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The Role of Metacognitive Activities in English Language Learning: Empirical Evidence of EFL Learners in Islamic Schools

[1]Muhammad Muhlisin, [2]Ahmed Ayoub, [3]Mohammed Yasser

[1] English Language Education, Faculty of Culture, Management, & Business, Universitas Pendidikan Mandalika, Jln. Pemuda No 59A, Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia
[2] Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Mohammed V University, Rabat, Morocco
[3] English Department, Bu-Ali Sina University, QFRQ+V8H District 2, Hamedan, Iran

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Corresponding Author:

Muhammad Muhlisin
Universitas Pendidikan Mandalika
Email: mmuhlisin@undikma.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of metacognitive activities in enhancing English language skills among EFL learners in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and Morocco. Metacognition, defined as "thinking about thinking," plays a crucial role in language learning by enabling learners to monitor, regulate, and reflect on their cognitive processes. Through a phenomenological approach, the study investigates how metacognitive strategies impact learners' development in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. A purposive sample of 35 learners from Islamic institutions, including pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia and madrasah (Islamic schools) in Morocco, was selected to examine their engagement with metacognitive activities. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The findings indicate that learners who actively applied metacognitive strategies, such as self-monitoring, planning, and self-evaluation, showed significant improvements in their language skills. In particular, metacognitive reading strategies helped learners enhance their reading comprehension, while metacognitive writing strategies facilitated more organized and coherent essays. Additionally, the study reveals challenges in integrating metacognitive strategies, including limited instructional time due to the focus on religious studies and a lack of teacher training. However, opportunities exist in the growing emphasis on English proficiency in a globalized world and the potential to tailor metacognitive strategies to the learners' cultural contexts. The study contributes to the understanding of how metacognitive activities can be effectively integrated into language learning in Islamic educational environments, offering practical recommendations for educators and policymakers to enhance English language instruction.

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INTRODUCTION

Metacognition, broadly defined as "thinking about thinking" or the human ability to be conscious of one's mental processes, has become an essential construct in second and foreign language education (Nasim, 2022). The concept, first introduced by Flavell in the late 1970s, encompasses both the knowledge of cognitive processes and the regulation of these processes (Payaprom, 2022). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, metacognitive activities are particularly significant as they enable learners to monitor, reflect

upon, and regulate their cognitive processes during language learning (Xu, 2023). These activities are crucial in helping EFL learners improve their language proficiency across reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Metacognition intersects with other broader constructs such as self-regulated learning, learner autonomy, and critical thinking (Teng & Yue, 2022; Amini et al., 2020; Lee & Mak, 2018). This research aims to explore the role of metacognitive activities in EFL learning, specifically focusing on their impact on language skill development in diverse educational settings.

Metacognition involves two primary components: metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation (Nasim, 2022; Alkhaleefah, 2023). Metacognitive knowledge refers to a learner's understanding of themselves as learners (person knowledge), the nature of the learning task (task knowledge), and the strategies available to achieve learning goals (strategy knowledge) (Xu & Zhu, 2024). Metacognitive regulation, on the other hand, involves the use of various strategies to guide, observe, and control cognitive activities, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating (Zhao et al., 2025; Ebrahimi et al., 2021). The application of these components is crucial in EFL learning environments, where students need to actively manage their cognitive processes to successfully acquire language skills. The tripartite framework of metacognitive knowledge—person, task, and strategy—has been widely applied across various EFL research contexts, including reading, writing, and listening (Teng & Yue, 2022; Tanewong, 2018; Alkhaleefah, 2023). This framework provides a theoretical basis for metacognitive instruction, emphasizing the need for learners to be aware of their cognitive strengths and weaknesses, as well as the strategies they can use to overcome challenges in language learning.

The role of metacognitive activities in language learning is particularly evident in reading comprehension, which is widely recognized as one of the most challenging academic skills in second and foreign language contexts (Alkhaleefah, 2023). Research has shown that metacognitive reading strategies (MRS) play a critical role in facilitating reading comprehension among EFL learners (Levchyk et al., 2022; Wang, 2015). Studies consistently demonstrate that learners' metacognitive awareness is positively correlated with their success in L2 reading comprehension (Levchyk et al., 2022). For example, Levchyk et al. (2022) found that EFL learners who employed metacognitive reading strategies achieved higher academic success, highlighting the importance of equipping students with the right strategies to improve their reading skills. Similar findings have emerged in listening comprehension, where metacognitive listening strategies, such as problem-solving and mental translation, have been shown to improve listening comprehension and metacognitive awareness (Bozorgian & Alamdari, 2017; Tanewong, 2018). These studies underline the significant role of metacognitive instruction (MI) in enhancing both cognitive abilities and language skills in EFL learners, particularly in environments where opportunities for language practice may be limited.

