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**Exploring the Connection Between Metacognition and Academic  
Achievement :**

**A Case Study of Third-Year EFL Students of Dr Moulay Taher University**

Dissertation submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in  
Didactics.

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## **Declaration of Originality**

I hereby declare that this thesis is based on my original work except for citations and quotations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously and concurrently submitted for any other degree or award at any university or institution except for Dr. Moulay Tahar University of Saida.

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Signature:

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## **Dedication**

To my dear parents. As I step into the next chapter of my life, I carry with me the lessons you've taught me, the love you've given me, every word of encouragement, every sacrifice, and Motivation to make you proud.

To my friends whom I met at university and who became part of my life

Thankful for all the memories we have made together and your unwavering support.

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## **Acknowledgments**

All the praise and thanks go first to Allah who helped and provided me with the strength and patience

I would like to express my warm thanks to my supervisor Dr. N. Marouf for her support, assistance, and guidance in completing my work.

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I also extend special thanks to all the students and teachers among them Mrs. Adnane who helped me to collect much of the data needed. Without their help and participation, this study could not have been done.

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## **Abstract**

Understanding and controlling one's own thinking can sometimes be challenging and surprisingly, one needs more practice to perform these skills easily. This is what is called metacognition, a skill that a lot do ignore its importance and influence on human behavior and performance especially in the educational context. Thus, the present research study aims to investigate and explore the connection between metacognition and academic achievement among third-year EFL students at Saida University of Dr Moulay Taher, it also aims at assessing students' metacognitive awareness as well as teachers' perspectives and attitudes toward this skill. To achieve the research aims the case study was selected using two research tools for data collection: a questionnaire for (70) students, and structured interviews for ( 08 ) EFL teachers from the English department of Saida University. The findings revealed a Significant lack of awareness among most third-year students due to the lack of formal training and instruction that was confirmed by the teachers where none of these skills were included in students' curriculum courses, as well as the results showed a very strong positive relationship between metacognition and academic performance, confirming that students who demonstrate stronger metacognitive skills tend to perform better academically than those who don't. At the end of this research, a series of recommendations were suggested to both the EFL teachers and the learners to foster and implement metacognitive skills in their learning process such as: including metacognitive activities in lessons across different subjects, Encouraging students to take more control of their learning which will increase their autonomy and give students feedback that focuses on how they think, not just their answers.

***Keywords:*** Academic achievement, Autonomy, EFL students, EFL teachers, Educational Context, Metacognition, Saida University

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## **List of Abbreviations**

**EFL:** English as Foreign Language.

**SRL:** Self-Regulated Learning.

**ALA:** the Association of Language Awareness.

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## General Introduction

In education, seeking effective strategies and methods for better successful learning has become challenging mostly for educators, especially in the context of learning a foreign language, which relies not only on the grammar rules and vocabulary but also the skills that students should integrate into their learning for smoother and more achievable learning goals some of these skills are either being ignored by the students or neglected in their curriculum system. One of these crucial skills is metacognition, defined as understanding one's own thinking, it includes the ability to monitor, plan, and evaluate one's thinking. In simple terms, it involves reflecting on how we learn, solve problems, and process the information we receive. Despite its importance, it often receives low attention in the educational curriculum.

Metacognition can be defined as one of the pillars of academic achievement, several researchers have confirmed and mentioned the connection that exists between these two aspects, metacognitive skills such as monitoring and planning play a crucial role in academic success in a way that when students are being aware of their thinking and what they're learning when completing their exams, assignments, and classroom activities will lead to a more improved performance and success in their learning journey. Providing instruction in metacognitive strategies empowers learners to become more self-regulated, self-directed, and ultimately successful in their educational pursuits (Goh, 1997; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Vandergrift, 2002, 2003). As well as encouraging learner autonomy and learner-centeredness classroom environment (Raoofti et al., 2013).

However, despite the importance and significance of metacognition, this area still lacks attention and understanding on how it influences students' learning, its connection with academic achievement, and the reason behind this lack of awareness among both students and teachers in including it in the curriculum.

Considering what we mentioned above, this study was conducted at Dr Moulay Taher Saida's University aiming to explore and assess the connection between metacognition and academic achievement among third-year EFL students. Accordingly tries to provide answers to the following questions:

- How does metacognition affect third-year academic performance?

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- Do third-year EFL students with stronger metacognitive skills tend to perform better academically?
  - Is there a metacognitive skills awareness among Third-year EFL students?

To answer these questions, three research hypotheses are formulated:

- Metacognition has a positive impact on students' academic achievement, it enables students to enhance their learning process, language skills, and performance.
- Third-year EFL students who exhibit stronger metacognitive skills are more likely to achieve higher academic performance compared to their peers with weaker metacognitive skills.
- Many Third-year EFL students may not be aware of their metacognitive skills and how they can influence their learning.

To conduct this research and meet the objectives that were set at the beginning, the researcher designed a research methodology, an explanatory case study research design that is directed to third-year EFL students with the use of a mixed-method approach for the collection and analysis of data. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are integrated, with the use of two instruments, the quantitative tool included a questionnaire delivered for Third-year students consisting of 11 close-ended, multiple choices questions and a qualitative method that involved a structured interview for (8) English teachers from the English language department of Saida university seeking for their perceptions towards students' metacognitive awareness and its roles in influencing their academic performance.

The current research is divided into three main chapters: the first is a review of the literature, the second is dedicated to the fieldwork, and the third one includes the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered, in addition to a general introduction that provides an overview of the issue and a general conclusion that summarizes the whole work.

The first chapter focuses on the different metacognition definitions and overviews from different researchers and authors, it tackles as well metacognition from different sides, including the general view moving to the educational context than in the EFL context, Additionally, the chapter mentions its connection with academic achievements ending with how

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it is viewed from Algerian context. The second chapter deals with the research design and methodology. It portrays the utilized research instruments for the collection of data, and the methodology undertaken to achieve the research purposes. With a detailed description of the sample and population as well as an explanation of the questionnaire and interview questions and the limitations faced while completing this research. finally, the last chapter attempts to analyze and interpret the collected data and findings and provides recommendations for both teachers and students on the importance of integrating metacognition in their learning process and fostering metacognitive skills for better academic performance.

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## Chapter One: Literature Review

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## 1.1 Introduction

As humans, we never understood how our minds really work or how to reflect on our own thinking. This lack of understanding is what is known as metacognition or when the mind controls itself. It has always played a crucial role in our academic journey, yet it doesn't receive the attention that it deserves. Additionally, many students are unaware of how their metacognition skills can influence their learning process. This chapter will be divided into two parts. In the first one, we will focus on metacognition, in general, mentioning various researchers' viewpoints and definitions in the educational context. In the second part, we will dive to explore the relationship between metacognition and academic achievement and how its awareness may empower students and support their academic journey and more specifically in EFL learning.

## 1.2 Definition of Metacognition

Like a dark room devoid of light, this is how our minds will appear without metacognition. In other words, without metacognition, our thinking will lack illumination and insight. The word Metacognition is divided into two parts: Meta which means " Beyond "and Cognition " knowledge " which makes it " beyond knowledge. However, the accepted field meaning is more complex. Cambridge Dictionary defines Metacognition as " *one of the famous most sophisticated cognitive capacities* ".

Moreover, the term Metacognition has been used in psychology and education research since mid-1970, and before getting broader it was first introduced under the term " Metamemory" in the early 1970s by John Flavell who is considered to be the "father of the field ". Where he conducted a study on children's metamemory to explain their development and application of recall strategies. Later, in 1979, he defined it as " *knowledge and cognition about cognitive phenomena*" (Flavell, 1979). Which goes beyond just knowing the information, but also understanding how our mind will process and use this information. Similarly, According to Moore, it is " *the individual's knowledge about various aspects of thinking* " ( Moore, 1989).It has also been described as '*individuals' capacity to adapt their cognitive processes to enhance more effective understanding*' (Gavelek& Raphael, 1985, pp. 22-23).

Furthermore, Paris and Winograd (1990) define 'metacognition' as encompassing two fundamental aspects: self-appraisal and self-management of cognitive processes (p. 17).

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Self-appraisal refers to how an individual will reflect his thinking toward knowledge states, skills, motivation, and learning strategies, which will provide answers to questions such as "what you know what you think, and when and why to apply these learning and knowledge strategies ( Paris& Winograd, 1990, p. 17). Whereas self-management refers to " metacognition in action " which relates to the processes that aid in "controlling elements of problem resolution," among them "the preparations that learners make before performing a task" and "the modifications they make as they work" and "the modifications that they make afterward" (p. 18).

Metacognition has come to be defined and used in ways that are mostly consistent with Flavell's original meaning. Following that, metacognition is defined as :

- “The act of thinking, planning, and controlling thinking” (Girash, 2014)
- “The ability to reflect, understand, and control learning and the fact of being aware of our steps and strategies during solving a problem” (Ferreiro, 2012, p.253).
- “The self-knowledge that a person has about his/her cognitive processes, the characteristics and exigencies of the situations and tasks to solve, and the strategies that can unfold to manage efficiently their execution by themselves” (Escanero, Soria and Gonzales-Hard, 2008, p. 4).
- “A series of operations, activities, and cognitive functions carried out by a person through an internalized set of intellectual mechanisms that allow him/her to gather, produce and evaluate information, which makes possible the person to know, control and self-regulate his/her own intellectual operation”. (Arredondo, 2007, p.74).
- “Awareness or analysis about learning or thinking process” (Merriam-Webster, 2014)

According to these definitions, we can clearly see that they all share the same meaning, which shows that metacognition occurs when an individual is conscious of how they think and modifies it to solve problems or complete desired activities.



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### 1.3 Cognition and Metacognition

According to Noushad (2008), cognition is *"Where thinking is purposeful and is based on experiential data"*. In other words, it's When you think on purpose and use your experiences to guide you. At the same time, metacognition is thinking about and managing that thinking process. But what distinctions may be made between cognition and metacognition?

Acereda (2017) compiles Haller, Child, and Walberg's (1988) approximate response into the following table:

**Table 1.1**

COGNITION	METACOGNITION
Reference to processes or operations that are in progress	Supervision or vigilance, on the part of the apprentice, of the mental operations that are underway; that is to say, supervision of the cognitive processes that are activated during the accomplishment of some task or the coping of some problem whose solution raises some intellectual requirement
Processes or strategies that are activated by the apprentice in an effective way	Construct that refers to: 1. What a person knows of his cognitions 2. The person's ability to control their own cognitions

#### *Differences Between Cognition and Metacognition*

*Note:* based on the work of Haller, Child, and Walberg, 1988.

