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WRITING STRATEGIES OF INDONESIAN UNDERGRADUATE EFL STUDENTS IN A MULTILINGUAL CONTEXT

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Abstract: This study identifies and describes the writing strategies used by Indonesian undergraduate students in an English Department within a multilingual context. A quantitative survey was conducted with 76 students at a private university in Bandung, using a Likert-scale questionnaire to measure cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. The results showed that students used a range of strategies, with cognitive strategies like brainstorming and rereading being most common, and metacognitive strategies, such as self-monitoring and feedback awareness, being more frequently employed. Affective strategies focused on emotional regulation and motivation, while social strategies highlighted peer collaboration and digital tools. The study provides insights into writing strategy use among Indonesian EFL students and suggests the need for explicit instruction in planning, research-based writing, and strategy development. Due to its limited scope, the findings are not intended to be broadly generalized.
Keywords: *writing skills; writing strategies; Indonesian EFL; multilingual; multilingual context.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing strategies refer to deliberate, goal-oriented actions that learners employ to plan, organize, monitor, and evaluate their writing processes (Oxford, 2017; Teng, 2022). These strategies support writers in managing both linguistic and cognitive demands during text production and are commonly categorized into four major groups: cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Cognitive strategies involve direct manipulation of language and content, such as brainstorming, drafting, revising, and using linguistic resources. Metacognitive strategies relate to planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's writing performance. Affective strategies help regulate emotions, motivation, and anxiety during writing tasks, while social strategies emphasize interaction, feedback, and collaboration with peers or instructors (Teng & Zhang, 2021). Collectively, these strategies enable learners to approach writing more systematically and effectively, particularly in second or foreign language contexts.

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting, writing is widely regarded as one of the most demanding language skills because it requires the simultaneous control of grammar, vocabulary, organization, coherence, and rhetorical conventions. For Indonesian university students, especially those enrolled in English departments, academic writing is a core academic competency that reflects not only language proficiency but also critical thinking and academic literacy. However, despite prolonged exposure to English instruction, many Indonesian undergraduates continue to experience difficulties in expressing complex ideas coherently, maintaining academic tone, and organizing arguments effectively. These challenges underscore the importance of understanding how students employ writing strategies to cope with academic writing demands in EFL contexts.

Indonesian undergraduate students in English departments constitute a particularly relevant population for writing strategy research due to the multilingual environment in which they study and learn. Most students grow up using at least two languages—Bahasa Indonesia and a regional language such as Javanese, Sundanese, or Minangkabau—while acquiring English as a

foreign language in formal educational settings (Musgrave, 2020; Sutrisno, 2023). This multilingual background forms an important contextual feature of their learning experience and shapes how students approach language learning and academic writing tasks. Rather than treating multilingualism as a causal variable, it is more appropriate to view it as a contextual characteristic within which students develop and employ writing strategies.

Indonesia's linguistic landscape is inherently multilingual, with more than 700 regional languages spoken across the archipelago. As a result, most Indonesian students navigate multiple linguistic systems throughout their educational journey. In higher education, particularly in English departments, students are required to perform academic writing tasks in English while drawing on learning experiences shaped by their prior language use and instructional backgrounds. Previous research suggests that multilingual learners may demonstrate heightened awareness of language forms and rhetorical patterns, which can influence their strategic approaches to writing (Calafato, 2023; Oussou et al., 2024). However, empirical studies examining how writing strategies are used by Indonesian EFL students remain largely descriptive, focusing on strategy frequency rather than causal relationships.

A growing body of research indicates that EFL learners employ a wide range of writing strategies with varying degrees of consistency. Studies have shown that Indonesian university students tend to rely more frequently on cognitive and metacognitive strategies, such as outlining, rereading, and revising drafts, while affective and social strategies are used less systematically (Nadhifah et al., 2023; Wang, 2023). This imbalance suggests that while students recognize the importance of linguistic and organizational preparation, they may receive limited instructional support in emotional regulation, peer collaboration, and reflective writing practices. Understanding these patterns is essential for developing effective pedagogical interventions tailored to students' actual strategy use.

Writing strategies have been consistently linked to writing quality and academic success. Mu (2005) categorizes writing strategies into rhetorical, metacognitive, cognitive, communicative, and social/affective strategies, while later scholars (Cohen, 2018; Fajrina et al., 2022; Wang, 2023) consolidate them into four main categories: cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Metacognitive strategies enable learners to regulate their writing through planning and self-monitoring, cognitive strategies facilitate idea generation and text development, affective strategies support emotional control, and social strategies enhance learning through interaction and feedback. Research in Indonesian contexts confirms that students who effectively apply these strategies tend to demonstrate stronger writing performance and greater academic confidence (Hidayatullah, 2022; McCutchen, 2023; Qin et al., 2022).

Cognitive strategies such as brainstorming, outlining, and revising play a central role in helping students produce organized and coherent texts. Brainstorming allows learners to generate and structure ideas before writing, while outlining helps them organize arguments systematically (Fajrina et al., 2020; Oussou et al., 2024). Revising drafts enables students to refine content, improve coherence, and correct linguistic errors, contributing to higher-quality academic writing (Teng et al., 2022; Suryani & Ramadhani, 2023). Studies consistently show that students who actively engage in these strategies produce clearer thesis statements and more effective paragraph development (McCutchen, 2023; Booth Olson et al., 2023).