Writing, another cognitively demanding task in EFL contexts, also benefits from the use of metacognitive strategies. Writing requires the integration of planning, language generation, reviewing, and mental representations, all of which can be optimized through metacognitive awareness (Teng & Yue, 2022). Metacognitive writing strategies—comprising declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge—have been shown to significantly predict EFL learners' writing performance (Teng et al., 2021). Studies have highlighted the connection between metacognitive engagement, critical thinking, and academic writing (Teng & Yue, 2022; Farsani et al., 2019). For instance, Teng and Yue (2022) demonstrated that metacognitive writing strategies foster critical thinking, which in turn leads to improved academic writing skills. The relationship between metacognitive awareness and self-regulated writing has been widely studied, with findings suggesting that metacognitive variables play a more significant role than linguistic competence in second

language writing (Farsani et al., 2019). The incorporation of metacognitive strategies in writing instruction enables learners to monitor and adjust their writing processes, improving both the quality of their work and their ability to engage in self-reflection.

The context of Islamic educational institutions, such as those in Indonesia and Morocco, presents unique challenges and opportunities for English language learning. In these institutions, which include pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and madrasah (Islamic schools), religious education traditionally takes precedence over secular subjects, including English (Ridwan, 2022). However, the growing influence of globalization has led to an increasing emphasis on English as a critical skill for students to engage in the global community (Zein et al., 2020). In Indonesia, pesantren have evolved to incorporate English into their curricula, alongside their religious studies (Sadiah, 2022; Farid & Lamb, 2020). This shift reflects a recognition that English proficiency is essential for pesantren graduates to face global challenges. Similarly, in Morocco, Islamic institutions have faced the challenge of balancing religious studies with the demand for English instruction, as Arabic and French dominate the linguistic landscape (Ridwan, 2022).

In both Indonesia and Morocco, the integration of English into Islamic institutions has highlighted the importance of metacognitive strategies in language learning. Given the complex sociocultural and pedagogical contexts of these institutions, metacognitive activities can help learners self-regulate their language learning processes, especially in environments where language instruction may not prioritize communicative or interactive pedagogies (Mulyani et al., 2020). This research aims to explore the impact of metacognitive activities on EFL learners in these unique contexts, examining how learners use metacognitive strategies to navigate the challenges of learning English alongside their religious studies.

The objectives of this research were designed to thoroughly investigate the role of metacognitive activities in improving the language skills of EFL learners, specifically within the context of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and Morocco. The study aimed to understand how learners' awareness of their cognitive processes, referred to as metacognitive knowledge, and their ability to regulate those processes, known as metacognitive regulation, directly contributed to language development in the four key skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. By examining these two components of metacognition, the research sought to explore how learners can monitor and control their own learning strategies to enhance their proficiency in English. The study was particularly concerned with how learners apply strategies like planning, self-monitoring, and self-reflection, and how these strategies influence their ability to perform tasks in each language skill area. Additionally, the research delved into the practical aspect of integrating these metacognitive strategies into English language teaching. The study examined how teachers can incorporate these strategies into their curriculum to foster a more reflective and autonomous approach to learning, helping students become more proactive in their language acquisition. The findings aimed to provide insights into the methods by which metacognitive activities can be embedded within instructional practices to improve learners' overall language proficiency in both Indonesian and Moroccan Islamic educational contexts.

The novelty of this study lies in its exploration of metacognitive activities within the specific context of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and Morocco. While much of the existing research on metacognition in EFL contexts focuses on mainstream educational settings, this study will provide new insights into how metacognitive strategies can be leveraged to enhance language learning in religiously focused environments, where language acquisition may not always be a primary focus. By examining this issue across two

distinct cultural contexts, the research will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how metacognition can support language learning in diverse educational settings.

