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Reconceptualizing Reflective Practice in L2 Writing: The Role of Metacognitively Structured Follow-Up Activities

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ABSTRACT

This study examines students' follow-up activities following the writing test and analyzes the metacognitive dimensions inherent within these activities. Employing a qualitative research design, data were collected from students' reflective responses and subjected to coding analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns. Results indicate that students participate in diverse follow-up activities, which are classified into four primary domains : (1) linguistic revision-oriented activities, including grammar revision, vocabulary expansion, sentence variation, and rewriting for clarity; (2) strategy-based writing improvement, such as outlining, analysis of model texts, and peer feedback; (3) resource utilization and external support, including digital tools, AI-based applications, and external learning environments; and (4) self-regulated practice and habit formation, encompassing journaling, goal-setting, and timed writing practice. Three principal metacognitive are identified in these activities: metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive regulation and strategic action orientation. Findings indicate that students exhibit substantial learner autonomy by proactively managing and extending their learning beyond classroom setting. Nevertheless, their practices predominantly focus on lower-level linguistic features, indicating the need for instructional support foster higher-order writing skills. This study advances English language education by emphasizing the integration of metacognitive strategy instruction and promotion self-regulated learning in pedagogical approaches. Additionally, the findings highlight the influence of technology-enhanced environments on contemporary language learning behaviors. Further research warranted to assess the impact of these follow-up activities on learning outcomes and investigate their development across varied educational contexts.

Keywords: follow-up activities, metacognition, self-regulated learning, writing strategies, vocabulary development, English language education.

INTRODUCTION

Metacognitive process which must be followed up with structured tasks is what reflective practice in L2 writing is about. Recent research has found that L2 writers have both general and writing-specific metacognitive knowledge and that explicit instruction can improve their self-regulation. For example, Li et al. (2026) conduct a systematic review of 39 studies and find that L2 learners gradually develop metacognitive awareness (about audience,

purpose, etc.) and that classroom strategies (e.g. training, feedback, portfolios) substantially enhance such development. In line with this, experimental research has shown that the inclusion of metacognitive scaffolds in writing tasks increases the use of strategies. Huang and Zhang (2022) found that Chinese EFL students were more aware of their audience after a process-genre writing intervention, shifting their monitoring from surface-level edits to discourse-level planning. Similarly, Tian et al. (2022) found that learners used more cognitive planning when revising drafts with automated feedback and more motivational control when revising drafts with teacher feedback. Reflective journals are themselves a metacognitive follow-up. Zhang et al. (2022) demonstrate that writing weekly journals resulted in students progressively using diverse self-regulated strategies (monitoring, planning, etc.) over a semester. Well-designed reflective tasks guided by prompts, spaced over time, and linked to feedback can promote the metacognitive development of L2 writers, the findings suggest. Theoretical basis for this approach is grounded in the description of metacognition by Flavell (1979) as the awareness and regulation of cognitive processes, and the social-cognitive model of Zimmerman & Bandura (1994), which depicts that students with higher writing self-efficacy tend to set more ambitious goals and perform better in their courses. To summarize, the re-conceptualization of reflective practice views journal writing and other follow-up activities as metacognitively structured interventions that activate regulatory skills. Recent empirical evidence confirms their effectiveness and points to best practices for implementation Reflective writing is increasingly recognized as a powerful tool in writing instruction for fostering learners' metacognitive engagement, self-regulation, and writing performance.

Reflective writing, especially when structured and integrated into the writing process, significantly enhances learners' metacognitive awareness and writing skills. Studies show that both collaborative and individual reflective practices improve writing quality, with collaborative settings amplifying dialogic reflection and metacognitive growth through peer interaction (Leong et al., 2025). Reflective journal writing, in particular, leads to notable gains in metacognitive awareness, enabling students to plan, monitor, and evaluate their writing more effectively, which translates into improved writing performance (Aliyu et al., 2023).

