the habitual juxtaposition of a particular word with another word or words with a frequency greater than chance. In Arabic, as in many languages, Abubakar Garba et al. said that collocations are crucial for fluent and natural-sounding speech and writing.<sup>32</sup> They emphasized that errors in collocation often arise from direct translations or a lack of familiarity with the language's idiomatic expressions. Such mistakes can lead to awkward phrasing and a breakdown in communication, becoming unclear or completely lost.

One common error in collocation among Arabic learners involves the incorrect pairing of verbs with nouns. For example, the phrase "فعل ضوء" (fa'al dhau), which literally translates to "do light," is a mistranslation of the correct collocation "أشعل ضوء" (ash'ala dhau), meaning "turn on the light." In Arabic, specific verbs are conventionally used with particular nouns, and failure to recognize these combinations can result in phrases that sound unnatural to native speakers. Mastering these verb-noun pairs is essential for conveying the right meaning and achieving fluency in the language.

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<sup>31</sup> Luluk Humairo Pimada et al., "Error Analysis in Writing Hamzah: What Have to Students Do?," *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning* 4, no. 1 (December 10, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v4i1.9870>.

<sup>32</sup> Mahmud Abubakar Garba, Abd Rauf Bin Hassan, and Mohd Azidan Abdul Jabar, "Functions of Collocations in the Prevention of Linguistic Errors among Arabic Learners as a Foreign Language," *Cogent Social Sciences* 9, no. 2 (December 15, 2023): 2260608, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2260608>.

Another area where collocation errors frequently occur is in adjective-noun combinations. Arabic has particular adjectives that naturally pair with specific nouns, often reflecting cultural nuances. For instance, while a learner might say “جديد فكرة” (*jadīd fikrah*) to mean “new idea,” the correct collocation is “فكرة جديدة” (*fikrah jadīdah*). The adjective should follow the noun in this case. Such mistakes can create confusion for listeners or readers, as the expected flow and structure of the language are disrupted. Understanding these patterns is critical for effective communication in Arabic, as they contribute significantly to the overall coherence and meaning of sentences.

Additionally, prepositional collocations can also present challenges for Arabic learners. Different languages often have distinct prepositional phrases that do not directly translate. For instance, a learner might mistakenly say “ذهبت إلى السوق في السيارة” (*dhahabat ilā al-sūq fī al-sayyārah*) to mean “I went to the market by car,” where the word “في” (*fī*, meaning “in”) is used incorrectly. The appropriate preposition in this context is “بـ” (*bi*, meaning “by”), leading to the correct phrase “ذهبت إلى السوق بالسيارة” (*dhahabat ilā al-sūq bil-sayyārah*). Such errors highlight the importance of understanding the nuances of prepositional use within the Arabic language. Familiarizing oneself with common prepositional collocations will enhance clarity and correctness in communication.<sup>33</sup>

## Grammar

Grammar in Arabic is a complex system that governs the structure of sentences, including the arrangement of words and the agreement between them.<sup>34</sup> Errors in grammar are prevalent among learners, particularly those who are new to the language. Mudhsh said that understanding the common grammatical errors made by learners is essential for improving proficiency in Arabic.<sup>35</sup> Mubarak *et al.* showed several common grammatical errors occur with subject-verb agreement.<sup>36</sup> In Arabic, the verb must agree with its subject in both gender and number. For example, a learner may incorrectly say “الطلاب يكتب” (*al-*

<sup>33</sup> Reima Al-Jarf, “Undergraduate Student-Translators’ Difficulties in Translating English Word + Preposition Collocations to Arabic,” *International Journal of Linguistics Studies* 2, no. 2 (July 25, 2022): 60–72, <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijls.2022.2.2.9>.

<sup>34</sup> Talqis Nurdianto, “The Role of Classical Arabic Grammarian in the Renewal of Arabic Syntax,” in *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Sustainable Innovation 2020–Social, Humanity, and Education (ICoSIHESS 2020)* (4th International Conference on Sustainable Innovation 2020–Social, Humanity, and Education (ICoSIHESS 2020), Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Atlantis Press, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210120.137>.

