

## Cognitive Development in Writing Skills Among Students of Insan Mulia Integrated Islamic High School

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### ABSTRAK

Siswa Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP) berada pada fase operasional formal dalam perkembangan kognitif, di mana mereka mampu menggunakan simbol untuk memahami konsep-konsep abstrak secara logis. Mereka juga mengembangkan kemampuan fleksibilitas dalam berpikir, berpikir secara abstrak, merumuskan hipotesis mental, serta mempertimbangkan alternatif dan solusi dalam pemecahan masalah. Meskipun demikian, tulisan siswa sering kali mengandung kesalahan dalam aspek-aspek seperti ejaan, tata bahasa, tanda baca, kosakata, dan penggunaan waktu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kognisi siswa kelas 9 di SMPIT Insan Mulia Batanghari dalam menulis teks deskriptif berbahasa Arab sebagai bahasa kedua. Desain studi yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan wawancara, observasi, dan analisis teks sebagai metode pengumpulan data. Data yang dikumpulkan berupa kalimat-kalimat dalam teks deskriptif, transkrip wawancara, dan hasil observasi dari proses penulisan siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kognisi siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif mengikuti tahapan proses menulis yang meliputi pra-menulis, penyusunan draf, revisi, pengeditan, dan penerbitan. Selain itu, siswa memiliki tujuan dan motivasi dalam menulis yang didasari oleh keyakinan bahwa menulis dapat meningkatkan keterampilan mereka dalam mempelajari Bahasa Arab sebagai bahasa asing. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan mendalam tentang proses kognitif siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif berbahasa Arab dan relevansinya dalam konteks pendidikan bahasa kedua.

**Kata kunci** : Kognisi siswa, Perkembangan Kognitif, Bahasa Arab, Bahasa kedua.

### ABSTRACT

*Junior high school students (SMP) are in the formal operational stage of cognitive development, where they are capable of using symbols to logically understand abstract concepts. They also develop flexibility in thinking, abstract thinking, formulating mental hypotheses, and considering alternatives and solutions in problem-solving. However,*

*students' writings often contain errors in aspects such as spelling, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, and tense. This study aims to analyze the cognition of 9th-grade students at SMPIT Insan Mulia Batanghari in writing descriptive texts in Arabic as a second language. The research design used is qualitative descriptive, employing interviews, observations, and text analysis as data collection methods. The data collected consist of sentences from descriptive texts, interview transcripts, and observations of the students' writing processes. The results of the study indicate that students' cognition in writing descriptive texts follows the stages of the writing process, including pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Moreover, students have goals and motivations for writing, grounded in the belief that writing can enhance their skills in learning Arabic as a foreign language. This study provides valuable insights into the cognitive processes of students in writing descriptive texts in Arabic and its relevance in the context of second language education.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

When students learn to write Arabic as a second language, they may encounter several challenges. These include mastering Arabic letters and the convention of writing from right to left. Additionally, complex sentence structures in Arabic can also pose a challenge because they require a good understanding of Arabic grammar rules, including the use of pronouns, conjunctions, and word placement in sentences. Furthermore, difficulty in understanding and correctly using Arabic vocabulary and various formal writing styles depending on the context are also common issues. Additionally, weak writing skills, limited practice contexts, and difficulty in understanding the use of punctuation marks and other symbols are also complicating factors in the process of learning Arabic writing.

The cognitive development theory in writing skill reflects the individual's writing capabilities evolving with their growth and cognitive development (Bazerman, 2009). In the sensorimotor stage (0-2 years), the main focus is on developing fine motor skills, which form an important basis in the writing process. Additionally, early awareness of writing tools and means of writing also begins to form during this period (Oliver, 1990).

The preoperational stage, spanning from ages 2 to 7 in child development, marks a period where imagination and symbolic representation develop rapidly. During this stage, children begin to explore the world in more abstract ways, using imagination to create stories and scenarios that are not necessarily based on reality (فنجري عمار عمر et al., 2022). Symbolic play also emerges, where children use symbols, such as toys or words, to represent specific objects or ideas. Despite their vivid imagination, they tend to be egocentric and struggle with logical understanding, making grasping others' perspectives challenging (Abdeldaim, 2022). Language undergoes significant development, becoming a primary means of expressing ideas and sharing imaginary stories. Play, especially role-playing, plays a crucial role in enhancing symbolic representation skills. However, children in this stage face limitations in realistic logical thinking and more complex logical operations. This stage lays the groundwork for later development in the concrete operational stage (العويرضي, 2022).

In the concrete operational stage (7-11 years), children develop logical thinking skills and organize thoughts in a more complex manner. They become capable of forming sentences and paragraphs more coherently, with an initial understanding of conventions in written language. This reflects a transition from simple writing to more organized and logically thought-out writing (Agustyaningrum et al., 2022).

The formal operational stage (11 years and above) represents a cognitive maturity that allows individuals to think abstractly and critically in writing (Din, 2020). During this period, deeper understanding of writing structures and techniques evolves, along with the ability to plan and revise writing in a more organized manner. This marks the peak of writing skill development, encompassing vital aspects of writing (Wang et al., 2024).