Guided reflective journal activities help students express and monitor their metacognitive processes—awareness, evaluation, and regulation—regardless of their prior writing experience. This practice encourages independent learning and the development of effective writing strategies (Ramadhanti et al., 2020). Action research in secondary education demonstrates that interventions using reflective writing, supported by modelling and structured rubrics, address cognitive and linguistic challenges, enhance critical thinking, and foster metacognitive engagement (Ramlal & Augustin, 2020). Integrating metacognitive strategies such as self-assessment, peer evaluation, and reflective journaling into writing instruction deepens learners' thought processes and improves writing quality, supporting self-directed learning and academic thinking (Volkov, 2024).

However, in many writing classrooms, reflection remains an isolated or ritualized practice rather than a transformative learning process. While students may be able to describe their experiences, they often struggle to translate reflective insights into concrete follow-up actions that enhance their writing competence (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 2013). In other words, the connection between reflection and action-the stage where students design and implement strategies for improvement-is often underdeveloped. Without meaningful follow-up activities, reflection may fail to fulfil its purpose as a metacognitive tool,

leading to limited impact on students' long-term learning outcomes.

Previous studies have shown that reflective writing contributes positively to students' writing fluency (Moon, 2006), self-regulated learning (Lee, 2017), and metacognitive awareness in academic writing (Wong et al., 2019). Nonetheless, most of these studies focus on the reflective process itself rather than the subsequent learning behaviour it generates. There remains a scarcity of empirical research that specifically investigates students' follow-up activities-how learners act upon their reflections and how such actions influence the development of their writing skills. Moreover, few studies have examined the qualitative dimensions of these activities as indicators of metacognitive engagement in the writing classroom.

To address this gap, the present study focuses on the follow-up activities that students plan as a continuation of their reflective practice. The study explores the types of follow-up activities students propose, the metacognitive dimensions embedded within these activities. The aim of this study is to analyse the follow-up activities emerging from students' reflective writing to better understand how learners translate reflection into action within writing instruction.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to both theory and pedagogy. Theoretically, it advances the conceptual understanding of metacognition in writing by emphasizing the dynamic link between reflection and action. Pedagogically, it offers insights for teachers to design reflection-based writing activities that go beyond self-description and foster autonomous, strategic learning. By highlighting the role of follow-up activities as extensions of reflective thinking, this study proposes a more comprehensive framework for fostering metacognition in writing classrooms.

MATERIALS & METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design with a thematic coding analysis approach to explore students' follow-up learning activities and the metacognitive dimensions embedded within those activities. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate as the study aimed to capture students' perspectives, experiences, and self-initiated learning behaviours in depth (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The analysis followed principles of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), allowing patterns and themes to emerge systematically from the data.

The study was conducted in an English language learning context involving 33 second year students of English Education Department Nusantara PGRI Kediri University in creative writing subject. They had experienced the instructional activities and were able to reflect on their follow-up learning practices. The participants shared relatively similar learning backgrounds as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, with exposure to both classroom instruction and digital learning environments. This context is relevant as it reflects contemporary language learning settings where formal and informal learning intersect.

Research Instruments

To address the research objectives, several instruments were employed: first, reflective practice prompts. The students were required to complete structured reflective journals after writing test. The reflection prompts guided students to: evaluate their writing strengths and weaknesses also propose specific follow-up actions for improvement. These reflective entries served as the primary qualitative data source. Secondly, follow-up activity documentation sheet. This structured documentation sheet was developed to systematically record and categorize the types of follow-up activities proposed by students, namely; additional practice, peer feedback, grammar revision, vocabulary enrichment, consultation with lecturer.

Third, metacognitive coding framework. A coding rubric was adapted based on metacognitive theory, focusing on three main dimensions: Metacognitive knowledge (awareness of strengths/weaknesses), Metacognitive regulation (planning, monitoring, evaluating) and Strategic action (concrete improvement steps). This framework was used to analyse the metacognitive dimensions embedded in students' proposed follow-up activities.

Data Collection

Data were collected through students' written reflective responses, which required participants to describe the follow-up activities they engaged in after completing easy writing test. The instrument was designed to elicit detailed information about: number, types of follow-up activities, purpose, resources used, time table, and picture of the activities. To ensure consistency, all participants were given the same instructions and prompts and submitted their responses. The data collection instrument underwent expert validation by specialists in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics. The validation focused on: content relevance, clarity of instructions, and alignment with research questions. A pilot test was conducted with a small group of students to identify ambiguities and refine the instrument before the main data collection.