Metacognitive strategies are equally crucial, particularly in academic settings where students must manage complex writing tasks under time constraints. Planning, monitoring, and self-evaluation allow learners to control their writing process and identify areas for improvement (Schnoor, 2023; Zhang & Guo, 2022). Research indicates that students who apply metacognitive strategies produce more coherent and well-structured texts and demonstrate greater awareness of their writing strengths and weaknesses (Wang, 2023; Wulandari, 2021). A recent literature review on Indonesian EFL learners revealed that metacognitive strategies are consistently prominent across multiple studies, accompanied by cognitive, social, affective, and compensation strategies (Nadhifah et al., 2023). Goal setting and reflection further support students' ability to sustain motivation and direction throughout the writing process.

Affective and social strategies also contribute significantly to writing development. Emotional regulation, confidence building, and anxiety management help students remain focused and engaged during writing tasks (Fajrina et al., 2021). Social strategies, such as peer feedback and teacher consultation, provide learners with external perspectives that support revision and refinement

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of ideas. Studies show that students who actively seek feedback and collaborate with peers tend to produce more polished and academically appropriate writing (McCutchen, 2023; Teng et al., 2022).

Previous research in Indonesia has consistently demonstrated a strong association between writing strategy use and writing performance. High-achieving students are more likely to employ a balanced combination of cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies to support idea development and argumentation (Ilham et al., 2020). However, many existing studies focus on outcomes rather than providing detailed descriptive accounts of how strategies are used within specific institutional contexts. Several Indonesian EFL studies reveal strategy usage patterns linked to proficiency and drafting behavior (Ardila, 2020; Sundari & Febriyanti, 2022). Previous research on Indonesian EFL undergraduates found that students applied writing strategies at a moderate level and that their strategy use patterns showed distinctive features compared to English L1 learners (Fajrina et al., 2022).

While previous Indonesian EFL writing strategy studies have predominantly focused on: (a) correlating strategy use with writing proficiency (Ilham et al., 2020), (b) comparing high- and low-achieving writers (Ardila, 2020), or (c) examining specific strategy categories in isolation (Fajrina et al., 2022), limited research has provided a comprehensive, multi-dimensional profile of how undergraduate students simultaneously deploy cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies within Indonesia's inherently multilingual higher education contexts. Furthermore, existing studies rarely account for how students' multilingual repertoires—encompassing regional languages, Bahasa Indonesia, and English—intersect with their strategic writing behaviors. This descriptive gap limits educators' ability to design writing instruction that is responsive to students' actual strategic practices and multilingual resources.

Based on this background, the present study aims to identify and describe the writing strategies employed by Indonesian undergraduate students in an English Department within a multilingual educational context. By providing a descriptive profile of students' cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social writing strategies, this study seeks to contribute context-specific insights that can inform writing instruction and strategy-based pedagogy in Indonesian higher education.

The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive and multi-strategy profile (cognitive, metacognitive, affective, social) of Indonesian EFL undergraduates' writing practices within a naturally multilingual educational setting. While previous Indonesian studies have examined writing strategies, they have typically focused on one or two strategy categories or have treated multilingualism as a background variable rather than as the contextual reality shaping students' learning experiences. This study contributes a baseline descriptive explanation against which future comparative studies can be positioned.

METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative descriptive survey design to systematically describe undergraduate students' writing strategy use in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The purpose of this design is not to examine causal relationships or impacts but to identify patterns and frequencies of writing strategies employed by students within a multilingual educational environment. Quantitative descriptive research is appropriate when the objective is to provide an empirical snapshot of learners' behaviors or preferences based on numerical data derived from structured instruments (Creswell, 2018).

The participants of this study were 76 undergraduate students enrolled in the English Department of a private university in Bandung, Indonesia. The participants were selected using convenience sampling, based on their availability and willingness to participate at the time of data collection (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The sample consisted of students from different semesters, with the majority coming from the fifth semester (64.5%), followed by first-semester students (28.9%), and a smaller proportion from other semesters. All participants were active students and had experienced academic writing instruction in English.

It is acknowledged that the sample's uneven distribution across semesters limits the study's ability to capture developmental trajectories in strategy use. The dominance of fifth-semester students may reflect strategy patterns characteristic of more experienced writers, potentially overestimating the occurrence of certain strategies among the general undergraduate population. Future research should employ stratified sampling to ensure representation across all year levels.

Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire designed to measure students' writing strategy use across four dimensions:

cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. The questionnaire items were adapted from established and widely used writing strategy frameworks and instruments (Oxford, 2017; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). The adaptation process involved contextualizing the wording of items to suit Indonesian undergraduate EFL learners while maintaining the original constructs.

Prior to the main data collection, the questionnaire underwent expert review to ensure content validity. Additionally, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of students who were not included in the main sample to assess clarity, readability, and item relevance. Based on the pilot results, minor revisions were made to improve item comprehensibility.

