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Chapter 1

The Problem and its Setting

1.1 *The statement of the problem and its setting*

In this dissertation a comprehensive picture of the language learner strategies of Hungarian secondary grammar school learners will be presented. Besides depicting the strategies the learners employ in and outside of the classroom, the dissertation will reveal how the strategies correlate with a variety of factors which interplay in a complex manner to affect their strategy choice. The information thus gained provides the basis for outlining implications for the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL), more particularly, for teacher training in TEFL, at pre- and in-service levels.

The in-depth analysis of learner strategies is necessitated by several factors. One is that learner strategies are assumed to be causal in bringing about learning outcomes. They are linked to all aspects of learning, including the cognitive and metacognitive, as well as the social and affective ones. The kind of learning that takes place is reflected in the learner strategies applied. Though the focus of the current paper will be the strategies that learners select when engaged in foreign language (FL) learning tasks, it is maintained that many of these strategies are more generally applicable than specifically to the learning of an FL. Therefore the gathered information is supposed to have wider implications than for purely FL instruction.

Further, learner strategies have been recognised to play a significant role in the development of communicative competence. According to the theories suggested by Canale & Swain (1980) and Canale (1983), communicative competence can be explained in terms of three competencies – grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence. Grammatical competence encompasses “knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology” (Canale & Swain, 1980:29). This competence is clearly associated with mastering the linguistic code of a language; this is how Hymes, who the term *communicative competence* was coined by (1967), conceived of it. Sociolinguistic competence is the ability to apply the sociocultural rules of language, and the rules of discourse. Strategic competence was defined by Canale & Swain as:

“...verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence” (1980:30).

In other words, strategic competence was seen as crucial to activate in case of communication problems.

Canale & Swain’s definition has undergone considerable changes, and the scope of strategic competence has broadened well beyond the meaning suggested in the early works, where emphasis was on the compensatory aspect. In a more recent theoretical model provided by Bachman (1990), later refined by Bachman & Palmer (1996), strategic competence serves an executive function of making final decisions among many possible options on wording, phrasing, and other productive and receptive means of negotiating meaning. According to Bachman & Palmer, strategic competence is:

“...a set of metacognitive components, or strategies, which can be thought of as higher order executive processes that provide a cognitive management function in language use” (1996:70).

As the definition suggests, it is not only strategies which are compensatory in nature that make up strategic competence, but also non-compensatory ones. Strategic behaviour under the rubric of strategic competence in this model includes metacognitive, cognitive and also post-task assessment strategies.

While developing grammatical competence at the expense of the other components has traditionally been emphasised in language teaching, strategic competence has certainly been the most neglected area by coursebooks and teachers alike (cf. Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1991), although laying equal emphasis on developing learners’ competencies, among them, strategic competence, is rather important. Thus, the careful examination of what L2 learners’ strategy use reveals about their strategic competence is fully justified.

In order that foreign language teaching practices can be adjusted to the requirement of developing communicative competence, we need to find out as much as possible about the way learners learn. Like all other walks of life, the situation in the foreign language teaching-learning field, more particularly, English language education in Hungary was affected to a large extent by the political changes of 1989-90. The question of how ELT has changed over the last decade has received sufficient attention, having been the focus of several large-scale studies. One such

study by Enyedi & Medgyes (1998) provides a detailed analysis of the teaching of foreign languages in the region. Placing the Hungarian context within a broader Central and Eastern European framework, it depicts the historical and socio-political roots of the current situation. The baseline study (Fekete et alia, 1999), in preparing the way for the reform of the secondary school leaving (érettségi) exam, provides a full picture about the state of affairs in English language education in Hungary. Based on the careful examination of the socio-political and sociolinguistic context of foreign language education, the various public examinations available, students' foreign language knowledge and performance, and attitudes towards L2 knowledge among wide spectra of the population, this study outlines the directions of changes that would be necessary to adopt in L2 teaching, testing and teacher training practices.

As these examples show, ways of improving the situation in the L2 field have been under study and researched on a large scale. Nevertheless, little has been said about the other, equally important aspect of the teaching-learning context: learning and the learner. In the attempts to develop practices in language education to perfection, relatively little accent has been put on discovering how students learn, how they tackle L2 learning tasks and problems, and how these findings could inform teaching. The current dissertation aims to address these issues.

Another justification for focusing on learning as reflected in learner strategy choice is that Hungary aspires to join the European Union, where the mastery of two European languages will be indispensable. With this aspiration and the statistics suggesting that a decade after the political changes foreign language competence of Hungarians, even that of the young generations, is far behind that of other European nations, including some of those that shared in our political past (cf. Dörnyei, 1992; Dobszay, 1999; Nikolov, 1999), addressing the issue of how to improve the learning situation is obligatory.

In sum, this dissertation sets out to examine the current L2 teaching-learning situation from a learner strategy-focused perspective, and aims to conclude what the findings reveal about the way L2 learners learn, about the ways they are taught, and how these relate to the relative unsuccessfulness/successfulness of foreign language learning.

1.2 Research questions, hypotheses and assumptions

In the light of the problems outlined in the previous section, the following questions have been set for the dissertation to address:

- What kind of English language learning is typical among secondary grammar school learners as reflected in the use of their learner strategies?
- What kind and amount of learner strategies do 16-17-year-old secondary grammar school learners employ?
- What personal and situational factors affect the type and frequency of strategy use?
- How is strategy choice related to gains in proficiency?
- What do the previous reflect about the style of teaching/education?
- How far are students' perceptual learning preferences accommodated by the perceptual style of foreign language instruction?
- What does all this imply for classroom foreign language teaching and teacher training?

In seeking to answer these questions, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

1. Hungarian secondary grammar school learners' use of strategies varies between low and medium levels, in terms of the range as well as the frequency of strategy choice.
2. The cognitive and metacognitive aspects of learning are more satisfactorily catered for in terms of strategy use than the social and affective ones. This reflects the fact that language learning is interpreted as primarily a cognitive and metacognitive enterprise in Hungarian state education.
3. Students on higher proficiency levels, and more successful language learners demonstrate higher levels of strategy use, both in frequency and range.
4. Female students demonstrate more frequent strategy use, and the use of more strategies than males.
5. As regards perceptual preferences, the majority of secondary grammar school students are visually oriented. Nevertheless, foreign language instruction on the secondary school level dominantly - in approximately 80-90% of class time - caters to the auditory learner. In cases when the perceptual style of teaching and

the learning style of the learner do not match, learning difficulties or problems may arise, which may affect outcomes for the learner negatively.

Furthermore, the *assumption* has been made that learner strategy choice reflects the content and style of teaching as well as the students' motives for learning the English language. Concerning the role of teachers in uncovering and applying the means of facilitating effective L2 learning, it has been *assumed* that - though it is not their fault - teachers are not fully aware of the way their learners learn and of the impact of a variety of factors on learning outcomes. Teachers cannot address the questions of how to approach the task of learning in their everyday classroom work for several reasons. Of these, the curricular and institutional requirements compelling them to focus on purveying content rather than methods of learning are most significant. Another reason is that teachers are not prepared for this task methodologically.

To answer the research questions and see how far the hypotheses and assumptions are confirmed, research involving 125 secondary learners and their English teachers has been conducted. Learners' strategy use and perceptual learning preferences were examined by the application of self-reporting questionnaires. Parallel to this method of collecting data, observations were carried out by the researcher in the English classes of the learners involved, and interviews conducted with their teachers in order to see how they view related matters. On the basis of the collected data, suggestions for necessary modifications to foreign language instruction and teacher training content on pre- and in-service levels have been offered.

1.3 Delimitations

In this section those issues are presented which – though related to and significant from the point of view of the main focus of the dissertation – could not be addressed, for conceptual or practical limitations.

Besides the learner variables that are examined in this study in relation to strategy choice, there are a host of others - cognitive (e.g.: language aptitude) or affective (e.g.: language anxiety) in nature - with a significant effect on the learning process. In accordance with the objectives of the dissertation, the scope of the

research had to be narrowed down to the investigation of such variables the understanding of which has immediate implications for the FL classroom in Hungary. On similar considerations, the dissertation has only investigated sensory preferences of the range of learning style dimensions which are all linked to strategy choice to varying degrees. The investigation of aptitude and anxiety, which a lot of research has found to exert the greatest influence on language learning and learner strategy choice, could not be implemented for feasibility constraints, in that appropriate measuring instruments in Hungarian were not at my disposal when the research was being carried out. As for motivation, instead of aiming at the study of the correlation between strategy choice and motivation, it has been examined to an extent that an overall picture about the participating learners' motives for learning English can be gained.

As the study aims to provide a broad, rather than a specific picture about learner strategy use in state education, I did not employ any means of strategy assessment which are appropriate to collect specific information on task-specific uses by individual learners.

1.4 Terminology

The use of key terms in this writing is described below:

Learner strategy: Numerous definitions are available in the literature. For the purposes of the present study, a most recent one by Cohen (1998) has been adopted. According to him, second language learner strategies include both second language *learning* and second language *use* strategies. They constitute the steps or actions consciously selected by learners to facilitate the learning of a second language, the use of it, or both (Cohen, 1998:5).

Learning style: As regards the number of definitions available in the literature, the same applies as to the concept of strategy. Whereas the strategy concept involves some kind of action taken by the learner, *learning style* refers to the learner's *general predisposition* towards learning and towards processing information. According to Reid: "learning style refers to an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills" (1995:iii). This work has examined perceptual learning

styles, and the term is used to refer to the learner's preferred way(s) of receiving and absorbing input.

Motivation: The data on the respondents' motives for learning English have been examined in the framework of two widely recognised constructs: the integrative-instrumental and the intrinsic-extrinsic. According to the approach proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1972), motivation is a construct covering two large sets of orientations towards the L2 learning task: integrative and instrumental. Maintaining that both orientations have subsets, the examination of which exceeds the limits of this dissertation, I will use *integrative orientation* to refer to:

“a high level of drive on the part of the individual to acquire the language of a valued foreign-language community in order to facilitate communication with that group” (Gardner et alia, 1976:199, in Dörnyei, 1990:46).

In accordance with this, the desire to learn the target language because of positive attitudes towards the language itself, the people and culture of the target language community will be regarded as integrative orientation.

Instrumental orientation will be used to refer to the learner's interest in learning a foreign language for “pragmatic, utilitarian benefits of language proficiency, such as a better job or higher salary” (Dörnyei, 1990:46).

The intrinsic/extrinsic construct in studies of language learning motivation is linked to rewards for learning the language. When motivation is investigated within this framework, Deci's definition will be followed.

“Intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself... Intrinsically motivated behaviours are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences...” (Deci, 1975:23, in Brown, 1994:155-56).

Extrinsically motivated behaviours, on the other hand, will be interpreted as ones that the individual carries out in hope of some reward from outside and beyond the self (e.g: good grades), or to avoid punishment (cf. Dörnyei, 1994:275).

Learning and acquisition: Maintaining that the distinction between learning and acquisition might bear significance in certain contexts, the two terms will be used interchangeably here. Although *learning* normally refers to conscious processes for internalising the language, and *acquisition* is reserved for subconscious ones, the distinction between the two is not unequivocal enough to use reliably. This is plainly reflected in the ongoing debate about the conscious vs. subconscious dichotomy (cf.

Ellis, 1994:359-62 and section 2.1.4.2). Further, the strategies employed by learners in order to facilitate the learning and acquisition of a foreign/second language, which are the focus of this study, are generally referred to as *learning* or *learner* strategies. This is the term one finds in professional journals and the research literature, and this is what we use to label the learner of the language. Talking about a language acquirer, or language acquisition strategies would sound awkward, even when the subconscious processes of acquisition were meant. Yet another reason is that language learning/learner strategy research exists within the broader framework of the discipline of second language acquisition (SLA), many issues of which are in fact concerned with conscious learning, rather than acquisition.

Foreign or second language: If a distinction between second or foreign language needs to be made, second language refers to the language which is spoken as L1 by some members of the community where it is learned, that is, it has a social function. Foreign language is not considered to function as L1 in the local community, it is learned primarily for contact outside the community. In this respect, the Hungarian situation is almost exclusively a foreign language learning context. Similarly to the previous distinction (learning and acquisition), this one is not always water-tight, and because of the existence of SLA addressing issues of both learning and acquisition, second language seems to be the more widely used, generic term. The current writing will use these two terms and *L2* as synonyms.

She/he: Finally, about the use of *third person singular personal pronoun* in the text. The research involved both teachers and L2 students. *She* will be used to refer to teachers in general, whereas learners will be indicated by generic *he*.

The dissertation was conceived of and realised in the hope that it will contribute to a better understanding of foreign language learning in the present-day Hungarian secondary classroom context in general and of the role of learner strategies in foreign language learning in particular, with a view to gaining insights into the ways of bettering current practices.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The use of language learning strategies, “the specific actions or techniques that learners use... to improve their progress in developing L2 skills” (Green & Oxford, 1995:262), is an age-old phenomenon. The concept, however, is a relatively new one, having been discovered and named only recently (Oxford, 1990:1). Nowadays - even though doubts and scepticism remain - the importance of learning strategies in bringing about desirable learning outcomes is widely recognised throughout the educational world.

Nisbet and Shucksmith (1986) trace back the roots of the intensive interest in what answers learners give to their learning problems to around the turn of the 19th-20th centuries. Since that time questions of learning and remembering, ideas about learning to learn, and improvement of study skills have been in the focus of researchers’ attention, particularly in the field of psychology. The examination of how learners approach second language learning was partly inspired by developments in cognitive psychology (Brown et alia, 1983), which - according to (Hunt, 1982) - is the study of the workings of the mind between input and output, that is, perception, memory, learning, inference, and concept formation.

The study of second language acquisition has shown a growing interest in learners’ strategies since the early 1970s. This was prompted by several factors. One was the explosion of the demand for speakers of foreign languages, resulting from political changes in Europe after World War II (Gremmo & Riley, 1995). This pragmatic reason contributed largely to the mushrooming of research activity into foreign language learning.

Parallel to the rise of the interest in learners’ strategies was the recognition that no matter to what perfection our practices of language teaching develop, there still remain differences between the achievement of students. Teachers and researchers understood that while some students develop fast and achieve the desired level of proficiency relatively easily, for others language learning and experience of

the same teaching methodology proves to be a waste of effort and time, often causing frustration. It was also realised that certain learners turned out to be successful *in spite of* the method their teachers used. All these resulted in the recognition that the quest for the one perfect L2 teaching method may be a futile one, that probably there is no one way of teaching capable of satisfying all individual learners' needs in equal measure. As Brown puts it: "We began to see the importance of individual *variation* in language learning" (1994:114).

The above led to a gradual shift in focus in educational thought away from teaching to learning. This shift got further inspiration from the learner-centred, humanistic approaches, rooted in Rogers's humanistic psychology and the resulting 'designer' methods (Brown, 1994:95) of the 70's. Rogers (1969) emphasised the importance of learning to learn and of adapting to a changing environment. These developments brought about the discovery of the rich and varied potential of the learner, and highlighted the active role that the learner as a whole person assume in the teaching-learning process. This at the same time reflected a growing dissatisfaction with the passive determinism of behaviourist psychology, which regarded human beings as "subjects whose behaviour could be shaped in much the same way as that of rats or pigeons" (Sheerin, 1991:143).

It follows from the paradigm shift from teaching to learning that an interest arose in the factors and learner variables that could positively affect learning outcomes. Among these the activities that successful learners engage in to promote their own learning gained marked significance. This happened in the belief that once it is identified what efficient learners do to facilitate their learning, these behaviours, steps and techniques will lend themselves to teaching to less successful learners. This was the premise that the earliest research into learning strategies (cf. Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975; Naiman et alia, 1978) was built on.

Strongly related to the growing body of research on learner strategies was the emergence of the notion of 'learner autonomy', a development following from the rise of the learner-centred approaches to teaching. Learner autonomy in Tudor's interpretation is "a *qualitative involvement* of learners in their language study... (it) relates to notions of awareness of learning goals, participation in decision making, and personal assumption of responsibility" (1996:18). For Wenden, the autonomous learner is one who "... has acquired the strategies and knowledge to take some (if not

all) responsibility for her language learning and is willing and self-confident enough to do so” (1991:163).

Indeed, propagators of learner autonomy recognised that learning strategies have a crucial role in turning learners from passive recipients of knowledge into active participants of their own learning enterprise, thus in helping them to assume responsibility for their own learning. Growing knowledge about learning strategies and experiences with enhancing learner autonomy provided a joint grounding for investigations into the possibilities of instructing learners in the conscious use of ‘good’ strategies, which became known as learner (strategy) training.

Since the beginnings, there have been no signs of learning strategy research becoming short of breath. On the contrary. As Skehan observes: “Research on learning strategies has gone through a near-explosion of activity in recent years, with several different groups now active in this area” (1991:285).

What follows is a review of those issues and phases in learner strategy research which are essential to the understanding of the research that the current dissertation is built on.

The first section (2.1) will provide an overview of the earliest phases of learner strategy research, which were underpinned by the so-called ‘good language learner’ studies. Though less impressive than the good language learner research, studies of unsuccessful learners’ strategies will also be reviewed in section 2.1, as they relate closely to the good language learner studies. Then an overview of the major attempts to pin down the essence of the concept of learner strategy will follow, with details on the principal debates about terminological and conceptual issues. The subsection on definitions will end with the most comprehensive learner strategy definition that has been produced to date and adopted for the purposes of the current dissertation.

The theoretical foundations to the study of learning strategies will follow in section 2.2, where models of L2 learning inspired by cognitive and social psychology will be described. This is necessitated by the fact that this line of research has contributed a great deal to uncovering the multitude of factors from the interplay of which learner strategy use results, some of which are under study in this paper.

Section 2.3 introduces two influential strategy classification schemes, O’Malley & Chamot’s (1990) and Oxford’s (1990). The latter will be treated with a

marked attention, as this is the scheme that has been utilised as a frame of reference for the present research.

A detailed analysis of the factors that have been found or hypothesised to affect the choice of strategies, more particularly of those that are relevant to the research to be introduced, will be offered in section 2.4.

Section 2.5 presents a description of the methods of assessing learner strategies. In describing the advantages and disadvantages to using them in various research environments, special accent will be put on the ones that have been utilised for the present research. As such, Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) has been afforded a whole subsection.

The last section (2.6) of Chapter 2 discusses developments that led to the attempts to incorporate results of learner strategy research into the foreign language classroom, providing various forms of training in strategy use.

2.1 From the beginnings to an all-embracing definition

2.1.1 'Good language learner' studies

As pointed out in the Introduction to this chapter, the recognition of the vanity of the quest for the 'perfect' teaching method made it clear that language instruction could profit from a better understanding of the learner and the learning process itself. As Rubin noted, "there has been too much attention on the input to the learner and too little on what was going on in the learner himself" (1975:44). Consequently, attempts were made to isolate learner characteristics and processes that account for the variance between the rate and route of L2 achievement. It was with these attempts that learner strategy research started and escalated in the 'good language learner studies'.

This early research on learning strategies was driven by the underlying belief expressed in Rubin's programmatic work as follows: "If we knew more about what the 'successful' learners did, we might be able to teach these strategies to poorer learners to enhance their success record" (1975:42). Emphasis in these studies was on investigating what we can learn from the good language learners in terms of their approach to the task of learning a foreign language, and whether there are any characteristic features predisposing them to success in their endeavour. As for

identifying the ‘successful learner’, early research relied on teachers’ experiences and observations, and utilised data gained from observations and learners’ verbal reports (interviews and written questionnaires).

Studies of this kind include Rubin’s (1975), Stern’s (1975) and Naiman et alia’s (1978) contributions, all of which resulted in lists of strategies supposedly employed by the good language learner. Rubin (1975) suggested that good language learners are willing and accurate guessers; have a strong drive to communicate; are often uninhibited; are willing to make mistakes; focus on form by looking for patterns and analysing; make use of all practice opportunities; monitor their own and others’ speech; and pay attention to meaning. Naiman et alia (1978) identified five broad strategies, namely: an active task approach; realisation of language as a system; realisation of language as a means of communication; management of affective demands; and monitoring of second language performance, as essential for success with language learning.

Studying the various lists of strategies that those investigations produced would certainly help identify common patterns in the strategy use of the good learner. However, as early as in the seventies research highlighted the fact that strategies would vary with a variety of factors, such as the learning task, level of proficiency, age, learning context, and general learning styles. Thus, Rubin cautions (1975), we had better expect many different kinds of ‘good language learners’. Naiman et alia arrive at a similar conclusion, suggesting that “...the successful or good language learner, with predetermined, overall characteristics, does not exist. There are many individual ways of learning a language successfully” (1978:103). This position is held by Stevick, as well, who notes in a study of seven successful language learners that “they differ markedly with regard to what... they prefer to do and not to do” (1989:128). Still, he thinks that overall patterns can be identified.

All good language learner studies seem to agree that the ingredients of successful language learning are the following: realisation of language as a system, that is, concern for form; realisation of language as a means of communication, that is, concern for meaning; an active task approach; an awareness of the learning process; and the knowledge about learning, that is, the ability to use strategies flexibly, in accordance with the task requirements (cf. Ellis, 1994:546). Subsequent research has validated these characteristics, producing evidence for the presence with

successful learners of these strategies in various combinations and modified to differing extents by an array of factors to be detailed later (section 2.4).

In sum, it is reasonable to state that early research provided second language research with invaluable insights into the process of foreign language learning. It drew attention to the unique nature of the language learning experience. Although far from conclusive, good language learner studies proved to be useful in investigating how strategies affect learning. Not only did they generate inventories of strategies, but also opened up paths for immediate practical application in the form of training programmes. Undoubtedly not without flaws, and far transcended by later developments, good language learner studies deserve credit as constituting “one of the most effective lines of enquiry in learning strategy research” (Ellis, 1994:550).

2.1.2 Studies of unsuccessful learners' strategies

Though unsuccessful/poor language learners and their strategies never aroused the amount of research interest that good language learners did, the other significant line of investigation was marked out by the comparisons of poor and successful learners' learning.

As has been seen, good language learner studies imply that successful learners have a variety of strategies which they apply appropriately, what is more, are able to reflect and report on them. Poor learners, by contrast, are shown to lack these strategies or are inactive strategy users. Nevertheless, the research projects (cf. Reiss, 1981; Porte, 1988; Vann & Abraham, 1990) that investigated unsuccessful learners reveal that poor learners are also active strategy users, and the repertoire of their strategies is similar to that of their successful counterparts. Where they differ most is their failure to apply the strategies appropriately to the task and in a concerted fashion. As Vann & Abraham conclude:

“... (poor learners) lacked certain higher order processes, what are often called metacognitive strategies or self-regulatory skills, which would enable them to assess the task and bring to bear the necessary strategies for its completion” (1990:191).

Thus, it is suggested, a major difference between the two types of learner lies in the way they use strategies. Reiss's study (1981) found that learners who were labelled as 'good' by their teachers were able to give accurate and specific accounts of how

they were going about learning tasks, whereas the ones labelled ‘poor’ were vague and imprecise when reflecting and reporting on how they learn.

This provokes two conclusions. One is that due to their apparent problems with reporting on strategy use, we may have inadequate knowledge about what poor learners do, thus it cannot be stated for sure to what extent their poor performance is due to an inappropriate application of an underdeveloped strategy system, or to an inability to learn languages. The other conclusion, supported also by Porte (1988), is that poor learners’ problems might be solved by helping them identify, verbalise, then refine and possibly expand their repertoire of learning strategies. As will be seen, this is a fundamental tenet that underlies most learner strategy training programmes (section 2.6).