Data were collected in four stages: first, implementation of reflective practice. The reflective practice was applied after completing essay writing test, students submitted a reflective journal including their planned follow-up activities. It is followed by collection of reflective journals. Students' reflective journals were collected. Particular attention was given to the sections where students articulated future improvement plans. Finally, documentation and coding. All reflective entries were compiled and coded according to the metacognitive framework. Follow-up activities were categorized based on recurring patterns.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using a thematic coding procedure adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006) and Miles et al. (2014). The analysis involved several stages: first, data familiarization, in this stage all responses were read multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data. Then, initial coding or open coding, in this step meaningful units of data were identified and labelled with initial codes (e.g., revising grammar errors, expanding vocabulary, using digital tools). After that, categorization or axial coding, then the related codes were grouped into broader categories, such as: linguistic revision-oriented activities, strategy-based writing improvement, resource utilization and external support and self-regulated practice and habit formation. Then, the theme development or selective coding, in this step categories were further refined into overarching themes and aligned with the research questions. For the second research question, themes were mapped onto metacognitive dimensions, including: metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive regulation and strategic action orientation. The last step is interpretation, in this stage the themes were interpreted and supported with representative excerpts from participants' responses.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The study employed several strategies to ensure rigor, based on the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was established through sustained engagement with the data, incorporation of rich excerpts, and member checking whereby participants were asked to confirm the accuracy of interpretations; Detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and procedures are provided to ensure transferability, allowing readers to assess the extent to which the

findings can be applied to other settings. A systematic and transparent coding process ensures dependability. A codebook was developed to define categories and to ensure consistency across analysis. Confirmability is attained by an audit trail that describes all data collection and analysis steps, ensuring findings are rooted in the data and not researcher bias. To enhance reliability, the study employed intercoder agreement procedures. An independent coder with expertise in English Language Teaching was involved in coding a subset of the data.

RESULT

A. Types of Follow-Up Activities Proposed by Students

Analysis of 33 reflective journals identified four major categories of follow-up activities: (1) Linguistic Revision-Oriented Activities, (2) Strategy-Based Writing Improvement, (3) Resource Utilization and External Support, and (4) Self-Regulated Practice and Habit Formation.

1. Linguistic Revision-Oriented Activities

This category was the most frequently reported and included activities related to grammar revision, vocabulary expansion, sentence variation practice, and paragraph rewriting.

a. Revising Grammar Errors

Grammar revision emerged as the dominant follow-up activity. Students showed awareness of their grammatical weaknesses and proposed various strategies to improve accuracy. Several students focused on learning grammar independently through online resources. For example, one student stated, *"I watched video in YouTube to study about basic grammar to reduce my mistake in sentence structure"* (S7), while another reported, *"I try to improve my knowledge on grammar so I can reduce my grammar error when I write or speak"* (S9).

Students also used structured learning resources such as grammar books, websites, and grammar-checking applications. One participant explained, *"I practiced verb-ing spelling through a pretest using Betty Schrampfer Azar's book to improve my grammar"* (S24), whereas another noted, *"I practiced interactive grammar exercises through British Council website, Grammarly, and Martin Hewings' book"* (S26).

In addition, students targeted specific grammatical features, including tenses, passive voice, modal verbs, adjective clauses, and contrast expressions. Digital resources such as YouTube and Google were frequently mentioned as learning supports. For example, students reported, *"I learned past tense by watching YouTube videos"* (S27) and *"I learned past tense through Google and YouTube"* (S29).

b. Expanding Academic Vocabulary

Vocabulary development was another prominent follow-up activity. Students employed various strategies, including reading literary texts, watching films, listening to songs and podcasts, and using language-learning applications.

One student reported, *"I watched film 'The Chronicles of Narnia', listened to song, and read short story to add new vocabulary"* (S1), while another stated, *"I read some other travel essays to enrich my vocabulary and figurative language"* (S2).

