

# Enhancing Writing Skills through Intercultural-Based Metacognitive Strategies

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## Abstract

This systematic literature review explores the impact of intercultural-based metacognitive strategies in improving academic writing in higher education. The study examines the various components of these strategies, including declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge, and their role in improving writing proficiency, especially for ESL and multilingual learners. Key strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating were found to significantly influence students' writing outcomes by fostering metacognitive awareness and promoting critical thinking. Moreover, the integration of cultural awareness with metacognitive practices enriches students' ability to adapt their writing style to diverse academic contexts and audiences. This research highlights the role of immersive learning environments and learning strategies in strengthening these skills. Despite the benefits, challenges related to the gap between theory and practice and cultural nuances in strategy implementation remain. The review concludes by emphasizing the need for further research to address these challenges and optimize the integration of cross-culturally based metacognitive strategies in academic writing curricula.

**Keywords:** Metacognitive Strategies; Academic Writing; Intercultural Awareness

## INTRODUCTION

Writing skills are one of the main aspects of language learning, especially in the context of higher education (Ilham et al., 2025). Effective writing requires a good command of language structure, an understanding of various writing conventions, and the ability to organize and develop ideas coherently (Ilham, 2024). In the writing learning process, students are not only required to master the technical aspects of writing such as grammar and vocabulary, but also to develop metacognitive strategies that enable them to plan, monitor and evaluate their writing process more effectively.

Intercultural-Based Learning (IBL) has long been recognized as an approach that enriches learning experiences, especially in language contexts (Y. Huang & Zhang, 2022). It emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural differences in communication, which can enrich writing skills, especially in academic contexts (L. Huang, 2023). Integrating metacognitive strategies in intercultural-based learning provides an opportunity for students to not only understand language and cultural elements, but also to control and monitor their own learning process, which can ultimately improve their writing skills in a foreign language, such as English (Alamri, 2018).

In research on writing skills, various metacognitive strategies have been shown to improve learning outcomes, both in technical aspects and in the aspect of thinking creativity (Ilham, 2022; Ilham et al., 2020). According to (Pante, 2023), the application of metacognitive strategies in writing allows students to be more aware of their thinking process during writing and evaluate their writing more objectively. Metacognition in writing allows students to monitor the development of their ideas, identify weak parts, and improve them during the writing process, which contributes to the overall strengthening of writing skills (Ilham, 2023).

In addition, research also shows that intercultural-based approaches can enrich writing learning by giving students access to a variety of cultural perspectives (Muyassaroh, 2019; Alamri, 2018). When students learn to write with cultural differences in mind, they can develop more communicative and adaptive writing skills, which are crucial in a global academic context (Rosdiana et al., 2023). This is particularly relevant given that today's academic world increasingly involves international and multicultural collaboration, which requires students to adapt their writing to different communication styles (Sun & Zhang, 2022).

Several studies have examined the use of metacognitive strategies in intercultural learning and shown that these strategies not only improve students' writing techniques, but also enhance their understanding of cultural conventions in academic writing (Haerazi & Nunez, 2022). Through this approach, students are encouraged to think critically about how to write appropriately in a particular cultural context, while maintaining the quality and integrity of their writing (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020). This method is proven to improve creativity, critical analysis, and overall writing skills, which are crucial in advanced language learning (Haerazi et al., 2020).

However, although there is a lot of evidence supporting the success of this approach, there are still some gaps or shortcomings in the existing literature. One major gap is the lack of research that examines in depth how interculturality-based metacognitive strategies are practically applied in writing instruction in higher education contexts (Aprianoto et al., 2018). Further research is needed to explore how the implementation of these strategies in writing instruction can be done in a more structured and effective way, and how it can impact on improving students' writing skills in a multicultural academic context (Aprianoto & Haerazi, 2019).

This study aims to fill the gap in the existing literature by exploring the application of intercultural-based metacognitive strategies in academic writing learning in higher education. It also aims to identify how the application of these strategies can improve students' writing skills in English, as well as how it affects their ability to navigate various cultural conventions in academic writing. With a deeper understanding of the application of this strategy, it is hoped that new ways can be found to improve a more inclusive and effective approach to learning writing in higher education.