2.1.3 Definitions

What exactly was it that researchers wanted to identify when investigating the strategies of good or poor language learners? What are learning strategies, and in what ways are they different from other activities learners engage in to enhance their learning? Ellis reminds that “the concept of ‘strategy’ is a somewhat fuzzy one, and ... not easy to tie down” (1994:529). The problems researchers encountered in the process of trying to grasp the essence of learner strategies and squeezing it into definitions are demonstrated in Table 1 on the following page, which provides an overview of learning strategy definitions in a chronological order.

SOURCE	DEFINITION
Stern (1983:405)	“... <i>strategy</i> is best reserved for <i>general tendencies</i> or <i>overall characteristics</i> of the approach employed by the language learner, leaving <i>techniques</i> as the term to refer to particular forms of <i>observable learning behaviour, more or less consciously</i> employed by the learner...”
Weinstein & Mayer (1986:315)	“Learning strategies are the <i>behaviours and thoughts</i> that a learner engages in during learning that are intended to influence the learner’s encoding process.”
Bialystok (1985:258)	“ ... learning strategies are construed as activities undertaken by learners, whether <i>consciously or not</i> , that have the effect of promoting the learner’s ability either to analyse the linguistic knowledge relevant to the language under study; or to improve the control of procedures for selecting and applying that knowledge under specific contextual conditions.”
Wenden (1987:6)	“The term <i>learner strategies</i> ... refers to language learning <i>behaviours</i> learners actually engage in to learn and regulate the learning of a second language.”
O’Malley & Chamot (1990:43)	“Learning strategies ... have <i>learning facilitation as a goal</i> and are <i>intentional</i> on the part of the learner. The goal of strategy use is to affect the learner’s motivational or affective state, or the way in which the learner selects, acquires, organises, or integrates new knowledge.”
Oxford (1990:8)	“Learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning <i>easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed¹, more effective, and more transferable</i> to new situations.”
Cohen (1990:5)	“Learning strategies are learning processes which are <i>consciously</i> selected by the learner... These are also moves which the learner is at least partially aware of.”
Wenden (1991:18)	“Learning strategies are <i>mental steps or operations</i> that learners use to learn a new language and to <i>regulate their efforts</i> to do so.”
Brown (1994:114)	“Learning strategies are the moment by moment techniques that we employ to <i>solve ‘problems’</i> posed by second language input and output”.

Table 1 List of learning strategy definitions

The most intriguing problems pervading the issue are discussed in the following section. The italics in the table have been applied to help the reader more easily find the problem area referred to in the passages that follow.

¹ The term self-direction is often applied in relation to language learning strategies. Dickinson (1987) used it to refer to the learner’s attitude to taking responsibility for his own learning, whereas for Holec (1981) it referred to the learning mode, situation, or techniques.

2.1.4 *Controversial issues*

2.1.4.1 **Problems of terminology**

The first issue concerns the lack of clarity about what term to use when referring to the phenomenon in question. As Wenden puts it:

“Researchers in second language acquisition have not been able to come to a consensus regarding what a strategy is. This is reflected in the literature where strategies are referred to as ‘techniques’, ‘tactics’, ‘potentially conscious plans’, ‘consciously employed operations’, ‘learning skills’, ‘basic skills’, ‘functional skills’, ‘cognitive abilities’, ‘problem solving procedures’, and ‘language learning behaviours’” (1987:7; 1991:18).

While Stern distinguishes between *strategies* and *techniques*, reserving the term *strategy* for general tendencies or overall characteristics, and *techniques* for observable learning behaviour (Table 1), others tend to use the term strategy to refer to what Stern calls techniques. Seliger makes a distinction between *strategies* and *tactics*. The former are defined as “the basic abstract categories of processing by which information from the outside world is organised or categorised into cognitive structures...” (Seliger, 1984:41), and the latter are seen as “an infinitely variable set of behaviours or learning activities dependent on a wide variety of factors...” (1984:38). Strategies in his approach involve subconscious mechanisms, whereas tactics are conscious or potentially conscious and highly variable, in response to the learning environment or to the demands of input and output. This distinction on the basis of consciousness is a helpful one, suggests Ellis (1994:532), emphasising that there is a lot of uncertainty about the consciousness issue among researchers, there being a tendency to use ‘strategy’ to refer to both conscious and subconscious activities (for further clarification of consciousness issue see 2.1.4.2).

Seeing strategies as either conscious or subconscious, McDonough (1995) discusses the overlapping uses of the terms skills, processes and strategies. He suggests that:

“...skill, process and strategy may be coterminous with various kinds of cognitive mechanism, some of which are automatic and not available for conscious manipulation or inspection, and some of which are” (in McDonough, 1999:1).

A solution to this problem, as proposed by Cohen, is to refer to all these processes as strategies, “while still acknowledging that there is a continuum from the broadest categories to the most specific or low-level” (1998:10).

2.1.4.2 Conscious vs. subconscious

As clear from Table 1 (p.16) and the previous discussion, there was little agreement on whether strategies are to be seen as conscious and intentional (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Cohen, 1990) or subconscious, or both (Stern, 1983; Bialystok, 1985; McDonough, 1995). Some researchers avoided addressing this issue on the whole.

Schmidt postulates that the phenomena called language learning strategies are either within the *focal attention* of the learners or within their *peripheral attention*, that is, they can identify them if asked about what they have just done (Schmidt 1994, in Cohen, 1998). This stipulation, coupled with more recent research findings (Chamot, 1996; Chamot et alia, 1996), suggests that it is appropriate to link the notion of consciousness to the definition of strategies, even though consciousness itself is still a controversial issue in SLA (cf. Ellis, 1994:361).

Dissatisfied with the interpretations which disregard the fact that the everyday use of the term ‘strategy’ implies active planning, thus allow for the possibility that students are unaware of using a strategy, MacIntyre (1994:190) proposes a conceptualisation in which the defining characteristics of language learning strategies are *intentionality* and *choice*. Rendering these central to the strategy concept, he excludes from the definition actions that arise automatically for a learner. Though *conscious* and *intentional* are not synonyms, MacIntyre’s interpretation of strategies as intentional, rather than automatic, is clearly in line with those in which strategy and consciousness are twined together.

Along similar lines, Cohen (1998:10) views *potential consciousness* as the element that distinguishes strategies from other, not strategic processes. That is to say, behaviours that are so unconscious that the learner is unable to identify - even when asked to - should be referred to as *processes*, whereas *strategy* should be maintained for behaviours the learner is able to identify. This agrees with Ellis’s (1994) proposition as well, which suggests that if strategies become so automatic that learners are not conscious of employing them, thus unable to describe them, they should lose their significance as strategies.

2.1.4.3 Behavioural vs. mental

A third issue subject to dispute is whether strategies should be perceived as behavioural (and thus, observable), or mental (taking place in the mind, thus unobservable), or both. While Weinstein & Mayer (1986) refer to learner strategies as behavioural as well as mental, Wenden calls them behaviours in 1987, and mental steps in 1991. In Chamot & Rubin's interpretation learning strategies are largely unobservable cognitive processes, mental and personal in nature, the application of which may be observable behaviours (1994:773). It is inappropriate, however, for strategies to be called behaviours.

A resolution of this problem in Cohen's view (1998) lies in acknowledging that whereas some strategies are behavioural and observable, others may be behavioural, but not readily observable, and yet others are purely mental and not observable.

2.1.4.4 General vs. specific

Views also differ on a fourth question, which is whether strategies are more general in nature or tied particularly to specific content or task. Brown (1994) is clearly of the view that strategies are problem and task specific, contextualised battle plans, which vary from moment to moment and from individual to individual. Cohen (1998), however, puts forward the idea that general as well as more specific acts that learners engage in to enhance their learning and which otherwise correspond to other criteria of 'strategyhood' be included in the strategy concept. He suggests placing strategies along a continuum from general to most specific.

Figure 1 on the following page demonstrates a continuum as conceived of by Cohen. While *forming concepts and hypotheses* about the working of the target language is a general strategy, *summarising a text* is more specific, and *writing on-going summaries in the margin in note form* is an even more specific one.

GENERAL	MORE SPECIFIC	STILL MORE SPECIFIC
Forming concepts and hypotheses about how the target language works	Summarising a text to determine its coherence	Writing ongoing summaries in the margin in note form

*Figure 1 General vs. specific strategies
(adapted from Cohen, 1998:10)*

2.1.5 *Learning vs. communication vs. production strategies*

The previous sections reveal that numerous attempts were made to identify and define strategies. Subsequent research aimed at classifying and categorising the lists that had been accumulated, which resulted in distinguishing among several types of strategy, giving rise to further, more refined definitions.

One possible line of drawing distinctions is between *learning*, *production* and *communication* strategies. This distinction on the basis of the purpose of the strategic behaviour is attributed to Tarone (1977, 1980). According to her, the purpose of *learning* strategies is the expansion of language knowledge; that of *production* strategies is the exercising of a receptive or productive skill; and that of *communication* strategies is the repairing and forestalling of communication breakdown.

A *learning* strategy in Tarone's definition is "an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language" (1983:67). That is, learning strategies are concerned with language acquisition, and as such, they relate primarily to input, to how messages from others are processed, stored and retrieved. Production and communication strategies refer to language use. *Production* strategies are "attempts to use one's linguistic system efficiently and clearly, with a minimum of effort" (Tarone, 1980:419). *Communication* strategies - the term was coined by Selinker and discussed in his seminal paper on 'interlanguage' as one of the five central processes involved in L2 learning (1972:229) - are "mutual attempts of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared" (Tarone, 1980:420). Clearly, in this view, communication

strategies are the devices of tackling communication problems that arise during interaction.

A careful examination of the last two definitions makes one realise that the difference between production and communication strategies lies merely in the lack of interactional focus in the case of the former. Owing partly to this, the distinctions between learning, production and communication strategies have recently been abandoned in favour of the simpler split between learning and communication strategies.

Since the notion of communication strategies was first raised, it has attracted a great deal of research interest (for a thorough review see Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). This interest is totally understandable when one considers the fact that they are the language devices of tackling communication problems and difficulties in an L2, concomitant of learning and using a foreign language (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997:202). Clearly, the distinction may be important in certain research contexts, where focus is laid on identifying strategies specific to carrying out communication tasks. However, as often pointed out and admitted by Tarone herself, the distinctions are not always easy to apply, because it is rarely clear-cut whether the use of a strategy is motivated by the learner's desire to learn or to communicate (1980:421). This reservation is adopted by Oxford (1990), too, who emphasises that the split between learning and communication strategies is an artificial and inaccurate one, therefore to be completely avoided in her scheme of strategies (see in detail in 2.3.2).

The most recent definition of L2 strategies (adopted for the purposes of the present research and introduced in the following section) also rejects the distinction on the grounds depicted above.

2.1.6 *Emergence of the term 'learner' strategy*

As has been seen, a range of language learning strategies had been isolated and described, and there had been numerous attempts to categorise them. The debatable split between learning and communication strategies as opposed to the distinction between the strategies of language learning and use eventually brought about the emergence of the term, *learner strategy*, to replace the narrower conception of *learning strategy* (McDonough, 1999).

Maintaining that the terminological issues are in no way settled, Cohen provides the following, broad definition (parts italicised by him):

“*Second language learner strategies* encompass both *second language learning* and *second language use strategies*. Taken together, they constitute the steps or actions consciously selected by learners either to improve the *learning* of a second language, or the *use* of it, or both” (Cohen, 1998:5).

Language *learning* strategies subsumed within this broad framework are those that are used to identify the material to be learned; to distinguish it from other materials if needed; to group it for easier learning, to engage oneself repeatedly in it; and to commit it to memory formally when not acquired in an informal context.

Strategies of language *use* include four subsets: those of retrieval, rehearsal, cover and communication strategies. *Retrieval strategies* are activated to recall material from long term memory; *rehearsal strategies* are for practising the material in a variety of ways; *cover strategies* are used to create the impression that the learner has control over the material when it is not the case; and *communication strategies* are approaches to conveying messages in a way that they are both meaningful and informative for the listener/reader (Cohen, 1998:5-7).

In his state of the art article, McDonough comments on the development of the term *learner strategy* as follows:

“... this term is also redolent of the learner’s active participation in the learning process, not simply as a performer, as in audio-lingual methods of teaching, but as a problem-solver and reflective organiser of the knowledge and skills on offer in the language exposure and required for effective language use” (McDonough, 1999:2).

Having reviewed the earliest phases of learner strategy research, where the main focus was on identifying what successful learners did to enhance L2 learning, the studies of poor students’ strategies, and the route that the concept of learner strategy had taken until it reached the comprehensive definition presented above, I will go on to review strategy-related foreign language learning theories.

2.2 Theoretical foundations to the study of learner strategies

Language learner strategy research is often criticised for lacking in underlying theory (cf. Ellis, 1994, McDonough, 1999). However, there have been remarkable attempts

to ground this line of research within theoretical frameworks provided by various fields in psychology, more particularly cognitive and social.

As pointed out in the introduction to the present chapter, the theoretical impetus to the study of learner strategies came from the relatively new discipline of cognitive psychology. The 60's saw a renewed interest in cognitive science, which ushered in multiplied research activity in the study of thinking. Coupled with Piaget's studies of child development (cf. Wittig & Williams, 1984:130), which focussed on the cognitive structures and processes, and Chomsky's revolutionary explanation of language behaviour, which led to the rejection of the behaviourist paradigm (Sheerin, 1991), cognitive psychology aroused a number of questions about the workings of the mind. These queries soon found their way into the realm of second language research.

Developments in first language acquisition research also contributed to the theoretical foundations of the study of second language learning. Part of the inspiration to a strategic approach to the study of second language acquisition was Slobin's (1973) work on first language acquisition. He explored the operating principles a child employs in learning the structure of the language of his environment, assuming the pre-existence of various kinds of linguistic knowledge. Although his principles were soon rejected in favour of more complex theories of the innate language faculty, his work motivated important research in the area of second language development, drawing upon the notion of strategies. Prominent among these research activities was Selinker's (1972) theory of interlanguage (cf. McDonough, 1999:3), which will be looked at in section 2.2.1.1.

Undoubtedly, the most useful theoretical basis has been the cognitive accounts of second language acquisition, among those the various forms of information processing theory. A premise of cognitive science is that humans are processors of information. Information comes in through our sense receptors, where selected items of information are attended to, then moved into the short-term memory. After a series of mental operations are applied to this in short-term memory, the modified product is moved to long-term memory from where it can be retrieved when needed. The techniques used to manipulate incoming information and to retrieve what is stored are cognitive strategies (cf. Wenden, 1987).

The models and theories of second language acquisition drawing primarily on constructs borrowed from cognitive psychology are of two types. They are either (1)

accounts of language learning, as opposed to other kinds of learning, that is, have language as a focal starting point, or (2) give accounts of L2 acquisition in terms of general skill learning, regarding language learning as any other type of skill learning (Ellis, 1994:388). Models of the first category are, among others, Selinker's work (1972) and Bialystok's theoretical model of second language learning (1978, 1981, 1982). These will be discussed in the following sections, where emphasis will be laid particularly on the role learning strategies are assigned in these models. Of the second type, O'Malley & Chamot's (1990) model will be presented.

2.2.1 Models inspired by cognitive psychology

2.2.1.1 Selinker's model

Early interlanguage theory, first introduced by Selinker in 1972, was built upon research investigating learners' errors and the general pattern of L2 development. The model involves five core cognitive processes responsible for interlanguage construction: language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication, and overgeneralization of the target language (TL) material. Selinker defines strategies of second language learning as an "identifiable approach by the learner to the material to be learned" (1972:37), while strategies of second language communication are considered an "identifiable approach by the learner to communication with native speakers of the TL" (ibid).

A number of problems with this list of cognitive processes are now apparent (cf. Ellis, 1994:351). Being beyond the scope of this writing, these are not going to be discussed. What needs to be emphasised is that the list of the central processes was valuable, in that it highlighted mental processes responsible for L2 acquisition, and it served as a basis for the introduction of the distinction between learning and communication strategies (cf. section 2.1.5). Subsequent work (Selinker et alia, 1975) focused on learning strategies and emphasised that the evidence for the systematic nature of interlanguage lies in recognisable strategies.

2.2.1.2 Bialystok's theory of L2 learning

Prompted largely by early interlanguage theory, Bialystok's theoretical model of second language learning is built upon the distinction between the hypothetical constructs of implicit and explicit knowledge. The "distinction between the two knowledge sources is defined in terms of function, rather than content" (Bialystok, 1978:73). While only one function is ascribed to implicit knowledge, which is to contain all information about the target language necessary for comprehension and production tasks, explicit knowledge has three functions to fulfil: it acts as a buffer for new information about the language, it acts as a store for information which is always represented explicitly, further, it acts as an explicit articulatory system. That is, the information represented in implicit knowledge may be made conscious in this source (Bialystok, 1978:72-73).

Language learning strategies, a central feature of this model, "operate by bringing relevant knowledge to the language task that has the effect of improving performance" (1978:76). Four language learning strategies are identified: formal practising, functional practising, monitoring and inferencing. *Formal practising* is the specific exercise of the language code for the sake of mastering the rule system. It involves the conscious study of L2 as well as attempts to automatize explicit knowledge already learnt, thus facilitates explicit knowledge to become implicit. *Functional practising* occurs when the learner increases his opportunity to use the language for communication, thus it facilitates the development of implicit knowledge through exposure to communicative language use. *Monitoring* and *inferencing* are regarded as complementary in this model, in that monitoring is essentially a production strategy, while inferencing is its comprehension counterpart. Being primarily a formal production strategy, monitoring "works by exploiting formal information about the language" (Bialystok, 1978:78) represented in explicit knowledge, while "inferencing is a strategy whereby a language learner may arrive at particular linguistic information which was previously unknown" (ibid).

The original version of this theoretical model, proposed in 1978, has undergone considerable revision since then; developments have mainly concerned the reconceptualisation of L2 knowledge, rather than the role of strategies in the model. Later Bialystok expanded her cognitive theory to include accounts of the role of communication and compensation strategies (cf. 1990) in second language

acquisition. Being beyond the scope of the present research, these are not going to be looked at in any detail.

2.2.1.3 O'Malley & Chamot's model of cognitive skill learning

As pointed out above, it is the information processing models of learning that have proved to be most useful in providing a theoretical framework for researchers of learner strategies. Maybe the most remarkable work here is that of O'Malley and his associates (O'Malley et alia, 1987; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Their work rests on the tenet that second language acquisition is "best understood as a complex cognitive skill" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:19), thus can be described within the context of cognitive theory. The cognitive theory of learning applied to the study of learning strategies is Anderson's Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT) Model (Anderson, 1976; 1980; 1983).

Anderson's ACT model is built on the distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge, although it is admitted that the division is far from being unambiguous. *Declarative knowledge* consists of all the facts we know about, it is the 'static' information in memory. It is possessed in an all-or-none manner. The learner acquires it suddenly, by being told and building upon prior knowledge, and activates it in a conscious manner (Anderson, 1976:117). *Procedural knowledge*, on the other hand, refers to the complex cognitive skills and other processes we know how to perform, this is the 'dynamic' information about how to do something. It seems to be something that can be partially possessed. It is learned gradually, through cued practice, and it is activated without awareness, i.e. automatic. Language learning in this model is like any other type of skill learning, and involves procedures for transforming declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge.

A central issue of the model is how procedural knowledge is represented in memory. Drawing in part on developments in the information processing aspects of computer sciences (Gagné, 1985), Anderson maintains that it is contained in production systems. A production system in its basic form has a condition (a clause or a set of clauses preceded by IF), and an action (a clause or a set of clauses preceded by THEN). The production for pluralisation, for example, is as follows:

IF the goal is to generate a plural of a noun, and the noun ends in a hard consonant, THEN generate the noun +/s/.

Production systems, or condition–action pairs, can initially be represented in declarative form, and gradually, through practice, can be compiled into production sets, and become automatic (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990:25). The authors maintain that:

“Such a representational system can be used to represent specific procedures in any domain (math, physics, chess, language, and so on) as well as general strategies, or domain-independent problem-solving procedures” (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990:25).

This proposition is clearly in conflict with other theories, including Chomsky’s (1980), who proposed that the mind has specific, innate language faculties.

Anderson (1980, 1983) distinguishes three stages of skill learning, in which the transition of declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge takes place: the cognitive, associative and autonomous stages. Normally, skill learning begins with the *cognitive stage*, during which the learner collects and makes sense of available input. It involves attending to both formal and functional aspects of language, whereby the learner is involved in a conscious activity, resulting in declarative knowledge. This, however, is still inadequate for skilled performance.

During the *associative* stage the learner strengthens the connections among the various elements or components of the skill, and constructs more efficient production sets. The declarative knowledge is turned into its procedural form, but the declarative representation initially formed is not always lost. Thus, Anderson notes (1983), errors are still likely during this stage. During the third, *autonomous* stage execution of a skill becomes more or less automatic and subconscious (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990:25-26). At this stage errors as well as the ability to verbalise knowledge of the skill can disappear entirely.

In sum, this theory assumes that learners learn the rules (declarative knowledge), which underlie performance of a complex skill, prior to competent and automatic skill performance (procedural knowledge).

Although the concept of strategy itself does not have a major role in Anderson’s model, the ACT model provokes two interpretations of the term (cf. Ellis, 1994). According to one, strategies only occur in the early cognitive stage, when they are still conscious, thus accessible for inspection, but “they cease to be ‘strategic’”, when performed automatically (cf. Ellis, 1994:533; and section 2.1.4.2).

The other view, which O'Malley & Chamot hold, is that they occur in all three stages. They take the form of production sets, which initially exist only in declarative form, in the cognitive and associative stages of learning. Then they are conscious and deliberate, and accessible through processing. Gradually, they become proceduralised, until they become fully automatic and unconscious. Commenting on this approach to the formulation of strategies, Ellis suggests that since:

“...strategies can only be effectively studied in the declarative stage of learning, when learners are still able to verbalise them, for research purposes they can be defined as production sets that exist as declarative knowledge and are used to solve some learning problems” (Ellis, 1994:533).

2.2.2 Models inspired by social psychology

As was emphasised, the development of cognitive psychology has contributed largely to the grounding of learner strategy research in a theoretical framework. Social psychology has also opened up a new perspective. Of the theories that have added a social psychological dimension to the study of second language acquisition, the socio-educational model (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992, 1993) and the social psychological model of strategy use (MacIntyre, 1994) will be looked at.

2.2.2.1 The socio-educational model of second language acquisition

The socio-educational model of second language acquisition (Gardner, 1985) attempts to afford a comprehensive account of second language learning. The model presented below (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993) is the result of years of evolution from the social psychological model of second language acquisition suggested by Lambert (1963, 1967) and that proposed by Gardner & Lambert (1972). It also has direct links with Carroll's (1962) educational model of second language learning and of school learning (Carroll, 1963, in Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992:213).

Figure 2 on the following page highlights all the factors incorporated into the socio-educational model, as well as the complexity of the interrelationships among the factors, which render it dynamic.