<sup>35</sup> Badri Abdulhakim D. M. Mudhsh, “A Comparative Study of Tense and Aspect Categories in Arabic and English,” ed. Krisda Chaemsaitong, *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 8, no. 1 (January 1, 2021): 1899568, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2021.1899568>.

<sup>36</sup> Faisal Mubarak et al., “Arabic Phrases Errors in Writing Theses for Masters Students at Indonesian Universities,” *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 8, no. 3 (2022).

*thullāb yaktub*) when they should use the plural form of the verb, resulting in “الطلاب يكتبون” (*al-thullāb yaktubūn*) for “The students write.” This mistake stems from a misunderstanding of how plural forms function in Arabic, where the verb changes based on the gender and number of the subject. Such errors can lead to confusion about who is performing the action and ultimately disrupt the intended meaning of the sentence.

Another area where grammatical mistakes frequently occur is in the use of verb tenses. Arabic has a rich system of verb conjugation that expresses various tenses, aspects, and moods. However, learners often struggle to apply these rules correctly. For instance, a student might say “أنا أذهب إلى المدرسة أمس” (*anā adhbhab ilā al-madrasa amṣ*), intending to mean “I went to school yesterday.” The correct construction should use the past tense: “أنا ذهبت إلى المدرسة أمس” (*anā dbhabt ilā al-madrasa amṣ*). Misusing tenses not only affects the clarity of communication but can also change the meaning of the entire sentence, demonstrating the importance of mastering verb conjugation in Arabic.

Errors in noun case endings (*i‘rāb*) can also pose challenges for Arabic learners. The Arabic language employs a system of grammatical cases that indicate the role of a noun within a sentence, such as nominative, accusative, and genitive. For example, in the sentence “الكتاب على الطاولة” (*al-kitāb ‘alā al-thāvilah*, “The book is on the table”), if a learner incorrectly uses “الكتاب” (*al-kitāb*) in the accusative case instead of the nominative case, it can lead to confusion regarding the subject of the sentence. Understanding how to correctly apply case endings is crucial for clarity and precision in communication, and it requires considerable practice for learners to master.

### Students’ Metacognitive Strategies in Arabic Writing

As previously explained, metacognitive strategies include students' ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate what they will, are, or have written. Here it will be shown how students choose strategies when writing Arabic essays. The following results are obtained:

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics for Metacognitive Strategies & Essay Score

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance
Metacognitive Strategies	40	41.00	94.00	71.7000	12.74443	162.421
Essay Score	40	44.00	97.00	80.6000	15.12308	228.708
Valid N (list wise)	40					

Based on the data presented Table 1., there are two main variables: metacognitive strategies as the X variable and essay value as the Y variable. The

sample size (N) for both variables is 40. Analyzing the data further by interpreting the key statistical parameters provided.

The minimum score for metacognitive strategies is 41.00, while the minimum essay score is slightly higher at 44.00. This indicates that even the students who demonstrated the lowest use of metacognitive strategies still managed to achieve slightly higher baseline essay scores. A score of 41.00 in metacognitive strategies suggests that some students are either not aware of or do not actively employ these strategies to their fullest potential.

The maximum values of both variables provide further insights into the capabilities of the highest-performing students. The maximum score for metacognitive strategies is 94.00, while the maximum essay score is 97.00. The fact that some students came very close to perfect scores in both categories indicates that high proficiency in metacognitive strategies corresponds to strong essay performance. However, it is noteworthy that while the top essay score is nearly perfect, the highest metacognitive strategy score does not quite reach the same level. This may suggest that even the most capable students are not fully maximizing their use of metacognitive strategies or that these strategies are inherently difficult to master to a perfect degree.

When we examine the mean values, the average score for metacognitive strategies is 71.70, compared to an average essay score of 80.60. This nearly nine-point difference suggests that, on average, students performed better in their essay writing than they did in their use of metacognitive strategies. The lower mean for metacognitive strategies may point to students' overall lack of awareness or mastery of these strategies, even though they are still managing relatively strong essay performances. This difference also raises questions about what other factors might be influencing essay scores.