Reading activities were particularly common. Students reported reading novels, short stories, web novels, and online articles to learn vocabulary in context. Digital resources were also widely used. For instance, one participant explained, *"I studied new vocabulary every day using Duolingo application"* (S14), while another noted, *"I listened to English podcast to add new vocabulary while listening"* (S16).

Students also emphasized contextual vocabulary use. As one student stated, *"I watched YouTube to recognize words in their contexts and improve intonation"* (S12). Another reported, *"I used flash card idiom from Quizlet to memorize and practice English idioms"* (S16).

c. Practicing Sentence Variation

Students also reported activities aimed at improving sentence construction and syntactic flexibility. Writing practice was the most common strategy. One student

stated, *"I practice writing to make me fluent in writing English sentence and know whether the sentences right or wrong"* (S7). Grammar exercises were frequently used to support sentence variation. For example, a participant reported, *"I practiced on grammar focused on Simple Past and Past Continuous and studied Present Tense, Continuous, Perfect in various sentence context"* (S23). Another explained, *"I did grammar exercises every day to practice writing sentences in correct grammar"* (S22). Several students also used digital applications such as *Duolingo* and online resources. One participant stated, *"I used words in sentences using mobile application such as Duolingo"* (S18), while another reported practicing sentence writing using materials from *Google, YouTube, and Telegram* (S29).

d. Rewriting Paragraphs for Clarity

Although less frequently reported, some students proposed rewriting paragraphs to improve clarity and coherence. One participant stated, *"I write sentences or paragraph with the focus on certain grammar to apply my grammar knowledge in my own writing"* (S22). Another reported, *"I learned grammar and rewrote sentences to improve my understanding of sentence structure"* (S28).

Students also used supporting tools during revision. For example, one student explained that they completed writing tasks in Microsoft Word and revised them to improve presentation and readability (S3). These responses indicate that some learners engaged in deeper revision practices that involved reorganizing ideas and refining sentence structures.

2. Strategy-Based Writing Improvement

The analysis revealed that students proposed several strategy-based activities to improve their writing performance. Three major strategies emerged from the data: creating writing outlines before drafting, practicing peer feedback exchange, and comparing writing with model texts.

a. Creating Writing Outlines Before Drafting

Planning and outlining before writing were among the most frequently reported strategies. Students described organizing ideas, visualizing content, and learning text structures before beginning the drafting process. For example, one student stated, *"I made visualization of my main characters, then I made outline of my story"* (S3). Another explained, *"I learned how to write an essay to understand the writing process step by step"* (S24).

These responses suggest that students viewed writing as a structured process that requires planning and organization before text production. The use of outlines, story maps, and essay structures indicates efforts to improve coherence and logical development of ideas.

b. Practicing Peer Feedback Exchange

Although less frequently mentioned, some students reported seeking feedback from peers as part of their follow-up activities. One participant stated, *"I asked and discussed grammar with my friends so we can understand more and work together"* (S13).

This finding indicates that students occasionally engaged in collaborative learning to identify errors, clarify language use, and gain alternative perspectives on their writing. However, compared to other follow-up activities, peer feedback appeared to be relatively limited, suggesting that independent learning strategies were more dominant than collaborative ones.

c. Comparing Writing with Model Texts

Another strategy involved using model texts as references for improving writing quality. Students reported reading sample texts and applying observed structures and language features to their own writing. For example, one participant stated, *"I tried to make my own short travel essay based on the theory and the model that have been learnt"* (S2). Similarly, another student reported, *"I read children's short stories to learn writing styles and improve my own writing"* (S28).

Some students also engaged in summarizing and adapting texts, indicating attempts to internalize organizational patterns and genre conventions. These activities suggest that learners used model texts not only as sources of content but also as guides for understanding effective writing practices.

Overall, the findings indicate that strategy-based writing improvement activities extend beyond linguistic correction and focus on the writing process itself. Students employed planning techniques, sought feedback from peers, and utilized model texts to improve organization, coherence, and genre awareness. Among these strategies, pre-writing planning and outlining emerged as the most frequently reported activity, while peer feedback was the least common.