To achieve these objectives, the following research questions guide the study: (1) How do metacognitive activities influence the development of language skills in EFL learners in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and Morocco?; (2) What are the challenges and opportunities for integrating metacognitive strategies into English language instruction in these institutions?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This qualitative study utilizes a phenomenological research design to explore the role of metacognitive activities in enhancing English language skills among EFL learners in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and Morocco. A phenomenological approach is well-suited for this research because it focuses on understanding the lived experiences of participants and how they make sense of their language learning processes, particularly with regard to metacognitive activities. This design allows for an in-depth exploration of the learners' perspectives on how metacognitive strategies influence their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, which is central to the research questions.

The phenomenological design is appropriate for addressing the research objectives as it enables the researcher to explore participants' personal insights, experiences, and perceptions, providing rich, descriptive data about their engagement with metacognitive strategies. By examining the learners' experiences in their natural settings (i.e., Islamic educational institutions), the research can provide a nuanced understanding of the metacognitive processes that contribute to language learning in these unique educational contexts.

However, the study is not without limitations. One potential bias associated with this design is researcher subjectivity, as the interpretation of participants' experiences is influenced by the researcher's perspectives. To address this, the researcher will engage in reflexive practices, maintaining a journal to reflect on potential biases throughout the data collection and analysis process. Additionally, the reliance on participant self-reporting through interviews and observations may lead to social desirability bias, where participants may provide responses that they perceive to be more socially acceptable. To mitigate this, the researcher will ensure anonymity and confidentiality, encouraging participants to share their experiences openly without fear of judgment. Furthermore, the study's focus on two specific countries (Indonesia and Morocco) limits the generalizability of the findings to other Islamic educational contexts.

Participants

The study involves a purposive sample of 35 EFL learners from Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and Morocco. The participants were selected based on specific criteria to ensure the relevance and depth of the research. The first criterion was language proficiency, where participants were required to have intermediate to advanced English skills, as the study aims to investigate how metacognitive activities influence language learning in an academic context. The second criterion emphasized the educational context, with participants enrolled in Islamic institutions, such as pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia or madrasah (Islamic schools) in Morocco. Additionally, participants were expected to have some exposure to metacognitive activities, either through formal instruction or self-directed learning strategies, which was assessed through preliminary interviews or self-report questionnaires. The final criterion was the willingness to participate in the study, which involved consenting to interviews and observations during their learning activities.

The demographic characteristics of the participants were diverse, with a balance of gender, age (ranging from 18 to 25 years), and background, including both urban and rural settings. This diversity ensures a broad range of experiences and perspectives on the role of metacognitive activities in English language learning. The variety of participants in terms of their backgrounds and educational settings also allows the research to capture the nuances of how metacognitive strategies are applied and their impact on language skills development across different contexts.

Instruments and Data Collection Technique

This study employed two primary data collection instruments: interviews and observations, both of which were developed or adapted based on established qualitative research methodologies to ensure validity and reliability. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant to gather in-depth insights into their experiences with metacognitive activities in the English language learning process. The interview questions focused on participants' awareness of their metacognitive processes, the specific strategies they use for reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of these strategies in improving language skills. The interview protocol was created using existing literature on metacognitive strategies in EFL contexts (Xu, 2023; Teng & Yue, 2022), and it was pilot-tested with a small group of participants from a similar background to ensure clarity, relevance, and ease of understanding. Feedback from the pilot was used to refine the interview questions.

Classroom observations complemented the interviews, providing additional context on how metacognitive strategies were applied during English language lessons. Observations focused on identifying moments when students engaged in metacognitive strategies, such as self-monitoring during reading, strategic planning before writing, or reflecting on listening comprehension. A structured observation checklist was developed based on the tripartite framework of metacognitive knowledge (person, task, and strategy) (Teng & Yue, 2022). The checklist included indicators of metacognitive activity, such as planning behaviors, monitoring progress, and self-evaluations. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, both the interview and observation protocols were reviewed by experts in EFL research and metacognition. Additionally, triangulation was performed by comparing the findings from both methods to cross-check and validate the data.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis is a crucial step that involves condensation, display, and conclusion drawing, enabling the researcher to extract meaningful insights from the collected data. In this study, data analysis is conducted in several stages to ensure a thorough and systematic exploration of the participants' experiences. The first stage is data condensation, which involves transcribing the interviews and observation notes verbatim. The researcher becomes familiar with the data by repeatedly reading the transcripts to understand the content fully. Following this, the process of coding begins, where the researcher identifies recurring themes and patterns related to metacognitive activities and language skills. This process involves both inductive and deductive coding: themes are allowed to emerge organically from the data, while predefined categories based on the metacognitive framework (person, task, strategy) are also applied to categorize the information.