The standard deviation reveals the degree of variability or dispersion within the two sets of scores. For metacognitive strategies, the standard deviation is 12.74, while the essay score standard deviation is higher at 15.12. The larger standard deviation for essay scores suggests that there is more variability in how students performed on their essays compared to their use of metacognitive strategies. This could indicate that students are more consistent in their use of strategies, even if their application of those strategies is not always at the highest level, whereas essay writing performance shows a broader range of ability.

Finally, the variance provides additional information on the spread of scores, complementing the standard deviation. The variance for metacognitive strategies is 162.42, while the variance for essay scores is significantly higher at 228.71. The higher variance in essay scores reinforces the observation that there is greater variability in students' writing performance. This greater spread might indicate that while metacognitive strategies help guide writing processes, essay

scores can fluctuate more widely due to other factors like linguistic competence, coherence, organization, and even individual creativity or personal expression.

This result indicates that while metacognitive strategies positively influence students' writing abilities, they are not the only factor at play in determining essay performance. Recent studies have also supported the notion that metacognitive strategy use enhances writing outcomes but must be integrated with other skills, such as linguistic proficiency and cognitive organization. Han highlights that metacognitive awareness in writing allows students to plan, monitor, and evaluate their work, improving writing quality but not guaranteeing success without strong language skills.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Cer emphasizes the need for metacognitive strategies to be complemented by content knowledge and linguistic competence.<sup>38</sup> Both affirm that while students with good strategy use often perform better, the most successful writers tend to have a balanced combination of metacognitive, linguistic, and organizational skills. Thus, to enhance essay scores effectively, instructional approaches should foster both metacognitive strategies and robust writing skills.

### **Evaluating Students' Product of Arabic Writing**

The researcher assessed the essays written by students using Holly L. Jacob's five-part evaluation criteria, which consist of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and technical. These five components provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating the quality of written work. By applying these criteria, the researchers were able to categorize the essays into high-performing and low-performing samples, establishing clear upper and lower boundaries for the scoring range.

Errors in content often stem from a lack of understanding of the topic or an inability to develop ideas thoroughly. In Arabic writing, this can manifest when the writer fails to present clear arguments or support their opinions with relevant examples or evidence. An essay that is weak in content might consist of general statements without further exploration or concrete details. For instance, in discussions on topics such as education, ethics, or simpler issues, the absence of contextual knowledge can lead to significant errors in the substance of the writing. Often, students simply repeat known information without contributing new insights or deeper analysis, which diminishes the strength of their essays. As seen in Appendix 1-B (compare with 1-A), there are clear examples of how lacking depth in content can result in underdeveloped essays that fail to engage with the complexity of the topic at hand. Such shortcomings reveal the need for

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<sup>37</sup> Han, "Metacognitive Writing Strategy Instruction in the EFL Context."

<sup>38</sup> Cer, "The Instruction of Writing Strategies."

students to enhance their critical thinking and ability to expand on ideas to avoid superficiality in their essays.<sup>39</sup>

Errors in organization are a common issue in Arabic writing. Writers often struggle to arrange paragraphs with clear logic and smooth transitions between ideas.<sup>40</sup> The distinctive writing style of the Arabic language can sometimes confuse novice writers when organizing their thoughts. Frequently, students are seen crafting paragraphs without dividing them into digestible main ideas. Furthermore, the introduction (مقدمة) and conclusion (خاتمة) are often unclear or poorly connected to the body of the essay, resulting in writing that feels disjointed and challenging to follow. This lack of coherence weakens the overall flow of the argument, making it difficult for readers to understand the writer's message. As illustrated in Appendix 2-B (compare with 2-A), the disorganized structure is evident, leading to paragraphs that seem disconnected or abruptly transitioned, which further diminishes the quality of the essay.

The use of vocabulary in Arabic often presents a significant challenge, especially for non-native speakers.<sup>41</sup> Vocabulary errors typically manifest in the form of incorrect word choices, the use of overly simplistic words, or words that do not fit the appropriate which leads to conveying meanings that are inaccurate (see Appendix 3-B-L3, L4, L8, L9, L10, L11, L14, & L-15).