## METHOD

This study aims to explore the application of intercultural-based metacognitive strategies in improving English writing skills in higher education. The main focus of this research is to assess how the integration of cultural aspects in writing learning can enrich students' academic writing skills. This research also aims to explore the effectiveness of metacognitive strategies in the context of English language learning, as well as the challenges faced by both teachers and students in their application in higher education settings. Using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, this research will analyze various relevant literatures to provide a deeper understanding of the influence of this approach on academic writing skills (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

To obtain relevant literature, a search was conducted in various reputable academic databases, such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and DOAJ, using keywords related to the research topic, such as "intercultural-based metacognitive strategies," "academic writing," and "higher education." The articles selected were limited to publications between 2015 and 2025 to ensure that the data used was current and relevant. The inclusion criteria used included articles that addressed intercultural-based metacognitive strategies in the learning of English writing in higher education, while articles that were not relevant to the topic or did not meet the quality criteria were excluded.

After the selection process, the data obtained from the articles were extracted, including information on the methodology used, the results found, as well as key findings related to the

application of these strategies in writing instruction. Data extraction is done systematically to ensure that the analysis is consistent and can provide a clear picture of the influences and challenges involved in the implementation of intercultural-based metacognitive strategies in the teaching of English writing in higher education.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

This section presents the main findings obtained from data analysis and literature review related to the effect of intercultural-based metacognitive strategies on improving academic writing skills. The results are classified based on various aspects of the focus of the study, including the development of metacognitive awareness, the integration of cultural awareness, and the effectiveness of the implementation of these strategies in the context of academic English learning in higher education. The presentation of these findings aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the key variables that influence the process and outcomes of learning to write, as well as to show the consistency and variation of research results that have been conducted over a period of time.

To provide a more systematic overview of the research results related to intercultural-based metacognitive strategies in improving academic writing skills, the following table presents a grouping of research results based on the main focus, relevant authors, and insights or research variables found. This presentation aims to facilitate understanding of the various aspects that have been reviewed in the literature as well as showing the significant contribution of each field of study to the development of effective learning strategies in the higher education context.

**Table 1.** Research Results Grouping of Intercultural-Based Metacognitive Strategies in Improving Academic Writing Skills

No	Fields and focus	Name of Authors	Research Insights or Variables
1	The effect of intercultural-based metacognitive strategies on academic writing skills	(Anggoro, 2020)	Strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating improve writing skills especially in ESL students and beginners.
2	The dominance of metacognitive strategies in advanced English learners	(Y. Huang & Zhang, 2022)	Declarative, procedural, conditional, planning, monitoring and evaluating strategies greatly contribute to academic writing ability.
3	Components of intercultural-based metacognitive strategies	(Haerazi & Irawan, 2020)	Key components include declarative, procedural, conditional knowledge, intuitive strategies and critical thinking that help overcome cultural and language barriers.
4	The role of metacognition in intercultural competence development	(Haerazi & Nunez, 2022)	Strategies such as self-assessment, self-monitoring, prediction, planning, and reflection are essential in dealing with cultural differences and developing intercultural competence.
5	Integration of cultural awareness and metacognitive	(Aprianoto & Haerazi, 2019)	Cultural awareness enriches the quality of writing and the learning experience, but

	strategies in improving writing skills		the implementation of this strategy still faces a gap between theory and practice.
6	Effectiveness of metacognitive strategy training in learning academic writing	(Sun & Zhang, 2022)	Training a combination of cognitive and metacognitive strategies is more effective than a single strategy, helping to overcome writing challenges and produce comprehensive content, especially for multilingual learners.

Based on Table 1, which presents research results related to intercultural-based metacognitive strategies in improving academic writing skills, it can be interpreted that this approach has a significant and multifaceted effect. The strategy not only increases students' awareness in managing the technical writing process, but also enriches their ability to understand and adapt to diverse cultural contexts. Moreover, the integration of cultural awareness and metacognitive practices is proven to enhance communication and critical thinking skills that are crucial in a multicultural academic environment. However, the table also highlights various challenges, such as the need for teacher training and customization of strategies to students' cultural needs, which are critical factors in successful implementation. With this in mind, the following discussion will outline in detail the effect of intercultural-based metacognitive strategies on academic English writing skills in higher education, the main components of such strategies, as well as the role of cultural awareness in the development of academic writing skills.