Based on their work, cognition is like the active mental work or processes happening in our minds right now. The person who is learning effectively uses processes or strategies to deal with tasks. On the other hand, metacognition is when the learner acts like a supervisor, carefully watching and managing their own mental processes while tackling tasks or solving problems. It's about being aware of how your brain works, understanding what you know about your thinking, and having control over it. In simpler terms, cognition is mental work, and metacognition is being in charge of and understanding how that mental work is done.

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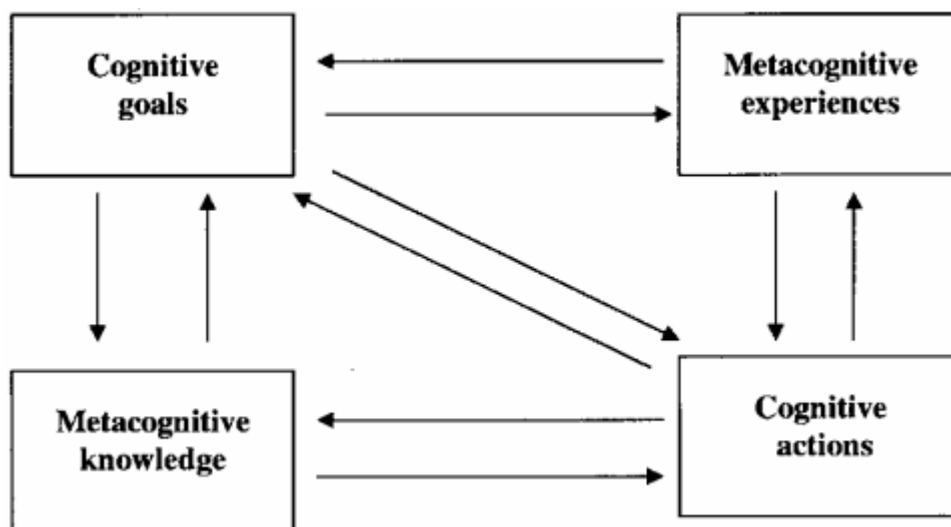
## 1.4 Metacognition Component

Metacognition entails several components or characteristics that work together to increase an individual's awareness, monitoring, and management of their own cognitive

processes. Flavell (1979) claims that the monitoring of these cognitive processes happens through the actions and interactions of four types of phenomena:

- a) metacognitive knowledge
- b) metacognitive experiences
- c) goals (or tasks): refer to the objectives of a cognitive enterprise
- d) actions (or strategies): refer to the cognitions or other behaviors employed to achieve them.

Figure 1.1 illustrates Flavell's (1981, p. 40) model of cognitive monitoring



*A Model of Cognitive Knowledge*

### 1.4.1 Metacognitive Knowledge

Flavell (1979) describes three kinds of metacognitive knowledge:

- **Awareness of knowledge:** This is When you Know what you have understood, what you didn't and what do you want to learn.

- 
- "I know that I understand that plants need sunlight but I do not know why."

It can also include an awareness of others' knowledge.

- "I know that Sarah understands long division, so I'll ask her to explain this problem to me."

• **Awareness of thinking:** Grasping what needs to be done and understanding the nature of tasks involving thinking and learning.

- "I know that reading this newspaper article will be easier for me than reading my textbook."

• **Awareness of thinking strategies:** Understanding different ways to guide your own learning.

- "I am having difficulty reading this article. I should summarize what I just read before going on."

Furthermore, metacognitive knowledge empowers individuals to navigate their own understanding, enhance learning, and adapt strategies for more effective comprehension.

### 1.4.2 Metacognitive experiences

Louca (2008) stated that "Metacognitive experiences can be fully or less fully conscious and verbalizable, brief or lengthy, simple or complex in context." In other words, they may vary in terms of how consciously they are experienced, whether they can be expressed in words, how long they last, and how simple or complex they are, all depending on the specific context. It is more likely to happen in situations that require a lot of thorough, deliberate thinking and give a lot of opportunity for ideas and feelings, concerning your own thoughts that arise (Louca, 2008). It occurs for example when one senses difficulty in perceiving, understanding, remembering, or solving something, indicating a perceived distance from the cognitive goal, or when someone is worried because he doesn't grasp something and really feels the need to understand it.

As for the last two, Flavell states that goals (or tasks) refer to the objectives of a cognitive enterprise, while actions (or strategies) refer to the cognitions or other behaviors employed to achieve them.

## 1.4 Metacognition in Educational Setting

In the academic context, according to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, Metacognition is "awareness or analysis of one's own learning or thinking processes". ([Merriam-Webster, 2012](#)).

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The idea that thinking about "how we learn is crucial" has been around for a long time. It goes back to Socrates, who used questions to make people think deeply. Even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Dewey believed that reflecting on our experiences is more valuable for learning than the experiences themselves (Dewey, 1933). Many more researchers are convinced of the educational importance that metacognitive theory has for teachers and students, For example, Borkowski and Muthukrishna argue that metacognitive theory has “considerable potential to help teachers who strive to create a class environment focused on strategic learning that is both flexible and creative” (Borkowski and Muthukrishna, 1992, p. 479).

Making metacognition part of how we learn is like adding the last puzzle of our academic journey. According to Flavell ( 1976) :

*Metacognition involves an individual's understanding of their cognitive processes and anything associated with them, such as the learning-related characteristics of information or data. For instance, engaging in metacognition occurs when one recognizes experiencing greater difficulty learning A compared to B or when the realization prompts a double-check of C before accepting it as a factual statement.*

In other words, it is essentially about understanding how our minds work and recognizing the various aspects related to learning. For example, when we realize that learning one thing (let's call it topic A) is harder for us than something else (let's call it topic B), it's like a light turning on in our minds. This light makes us stop and check if the information, let's call it variable C, is correct before we believe it. In simpler words, metacognition means we can look at how we think, figure out what's tricky for us, and change how we enhance our learning experience.

The importance of metacognition lies in its ability to generate insightful information that empowers students to take charge of their education by exhibiting a deliberate use of cognitive strategies, Educational researchers have mainly investigated metacognition through the lens of Self-Regulated Learning theory (Fleur, Bredeweg, & van den Bos, 2021).

SRL theory emphasizes the role of metacognition as one of three integral components, alongside motivation to learn and behavioral processes, in facilitating self-directed learning. The definition of metacognition within the SRL framework, encompassing goal setting, planning, organizing, self-monitoring, and self-evaluating at various stages of the learning process, aligns with the broader understanding of metacognitive processes in educational research.

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### **1.4.1 Self-Regulated Learning**

Metacognition and self-regulated learning are interconnected aspects of effective learning. Metacognition serves as a cognitive foundation for self-regulated learning, empowering students to take control of their learning processes and ultimately contributing to academic achievement. According to Schunk and Zimmerman (1998), Self-regulated learning pertains to the self-regulatory and metacognitive processes by which students accomplish learning goals, meaning that self-regulated learning involves the ability of students to manage and control their own learning experiences. It's not just about memorizing information; it's about actively engaging in processes that help students set, monitor, and achieve their learning objectives.

The inclusion of metacognitive processes emphasizes the reflective and thinking aspect of this self-regulated learning approach. Self-regulated learning (SRL) has made a substantial contribution to educational psychology since the initial papers in which scholars began distinguishing between SRL and metacognition (e.g., Zimmerman, 1986; Pintrich et al., 1993a). Since then, there has been an increase in publications in the field of SRL theory, with expanded conceptual development. Currently, there are various models of self-regulated learning (SRL), as highlighted by Sitzmann and Ely in 2011. One of these models, which examines self-regulated learning from a metacognitive perspective, is the model proposed by Winne and Hadwin.

### **1.4.2 Winne and Hadwin SRL model**

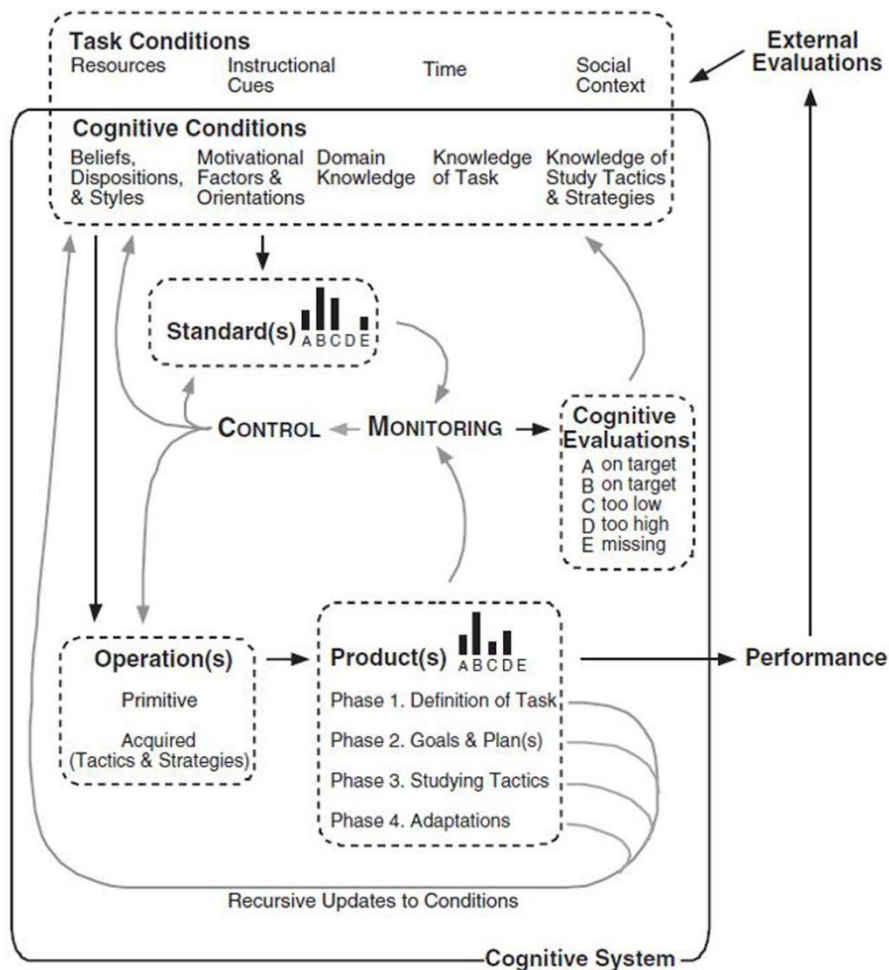
Winne and Hadwin's approach to self-regulated learning (SRL) strongly focuses on students actively managing their own learning. This involves keeping track of progress and using thinking strategies (cognitive and metacognitive). The model also highlights that SRL is goal-driven, and the actions students take to regulate their learning have a direct impact on motivation (Winne and Hadwin, 2008).