The questionnaire was distributed online using a digital survey platform to facilitate access and participation. Participants received clear instructions regarding the purpose of the study and the procedure for completing the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality of responses was assured. After the data collection period ended, the responses were screened to ensure completeness and consistency before analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequencies and percentages, to summarize students' responses for each questionnaire item and strategy category. This approach allowed for the identification of dominant and less frequently used writing strategies among the participants. No inferential statistical analysis was conducted, as the study did not aim to test relationships or effects between variables. The findings are presented as a descriptive profile of writing strategy use within the studied context.

RESULTS AND DISCUISSON

Gender Distribution of Respondents

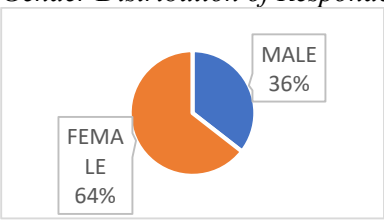


Figure 1 Respondents

Figure 1 Figure 1 presents the gender distribution of the respondents. Of the 76 participants, 27 students (36%) were male, while 49 students (64%) were female. The data indicate that female students constituted the majority of respondents in this study.

Semester distribution of respondents

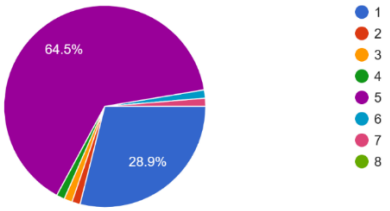


Figure 2 *Semesters of the respondents*

Figure 2 shows the distribution of respondents based on their current semester. Most participants were enrolled in Semester 5 (64.5%), followed by Semester 1 (28.9%). The remaining semesters (Semesters 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8) were minimally represented, together accounting for 6.6% of the sample.

Students' writing strategy

The following subsections report the results of students' responses to the questionnaire items measuring cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social writing strategies. The data are presented in terms of frequencies and percentages for each Likert-scale item.

The primacy of internal cognitive strategies

Table 1. *Internal cognitive strategies*

Likert Scale	*1	*2	*3	*4	*5
1	4	12	2	6	3
2	6	64	6	4	3
3	19		18	20	25
4	31		41	41	27
5	16		9	9	18

*Notes:
1 Make an outline before writing.
2. Look for references or reading materials to strengthen ideas in writing.
3 Use Brainstorming techniques to develop ideas before writing.
4. Reread writing to make sure the sentences are clear and relevant to the topic.
5. Use new vocabulary that have been learned to enrich the writing.

Table 1 column 2 shows students' responses to the statement *"Make an outline before writing."* A total of 31 respondents (40.8%) agreed and 16 respondents (21.1%) strongly agreed with the statement. Meanwhile, 19 respondents (25%) selected neutral, and 10 respondents (13.2%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 1 column 3 reports responses to the item *"Look for references or reading materials to strengthen ideas in writing."* All respondents selected either disagree (15.8%) or strongly

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disagree (84.2%), indicating no neutral or agreement responses for this item.

Table 1 column 4 presents responses to *"Use brainstorming techniques to develop ideas before writing."* A combined 65.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 23.7% selected neutral and 10.5% disagreed.

Table 1 column 5 shows that 65.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with "Reread writing to ensure clarity and relevance." Neutral responses accounted for 26.3%, while 13.2% disagreed.

Table 1 column 6 indicates 35.5% (27 respondents) Agreed (4) and 23.7% (18 respondents) Strongly Agreed (5) with the statement. Combined, 59.2% of the participants actively try to use new words to improve their writing. A significant portion of the group, 32.9% (25 respondents), remained Neutral (3). 3.9% Disagreed (2) and another 3.9% Strongly Disagreed (1).

Metacognitive awareness as an emerging competence

Table 2 *Metacognitive awareness as an emerging competence*

Likert Scale	*6	*7	*8	*9	*10
1	3	3	3	3	3
2	3	4	4	4	3
3	23	10	17	17	16
4	31	30	32	38	38
5	16	29	20	14	16

*Notes:
6 Plan a specific time for writing to focus better.
7 Evaluate the writing after finishing it to match the goal.
8 Pay attention to feedback from teachers or friends to improve future writing.
9 Monitor the writing process to stay on track.
10 Compare with others' writing to find ways to improve.

Table 2 column 2 presents, the majority of respondents indicate that they value planning their writing time. Specifically, 40.8% (31 respondents) Agreed (4) with the statement, and 21.1% (16 respondents) Strongly Agreed (5). Combined, 61.9% of the participants actively manage their schedules to ensure better focus during the writing process. A significant portion, 30.3% (23 respondents), remained Neutral (3). Very few respondents expressed a negative view of scheduling. Only 3.9% Disagreed (2) and 3.9% Strongly Disagreed (1). Combined, only 7.8% of the group does not prioritize planning a specific time for their writing tasks.

Table 2 column 3 shows 77.6% of the respondents agreed with the statement, consisting of 39.5% (30 respondents) who Agreed (4) and 38.1% (29 respondents) who Strongly Agreed (5). 13.2% (10 respondents) chose Neutral (3). Only 9.2% of participants expressed a negative preference, with 5.3% Disagreeing (2) and 3.9% Strongly Disagreeing (1).