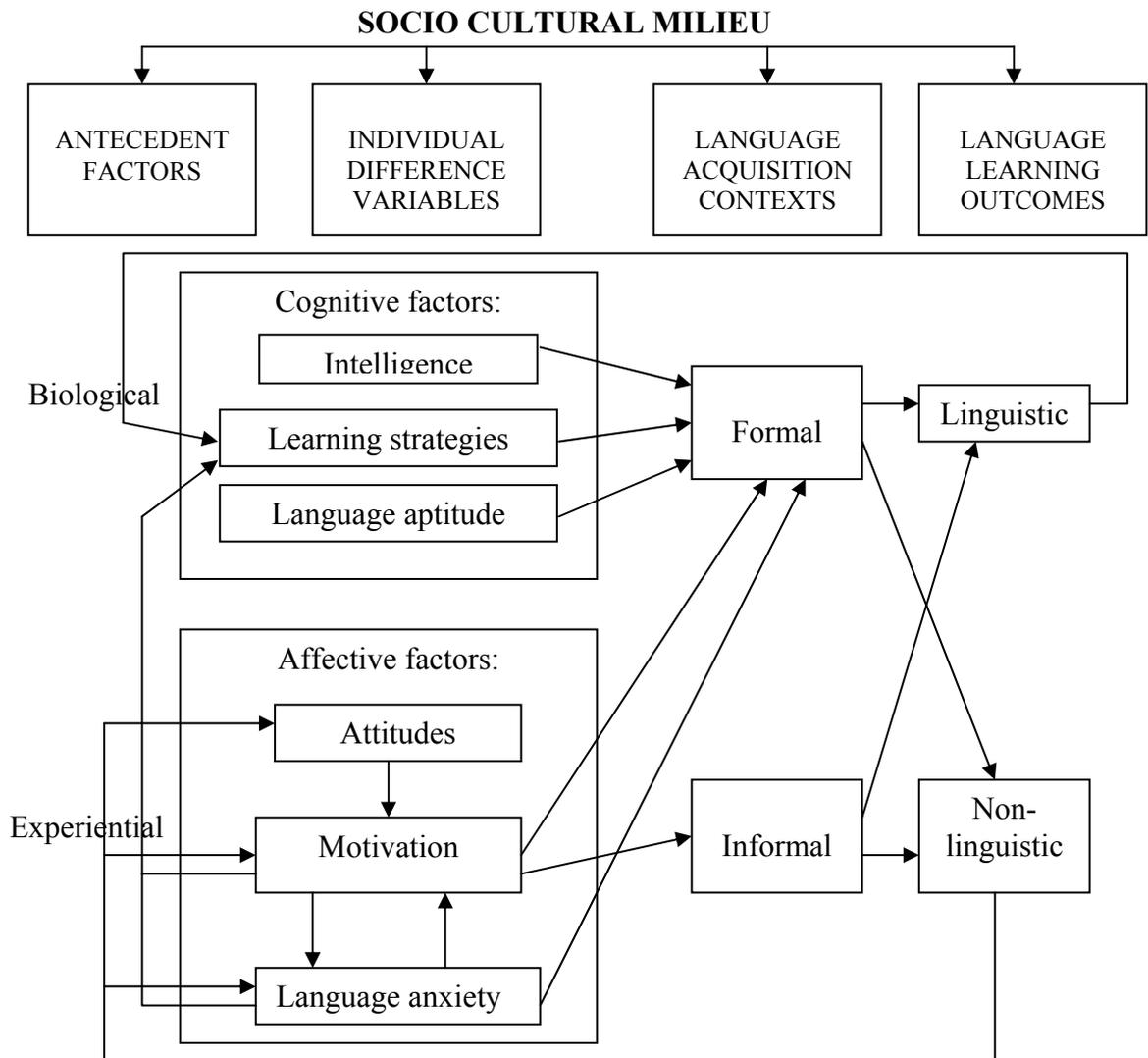


Figure 2 Schematic representation of the socio-educational model of second language acquisition (adapted from Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993:8).

As clear from the figure, the model is organised around four major parts – antecedent factors, individual difference variables, language acquisition contexts and language learning outcomes – with the socio-cultural milieu assigned a role determining all the major parts. It suggests that any study of second language learning/acquisition must “direct close attention to the social context in which the learning is taking place ” (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993:7), in order for it to provide a valid account.

The authors posit that there are a number of factors, biological and experiential in nature, labelled *antecedent factors*, which must be considered when one studies the role that individual difference variables adopt in the process of second language learning. Antecedent factors include examples such as age, gender or prior language learning experience, and a wealth of research evidence suggests

that they might considerably affect the individual difference factors. For example, age and gender have been found to influence what strategies learners select (cf. sections 2.4.1.1, 2.4.2.2), and earlier language learning experience is widely assumed to influence attitudes, motivation, and language anxiety.

The model includes six major *individual difference variables*, three in the cognitive, another three in the affective category. The authors make it clear that they consider individual difference variables as relatively independent of one another, though it is emphasised that they may correlate significantly in a variety of ways.

The solid directional arrows indicate the causal relationships among the various individual difference variables. Attitudes thus appear to have a causal influence on motivation, while motivation is shown to be in a two-way causal relationship with language anxiety. That is, motivation is suggested to need an affective basis to be maintained, and this function is fulfilled by attitudes. Further, high levels of motivation are assumed to depress language anxiety, while high levels of anxiety may decrease motivation (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993:9). Causal links are also shown from language anxiety and motivation to learning strategies. This is supported by research findings by Oxford & Nyikos (1989), Rost & Ross (1991), among others, which point to the importance of motivational factors underlying strategy choice, and by Oxford's taxonomy of learning strategies, where strategies which regulate one's affective state by reducing anxiety are subsumed within the category of indirect learning strategies (cf. section 2.3.2).

As regards the *contexts of language acquisition*, all the individual difference variables except language attitudes are shown to influence learning directly in a formal context. This indicates that these variables, including learning strategies, will have an effect on how successfully a learner acquires the material in a context where direct instruction in the foreign language is involved, as in a classroom situation. Learning strategies, at the same time, are not assumed to have a direct effect on learning outcomes in an informal context, motivation being the only variable proposed to have a significant role in an environment the main feature of which is its voluntary nature.

Linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes, the fourth part of the model, are important when looked at from a learning strategy perspective. Drawing on research findings up to that time (Oxford & Crookall, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989), the authors suggest that learning strategy use is influenced particularly by linguistic

outcomes, in that the choice of strategies depends to a large extent on achievement in the foreign language (Gardner & McIntyre, 1993:9).

The dynamic nature of the model is apparent in that both the cognitive and affective variables are shown to influence the individual's level of achievement. The level of achievement and experiences (linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes), in turn, appear as having an impact on the learner primarily on affective attributes, but also on his learner strategy use (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992:212).

2.2.2.2 MacIntyre's social psychological model

An insightful strategy-related model of language learning has been proposed by MacIntyre (1994). He sees learner strategies as part of a larger, elaborate system, allowing for strategy use to be context-dependent. In this model, strategies exert their influence on learning within a scheme of a multitude of social-psychological variables, including gender, attitudes and motivation, anxiety, cognitive style, self-confidence, teacher behaviour and demands of the situation. For a learner strategy to be employed, at least four conditions must be met: student's knowledge of the strategy; having a reason to use it; not having a reason not to use it; and reinforcement of strategy use by positive consequences. *Knowledge of the strategy* means that the student is aware of the appropriate strategy or a range of strategies and he feels he knows how to use them. *Having a reason to use it* refers to sufficient impetus to use a strategy, meaning that there is an expectation on the student's behalf that the strategy will successfully help his learning, while *not having a reason not to use it* means that there is nothing to prevent its use. If a student expects difficulty to occur with the use of the strategy, feels anxious about using it or expects sanctions against it, he will probably neglect even well known, effective strategies. Finally, in the absence of *positive reinforcement*, which may be manifested in improved learning or communication, use of a strategy will likely diminish or cease (MacIntyre, 1994:190-191).

In a test of the model (MacIntyre & Noels, 1996) with a relatively large sample of (138) students completing first year FL courses at a Canadian university, variables defined by the model were used to predict the use of 50 learner strategies (included in the SILL, Oxford, 1990). Results proved the model viable, showing that it accounted for 60 percent of the variance in strategy use, and that three of its

components – knowledge, reason to use and no reason not to use a strategy – were supported for 72 percent of the strategies. This confirms the key role that social-psychological variables play in the use of learner strategies, thus in language learning.

2.2.3 Concluding remarks

The models reviewed at in the preceding sections are insightful accounts of the multifaceted endeavour of language learning. Approaching the problem either from the perspective of cognitive processes or of social variables, they give an outline of the processes involved in language learning and the role that learner strategies play in these processes.

O'Malley & Chamot's model is a comprehensive account of language learning as cognitive skill learning. As such, it is expandable to other types of learning, thus inherent in it is the denial of the existence of a separate faculty in the human mind for the acquisition of language. This feature of the model has made it vulnerable to criticism. The other models drawing on cognitive theory focus primarily on language and offer explanations for what needs to happen for L2 development to occur.

The complexity of the interplay of the factors which are responsible for learning to take place can be found in the theories inspired by social psychology. Expanding the scope of investigation to variables related to the language learner and his learning context, these models highlight the importance of factors beyond cognition.

In summary, all have contributed to enlarging our understanding of second language learning in general and the place of learning strategies in it in particular.

2.3 Classifying strategies – taxonomies

As has been emphasised, the major concern of early research (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975; Wong-Fillmore, 1976; Bialystok, 1978, Naiman et alia, 1978) was to identify and describe learners' strategies. These provided bases for compiling inventories. As Ellis comments (1994:535), the inventories were hardly generalizable as they had

reflected more than anything the kind of learner under study, the setting where the research was carried out and the goal of the research.

Soon, however, attempts were made to organise the strategies into groups and categories, and to create systems of broader categories within which to subsume more specific strategies. As a result, taxonomies emerged, which were informed by a variety of classifying principles. Of the nearly two dozen (Oxford, 1999, online), currently existing classification systems two (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990) will be presented in detail, as the ones that have proved to be most influential in refining our understanding of L2 strategies.

2.3.1 *O'Malley and Chamot's taxonomy*

O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) classification system derives from findings of extensive research (O'Malley et alia, 1985a, b; Chamot, 1987; Chamot & O'Malley, 1987; O'Malley et alia, 1987; Chamot et alia, 1988, O'Malley et alia, 1989) on the learner strategies of learners of English as a second language in the United States, and is placed within the theoretical framework of the information processing model of cognitive psychology (see in detail in section 2.2.1.3).

In this system, a three-way division of strategies appears, which draws on Flavell's concept of metacognition (1979). Strategies are grouped into *metacognitive*, *cognitive*, and *socio-affective* ones. Metacognitive is a term indicating an executive function in information processing theory (Brown et alia, 1983). *Metacognitive strategies* are higher order executive skills that may "involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating how well one has learned" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:137). Their main function is to regulate language learning by means of planning, monitoring and evaluating, thus they are applicable to a variety of tasks.

Cognitive strategies, having an operative or cognitive processing function, are more directly related to individual learning tasks, and entail direct manipulation of the materials in ways that facilitate learning.

Social/affective strategies describe ways in which learners choose to interact with others – other learners or native speakers – , or use affective control in their

pursuit of language learning. Thus they have a social-mediating and transacting function.

Table 2 provides a list of all the strategies that the studies of O'Malley and his associates' extensive research identified, and which were later subsumed within the three types of strategy in O'Malley and Chamot's (1990:Chapter 5) scheme.

S T R A T E G I E S		
METACOGNITIVE	COGNITIVE	SOCIO-AFFECTIVE
Planning (Advance organisation)	Repetition	Questioning for clarification
Directed attention	Resourcing	Co-operation
Selective attention	Grouping	Self-talk
Functional planning	Note-taking	Self-reinforcement
Self-management	Deduction/ Induction	
Monitoring	Imagery	
Problem identification	Auditory representation	
Self-evaluation	Key word method	
	Substitution	
	Elaboration	
	Summarisation	
	Translation	
	Transfer	
	Inferencing	
	Note taking	
	Recombination	
	Contextualisation	

Table 2 O'Malley & Chamot's strategy classification scheme

The metacognitive strategy of *directed attention*, for example, is defined as “deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevant distracters; maintaining attention during task execution” (1990:137). *Transfer* (a cognitive strategy) means “using previously acquired linguistic knowledge to facilitate a language task” (1990:138), and socio-affective *self-talk* stands for “reducing anxiety by using mental techniques that make one feel competent to do the learning task” (1990:139).

As pointed out, the taxonomy is grounded in a cognitive theory of language learning and the authors emphasise the significance of its application to learning strategy research. However, the practical application of the taxonomy is not free of problems. Some of the strategies, for example *monitoring*, might be arguably

cognitive and metacognitive. This problem is aggravated by the fact that there is no clear exemplification of how the strategies appear in practice. Strongly related to the previous points is that many of the definitions are imprecise, therefore a lot of strategies potentially overlap. This could be the case with *elaboration*, *inferencing* and *transfer*, which all refer to making sense of new information in relation to previously acquired knowledge.

According to Grenfell & Harris, the taxonomy is too broad, as it does not capture the complexity of language learning it claims to capture, and it is too narrow at the same time, not paying enough attention to research into communication strategies (1998:25). They argue that the lack of clarity about what distinguishes between learning and communication strategies, further, the arbitrary way in which some of the definitions are drawn warns researchers against relying solely on this taxonomy (ibid).

The criticism notwithstanding, this taxonomy has provided a useful theoretical framework for a number of studies, including research into the learner strategies of secondary students in Poland (Drozdziel-Szelest, 1997) and young learners in Finland (Julkunen, 1999).

2.3.2 *Oxford's taxonomy*

Probably the most comprehensive system of classification to date is that of Oxford (1990), which developed as a result of “years of struggling with issues of language learning and teaching” (Oxford, 1990:ix). Presented first in 1985, the taxonomy underwent numerous modifications and was revised several times, until it gained its current form.

Oxford's main concern was to subsume within her system all the strategies that had been identified and discussed in the literature, thus - using less technical terminology compared to other typologies - equipping researchers and practitioners with a system of classification that is immediately applicable in everyday second language work. Drawing on some of the earlier classification schemes (cf. Rubin, 1981), Oxford suggests two broad classes of strategies: direct and indirect, which parallel Dansereau's (1978, 1985) primary strategies and support strategies. These are further subdivided into three classes each.

All *direct strategies* involve the target language directly, operating specifically on the L2 material to facilitate its storage and recall from memory. *Indirect strategies* do not operate on the second language itself, but they are important, as they “provide indirect support for language learning, through focusing, planning, evaluating, seeking opportunities, controlling anxiety, increasing co-operation and empathy...” (Oxford, 1990:151).

Within the *direct strategies* Oxford subsumes memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. “*Memory strategies...* have a highly specific function: helping students store verbal material and retrieve it when needed” (Oxford, 1990:39). They are particularly important in helping students cope with vocabulary learning, “the most sizeable and unmanageable component in the learning of any language” (Hague, 1987, in Oxford 1990:39), and in helping move information from the level of declarative to procedural knowledge (cf. cognitive theory of skill learning in section 2.2.1.3). *Cognitive strategies* are essential for learning an L2. This varied lot of strategies, unified by the common function of manipulation and transformation of the target language, enable learners to understand and produce new language by many different means (Oxford, 1990:43). “*Compensation strategies...* allow learners to use the language for either comprehension or production despite limitations in knowledge” (Oxford, 1990:47).

Oxford’s *indirect class* is divided into the groups of metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

“*Metacognitive strategies* allow learners to control their own cognition – that is, to co-ordinate the learning process... *Affective strategies* help to regulate emotions, motivations and attitudes. *Social strategies* help students learn through interaction with others” (Oxford, 1990:135).

The six strategy groups are then subdivided into altogether 19 strategy sets - 10 in the direct, and 9 in the indirect group (Figure 3, next page) - which are further broken down into individual strategies. For example, one type of cognitive strategy is *receiving and sending messages*, which consists of such individual strategies as *getting the idea quickly* and *using resources for receiving and sending messages*. Social strategies consist of three sets, one of which, *co-operating with others*, has got the strategies of *co-operating with peers* and *co-operating with proficient users of the language* subsumed under it. The entire system thus organised includes sixty-two

strategies (1990:18-21). Figure 3 illustrates the categories and sets of strategies of Oxford's system. (See Appendix H for the entire scheme.)

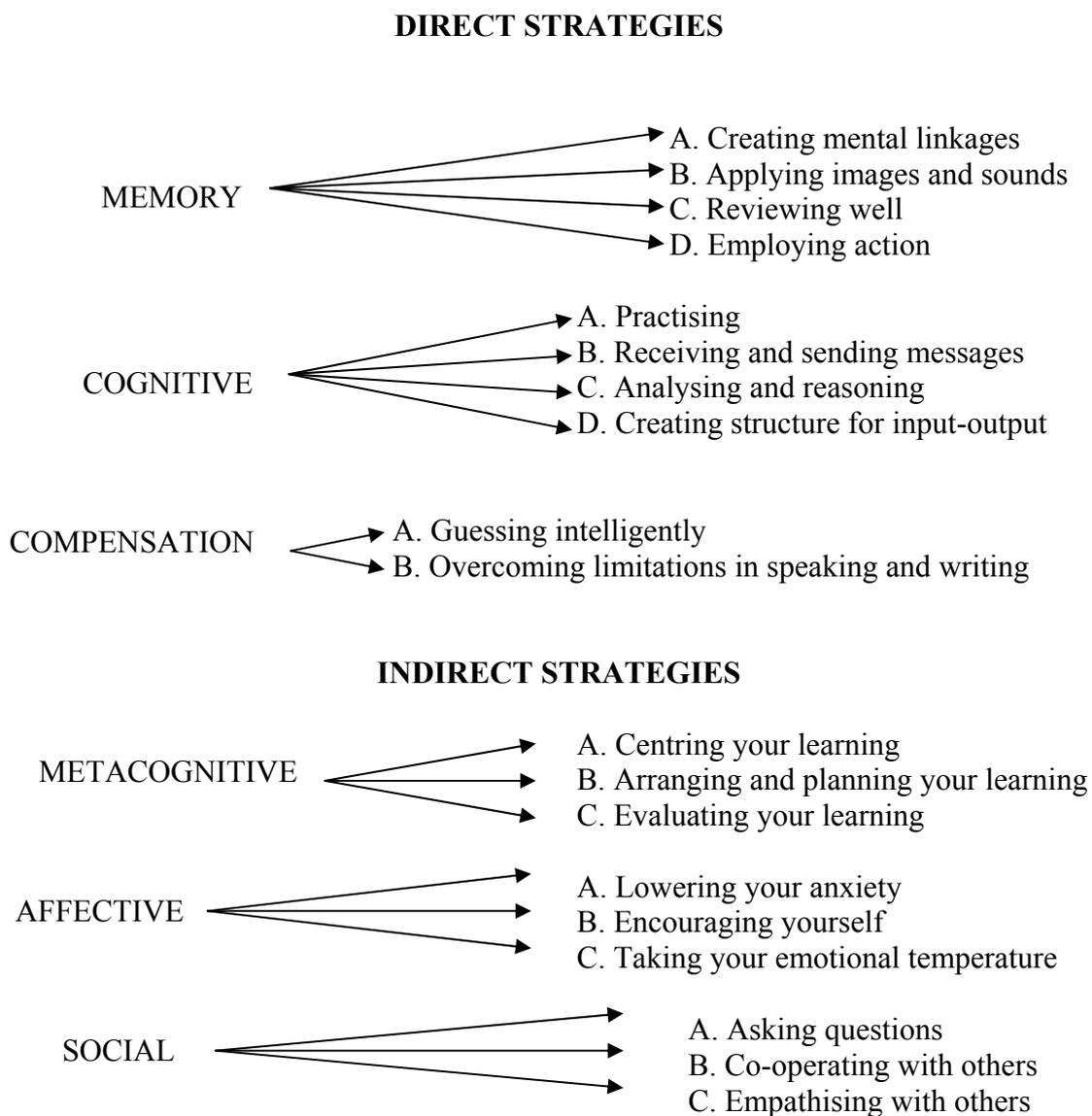


Figure 3 Strategy groups and sets in Oxford's taxonomy (1990)

In this system, all the six *broad* (Oxford's term) strategy groups have got their roles in enhancing L2 learning. They are presented as strategies that should preferably supplement, rather than exclude each other.

Examining O'Malley & Chamot's and Oxford's schemes, one recognises that there is a considerable amount of overlap between the two. It is easy to locate Oxford's cognitive and memory strategies within O'Malley & Chamot's cognitive

category, while her social and affective strategies correspond almost completely to O'Malley & Chamot's socio-affective group. It is also apparent that the strategies Oxford categorised as compensation strategies - a group of direct learning strategies in her taxonomy - appear as communication strategies in other systems, that is, among strategies directed at language use (cf. Tarone, 1981; Rubin, 1987).

Oxford justifies this classification by emphasising that the distinction between learning and communication strategies - as was pointed out in section 2.1.5 - is artificial and inaccurate. As she claims:

“It is often impossible to determine whether the learner intends to use a given strategy to communicate or to learn; often the motivations are mixed, and ... learning often results even if communication is the main goal.”

Then she adds that:

“to avoid the false split between communication strategies and learning strategies ... this book refers instead to compensation strategies” (Oxford, 1990:243).

Perhaps it is not without grounds that O'Malley & Chamot criticised Oxford for having created a scheme “far removed from any underlying cognitive theory” (1990:103). They maintain that in her endeavour to include in her system every single strategy that had ever been mentioned in the literature, she generated overlapping categories, having failed to prioritise at the same time which strategies are important to learning. Ellis's view on Oxford's scheme is that it is “marred by a failure to make a clear distinction” (1994:539) between language learning and language use strategies. Nevertheless, he acknowledges, the hierarchy of levels the strategies are organised into and “the breadth of the taxonomy is impressive” (ibid).

Clearly, like O'Malley & Chamot's scheme, Oxford's is not a flawless one. Given the goals, context and subjects in Drozdziel-Szelest's research (1997) referred to in section 2.3.1, which utilised O'Malley & Chamot's taxonomy, doing the same would have been a viable option for the purposes of the present research as well. The criticism attached to O'Malley & Chamot's taxonomy, the fact that Oxford's scheme provided the foundation for the most comprehensive strategy assessment questionnaire to date, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL, details in section 2.5.6), and that the findings yielded by the SILL are supposed to be immediately applicable in everyday second language work helped decide on utilising Oxford's as a theoretical framework, rather than any other.

2.3.3 *Concluding remarks on taxonomies*

Once one has looked through the taxonomies that learner strategy research has produced, it is difficult to resist an idea by Cook intruding into one's thoughts. Quoting Chomsky, who claims that "the taxonomic model (or any of its variants within modern study of language) is far too oversimplified to be able to account for the facts of linguistic structure" (Chomsky, 1964:27, in Cook, 1993:134), Cook suggests:

"Perhaps strategies are such a simple domain of investigation that taxonomies are all that is required. Perhaps, however, strategies are as complex linguistic behaviour as any of the formal linguistic levels: taxonomies can never do them justice" (1993:134).