As per Winne and Hadwin's model (e.g., Winne, 2011), learning involves four connected phases, depicted in a feedback loop, and it's an ongoing and flexible process. These phases as shown (Figure 1.2) include:

- a) task definition, where students grasp the requirements of the task.

- b) goal setting and planning, where students establish goals and devise plans.
- c) using study tactics and strategies to achieve those goals
- d) metacognitively adjusting studying, which happens after the main processes, leading students to make long-term changes in their motivations, beliefs, and strategies for the future.

**Figure 1.2**



*Current Version of Winne's SRL Model*

*Note: Adapted from Winne and Hadwin (1998).*

## 1.5 Metacognition and Academic Performance

Metacognition holds a positive relationship with academic achievement. According to research conducted by Dunning, Johnson, Ehrlinger, and Kruger (2003) as well as Kruger and Dunning (1999), metacognition, or understanding one's thinking processes, is vital for effective

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learning and serves as a robust predictor of academic success. In other words, it is being mindful of how you think and learn, and making adjustments accordingly appears to be a key factor in doing well academically.

Similarly, Everson and Tobias mentioned that "Metacognition enables students to be strategic in their learning by, for instance, learning new information rather than focusing on studying information already learned" (1998), which means that this approach emphasizes efficiency, adaptability, active engagement, and problem-solving skills. By directing attention to unfamiliar content, metacognitive learners optimize their study efforts, fostering a deeper understanding of subjects and enhancing the foundation for long-term academic success.

Furthermore, According to Wang et al. (1990), students with strong metacognitive skills are positioned to learn more and perform better than peers who are still developing their metacognition. Likewise, Students with good metacognition demonstrate good academic performance compared to students with poor metacognition (Coutinho, 2007). To put it differently, an alternative viewpoint made by Stanton, Sebesta, and Dunlosky (2021) suggests that " Students with well-developed metacognition can identify concepts they do not understand and select appropriate strategies for learning those concepts. They know how to implement strategies they have selected and carry out their overall study plans, and They can evaluate their strategies and adjust their plans based on outcome." ( Stanton, Sebesta, and Dunlosky (2021). This means that these students can look at how well their chosen strategies are working and make changes to their plans based on what's happening. Essentially, having good metacognition helps students learn smart and adjust their study methods for better results.

Additionally, teaching metacognitive skills proves to be an efficacious approach in fostering learner-centeredness and learner autonomy ( Raoofi et al., 2013). Several research studies consistently show that providing instruction in metacognitive strategies empowers learners to become more self-regulated, self-directed, and ultimately successful in their educational pursuits (Goh, 1997; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Vandergrift, 2002, 2003).

However, Mastery goals and performance goals are intricately linked to academic success, with metacognition serving as the crucial mediator. Students aspiring towards mastery goals are expected to possess strong metacognitive skills, fostering academic success (Coutinho, 2007). Conversely, students driven by performance goals may exhibit weaker metacognition, potentially leading to academic challenges (Coutinho, 2007). In essence, the relationship between goals and academic outcomes hinges on the influence of metacognitive abilities. Although the connection between mastery goals and metacognition has been

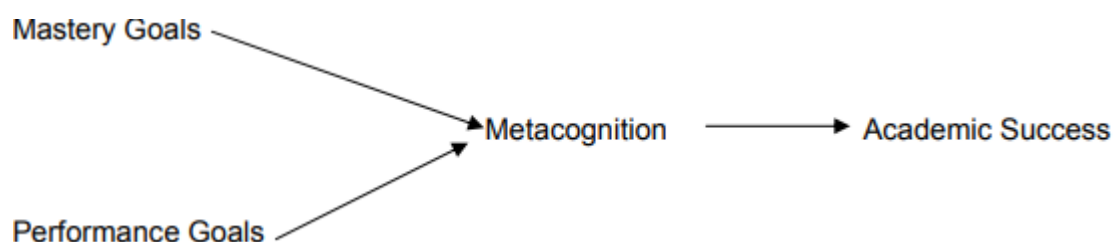
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extensively acknowledged (Ames and Archer, 1988; Dweck and Leggett, 1988), The association between metacognition and performance goals is less straightforward.

While certain studies suggest a weak positive relationship between metacognition and performance goals (e.g., Ames and Archer; Butler, 1993), others indicate a negative relationship (Wolters, 1998) or no relationship (Ford, Smith, Weissbein, Gully, and Salas, 1998).

**Figure 1.3**



*Relationship Between Achievement Goals, Metacognition, And Academic Success*

## **1.6 Metacognition in EFL Learning**

Metacognition plays a significant role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, contributing to the effectiveness of language acquisition and proficiency development. In a study conducted by Raofi, Heng Chan, Mukundan, and Md Rashid, they argued that "*the more the learners use metacognitive resources in their language learning, the more successful they were at performing language tasks*" (Raofi, Heng Chan, Mukundan, & Md Rashid, 2013). In other words, being mindful and strategic about how one learns a language appears to contribute to better performance in language-related tasks. Wenden (1987) was one of the first researchers to highlight how thinking about our thinking (metacognition) is crucial in learning and teaching languages. In her study on what we know about metacognition, she explained how this new area of research connects with what we already understand about language.

In the context of learning a second/foreign language, Wenden (1998) believes that metacognitive knowledge is "relatively stable information human-thinkers have about their own



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cognitive processes and those of others”(p. 516). To put it simply, it is like steady information that people have about how they think and how others think. This type of knowledge comprises the "beliefs, insights, and concepts individuals have developed regarding language and the

process of learning a language" (Wenden 1999, p. 34). Wenden later has integrated a simplified model of metacognitive knowledge in language learners, emphasizing three key variables: person, task, and strategy knowledge. These effective illustrations of how this three-part knowledge system can be applied in researching language learning and teaching have had a significant and successful impact (as cited in Zhang & Zhang, 2019).

Furthermore, concerning metacognition, there are two essential components: metacognitive awareness and metacognitive strategies. Metacognitive awareness refers to learners' knowledge about their learning, while metacognitive strategies involve learners' regulation and management of their learning. This encompasses a diverse set of activities, such as selecting the most useful strategies for a particular task, planning, monitoring, regulating, and evaluating the learning process (Schraw et al., 2006).

Research findings in the field of metacognition consistently highlight a significant correlation between success in second/foreign language learning and the application of metacognitive strategies and knowledge (Raoufi et al., 2013). The evidence suggests that learners who actively engage in metacognitive processes, such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning strategies, tend to achieve higher levels of proficiency and success in acquiring a second or foreign language.

Simply put, according to Haukås, Bjørke, and Dypedahl (2018b), the idea of language awareness significantly aligns with their comprehension of metacognition. Where in language learning means being aware of and thinking about what you know, your experiences, feelings, and how you learn regarding language (Haukås et al., 2018b). This awareness helps you navigate and understand the language better. Furthermore, the idea of language awareness, according to the Association of Language Awareness (ALA) it is the "explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching, and language use", which is all about consciously understanding how language works, especially when learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Haukås et al., 2018b). In this way,

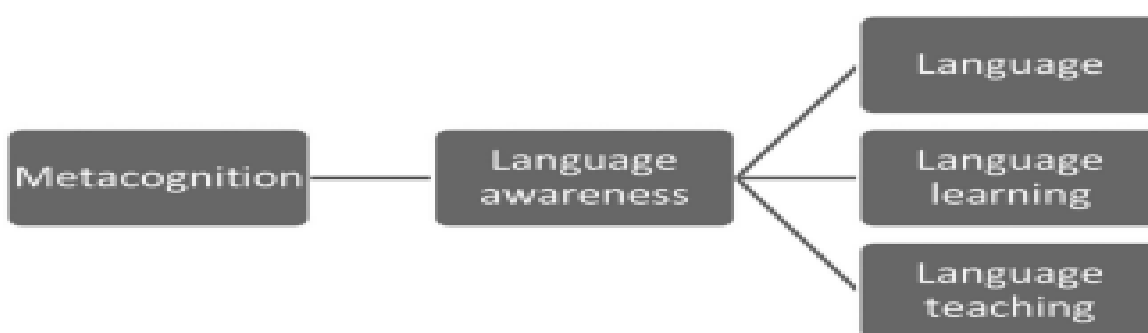
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thinking about how you learn and feel about language becomes a crucial skill for better language learning, more specifically in EFL learning.

In simpler terms, the higher-level category, Metacognition, involves being aware of and reflecting on what you know. On the other hand, its lower-level category, Language Awareness, is thinking about these aspects but specifically in three areas: Language, Language learning, and Language teaching (Haukås, Bjørke, & Dypedahl, 2018b). (see Figure 1.4)

**Figure 1.4**



*Metacognition in Relation to Language Awareness and Its Subdomains*

## **1.7 Metacognition From The Algerian Context**

In the Algerian context, in recent years it has undergone significant educational reforms. These reforms have brought about an important shift in the learning process, emphasizing the importance of factors such as metacognitive awareness and regulatory skills in the educational landscape (Ameziane, Ghendouz, 2013). Later on, research has increasingly focused on the impact of metacognitive competence on the learning outcomes of both students and teachers. The implementation of strategy and metacognition-based instruction has been shown to benefit Algerian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers and students, contributing to improved learning behavior and outcomes (Mansouri, 2020). In simple terms, teaching those strategies and metacognition instruction to EFL teachers and students for better learning of English and helping them to understand how they learn can lead to better behavior during learning and better outcomes in their English learning journey.