Table 2 column 4 reports that 42.1% (32 respondents) Agreed (4) and 26.3% (20 respondents) Strongly Agreed (5) with the statement. Combined, 68.4% of the respondents actively use external critiques to inform and improve their future writing performance. About 22.4% (17 respondents) chose the Neutral (3) option. A small minority expressed a lack of interest in feedback. 5.3% Disagreed (2) and 3.9% Strongly Disagreed (1), totalling only 9.2%.

Table 2 column 5 shows that exactly half of the respondents (50.0%) chose Agree (4). When combined with the 18.4% (14 respondents) who Strongly Agreed (5), a substantial 68.4% of the participants demonstrate active self-monitoring behaviors during the writing process. 22.4% (17 respondents) remained Neutral (3). A very small portion of the group indicated that they do not monitor their process. 5.3% Disagreed (2) and 3.9% Strongly Disagreed (1), making a total of only 9.2% who lack this specific self-regulatory habit.

Table 2 column 6 indicates that half of the participants (50.0%) chose Agree (4), while 21.1% (16 respondents) Strongly Agreed (5). Combined, 71.1% of the respondents utilize others' writing as a benchmark or source of inspiration for their own improvement. 21.1% (16 respondents) remained Neutral (3). A small minority of respondents avoid comparing their work with others. 3.9% Disagreed (2) and 3.9% Strongly Disagreed (1), totalling only 7.8%.

Affective regulation and the confidence gap

Table 3 present responses related to affective strategies. Overall, the data show that most respondents selected neutral to agreement options across items measuring confidence, anxiety reduction, persistence, motivation, and emotional regulation.

Table 3. Affective regulation and the confidence gap

Likert Scale	*11	*12	*13	*14	*15
1	2	2	3	3	3
2	10	6	5	3	3
3	29	22	22	16	16
4	29	32	35	38	38
5	6	14	11	16	16

*Notes:
11 Confident when writing in English
12 Reduce anxiety or the fear of making mistakes while writing
13 Keep writing even when facing difficulties with structure or grammar
14 Look for motivation by reading other respondents' writings
15 Try to maintain a good mood or atmosphere when writing.

Table 3 column 2 shows a notable split between neutral and positive feelings. Both the Neutral (3) and Agree (4) categories received the highest number of responses, with 38.2% (29 respondents) each. When combining Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5) at 7.9%, a total of 46.1% of respondents express confidence in their English writing abilities. Neutral response is 38.2% of the respondents. A total of 15.8% of participants reported a lack of confidence, with 13.2% Disagreeing (2) and 2.6% Strongly Disagreeing (1).

Table 3 column 3 shows a majority of the respondents are proactive in managing their writing anxiety. 42.1% (32 respondents) Agreed (4) and 18.4% (14 respondents) Strongly Agreed (5) that they take steps to reduce their fears. Combined, 60.5% of the participants use strategies to stay calm and minimize the pressure of perfectionism. 28.9% (22 respondents) chose the Neutral (3) option. A small minority does not focus on reducing anxiety. 7.9% Disagreed (2) and 2.6% Strongly Disagreed (1), totalling only 10.5%.

Table 3 column 4 indicates a significant majority of respondents demonstrate high levels of perseverance. Specifically, 46.1% (35 respondents) Agreed (4) and 14.5% (11 respondents) Strongly Agreed (5) with the statement. Combined, 60.6% of the participants try to maintain their "flow" and finish their thoughts even when they encounter linguistic obstacles. 28.9% (22 respondents) remained Neutral (3). 10.5% of participants reported that they do not keep writing when facing difficulties (6.6% Disagreed and 3.9% Strongly Disagreed).

Table 3 column 5 illustrates that a very strong inclination toward seeking inspiration from peers. Exactly 50% (38 respondents) Agreed (4) with the statement, and 21.1% (16 respondents) Strongly Agreed (5). Combined, 71.1% of the participants find that reading the work of others helps boost their own motivation to write. 21.1% (16 respondents) remained Neutral (3), indicating that while they may read others' work, it may not significantly impact their emotional drive or motivation level. 3.9% Disagreed (2) and 3.9% Strongly Disagreed (1). This suggests that very few students find the work of others discouraging or irrelevant to their own motivational needs.

The data on *Table 3 column 2* reveals a significant consensus among participants. Half of the respondents (50.0% or 38 people) Agreed (4) with the statement, while 21.1% (16 respondents) Strongly Agreed (5). Combined, a substantial 71.1% of the group actively manages their writing environment or mood to facilitate a better writing experience. 21.1% (16 respondents) chose Neutral (3), suggesting that while they may not strictly curate their atmosphere, they are likely aware of its influence or do so only occasionally. 3.9% of the respondents Disagreeing (2) and 3.9% Strongly Disagreeing (1).

Social and digital collaboration as writing support

Tables 4 present respondents' use of social strategies, including seeking help, discussing ideas, receiving feedback, participating in communities, and using technology.