Whatever way it may be, competing systems exist side by side, while there is a great deal of overlapping at the same time. The schemes contain more or less similar categories and individual strategies organised in different ways. This reflects differing organising principles and differing underlying theories, or - even worse - the complete lack of the latter. This may have inspired Skehan to point to the need for researchers "to go beyond the convenient classifications... and make links between these schemes and underlying theory" (1991:287).

This problem is further aggravated by the fact that even the widely accepted distinctions between the seemingly well-defined categories of cognitive, metacognitive, social and affective strategies are not unequivocal. This is why it might happen that one and the same strategy is up to be interpreted as a metacognitive and a cognitive one at the same time, because delineating whether the strategy is one or the other type causes difficulty (Cohen, 1998:12).

Moreover, the strategies classified onto the same level of hierarchy within one scheme frequently vary on a number of dimensions, e.g. specificity, some being more specific than others (Ellis, 1994:540). Even in the case of schemes containing plenty of items, locating instances of strategy use as elicited from learners in the system requires a lot of interpretation on the part of the researcher. Clearly, due to a variety of factors, identifying and classifying strategies is rather problematic. Learner strategy research is still in need of a coherent, well accepted system for describing strategies (Oxford, 1999, online).

Nevertheless, in spite of all the problems that prevail, the existing systems provide a useful frame of reference for those teachers and researchers whose main concern is learner training, where the problems depicted above are of lesser importance.

2.4 Factors influencing strategy choice

The theories of L2 learning discussed in section 2.2 attribute differing degrees of significance to learner strategies in bringing about desirable learning outcomes. In the following, focus will be laid on those factors which have been brought to light as potentially affecting language learning by influencing to varying degrees the use of learner strategies.

A vast body of research focuses on the factors affecting learner strategies. The idea of relating learner strategies to a framework of individual learner differences is traced back to Skehan. In 1989, he pointed to the fact that the main concern of SLA researchers had been on establishing in what respects learners were similar, and on what processes of language learning were universal, rather than on what made language learning a unique experience for each learner. With this he called for the establishment of alternative research approaches in the SLA tradition, arguing that the study of individual differences between learners, although well-established in other disciplines, such as psychology, should be given due attention in SLA as well (Skehan, 1989:1).

Since then, the study of individual learner differences has grown enormously, with several frameworks proposed to investigate them and the ways they are related to learning. In a model of second language acquisition outlined by Ellis (1994) (Figure 4, next page), individual learner differences - which subsume beliefs about language learning, affective states, learner factors, and learning experiences - are demonstrated to be related in complex ways to the other two parts of the model, learning strategies and learning outcomes.

Both individual difference variables and situational and social variables are supposed to affect the quantity and quality of learning strategy choice, which, in turn, influences learning outcomes in terms of both rate and level of proficiency. The arrow pointing backwards from learning outcomes is to suggest that strategy choice

is also affected considerably by these factors. The figure clearly shows two things, crucially important for the purposes of this dissertation: (1) learning strategies are central to the process of language learning; (2) the choice of particular strategies is the function of the interplay of a number of variables.

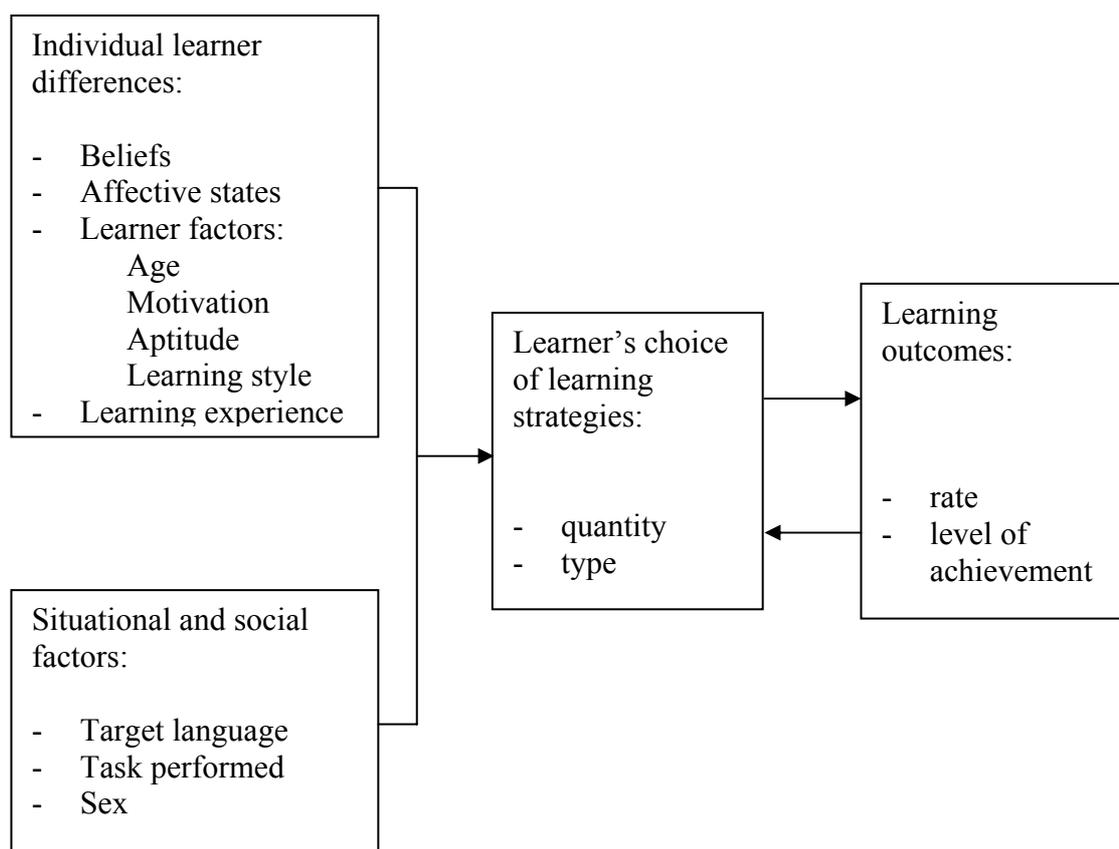


Figure 4 The relationship between individual learner differences, situational factors, learning strategies, and learning outcomes (adapted from Ellis, 1994:530)

Indeed, learners vary to a large extent in the way they use strategies, with respect to both the frequency and the type of strategy, due to a large number of individual differences. The links between strategies and other constructs have been explored in a variety of studies. Having synthesised existing research on how various factors influence strategy choice by learners of a second language, Oxford (1990a) concluded that studies on motivation, gender, cultural background, attitudes and

beliefs, type of task, age and L2 stage, learning style and tolerance of ambiguity had yielded results indicative of the close link between strategy use and these factors.

Of these variables, the ones relevant to the context of the present research will be discussed. Thus, a detailed discussion follows of the way particular learner factors, and situational/social factors have been found to affect strategy choice. Under the heading of *learner factors: age, motivation, and learning styles* will be looked at. *Situational/social factors* will cover *L2 stage and proficiency level, teaching method and task type, and gender*

2.4.1 *Learner factors*

2.4.1.1 **Age**

Evidence from research suggests that age exerts a significant effect on strategies and the way they are employed. Though the majority of learner strategy research has focused on the strategies of adult and adolescent language learners, several studies (Chesterfield & Chesterfield, 1985; Julkunen, 1999; Nikolov, 1999b; Wong-Fillmore, 1976) have disclosed some peculiarities of children's strategy use.

Chesterfield & Chesterfield (1985) found a natural order for the development of strategies, with a tendency for children to use receptive strategies – including repetition and memorisation – in the beginning, then to gradually develop ones that allow interaction, and finally to use strategies that demonstrate awareness and monitoring of grammatical errors. Wong-Fillmore's findings (1976) assert that social strategies, based on interpersonal communication, are predominant in the early stages of language learning.

Examining young learners' strategies within the framework of O'Malley & Chamot's scheme (section 2.3.1), Julkunen (1999) found that Finnish 12-year-olds applied far more metacognitive strategies than cognitive ones, though planning, a metacognitive strategy, was not typical at all. Highest level of use, similarly to Wong-Fillmore's findings (1976), was with social strategies. This highlights the peculiarity of children's approach to learning, on the one hand, and the fact that social strategies are less closely related to proficiency than metacognitive or cognitive ones, on the other.

Nikolov's findings (1999b) in the Hungarian context agree to a large extent with the previous ones. In discussing the emergence of strategies with young

children, she observes that the younger the learners, the less learning strategies they employ, but rely on naturalistic processes of acquisition instead (1999b:227). The growing experience with schooling then boosts the use of learning strategies. While some strategies emerge naturally as a response to the challenges posed by what happens in the classroom, others can and need to be developed through careful instruction. Metacognitive planning and evaluation strategies do not emerge, but can be gradually developed by activities and tasks. Social strategies overlap with emotional/motivational ones (1999b:228). The use of cognitive strategies grows with the growing of age. With the disappearance of a reliance on repetition around the age of 9 or 10, more sophisticated problem-solving strategies overlapping with compensation ones develop.

Research demonstrates that children and adults have a differing set of strategies at their disposal and they use them differently. While young children's strategies are simple and employed in a task-specific manner, more mature children and adults make use of complex and more sophisticated strategies, which they employ in a flexible way (Brown et alia, 1983). These differences, in Ellis's interpretation (1994:541), may account for the faster development of the mastery of a foreign language by older children and adults, particularly in the areas of grammar and vocabulary, for which a lot of strategies exist, while children have undoubted superiority in pronunciation, for which few strategies are available.

In sum, it is reasonable to say that learner strategies develop with age, which in turn may result in improved performance.

2.4.1.2 Motivation

We have seen that theories of second language learning (section 2.2.2) as well as frameworks proposed for the study of individual differences (Figure 4, p.41) attach a great importance to affective variables, such as motivation, attitudes, and language anxiety in language learning. These variables appear to be in a significant and highly complex, often causal and dynamic relationship with strategies. Of these variables, special attention will be directed towards motivation, the only affective variable under scrutiny in this paper.

When discussing the 'good language learner' studies, we saw that Rubin (1975) considered motivation as a crucial factor to characterise good language

learners (p.13). O'Malley & Chamot regard motivation as a factor of primary influence, expressing that they found ineffective students to generally display low motivation, whereas effective students tended to be highly motivated. Although it is acknowledged that even the effective students exhibited variations in the motivational level over a longer period of time, motivation is a key factor to the understanding of learner strategy use (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:140).

In a study of the FL learner strategy use of nearly 1200 university students, Oxford & Nyikos (1989) examined how background variables - such as sex, years of study, major and self-rated proficiency - and motivation interact to affect the type and frequency of strategy choice. They found that "the degree of expressed motivation was the single most powerful influence on the choice of language learning strategies" (1989:294). The *level of motivation* was found to affect significantly the use of strategies in formal rule-related practice, functional practice, general study and conversational input elicitation, in that highly motivated students used significantly more strategies in those activities than less motivated ones.

These findings led Oxford & Nyikos to create a model which demonstrates the interaction among the factors investigated in their study (1989). This model takes the shape of a causal spiral and depicts motivation as promoting strategy use, which in turn increases self-rated proficiency and self-esteem, which has as its consequence enhanced motivation leading to more intensive strategy use, and so on. This postulation of a reciprocal causal relationship between language performance and learner variables, including motivation as a chief factor, is deemed reasonable by Gardner & MacIntyre (1992:218), since it grasps the developmental nature of language study.

In the same study, Oxford & Nyikos (1989) also found that strategies of formal practice and general study were more popular among the subjects than functional practice strategies. This led to the logical explanation that besides the degree, the *type of motivation* be also significant. The authors suggest that the students' preference for these strategies is the reflection of their instrumental drive to meet course requirements and obtain good grades in a course which lays emphasis on analytical skills.

Politzer & McGroarty (1985) also express that the type of motivation might be a key to strategy use, since they found that learners concerned with developing

their communication skills selected different strategies from those who were only interested in reading the technical literature in the target language.

In a test of the social psychological model of strategy use (section 2.2.2.2) McIntyre & Noels (1996) examined how specific motivational factors correlated with the use of different types of learner strategies. Agreeing with Oxford & Nyikos' results (1989), McIntyre & Noels' findings showed that highly motivated students used significantly more strategies of the memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive and social categories. As for the type of motivation, the influence of integrative orientations was observed, particularly on the increased use of social and metacognitive strategies.

A study by Gardner and his colleagues of the FL learning of about 100 university students in Canada, which aimed to show how the investigated variables could be incorporated into an extended version of the socio-educational model (section 2.2.2.1) revealed similar patterns (Gardner et alia, 1997). They also found that both the intensity and the type of motivation was associated with the frequent use of nearly all the strategies investigated, except for one strategy, compensating for missing knowledge, which highly motivated students tended to avoid.

It seems reasonable to conclude from these findings that the degree as well as the type of motivation relate strongly to strategy use. Learners who learn a language for its communicative value are likely to use different strategies from those whose main concern is to fulfil graduation requirements. The picture, however, is even more complex. As Ehrman & Oxford's study (1989) of adult foreign language students learning the language for career reasons in the US shows, in that particular context instrumental motivation resulted in a preference for communication oriented strategies. This further demonstrates that strategy choice results from the interplay of a number of factors, among which motivation is a most significant one.

2.4.1.3 Learning styles

The psychological construct of learning style has generated a wealth of research. Although relatively little has been found out about the link between various learning style dimensions and learner strategies, there is some ground to propose that learners' strategies are not independent of their styles.

In the following, an overview of the existing definitions and learning style dimensions will follow, then the style category of perceptual preferences, as of relevance to the present research, will be dealt with at some length. The last subsection will review what has been found out about the link between styles and strategies.

2.4.1.3.1 Definitions and models

Talking about learning styles, we refer to “an individual’s natural, habitual and preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills” (Reid, 1995:x). Premising by way of introduction that the terms *styles* and *strategies* are often interchanged, Brown introduces the learning style construct with defining *style* as a “term that refers to consistent and rather enduring tendencies or preferences within an individual”, and *strategies* as “specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information” (1994:104). Then he points out that the way we approach things in general and the particular attack we make on problems is the reflection of the link between personality and cognition, which is often referred to as cognitive style. When this is related specifically to educational contexts, the more general term to use is *learning styles*.

Like the concept of strategy, learning style is a complex construct involving the interaction of a number of elements. The available definitions reflect the diversity of the elements, ranging from reference to preferred sensory modalities to cognitive information processing patterns. According to a most frequently cited definition, learning styles are:

“...cognitive, affective and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment... Learning style is a consistent way of functioning, that reflects underlying causes of behaviour” (Keefe, 1979:4).

Ehrman & Oxford suggest that learning style “indicates preferred or habitual patterns of mental functioning and dealing with new information” (1990:311), while Skehan offers the following definition: “a general predisposition, voluntary or not, toward processing information in a particular way” (1991:288).

Strategies - as was seen - are dependent in a complex and not always predictable manner upon a variety of factors and on their interplay. Regarding styles, however, it is their relative stability and endurance over time that are emphasised. As Kinsella puts it, styles persist, regardless of teaching methods and content area.

“...Everyone has a learning style, but each person’s is as unique as a signature. Each signature appears to be influenced by both nature and nurture; it is a biological and developmental set of characteristics“ (Kinsella, 1995:171).

Though a number of researchers are of the view that styles are stable traits in adults (Ellis, 1994:499), this view has been criticised widely. Some argue that though individuals show general tendencies toward one style or another, style preferences are context-bound; that is, differing contexts will evoke differing styles (Brown, 1994). Little & Singleton (1990) forward the idea that adult learners can be helped to explore their own preferred ways of learning and adjust their learning approach to the particular task. This is a rather important claim, since one of the assumptions that the idea of learner training is premised on is that people’s approaches to learning can be changed and improved.

A number of learning style models have been advanced, which seek to grasp all the dimensions involved in the concept. Dunn et alia’s multidimensional model (1979, 1989) encompasses five stimulus categories as potentially interacting to produce a person’s learning style. These are: *environmental*, *physical*, *emotional*, *sociological* and *psychological* stimuli. For example, the distinctions of brain hemisphericity, that is, left or right brain functioning, the analytic/relational and the reflective/impulsive dichotomies derive from the way learners respond to psychological stimulus (cf. Kinsella, 1995).

Oxford & Anderson (1995) have proposed a somewhat different, six-element model: in their interpretation, *cognitive* elements are responsible for patterns of mental functioning, the *executive* aspect deals with the organisation and managing of the person’s learning process, the *affective* aspect refers to clusters of attitudes, beliefs and values that impinge upon the way an individual responds to a learning situation, the *social* aspect concerns the extent to which learning with others is preferred by the individual, the *physiological* element involves the partly anatomically based sensory preferences, and the *behavioural* aspect relates to the tendency to seek situations which are compatible with one’s learning style.

An individual's learning style is the composite of at least 20 learning style dimensions. Not all relate equally to the teaching–learning context in general, or to second language research in particular. Of the variety of distinctions that have been suggested the following ones have proved to be significant for second language learning: field dependence/independence; left/right brain functioning; ambiguity tolerance/intolerance; reflectivity/impulsivity; feeling/thinking; global/analytic; intuitive-random/concrete-sequential; and extroverted/introverted. Looking at all these style dimensions in detail and at how they relate to success in the foreign language classroom would far exceed the limits of the present writing, thus only the fundamentals will be touched upon.

The multiple elements that comprise the individual learning styles are bipolar, representing a continuum from one end to the other. No one fits into one or another of these categories to the exclusion of the other, parallel category (e.g.: it is unlikely that a learner always adopts a completely and only reflective approach to learning), although preferences exist, and sometimes these preferences are as strong as to suppress the parallel category entirely. No value judgement is to be attached to where a learner falls on the continuum. Since styles are not in any way related to intelligence, students should not be labelled or stigmatised for having any set of learning style characteristics. Oxford (1990a) makes the point that each style preference has significant advantages as regards learning, and the important thing is for learners to identify their style preference, because their 'comfort zone' falls within their favourite style. She also suggests that learners stretch their comfort zone through practice.

2.4.1.3.2 Perceptual preferences

Being the focus of the present research, the distinction on the basis of perceptual preferences will be looked at in more detail in the following.

Educators usually refer to the sensory channels through which perception occurs as modalities, and the modalities through which an individual best absorbs and retains information is called 'modality strengths'. Four modalities exist: *auditory*, *visual*, *tactile* and *kinesthetic*. Although *tactile* suggests learning with one's hands through manipulation of objects, and *kinesthetic* implies total physical

involvement with the environment through movement, these two terms are often used interchangeably; some researchers (O'Brien, 1989) amalgamate the perceptual properties of the tactile/kinesthetic learner into the *haptic* category.

There are important distinctions within the auditory and visual categories as well. While some auditory learners prefer perceiving input through listening to instruction from teachers or tapes and films, others may additionally need to process information through talking aloud to themselves or through small group and/or class discussions. As for visual learners, they normally gravitate towards silent reading, prefer quiet and like working on their own. While some visual learners, however, need verbal visual backup to oral input, others prefer less verbal presentation of visual input in the form of pictures, charts, diagrams and graphs.

Learners vary to a large extent with respect to their perceptual preferences. Modality strengths may occur in a single channel, or may be mixed with one or more modalities dominating over the others. Most people learn how to absorb and retain information through several channels as they grow older, yet the modality strength is retained in that learning is easier through the preferred channel. Whereas children in their lower primary years are more tactile and kinesthetic, the visual, then later the auditory strengths evolve by the upper primary age.

This is a consequence of the changing learning environment provided by the school, in that there is less and less variety in the way the material is presented, to the extent that towards the end of the upper primary years students receive most of the input through listening and reading. Those adolescent and adult students who still prefer learning through tactile/kinesthetic and visual non-verbal approaches may easily become disadvantaged in traditional educational settings, where – according to Reid's American data (in Oxford & Anderson, 1995:210) – 90% of classroom instruction caters to the competent auditory learner. In all educational systems, learners with mixed modality strengths are advantaged over those with one strength, because they are able to absorb information in whatever way it is presented.

The question arises how educational outcomes can be enhanced for those who are disadvantaged because of their modality strengths. Research on identifying modality strengths and on learners' attitude towards assessing their sensory preferences (O'Brien, 1989; Oxford & Ehrman, 1993; Kroonenberg, 1995) is consonant in suggesting that learners need to be given the opportunity to describe and discover the senses through which they are best able to absorb input. Helping

learners find out about their preferred ways of learning can take several forms, ranging from one-to-one through whole class discussions to learning style surveys. For assessing sensory preferences, the self-reporting questionnaires developed by Reid (1984), O'Brien (1990), Kinsella (1993) and Oxford (1993a) are available.

Although Reid warns that with the present state of our knowledge and understanding of learning styles the instruments must be used with caution, bearing in mind that none is perfect, what is more, students and styles grow and change, she asserts that both teachers and students may find them illuminating (Reid, 1995:xiii). Kroonenberg puts forward the view that it is impossible for any one teacher to constantly bear in mind all the individual difference variables and sensory preferences, or to remember how individual students learn best. Therefore, she suggests, in accordance with Oxford's view (1993a), it is primarily learners who must be made aware and reflective about their own perceptual strengths.

Having administered an instrument of sensory preference assessment, teachers can work closely together with learners, analysing and modifying their teaching styles, while giving learners tools to enhance and expand their styles and introducing them to learning strategies that work best for their styles. In this way, Kroonenberg asserts: "the 'style wars' that often exist between teacher and learner can be greatly reduced" (1995:85).

The 'style war' that Kroonenberg refers to is being documented in a growing body of research. Oxford and Lavine (1992), and Wallace and Oxford (1992) found evidence for conflicts arising from differences between teachers' instructional style preferences and learners' preferred ways of learning. Such style conflicts may potentially affect learning and students' grades negatively. A diagnostic approach to this problem would be to assess both learners' and teachers' style preferences before determining what instructional style is most appropriate for a given class. Congruent with this view is Kinsella's approach, who forwards that the best way for the teacher to meet the demands posed by the inevitable diversity of learning styles is to make classroom instruction consistent with the findings of learning style assessments.

“Learning style research supports what experienced classroom practitioners know intuitively: that students absorb new material and skills through their senses and prefer some senses over others in specific situations. When lessons are presented visually as well as verbally, and reinforced through writing, drawing or speaking activities, students are not only able to learn in the way best suited to their style, but also to develop a full and varied repertoire of modality strengths. The best instructional approach, then, regardless of subject matter or grade level, is a deliberate multisensory approach” (Kinsella, 1995:175).

2.4.1.3.3 Linking learning styles and strategies

Although our understanding of learning strategies in the context of styles is limited at present, it is hypothesised that learning strategies do not operate by themselves but are directly tied to learners’ underlying learning styles.

According to O’Malley & Chamot (1990), the success of the use of particular strategies by learners with given learning styles depends largely on how closely allied the strategies are to the learner’s natural learning style. Thus, a clear understanding of the learner’s learning style is needed so that students can be assisted in finding the strategies most appropriate for them. As Schmeck claims, a learning strategy disembedded from personality related factors is “only a short-term prop for learning” (Schmeck, 1988:179). Brown supports this view, positing that some styles evoke certain strategies, therefore, in order to discover strategies that work best towards one’s success, it is important to become aware of one’s styles (Brown, 1991:71).