One of the Studies was made by Benbouzid and Hamitouche (2020) aiming to examine and assess teachers' awareness of their teaching practices and their metacognitive

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understanding, shedding light on the potential benefits of integrating metacognitive strategies into the teaching of writing. It also sought to determine whether EFL writing instructors predominantly teach with metacognition, for metacognition, or both. The results indicated that teachers consistently engage in self-reflection regarding their thinking and writing instruction, demonstrating an awareness and comprehension of their metacognitive knowledge, including personal, task, and strategic awareness ( Benbouzid & Hamitouche, 2020) similar to a study

made by Keltoum Mansouri (2020) in two English languages department from different Algerian universities investigating the extent to which research-based training about listening strategy and metacognition based-instruction benefitted Algerian EFL teachers' and students' self-efficacy for listening, in addition to students' listening proficiency, The participants were divided into two groups: an intervention group (97 students and five teachers) and a comparison group (89 students and five teachers). Results showed that both groups of teachers experienced improved self-efficacy. However, the intervention group reported a higher level at the post-test than the comparison group, despite the latter having a higher level at the pre-test

In contrast, Another study conducted by Zid and Noua ( 2022) at El Oued University aimed to investigate the level of Algerian EFL students' awareness and use of metacognitive strategies in their writing. one of them was among first-year EFL students at EL OUED University in Algeria. The results indicated a low level of awareness and utilization of various metacognitive writing strategies, that is to say, students were not very aware and didn't use any of the strategies related much, especially on the side of self-assessment or evaluation ( Zid&Noua, 2022 ).

To summarize, the investigation of metacognition in the Algerian context holds a significant role in enhancing the quality of English language education and fostering a deeper understanding of the cognitive processes involved in learning and teaching.

## **1.8 Conclusion**

To conclude, thinking about thinking, or metacognition in general, proves to be and plays a crucial role in the academic context offers valuable insights from different perspectives and sides, and is an essential contributor to effective learning. Despite its significance, it still remains limited and neglected, particularly among students. The exploration of metacognition in both general and EFL learning contexts emphasizes its potential to empower students and

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enhance academic achievement where several studies mentioned above demonstrated that students with developed metacognitive skills tend to perform improved academic performance across various subjects because simply the ability to set goals, monitor and choose the perfect strategies based on feedback fosters a dynamic learning environment.

## **Chapter Two: Methodology**

2.1 Introduction .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.2 Methodology .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.3 Type of Research Design .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.3 Population and Sample.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.4 Research Setting.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.5 Data Collection .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.5.1 Questionnaire .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.5.2 Teacher’s Interview.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.6 Limitations .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.7 Conclusion.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

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## 2.1 Introduction

While the first chapter concerns the theoretical and general background of the current study, this chapter is dedicated to testing out the different theories and aspects that were mentioned in the first chapter of the literature review. We will first explain the research methodology that was followed for the collection and analysis of data in this study which aims at exploring the relationship and connections between metacognition and academic achievement. Describing the participants including students and teachers of Dr Moulay's Saida University as well as the description of the research instruments. Finally, this chapter will end by providing the challenges and limitations faced during the research. the main goal is to provide a comprehensive and understandable outline of this methodology that will underlie the study.

## 2.2 Methodology

This research is conducted with the use of a mixed method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to gather more reliable and clear data. According to Allison and Joana: " a mixed method approach allows researchers to explore diverse perspectives and uncover relationships that exist between the intricate layers of our multifaceted research questions " (2017), which means that researchers will have a wide range and tools to examine and explore complex research questions and dig deeper .

**Table 2.1**

<b>Quantitative Method</b>	<b>Mixed-Method</b>	<b>Quantitative Method</b>
Pre-determined	Both pre-determined and emerging methods	Emerging methods
Instrument Based questions	Both open and closed-ended questions	Open-ended questions

Performance data, Attitude data, Observational data, and Census data	Multiple forms of data drawing all possibilities	Interview data, observation data, and audio-visual data
Statistical analysis	Statistical and text analysis	Text and image analysis
Statistical interpretation	Across databases interpretation	Themes, patterns interpretation.

When using both qualitative and quantitative methods together in research, we have a better chance of getting valid answers to our questions. Each method has its strengths and weaknesses (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, As cited in Dawadi, Shrestha, & Giri, 2021). For example, quantitative methods are known for providing statistical and numerical data, while qualitative methods are used for understanding people's experiences, perceptions, and attitudes. By using both methods, we can take advantage of the strengths of each as well as complete the weaknesses of each.

It is important to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative methods. they may share the same theory but not the same treatment of data ( Pathak, 2011, As cited in Kandel, 2022 ). A qualitative approach usually collects and analyzes data by answering the " how " and " why " questions to understand more and deeper people's perceptions and attitudes toward the chosen topic, using different tools such as interviews and observations. which helps in providing valuable insights that quantitative data alone cannot offer. Qualitative research aims to create concepts that help in comprehending social phenomena within real-life contexts and prioritizes capturing the meanings, experiences, and perspectives of all involved participants (Kandel, 2022).

However, unlike qualitative research which involves gathering non-numerical data, a quantitative approach focuses on collecting numerical, and mathematical data using several tools such as questionnaires and tests. Quantitative research serves as a reliable method for collecting empirical data on a chosen topic. Researchers employ statistical models and mathematics to assess their hypotheses ( Adam, 2023 ).In simple terms, measuring things is crucial because it helps connect what we observe in the real world to mathematical expressions. Researchers use numbers to describe what they find, and then they use statistics to make sense of those numbers (Kandel. 2022 ). Besides is a method that can be done anonymously and doesn't need to be directly observed.

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Therefore a case study of third-year EFL students of Dr Moulay Taher Saida's University is carried out by combining both methods as a questionnaire for the students and an interview for the teachers By integrating these methods, the study aims to offer a thorough exploration of the relationship between metacognition and students academic success.

## **2.3 Type of Research Design**

A research design is a framework that we follow and focus on when conducting our research study, and consists of the various methods and approaches that we can use for the collection of the data and information to answer the research question and confirm the hypotheses of our study. Research types differ depending on the research goal, aim, and purpose.

Explanatory research is a method employed to develop a more thorough comprehension of the underlying causes, reasons, and connections related to a specific phenomenon that hasn't been thoroughly investigated (Dovetail, 2023 ) In other words, it helps us understand the reasons behind the chosen topic or phenomena, the causes that made it happen and the relationship between its variables. The current study is an explanatory case study research, which means it focuses on a particular person or group that seems suitable for the research. In this study, the chosen case study involves third-year EFL students. With the objective to examine and investigate a deeper understanding of the relationship between metacognition and academic achievement.

## **2.3 Population and Sample**

The population of this study involves third-year students from Dr. Moulay Taher University of Saida, a total of (126) students. includes females and males with an average age of twenty-one years old. the idea behind focusing on third-year students is that they are more likely to be exposed to academic challenges and experiences which makes them better at thinking about how they learn compared to novice students such as first-year students, and makes it easier to examine their learning strategies. However, even if it's preferable to include the whole population in a research study, but it is not always practical to study the entire population (Acharya, 2013, p. 330, as cited in Noor, Golzar & Tojak 2022). A simple random sampling technique was used in this study for the selection of the sample.

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According to Singh Simple Random Sampling is the “simplest and most common method of selecting a sample, in which the sample is selected unit by unit, with equal probability of selection for each unit at each draw” (Singh, 2003, p. 71, as cited in Noor, Golzar & Tojak 2022). In simple terms, it is a method in which everyone in the population has an equal chance of being selected into a more smaller manageable sample that can be easier to analyze. It's often used in questionnaires and quantitative research designs. Therefore in our study, 70 students were selected and asked to answer the provided questionnaire.

Additionally, since instructors' feedback would be a beneficial key for this research, a sample of (8) teachers, (3 males and 5 females) from the same department and different module instructors, with teaching experience ranging from 2 to 19 years were involved in answering the interview questions.

## **2.4 Research Setting**

The research is conducted at the Department of English and Literature in the Faculty of Letters and Languages at Saida's University. The research took place at the end of the First semester of the academic year 2023 / 2024.

## **2.5 Data Collection**

Data collection in research is a crucial factor, it's a process of gathering information and data aimed at contributing to finding answers to the various questions and objectives of the research. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings. For quantitative data a questionnaire with 11 questions divided into two sections from close-ended to multiple choice questions for students and an interview for the teachers for more qualitative valuable data.

### **2.5.1 Questionnaire**

One of the quantitative instruments that was used in this research was a questionnaire., According to Kate (2024), a questionnaire is like a conversation that comes in the form of paper, online, or in digital format and that consists of a set of well-thought-out questions designed to gather specific and accurate information from people. In other words, it's a set of structured questions designed to gather information data from a target population and they can vary from multiple-choice questions to open-ended ones.



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In the present study, the questionnaire was distributed to third-year students at Dr. Moulay Taher University of Saida, by the end of their lectures to ensure the participation of all the students, to explore and delve into their metacognition awareness and their ability to understand and control their own learning process during their academic journey. It consists of 11 questions divided into two sections, utilizing two types of questions, both closed-ended questions which offer predetermined answer choices, and open-ended questions where students can express their thoughts freely, additionally including multiple-choice questions allowing for both qualitative and quantitative analysis. However, there are some questions that have been left unanswered.

### **2.5.1.1 Students Questionnaire Description**

The questionnaire includes 11 questions, each divided into two sections. the first one was about student information background. at the same time, the second section consists of questions about metacognitive awareness, skills, and learning strategies.

#### ***Section One:*** students background

The first section involved three questions that addressed general student information.

- 1- the first question was a close-ended question about their gender.
- 2- the second was a multiple-choice question that concerns their English language proficiency
- 3- The third question was a Likert scale question to assess the overall student's current academic performance

#### ***Section Two:***

The second section was devoted for the aim to examining students' metacognition awareness and the use of various aspects of metacognitive skills, and is divided into 8 questions:

- 1- How Familiar are you with the term " metacognition "?

the first question concerned their knowledge and familiarity with the term and concept of metacognition in general.

- 2- Have you received any formal instruction or training on metacognitive skills during your learning?

This closed-ended yes or no question was about assessing if the students had ever been exposed to any metacognition skills training during their academic journey.

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- 3- Do you ask questions about your own thinking and learning before, during, and after a learning task?

This question aimed to assess participants' self-awareness and monitoring of their cognitive processes throughout the learning process.

