

Proficient Learners' Writing Strategy Usage in Arabic Composition

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Learning to write effectively in Arabic as a foreign language is understood to be difficult for learners. However, studies on writing in Arabic language are still in their early stages. Therefore, this study investigated the writing strategies used by Sri Lankan learners of Arabic as a foreign language. The aim of this study was to identify the writing strategies employed by these proficient learners in composing Arabic essays. This research employed a qualitative method. Participants were instructed to write an essay in Arabic, and data were obtained using think aloud protocol, observation and retrospective interview. Six pre-university Arabic language learners from the Fathih Institute of Sri Lanka participated in this research. They were selected based on their previous achievements in writing tests and recommendation of the instructor. Data were then coded and rated by three experts. The Cohen's Kappa inter-rater agreement value was 0.86. Findings showed that the learners used all five rhetorical, metacognitive, cognitive, communicative and social/affective writing strategies. Cognitive and metacognitive strategies were used more frequently compared to rhetorical, communicative and social/affective strategies. Meanwhile, all learners used a wide array of writing strategies. This study identified thirty six writing strategies used by learners of Arabic as a foreign language, named AFL-WS inventory. The findings imply that Arabic writing instructors need to train learners in using these strategies effectively and productively.

Keywords: Arabic language, Proficient learner, Sri Lanka, Writing strategies