What we know about the link between styles and strategies draws on research carried out mainly in the United States. In a large-scale study of American adults, Ehrman & Oxford (1995) investigated how a range of individual difference variables, among those various learning style dimensions, related to proficiency ratings. Although some of the variables (aptitude and motivation) showed strong correlation with proficiency test results, none of the learning style dimensions did. However, in another study (Rossi-Le, 1995), which investigated the link between learner strategies assessed through the SILL (Oxford, 1986-90) and perceptual preferences assessed through Reid’s instrument (1984), perceptual preferences were

found to be closely related to the strategic approaches to learning of adult students with differing cultural backgrounds.

In sum, learning styles, even if the concept might be “ill-defined and overlapping with other individual differences of both an affective and a cognitive nature” (Ellis, 1994:508), are far too influential on learning to be ignored, therefore more research is needed so that definitive claims can be made about the link between styles and strategies. As all style dimensions have advantages as well as disadvantages as regards learning outcomes, learners should be made aware and reflective about their own styles, and learn how to compensate for the weaknesses due to their styles. This is one way of ensuring that learners can adjust their working modes and strategies to their styles, and also, to the dominant style of teaching. Furthermore, an awareness of learning style is the key to expanding styles and develop flexibility in the learning approach.

Having looked at the learner factors that had been found to affect learner strategy choice, in the following we will look at the situational and social ones.

2.4.2 Situational/social factors

2.4.2.1 L2 stage and proficiency level

Several researchers have investigated the effect of the duration of L2 studies and the level of language proficiency on strategy use. Bialystok (1981a) found that as students became more advanced in their language studies, their strategies also changed, in that formal practice with rules and forms was less and less effective. This is consonant with findings of Cohen & Aphek (1981), who discovered a relationship between the learners’ overall proficiency and the type of task that worked best for effective language learning. Beginners in that study preferred lists of vocabulary items when learning words, while intermediate students tended to use contextualisation. Although they found strategies that they labelled as ‘good’ and as ‘bad’ across all course levels, the general tendency was for more advanced learners to use more sophisticated, ‘better’ strategies.

Beginning students in O’Malley et alia’s study (1985a) laid emphasis on the actual handling of data and direct learning processes, while the intermediate learners used more metacognitive strategies, particularly planning. This was interpreted as a sign of a growing awareness of learning and of themselves as learners. Similarly,

Chamot et alia (1987, 1988) report a decrease in the number of cognitive strategies and an increase of metacognitive strategies with the increase of course level. Discussing factors affecting strategy use by learners in the study by Chamot et alia (1988), O'Malley & Chamot (1990:140) point to the significance of the degree of language learning expertise. They observe that while novice language learners were found to lack procedural skills (cf. 2.2.1.3) needed for solving language problems, thus often panicked when facing a task requiring such skills, expert learners (i.e.: those who had previous language learning experience) were calm and deployed the procedural skills developed in other language learning situations easily. In the study of Oxford & Nyikos (1989) referred to under Motivation (2.4.1.2), both the increased length of L2 studies and more advanced proficiency level led to more intensive strategy use.

Synthesising research findings on this aspect of strategy use, Oxford forwards the following interpretation:

Language students, as they become more advanced, might spontaneously develop new and better strategies as a result of experimenting with language learning;

Strategies developed by students at a higher level of advancement may be a response to the changing nature of task requirements in higher level courses;

Students with bad strategies may never reach high-level courses, dropping out as a result of poor performance (Oxford, 1989:237).

In sum, it seems certain that the strategies that language learners develop and use change over time and reflect the level of advancement. Strategies become more efficient with the increase of the proficiency level, and more experienced language learners are superior to less experienced ones in terms of their choice of strategies.

2.4.2.2 Gender

In discussing factors affecting strategy use, Ellis comments that the gender-related aspect did not receive much attention (1994:545). Perhaps the amount of research aimed specifically at this aspect is not conclusive, however, the research evidence accumulated over time documents that females and males differ in the way they use strategies for learning a foreign language.

In a review of nearly eighty studies, Oxford, Nyikos & Ehrman (1988) found four that had investigated gender differences. All those showed women to use significantly more strategies, and to use them more frequently than men. In a study comparing language behaviour and social behaviour, for example, all the female students used more social strategies than the male subjects (Politzer, 1983). In the study of Oxford & Nyikos (1989) cited in sections 2.4.1.2 and 2.4.2.1, gender proved to exert a profound effect on strategy choice. Females reported using strategies far more often than did males in three factors: formal rule-related practice, general study strategies, and conversational input elicitation strategies.

Using the SILL, Ehrman & Oxford (1989) discovered significant gender differences favouring women in general study strategies, strategies for authentic language use, strategies for searching for and communicating meaning, and metacognitive and self-management strategies. In a study of the motives, attitudes and strategies of university students as elicited via self-reports, Bacon & Finnemann (1990) also found significant differences between males and females, in that female students favoured global/synthetic strategies, while males were significantly more likely to report local (decoding/analytic) ones. Summarising the findings of gender-related research up till that time, Oxford concluded:

“... strategy research has... usually demonstrated gender differences in strategy frequency, with females choosing to use particular sets of strategies more often than males. Females especially tended to use general study strategies, social strategies, affective strategies, and certain conversational or functional practice strategies more frequently than males across a number of studies, usually showing a greater range of frequently used strategy categories” (1993b:83).

A SILL-based, large-scale study of nearly 400 students at three different course levels at a Puerto Rican university investigated strategy use in relation to proficiency level and gender (Green & Oxford, 1995). As opposed to earlier studies that focussed on overall strategy use and/or broad categories, in this study differences were investigated at the individual strategy level. Fourteen of the fifty SILL items were found to be used significantly more often by women than men, while only one was used significantly more often by males.

Findings such as these suggest that there might be consistent differences in the ways that females as a group and males as a group approach the task of learning a foreign language, although variation on the individual level exists. Several factors

have been hypothesised as accounting for these gender-related variance, such as biological causes, female superiority in verbal skills, women's being more socially oriented, sex differences in integrative motivation, and female personality attributes favouring authentic communication and natural language use over formal language use and learning (Oxford, 1993; 1995).

Nyikos (1990) attempts a more complex interpretation in a study where she hypothesises that, although females and males are equal in their language learning potential, they are determined by social forces and socialisation processes to display differences in strategy use and language achievement. Her findings confirm that there exists a complex interaction between psycho-social variables and gender, which predisposes the individual's strategy use.

Reflecting on gender-related differences in strategy use in the context of learning styles, Oxford tentatively suggests that the often superior classroom performance in ESL and EFL settings of females over males might be accounted for by the qualitative differences in strategy use (cf. Oxford, 1993:146). Women's superiority to men in language learning, however, is not confirmed by Nyikos' (1990) or by Green & Oxford' study (1995). In these studies, variation by gender and variation by proficiency appear to be working in different and unrelated ways, and there is no overlap between the strategies used more frequently by women and those used more often by more proficient learners. Green & Oxford conclude that the pronounced gender differences in strategy use could most probably be related to underlying learning styles, motivations and attitudes (1995:291).

A study by Young & Oxford (1997) also failed to demonstrate that females perform better than males. The focus of their research was gender-specific strategies used to process written input in L1 and L2. Though females tended to use global strategies slightly more often than males (cf. Bacon & Finnemann, 1990), this result did not show full significance. Moreover, both sexes performed similarly in the reading recall tasks. This suggests that there are indeed some differences in the way females and males approach learning tasks, but these might not be so pronounced in overall, general strategy use. Rather, as Young & Oxford suggest:

“...the more meaningful contrasts may reside at the level of specific strategies, the identifiable behaviours that learners use to aid them... Thus, there may be few inherently ‘male’ or ‘female’ strategies” (1997:66).

This conclusion may imply that gender-related differences in strategy use are not significant enough to be taken into consideration in the classroom. Yet this is not what the authors suggest. They propose that the recurring gender patterns – whatever the reason for their existence might be – must be attended to, understood and handled by the teacher.

2.4.2.3 Teaching method and task types/requirements

Typical teacher expectations, instructional and testing modes, which are concomitant of various teaching methods, are supposed to exert an influence on how learners make sense of the foreign language and of the task of learning it.

Oxford and Nyikos (1989) are of the view that learning strategies are in part the reflection of the *kind of teaching* that takes place in a course. In the study first referred to in section 2.4.1.2, they found that strategies of formal, rule-related practice prevailed, which they interpreted as the consequence of the rule-based, analytical instruction at that course. Similar conclusions were drawn from the findings of a factor analytic study of strategy use by university students (Nyikos & Oxford, 1993), where a most prominent feature was the preference for formal, rule-related strategies and standard academic study strategies. This the authors interpreted as a sign of the learners aiming at obtaining good grades above anything else, which they suggest is the spin-off of the predominant testing practices at universities. “Choice of strategies,” they conclude, “depends on existing reward systems which are context-specific to classrooms/teachers...” (Nyikos & Oxford, 1993:20).

In tune with the above findings, the *objectives of a language course*, which often derive at least partly from the teaching method, were also found to determine the kind of strategies learners employ. In a classroom where much emphasis is put on the grammatical structure of the foreign language and on the analytical comparison of the native to the target language, learners are more likely to develop and prefer strategies such as *deduction* and *translation*, while classrooms more concerned with proficiency encourage the development of *inferencing* and *substitution* (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990:140).

Discussing the role of situational factors, Ellis (1994) observes that it is rather micro- (than macro-) differences in the particular learning setting that exert a greater influence on strategy use. Chamot et alia (1988) report that the task type had a

marked influence on what cognitive and metacognitive strategies learners used. For example, the use of the cognitive strategies, *translation* or *deduction*, was generated by a cloze, while listening comprehension encouraged the use of *selective attention* or *self-monitoring* as metacognitive strategies.

Another important finding is that more advanced students are able to adjust their strategies to the task requirements more than less advanced ones (cf. Oxford, 1989:244). Wenden (1986a) draws attention to the fact that it is not only the task itself, rather the learner's *perception of the task* that determines what strategies will be employed.

Clearly, there is a strong link between the strategies learners employ and the nature and range of the instructional tasks that they experience in classroom settings, in that the former depends crucially on the latter. Yet it does not mean that it is always possible to predict what strategy a particular learner will use to perform a particular task. As Ellis concludes: "Specific tasks may predispose learners to use particular strategies, but they cannot predetermine the actual strategies that will be used" (1994:545). This is a very important message with far-reaching implications for learner training, which will be addressed in detail in section 2.6.

2.4.3 *Concluding remarks*

The discussion in the preceding subsections provided substantial support for the claim that strategy use is the function of a number of factors – learner differences as well as situational variables – and that in some cases a reciprocal relationship exists between strategy choice and the variable in question. Whereas some links are apparently strong and the impact of certain variables is powerful - such as that of age, motivation, gender or task requirements -, the influence of others is not immediately or at all obvious. Although the latter applies to some of the learning style dimensions, too, it can be safely assumed that complex and multidimensional relationships exist between strategy use and learning styles, in that the effectiveness of a particular strategy or strategy cluster is determined by the learner's underlying learning style. This point has wide-reaching implications for the foreign language classroom, as was seen in the discussion of learning styles, and the link between styles and strategies.

The research reviewed in this section suggests that by manipulating the variables that come into play, learners' strategic behaviour can be changed, possibly through learner training. While some variables, like age and gender, apparently do not count here, by the manipulation of others, e.g.: motivation, tasks, or course requirements, strategy use could be altered in directions that are favourable for effective learning. Though not without limitations, these findings have provided ample grounding for the belief that most approaches to learner training are built on, that the intervention into strategic behaviour will enhance learning. But before the issues of learner training are addressed (2.6), the methods available to assess strategy choice will be looked at.

2.5 *Methods for investigating learner strategies*

The growth of research into learner strategies, into the ways strategies affect learning outcomes and the factors that influence strategy choice occurred parallel to the development of the ways of obtaining information about learners' strategies.

What follows is a review of those methods that have been utilised for the present research: observations, questionnaires, interviews, and the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning. Further, methods that the research will recommend for use in the foreign language classroom will also be introduced. In so doing, it will be outlined what these methods of investigating learner strategies comprise, how they have developed, and what advantages and disadvantages researchers and reviewers attribute to them (cf. Cohen, 1987; Cohen, 1998:Chapter 3; Elekes, 2000; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:86-97; Oxford & Crookall, 1989; Wenden, 1991:Chapter 6).

2.5.1 Observations

As referred to in the section on the 'good language learner' studies (section 2.1.1.), the main concern of the early strategy studies was to identify, describe and classify the strategies used by the 'good language learner', and to create some kind of theoretical framework within which these strategies could be placed. Researchers of that time tried to collect information by observing learners carrying out language

learning tasks, normally in their natural classroom settings, with the observers taping/videotaping them and/or taking field notes.

Observations were used by Naiman et alia. (1978), Cohen & Aphek (1981), and O'Malley et alia (1985b) – to mention just a few examples. Soon, however, dissatisfaction with the method arose, as it had been found that it failed to provide much information on learners' strategies. As Naiman et alia put it: “very few overt and systematic techniques or strategies are ever displayed in the language classroom” (1978:65). Rubin voiced similar concerns when she pointed out that observations are “not very productive” in revealing the mental operation used by the student and that the classroom rarely affords enough opportunities for learners to engage in behavioural strategies (1981:121). O'Malley et alia (1985b) found data gathered by observations so unproductive when compared to data generated by other means that they decided to discard the method. Because of the inadequacy of observations, Cohen & Aphek (1981:233) suggest that they should best be coupled with more introspective means. There are a number of additional problems related to setting up the procedure itself. These could be summed up in what Allwright & Bailey described as “the observer's paradox” (1991:70-71). This refers to the phenomenon that the presence of tapes, videos and observers might change the behaviour of those observed to an undesirable extent, thus contaminating data.

To do observations justice, one should note that the method seems to be fairly productive when applied with children as subjects of the research. Chesterfield & Chesterfield (1985), Wong-Fillmore (1976) and Nikolov (1999b) found observations effective in studying strategies of young learners. Ellis comments on this contradiction with saying that the behaviour of young children is probably an indicator of their mental activity, whereas adults are far more engaged in internal processes not directly manifested in observable behaviour (Ellis, 1994:534).

In sum, rather than being used as an only instrument, observations should serve as a complementary method of collecting data on learning processes and strategies.

2.5.2 Retrospective methods

The use of *interviews* and *questionnaires*, both of which rely heavily on the retrospective accounts of the strategies learners use, has proved to be more successful. When applying these instruments, researchers ask learners in some form to reflect and report orally or in writing on the learner strategies they use in general or in relation to a particular task.

Interviews fall into three categories: highly structured, semi-structured and unstructured. In *highly structured interviews* the researcher has a predetermined agenda in a list of questions that the respondent is expected to reply. The other extreme is manifested in *unstructured interviews*, where the researcher has little or no control over the direction the interview takes, it being dictated by the responses as they evolve during the course of the conversation. Because of their flexibility, *semi-structured interviews* seem to be favoured most by researchers. There is normally a prompt to elicit information on matters of the researcher's concern, but researchers and respondents alike may pursue topics of interest as they arise.

Issues to address about interviews are the number of participants and the 'social desirability' problem. As for the number of subjects, involving only one enables the researcher to develop a detailed case study, which can yield insights into the respondent's strategy use. Conducting small group interviews, on the other hand, may be more time- and cost-effective, what is more, group interviews may also generate a wealth of valuable responses. The problem of 'social desirability' (Cohen, 1998:29) is to an extent related to the number of respondents. This means that some subjects might be reluctant to talk in the presence of others, being fearful of producing a socially unacceptable answer. At the same time, it might happen that subjects give answers they believe are socially desirable, either for the other subjects present or the interviewer.

Questionnaires resemble highly structured interviews, in that they have the potential of eliciting a large amount of information on a predetermined set of questions. In contrast to interviews, they are generally administered to large groups of students. They are considered by many to be the most cost-effective mode of strategy assessment (Cohen, 1998; Oxford, 1996), being so easy and quick to

administer. In Oxford's view, they are even the least threatening tool of data gathering under conditions of confidentiality (1996:39). It is no wonder that a large number of studies have utilised these retrospective methods (Naiman et alia, 1978; Rubin, 1981; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985; Oxford, 1985; O'Malley et alia, 1985a; Wenden, 1986; Chamot, 1987).

Nonetheless, these methods have not been left uncriticised. Critiques argue that the gap between the report and the event of strategy use might distort the data; that learners' reported strategy use may not necessarily be an accurate account of what they actually do (Politzer & McGroarty, 1985); that subjects may have problems formulating their ideas about the task of language learning (Wenden, 1986); that they may under or overestimate the frequency of the use of certain strategies; and that they may even be unaware of when and how they are using the strategies (Cohen, 1998:31). Questionnaire items referring to general behaviour may be more likely to elicit answers reflecting what learners believe they do than what they actually do.

Rubin noted (1981) that because of the great variation in the learners' ability to describe their strategies, they may need to be tutored in self-reporting. Now there seems to be a general consensus that data collection methods which rely on learners' verbal reporting, such as interviews, think-alouds and diaries (see below, 2.5.3, 2.5.4), necessitate informant training for the methods to yield reliable data (cf. Nunan, 1992).

2.5.3 *Self-revelatory verbal reports*

Efforts to obtain learner strategy data that describe the events of language learning or language use immediately at or near the moment they occur motivated researchers to reach back to introspective methods developed in the late 19th century. At that time Wilhelm Wundt, often referred to as the founding father of experimental psychology (Wittig & Williams, 1984:10), started studying mental processes and the contents of the human mind by asking his introspectionists to "think aloud" as they performed mental tasks. This methodology - although "spurned by the behaviourist tradition as mentalistic rather than objective" (Cook, 1993:131) - was incorporated into research on language acquisition by researchers of native language reading and writing, and

later also adopted by second language research (for references see Cohen, 1998:35). The present discussion will introduce two types of self-revelatory verbal report: *self-observation* and *self-revelation*.

Self-observation is:

“the inspection of specific, not generalised, language behaviour, either introspectively, i.e. within 20 seconds of the mental event, or retrospectively - e.g. ‘What I just did was to skim through the incoming oral text as I listened, picking out key words and phrases’” (Cohen, 1998:34).

Self-revelation is:

“the ‘think-aloud’, stream-of-consciousness disclosure of thought processes while the information is being attended to – e.g. ‘Who does the “they” refer to here?’”(Cohen, 1998:34).

There have been numerous verbal report studies employing primarily self-observation and self-revelation as a means of assessing learner strategies. A lot of these describe strategies in the learning and use of L2 vocabulary, L2 listening, L2 speaking, L2 reading and L2 writing (for an extensive list of references see Cohen, 1998:36). This might have been one of the reasons for Ellis to state that these methods have more to tell us about skill learning than language learning strategies (1994:535). Nevertheless, it must be accredited to strategy investigations utilising self-observatory and self-revelatory accounts that they have generated a lot of valuable insights into communication strategies, in particular those that are used to compensate for gaps in communicative ability. Further, these methods have shed light on overall strategy use.

Self-revelatory research methods have been criticised on a number of grounds. The critiques find support in O’Malley & Chamot’s interpretation of strategies as declarative and procedural knowledge (cf. section 2.3.1.3). In that model, one should remember, “strategies begin as declarative knowledge that can become proceduralised with practice, and... proceed through the cognitive, associative and autonomous stages of learning” (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990:85). At the cognitive stage, strategy application is based on declarative knowledge, and requires processing in short term memory. Students may well be able to recall and describe the use of a strategy with a specific task at this stage, as it is not automatic yet. Strategy research at this stage, therefore, is relatively easy. When, however,

strategy application has entered the autonomous stage and become proceduralised, students may not be aware of using, thus unable to report on them.

Seliger provides further support for opponents of self-revelatory research when he questions the validity of the data, saying that “the conscious introspections of language learners are really the product of underlying processing and not the process itself” (Seliger, 1983:188). In McDonough’s view, people’s observation of their own behaviour is “notoriously unreliable”, thus their reports cannot be treated as reliable, either (McDonough, 1995:10). Dobrin (1986) expresses the view that even if the processing is not unconscious, thus inaccessible for reporting, it still can be far too complex or burdensome on the memory for the learner to report with any accuracy for the protocols. Faced with this problem, the researcher might have to intrude somehow, e.g. by trying to raise the level of conscious processing, which has the obvious danger of contaminating data.

Further reservations about these methods concern the potentially intrusive effect they may have, in that immediate retrospection in reading research, for example, may distort the process of reading itself. An additional matter of concern is that the findings may vary according to the type of instruction given, the characteristics of the subjects, the types of material used for collecting protocols and the nature of the data analysis (Olson et alia, 1984, in Cohen, 1998:37). Furthermore, doubts have been voiced about the respondents differing in the terminology they use to describe their mental processes, as well as in their verbal skills. The differences that will exist between written and oral reports (Afflerbach & Johnston, 1984, in Cohen, 1998:38) provide yet another problem source.

Clearly, self-revelatory verbal reports are not without faults. Perhaps it is in them that all the inconsistencies inherent in learner strategy research, which is still a “fledgling field” (Cohen, 1998:47), culminate. Advocates argue that researchers who are aware of these problems and are experienced can find ways of getting around them (Elekes, 2000), particularly in the research planning phase. If self-observation and self-revelation reports are elicited with care and interpreted with full understanding of the various aspects of the context, they may serve as a totally reliable and valuable source of information on cognitive processes. Finally, they should not be employed as the only instrument, but used in tandem with other means.

2.5.4 *Diaries and dialogue journals*

Another form of self-disclosure, diaries and dialogue journals are means of eliciting thoughts, feelings, concerns, achievements, strategies and impressions from learners. While diaries contain an individual's reflections on language learning, usually in the first person singular, dialogue journals have got an extra element added to them, a reader who is to respond. In formal learning contexts it is usually the teacher who responds, but peers or others involved with the writer's learning endeavour may also participate as readers.

As diaries and dialogue journals are primarily learner-generated and unstructured, entries are bound to cover a wide range of issues and topics important for the diarist (Cohen, 1998:41). This is at the same time regarded to be a major drawback, in that there may be too much information disclosed in the diary or dialogue journal which is totally irrelevant for strategy analysis purposes. The literature offers some suggestions about how to overcome problems concomitant with these introspective tools. In Oxford et alia's study (1996), diarists were asked to direct their writing at specific strategies of learning grammar, vocabulary and listening comprehension. Halbach (2000) developed and successfully applied a checklist to the analysis of diary entries, in order to see whether it can help shed light on the strategy use as reflected in the diarists' accounts. Another concern relates to the subjectivity of the data, which stems from the random and free-form nature of the entries. This is difficult to deny. However, one should note that the goal of diary studies is hardly ever to generate quantifiable data that enable the researcher to generalise the findings for other learners. Instead, they have been primarily used to highlight the affective states of the learners, and to explore what is significant to them, in an attempt for the researcher to focus more on learners and learner variables (Bailey, 1991).

Nunan (1992) argues in defence of diary studies that much of the data collected in this way is inaccessible through other techniques, thus are a valuable source of insight. In addition, it is widely recognised that regular writing helps diarists become more focused and more aware of their strategies, thus diaries can play an important role in raising learners' awareness of themselves, of language and of language learning, which are all prerequisites of successful learning.