- 4- In preparing for exams or assignments, how frequently do you set specific goals for your learning?

This question aimed to investigate participants' engagement in goal-setting behavior as a metacognitive strategy in their academic tasks and exams.

- 5- How often do you reflect on your understanding of English language concepts and skills after completing assignments or assessments?

This question aimed to assess participants' engagement in reflective practices after completing their assessments or assignments as part of their learning process in English language studies.

- 6- Do you know how to learn in terms of planning, monitoring, organizing, and evaluating your own learning and thinking?

This question explores students' familiarity with metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own learning.

- 7- How satisfied are you with your current academic performance in English language courses?

This question aimed to understand participants' level of satisfaction with how well they're doing in their current performance in language courses.

- 8- In your opinion, how would you see the importance of raising student awareness of their learning and thinking and how it can contribute to successful learning?

this question explores participants' perspectives on the importance of promoting metacognitive awareness and its impact on students learning.

### **2.5.2 Teacher's Interview**

An interview is a structured method in which is used to gather qualitative data and information by engaging in a conversation between the researcher and the interviewees. According to Patton as cited by Greenfield (1996); an interview is used to find out what is in

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and on someone else's mind that cannot be directly observable ( Hasan, 2001). It can have multiple types, in this study, a structured interview was suitable for the research, in which the questions were already predetermined, and were asked to 8 teachers from The English department of Dr. Moulay Taher University. The interview was conducted face-to-face with Five of the teachers, while three of them chose to answer via email. the interview is made up of 11 questions that were carefully chosen and predetermined making sure that it will cover the important key aspect of metacognition as seen by the teachers and its role in students' academic achievement.

### **2.5.2.1 Teacher's Interview Description**

The interview includes 11 questions for 8 teachers of Moulay Taher's English department that aimed to explore teachers' understanding of metacognitive strategies, their use of these strategies in their teaching, and their observations of students' metacognitive awareness. The questions were as followed :

**1- How many years of experience do you have in teaching EFL students?**

The first question aims to know the teacher's level of experience in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

**2- In your experience, how aware are Third-year EFL students of metacognitive skills such as self-reflection, goal-setting, and monitoring their learning progress?**

The second question is meant to understand the level of metacognitive awareness among third-year EFL students from the teacher's perspective.

**3- Have you incorporated any explicit instruction on metacognitive skills in your teaching methods for Third-year EFL students? If so, could you provide examples?**

The third question is intended to determine whether teachers have intergrated any metacognitive skills into their teaching for third-year EFL students.

**4- How do you encourage third-year EFL students to reflect on their learning strategies and set goals for improvement?**

This question aims to find out how teachers support students in becoming more self-aware and actively engaging in their own learning process.

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**5- In your observation, do you notice a difference in the academic performance of students who demonstrate stronger metacognitive skills compared to those who do not?**

The fifth question seeks to find out if there is a connection between metacognition and students' academic performance.

**6- How do you assess the metacognitive development of your Third-year EFL students?**

The question is meant to ask teachers how they evaluate and measure their student's metacognitive skills development

**7-. What challenges, if any, do you face in fostering metacognitive skills among Third-year EFL students?**

The question here asks teachers if they have encountered and faced any difficulties fostering metacognitive skills among their students.

**8- What strategies have you found effective in helping Third-year EFL students develop and apply metacognitive skills in their language learning?**

Question 8 asks teachers to share any effective methods and strategies that they have used in order to develop their student's metacognitive skills.

**9- How can teachers collaborate with students to enhance metacognitive awareness and application in the EFL learning environment?**

Question 9 also asks teachers to suggest ways in which they can work together with students to improve their metacognitive skills in learning English as a Foreign Language.

**10- From your perspective, how does metacognition contribute to the overall academic performance of Third-year EFL students?**

Question 10 seeks teachers to share their views on how students' metacognitive skills impact their overall performance in their language studies

**11-What recommendations do you have for educators looking to integrate metacognitive skill development into their third-year EFL courses?**

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The last question invites teachers to share their suggestions and recommendations for other instructors willing to incorporate metacognitive skills into their teaching.

## **2.6 Limitations**

The number of participants and time constraints can be considered as limitations to this study. Some of the students were not serious in providing the right and honest responses to the questions, because many contradictions were found in their answers. The limited access to multiple resources and articles relevant to the research topic was challenging both online and in the university library. Furthermore, certain answers had to be removed from the study, leading to a lowering of the sample size. As well as the limited knowledge of the topic among the students and the teachers which made it a bit difficult to conduct the interview.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

To conclude, this chapter offers an overall overview of a chosen methodology that is suitable for our explanatory research which seeks to investigate the connections between metacognition and academic achievement. The instruments used in this study allow the researcher to gather the necessary data and determine the impact of metacognition. For the aim of gathering this data, a questionnaire and interview were directed to Third-year students of the Department of English and their teachers. The chapter also discussed the sample population that contributed to this research. As well as explained the research methods used to complete this study. Finally, the chapter highlighted the study's limits that were faced during this research.

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## **Chapter Three: Data Analysis and Interpretation**

3.1 Introduction .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2 Data analysis: .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2.1 Questionnaire Results Analysis: .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2.2 Teachers Interview Analysis .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.3 Interpretation and Discussion of the Main Findings.	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.4 Recommendations .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.5 Conclusion.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

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## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will be devoted to the practical part of this study in which the data collected have been analyzed and discussed in order to achieve and reach our main objectives of the research in exploring the connection between metacognition and academic achievement and how it affects the performance of third-year EFL student of Dr. Moulay Taher university of Saida.

## 3.2 Data analysis

### 3.2.1 Questionnaire Results Analysis

There were in total 70 students that were chosen to answer the questionnaire. Hence, the final and total number of respondents of the questionnaire were 64 students from the Department of English at the University of Saida. The results gathered are analyzed and interpreted below.

#### Section One :

##### Question one: Gender

**Table 3.1**

*Students Gender*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Female</b>	36	56,2%
<b>Male</b>	28	43,7%
<b>Total</b>	64	100%

The Results indicate that the majority of respondents were females representing 56,25% of the sample, while male learners represented 43,75%. So, the majority of the participants are females.

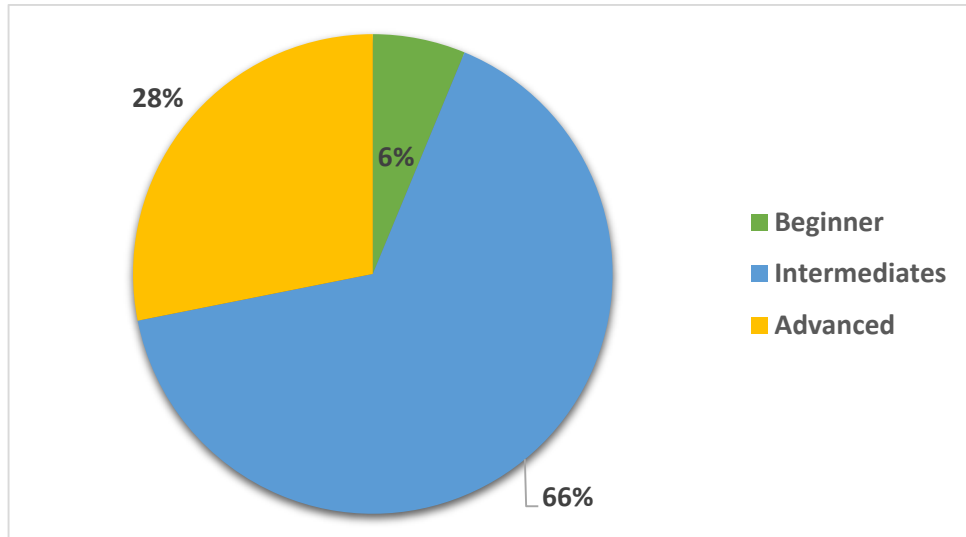
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**Question two: English language proficiency**

**Figure 3.1**

*Students' English Proficiency*



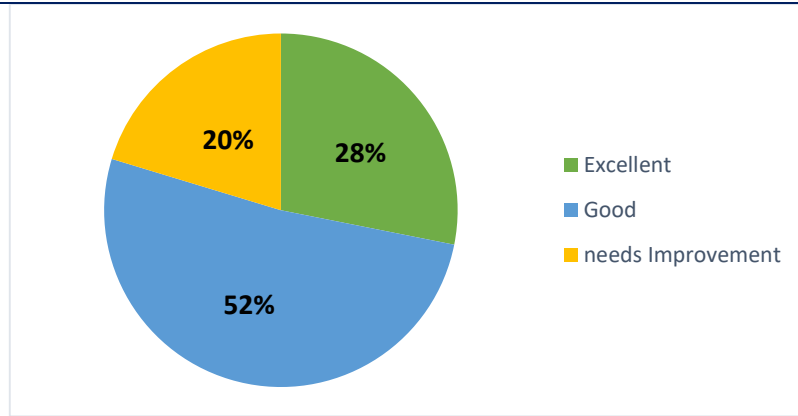
The Figure 3.1 above illustrates students' English language proficiency levels where we can see most of the students ( 66% ) assume that they have an intermediate level, whereas (28 %) of the respondents claim themselves as advanced in their language skills, and to finish with the least percentage with (6%) that shows certain students didn't hide that they are beginners in their language proficiency.

**Question three: How would you describe your overall academic performance in the current year?**

**Figures 3.2**

*Students Current Academic Performance*





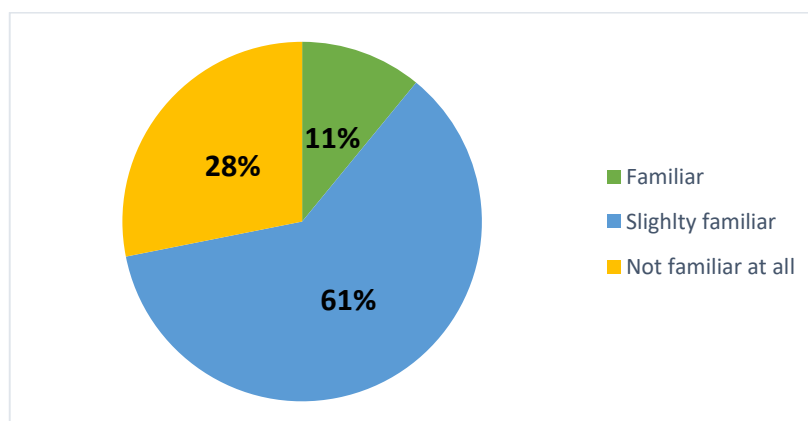
This Figure describes students' own description concerning their current academic performance. The majority of the respondents (52 %) indicated that they doing good in their current academic performance, while the other (28%) said their performance is excellent, in contrast with the remaining percentage (20%) of respondents that declared they still need improvement in their learning performance.