The cognitive development of writing skills involves four main stages. The sensory-motor stage focuses on developing fine motor skills by introducing students to alphabet letters. In the preoperational stage, students begin to explore their imagination, and are required to memorize Arabic language vocabulary. The operational stage reflects students' ability to form sentences and paragraphs more coherently, while students are challenged in the professional stage to develop

more complex and creative writing skills. In the final stage, students must be able to review and improve writing skills overall.

Given the preliminary interview, it appears that students' Arabic writing skills are severely weak, as Arabic is a second language rather than their native language. Even when given tasks to write scientific research in Indonesian, many students struggle. Most students still do not master how to form sentences correctly, despite understanding their meanings. When expressing ideas in writing, sentences are often poorly organized.

When given tasks to write daily activities in Arabic, many students use repetitive sentences, indicating a lack of vocabulary stored in their minds. Difficulty increases when students are asked to write poems in Arabic, especially at the high school level.

This research aims to investigate and analyze the development of Arabic writing skills among students, with a focus on the cognitive aspect. Firstly, the research will assess the level of development of students' writing skills at each stage of cognitive development, including the sensory-motor stage, preoperational stage, operational stage, and finally the professional stage. This analysis will provide deep insights into students' progress in writing skills alongside their cognitive development.

Additionally, the research will analyze factors affecting students' Arabic writing skills, especially in the context of using Arabic as a second language. This will include aspects such as the learning environment, curriculum, and teaching methods used. It is expected that this analysis will provide insights into the variables affecting students' writing skill development.

Finally, this research aims to formulate developmental recommendations and strategies in the field of learning that can enhance students' Arabic writing skills. By identifying the challenges students face and analyzing the impact of teaching, this research will provide practical guidance for decision-makers in education, teachers, and relevant stakeholders to improve the quality of teaching and learning Arabic writing skills at the high school level. The preoperational stage, spanning from ages 2 to 7 in child development, marks a period where imagination and symbolic representation develop rapidly. During this stage,

children begin to explore the world in more abstract ways, using imagination to create stories and scenarios that are not necessarily based on reality. Symbolic play also emerges, where children use symbols, such as toys or words, to represent specific objects or ideas. Despite their vivid imagination, they tend to be egocentric and struggle with logical understanding, making grasping others' perspectives challenging. Language undergoes significant development, becoming a primary means of expressing ideas and sharing imaginary stories. Play, especially role-playing, plays a crucial role in enhancing symbolic representation skills. However, children in this stage face limitations in realistic logical thinking and more complex logical operations. This stage lays the groundwork for later development in the concrete operational stage.

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Additionally, the research will analyze factors affecting students' Arabic writing skills, especially in the context of using Arabic as a second language. This will include aspects such as the learning environment, curriculum, and teaching methods used. It is expected that this analysis will provide insights into the variables affecting students' writing skill development.

Finally, this research aims to formulate developmental recommendations and strategies in the field of learning that can enhance students' Arabic writing skills. By identifying the challenges students face and analyzing the impact of teaching, this research will provide practical guidance for decision-makers in education, teachers, and relevant stakeholders to improve the quality of teaching and learning Arabic writing skills at the high school level.

## **DISCUSSION**

First, this research aims to understand the development of Arabic writing skills in students, focusing on the cognitive aspect. The study will evaluate students' ability to write in Arabic at each stage of cognitive development, ranging from the sensorimotor stage, preoperational stage, operational stage, to the

professional stage. This data will provide deep insights into students' progress in writing skills alongside their cognitive development.

Second, the research will analyze factors influencing Arabic writing skills in students, particularly in the context of Arabic as a second language. This will encompass aspects such as the learning environment, curriculum, and teaching methods employed. It is hoped that this analysis will provide insights into the variables affecting students' writing skill development.

Third, the research aims to formulate recommendations and development strategies in the field of learning to enhance students' Arabic writing skills. By identifying challenges faced by students and analyzing the impact of teaching, this research will provide practical guidance for decision-makers in education, teachers, and relevant stakeholders to improve the quality of teaching and learning Arabic writing skills at the secondary school level.

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of the research indicate a consistent pattern in the development of Arabic writing skills. In the sensorimotor stage, students begin to recognize Arabic letters and develop fine motor skills essential in the writing process. In the preoperational stage, students start to sharpen their imagination and express their ideas through writing. At the operational stage, their ability to construct sentences and paragraphs becomes more organized, and they begin to understand conventions in written language. Furthermore, in the professional stage, students reach the peak of their writing skill development, with the ability to plan and revise their writing more systematically.

Factors influencing students' Arabic writing skills include the learning environment, curriculum, and teaching methods. This study suggests that a supportive learning environment, relevant curriculum, and effective teaching methods can significantly enhance students' writing skills.

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the development of Arabic writing skills in students and the influencing factors. However, the study also has some limitations, such as sample limitations and a focus primarily on the secondary school level. For future research, it is recommended to broaden the sample scope and consider the influence of other

factors, such as student motivation and parental support, on their writing skill development.

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