3. Resource Utilization and External Support

The analysis revealed that students actively utilized various external resources and support systems to enhance their English learning. Three major patterns emerged from the data: consulting tutors or external learning support, using digital learning and grammar-checking tools, and watching academic writing or grammar tutorials.

a. Consulting Tutors and External Learning Support

Several students reported seeking assistance from external learning environments, including online courses, tutors, and language programs. For example, one student stated, *"I followed online course via Zoom to practice vocabulary in communication with native speaker"* (S17). Another participant reported, *"I took English course in Kampung Inggris Pare to improve my speaking and vocabulary skill"* (S18).

Some students also mentioned attending tutoring sessions and using guidebooks to strengthen their understanding of grammar and language use. These findings suggest that learners extended their learning beyond classroom instruction by accessing additional sources of expert guidance and structured practice.

b. Using Grammar-Checking Tools and Digital Learning Platforms

The use of digital technologies emerged as one of the most frequently reported follow-up activities. Students utilized grammar-checking applications, artificial intelligence (AI) tools, language-learning applications, and educational websites to support their learning.

For instance, one participant stated, *"I check it with Artificial Intelligence to increase my ability to write with the correct grammar"* (S9). Another reported, *"I used QuillBot, ChatGPT and Gemini AI checker"* (S23). Students also mentioned using platforms such as Duolingo, Quizizz, Grammarly, and the British Council website for practice, self-assessment, and monitoring their learning progress.

These responses indicate that digital tools served multiple functions, including providing feedback, facilitating practice, and helping learners evaluate their language performance independently.

c. Watching Academic Writing and Grammar Tutorials

Another common activity involved accessing instructional content through online video platforms, particularly *YouTube*. Students reported watching grammar lessons, writing tutorials, and educational videos to strengthen their understanding of language concepts.

For example, one student stated, *"I try to improve my understanding about basic grammar by watching BBC Learning English in YouTube"* (S9). Another participant explained, *"I watched YouTube 'Grammar Lessons' to understand grammar materials with visual explanation"* (S13).

In some cases, students combined video tutorials with note-taking and additional practice activities. These findings suggest that online instructional content functioned as an accessible source of supplementary learning outside formal classroom settings.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that students actively relied on both human

support and technology-based resources to facilitate their language learning. The most frequently reported activities involved the use of digital platforms and AI-assisted tools, followed by engagement with online tutorials and external learning programs. These practices indicate that students frequently extended their learning beyond classroom boundaries by utilizing diverse resources to support their language development.

4. Self-Regulated Practice and Habit Formation

The analysis revealed that students engaged in sustained and goal-oriented learning activities to improve their English proficiency. Three major patterns emerged from the data: writing journals regularly, setting vocabulary learning targets, and practicing timed writing.

a. Writing Journals Regularly

Many students reported engaging in regular writing activities as part of their independent learning routines. These activities included diary writing, note-taking, and recording grammar points for later review.

For example, one student stated, *"I learn to write by writing diary for a month in order to learn how to use grammar correctly"* (S8). Another participant explained, *"I wrote notes about tenses I forgot to improve my understanding and avoid repeating mistakes"* (S32). These responses indicate that students used writing as a routine practice to reinforce language knowledge and monitor their learning progress over time.

b. Setting Vocabulary Learning Targets

A prominent pattern in the data was students' use of specific vocabulary learning goals. Many participants reported setting daily, weekly, or monthly targets for acquiring new words. For instance, one student stated, *"I am looking for about 10–20 new vocabularies every week"* (S8). Another reported, *"I added 10–15 new words everyday"* (S12), while a third participant explained, *"I made target of 150 new word every month or 5 words per day"* (S18). To achieve these targets, students utilized various resources such as flashcards, vocabulary applications, dictionaries, and online learning platforms. The findings suggest that vocabulary development was frequently approached through structured and measurable learning routines.

c. Practicing Timed Writing

Some students reported engaging in writing activities under time constraints to improve writing fluency and productivity. These activities included essay writing, short-story writing, and other independent writing tasks. One participant stated, *"I practiced writing essays independently to improve my writing skills and writing speed"* (S27). Similarly, another student reported, *"I practiced writing short story and checked it with Artificial Intelligence to increase my ability"* (S9).