**Section two :**

**Question one:How familiar are you with the term " Metacognition "?**

**Figure 3.3**

*Students' Familiarity with Metacognition*



This question aimed to see and asses students' familiarity with the term metacognition and surprisingly only (11%) of the students were familiar with the terms the majority of the students (61%) stated that they are slightly familiar with the concept, while a significant number of students (28%) reported having no familiarity with the term at all.

**Question two: Have you received any formal instruction or training on metacognitive skills during your learning?**

**Table3.2**

*Training*

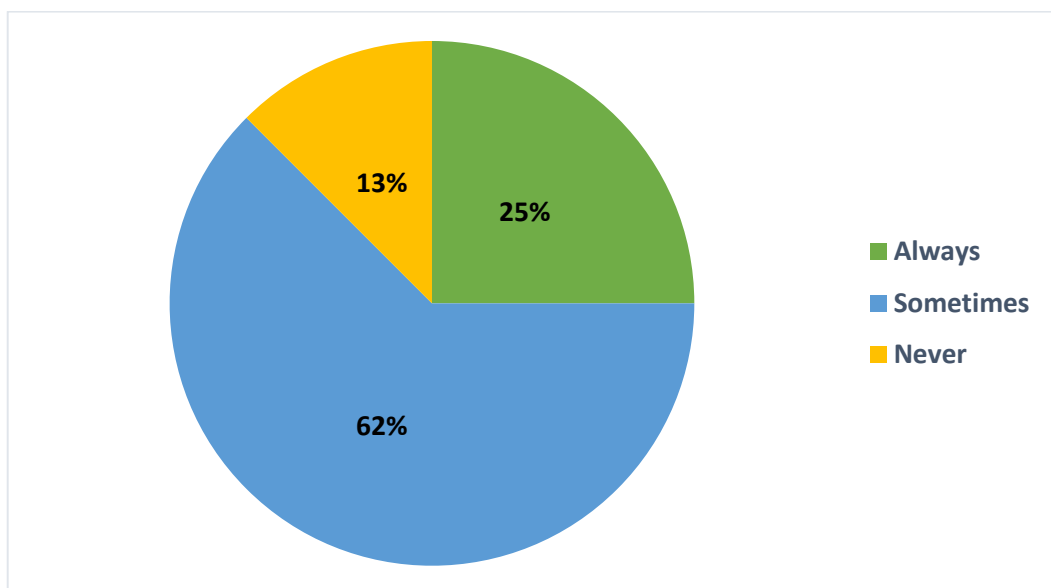
Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	14	21,8%
No	50	78,1%
Total	64	100%

The table displays the responses to the question about whether students have received any formal instruction or training on metacognitive skills during their learning. According to the data, (21,8%) of Students indicated that they had received such training, while the majority, (78,1%), reported that they had not.

**Question three: Do you ask questions about your own thinking and learning before, during, and after a learning task?**

**Figure 3.4**

*Students' Reflection During Learning Tasks.*



The Figure above shows how often students reflect on their thinking and learning throughout a task. A small number of students, (25%), stated that they always ask questions about their own learning processes. Whereas The majority, (62%), indicated that they

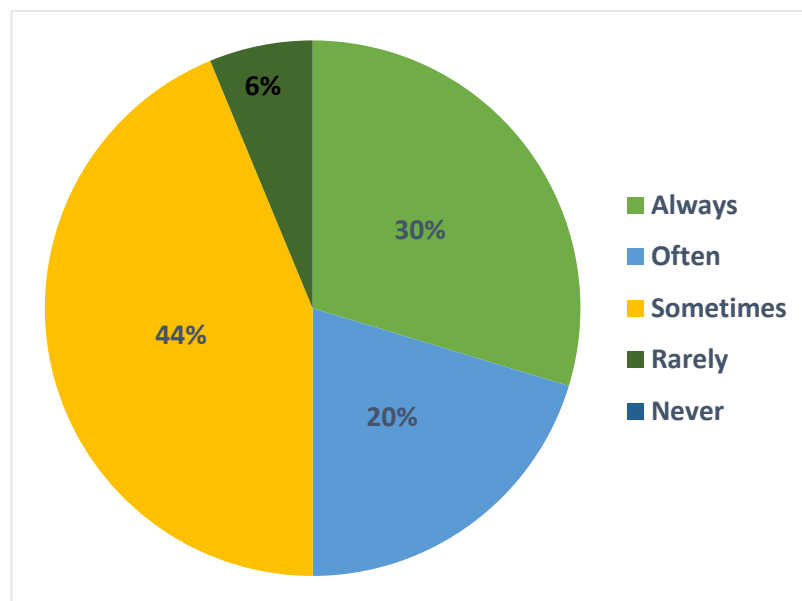
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sometimes engage in this type of reflection. On the other hand, the rest (13%) of students said they never ask questions about their own thinking and learning during a task.

**Question Four: In preparing for exams or assignments, how frequently do you set specific goals for your learning?**

**Figure 3.5**  
*Goal Setting in Students' Learning*



Setting goals for our learning is a very important step in preparing for exams or assignments, this idea is explored in this question, in which almost the majority (44%) claimed that sometimes they set goals, while (30%) indicated they always do. Additionally, 20% of students reported setting goals often, whereas 4% said they rarely set specific goals for their learning. Importantly, none of the students responded that they never set specific goals.

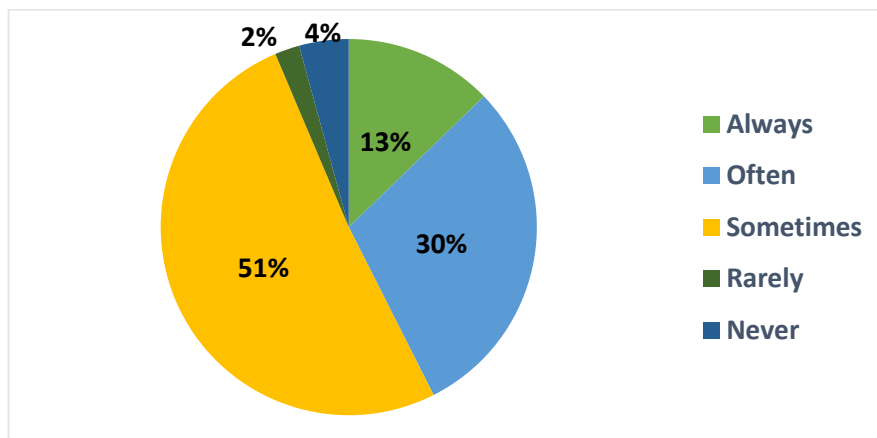
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**Question five: How often do you reflect on your understanding of English language concepts and skills after completing assignments or assessments?**

*Figure 3.6*

*Students Understanding Reflection After Completing Assignments*



The Figure shows how frequently students reflect on their understanding of English language concepts and skills after their assignments or assessments. The largest group(51%), reported that they reflect sometimes, while 30% said they reflect often. A smaller portion of students(13%) stated that they always reflect on their understanding. Additionally, 2% of students reported reflecting rarely, and 4% said they never reflect on their learning. This indicates that some students engage in some level of reflection. not all students consistently make it a regular habit of their learning process.

**Question Six: Do you know how to learn in terms of planning, monitoring, organizing, and evaluating your own learning and thinking?**

**Table3.3**

*Students Awareness of Metacognitive Learning Strategies*

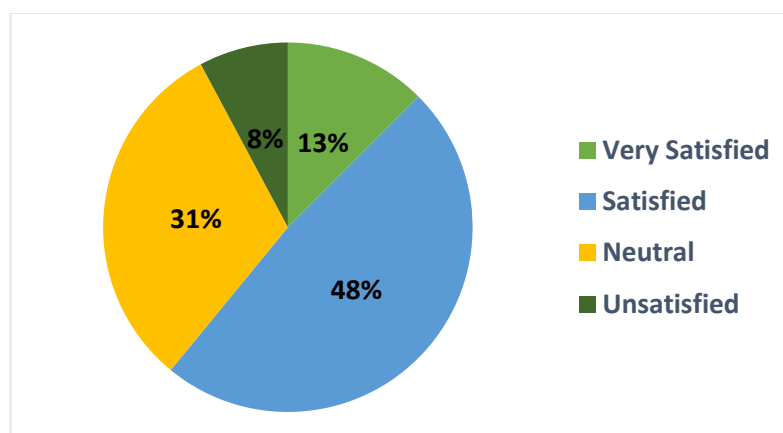
Options	Number	Pourcentage
Yes	45	70,3%
No	19	29,6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table above shows that the majority of students (70.3%) know how to plan and monitor their own learning and thinking, demonstrating strong metacognitive skills. However, the remaining 29.6% of students stated they do not possess these skills, indicating a need for additional support or training for these students

**Question seven: How satisfied are you with your current academic performance in English language courses?**

**Figure 3.7**

*Student Satisfaction with Academic Performance in English Courses*



This question aimed to assess students' satisfaction with their academic performance in English courses. Thirty-one participants (48%) reported that they were satisfied with their performance in English courses, while 13% stated that they were very satisfied. However, 31% of students were neutral, and the remaining 8% claimed to be unsatisfied with their academic performance. Overall, the majority of students reported satisfaction, suggesting a high level of performance. The minority of unsatisfied students may benefit from more opportunities to practice, and educators should consider using innovative teaching methods and new techniques to help them improve.

**Question eight: In your opinion, how would you see the importance of raising students' awareness of their learning and thinking and how it can contribute to successful learning?**

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This open-ended question aims to gather Students' perspectives on the importance of enhancing students' awareness of their own learning and thinking processes and it seeks to explore how they believe such awareness can impact students' learning. Only almost half of the students (45,3%) have answered this question though some of their responses were not entirely valid, whereas the rest of the participants (54,6%) did not.