Table 4. *Social and digital collaboration as writing support*

Likert Scale	*16	*17	*18	*19	*20
1	6	1	10	5	5
2	6	7	10	6	4
3	19	20	29	27	14
4	30	33	20	29	32
5	15	12	8	11	21

*Notes:
16 Ask for help from friends or teachers when experiencing difficulties in writing.
17 Discuss with friends regarding the ideas I plan to write.
18 Join communities or discussion forums to improve my writing ability.
19 Ask other respondents to read and provide feedback on my writing.
20 Utilize technology, such as applications or social media, to get suggestions for writing.

Based on *Table 4 column 2*, the majority of respondents reported a positive tendency toward seeking help. Specifically, 39.5% (30 respondents) chose Agree (4), and 19.7% (15 respondents) chose

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Strongly Agree (5). When combined, a significant 59.2% of the participants indicate that they are proactive in asking for assistance from peers or educators to overcome writing challenges. A quarter of the respondents (25%) remained Neutral (3), suggesting they may only seek help occasionally or are self-reliant depending on the complexity of the task. On the lower end of the scale, only a small portion of the group expressed a negative preference. 7.9% (6 respondents) Disagreed (2) and 6.7% (6 respondents) Strongly Disagreed (1) with the statement. Altogether, only 14.6% of the respondents do not typically reach out to others for help during the writing process.

Table 4 column 3 illustrate that the majority of respondents, 43.4% (33 respondents), Agreed (4) that they discuss their ideas with friends. When combined with those who Strongly Agreed (5) at 15.8% (12 respondents), a total of 59.2% of respondents utilize peer discussion as a strategy before writing. 26.3% (20 respondents) chose the Neutral (3) option, indicating that they may only sometimes engage in discussion or prefer to brainstorm alone depending on the specific assignment. Only 9.2% Disagreed (2) and a mere 1.3% Strongly Disagreed (1). Combined, only 10.5% of participants do not find discussing ideas with friends helpful or necessary.

Table 4 column 4 shows The Majority (Neutral): The highest percentage of respondents (38.2%) are neutral. This suggests that many are either unsure about the benefits of discussion forums or do not currently participate in them. Positive Outlook: A combined 36.8% of respondents (Agree and Strongly Agree) feel that joining communities is a helpful way to improve their writing. Negative Outlook: A combined 26.4% of respondents (Disagree and Strongly Disagree) do not see these forums as a useful tool for their writing development.

Table 4 column 5 shows that the largest group of respondents (38.2% or 29 respondents) Agreed (4) with the statement. When combined with those who Strongly Agreed (5) at 14.5% (11 respondents), more than half of the participants (52.7%) actively seek external feedback to improve their writing. A significant portion of the participants (35.5% or 27 respondents) chose the Neutral (3) option. 7.9% Disagreed (2) and 6.6% Strongly Disagreed (1). Combined, only 14.5% of the respondents prefer to finalize their writing independently without outside input.

The responses to *Table 4* column 6 show a very high level of agreement. Specifically, 42.1% (32 respondents) Agreed (4), and 27.6% (21 respondents) Strongly Agreed (5) with the statement. Combined, a substantial 69.7% of the participants utilize technological tools and social media for writing assistance. Compared to previous tables, the neutral response is lower at 18.4% (14 respondents). Only a small minority of respondents do not rely on technology for writing suggestions, with 5.3% Disagreeing (2) and 6.6% Strongly Disagreeing (1).

This study set out to describe the writing strategies employed by Indonesian undergraduate students in an English Department within a multilingual educational context. The findings indicate that students employ a range of cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies, though the frequency and consistency of strategy use vary across categories. Rather than demonstrating causal relationships, the results provide a contextualized profile of students' strategic writing behaviors, contributing to the existing body of descriptive research on EFL writing strategies in Indonesia.

Cognitive writing strategies

The findings of this study indicate that multilingual EFL students employ cognitive writing strategies at a moderate level, particularly in brainstorming, rereading, and vocabulary use, while strategies such as outlining and sourcing references are less consistently practiced. This pattern reflects a common tendency among EFL learners to rely more on internal, text-based cognitive processes than on external, research-oriented strategies. As Teng (2020) argues, cognitive strategies such as planning, organizing, revising, and lexical management are foundational to effective writing because they directly support idea development, textual organization, and linguistic accuracy.

The relatively high percentage of students who reported using brainstorming techniques before writing suggests an awareness of the importance of idea generation as an initial stage of the writing process. This finding aligns with Hidayatullah (2022), who found that brainstorming facilitates cognitive activation and helps learners generate richer content in academic writing tasks. For multilingual learners, brainstorming may also function as a flexible strategy that allows them to draw on multiple linguistic resources before committing ideas to written English. However, the presence of a substantial number of neutral responses indicates that brainstorming has not yet become an automatic or consistently applied habit for all students, possibly due to limited explicit

instruction on pre-writing strategies in earlier stages of their education.

