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THE ROLE OF METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES IN ENHANCING ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: The ability to write effectively in English is a critical component of foreign language proficiency, yet it remains one of the most challenging skills for learners. Metacognitive strategies—planning, monitoring, and evaluation—enable learners to regulate their writing process consciously and significantly improve writing quality Metacognition, understood as awareness and regulation of cognitive processes, plays a vital role in enabling learners to plan, monitor, and evaluate their writing. The study integrates perspectives from Cognitive Psychology and Self-Regulated Learning to demonstrate how strategic learning improves writing outcomes. The findings suggest that incorporating metacognitive instruction enhances coherence, organization, and learner autonomy.

Keywords: metacognition, writing skills, self-regulated learning, English language teaching, secondary education, discourse competence

Annotatsiya: Mazkur maqolada ingliz tilida yozish ko‘nikmalarini rivojlantirishda metakognitiv strategiyalarning o‘rni tahlil qilinadi Metakognitiv strategiyalar (rejalashtirish, monitoring, baholash) yozish jarayonini ongli boshqarish

imkonini beradi va yozma nutq sifatini sezilarli darajada oshiradi.Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko‘rsatadiki, metakognitiv yondashuv yozma nutq sifatini oshiradi va o‘quvchilarning mustaqil o‘rganish ko‘nikmalarini rivojlantiradi.

Kalit so‘zlar: metakognitsiya o‘z fikrlash jarayonini anglash va nazorat qilish, yozish ko‘nikmalari, o‘z-o‘zini boshqarib o‘rganish, ingliz tilini o‘qitish, o‘rta ta’lim.

In recent decades, English language education has gained increasing importance in Uzbekistan as part of broader educational reforms. Among the four language skills, writing is often perceived as the most demanding because it requires the integration of linguistic, cognitive, and organizational abilities.Many students demonstrate basic knowledge of grammar and vocabulary but struggle to express ideas clearly and coherently. This indicates that the problem lies not only in language competence but also in the lack of strategic thinking skills. In this context, metacognitive strategies emerge as a powerful tool for improving writing performance.

Theoretical Foundations of Metacognitive Skills.

The concept of metacognition was introduced by John Flavell, who defined it as “thinking about thinking.” It involves two key dimensions:

Metacognitive knowledge

Metacognitive regulation

Metacognitive knowledge includes awareness of one’s abilities, tasks, and strategies. Metacognitive regulation, on the other hand, involves active control over cognitive processes through planning, monitoring, and evaluation. From the perspective of Cognitive Psychology, learning is limited by working memory capacity. Writing in a

foreign language places a heavy cognitive load on learners. Metacognitive strategies help manage this load by organizing the writing process into manageable steps.

Metacognitive Strategies and Writing Development

Writing is a recursive and dynamic process that involves continuous reflection. Effective writers use metacognitive strategies such as:

Planning: setting goals and organizing ideas

Monitoring: checking progress during writing

Evaluating: revising and improving the final product

These processes are closely linked to Self-Regulated Learning, which emphasizes learners' active role in controlling their own learning. Research shows that students who apply these strategies produce higher-quality texts with better structure and coherence.

Challenges in Teaching Writing. Despite improvements in education, many teachers still focus on product-based approaches that emphasize grammatical correctness rather than the writing process.

Common challenges include:

-Poor idea development

-Weak coherence

-Lack of revision skills

These issues indicate the need for a shift toward process-oriented instruction that integrates metacognitive training.