2.5.5 *Concluding remarks on methods of investigation*

As we have seen from the discussion of the various learner strategy assessment procedures, all of them have strengths as well as weaknesses. Every method has something unique to offer that others lack, while suffering from drawbacks at the same time. It is the researcher's task to carefully consider all the available options and make an informed decision on the assessment method to adopt, depending on which is most likely to yield the desired type of information. The issues to guide the researcher when selecting a method are the following:

- objectives of the study as expressed in the research questions;
- strategies to be studied;
- language modalities involved;
- types of tasks for which the strategies are used;
- context of the research (the learning environment);
- number of learners and researchers;
- resources available (time and budgetary constraints);
- concerns about the reliability and validity of the given instrument.

(How these guidelines were considered at the design of the present research will be discussed in section 3.1, Chapter 3.)

The problems inherent in all assessment techniques have led researchers to experiment with triangulation, that is, employ a combination of techniques. Though this has become a widely accepted approach, multiple data collection procedures also have disconcerting features. As was seen, different measurement instruments have different goals, and yield data of different nature. Surveys, for example, yield quantitative data, whereas diaries or think alouds produce qualitative data. According to researchers experienced with a variety of methods, findings produced by differing procedures are often difficult or impossible to compare (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:95; Oxford & Green, 1995:167).

By way of summary, there follows a comparison of the strategy assessment methods in terms of their appropriate and inappropriate applications in Table 3 (next page).

Method of assessment	Appropriate uses	Limitations of use
Observations	Identify readily observable strategies for specific tasks. Only used in tandem with other methods.	Not useful for unobservable strategies or for identifying 'typical' strategies.
Questionnaires	Identify 'typical' strategies used by an individual; can be aggregated into group results; useful for measuring wide array of strategies within a short time; at low costs.	Not useful for identifying specific strategies on a given language task at a given time, or for in-depth analysis of an individual's strategy use.
Interviews	Identify strategies used on a given task over a given time period or more typically used strategies.	Less useful for identifying 'typical' strategies, due to the way they are conducted, but potentially could be used both for 'typical' and for specific strategies.
Self-revelatory verbal reports	Identify in-depth the strategies used in a given, ongoing task.	Not useful for 'typical' strategies.
Diaries, dialogue journals	Identify strategies on a given task over a period of time.	Less useful for identifying 'typical' strategies used more generally.

*Table 3 Comparisons of strategy assessment methods
(adapted from Oxford, 1996:38)*

Let Cohen's comment serve as a final conclusion on means of strategy assessment:

"... researchers have a variety of assessment methods at their disposal, and these methods may be combined in any number of ways in order to collect the most useful data for the given study. The field of language learning strategies may benefit most from a wide application of assessment methods in multiple research contexts" (1998:48-49).

2.5.6 The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

As has been seen, one of the strategy assessment instruments employed for this research was Oxford's SILL (1986-90). Therefore a detailed presentation of this instrument follows.

The descriptions above and in Table 3 made it clear that the use of questionnaires (otherwise known as *summative rating scales*, or *inventories*, or less accurately, *surveys*) is one of the most efficient and comprehensive ways of assessing

strategy use. Nearly a dozen different strategy assessment questionnaires are available in published materials, with rating scales in the 1-4 to 1-6 range, and the number of items included ranging from 12 to 66 or more. In Bialystok (1981a), for example, a 12-item rating scale is used, to assess the extent to which strategies are selected on both oral and written tasks, in formal as well as informal settings. Politzer & McGroarty (1985) developed a 66-item inventory called *Behaviour Questionnaire*, the items of which are divided into three groups: individual study behaviours, classroom behaviours, and interactions outside of class. It was used with students learning ESL in an intensive course, and improvements in ESL achievement were related to the use of individual strategies.

Arguing for the necessity of developing the SILL, Oxford observes (1996:27) that few of the nearly dozen instruments developed to study strategy choice by inventories have any published reliability or validity data, which, she claims, are indispensable for one to put faith in an instrument. The other reason for developing the SILL also derives from the qualities of the *preceding questionnaires*, in that:

“...they do not always systematically represent the wide variety of strategies viewed as important to language learning; often they stop with cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Thus a more comprehensive scale was needed for measuring strategy use among ESL and EFL students” (Oxford, 1996:27).

The SILL (Oxford, 1986-1990) was first designed as an instrument to assess language learning strategy use by learners at a language institute in Monterey, California, US. Two versions were developed, one for learners of foreign languages whose native tongue is English (an 80-item questionnaire), and another, 50-item instrument for ESL/EFL learners. The revised versions of both are appended to Oxford's book on learner strategies for language teachers (1990), accompanied with general instructions to administrators and a sample background questionnaire, which is to document age, gender, language experience, motivation, and other information that might be important. Being of the current dissertation's concern, only the inventory for ESL/EFL learners will be looked at.

In 1989, the SILL was organised according to strategy groups, using the statistical procedure of factor analysis. This procedure allows subdividing an instrument into dimensions referred to as subscales or factors. Based on earlier factor analyses, six subscales were developed, which were to include an adequate number of items to facilitate more in-depth research and analysis of ESL/EFL learning

strategies (Oxford, 1996:29; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995:5). These subscales include: memory strategies (9 items), cognitive strategies (14 items), compensation strategies (6 items), metacognitive strategies (9 items), affective strategies (6 items), and social strategies (6 items). (The structure of the SILL is thus based on Oxford's taxonomy of learner strategies, described in detail in section 2.3.2.) As can immediately be seen, the largest group is that of cognitive strategies. This is justified on grounds suggested by research, namely that the greatest variety of strategies is found in the cognitive domain, which ranges from practice-related strategies to those of deep-processing, in which learners analyse, synthesise and transform new information (Oxford & Ehrman, 1995, in Oxford, 1996:29; also in Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995:5).

Another characteristic feature of the SILL is that it conceptualises language learning strategies in a way to cover the social and affective sides of learning, besides the more intellectual (cognitive) and executive managerial (metacognitive) aspects. Thus, when related to language performance, the SILL allows considering the whole learner, rather than just the cognitive and metacognitive components of learning. The implication clearly is that "language learning, as much as or more than any other discipline, is an adventure of the whole learner, not just a mental exercise" (Oxford, 1996:28).

The SILL is a self-scoring, pen-and-pencil instrument. For learners to respond to the strategies included in it, a 1-5 Likert-type scale is used, where 1 indicates *never or almost never true of me*, 2 indicates *generally not true of me*, 3 is for *somewhat true of me*, 4 is *generally true of me*, and 5 is for *always or almost always true of me* (See Appendix A1).

According to the author, the SILL has been used as a basis for 40-50 major studies, including a dozen dissertations and theses, and these studies have involved nearly ten thousand students around the world. In addition to the original English version, it has been translated to a minimum of ten languages, from Arabic to German to Russian to Ukrainian (Oxford, 1996), but to the best of my knowledge, not to Hungarian to date.

As for the psychometric qualities, in contrast to other instruments of this sort, the SILL has been tested extensively for both reliability and validity, and has been found to be a perfectly valid and reliable instrument. (For details on these properties see Oxford, 1996:29-37, and Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995:5-13)

We have reviewed what strategies are, how they are related to language learning, how they are affected by a variety of learner and situation-related factors, and the means of assessing learner strategies. In the pages ahead, we are going to look at the attempts to incorporate the insights from learner strategy research into the foreign language classroom, in the various forms of instruction in the use of learner strategies.

2.6 *Training learners in the use of strategies*

Learner strategy training, learner strategy instruction, or learner training, for short, encompasses all the approaches to L2 teaching where accent falls on teaching learners the application of learner strategies which are supposed to bring about improved language attainment. The idea dates back to the beginnings of learner strategy research, more precisely to the roots of the good language learner studies in the early seventies (cf. section 2.1.1). Researchers' interest has not diminished ever since. On the contrary. Both the theory and practice of learner training have been the focus of plenty of research efforts. Proponents and opponents abound. As empirical research as well as our understanding of the field has grown considerably, the critical analysis and evaluation of learner training with a view to applying it for the benefit of the learner has become possible.

In what follows, the fundamental tenets of learner strategy instruction will be reviewed. This will be followed by the introduction of some empirical work that yielded mixed results and provoked a critical review of the field. Finally, several influential learner training schemes and the implications accruing from them will be discussed.

2.6.1 Fundamentals of the idea

A basic tenet of learner training is that the learner strategies of successful learners can be codified and taught to poor learners, which in turn will result in the increased learning efficiency of the latter. Equipping students with the tools necessary for transforming themselves into successful learners involves helping them consider the factors that affect their learning and discover strategies that work best for them. That

is to say, underlying the idea is the assumption that learner strategies are teachable and conscious attention to them is beneficial (cf. Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Cook, 1991).

A second premise is that learner strategies, exerting a powerful influence on learning outcomes, are central to enhancing or hindering learning. A remarkable body of learner strategy research rests on the assumption that there exists a linear, causal and significant correlation between strategies and improved performance. The studies conducted along this line (Cohen, 1990; Cohen & Aphek, 1981; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Oxford et alia, 1993; Phillips, 1991; Rost & Ross, 1991) found that students who were better in their language performance demonstrated a higher level of overall strategy use and frequent use of a greater number of strategy categories or individual strategies.

A further underlying belief that justifies intervention into the learning process is that learners benefit from an awareness of their own personal learning styles and of how they can modify their learning techniques in accordance with the changing of the learning environment (Chamot & Rubin, 1994).

2.6.2 Learner training schemes with inconclusive results

In the spirit of these tenets, research into the aspects of learning strategy instruction started. One area with remarkable experiments is that of vocabulary acquisition. Of these the studies by Bialystok (1983a), Cohen & Aphek (1980) and O'Malley et alia (1985b) are worth mentioning. Both Bialystok's and Cohen & Aphek's strategy training experiments brought mixed results. In Bialystok's study, training in inferencing proved successful, whereas training in using picture cues did not. Cohen & Aphek's results suggest that training learners in the forming of associations might be successful with advanced, but not with beginner learners.

O'Malley et alia's study (1985b) failed to produce any significant differences in the effect of training in the use of cognitive and metalingual strategies on groups of mixed ethnic backgrounds. Its significance lies rather in bringing to light the fact that Asian students - unlike Hispanic ones - resisted using the strategies delivered in the programme, preferring to rely on rote memorization instead. This highlights the importance of the ethnic/cultural background in determining learning styles, as well as the importance of taking learning styles into consideration when planning learner training programmes.

In the same study, O'Malley and his associates (O'Malley et alia, 1985b) investigated the effect of an 8-day training in listening and speaking strategies. Whereas results proved not to be statistically significant as regards listening strategies, training in speaking strategies was found to be significantly useful. It must be noted, however, that the listening strategies were general ones, which could have been applied to any listening task, whereas the speaking strategies were specific to the task that had been set.

Aiming primarily at raising learners' metacognitive awareness of language learning, Wenden (1987a) sought to implement a training programme with two advanced groups on an intensive English course. Her efforts met with so little appreciation that the programme had to be abandoned entirely for one group, and received rather unfavourable feedback from the remaining one.

These examples may be discouraging. They show that learner strategy instruction is far too complex and findings yielded by the various experiments are rather problematic to generalise because of the enormous differences in the contexts of the training, the strategies in focus and the characteristics of the participating students in all possible respects. The inconclusive results and the host of problems uncovered by these research efforts gave rise to strong criticism aimed at learner training, on the one hand, but also to the refinement of its theory and practice, on the other. The following sections will be devoted to these developments.

2.6.3 Critical assessment

The most remarkable criticism was put forward by Rees-Miller (1993). She questions the existence of a direct causal link between strategy use and proficiency gains, arguing that the studies researching it (cf. 2.6.1.) employed differing means to measure proficiency, further, interpreted the notion of proficient language learning and learner in differing ways. Thus, in her view, it is problematic to conclude that better performance is the direct result of the frequent use of certain strategies. Conclusions from the research on unsuccessful learners (cf. 2.1.2), she reminds, also warn that it is not necessarily a lack of a repertoire of strategies or infrequent strategy use that makes them ineffective, but the lack of an ability to select strategies appropriate to the task.

Further, she points out, there are far too many unresolved questions about learner training that caution against it being “entrenched as a methodological cornerstone of classroom teaching” (1993:681). The wide range of disputable topics she raises are as follows: What strategies or combinations/clusters of strategies to include in a training program? Should the strategy involved be more general, of wider applicability, or more specific? Should it pertain to particular tasks or skills? What are the criteria of the appropriateness of a certain strategy to a particular task or learner? How to measure the effectiveness of the training? What is the evidence for students profiting from an awareness of their personal learning styles? Most of her criticism draws on the argument that the fundamentals of learner training may intuitively be correct, but proper validation would require a lot of empirical and longitudinal research. Indeed, there have been relatively few longitudinal studies of the variety of factors involved with providing instruction in strategy use. Still, Rees-Miller’s critical analysis did the cause of learner training good service, because it accelerated the clarification of a number of issues challenged by her.

Responding to Rees-Miller, Chamot & Rubin (1994) comment on all the critical points. Referring to evidence accumulated by empirical work, they confirm that instruction in strategy use does improve learners’ L2 skills, and that strategy use does correlate with improved performance. They assert that it is not the application of particular strategies that leads to better performance but the effective management of a repertoire of strategies. This draws on findings pointing to the variables that affect the usefulness of particular strategies. Because of the uniqueness of the learning experience, the effective use of strategies varies from learner to learner. As they observe:

“The good language learner cannot be described in terms of a single set of strategies but rather through the ability to understand and deploy a personal set of effective strategies”(Chamot & Rubin, 1994:772).

Besides helping clarify the issues involved, Rees-Miller’s study also opened up the path for better controlled strategy training schemes and the evaluation of the interventionist studies.

2.6.4 *Successful schemes*

The strategy training schemes to be outlined in this section provide evidence in support of the beneficial effects of these programmes on learning.

In a study of L2 learner use of listener feedback and of clarification questions, Rost & Ross (1991) evaluated the effect of prior training on learners' ability to ask clarification questions of native speakers and to summarize what they had heard. The results indicated that training in specific questioning strategies had a beneficial effect on both the learners' immediate comprehension and their subsequent production. The authors conclude that "strategies for listening comprehension can be demonstrated and readily adopted..." and that "specific listening strategies for specific tasks can be taught to learners of all proficiency levels" (Rost & Ross, 1991:266).

Dörnyei (1995) conducted a strategy training course with Hungarian secondary school learners, focusing on three different communication strategies (topic avoidance/replacement, circumlocutions, fillers/hesitation devices), in order to see how instruction in these affects some qualitative and quantitative aspects of strategy use and the learners' fluency. Showing significant differences between the performances of the treatment and non-treatment groups in their use of circumlocutions and fillers, his results demonstrate that it is possible to train learners in the use of these two communication strategies with good effect. As regards conversational training (topic avoidance/replacement), however, results were not significantly better with the treatment than with the non-treatment group. Dörnyei interprets these findings as pointing towards "the possibility of developing the quality and quantity of learners' use of at least some communication strategies through focused instruction" (1995:55), which in turn affects fluency positively.

An exploratory study involving Hong Kong secondary (15-16 year-old) learners by Sengupta (2000) investigated the effects of explicit instruction in revision strategies on learners' performances and perceptions about writing. The data indicated that the explicit training had a measurable effect on writing performance and "contributed towards developing an awareness of discourse-related features in second language writing" (Sengupta, 2000:97).

The largest-scale controlled strategy training scheme to date, Cohen, Weaver and Li's study (in Cohen, 1998) has produced results consonant with Dörnyei's. Cohen et alia's scheme incorporated a strategy-based training course for teachers (Weaver & Cohen, 1997) and training in various speaking strategies for learners. Though not all the results are conclusive, they provide a firm grounding for the claim that strategy-based instruction results in measurable benefits in both the quantity and the quality of learners' performance on set tasks.

2.6.5 *Learner training materials*

With the development of the studies and experiments of learner strategy instruction depicted above, learner strategy training materials have also been created. Based largely on findings of language learning strategy research, and in part on results of general educational research, these materials are either meant for learners (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Chamot & O'Malley, 1987), or are resource books for teachers (Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1991).

Ellis & Sinclair (1989) see the primary aim of learner training in the development of a personal language learning approach. To that end, learners are to be provided through training with three kinds of knowledge: knowledge about language, which can be developed through language awareness activities; knowledge about language learning, which can be developed through experimentation and reflection; and knowledge about oneself as language learner, which is developed through self-assessment and introspection (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989:2). To ensure the development of these kinds of knowledge, a two-stage programme is proposed where stage one aims at *preparation* for language learning, while stage two is focused on the individual skills.

The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA, Chamot & O'Malley, 1987, O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994) was developed to provide transitional instruction for upper elementary and secondary students at intermediate and advanced ESL levels (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987). Based on Anderson's information processing theory, thus viewing second language acquisition as a cognitive skill (cf. section 2.2.1.3), CALLA aims "to provide a broad framework for using language to learn through the integration of language and

content” (Chamot & O’Malley, 1987:34). Students are taught to use strategies to assist in their comprehension, acquisition and retention of both language skills and concepts in the content area. Advocates of applying the CALLA justify instruction in the use of learner strategies on the following grounds: mentally active learners are better learners; strategies can be taught; learning strategies are transferable to new tasks; and academic language learning is more effective with learning strategies. The model lays emphasis on raising learners’ awareness about their strategies, on developing and broadening their understanding of learning strategies, on developing their ability to evaluate strategy use and to transfer strategies to new tasks (cf. O’Malley & Chamot, 1990).

Oxford’s resource book (1990) is built on the premise that learning strategies are key to more effective, meaningful learning, as well as to learner autonomy (cf. p. 10-11). A further underlying assumption is that although strategies are utilised by learners, teachers have an important role in helping learners develop and use strategies to their fullest possible potential (1990:ix). The eight-step model introduced in the book with a variety of practical suggestions that are immediately applicable in the classroom is intended for long-term strategy training. The eight steps are as follows:

1. determine the learners’ needs and the time available;
2. select strategies well;
3. consider integration of strategy training;
4. consider motivational issues;
5. prepare materials and activities;
6. conduct completely ‘informed training’;
7. evaluate the strategy training;
8. revise the strategy training.

(Oxford, 1990: 204)

As can be seen, the first five steps emphasise planning and preparation, while the last three involve conducting, evaluating and revising training. It is assumed that learners’ current use of strategies has been assessed before. Key issues of learner strategy training apparent in the eight steps (e.g.: integrated training, informed training) will be discussed in detail in the next section, 2.6.6.

Wenden's book argues for training learners in the use of strategies that help them take on more and more responsibility for their own learning endeavour, thus become autonomous. Learning how to learn through acquiring the strategies of independent learning are especially important for those learners who "may not be as varied and flexible in their use of learning strategies as their successful classmates" (Wenden, 1991:163). The book contains materials in the form of lesson plans for training in the use of cognitive and self-management strategies, as well as for changing learners' unfavourable attitudes and beliefs that might hinder language learning.

2.6.6 Issues in implementing learner strategy training

As has been seen, the theory and practice of intervening in the foreign language learning process through providing instruction in learner strategy use have evoked a lot of debate and raised a number of issues that need to be addressed before learner training programmes are implemented. Three questions of paramount importance have emerged, which will be discussed below.

2.6.6.1 What strategies or combination of strategies to include

It is clear now that the question of what strategies or combinations of strategies to teach cannot be answered by providing a list, even if compiling it were preceded by the most careful selection. However, there are guidelines that can inform the selection of particular strategies for particular learner training purposes. As has been seen, it is not necessarily particular strategies that affect learning favourably, but the effective management of a repertoire of strategies appropriate to the task and context of learning (cf. Chamot & Rubin, 1994).

Thus, what strategy to include in the programme will be the function of a number of factors. Approaching the question from the angle of the learning task, it is advisable to select strategies of wider applicability, that is, more general and more essential ones that can be applied and transferred to a number of situations and tasks. Oxford suggests that the teacher can decide on a *broad focus*, which means combining the main groups of strategies, or on a *narrow focus*, which is limited to the training of just one or two strategies. She supports, however, a *combination*

focus, where the teacher starts with presenting lots of strategies whose usefulness is then rated by the learners, then continues with narrowing down onto the ones that the learners have selected as appropriate to their needs. Involving the element of learner choice, such an approach is more beneficial as it potentially leads to more self-direction (Oxford, 1990:206).

Further, the success of a strategy or strategy cluster will depend on the needs and characteristic features of the learners, which, as has been emphasised, are related to learner and situational factors, such as age, level of proficiency, language learning experience, beliefs about and attitude to language learning, learning styles, and the strategies that learners have or have not acquired before. This view is further supported by the suggestion arising from the test of the social psychological model of strategy use (MacIntyre & Noels, 1996), saying that individualised training programmes designed to take account of a specific student's motivation, attitudes and opinions about specific strategies should be more effective than ones aimed at a general audience (1996:384).

To sum up, there is no pre-fabricated recipe about what strategies or strategy clusters to include in a programme. The decision should be a unique one tailored to the particular programme.

2.6.6.2 Separate vs. integrated instruction

The view that strategy training can only be effective when fully integrated with language training has gained firm ground. This is supported by the argument that learning in context is more effective than learning separate strategies the applicability of which may not be apparent for the learner. Also, it is emphasised that practising strategies on authentic tasks facilitates the transfer of strategies to similar tasks that learners will encounter in other situations (cf. O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, Wenden, 1987a; 1991).

Wenden argues that strategy training should always be "contextualised" (1991:105), that is, take place in the context of the content subject or skill for which it is appropriate, and not in isolation from it. It is important for training to be directed towards specific language learning problems related to the learner's experience, since this is the way of highlighting the relevance of the strategy. This position is based on research results (Wenden, 1987a) which show that programmes where strategy

training is not fully integrated with language training meet with resistance from learners, thus are doomed to failure.

2.6.6.3 Informed (direct/explicit) vs. uninformed (embedded/implicit) strategy training

A further issue concerns whether informed or uninformed strategy training is more effective. (Other terms found in the literature referring to the same concept are *direct* or *explicit*, and *embedded* or *implicit*.) O'Malley & Chamot are for direct training, saying that "students should be apprised of the goals of strategy instruction and should be made aware of the strategies they are being taught" (1990:184). This is consonant with Cohen's view and with that of those (Chamot & Rubin, 1994; Dörnyei, 1995) who emphasise the role of consciousness-raising in learner training.

"In an approach where the learner becomes aware of the learning process wherever possible, this learner also assumes a generally more active role in achieving success. Success is then no longer an accident, but the product of careful planning and execution of a series of strategies that work for that learner" (Cohen, 1991:109).

Support for such claims derives from rather disappointing results of earlier research which followed an embedded training approach. It was found that learners who practised strategies without being aware of them or of their purpose had difficulty transferring them to new tasks or maintaining them over time (cf. Wenden, 1987a; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). This element of explicitness is emphasised by Oxford (1990) and Wenden (1991) in the notion of informed training. According to Oxford:

"Research shows that strategy training which fully informs the learner (by indicating why the strategy is useful, how it can be transferred to different tasks, and how learners can evaluate the success of this strategy) is more successful than training that does not" (1990:207).

This approach to training is adopted by Dörnyei (1995) and is suggested by Chamot & Rubin (1994), who emphasise that learners' awareness of the strategies they use and of the ones to be taught should be raised by incorporating the element of discovery into the programme.

