

**A case study**  
**On Metacognitive Learning Strategies Employed by Sri Lankan Learners**  
**in Arabic Composition**

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**Introduction**

In the earlier period, study into the process of writing has dealt mainly with a product, that is, L2 learners' writing samples, to determine the writers' language ability and proficiency development. However, a change in study orientation has emerged; with some researchers now taking a closer look at the way L2 learners take on techniques and procedures to produce written works (Leki 1995). Observing how L2 learners carry out the act of writing provides L2 instructors as well as researchers with insights about the difficulties L2 learners come upon. The area of strategy use in L2 learning has become a main area of exploration. For example, Leki (1995) examined the strategies English as a second language (ESL) student's use when implementing writing tasks across the curriculum. She indicated from interview with students that these learners use one or more of 10 strategy types. Research on L2 writing is inconclusive. Much research is needed in this to increase our understanding of the processes L2 learners employ when executing an L2 activity. In addition, it is important to explore the relationship between strategy use and success in the development of writing skill. According to Leki, "We need a picture of the fullest range possible of strategies employed, that is, a catalogue." (1995, 240). However, research on writing in Arabic as an L2 is still in its early years. Few studies have dealt with essays written in Arabic as a final product and described deficiencies that surfaced. (Shakir and Obaidat 1992; Salim khalidein, 2012). Hence, this study focused on investigates the types of metacognitive strategies used by Sri Lankan learners of Arabic as a foreign language when they writing essay in Arabic.

**Literature**

In the area of second language learning strategies, well known researchers like Rubin 1975; Stern 1975; Naiman 1978; Hosenfeld et al 1981; Arnold and Kirchofer 1981; O'Malley & chamot 1990;

Oxford 1990 are considered as the founding fathers. One of the earlier works to consider is that of Rubin (1975) who set out to identify the strategies of successful learners so that these could be made available to less successful learners. Among the factors considered were psychological, communications, social and cognitive strategies. Stern (1975) used list of 10 strategies necessary for second language competence and interviews with good language learners, while Naiman set out on more empirical work on this field.

Hosenfeld et al, Arnold and Kirchofer (1981) are some of the first Second language learning strategies researchers who attempted to train learners the use of efficient reading strategies. They used 'think-aloud' protocols reported on the reading strategies of successful and unsuccessful second language learners and, more specifically, on a metacognitive strategy in which good learners evaluate their thinking using logic. O'Malley et al. (1985) provided the first clear distinction between metacognitive and cognitive strategies by working with beginning and intermediate level ESL learners to assess their strategy use for oral language tasks. Oxford (1990) identified and introduced the type of learning strategies of four skills (Listening, reading, speaking and writing). Oxford (1990) type of learning strategies widely used today in learning strategies research.

In writing strategy, several studies conducted in deferent perception. The following are some of the studies; Srijongjai (2011) studied learning styles of Thai English major students in English as a foreign language writing class. Data analysis showed that the average primary and secondary learning styles of the students were social and cultural and there were no significant differences of the students' learning styles based on their achievement levels in the writing class. Another comparative study was conducted by Wong (2011). This study was as comparative investigation into the learning styles and strategies of effective and ineffective language learners. It found the differences in learning