Similarly, rereading and revising emerged as moderately well-developed cognitive behaviors, with more than half of the respondents indicating that they reread their writing to ensure clarity and relevance. This finding supports Zhang and Guo's (2022) argument that revision serves as a bridge between cognitive and metacognitive strategy use, enabling writers to monitor their texts and make necessary adjustments. Nevertheless, as noted in previous EFL research, student revision often focuses on surface-level issues such as grammar and vocabulary rather than deeper concerns related to argument structure and coherence. This suggests that while students are aware of the need to revise, they may require more guided practice to engage in higher-level textual reorganization.

Vocabulary management also appeared as a moderately used cognitive strategy. The effort to incorporate newly learned vocabulary indicates students' awareness of lexical diversity as an important component of writing quality. Teng and Zhang (2022) emphasize that vocabulary-related strategies contribute significantly to writing development by enhancing precision and expressive range. However, the relatively high number of neutral responses suggests that some students may lack confidence in using new vocabulary, possibly due to fear of making lexical or grammatical errors. This hesitation is consistent with findings from Indonesian EFL contexts, where learners often prioritize accuracy over lexical experimentation.

In contrast, outlining and the use of external references were the least frequently employed cognitive strategies. Although a majority of students acknowledged the value of outlining, a considerable proportion still wrote without structured planning. Booth Olson et al. (2023) demonstrate that explicit instruction in outlining substantially improves logical flow and argumentative quality, indicating that the limited use of this strategy may stem from insufficient pedagogical emphasis rather than students' lack of awareness. Even more striking is the minimal engagement with sourcing references, which suggests a weak integration between reading and writing processes. This finding reflects previous observations that novice EFL writers often perceive writing as an isolated activity rather than as a research-informed practice.

Overall, the findings reinforce Zhang and Guo's (2022) claim that many EFL writers rely more heavily on internal cognitive strategies—such as idea generation, monitoring, and lexical choice—than on external strategies involving research and planning. In the Indonesian university context, this tendency may be influenced by instructional practices that emphasize product-oriented writing and language accuracy over process-based and research-driven writing. Therefore, explicit and systematic instruction in cognitive writing strategies—particularly outlining, integrating sources, and deep revision—is essential. As confirmed by Teng (2020) and Rosdiana et al. (2023), strategy-based writing instruction not only improves writing quality but also enhances learners' self-efficacy and autonomy, which are critical for multilingual EFL students' long-term academic writing development.

Metacognitive writing strategies

The findings indicate that the respondents demonstrate a moderately strong engagement in metacognitive writing strategies, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating their writing processes. This suggests that many students possess an emerging capacity for self-regulated learning, which is essential for successful academic writing in EFL contexts. Metacognitive strategies enable learners to consciously control their writing processes by setting goals, selecting appropriate strategies, and evaluating outcomes (Teng & Zhang, 2022; Hidayatullah, 2022). The overall pattern observed in this study reflects a growing awareness among students of the importance of regulating their writing behavior beyond surface-level language use.

Time management emerged as a moderately practiced metacognitive strategy. A majority of students reported planning specific time for writing, indicating recognition of time allocation as part of effective writing regulation. Zimmerman (2000) emphasizes that deliberate time management and goal setting are hallmarks of self-regulated writers, allowing them to maintain focus and sustain effort during complex writing tasks. However, the substantial proportion of neutral responses suggests that time planning has not yet become a stable habit for all learners. This inconsistency may be attributed to procrastination, competing academic demands, or limited training in goal-oriented writing practices—factors commonly reported among EFL university students (Teng, 2020).

Self-evaluation after completing a writing task was one of the most strongly endorsed metacognitive behaviors. The high percentage of students who reported evaluating their writing to

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ensure alignment with intended goals indicates a strong inclination toward reflective practice. According to Zhang and Guo (2022), self-evaluation allows writers to identify mismatches between their communicative intentions and the final text, thereby improving coherence, clarity, and task fulfilment. This finding supports earlier work by Torrance et al. (2000), which highlights reflection as a critical mechanism for developing writing proficiency, particularly when learners are encouraged to assess their work against explicit criteria.

Attention to feedback from teachers and peers also showed a positive trend, suggesting that students value external input as part of their writing development. Feedback plays a crucial role in fostering metacognitive growth by helping learners internalize evaluative standards and apply them in subsequent writing tasks (Negretti et al., 2023). However, the presence of a notable minority who remained neutral or disagreed indicates that feedback is not always effectively utilized. Affective factors such as anxiety, low self-efficacy, or uncertainty about how to act on feedback may hinder learners' ability to transform external comments into meaningful revisions (Torrance et al., 2000). This highlights the need for instructional support that guides students in interpreting and applying feedback strategically.

Monitoring during the writing process was another frequently reported metacognitive behavior. The findings suggest that many students actively check their progress while writing, adjusting their ideas and language as needed. Such ongoing monitoring reflects advanced self-regulatory control and is strongly associated with higher-quality writing outcomes (Teng & Zhang, 2022). Writers who monitor their work in real time are better equipped to detect inconsistencies, maintain coherence, and align their text with communicative goals (Hidayatullah, 2022).

Comparative evaluation—comparing one's writing with others' work—also emerged as a prominent strategy. This behavior represents an advanced form of metacognitive awareness, as it involves benchmarking one's performance against external models. Zhang and Thomas (2024) argue that exposure to peers' or exemplary texts enables learners to internalize effective rhetorical structures and linguistic choices. When supported by collaborative and digital environments, such comparative practices can enhance learner autonomy and intercultural awareness, particularly in multilingual writing contexts.