In several cases, students combined timed writing practice with feedback from digital tools, allowing them to evaluate their performance and identify areas for improvement.

Overall, the findings indicate that students developed self-regulated learning habits through regular practice, goal setting, and continuous performance monitoring. Among the identified activities, vocabulary-target setting and routine writing practices were the most frequently reported, suggesting that students relied heavily on structured and consistent learning behaviors to support their language development.

B. Metacognitive Dimensions Embedded in Follow-Up Activities

The second research question examined the metacognitive dimensions reflected in students' proposed follow-up activities. Analysis of the reflective journals revealed three interconnected dimensions: (1) metacognitive knowledge, (2) metacognitive regulation, and (3) strategic action orientation.

1. Metacognitive Knowledge: Awareness of Strengths and Weaknesses

The findings indicate that students demonstrated awareness of their own language learning strengths and limitations, particularly in grammar, vocabulary, and sentence construction. This awareness was reflected in their identification of areas requiring improvement and their selection of specific follow-up activities.

For example, one student stated, *"I try to improve my knowledge on grammar so I can reduce my grammar error when I write or speak"* (S9). Similarly, another participant reported, *"I evaluated my grammar error and evaluated my learning progress"* (S22).

Students also recognized the need to improve vocabulary knowledge and language use in context. Many participants proposed activities such as reading, watching English-language media, and learning figurative expressions to address perceived weaknesses. These responses suggest that learners were able to identify gaps in their language proficiency and use this awareness to guide subsequent learning efforts.

2. Metacognitive Regulation: Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluating Learning

The second dimension relates to students' ability to regulate their learning through planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Evidence of planning was found in activities involving schedules, learning routines, and vocabulary targets. For instance, one student stated, *"I made schedule weekly to learn grammar so I manage my independent learning consistently"* (S22). Other students reported setting specific goals, such as learning five to fifteen new words each day.

Monitoring behaviors were evident in students' use of learning applications, quizzes, and digital feedback tools. One participant explained, *"I check it with Artificial Intelligence to increase my ability to write with the correct grammar"* (S9), while another reported using online quizzes and applications to monitor improvement (S26). Evaluation was reflected in activities such as revising written work, reviewing errors, and comparing outputs with reference materials. These findings suggest that students actively monitored their progress and adjusted their learning strategies based on the outcomes of their practice.

3. Strategic Action Orientation: Concrete Steps for Improvement

The third dimension concerns the specific actions students implemented to improve their language proficiency. The data show that learners adopted a variety of strategies, including grammar exercises, extensive reading, vocabulary learning, sentence-writing practice, digital learning tools, and collaborative learning activities. For example, one student reported, *"I practiced interactive grammar exercises through British Council website to improve my grammar"* (S26). Another participant stated, *"I asked and discussed grammar with my friends so we can understand more"* (S13).

Students also extended their learning beyond formal classroom activities through films, songs, podcasts, online tutorials, and AI-assisted platforms. These actions demonstrate that learners not only recognized areas for improvement but also implemented concrete strategies to address them.

Overall, the findings indicate that students' follow-up activities were strongly characterized by metacognitive engagement. Learners demonstrated awareness of their learning needs, regulated their learning through planning and evaluation, and implemented diverse strategies to improve their language proficiency. The interaction of these three dimensions suggests that the proposed follow-up activities reflected developing learner autonomy and active involvement in the language learning process.