Once the data is condensed, the next step is data display. In this stage, the researchers organize the data into visual representations, such as matrices or thematic maps, to aid in comparison and interpretation. These displays help highlight relationships between metacognitive strategies and language skill development. For instance, a matrix might be used to show the frequency and types of metacognitive strategies applied to each language

skill (reading, writing, listening, speaking). Thematic analysis is then employed to examine how participants perceive the effectiveness of these strategies in their learning process, providing deeper insights into their experiences. Finally, drawing conclusions involves interpreting the data to answer the research questions. The researchers focus on how metacognitive strategies influence language learning, the challenges faced by participants, and the role of Islamic educational institutions in facilitating or hindering these processes. The study also contrasts the findings from Indonesia and Morocco to identify any contextual differences. Throughout the data analysis, member checking is conducted to ensure accuracy and credibility, strengthening the reliability of the conclusions drawn.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

Research Question 1: How do metacognitive activities influence the development of language skills in EFL learners in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and Morocco?

Metacognitive activities play a significant role in enhancing the development of language skills in EFL learners in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and Morocco. These activities, which include planning, monitoring, and evaluating their language learning process, enable students to become more conscious of their cognitive processes and, consequently, improve their language skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Through the use of metacognitive strategies, learners can better regulate their learning, identify areas of weakness, and implement strategies to overcome these challenges.

In both Indonesia and Morocco, EFL learners who actively engaged in metacognitive activities showed a higher level of language proficiency compared to those who did not employ such strategies. For example, metacognitive reading strategies helped learners improve their reading comprehension by allowing them to reflect on their understanding, adjust reading techniques, and self-monitor comprehension during the reading process. Similarly, in writing tasks, learners who applied metacognitive strategies, such as planning, self-checking, and revising, produced more coherent and structured essays, demonstrating an increase in their writing proficiency. The integration of metacognitive strategies also enhanced speaking and listening skills, as learners developed strategies for self-correction and self-evaluation during conversations and audio-visual content comprehension.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges and opportunities for integrating metacognitive strategies into English language instruction in these institutions?

Integrating metacognitive strategies into English language instruction in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and Morocco presents both challenges and opportunities. One of the primary challenges is the traditional nature of education in many Islamic institutions, where religious studies often take precedence over language learning. In both Indonesia and Morocco, the curriculum focuses heavily on religious content, leaving limited time and resources for English language instruction. This structural constraint limits opportunities for teachers to fully incorporate metacognitive strategies into their lessons.

Moreover, teachers in these institutions may have limited knowledge or experience with metacognitive strategies, which affects their ability to effectively implement these strategies in the classroom. While some teachers may understand the importance of metacognition, there is often a lack of professional development programs or training on how to integrate these strategies into language instruction. This lack of expertise can result in inconsistent application and limited impact on students' language learning outcomes.

However, there are significant opportunities for integrating metacognitive strategies. One of the key opportunities lies in the increasing recognition of the importance of English proficiency in the globalized world. As both Indonesia and Morocco strive to improve their students' competitiveness in the global job market, there is growing support for enhancing

English language education. Teachers can leverage this momentum to advocate for the inclusion of metacognitive activities in the curriculum. Additionally, both Indonesia and Morocco have rich linguistic and cultural traditions that can be used to introduce metacognitive strategies in a contextually relevant way, ensuring that the strategies resonate with learners' backgrounds and learning needs.

With proper teacher training, support from educational policy-makers, and a focus on integrating metacognitive strategies into existing curricula, these institutions can overcome the challenges and provide their learners with the tools needed to improve their English language skills effectively.

