

REVIEW: The influence of El Niño-Southern Oscillation on cool-season precipitation variability in the arid Middle East

General Remarks:

The authors addressed all previous comments, while providing evidence and additional analysis to affirm their results. After reviewing the authors response, I believe that my main comment still stands, which is that the rain enhancing signal of positive ENSO is more nuanced than what the extended season composite analysis suggests, and therefore should be communicated to the reader with a grain of salt. This is based on:

- (1) No clear signal in mid-winter, when most precipitation occurs in the region (Fig. 3a).
- (2) Linear regression showing no statistically significant relationship for positive ENSO (Fig. 3e, R4e, R5e).
- (3) Strong heterogeneity between decades (Figs. R4a,R5a), which also includes sensitivity to the choice of the climatology period (Figs. R4d,R5d).

While I believe this point is an important caveat for the premise of the article, I recognize that it does not materially affect the study's mechanistic findings or overall conclusions. Accordingly, I leave it to the editor and the authors to determine whether incorporating this point is warranted (particularly at the end of Section 3 and/or in the Summary).