Errors in language use, particularly related to grammar (*nahwu*) and morphology (*sarf*), are among the biggest challenges in Arabic writing. Arabic has an extremely complex grammatical system,<sup>42</sup> including *i'rab* (grammatical case markings), flexible sentence structures, and verb conjugation based on gender and number. Students often make mistakes in determining the correct word endings and in using verbs (*fi'il*) and nouns (*isim*) that do not match the sentence context. Additionally, neglecting the use of certain particles (huruf jar) or omitting important elements like pronouns (*dhamir*) can obscure the meaning and disrupt sentence structure. Many learners also struggle with more intricate grammatical rules, such as *idafa* (possessive constructions) and conjunctions (see Appendix 4-B-L16, L18, & L22).

In terms of technical, errors in Arabic writing typically relate to spelling issues, punctuation, and the correct use of the Arabic alphabet (Hijaiyah letters). Mistakes in these areas can lead to significant misunderstandings in the intended

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<sup>39</sup> Rivas, Saiz, and Ossa, "Metacognitive Strategies and Development of Critical Thinking in Higher Education."

<sup>40</sup> Teng and Yue, "Metacognitive Writing Strategies, Critical Thinking Skills, and Academic Writing Performance."

<sup>41</sup> Zainul Arifin et al., "Critical Tracing of Arabic Language Acquisition in Indonesian Context," *Izdiabar: Journal of Arabic Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature* 5, no. 2 (September 17, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.22219/jiz.v5i2.20745>.

<sup>42</sup> Mubarak et al., "Arabic Phrases Errors in Writing Theses for Masters Students at Indonesian Universities."



meaning of words.<sup>43</sup> Additionally, punctuation marks such as commas, periods, and quotation marks are often neglected or incorrectly placed, resulting in writing that feels disorganized and difficult to comprehend as seen in Appendix 5-B. Proper attention to these mechanics is essential for ensuring clarity and precision in written Arabic.

Based on our observations, there was a clear distinction between the highest and lowest scoring essays within each category. The high-scoring essays were cohesive, thoughtful, and polished, while the lower-scoring essays exhibited gaps in understanding, weak organization, and frequent language errors. This range of scores provided a clear picture of the students' varied writing abilities, offering valuable insights into areas where students excelled and where they needed further instruction or support. The results of this evaluation underscore the importance of a well-rounded approach to writing assessment, one that recognizes both linguistic proficiency and the ability to communicate effectively through Arabic written language.

**Correlation between Students' Metacognitive Strategies and Writing Score**

In the process of examining the relationship between metacognitive strategies and student essay performance, it is essential to explore how these two variables interact and influence one another. Metacognitive strategies, which involve self-regulation, planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's own cognitive processes, are believed to play a crucial role in effective learning and writing. Understanding the extent to which these strategies impact the quality of student essays can provide valuable insights for educators and learners alike, particularly in the context of writing in a foreign language like Arabic. To gain a clearer picture of this dynamic, a correlation analysis was conducted, comparing students' metacognitive strategy usage with their essay scores. The findings, as presented in the following table, will shed light on the strength and direction of this relationship, offering a basis for further discussion on the effectiveness of metacognitive strategies in improving writing outcomes.

**Table 2.** Pearson Correlations for Metacognitive Strategies & Essay Score

		Metacognitive Strategies	Essay Score
Metacognitive Strategies	Pearson Correlation	1	.282
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.078
	N	40	40
Essay Score	Pearson Correlation	.282	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.078	
	N	40	40

<sup>43</sup> Sani et al., "Malay Arabic Influence in Arabic Writing Skills."

The data in Table 2 showcases the results of a Pearson correlation analysis between two variables: Metacognitive Strategies (X) and Essay Score (Y). The table provides key insights into the relationship between these variables based on the correlation coefficient and the significance value. According to the standard for interpreting Pearson correlations, we use the significance (Sig.) value to determine whether the correlation is statistically significant.