Table 1. Summary of Students' Follow-Up Activities and Embedded Metacognitive Dimensions

Main Theme	Subtheme	Description of Findings	Representative Evidence
Linguistic Revision-Oriented Activities	Revising grammar errors	Students focused on identifying and correcting grammatical weaknesses through self-study, grammar exercises, and online resources.	"*I watched video in YouTube to study about basic grammar…*" (S7); "*I try to improve my knowledge on grammar…*" (S9)
	Expanding academic vocabulary	Students enriched vocabulary through reading, films, songs, podcasts, and language-learning applications.	"*I watched film... read short story to add new vocabulary*" (S1); "*I studied new vocabulary every day using Duolingo*" (S14)
	Practicing sentence variation	Students practiced constructing sentences using different grammatical structures and writing exercises.	"*I practiced writing to make me fluent in writing English sentence*" (S7); "*I did grammar exercises every day*" (S22)
	Rewriting paragraphs for clarity	Students revised and reorganized written texts to improve clarity, coherence, and grammar application.	"*I wrote sentences or paragraph with the focus on certain grammar*" (S22)
Strategy-Based Writing Improvement	Creating writing outlines	Students planned and organized ideas before drafting through outlines, story maps, and essay frameworks.	"*I made outline of my story*" (S3); "*I learned how to write an essay*" (S24)
	Peer feedback exchange	Students discussed writing and grammar issues with peers to gain feedback and alternative perspectives.	"*I asked and discussed grammar with my friends*" (S13)
	Comparing with model texts	Students used sample texts as references to learn writing styles, organization, and genre conventions.	"*I tried to make my own short travel essay based on the model*" (S2)
Resource Utilization and External Support	Consulting tutors and courses	Students sought additional guidance through courses, tutors, and external learning programs.	"*I followed online course via Zoom*" (S17); "*I took English course in Kampung Inggris Pare*" (S18)
	Using digital tools and AI	Students used Grammarly, QuillBot, ChatGPT, Gemini, Duolingo, and other digital platforms for learning and feedback.	"*I used QuillBot, ChatGPT and Gemini AI checker*" (S23)
	Watching instructional tutorials	Students accessed YouTube and other educational videos to learn grammar and academic writing.	"*I watched BBC Learning English in YouTube*" (S9)
Self-Regulated Practice and Habit Formation	Writing journals regularly	Students engaged in routine writing practices such as diaries and note-taking.	"*I learn to write by writing diary for a month*" (S8)
	Setting vocabulary targets	Students established measurable vocabulary-learning goals and monitored progress.	"*I added 10–15 new words everyday*" (S12)
	Practicing timed writing	Students practiced writing under time constraints to improve fluency and writing speed.	"*I practiced writing essays independently*" (S27)
Metacognitive Dimensions	Metacognitive knowledge	Students identified their strengths, weaknesses, and areas requiring improvement.	"*I try to improve my knowledge on grammar…*" (S9)
	Metacognitive regulation	Students planned, monitored, and evaluated their learning through schedules, targets, and self-assessment.	"*I made schedule weekly to learn grammar*" (S22)
	Strategic action orientation	Students implemented concrete actions and strategies to improve language proficiency.	"*I practiced interactive grammar exercises…*" (S26)

DISCUSSION

The separation of findings in this study allows for a critical, theoretically grounded interpretation of how EFL students navigate their writing development post-reflection. The empirical evidence demonstrates that when students are prompted to propose follow-up activities, they do not merely list tasks; instead, they engage in a highly structured, agentic process driven by metacognitive mechanisms.

The overriding dominance of Linguistic Revision-Oriented Activities, particularly the heavy emphasis on grammar and vocabulary rectification, reveals an interesting pedagogical phenomenon. It indicates that students still hold a highly localized, form-focused perception of writing quality. This tendency to prioritize surface-level accuracy aligns with previous literature suggesting that L2 writers frequently experience high cognitive anxiety regarding grammatical precision, often viewing language errors as the primary barrier to academic legitimacy.

Substantively, the structural composition of the students' proposals provides strong empirical validation for contemporary models of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL), most notably the framework popularized by Zimmerman (2002). Zimmerman's model posits that self-regulation operates in a cyclical phase involving forethought, performance, and self-reflection. The findings of this study capture students at the critical junction of self-reflection and future forethought. By demonstrating goal setting, autonomous resource management, and reflective evaluation, these learners explicitly transition from passive recipients of feedback into active, self-regulated agents of their own linguistic trajectories.