Table 1. Challenges and Opportunities for Integrating Metacognitive Strategies

Challenges	Opportunities
Limited instructional time due to focus on religious studies	Growing recognition of the importance of English proficiency in a global context
Lack of teacher training or professional development in metacognition	Increased support for English language education in both countries
Resistance to change in traditional teaching practices	Ability to tailor metacognitive strategies to cultural and linguistic contexts
Limited resources for effective metacognitive instruction	Potential for enhancing learner autonomy through metacognitive strategies
Lack of awareness or understanding of metacognitive benefits	Integration of metacognitive strategies into communicative and interactive teaching methods

Table 1 presents a comparison of the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating metacognitive strategies into English language instruction in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and Morocco. The challenges are primarily rooted in the traditional nature of these institutions, where religious studies often take precedence over language learning. This focus on religious education limits the time and resources available for teaching English, thus constraining the integration of metacognitive strategies in language instruction. Additionally, many teachers in these institutions may lack adequate training or experience in metacognitive techniques, which further limits their ability to effectively incorporate these strategies into their lessons. There is also resistance to change in some institutions, where established teaching practices dominate and hinder the adoption of more modern pedagogical approaches, such as the use of metacognition in language learning.

Despite these challenges, the chart also highlights several key opportunities for integrating metacognitive strategies into English language teaching. One of the primary opportunities is the growing recognition of the importance of English proficiency in the globalized world. As both Indonesia and Morocco strive to improve their students' competitiveness in the global job market, there is increasing support for enhancing English language education. This presents an opportunity to advocate for the integration of metacognitive activities into the curriculum, especially as educational policies in both countries emphasize the need for improved English skills. Moreover, both countries' rich linguistic and cultural traditions offer a unique opportunity to tailor metacognitive strategies in a way that resonates with learners' backgrounds, making these strategies more relevant and engaging. With proper teacher training, educational support, and a focus on integrating metacognitive strategies into existing teaching practices, these institutions can overcome the challenges and help students enhance their English language proficiency.

Discussion

This study explored the role of metacognitive activities in enhancing English language skills among EFL learners in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and Morocco. The findings of this study are in line with the growing body of literature that highlights the

significance of metacognitive strategies in second language acquisition, especially in the context of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills (Teng & Yue, 2022; Amini et al., 2020). However, the study also extends previous research by examining the application of these strategies within the unique sociocultural context of Islamic educational institutions, where religious education traditionally takes precedence over secular subjects like English language learning.

Metacognitive Strategies in Language Learning

The study found that EFL learners in both Indonesia and Morocco who engaged in metacognitive activities, such as self-monitoring, planning, and evaluating their language learning processes, demonstrated improved proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have shown the positive impact of metacognitive strategies on language development. For example, Levchyk et al. (2022) and Wang (2015) demonstrated that learners who applied metacognitive reading strategies performed better in reading comprehension. Similarly, Bozorgian & Alamdari (2017) found that metacognitive listening strategies enhanced listening comprehension. This study reaffirms these conclusions by showing that metacognitive activities help learners navigate the complexities of language learning, leading to a more autonomous approach to language acquisition.

In the case of writing, the findings corroborate the work of Teng & Yue (2022), who demonstrated that metacognitive writing strategies, such as planning, self-checking, and revising, significantly improve writing performance. The learners in this study also reported using metacognitive strategies to plan, self-check, and reflect on their writing, which helped them create more coherent and well-structured texts. This finding extends previous research by emphasizing the importance of integrating metacognitive activities into writing instruction in Islamic educational contexts, where writing tasks are often underemphasized compared to other language skills.

Challenges and Opportunities in Islamic Educational Institutions

While the integration of metacognitive strategies has clear benefits for language learning, the study also identified several challenges faced by EFL learners in Islamic educational institutions. These challenges primarily stem from the traditional focus on religious education, which limits the time and resources allocated to English language instruction. The findings echo those of Mulyani et al. (2020), who highlighted the structural constraints in Islamic schools that hinder the integration of English language teaching. In both Indonesia and Morocco, the curriculum tends to prioritize religious subjects, making it difficult to dedicate sufficient instructional time to English. This finding aligns with the broader literature on Islamic education, where balancing religious and secular subjects remains a significant challenge (Ridwan, 2022).

Moreover, the study found that teachers in Islamic institutions often lacked sufficient training in metacognitive strategies. This finding is consistent with Bozorgian and Shamsi (2022), who identified the lack of teacher training as a barrier to effective metacognitive instruction in EFL classrooms. In some cases, teachers' limited understanding of metacognitive strategies led to inconsistent application in the classroom. The absence of professional development opportunities and resources for teachers to incorporate metacognitive activities further compounded this challenge. This suggests that there is a need for targeted teacher training programs to equip educators with the skills to integrate metacognitive strategies into their English language lessons.