The significance value for both metacognitive strategies and essay scores is .078, which exceeds the standard threshold of 0.05. Based on the guideline that significance values greater than 0.05 indicate a lack of correlation, it can be concluded that there is no statistically significant correlation between metacognitive strategies and essay scores. This lack of correlation suggests that the use of metacognitive strategies does not have a significant impact on students' essay performance, at least within the scope of this dataset. Although the Pearson correlation coefficient provides additional information about the direction and strength of the relationship, the absence of significance means that any relationship observed here should be interpreted cautiously.

Turning to the Pearson correlation coefficient, we observe a value of .282 for both metacognitive strategies and essay scores. This value indicates that the relationship between the two variables is positive, meaning that as metacognitive strategy use increases, essay scores also tend to increase. Importantly, this is a positive relationship because the correlation coefficient is greater than zero, and no negative sign is present. However, while the relationship is positive, the strength of the correlation is considered weak, as the coefficient falls below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.30 for moderate correlations. A correlation of .282 suggests that there is some degree of association between metacognitive strategy use and essay performance, but this relationship is not strong enough.

Despite the weak positive correlation, it is essential to recognize that correlation does not imply causation. A positive correlation indicates that there is a trend where higher usage of metacognitive strategies is associated with better essay scores. However, given the weak strength of this correlation, it is likely that other factors, such as language proficiency, cognitive skills, and writing experience, may also play significant roles in essay performance. Additionally, the absence of a statistically significant correlation reinforces the idea that while the two variables are somewhat related, the relationship is not strong enough to be considered predictive or causal. Therefore, while metacognitive strategies may contribute to essay success and many factors that influence writing performance.

Form this data we conclude that the correlation between metacognitive strategies and essay scores is weak but positive, as evidenced by the Pearson correlation coefficient of .282. However, the lack of statistical significance (with a p-value of .078) suggests that the observed relationship is not strong enough to

be considered meaningful in a broader context. This finding implies that while students who employ more metacognitive strategies might perform slightly better on their essays, metacognitive strategy use alone does not have a significant impact on writing outcomes.

From this finding, Rosdiana *et al.* were emphasizing that while these strategies help, they are not the sole factor in improving writing if students did not elaborate on good materials.<sup>44</sup> Likewise, Teng *et al.*, quoting Karlen's opinion, they said that students who aim to achieve effective writing also need to acquire metacognitive knowledge to regulate and monitor the writing process and to use strategies successfully.<sup>45</sup> It means that factors such as linguistic skills and cognitive development may play larger roles, aligning with the idea that metacognitive strategies need to be integrated with other competencies for better outcomes. In addition, Alfai found that producing good writing requires an understanding of how to create cohesive and coherent structures, as both play a critical role in determining writing performance standards.<sup>46</sup>

## Conclusion

This study highlights the weak positive correlation between metacognitive strategy use and essay performance among Arabic-writing students. The average scores show a slight advantage in essay performance over metacognitive strategy use, though the statistical analysis reveals no significant correlation. While students may still perform adequately in writing tasks without strong use of metacognitive strategies, repeated errors in organization and language use indicate that both good writing knowledge and metacognitive awareness are necessary for coherent and high-quality writing. Neither factor alone is sufficient to ensure optimal writing outcomes.

In the midst of the shortcomings in this research, further research needs to examine the implementation of metacognitive strategies that focus on learning Arabic writing in various educational settings. Testing the effectiveness of this strategy in classrooms with diverse demographics and different learning environments is also interesting to explore, so that the challenges and opportunities faced in the development of metacognitive strategies in Arabic writing can be identified. This fact will provide valuable insights into the potential of metacognitive strategies in changing the landscape of Arabic writing for a more active and effective learning experience. Further studies will allow for the adaptation of these strategies to different educational contexts.

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<sup>44</sup> Rosdiana et al., "The Role of Metacognitive Strategies in Academic Writing Skills in Higher Education."

<sup>45</sup> Teng, Qin, and Wang, "Validation of Metacognitive Academic Writing Strategies and the Predictive Effects on Academic Writing Performance in a Foreign Language Context."

<sup>46</sup> Alfai, "A Suggested Model for Metacognitive Strategy Instruction in EFL Writing Classrooms."

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