Most of the students agreed on how raising students' awareness is important for their learning, some claimed that it could be very important for students to be autonomous and reflect on their learning which can have a positive impact on their academic performance, One of them stated that language learning and thinking are closely connected to cognition, being aware of these concepts would be helpful to advance both processes which will increase language proficiency as well as contributing in a successful learning.

### **3.2.2 Teachers Interview Analysis**

Seven teachers in the Department of English at the University of Saida were interviewed as part of our study, and their answers were as follows:

#### **Question 1:**

Initially, teachers were first asked about their teaching experience as TEFL teachers, half of the teachers reported having over 10 years of experience in teaching English, while only one claimed having less than 5 years.

#### **Questions 2:**

For the second question, teachers were asked about their perspectives towards third years students' metacognitive skills awareness based on their individual experience, they all agreed on the fact that this awareness can be different from one student to another and that some students are aware and demonstrate these skills, while others are not. The first teacher said that this lack of metacognitive awareness among the students may be due to not setting clear goals and objectives for themselves. On the one hand, the second teacher attributed students' lack of awareness to traditional teaching methods where students are only asked to give answers and feedback with no creativity and the misuse of technology. More specifically, the use of AI has caused students to neglect active engagement in their own learning process and critical thinking.

#### **Question 3:**

The third question was about whether teachers have incorporated any explicit instruction on metacognitive skills in their teaching methods, half of the teachers shared a

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similar idea and approach emphasizing the importance of incorporating metacognitive skills in their teaching process and also in fostering students' abilities in critical thinking and monitoring their learning. One of these teachers mentioned that he often suggests doing classroom activities, where students are asked to bring up their own answers, and examples and then come up with their unique conclusions which might wrap up the core of the lecture and help them to develop their critical thinking and cognitive abilities. However another teacher mentioned a very interesting point regarding the neglect of metacognitive skills among teachers, she reported that they somehow focus and work more on the cognitive skills rather than the metacognitive ones, which may, to some extent, be the reason behind the low awareness among students.

**Question 4 :**

The next question addressed how they encourage third-year EFL students to reflect on their learning strategies and set goals for improvement, from the answers provided each teacher has special methods and approaches to helping students reflect on their learning. The first teacher emphasizes the importance of reminding students to prioritize setting goals in their learning. Another teacher emphasizes asking students to think about how they will benefit from their current learning, not just in the next academic year but also in the future by doing this students will be encouraged to engage in self-reflection and consider the long-term impact of their learning. The second teacher suggested setting goals at different stages, such as for the year, semester, and each session, and guiding students in tracking their progress.

The third one stresses the importance of reading and listening to critical content such as podcasts to enhance cognitive competencies. whereas the fourth teacher suggested that students organize revision strategies and give homework and assignments, sharing different resources like books and articles to guide students toward effective learning habits, finally the rest of the teachers indicated that they encourage students to engage in self-reflection and goal-setting through ongoing conversations and continuous support

**Question 5 :**

The fifth question in the interview was about whether teachers have noticed a difference between the academic performances of students who demonstrate stronger metacognitive skills compared to those who do not. The given answers showed that the majority of the teachers believe that metacognitive skills play a significant role in students' academic performance and

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agreed that students who demonstrate stronger metacognitive skills tend to perform better academically.

**Question 6 :**

Regarding the question of how teachers assess the metacognitive development of their Third-year EFL students. The first three teachers said that they generally do not assess students' metacognitive skills for several reasons. The first noted that it is clearly reflected in their writing and only skilled students can enhance their metacognitive or cognitive skills. The second teacher pointed out that there is currently no formal assessment system in place. The third teacher mentioned how the chosen research topic makes them as EFL teachers aware of this aspect and as a point that they need to consider and focus on it even more in their learning process. However, the rest of the teachers claimed using in-class interactions and out-of-class assignments and asking students questions about how they learn or revise for exams and tests as a method of assessing metacognitive development.

**Question 7 :**

This question was about the challenges that teachers can face when fostering metacognitive skills among third-year students. While the first teachers mentioned not facing any, the rest of the teachers agreed on common challenges, such as lack of interest, motivation, and autonomy as well as time constraints which could limit opportunities for structured metacognitive skill development activities or discussions. Additionally to the classroom environment, One of the teachers mentioned how it can cause a lack of collaborative atmosphere which is a common challenge for teachers.

**Question 8 :**

In response to the question of what strategies teachers find effective in helping Third-year EFL students develop and apply metacognitive skills in their language learning, the first teacher stated thinking, monitoring, and evaluating as effective strategies for developing and applying metacognitive skills that can encourage students more to reflect on their learning processes, monitor their understanding and progress, and evaluate their strategies and outcomes. The second teacher said that Advising students to think outside the box and focus on improvising and improving their capabilities is suggested as an effective strategy.

The third teacher said " I think it's better to push them to think that if they are not studying for a career then why study at all " mentioning that this panic mode usually can help them



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become more self-reflective and start paying attention to what they are doing and if it leads towards something they want or not. Another teacher mentioned how Explicit questioning is identified as an effective strategy. By inviting learners to reflect on how they learn through direct questioning it may foster more awareness and sense of responsibility among them.

Another effective strategy suggested by one of the teachers was improvisation, they stated that by improvising the teacher will discover that some students do really have some great ideas, especially when it comes to some of the language games and tasks. It will foster creativity and critical thinking, allowing students to actively engage in finding solutions and applying language skills in practical scenarios. To finish the rest of the teachers suggested Encouraging students to read, report, present, and discuss their work while also fostering closer relationships and engagement with students.

**Question 9 :**

This question was about how teachers can collaborate with students to enhance metacognitive awareness and application in the EFL learning environment. The first teacher indicated that it can be done explicitly by teaching them the different metacognitive strategies. As well as the second teacher said that It should be incorporated as a module within the curriculum, especially for first-year students to ensure that it receives the needed attention and emphasis from both teachers and students. The third one mentioned the importance of establishing a positive relationship between teachers and students and allowing students to be

more autonomous which can help in creating a conducive learning environment. Besides the rest of the teachers claim that they employ various forms of communication, both oral and written, to continuously analyze and assess students' metacognitive development.

**Question 10 :**

This question's goal is to seek teachers' perspectives on how does metacognition contributes to the overall academic performance of Third year EFL students. All of the teachers agree on its positive impact on academic achievements, one of the teachers described it as the heart of academic success and it will continue to be a part of the individual worthiness and significance all their life span It continually plays a pivotal role in personal development and growth. Another teacher added that it enables students to improve their language skills, performance, and proficiency which makes it necessary to be incorporated into the syllabus.

**Question 11 :**

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The last question aims to ask teachers for any recommendations they have for educators looking to integrate metacognitive skill development into their third-year EFL courses. The first teacher suggested encouraging students to engage in critical thinking, self-reflection, and trust in their abilities. This motivation can foster and help the development of metacognitive skills among them. The second teacher mentioned that a teacher has to be self-reflective in his teaching to push students to be self-reflective which applies to all metacognitive skills. Additionally, most teachers have memorized their "performance" of all the lectures necessary and hence they have no room to adapt any new strategies within their teaching process. The third teacher said that Teachers should move beyond the traditional role of knowledge providers and become "facilitators" of the learning process. By paying attention to students' affective needs and guiding them through metacognitive processes, educators can effectively support students in their learning journey. As well as the fourth teacher stated the importance of helping students go along by themselves, in other words, be autonomous in their learning. Additionally one of the teachers indicated the need to start educating themselves more about the topics and learn more about the strategies and getting informed on how a student can learn about this concept.

### **3.3 Interpretation and Discussion of the Main Findings**

In this chapter, we present and analyze the research findings derived from the student questionnaires and teacher interviews, focusing on the relationship between metacognition and academic achievement among third-year EFL students at Dr. Moulay Taher University of Saida. Through this analysis, we evaluate the validity of our hypotheses and address the research questions posed at the outset of the study. This discussion aims to interpret the data in a way that provides clear insights into the role of metacognitive skills in students' academic performance.

First, the data presented has confirmed the validity of the hypothesis and answered the research question regarding student metacognitive awareness. The results from the students' questionnaire revealed that only 11% of the students were familiar with the term, while 61% were slightly familiar, indicating limited or unclear familiarity with the concept. Additionally, 28% of students reported having no idea about metacognition at all. Furthermore, insights from teacher interviews also supported this hypothesis; based on their experience, they agreed that

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the majority of students lack this awareness. One of the main reasons behind this is the lack of metacognition training, as half of the participants (78.1%) claimed they had not received any such training during their learning. These findings underscore the prevalence of limited awareness or understanding of metacognition among students, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to enhance metacognitive awareness and understanding throughout their learning journey.

This makes it related and confirms the study made by Zid and Noua (2022) that was mentioned in the first chapter about metacognition in the Algerian context. The study confirmed and highlighted the difference in results regarding the level of awareness and use of metacognitive strategies among Algerian EFL students in writing. The study by Zid and Noua resulted in a very low level of awareness and use of metacognitive writing strategies among first-year EFL students at El Oued University in Algeria, particularly in terms of self-assessment or evaluation.

Concerning the second hypothesis if students who have stronger metacognitive skills tend to perform better than those who don't, the interview responses revealed that most teachers believe metacognitive skills significantly plays a crucial role and influence in students' academic performance. They also agreed that students exhibiting stronger metacognitive abilities typically perform better academically. This confirms the hypotheses and emphasizes the importance of developing and enhancing metacognitive abilities among students to foster their academic success. This result ties well with a previous study that was mentioned in the first chapter, conducted by Wang et al. (1990) and Savia (2007). Highlighting the significance of metacognitive skills in academic performance. It underscores the idea that students with strong metacognitive skills have a higher chance of learning more and performing better academically compared to those who are still developing these skills or have poor metacognition.

In addition to findings from the student questionnaire and teacher interviews, the investigation also sought to understand teachers' perspectives on the contribution of metacognition to the overall academic performance of third-year EFL students. The responses from all teachers confirmed the positive impact of metacognition on students' academic achievements. One teacher characterized metacognition as the 'heart of academic success,' emphasizing its important significance throughout students' lives and its pivotal role in personal development and growth. Another teacher highlighted how metacognition enables students to enhance their language skills, performance, and proficiency, emphasizing the necessity of

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incorporating metacognitive strategies into the syllabus. These insights from teachers provide further support for the hypothesis that metacognition significantly contributes to students' academic success, reinforcing the importance of fostering metacognitive abilities among students to enhance their learning outcomes.

