

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**INVESTIGATING METACOGNITIVE  
WRITING STRATEGIES AND  
WRITING ANXIETY IN THE  
WRITING PROCESS  
OF ESL WRITERS**

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## ABSTRACT

The complexity in writing has caused ESL learners to experience writing anxiety when writing. This language barrier has restricted their writing performance, which results in poor quality compositions. This study therefore aims to identify the types and reasons for writing anxiety, so that professional and practical solutions can be addressed by writing teachers. Moreover, using strategies has been acknowledged as one of coping strategies to deal with writing anxiety. Metacognitive writing strategies are known as a useful writing strategy that can help to regulate and control the writers during planning, monitoring, and evaluating stages. The effectiveness of using metacognitive writing strategies is proven to be beneficial in enhancing self-directed learning, and, in improving their writing performance. Due to the fact that not every ESL writer is equipped with an extensive awareness and wide repertoire of metacognitive writing strategies, the importance of explicitly teaching the strategies should be emphasised. Given the relevance of these issues, the study aims to investigate how the writers use metacognitive writing strategies of *Planning*, *Monitoring* and *Evaluating* during their writing process of expository essays. To accomplish the purposes of this study, a qualitative research design was conducted and data were collected by means of semi-structured interview, observation, and think-aloud protocols (TAPs). The participants were six third-semester students of UiTM Pasir Gudang who voluntarily involved in the study. The gathered data were coded and analysed using Atlas-ti (Version 8.0). Findings show that all the participants admitted to experiencing writing anxiety while writing and there were sub-types and sub-reasons of writing anxiety discovered in the study. Another finding obtained in the study was that when employing metacognitive writing strategies, there were sub-categories of the strategies used by the participants during planning, monitoring, and evaluating phases. Thus, these results are in line with those studies which ascertain that strategies can be taught, and that the deployment of metacognitive writing strategies allows learners to have major control over their learning process. A framework of metacognitive writing strategies and writing anxiety is proposed with respect to metacognitive writing strategies used by the participants. Suggestions for future research, and implications for ESL writers and writing teachers are also provided.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

Studies on writing have proliferated in recent decades. Many researchers have recognised writing as a cognitive social skill as it is a mode of communication that enables writers to connect and convey their message to their target readers. Azizi et al. (2017) defined writing as a comprehensive skill that enables learners to stimulate other sources of knowledge by using skills such as vocabulary, grammar, symbols and letters, and text structure. In addition to stimulating writers' prior knowledge, writing also enhances writers' connection with readers. Communication takes place when writers successfully communicate their ideas, thoughts, facts, and opinions to readers during the writing process. During the writing process, writers write with different purposes in mind, with the expectation that their planned ideas, opinions and thoughts will be appropriately perceived by their target audience. To achieve this purpose, the writers, researchers, students, or professionals should have the necessary knowledge to convey their ideas during the writing process.

This chapter will therefore provide deep insights into ESL writing, ESL writers, metacognitive writing strategies and writing anxiety. It also presented the problem statement, research objectives and research questions of the study. The researcher has also identified some limitations in conducting the study that can be addressed in future research. In addition, a list of definitions of terms used in the study is provided in this chapter to help guide the readers. It is therefore hoped that the study will be considered significant and valuable by several respected parties and will encourage future researchers to conduct a thorough investigation in various dimensions.

### 1.2 Research Background

In the study, the researcher examines the writing process of ESL writers to understand, determine, and identify two important findings, namely metacognitive writing strategies and writing anxiety. These two areas under study are related to the