2.6.7 *A broad framework for strategy instruction*

Based on the responses to reservations about learner training and on the experience accumulated about its practical application, it is possible to suggest the following principles and general framework for the implementation of strategy training programmes:

- L2 strategy training should be built on learners' stated needs, attitudes and beliefs;
- Strategies should be chosen so that they mesh with and support each other and so that they fit the requirements of the language task, the learners' goals and learning styles;
- Training should be integrated into regular language activities, over a longer period of time;
- Affective issues - such as motivation, anxiety, beliefs, interests - should be directly addressed in L2 strategy training;
- Strategy training should be overt, explicit and relevant;
- Strategy training should not be solely tied to the class at hand, but provide strategies transferable to future (not only) language tasks beyond the given class;
- Strategy training should provide learners with the mechanisms of evaluating their own progress, and the success of the strategies and of the training.

(cf. Oxford, 1999, online)

A fully integrated and informed training programme then should include the following components:

- Awareness training, in which the concept of strategy and strategy training is introduced;
- Encouragement of strategy use in general;
- Identification of the strategies students already use;
- Introduction of new strategies by explanation of their importance for effective learning and of their use;
- Naming, demonstration and modelling of the new strategy by the teacher;
- Guided in-class practising of the new strategy followed by revision cycles;
- Evaluation of the degree of success with the new strategy by the learners;

- Identifying and selecting additional strategies to be included in the training programme by the learners and the teacher;
- Transfer of newly acquired strategies to new tasks;
- Evaluation of the whole programme.

(cf. Oxford, 1990; Dörnyei, 1995)

2.6.8 *Concluding remarks on learner strategy instruction*

While it would be difficult to deny that more empirical data, longitudinal studies and the replication of research is needed to confirm the efficacy of strategy-based L2 instruction, training learners in the use of strategies believed to affect learning positively has become a well-established domain of the L2 teaching-learning field. Serious arguments are no longer raised against the need of helping students develop themselves into effective and successful language learners. Although the link between strategy use and proficiency is rather complex and needs further exploration, it seems reasonable to assume that strategies could affect learning positively, and also that they can be taught and transferred.

It has also become clear that strategies are not inherently good or bad, but that any strategy can lead to failure if used inappropriately. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to find out in what circumstances, for whom, and what strategies work. Recognition of the fact that the learner participates in the process of learning with his whole personality has led to the inclusion of affective aspects of learning in the programmes.

Learner training can be beneficial. If conducted properly, it has the potential of benefiting not only poor learners, who used to be the original target audience of strategy training schemes, but also successful ones, by opening up new perspectives and raising awareness about more options and choices available. Finally, because of the general nature and transferability of many L2 strategies to tasks in other subjects, strategy-based instruction is not only promising for those concerned with L2 learning, but for anyone concerned with education in general.

2.7 Summary

Learner strategy research has come a long way. As a result of the plethora of research into this basically cognitively-oriented aspect of learning, our understanding of the process and the components of learning has become refined. Learner strategies that were identified and isolated from other processes have been listed and classified into systems organised according to various principles. Means of strategy assessment have been developed parallel to the growing body of knowledge about the nature and role of strategies in affecting the learning of a language and other subjects. As a result, it is possible to try out teaching strategies with the aim of making learning more effective, successful, and perhaps even more enjoyable. Although ambiguities and uncertainties about learner strategies abound, thus the knowledge of the field needs further refining, we can progress with applying the insights for the benefit of all – but primarily the pupils – involved.

By way of summary, a list compiled upon the careful analysis of the characteristic features of learner strategies, as suggested in the literature and reviewed in this paper, will follow (cf. Oxford 1990:9; Wenden 1991:18; Ellis 1994:532-33; Cohen 1998:13-15).

- All appropriate strategies contribute to the main goal of language learning/teaching: the development of communicative competence.
- Learners are generally aware of the strategies they use and can identify what they are doing/thinking, if asked to do so.
- Some strategies are directly observable (behavioural strategies), while some are not (mental strategies).
- Strategies can be both general approaches and specific actions taken to learn and use an L2.
- Strategies are problem-oriented. The learner employs them to overcome some particular problem encountered while learning or using an L2.
- Strategies support learning indirectly (by providing learners with data about the L2 which they can then process) or directly.
- Strategies involve linguistic as well as non-linguistic behaviour.
- Strategies do not operate by themselves but are tied to the learner's underlying learning styles (more enduring personality characteristics), other personality

related variables (anxiety, self-concept) and demographic factors (age, sex, ethnicity).

- Strategy use is affected by a variety of factors. It varies as a result of both learner preferences and situational variables.
- Strategies allow learners to become autonomous and more self-directed.
- Strategies involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive.
- Strategies are amenable to change. They are part of our cognitive software. Ineffective ones can be changed or rejected, new strategies can be learned and taught, and well-functioning ones can be adapted to new situations.

Chapter 3

Description of the Research

Introduction

The objective of the research to be presented in this chapter was to gain a comprehensive picture about a relatively large group of Debrecen secondary grammar school (*'gimnázium'* in the Hungarian school system) learners in terms of their learner strategy use. Answers have been sought to what kind and amount of strategies the learners employ when studying an L2, and how their strategy choice is related to a variety of factors, namely proficiency level, success with language learning, gender, sensory learning preferences, motives for language learning, and the content and style of teaching they are exposed to. Highlighting current L2 education practices, this information is essential for informing everyday classroom instruction as well as teacher training, pre- and in-service.

After the formulation of the research questions (section 1.2, p.4), data gathering tools were selected. In order to assess the L2 learner strategies and the learners' sensory learning preferences, questionnaires were used: two different ones for strategy assessment, and one for identifying sensory preferences. One strategy questionnaire was a published instrument, Oxford's SILL (1990, cf. 2.5.6), in Hungarian translation. The other was designed by me after the SILL data had been obtained, and named Strategy Questionnaire 2 (SQ2).

Observations of several English classes of the learners involved with the research were also carried out by me. These were intended to highlight what kind of FL instruction is typical in these classes, what perceptual preferences the teaching appeals to, how and to what extent teaching encourages strategy use, and what strategies are instigated. Teachers' views on their students' learning, strategy use and on issues of facilitating effective learning were elicited by interviews. An outline of the various phases of the research follows. The phases are not in the chronological order in which they took place.

- a. assessing selected learners' strategy use (n=79) by the application of the SILL;

- b. assessing selected learners' strategy use (n=46) by the application of researcher-designed SQ2;
- c. assessing all participating students' sensory learning preferences (n=125) by the application of the Learning Channel Preference Checklist (LCPC) (O'Brien, 1990);
- d. observing English classes of all participating students (4-5/school) to see what style of teaching is typical, what perceptual preferences teaching appeals to and what strategies teaching mediates;
- e. interviewing participating students' English teachers to find out about their views on L2 learning and related matters.

In the sections ahead, research design considerations, the method of data collection and analysis, and the presentation and discussion of the results follow. (For hypotheses and assumptions, see 1.2, p.4).

3.1 Research design considerations

The choice of strategy assessment instruments was in line with the objectives of the research as expressed in the research questions, in that a lot of quantifiable data were to be collected on the type and amount of the general, rather than task-specific FL learner strategies of the subjects under study. The SILL and the LCPC yielded *quantitative*, while the SQ2 produced *quantifiable, qualitative* data. Thus in the design of the research elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches were combined. I conducted observations and interviews, and also statistical data analysis within my control, which shows that triangulation was realized in the collection as well as the analysis of data.

Given the time constraints, the limited availability of resources and the fact that I am not a secondary school teacher, research cross-sectional in nature seemed to be feasible. Longitudinal research with a similar focus could only have been implemented in the institution I work for. This, however, would have changed the research context from secondary state education to higher education, which was not an objective.

As regards the definition of *low*, *medium* and *high* strategy use referred to in Hypothesis 1 (*The subjects' strategy use varies between low and medium levels, in both range and frequency*), two principles were applied. One refers to the results of the SILL, another refers to the results produced by SQ2. According to Oxford's interpretation, mean values in the SILL ranging between 2.50-3.49 suggest medium strategy use, whereas means below 2.50 reflect low, and means above 3.50 reflect high strategy use (Oxford, 1990:291, 300). With Oxford's guidelines based on a standardised, widely-used instrument, defining various levels of use was easy for the SILL data.

As for the results of SQ2, however, a different approach had to be taken. Subjects completing this instrument produced two values, one referring to the range, and another to the frequency of their strategy use. The only available study that has produced data similar in nature, thus comparable to data yielded by SQ2 and useable as a frame of reference for defining levels of strategy use, is a Polish one (Drozdziel-Szelest, 1997). Although that study used O'Malley and Chamot's (section 2.3.1) taxonomy as a theoretical framework, it was applicable in the present paper.

The following system has been worked out to evaluate *high*, *medium* and *low* levels of strategy use for SQ2. Students whose value for the frequency was below 22, and that for the range of strategies reported was below 15 were regarded as having a limited repertoire of strategies (that is, low strategy use). Frequency values between 22-28, and range values between 15-20 located subjects among medium level strategy users. Figure 5 summarises low, medium, and high levels of strategy use in relation to the SILL and SQ2.

S T R A T E G Y U S E			
	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Reflected in SILL data	Mean values Up till 2.49	Mean values between 2.50-3.49	Mean values 3.50+above
SQ2: Frequency	Up till 21	22-28	29+above
SQ2: Range	Up till 14	15-20	21+above

Figure 5 Low, medium and high strategy use in the SILL and SQ2

The following sections offer a detailed description of the research. In the *first section* the *method* will be outlined, where the subjects, instruments, and the procedures for data collection and analysis will be discussed. That will be followed by the presentation of *all the findings* the research has produced. Finally, the findings will be *discussed* in the light of the hypotheses and assumptions (1.2, p.4).

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Subjects

3.2.1.1 Students

A total of 125 students, attending 5 different secondary grammar schools in Debrecen were involved in the study. The majority of them, 79 learners, completed the SILL, while the remaining 46 students completed the SQ2.

The *selection of the learners* for participation in the study was carried out by the teachers who had been approached in the earliest phase of the research, with the intention of involving them and a selected sample of their students in the study. The selection criteria were as follows: (1) learners have at least one year secondary school learning experience; (2) learners attend the four-year (as opposed to the six-year) programme; (3) learners are not in the 12th year of their studies.

Selection *criterion (1)* is grounded in the assumption that the L2 strategies of learners with a minimum of one year secondary school learning experience are to a great extent affected by the kind of teaching and requirements typical in the school, thus provide a reliable picture about the kind of learning taking place there. Setting *criterion (2)* was necessary in order to exclude from the study young learners whose learner strategies reflect a stage of development typical of younger learners, not of adolescents. As regards *criterion (3)*, it was solely set on a practical consideration. It had been assumed that learners in the 12th year are too concerned about their further studies, the school leaving and the entrance exams to be happy to take part in a study that requires their time and effort, while offering nothing in return that they might perceive as immediately rewarding.

As for the *school type*, the following considerations led to selecting secondary grammar, rather than another school type in state education. A reason for aiming at the secondary, instead of the primary level, is that the *age variable* was meant to be

controlled in this way, limiting the scope of the study to adolescents with a supposedly mature level of strategy application. The other reason is that the teacher training offered in the five-year programme I work for focuses primarily on the secondary level. The teaching and teacher training implications that the research is intended to offer are also to aim at the secondary level, thus should draw on data and experience gathered in that school type.

Limiting the research to secondary grammar schools is grounded - besides the practical, feasibility considerations - in the fact that this was meant to be a way of controlling the *socio-economic* variable. As for the subjects' social and economical environment, it was assumed that secondary grammar school learners come from families where the parent(s) can afford a longer period of schooling for the children after the primary school, regarding the secondary school as the field of preparation for further studies, not where vocations or trades can be acquired.

There are altogether six state-run secondary grammar school in Debrecen. Of these, five participated in the research, with two groups of learners each, except for Tóth Árpád Gimnázium, which contributed one large group. Table 4 shows the schools and the numbers of the students that participated in the study.

GIMNÁZIUM	YEAR/ GROUP	NUMBER OF LEARNERS/GROUP	NUMBER OF LEARNERS/SCHOOL
ADY ENDRE	11/1	14	29
	11/2	15	
FAZEKAS MIHÁLY	11/1	13	29
	11/2	16	
KOSSUTH LAJOS	10/1	14	24
	10/2	10	
MEDGYESSY FERENC	10	14	22
	11	8	
TÓTH ÁRPÁD	11	21	21
TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS:125			

Table 4 Distribution of subjects by schools and groups

3.2.1.2 Teachers

As regards the *selection of teachers* for participation in the study, the intention was to approach ones with whom I had been on friendly terms, so that it would not be embarrassing to ask them to contribute to the research. Altogether five teachers have been involved, one per school.

All of them are female university graduates. One is in her twenties, and has five years' of teaching experience; two are in their thirties, with teaching experience ranging from 10 to 15 years, and another two are in their early forties, with about twenty years' of EFL experience. The two youngest ones graduated from the three-year teacher training programme of the then Kossuth Lajos University, Debrecen, later upgraded their degrees at various universities in Hungary. The three eldest ones have been working as mentors for the five-year programme for varying lengths of time, two of whom had completed mentor courses.

3.2.2 *Instruments*

3.2.2.1 **Questionnaires**

3.2.2.1.1 The SILL

The bulk of the data on the strategy use was collected through the application of two different types of self-reporting questionnaire. Self-reporting questionnaires, as was seen, are means of strategy assessment appropriate for use when a lot of quantifiable data is needed on the general, rather than the task-specific strategies of a group of learners (cf. sections 2.5.2, 2.5.5, 3.1). A wide array of strategies can be measured through questionnaires, within a short time, at low cost, and last, but not least, they are supposed to be the least threatening tool when applied under conditions of confidentiality.

The *SILL* (cf. 2.5.6) is an instrument with excellent reliability and validity indicators. Although both of its versions – the one for native speakers of English studying foreign languages and the other for learners of ESL/EFL – were developed in the United States, it is said to be free of ethnocentric biases, thus suitable for use with learners of diverse ethnic backgrounds. The reliability of the SILL was generally found to be high, even for versions translated into the learners' mother tongue (Oxford, 1996:29).

Using translations is a means of ensuring greater accuracy of results, when the learners' proficiency level so demands. Hungarian translation(s) of the SILL may exist, however, I do not know of any. Thus, for the purposes of the present paper a Hungarian translation had to be made available, which I prepared on the basis of the

version published in Oxford (1990:293-300). (See Appendices A1 and A2 for the original version and the Hungarian translation, respectively.)

The *Hungarian SILL* is accompanied with a *cover questionnaire*, enquiring about demographic and other learner-related data that I assumed to be related with the patterns of strategy use. The cover questionnaire (see Appendix B1) elicits information on the length and experience of L2 studies (Questions 3-4); success with language learning as reflected in the learner's self-evaluation and course grades; success with the state language exam (Qs 5-8); and motives for learning English (Q9).

The SILL is a self-scoring instrument. Learners indicate their responses to the statements in it by selecting any one of five numbers on a Likert scale. Numbers are to be written onto a separate sheet provided. The SILL could be administered in a manner that calculating the scores and mean values is done by the learners themselves. This, however, requires preparation of the learners and teachers for the exercise in advance, in terms of giving information on what strategies are, what they are for, what the scores suggest, etc., which seemed neither feasible nor desirable in light of the objectives of the present case. Therefore, while a separate answer sheet was provided, no self-scoring guide was. Computation of various values was part of processing the data, carried out by me.

3.2.2.1.2 Strategy Questionnaire 2 (SQ2)

As pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, after the SILL had been administered and the data obtained and processed, another strategy questionnaire was designed, which was named Strategy Questionnaire 2 (SQ2, see Appendix C). This was necessitated by several reasons.

We have seen that the SILL contains examples of the strategies included in the six major groups in Oxford's taxonomy (see 2.3.2.). Therefore, it can only reveal how typical the use of those particular strategies is, leaving strategies that the learner may develop and use himself, but which do not appear among the SILL items, completely hidden.

All SILL items are supposed to be beneficial for learning, if applied appropriately, whereas it is common knowledge that learners employ for learning facilitation such steps or actions satisfying the strategy criteria which may not have a

positive impact on their learning. Therefore, it was realised, in order to validate the SILL in this context and for a truer picture to be gained, a tool had to be designed that had the potential of revealing all those strategies - whether effective or not - that were typical of the respondents.

In order that the instrument can reveal Hungarian secondary school students' typical strategies, such *tasks* had to be involved in the questionnaire which are *typical in the Hungarian educational context*. What these tasks are was found out by way of the observations that I had carried out. With questionnaire items referring to L2 tasks typical in the context under study, it was assumed that respondents would provide answers that reflect activities they normally engage in.

Other design principles to consider were: *all major aspects of language* be covered, namely: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and the four major skills (Qs 1-9); *all aspects of learning* (Qs 15-18) be covered, not only the cognitive and metacognitive (Qs 13-14) ones.

Thus, in the hope of gaining a more reliable picture on strategy use, *SQ2* (Appendix C) was designed. As can be seen, this is not like an inventory, but a questionnaire containing mainly open-ended questions, suitable to yield qualitative data (cf. strategy assessment questionnaire in Drozdziel-Szelest, 1997). Instead of eliciting how typical/frequent the choice of pre-set items is, it aims to elicit what learners do when solving various learning-related tasks/problems.

Except for number 20 (*"Where did you get your L2 learning methods from?"* Tick the appropriate answer(s): *from my teachers at school; from my private teacher/teachers; from my friends, class mates; from my parents; from my brother(s)/sister(s); I have worked them out myself; other...*), all the questions are open-ended, requiring the respondents to give an account of what they do, in their own wording.

In order that the data should be comparable to those produced by the SILL, I made attempts to put questions the replies to which will reveal strategies that I can identify and categorise on the basis of Oxford's taxonomy. This is why questions seeking specifically to reveal compensation strategies (Qs 10-12) are included.

Finally, a note on question 21 in this instrument. (*Do you think that learning a foreign language is different from learning other subjects? If yes, how far and in what respect?*). The idea was to elicit what degree of awareness of language and of language learning is reflected in respondents' views on L2 learning, as opposed to

other learning. The assumption behind this was that students with an understanding of what language is and what language learning entails develop more, and more effective strategies. This assumption draws on Wenden's conception of metacognitive knowledge (1991:35, 39), which includes beliefs, concepts and insights that learners have acquired about language and language learning, and which guides their choice of strategies.

Similarly to the Hungarian SILL, SQ2 is also accompanied with a cover questionnaire (Appendix B2). There are several extra items in it. Like question 21 in SQ2, these were added to see how respondents think about L2, L2 learning, and themselves as L2 learners (Qs 9-10, 12: *What do you like most about the English language, and about studying it?; What do you like least about the English language and about studying it?; How do you rate yourself as a language learner? Tick the appropriate answer: excellent, good, mediocre, poor, very poor*). On processing and analysing the data, however, it was realised that the findings yielded by the responses to these questions proved unusable. The data failed to reflect reliably the awareness of language or of language learning of the respondents, and I was unable to perceive patterns or categories of respondents' metacognitive knowledge, which I had meant to relate to their strategy choice.

3.2.2.1.3 The Learning Channel Preference Checklist (LCPC)

As discussed in detail in section 2.4.1.3.2, a highly significant learning style dimension with a conspicuous and immediate impact on learning outcomes by way of having the potential to cause learning and teaching style matches/mismatches is manifested in perceptual learning preferences.

For assessing perceptual learning preferences, again published material was used, O'Brien's LCPC (1990). (Appendices D1 and D2 contain the original and the translated versions.) This is a 36-item inventory, with an equal number of items (12 items per each perceptual strength) representing auditory, visual and haptic orientations.

Similarly to the SILL, this is a pen-and-pencil, self-reporting instrument. Respondents decide to what extent the statements are typical of them by indicating a number on a separate answer sheet between 1 and 5 (Likert-type scale), where 5

stands for *almost always*, while 1 is for *almost never*. Items referring to the same perceptual strength appear in a mixed order, which requires intense attention from the person doing the scoring and calculating. O'Brien provides a scoring guide as well as instructions on how to convert totals for individual perceptual strengths to percents, and also on how to produce the perceptual preferences profile for the learner on the basis of the percents (O'Brien, 1995:197-8).

Research results are consonant in suggesting that there are considerable differences between the various learning style preferences in general (cf. Oxford, 1996a; Oxford and Anderson, 1995), and the perceptual preferences of learners with differing ethnic and cultural backgrounds, in particular (Reid, 1987; Kroonenberg, 1995; Nelson, 1995; Stebbins, 1995). This makes the use of instruments developed with a group of a given ethnicity/cultural background in mind problematic, even when the original version, English in this case, is kept.

The application of translations into the respondents' mother tongue, often necessitated by the proficiency level, raises further problems. As Eliason (1995) points out, because of the inevitable presence of a lot of culture-specific concepts in learning style surveys, caution must be taken on behalf of the translator. Inadequate translations may cause various problems, ranging from misinterpretations to cultural inappropriacy. These may make data unreliable, if not destroy the style assessment exercise completely. There may be items which have different values attached to them in different cultures, to the extent that a completely neutral statement or question in one culture may sound odd, or even offensive in another.

As regards perceptual learning style surveys specifically, the biggest difficulty for the translator is posed by items which have no practical equivalent in the classroom experience of the community into whose language the translation is made (cf. Eliason, 1995). These considerations may be discouraging for the translator of a perceptual learning style survey. As, however, the only normed survey available in Hungarian (Bernáth et alia, 1981, in Balogh, 1995:13-15) focuses on several additional learning style dimensions besides the perceptual ones, a translation was needed. On the examination of the normed surveys in Reid (1995), the LCPC was selected.

As for the *selection criteria*, the most important was that it had been used successfully with learners at the upper primary and secondary level (cf. Kroonenberg, 1995:74), as opposed to all the others used only with tertiary level

students. Another criterion was the possibly lowest number of items which can be regarded as culturally sensitive, or difficult to translate for the lack of equivalents in the Hungarian school context. With these considerations in mind, O'Brien's LCPC remained virtually the only instrument which still seemed feasible to translate and apply. Then I applied for permission to use the survey, which was soon granted by O'Brien via e-mail (Appendix E).

The actual exercise of *translating the LCPC* then made it clear that this survey also contains several items which do not easily lend themselves to translating. It refers particularly to items 33 and 35 (Appendix D1), which contain references to tasks, such as *creating a project, doing a report on tape, or writing a report for extra credit*, which are rarely set in Hungarian secondary schools. One of them (33) stands for the auditory, and the other (35) for the haptic learning strength. Item 32 (*When I am trying to remember something new ... it helps me to from a picture of it in my head*), which represents a visual perceptual strength, was also revealed by other means of data gathering not to be very typical in our context, except when explicitly taught. With one item in each dozen representing one of the three perceptual preferences not typical in our school context, the balance is kept. That is, there are still an equal number of items (eleven) referring to each of the three modalities which are supposed to be common in our school context, and one in each supposed to be not very common.

The style and strategy questionnaires in Balogh (1995:7-11; 13-15) provided useful language and conceptual examples for translating the LCPC and the SILL, though the strategy questionnaire published in Balogh had not been specifically designed to identify language learner strategies, but general learner strategies.

3.2.2.2 Observations

The discussion in section 2.5.1 showed that observations are of limited value when research aims to assess strategy use. The observations conducted as part of this study had a different focus.

Three objectives had been set. The observations were meant to reveal:

- (1) *task types* that teachers set for work in and out of class, which was to be considered when designing SQ2 (see 3.2.2.1.2 above),
- (2) *perceptual learning style preferences* the style of teaching appeals to;

(3) choice of *what strategies* is *instigated* by the teaching/teacher, either explicitly or implicitly.