**1. Intercultural-based metacognitive strategies influence academic English writing skills in higher education**

Intercultural-based metacognitive strategies have a significant effect on academic English writing skills in higher education by increasing students' awareness and application of effective writing techniques (Alamri, 2018). Research shows that metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating, improve writing performance, especially in ESL students and first-year college students. Instruction on metacognitive strategies has also been shown to improve writing skills, as seen in quasi-experimental studies (Sun & Zhang, 2022). Moreover, EFL learners' experiences show the importance of applying these strategies in the writing process. For this reason, educators need to integrate metacognitive strategy training in the writing curriculum. However, other factors such as reading habits and prior knowledge also affect students' writing outcomes.

Metacognitive strategies have been shown to be effective in improving academic English writing skills in higher education. Although one study showed no significant effect on writing ability in field-dependent and field-independent learners, other studies have shown a positive impact (Muyassaroh, 2019). Metacognitive strategies were identified as the dominant factor among English language learners with high proficiency levels in Information Systems (Sari et al., 2024). These strategies also contribute significantly to academic writing skills, with declarative, procedural, conditional, planning, monitoring, evaluating, information management, and repair strategies having positive correlations (Rosdiana et al., 2023). In addition, authentic assessment combined with metacognitive strategies can effectively measure individual reading performance and development in English. Overall, metacognitive strategies play an important role in improving academic writing skills by increasing students' metacognitive awareness as well as their reflective abilities related to the writing process.

Intercultural-based metacognitive strategies play an important role in improving academic English writing skills in higher education, especially in the context of multicultural education. By integrating different cultural perspectives, these strategies help students

develop language skills and writing techniques relevant to different cultures. Although effective in enhancing students' metacognitive awareness, the main challenge lies in the difficulty of students from non-Western cultural backgrounds in adjusting to the more formal and structured conventions of Western academic writing (Ilham et al., 2020). Moreover, integrating this strategy into the curriculum requires customization to the cultural needs of students as well as adequate training for teachers to balance metacognitive knowledge with mastery of expected academic writing structures.

## **2. The main components of intercultural-based metacognitive strategies found in the relevant literature**

Interculturally-based metacognitive strategies include important components that support learning in diverse cultural contexts, with a focus on developing skills such as comprehension, critical thinking, and problem solving (Mubarok, 2017). Key components include declarative knowledge about metacognitive strategies, procedural knowledge to apply strategies such as planning and evaluation, and conditional knowledge about when and why strategies are used in different cultural contexts (Zhang & Lockee, 2022). In addition, intuitive strategies help overcome language and cultural barriers, while critical thinking supports reflection and analysis of intercultural interactions. Despite their effectiveness, some research suggests that cultural differences can affect the success of these strategies, requiring appropriate adaptations to the cultural nuances of the learning environment (Ekstam, 2015).

Metacognition plays an important role in the development of intercultural competence, as revealed by several studies. Key metacognitive strategies including self-assessment, self-monitoring, prediction, planning and reflection are crucial skills for learners to effectively deal with cultural differences (Morris et al., 2019). Immersive learning environments and smart assisted learning techniques can support the development of such metacognitive abilities. In educational contexts, especially during study abroad experiences, daily reflection sessions have been shown to promote students' metacognitive awareness and intercultural competence (Syahfutra et al., 2023). These reflections help students examine their own cultural biases and consider the cultural implications of their work, especially in unfamiliar cultural contexts. In addition, the integration of digital civics design, exposure to new cultural environments, and metacognitive questioning significantly contributed to students' intercultural learning and expression.

The main components of intercultural-based metacognitive strategies help students manage the learning process while understanding and adapting to different cultural contexts (Ilham, 2024). Declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge inform the selection of appropriate strategies, while intuitive and critical thinking strategies add depth to cross-cultural understanding. The use of technology and immersive learning experiences enhance the effectiveness of these strategies. However, challenges arise if strategies are not tailored to students' cultural contexts, so personalization and institutional support and teacher readiness are necessary to optimize metacognitive learning outcomes and intercultural competence.