These findings are similar to Dunning, Johnson, Ehrlinger, and Kruger's (2003) study, where they highlighted how understanding one's thinking processes, or metacognition, is crucial for effective learning and is a strong predictor of academic achievement. with emphasizing the idea that being mindful of how one thinks and learns, and making adjustments accordingly, is essential for academic success. Making it a valuable insight into the role of metacognition in the learning process.

### **3.4 Recommendations**

The current research has offered insights into students' and teachers' perceptions and attitudes concerning the connection and relationship of metacognition with academic achievement. On this basis, some recommendations are given aiming at improving EFL students' metacognitive skills.

- **For students :**

- Students should monitor their understanding, progress, and their engagement, they also have to pay attention to their learning process as they study or finish their tasks or assignments
- Set personal learning goals, students should Take the initiative to set specific learning goals for themselves.
- Actively seek feedback from their teachers and classmates on their work and use it to adjust their areas of improvement in their learning.
- Seek for resources, books, and audio or activities that focus on metacognition and study skills.

- **For teachers :**

- Teachers should encourage students and boost their motivation which is a key element that helps in fostering these skills, When students are motivated, they become actively engaged in the learning process, which is essential for the development of metacognitive strategies.

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- Teachers should also include metacognitive activities in lessons across different subjects.
  - Encouraging students to take more control of their learning which will increase their autonomy. When students are empowered to make decisions about their learning process, they naturally engage in metacognitive thinking. By actively planning, monitoring, and reflecting on their learning experiences, students become more aware of their own thinking processes and strategies.
  - Giving students feedback that focuses on how they think, not just their answers.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter has provided the analysis and discussion of the data collected in the context of exploring the connection between metacognition and academic achievement among third-year EFL students at Dr. Moulay Taher University of Saida. Through the questionnaire results and teacher interviews, valuable insights into students' and teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward metacognition have been gathered. The findings underscore the importance of enhancing metacognitive awareness and skills among students, as they play a crucial role in academic success. Recommendations for both students and teachers that aim to foster metacognitive development in the classroom were provided in this chapter.

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## General conclusion

Metacognition, often described as 'thinking about one's own thinking, indeed represents one of the hidden skills that few are consciously aware of, especially among students. Many more researchers are convinced of the educational importance that metacognitive skills have for both teachers and students. As well at the same time trying to explore ways to create a rich environment that makes it easy to develop these skills without encountering any challenges or difficulties and its connection with academic performance and how it can impact it. This research was conducted to answer these questions and to fulfill the objectives outlined at the beginning. In other words, the research work was an attempt to explore the connection between metacognition and academic performance. The case study was third-year EFL students in the English Department at the University of Saida.

The study was divided into three chapters, with the first chapter focusing on the literature review. In this chapter, we addressed various aspects of metacognition, starting with its definition and exploring different linguistic perspectives and points of view, we then examined how metacognition can impact both the educational and EFL learning contexts, as well as its influence on academic performance the different interventions and theories that can play a significant role in implementing these skills.

Then we moved to the second chapter which was the practical framework of the study, where the methodology used was presented . as well as the population and sample description. the study focused on third-year EFL students with a sample of 70 students who were asked to answer a structured questionnaire containing 11 questions with multiple choices questions and an open-ended one, Additionally, interviews were conducted with 8 teachers from the same department to gain further insights and enhance the validity of our study, These two instruments were highly important in obtaining reliable results and to confirm the hypotheses. Finally, the data was collected and analyzed then interpreted and discussed in the third chapter three of the objectives posed were achieved.

The findings revealed a significant lack of metacognition awareness among third-year students, most students were either not familiar or slightly familiar with this concept, which also revealed many reasons behind it, with the major one being the absence of suggestions or provisions for suitable instruction or training to enhance their metacognitive abilities in their

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learning. These results were also confirmed by teachers' interview answers, according to their observation in their classroom they noticed this lack of awareness among most of the students because they somehow focus and work more on cognitive skills rather the metacognitive ones. This finding confirmed students' lack of metacognitive awareness which was mentioned at the beginning of the research

It was also concluded that the majority of the teachers believe that metacognitive skills play a significant role in students' academic performance. Furthermore, they agreed that students who demonstrate stronger metacognitive skills tend to perform better academically. The study highlighted how metacognition plays a crucial role in students' academic performance and has a significant impact on their learning. It was described as the heart of academic success, continuing to be a part of individual worthiness and significance throughout their lifespan. Additionally, it was noted that metacognition continually plays a pivotal role in personal development and growth. This confirms the last two hypotheses regarding how metacognition affects students' academic achievement and how the academic performance of students who master metacognitive skills differs from those who don't

Nevertheless, in every research being studied, there are several challenges and obstacles that researchers face or overcome, in this study time constraints and a limited number of participants including some participants' unserious responses have impacted the validity of the data needed for the research was one of the main challenges faced, besides limited access to resources, and teachers' limited knowledge of the topic. Despite these challenges, the study has still provided valuable insights.

After completing the analysis and interpretation of the data, several recommendations have been proposed for both EFL learners and teachers. mentioning that Students should monitor progress, set goals, seek feedback, and access resources. Teachers should motivate students, integrate metacognitive activities, encourage autonomy, and provide feedback emphasizing thinking processes.

To sum up, based on the research findings, the three research questions of the present study have been answered along with all the three hypotheses that had been confirmed, and how metacognition could be a principal key in academic success was focused on. By teaching students how to think about their own thinking, we can encourage them to become more independent and autonomous learners, as well as integrating metacognition into the curriculum

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will provide them with essential cognitive tools that not only enhance their academic performance but also their problem-solving skills and critical thinking abilities.



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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Students Questionnaire

Dear students

This questionnaire is regarded as a crucial instrument for gathering information. If you could devote some time and effort to sharing your experiences and ideas by answering the following questions, your honest and thoughtful responses are crucial for the success of this research.

1- Gender :

Male

Female

2- English Language Proficiency :

Beginner

Intermediate

Advanced

3- How would you describe your overall academic performance in the current academic year?

Excellent

Good

Needs improvements

4- How familiar are you with the term " Metacognition "?

Note:" Metacognition refers to your awareness and understanding of your thinking processes".

Please answer the following question to the best of your ability.

Familiar

Slightly familiar

Not familiar at all

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5- Have you received any formal instruction or training on metacognition skills during your learning?

Yes

No

6- Do you ask questions about your own thinking and learning before, during, and after a learning task?

Always

Sometimes

Never

7- In preparing for exams or assignments, how frequently do you set specific goals for your learning?

Always

Often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

8- How often do you reflect on your understanding of English language concepts and skills after completing assignments or assessments?

Always

Often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

9- Do you know how to learn in terms of planning, monitoring, organizing, and evaluating your own learning and thinking?

Yes

No

10- How satisfied are you with your current academic performance in English language courses?

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Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neutral

Unsatisfied

11- In your opinion, how would you see the importance of raising students' awareness of their learning and thinking and how it can contribute to successful learning?

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## Appendix B

### Teachers Interview

- 1- How many years of experience do you have in teaching EFL students?
- 2- In your experience, how aware are Third-year EFL students of metacognitive skills such as self-reflection, goal-setting, and monitoring their learning progress?
- 3- Have you incorporated any explicit instruction on metacognitive skills in your teaching methods for Third-year EFL students? If so, could you provide examples?
- 4- How do you encourage third-year EFL students to reflect on their learning strategies and set goals for improvement?
- 5- In your observation, do you notice a difference in the academic performance of students who demonstrate stronger metacognitive skills compared to those who don't?
- 6- How do you assess the metacognitive development of your Third-year EFL students?
- 7- What challenges, if any, do you face in fostering metacognitive skills among Third-year EFL students?
- 8- What strategies have you found effective in helping Third-year EFL students develop and apply metacognitive skills in their language learning?
- 9- How can teachers collaborate with students to enhance metacognitive awareness and application in the EFL learning environment?
- 10- From your perspective, how does metacognition contribute to the overall academic performance of Third-year EFL students?
- 11- What recommendations do you have for educators looking to integrate metacognitive skill development into their third-year EFL courses?

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## المخلص

فهم وتحكم الشخص في تفكيره يمكن أن يكون تحديًا وفي بعض الأحيان يتطلب المزيد من الممارسة لإتقان هذه المهارات بسهولة. هذا ما يعرف بالوعي الفوق معرفي، وهي مهارة يتجاهل الكثيرون أهميتها وتأثيرها على السلوك والأداء البشري خاصة في السياق التعليمي. لذلك، تهدف الدراسة البحثية الحالية إلى التحقيق واستكشاف العلاقة بين الوعي الفوق معرفي والتحصيل الأكاديمي بين طلاب السنة الثالثة في تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة سعيدة د. مولاي الطاهر. كما تهدف إلى تقييم وعي الطلاب الفوق معرفي وكذلك وجهات نظر المعلمين ومواقفهم تجاه هذه المهارة. لتحقيق أهداف البحث تم اختيار دراسة الحالة باستخدام أداتين لجمع البيانات: استبيان لـ (70) طالبًا، ومقابلات منظمة مع (8) مدرسين من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة سعيدة. وكشفت النتائج عن نقص كبير في الوعي بين معظم طلاب السنة الثالثة بسبب نقص التدريب والتعليم الرسمي الذي أكد عليه المعلمون حيث لم تتضمن المناهج الدراسية أي من هذه المهارات، كما أظهرت النتائج وجود علاقة إيجابية قوية جدًا بين الوعي الفوق معرفي والأداء الأكاديمي، مؤكدة أن الطلاب الذين يظهرون مهارات فوق معرفية أقوى يميلون إلى الأداء الأكاديمي الأفضل من أولئك الذين لا يفعلون ذلك. وفي نهاية هذا البحث، تم اقتراح سلسلة من التوصيات لكل من معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية والطلاب لتعزيز وتنفيذ مهارات الوعي الفوق معرفي في عملية التعلم مثل: تضمين أنشطة فوق معرفية في الدروس عبر مختلف المواد، وتشجيع الطلاب على التحكم بشكل أكبر في تعلمهم مما سيزيد من استقلاليتهم ومنح الطلاب تغذية راجعة تركز على كيفية تفكيرهم وليس فقط على إجاباتهم.