Furthermore, the integration of diverse external learning tools and informal digital environments observed in the students' plans suggests an essential expansion of traditional SRL frameworks. Modern learners do not regulate their cognition within an isolated vacuum; rather, they navigate complex, technology-mediated learning ecosystems. As noted by Godwin-Jones (2018), managing learning across interconnected digital spaces demands a higher level of metacognitive sophistication, as learners must independently judge the credibility, relevance, and pedagogical value of autonomous digital resources.

However, the distinct asymmetry uncovered in the context-specific metacognitive variance presents a crucial pedagogical challenge. The reality that students' metacognitive engagement was intensely concentrated on micro-linguistic features (grammar and vocabulary) while remaining underdeveloped in macro-structural dimensions (discourse organization and argumentation) indicates a cognitive boundary. This boundary suggests that while students possess the regulatory tools to diagnose and fix localized surface errors, they lack the advanced metacognitive scaffolding required to evaluate and reshape complex rhetorical structures independently.

Despite its theoretical and practical contributions, several limitations inherently bound this study. First, the research design relies heavily on cross-sectional qualitative content analysis of reflective journals, capturing a snapshot of students' proposed plans rather than tracking the empirical execution and quantifiable success of these activities. Second, the study did not incorporate a rigorous quasi-experimental framework with a control group, making it difficult to statistically isolate the exact causal variance attributable solely to the reflective intervention. Finally, while the findings highlight students' intention to navigate external, technology-mediated environments, the data did not granularly examine how learners critically evaluate and validate the pedagogical credibility of autonomous digital tools and AI resources.

Consequently, these limitations point to critical areas for targeted pedagogical intervention and future academic inquiry. First, scaffolded metacognitive scaffolding where writing instructors must deliberately move beyond form-focused pedagogy. Rather than assuming students can

independently fix structural or argumentative flaws, educators need to explicitly scaffold advanced metacognitive strategies tailored specifically for high-level rhetorical competencies, macro-coherence, and critical argumentation. Second, true experimental validation through which future research should transcend the boundaries of purely qualitative or descriptive thematic designs by implementing true experimental or quasi-experimental frameworks. Utilizing rigorous control groups will help isolate the exact statistical variance attributable to structured reflective intervention versus traditional teacher-led feedback. Third, longitudinal tracking designs which are highly recommended to evaluate the sustainability, long-term retention, and cross-disciplinary transferability of the metacognitive skills developed through short-term reflective practices. Last, ecosystemic integration which is needed to explore how learners evaluate and cross-reference autonomous digital tools within informal learning environments, providing a more comprehensive blueprint for technology-mediated self-regulated learning in the digital age.

CONCLUSION

This study provides critical empirical and theoretical insights into how EFL students navigate their academic writing development through autonomous reflection. By separating the objective findings from the analytical discussion, this research underscores a pivotal pedagogical reality: when learners are systematically prompted to propose their own follow-up learning pathways, they actively transition from passive feedback recipients into highly agentic, self-regulated practitioners. The structural composition of these proposals strongly validates contemporary models of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL), demonstrating that the reflective journal acts as a powerful catalyst at the intersection of cognitive self-reflection and future forethought.

Crucially, however, the study uncovers a distinct metacognitive boundary in student autonomy. While learners exhibit sophisticated metacognitive awareness and regulation when diagnosing micro-linguistic features—such as mechanical grammar and vocabulary selection—their autonomous monitoring remains noticeably underdeveloped when confronting macro-structural writing dimensions, including macro-discourse organization, rhetorical coherence, and linear argumentation. This asymmetry reveals that the capacity for self-regulation does not automatically transfer from surface-level corrections to higher-order discourse synthesis. Furthermore, the findings highlight that modern students do not regulate their writing in a vacuum; rather, they navigate complex, technology-mediated learning ecosystems, demanding an advanced tier of digital metacognitive sophistication to evaluate external, autonomous resources.

The theoretical and empirical contributions of this study point to several urgent recommendations for advanced EFL writing instruction and future academic inquiry by conducting scaffolded metacognitive scaffolding, true experimental validation, longitudinal tracking, ecosystemic integration.

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