## **3. The role of cultural awareness in the development of academic writing skills through intercultural-based metacognitive strategies**

Cultural (CA) and intercultural awareness (ICA) play a central role in improving academic writing skills through the application of metacognitive strategies. An in-depth understanding of cultural contexts allows students to adapt writing style and content to suit international audiences and academic situations (Bhowmik & Chaudhuri, 2022). The integration of cultural awareness with metacognitive practices not only improves writing

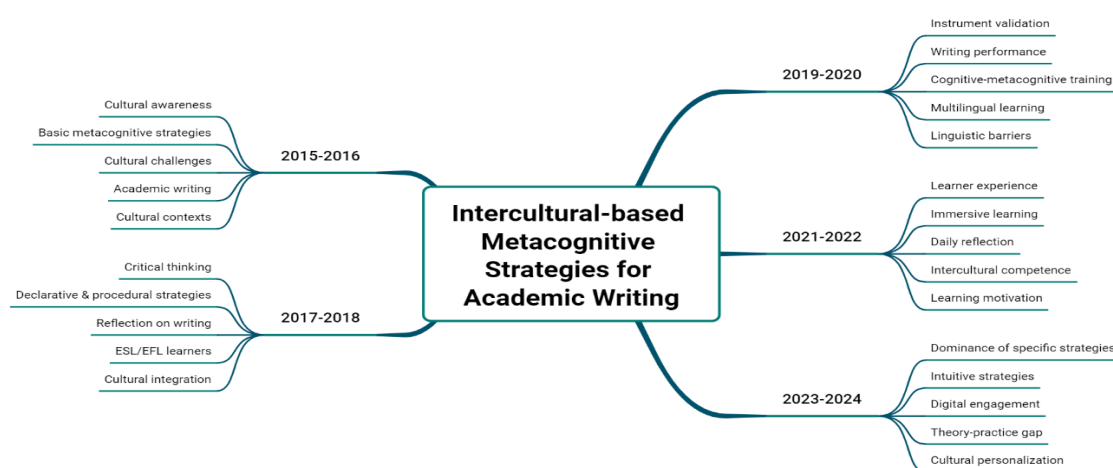


proficiency, but also enriches the learning experience and encourages deeper engagement (L. Huang, 2023). However, there is a gap between theory and practice in the application of these strategies that needs to be addressed to make their implementation more effective and relevant.

Various studies confirm the effectiveness of metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring and evaluation in improving academic writing. Training in a combination of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, especially in terms of self-monitoring, shows better results than single approaches (Caraballo, 2016). These strategies help students overcome various challenges in the writing process and produce comprehensive content, especially for multilingual learners (Brinkschulte et al., 2018). In addition, the development of measurement instruments for metacognitive strategies supports the validity and effectiveness of academic writing learning.

The main components of intercultural-based metacognitive strategies include managing the technical writing process as well as adapting to diverse cultural contexts. Through systematic planning, monitoring and evaluation, students gain better control over the quality of their writing and reflective skills in assessing their work (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018). However, significant challenges remain in the implementation of this strategy, especially regarding the need to adapt the strategy to the students' cultural context and the readiness of teachers and institutional support (Cierpisz, 2019). Therefore, the development and implementation of intercultural-based metacognitive strategies should be designed holistically to optimize the improvement of writing skills and cultural awareness in a multicultural higher education environment.

Understanding the dynamics of the development of intercultural-based metacognitive strategies in academic writing contexts more holistically requires a review of the research journey over time. By tracing the evolution of concepts, approaches, and focus of study within a certain span of years, we can see how these strategies are developed, tested, and implemented in various academic learning contexts. Therefore, the following visualization presents the thematic development of intercultural-based metacognitive strategies in academic writing that have been found in the literature over the past almost a decade.



**Figure 1.** The Development of Intercultural-Based Metacognitive Strategies in Improving Academic Writing Skills

Figure 1 shows the development of research on intercultural-based metacognitive strategies in academic writing from 2015 to 2024. In the early phase (2015-2016), the main

focus was still on basic metacognitive strategies and the cultural challenges faced by students in the context of academic writing. Subsequently, the 2017-2018 period showed a shift towards developing declarative and procedural strategies, as well as the importance of reflection in writing and cultural integration for ESL/EFL learners. Entering 2019-2020, research began to move towards instrument testing, metacognitive-cognitive training, and linguistic challenges in multilingual environments. The 2021-2022 phase marks an emphasis on student learning experiences, immersive learning, and intercultural competence. Finally, in 2023-2024, research delves deeper into the dominance of certain strategies, digital engagement, cultural personalization, and the gap between theory and practice. Overall, this mindmap illustrates that interculturality-based metacognitive strategies continue to evolve significantly, reflecting the increasing complexity in culturally sensitive approaches to teaching academic writing.

## Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that intercultural-based metacognitive strategies have a significant contribution in improving students' academic writing skills, particularly in the multicultural and multilingual context of higher education. This discussion aims to critically interpret the findings, relate them to relevant theoretical frameworks, and explore pedagogical implications and limitations that need to be considered in future research. First, intercultural sensitivity skills appear to be an important foundation in building students' metacognitive awareness. The findings show that the development of this awareness occurs gradually, from a general understanding of cultural challenges in academic writing (2015-2016 period), to more personalized strategies (2023-2024 period). This is in line with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory which emphasizes that learning is mediated by cultural tools and social interactions. In this context, students who have higher cultural sensitivity tend to be more reflective, able to regulate their own learning process, and can adapt their writing style to diverse academic discourses.

Furthermore, effective metacognitive strategies in intercultural contexts include not only declarative knowledge (knowing what), but also procedural knowledge (knowing how) and conditional knowledge (knowing when and why). These three dimensions have long been a central framework in the metacognitive literature (Haerazi & Nunez, 2022), but this study's findings show how they interact dynamically in cross-cultural academic writing contexts. Students, especially non-native speakers of English, are required not only to master the technical aspects of writing, but also to have cultural intelligence to understand contextually different academic expectations. However, the gap between theory and practice remains a major challenge in implementing this strategy in the classroom. While many studies support the effectiveness of intercultural-based approaches, their application in culturally heterogeneous classrooms is often limited. This signals the need for teacher training that explicitly integrates intercultural pedagogy with metacognitive instruction. In addition, institutional support in curriculum design that is adaptive to cultural diversity and the utilization of digital technology are important factors to bridge the gap.

Another interesting phenomenon is the shift in recent trends (2023-2024) towards intuitive strategies and digital engagement. This finding reflects how technology and student learning autonomy strengthen metacognitive processes while opening up space for independent cultural exploration. However, there is also a risk of digital access gaps and unequal digital literacy skills, which may affect the effectiveness of implementing these strategies in various educational contexts. Furthermore, intercultural competence is not only the ultimate goal of learning to write, but also a process that develops through metacognitive activities. Activities such as daily reflection, immersive experiences and self-assessment not only improve writing outcomes, but also strengthen students' awareness of their cultural position in academic practice. These findings are in line with Byram (1997) model of intercultural communication

competence, which emphasizes the importance of critical cultural awareness and the ability to make reflective judgments in intercultural interactions. While this study makes an important contribution, there are some limitations that need to be addressed. Most of the studies reviewed focus on Asian and Western contexts, so perspectives from other regions such as Africa, Latin America or the Middle East are underrepresented. In addition, few studies evaluated the long-term impact of intercultural-based metacognitive strategy training.

## CONCLUSION

The findings in this study confirm that interculturally-based metacognitive strategies have a significant contribution in improving students' academic writing skills, especially in a multicultural and multilingual higher education environment. The main issue analyzed in the results and discussion section, namely how students develop awareness and self-regulation in writing through cross-cultural understanding, is confirmed through literature evidence that shows a close relationship between cultural sensitivity and the effectiveness of learning strategies. The integration of three dimensions of metacognitive knowledge (declarative, procedural, and conditional) is proven to support the ability of students, especially non-native speakers, to navigate various cross-cultural academic conventions more reflectively and adaptively.

Nonetheless, challenges in the implementation of these strategies remain evident, particularly regarding the lack of teacher training that incorporates intercultural and metacognitive pedagogy explicitly, as well as limited curriculum support that is responsive to cultural diversity. In addition, the findings on the shift towards intuitive strategies and digital engagement show both potential and risk in the context of uneven digital literacy. Therefore, this study not only confirms the urgency of developing interculturally-based metacognitive strategies, but also emphasizes the need for policy strengthening, training and further research specifically covering broader cultural contexts and long-term evaluative approaches.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the academic community and scholars whose prior work on metacognitive strategies, intercultural competence, and academic writing has laid the foundation for this review. Appreciation is also extended to colleagues and reviewers who provided insightful feedback throughout the research process. Special thanks go to the university's research and development unit for supporting access to databases and digital libraries that facilitated the systematic analysis of relevant literature. The author also gratefully acknowledges the support provided by the Research and Community Service Center Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram through its research grant scheme, which enabled the completion of this study. Lastly, this review would not have been possible without the valuable contributions of educators and learners who have shared their experiences and challenges in implementing metacognitive strategies in diverse academic and cultural contexts.

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