Overall, the findings indicate that students demonstrate a relatively well-developed use of metacognitive writing strategies, especially in self-evaluation, monitoring, and feedback awareness. However, consistent application of time management and goal-oriented planning remains an area requiring further reinforcement. Consistent with prior research (Teng & Zhang, 2016; Graham & Harris, 2018), the results suggest that systematic engagement in metacognitive regulation—planning, monitoring, and evaluating—contributes significantly to improved writing quality and greater learner autonomy. Therefore, writing instruction in EFL contexts should explicitly incorporate metacognitive strategy training, including goal setting, reflective evaluation, and guided use of feedback, to support students' development as self-regulated academic writers.

Affective writing strategies

The findings indicate that affective strategies play a substantial role in shaping students' writing behaviors, particularly in managing emotions, sustaining motivation, and maintaining perseverance during the writing process. In line with Oxford's (2017) framework and Teng and Zhang's (2022) model of self-regulated writing, affective strategies function as critical mediators between cognitive demands and successful writing performance. The moderate to strong use of these strategies among respondents suggests that many students are developing emotional awareness and coping mechanisms necessary for writing in an EFL and multilingual context.

A notable finding is the high proportion of students who reported maintaining a positive emotional state while writing. Nearly seventy percent of respondents indicated that they consciously strive to remain in a good mood during composition. This result supports Vacalares et al. (2023), who argue that positive affect enhances writing fluency, creativity, and engagement by reducing cognitive overload and anxiety. Emotional stability allows learners to allocate more attentional resources to idea development and linguistic choices rather than to managing stress. In multilingual classrooms, where writers must navigate multiple linguistic systems, affective regulation becomes particularly important for sustaining engagement and resilience (Teng & Zhang, 2022; Torrance et al., 2000).

Students' confidence in writing English was found to be moderate. While the majority of respondents expressed neutral to positive confidence levels, a smaller proportion reported

high confidence. This pattern reflects a common characteristic of EFL learners, whose writing self-efficacy is often constrained by concerns over grammatical accuracy and lexical adequacy. Writing self-efficacy has been widely recognized as a strong predictor of writing achievement, persistence, and willingness to revise (Bandura, 1997). The findings suggest that although students possess emerging confidence, many still require instructional support to strengthen their belief in their writing ability. Guided feedback, repeated writing practice, and positive reinforcement may help transform moderate confidence into stronger self-efficacy.

The ability to reduce anxiety and fear of making mistakes emerged as another prominent affective strategy. A substantial proportion of students reported actively managing writing-related anxiety, indicating awareness of emotional barriers and deliberate efforts to overcome them. This finding aligns with Negretti et al. (2023), who emphasize that effective writers use affective regulation strategies such as self-encouragement and reframing errors as learning opportunities. Such emotional regulation is especially important in EFL contexts, where fear of error often inhibits risk-taking and idea development. The results suggest that students are beginning to view errors as part of the learning process rather than as sources of failure, reflecting a positive shift toward adaptive writing mindsets.

Persistence in writing despite difficulties with structure or grammar was also strongly evident. Most respondents reported continuing to write even when facing challenges, indicating grit and perseverance—qualities essential for long-term writing development. Vacalares et al. (2023) highlight that perseverance, supported by positive emotional regulation, significantly predicts sustained engagement and improvement in writing. This finding suggests that many students possess the emotional resilience required to cope with linguistic difficulties, an encouraging sign for their continued academic writing development.

Motivational strategies, particularly gaining inspiration from reading others' writing, were also commonly reported. This behavior reflects vicarious motivation, a concept rooted in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997), where learners draw confidence and inspiration from observing peers or models. Exposure to others' writing not only enhances motivation but also expands students' linguistic and rhetorical repertoire, allowing them to internalize new structures, styles, and ideas (Hidayatullah, 2022). Such practices are especially beneficial in multilingual contexts, where learners can compare diverse ways of expressing meaning across languages and genres.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that students employ affective strategies that support emotional regulation, motivation, and persistence in writing. However, the presence of only moderate confidence levels indicates a need for pedagogical interventions that explicitly address writing self-efficacy. Scaffolded feedback, collaborative writing activities, reflective journals, and supportive classroom climates can help students strengthen their affective engagement with writing. Consistent with prior research (Torrance et al., 2000; Teng & Zhang, 2022), fostering affective awareness alongside cognitive and metacognitive strategy instruction is essential for enhancing writing quality, particularly among multilingual EFL learners.

Social writing strategies

The findings demonstrate that social strategies constitute an important component of students' writing practices in the EFL context. A substantial proportion of respondents reported actively seeking help from peers or teachers, discussing ideas before writing, and requesting feedback on their written work. These behaviors are consistent with Oxford's (2017) conceptualization of social strategies as purposeful actions that involve interaction, cooperation, and negotiation to enhance language learning. The frequent use of such strategies suggests that students view writing not merely as an individual cognitive activity, but as a socially mediated process.