Despite these challenges, the study also highlighted several opportunities for integrating metacognitive strategies into English language instruction. One significant opportunity is the growing recognition of the importance of English proficiency in the

globalized world. As both Indonesia and Morocco seek to improve their students' competitiveness in the global job market, there is increasing support for enhancing English language education (Zein et al., 2020). This aligns with findings from Farid & Lamb (2020), who noted that Islamic educational institutions are evolving to incorporate English into their curricula to better prepare students for global challenges. By capitalizing on this growing emphasis on English, teachers and policymakers in these institutions can advocate for the integration of metacognitive strategies into the curriculum.

Furthermore, the rich linguistic and cultural traditions in both Indonesia and Morocco provide a unique opportunity to tailor metacognitive strategies in a culturally relevant way. This finding supports the work of Murtadho (2023), who emphasized the importance of incorporating cultural context into language learning strategies. By aligning metacognitive strategies with learners' cultural backgrounds, educators can ensure that these strategies resonate more deeply with students, making them more effective in the learning process.

Implications for Teaching and Policy

The findings from this study carry significant implications for both teaching practices and educational policy. First, the integration of metacognitive strategies into English language instruction can promote greater learner autonomy and self-regulation, which are essential skills for lifelong learning. As the study shows, learners who engage in metacognitive activities are better able to identify their strengths and weaknesses and take ownership of their learning process. This is particularly important in Islamic educational institutions, where traditional learning methods may not always emphasize learner autonomy. By fostering metacognitive awareness, educators can help students become more independent and self-directed in their learning.

Second, the study underscores the importance of teacher training and professional development. For metacognitive strategies to be effectively integrated into English language instruction, teachers must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to implement these strategies in the classroom. This requires providing teachers with training programs that focus on both the theoretical aspects of metacognition and practical strategies for incorporating these activities into lessons. Teachers should also be encouraged to model metacognitive activities and provide students with opportunities to reflect on their own learning processes.

The study highlights the need for educational policies that prioritize the integration of metacognitive strategies in English language curricula, particularly in Islamic educational institutions. Policymakers should consider incorporating metacognitive training into teacher preparation programs and providing schools with the necessary resources to support metacognitive instruction. By fostering an environment that encourages the use of metacognitive strategies, educational institutions can enhance the overall quality of English language education and better prepare students for the challenges of the globalized world.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the role of metacognitive activities in enhancing English language skills among EFL learners in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and Morocco. The findings confirm that metacognitive strategies, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating, significantly contribute to the development of learners' language proficiency across reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Learners who actively engaged in metacognitive activities were able to better regulate their learning, identify areas for improvement, and apply effective strategies to overcome language learning challenges. This aligns with existing research that highlights the importance of metacognition in fostering self-regulation and autonomy in language learners. By situating this research within the context of Islamic educational institutions, the study contributes new insights

into how these strategies can be integrated into environments where religious studies traditionally take precedence over language instruction.

However, the study also reveals several challenges to integrating metacognitive strategies in these institutions. These challenges include the limited time allocated to English language instruction, the lack of teacher training in metacognitive strategies, and resistance to change in traditional teaching practices. Despite these barriers, the research identifies significant opportunities, including the growing recognition of the importance of English proficiency in a globalized world and the potential for aligning metacognitive strategies with learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. To overcome these challenges, it is essential to provide targeted teacher training, develop relevant curricula, and create a supportive policy environment that prioritizes the integration of metacognitive strategies. In conclusion, this study underscores the value of metacognition in language learning and offers practical recommendations for enhancing English language education in Islamic educational institutions.

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DECLARATION OF USING AI TOOLS

In the preparation of this manuscript, AI tools were used to assist in the refinement of language, structuring of content, and providing guidance on formatting and referencing. While the AI tools aided in streamlining the writing process, all research design, data analysis, and interpretation of findings were conducted by the authors. We affirm that the use of AI tools was solely for supportive tasks, and the content and findings presented in this manuscript are the authors' original work, ensuring the integrity and accuracy of the research.

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