Pedagogical Implications: Teachers can enhance students' metacognitive skills through various instructional techniques:

-Think-aloud modeling

-Guided writing activities

-Peer review sessions

-Reflective journals

In Uzbekistan's senior secondary education, the teaching and learning of English writing occupy a complex space shaped by ambitious policy reforms and the everyday realities of classroom practice. Over the past decade, national initiatives aimed at strengthening foreign language competence, the growth of specialized schools, and increased alignment with international frameworks such as CEFR have raised expectations for learners' productive skills. Writing, in particular, has gained prominence as a key indicator of communicative competence. However, despite these developments, the level of writing proficiency among senior high school students remains uneven, reflecting disparities in educational resources, instructional approaches, and learner engagement across different regions and school types. Rather than representing a uniform standard, students' writing abilities form a continuum influenced by curricular design, assessment systems, teacher expertise, and access to meaningful language exposure.

From a theoretical standpoint, writing proficiency in a second language is inherently multidimensional. It extends beyond grammatical correctness to include discourse organization, genre awareness, audience sensitivity, and the ability to manage the writing process through planning, drafting, and revision. In many Uzbek classrooms,

however, observable outcomes tend to emphasize lower-level skills, particularly sentence accuracy and controlled writing formats. While these elements are important, they often overshadow higher-order competencies such as argument development, logical structuring, and reflective revision. As a result, students may demonstrate surface-level correctness without achieving deeper communicative effectiveness. A defining characteristic of current practice is the persistence of product-oriented approaches to writing instruction. In such contexts, the final written text is prioritized, and success is frequently measured by grammatical accuracy, lexical appropriateness, and adherence to model structures. Classroom activities often position writing as a supplementary task following grammar or reading exercises, rather than as a recursive and cognitively demanding process. This orientation shapes students' perceptions of writing: many equate quality with correctness, paying limited attention to idea generation, organization, or audience awareness. Consequently, learners may underutilize essential cognitive strategies such as outlining, revising, and self-monitoring, especially in timed assessment conditions.

Empirical observations of student writing reveal several recurring patterns. While many learners can produce basic paragraphs and respond to prompts, their texts often lack depth and coherence. Ideas may be insufficiently developed, supporting details limited or absent, and logical connections between sentences unclear despite the use of linking words. Grammatical inconsistencies, particularly in tense usage and article application, remain common, as does a tendency toward generalized vocabulary. These issues suggest that students frequently achieve only surface coherence, where formal markers of organization are present but do not reflect a well-developed underlying argument or structure. The influence of the first language also plays a significant role in shaping writing performance. Uzbek and, in many cases, Russian linguistic and rhetorical conventions may transfer into English writing, affecting sentence structure,

punctuation, and organizational patterns. For instance, students may produce longer, loosely connected sentences or adopt indirect approaches to presenting ideas. Rather than viewing these features solely as errors, they can be understood as manifestations of existing literacy practices. Effective instruction, therefore, requires raising learners' awareness of genre expectations in English and helping them make conscious rhetorical choices appropriate to different communicative contexts.

From a metacognitive perspective, a central issue lies in the limited development of self-regulated writing strategies. Although many students are capable of completing assigned tasks, fewer demonstrate systematic planning, ongoing monitoring, and critical evaluation of their work. Writing is frequently approached as a one-step activity rather than a multi-stage process. This lack of strategic awareness affects not only the quality of final texts but also students' ability to improve over time. Integrating metacognitive strategy instruction—such as goal setting, outlining, self-questioning, and reflective revision—can play a crucial role in addressing these challenges.

In conclusion, the current state of English writing among senior high school students in Uzbekistan can be characterized as developing yet highly variable. While many learners are able to achieve basic competence at the paragraph level, significant challenges remain in areas such as coherence, argumentation, and revision. These difficulties are closely related to existing instructional practices, assessment systems, and the limited integration of metacognitive strategies in writing instruction. Meta cognitive strategies play a crucial role in addressing these issues by enabling students to approach writing as a systematic and reflective process. Through planning, monitoring, and evaluation, learners are able to organize their ideas more effectively, improve text coherence, and refine their written output. Therefore, incorporating metacognitive strategy-based instruction into classroom practice can significantly

enhance writing performance, promote learner autonomy, and foster the critical thinking and communicative skills necessary for academic and professional success.

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