The tendency to seek assistance from friends or teachers when encountering writing difficulties reflects students' reliance on collaborative scaffolding. From a sociocultural perspective, interaction with more knowledgeable others plays a crucial role in supporting learners' development within their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). By consulting peers or instructors, students gain access to alternative perspectives, linguistic input, and corrective feedback, which can facilitate problem-solving and improve writing accuracy. This finding aligns with previous studies showing that peer and teacher support significantly enhances L2 writers' confidence and textual quality (McCutchen, 2023; Teng et al., 2022).

Similarly, the high level of engagement in discussing writing ideas with peers indicates that students benefit from idea negotiation and collaborative planning. Such discussions allow

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learners to clarify their thoughts, test arguments, and refine content before drafting. Research on L2 writing emphasizes that collaborative dialogue promotes deeper cognitive processing and metalinguistic awareness, particularly when learners verbalize and justify their ideas (Gee & Zhang, 2022). In multilingual contexts, these discussions may also involve implicit cross-linguistic comparisons, enabling students to draw on their full linguistic repertoire to shape meaning more effectively.

Feedback-seeking behavior further highlights the role of social interaction in fostering self-regulated learning. A considerable number of respondents reported asking others to read and comment on their writing, indicating awareness of feedback as a tool for improvement. Feedback, whether from peers or instructors, helps writers identify gaps between intended meaning and actual output, thereby supporting revision and reflection (Teng & Zhang, 2022). The relatively high proportion of neutral responses, however, suggests that not all students consistently engage in feedback practices, possibly due to limited opportunities, time constraints, or uncertainty about how to utilize feedback effectively.

Participation in writing communities or discussion forums was reported at a moderate level. While fewer students strongly agreed that they join such communities, a sizable proportion expressed agreement or neutrality, indicating openness to community-based learning. This finding suggests that students may recognize the value of writing communities but face practical barriers such as limited access, lack of familiarity, or competing academic demands. Nevertheless, online writing communities have been shown to promote sustained motivation, peer support, and a sense of belonging, especially in digital and multilingual learning environments (Zhang & Thomas, 2024).

The most prominent finding within the social strategy category is the widespread use of technology for writing support. Nearly seventy percent of respondents reported using applications or social media to obtain suggestions for writing. This reflects the growing integration of digital tools into students' literacy practices and highlights the role of technology-mediated collaboration in contemporary EFL writing. Digital platforms enable learners to access diverse feedback, models, and linguistic resources, thereby fostering learner autonomy and interactional competence (Zhang & Thomas, 2024). In multilingual settings, such tools also support intercultural awareness and pragmatic flexibility by exposing students to varied language use and rhetorical conventions.

Overall, the findings indicate that students' use of social strategies reflects a strong orientation toward collaborative and technology-enhanced learning. Their interaction with peers, teachers, and digital platforms demonstrates agency and willingness to improve writing through social engagement. Pedagogically, these results suggest that writing instruction should intentionally incorporate peer collaboration, structured feedback activities, and guided use of digital tools. By creating supportive social environments for writing, instructors can help students maximize the benefits of social strategies and further strengthen their writing development in multilingual and technology-rich contexts.

Although this study did not directly measure how students' multilingual repertoires shaped their strategy use, the findings invite speculation about possible multilingual influences. For instance, the high use of brainstorming (65.7%) may reflect multilingual writers' need to negotiate ideas across linguistic systems before committing to English. The near-total absence of reference use (0% agreement) may indicate that students rely on oral multilingual resources (peer discussion, family input) rather than written English sources. Future research should explicitly examine whether strategy use differs among students with varying degrees of multilingual proficiency and whether cross-linguistic transfer facilitates or complicates strategic writing behaviors.

CONCLUSION

This study offers several pedagogical implications for EFL writing instruction in multilingual contexts, particularly within Indonesian English departments. The moderate to strong use of cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies suggests students have emerging strategic awareness, but they need systematic support to fully develop these skills for academic writing.

Key implications include the need for explicit strategy-based instruction, particularly in outlining, research-based writing, and goal-oriented planning. Teachers should model and scaffold strategies through guided writing tasks and structured cycles. Writing instruction should also leverage students' multilingual backgrounds, encouraging cross-linguistic comparison and brainstorming in stronger languages to ease cognitive load.

The strong use of metacognitive strategies suggests students are receptive to self-regulated learning. Teachers should incorporate goal-setting, self-assessment, and reflective activities to enhance autonomy. Affective strategies are crucial, as students demonstrated moderate confidence, so creating a low-anxiety environment and fostering peer feedback can boost motivation and self-efficacy.

The frequent use of social strategies highlights the importance of collaboration and digital tools in writing instruction. Peer review, collaborative tasks, and online forums can enhance learning and intercultural communication. At the curriculum level, writing courses should integrate cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies to support multilingual learners. The findings suggest a holistic approach to writing instruction, recognizing it as a strategic, emotional, and socially situated practice. Finally, while the study's limitations include its sample size and institutional focus, future research should explore how writing strategies relate to writing performance and examine these strategies in other educational settings across Indonesia.

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