Following the analysis of the related literature, classroom observation schemes and projects (cf. Nikolov, 1999a; Nunan, 1992; Wragg, 1994), an observation instrument was designed (see Appendix F). This is a sheet divided into three columns. These provide space for a detailed description of the activity the class is engaged in, the perceptual strength that the activity accommodates, according to the observer's interpretation, and the strategies that the teacher stimulates her students to use. There is also room for any comments the observer feels like recording, and for essentials about the observed class in terms of time, place, and number of learners present.

3.2.2.3 Interviews

Considering what the literature suggests about the appropriateness, advantages and pitfalls of various types of interview (section 2.5.2), semi-structured interviews seemed to be a promising idea. A predetermined agenda was set (for questions see Appendix G), still it was deemed important to leave space for issues as evolving during the course of the conversation. The interviews were meant to highlight the involved teachers' views on and understanding of: their students' ways of learning, learner strategies and styles; ways of facilitating effective L2 learning; and related matters.

Conducting group interviews with the participating teachers would have made this component of the research more time and cost-effective. Also, the idea of group interviews seemed more promising in terms of the number of ideas and insights generated with more participants present. However, this idea was eventually discarded in favour of individual interviews, which were supposed to be less likely to cause 'social desirability' problems (cf. Cohen, 1998:29).

The interviews were conducted in Hungarian. Except for one, all were conducted parallel to the other procedures of data collection, and are taped. In the remaining case, the teacher opted for answering the questions in writing, instead of sitting for the interview.

3.2.3 *Procedures of data collection and analysis*

3.2.3.1 **Data collection**

All the data were collected during the spring term of 2000. After the teachers had been approached and informed about the objectives of the research, the observations started. The teachers had seen the observation instrument before, then were invited to look at the completed sheets after classes, thus they did not seem to mind the observer's presence. On the contrary, they showed genuine interest in the findings. Altogether 24 English lessons taught by the five teachers involved were observed.

As regards the *questionnaires*, all of them had been piloted with small groups of learners (ranging from 8-13 in each) taught by the teachers involved. First, in the framework of personal one-to-one conversations with me, the teachers had familiarised themselves with the aim of the research and of the pilot phase, the concepts of learning styles and strategies, and the tools of data gathering. Then they were asked to have the questionnaires completed by students other than the ones who would be selected for participation in the main study. They were asked to attend particularly to any language or conceptual problems students may have while completing the instruments, so that necessary changes could be adopted. As a result of piloting the instruments in this way, some questions were reworded in each questionnaire.

After that, the *SILL and the LCPC* was administered to 79 students in 5 different groups at 3 secondary grammar schools (Ady, Fazekas, Tóth Árpád). I had agreed with the teachers that the findings about the students' styles and strategies should form the basis for discussions about learning-related matters between the teachers and their students later on. Thus for the teachers and respondents it was the individual learners' findings that mattered.

As the *computation of the results*, however, was going to be my responsibility, results and names had to be matched, thus anonymity could not be guaranteed. Subjects were asked to put their names on the answer sheets and promised that a coding scheme would be applied, which would make the use of their names later on unnecessary. The coding scheme was developed by the Pedagogy Department of the University of Szeged (Bukta Katalin, personal communication). Code numbers were entered into squares at the top right hand corner of the questionnaires (Appendix B1).

Then the data were processed and computed, and the teachers received the results in an *information pack*. This packet contained data on each subject's perceptual learning style preference in percentages, accompanied by suggestions for auditory, visual and haptic learners about how best to approach their learning tasks (cf. O'Brien, 1995:199-201). Information about learners' strategy use was also included, with explanations about what statistical means for overall use and the use of broad strategy groups suggest. Further, teachers received suggestions in the form of a reading list and practical ideas, regarding how to utilise this information in the classroom.

As for *SQ2*, administration and briefing about results was carried out in the same manner as with the *SILL* respondents. Two groups of learners from Kossuth, and another two groups from Medgyessy Gimnázium, altogether 46 students, were involved with completing *SQ2*. These students also completed the *LCPC*.

Additional information relevant to the groups, rather than to the individual learners, was collected from the teachers during the personal, one-to-one conversations with me. This concerned the number of English classes per week the participating groups had, currently used coursebook(s), proficiency level (the group is supposed to be at), and teacher grading.

Teacher grading is not identical with course grades. (Learners were asked to put the latter down in answering Question 6 of the cover questionnaires, see Appendices B1, B2.) Teachers were asked during the interviews to rank their learners into one of the three categories of *top*, *medium* and *poor*, based on their own ranking criteria, which will be presented in section 3.3.7 (Teacher interviews).

3.2.3.2 Data analysis

3.2.3.2.1 Analysing data from strategy assessment questionnaires

Raw data yielded by the various strategy assessment questionnaires have been entered into a data base in the computer software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 9.0 for Windows.

Concerning the *SILL*, a variety of mathematical mean values have been computed: means for overall strategy use by student, means for each of the six broad strategy groups by student, means for individual strategies, and means for the six

strategy groups across the sample. (*Broad strategy group* or *category* is the term that Oxford normally uses when referring to the six groups in her scheme.)

This was followed by the computing of *significant variation* in mean strategy use by gender, proficiency level, length of L2 studies, number of English classes per week, teacher grading, and perceptual learning styles. Taking the students' various mean values as the dependent variables, significant variation by gender (the independent variable) was determined by applying *t* tests.

For determining significant variation by the other independent variables (proficiency level, length of L2 studies, number of English classes per week, perceptual learning styles, and teacher grading), *one-way analyses of variance* (ANOVA) were used. To see where specific significant differences lay (for example between which of the three levels of the teacher grading), the standard post-hoc Tukey test was applied.

To determine significance throughout the study, the standard of $p < .05$ was used, which means that a result was considered statistically significant if it could have occurred by chance fewer than 5 times out of 100. In selecting statistical procedures and the standard *p* value, personal communication with an expert on statistics in social sciences was conducted and the research literature on the topic (cf. Brown, J. D. 1991, 1992; Falus & Ollé, 2000) was consulted for guidelines.

SQ2 has yielded data of a different nature than the *SILL*. As learners' answers to the questions in this instrument were intended to reveal what learners do to solve various L2-related tasks and problems, it was hoped that strategies would emerge that lend themselves to identifying on the basis of, and subsuming within, Oxford's taxonomy (section 2.3.2).

For practical reasons, the task of *processing the data* in terms of strategy identification and categorisation was carried out solely by me, without a second rater. All the way through, the whole of Oxford's strategy system with the descriptions of the 62 strategies in it served as a frame of reference and guide (Appendix H). Identifying strategies in the learners' reports, and subsuming strategies unambiguously within the categories on the basis of Oxford's descriptions proved to be easier than I had previously thought.

Each strategy that students reported was categorised and counted as a single occurrence. When a strategy already identified and categorised was reported for a different question again, it was added to the total of strategy use. As a result, *two*

values per learner have been obtained. One stands for the *total number* of indicating strategy use across the whole instrument. The other indicates the *number of different strategies* a learner reports using. That is, the two numbers reflect the *frequency* and *range of strategy use*, respectively.

Similarly to the procedures described above, significant variation in the frequency and range of strategy use by (the independent variables of) gender, proficiency level, length of L2 studies, number of English classes per week, perceptual learning styles, and teacher grading has been determined by the use of *t* tests and one way ANOVAs.

3.2.3.2.2 Analysing data on sensory learning preferences

As regards data on sensory learning preferences, O'Brien's directions on how to produce profiles for learners (cf. section 3.2.2.1.3) were followed, which resulted in data demonstrating learners' perceptual preferences in percentages. On the basis of this, learners were categorised into groups of various perceptual preferences.

The review of the findings yielded by the LCPC made it clear that *four categories* lent themselves most apparently to establishing. The categories of learners with: auditory orientation, visual orientation, haptic orientation, and a balanced perceptual preference. Within these individual categories more subcategories could have been established, which would probably have provided a more complex picture about the sensory learning preference of the individual and how that relates to strategy use. However, creating more categories with this sample size, particularly in the case of the learners completing SQ2 (n=46), would have led to category sizes too small to ensure valid and meaningful analyses.

O'Brien was consulted via e-mail about what percentages to count when allocating learners into the four categories. Following the consultations, two principles were set to guide this exercise: (1) percent values for all the three perceptual strengths between 30% and 35% so that there is less than 1 percent point difference between each two will categorise the learner as *balanced*; (2) any one perceptual strength value above 35% and at least one percent point above the other value(s) at the same time will allocate the learner into the dominantly visual, auditory

or haptic category for which the value is above 35%. These guidelines proved to be practicable and easy to follow.

3.2.3.2.3 Analysing data on motives for learning

Questions 9 and 11 in the cover questionnaires appended to the SILL and SQ2, respectively, ask subjects to specify 5 motives for learning English, in an order of importance (Appendix B1, B2).

On consultations with the expert of statistical methods, all the motives that respondents reported were entered into a database. The order (first, second, third, etc) that the respondent allocated to the motive was also indicated. Then a motive indicated to be first in importance was given 5 points and multiplied by the number of times it was indicated to be number one in importance. A motive indicated second most important was allocated 4 points, the third most important was given 3 points, and so on, then multiplied by the number of times it was indicated to be second, third, etc. in importance. Adding up the scores thus gained per motive has revealed what reasons for learning English are most typical among the respondents.

3.2.3.2.4 Analysing observation data

Data collected through the observations have been subjected to various procedures of quantification. Having recorded the types of activity and task learners were engaged in, the length, interaction patterns, the teaching materials and/or aids that were used, and the homework assignments that the teachers set allowed building up a data bank. This reveals two things.

One is what typically happens in the secondary L2 classroom in terms of the most typical task types. This information was intended to serve as a basis for the description of the prevalent style of teaching.

The other thing evaluated and calculated from these data is the proportion in percent of the whole class time favouring the various perceptual learning preferences. This is significant when compared to the perceptual learning preferences of the learners, potentially affecting learning efficiency positively or negatively for the individual learner with a matching or a conflicting sensory learning preference.

Visual learners, as has been seen, learn better when they see or read the information, they prefer receiving input through the visual channel. Learners with an *auditory preference* learn better when the information comes through the ears, while *haptic learners* learn best by doing, moving and hands-on experience.

When evaluating which perceptual learning preference the observed tasks favour, it was examined which sensory channel the input appealed to most. For example, when learners were involved with silent reading, written practice activities, or copying, these were regarded as appealing to the visual channel. Checking solutions of written activities and of the homework, when carried out orally, was counted as appealing to the auditory channel. Oral practice activities were also recorded as appealing to auditory learners, if no visual backup materials were used. If, however, the use of the board, textbook, written practice material, or visual supplementary material of any sort was also involved, the activity was recorded as appealing simultaneously to both the *auditory AND the visual* channel.

Listening activities, even when accompanied by a written task, were counted as appealing to auditory learners, since the source of input appeals to the auditory channel. Integrated activities were either counted as *auditory AND visual* – e.g.: information gap activities utilising a written task sheet – or broken down into smaller chunks in the manner as they appealed to various preferences, then counted up separately.

As regards the instances of *explicit or implicit suggestions* by the teacher instigating the use of various learner strategies, frequency counts were taken. The guideline had been that any suggestion or question by the teacher which stimulates the use of various strategies without explicitly referring to them as learning methods or techniques or strategies, should be counted as implicit instigation. If the teacher suggests or stimulates the use of a strategy while also explicitly calling learners' attention to it as to something they should do when solving various learning tasks, this should be counted as an explicit suggestion.

The following section will present all the results yielded by the data analysis procedures.

3.3 Results

3.3.1 SILL results

As was seen, a total of 79 students attending 5 different groups in 3 grammar schools (Ady, Fazekas, Tóth Árpád) completed the SILL as part of the main study.

First we will look at the statistics calculated in the SPSS for respondents (Tables 5, 6), then those calculated for SILL items (Tables 7, 8). Altogether, seven mean values have been calculated per respondent: mean values for overall strategy use, and mean values for the six strategy groups. The means of overall strategy use are shown in Table 5.

OVERALL STRATEGY USE	
Highest mean	Lowest mean
3.86	2.02
Means between	N
2-2.49	10
2.50-3.00	31
3.10-3.49	36
3.50-	2
(n=79)	

Table 5 Mean values of respondents' overall strategy use

As clear from the table, the highest overall mean is 3.86, and the lowest is 2.02. While there are only two students in the whole sample whose overall strategy use is above 3.50, there are 10 between 2.00 and 2.49, and the vast majority is between 2.50 and 3.49.

One should recall at this point that the responses of 1 and 2 stand for *never or almost never true of me*, and *usually not true of me*, and response 3 means *somewhat true of me* in the SILL. As pointed out in section 3.2, Oxford suggests taking means between 1.5-2.49 as referring to low, means between 2.50-3.49 as referring to medium, and means above 3.5 as referring to high strategy use (cf. Figure 5). Regarding these as guidelines in defining *low* and *medium* strategy use, which is the proposition in Hypothesis 1, the values reflect the dominance of low and medium strategy use, and the lack of high overall strategy use in this sample.

There are 10 subjects in the SILL sample with overall mean values below 2.5, another 67 below 3.5, of whom 31 subjects demonstrated overall means between 2.5 and 3.00 and merely 2 above 3.5. This shows that more than 50% of the sample is below the medium level in their overall strategy use.

The results in Table 6 below demonstrate the use of *broad strategy groups*. (This is the term Oxford uses when referring to the six groups in her taxonomy). As can be seen, subjects' mean values for the six strategy groups is more varied, and low levels of use are not typical on such a large scale as was seen for overall use.

Strategy group	Max	Min	Low		Medium		High		N
			0-2.49		2.5-3.49		3.50-		
			N	%	N	%	N	%	
Memory	3.56	1.78	39	49.3	38	48.1	2	2.5	79
Cognitive	4.00	1.93	7	8.8	61	77.2	11	13.9	79
Compens	4.50	1.83	5	6.3	45	56.9	29	36.7	79
Metacog	4.22	1.11	11	13.9	46	58.2	22	27.8	79
Affective	3.83	1.00	40	50.6	38	48.1	1	1.2	79
Social	4.50	1.83	11	13.9	44	55.6	24	30.3	79

Table 6 Mean values of the six strategy groups across the sample

The table above indicates that the number of subjects shown to be high strategy users of one or more of the six categories ranges from 1 (affective) to 29 (compensation), while the numbers for low strategy use vary between 5 (compensation) and 40 (affective).

That is to say, the majority of the sample is shown to be low – 49.3% for memory, 50.6% for affective strategies - , or medium strategy users – 77.2% for cognitive, 56.9% for compensation, 58.2% for metacognitive, and 55.6% for social strategies.

The biggest number for high strategy use is with the compensation group, which is 36.7%. As regards social and metacognitive strategies, 30.3% and 27.8% of the sample have been found to be high strategy users. High memory and affective strategy use is typical of 2.5% and 1.2% of the sample, respectively.

In sum, these 79 respondents exhibit to an extent low, but particularly a medium level of use of broad strategy groups. High strategy use was found only with one third of the total sample, in merely one category. In another two categories, less than one third of the sample indicated a high level of use.

Now we will look at the means calculated per individual strategy items, and broad strategy groups. Table 7 below illustrates the item in each strategy group with the lowest and highest mean values. As can be seen (in bolds), the highest mean of all the fifty items is with a social strategy, item 45 (*If I don't understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again*), whereas the lowest mean of all is with item 43, an affective strategy (*I write down my feelings in a language learning diary*).

Strategy group		Strategy item	Mean
Memory (A)	Max	A9	3.48
	Min	A5	1.26
Cognitive (B)	Max	B10	4.09
	Min	B17	2.03
Compensation (C)	Max	C29	4.03
	Min	C28	2.40
Metacognitive (D)	Max	D32	4.10
	Min	D36	2.40
Affective (E)	Max	E40	3.34
	Min	E43	1.06
Social (F)	Max	F45	4.27
	Min	F47	2.43

Table 7 Means for individual strategy items

The most frequently used memory strategy is item 9 (*I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign*), the lowest is item 5 (*I use rhymes to remember new English words*).

As for cognitive strategies, item 10 is highest (*I say or write new English words several times*), and item 17 is lowest (*I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English*).

Of all the compensation strategies, item 29 has been given the highest value (*If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing*), and item 28 the lowest (*I try to guess what the other person will say next in English*).

The most often used metacognitive strategy in this sample is 32 (*I pay attention when someone is speaking English*), while item 36 has been reported to be least often used (*I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English*).

Affective strategies on the whole (as the data in Table 6 also demonstrated), are not very often used. The highest value, which is still below 3.50, is with item 40 (*I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake*), and the lowest in this group is the lowest of all the fifty at the same time, item 43 (in bold, spelled out above Table 7).

The most often used social strategy is at the same time the most often used learner strategy included in the SILL, item 45 (*If I don't understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again*), while the least frequent social strategy is expressed in item 47 (*I practise English with other students*). (Appendix I contains the means of all the SILL items.)

Table 8 below shows the mean values for the six strategy groups across the entire sample.

	Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Meta-cognitive	Affective	Social
Means	2.52	3.06	3.27	3.15	2.37	3.12

Table 8 Mean values of broad strategy groups

Consonant with means of respondents' overall strategy use, as well as with means of respondents' use of broad strategy groups (demonstrated in Tables 5 and 6), there is no strategy group with a mean high enough to place it in the category of frequently used strategies. The highest is 3.27, compensation strategies, and this is closely followed by the metacognitive and social strategies, 3.15 and 3.12, respectively, then cognitive strategies with a mean of 3.06. All these reflect medium level use. Memory and affective strategies have very low mean values indeed, 2.57 and 2.37, respectively.

3.3.2 SQ2 results

Students' responses to the questions of this instrument were processed in a way whereby strategies reported by students were identified, then located within Oxford's taxonomy, then counted up. Appendix M contains excerpts from the answers that the respondents gave. The excerpts are meant to illustrate how the respondents

verbalised their strategy use in relation to the various tasks indicated in the questionnaire.

If a particular strategy was reported more than once in response to the same question, it was counted as a single strategy. If the use of that strategy was reported again for a different task, it was added to the total number of strategies reported. As a result, two values were calculated for each learner: the number of different types of strategies reported, which shows the range of strategies; and the total number of the occurrence of strategy use reported for all the questions, that is, the frequency of strategy use.

Appendix J contains all the frequency and range values, as well as the mean values calculated for the total strategy use, the type of strategies employed, and the number of the various types of strategies used on average by the entire sample. Table 9 presents the descriptive statistics referring to the frequency and range of strategies reported by the students completing SQ2.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Median	Mode
Range	46	7	27	16.6	4.86	17	17
Frequency	46	7	41	23.8	8.26	23.5	22

Table 9 Frequency and range of strategies reported in SQ2

As Table 9 shows, nearly 24 occurrences of strategy use are reported by the students in this sample, and 16.6 different types of strategy are used, on average. While the most frequent strategy user reports 41 occurrences, and uses 27 different types, students at the other end report only 7 occurrences and merely 7 different types. Clearly, there is a wide range both in the frequency and type of strategy use.

Next we will examine the levels of strategy use shown in the data yielded by SQ2. (Definitions of *low*, *medium* and *high strategy use* in relation to both strategy assessment instruments were given in Figure 5.)

LEVELS	FREQUENCY			RANGE		
	VALUES	N	%	VALUES	N	%
Low	0-21	15	32	0-14	15	32
Medium	22-28	14	30	15-20	22	47.8
High	29-	17	36.9	21-	9	19.5

Table 10 Low, medium and high strategy use among SQ2 subjects

Overall strategy use across the SQ2 is shown in Table 10. According to that, the majority - over 60% of the sample - is shown to be low or medium overall strategy user in terms of frequency, and more than a third of the sample demonstrate a high level. The figures for the range are somewhat different, in that less than a fifth of the sample is shown to be high level users, whereas medium range dominates with 47.8%, followed by low strategy use by the 32% of the sample.

When we look at the maximum, minimum, and mean values for the six strategy groups (Table 11), we can see that the use of affective strategies is rather limited, on average 0.6 affective strategy is used. The numbers of different social and memory strategies used on average are barely above 2, the number of different compensation strategies is about 3, the number of different metacognitive strategies is about 4, and the number of different cognitive strategies is slightly less than 5.

The mean values for the frequency with which strategies belonging to the six different groups are used show a slightly different picture. While affective and memory strategies carry very low values again, cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies are shown to be more frequently used.

	Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Meta-cognitive	Affective	Social
Maximum	7	8	6	7	4	4
Minimum	0	1	1	1	0	1
Mean of range	2.13	4.78	2.97	3.9	0.6	2.17
Mean of frequency	2.89	7.21	3.32	5.89	0.6	4.02

Table 11 Mean values for frequency and range of strategies reported in SQ2

Now we will examine the use of various strategy groups and the use of individual strategies within the six broad groups. Table 12 presents the use of memory strategies by the respondents under study.

Memory strategies	Number of respondents reporting the use of memory strategies
(A) Creating mental linkages	28
A1 Grouping	11
A2 Associating/ elaborating	10
A3 Placing new words into context	7
(B) Applying images and sounds	34
B1 Using imagery	20
B2 Semantic mapping	1
B3 Using keywords	1
B4 Representing sounds in memory	12
(C) Reviewing well (Structured reviewing)	34
(D) Employing action	2

Table 12 Types of memory strategies reported

Clearly, the various forms of creating mental linkages (Memory A) are evenly scattered among the 28 out of 46 subjects, who use them. Applying images and sounds (Memory B) is used by 34 subjects. Of these, however, *using imagery* (B1) and *representing sounds in memory* (B4) are used by 20 and 12 subjects, respectively, whereas *semantic mapping* (B2) and *using keywords* (B3) are strategies used by very few students in the sample.

Structured reviewing, the only strategy within the set of reviewing well (Memory C), is indicated by 34 respondents. Employing action (Memory D) in any form is used by merely two subjects, that is, not widely known among these learners.

Table 13 presents the use of cognitive strategies.

Cognitive strategies	Number of respondents reporting the use of cognitive strategies
(A) Practising	133
A1 Repeating	39
A2 Formally practising with sounds and writing systems	36
A3 Recognising and using formulas and patterns	1
A4 Recombining	31
A5 Practising naturalistically	26
(B) Receiving and sending messages	48
B1 Getting the idea quickly	5
B2 Using resources for receiving and sending messages	43
(C) Analysing and reasoning	29
C1 Reasoning deductively	4
C2 Analysing expressions	14
C3 Analysing contrastively	2
C4 Translating	9
C5 Transferring	0
(D) Creating structure for input and output	10
D1 Taking notes	4
D2 Summarising	4
D3 Highlighting	2

Table 13 Types of cognitive strategies reported

Table 13 demonstrates that except for *recognising and using formulas and patterns* (A3), the various forms of practising strategies are very popular among the subjects. So is the strategy of *using resources for receiving and sending messages* (B2), which nearly all subjects reported employing. Interestingly, analysing and reasoning strategies (C) are not as commonly reported as one would expect. *Analysing contrastively* (C3) and *transferring* (C5) carry very low values.

Table 14 presents the use of compensation strategies by the respondents under study.

Compensation strategies	Number of respondents reporting the use of compensation strategies
(A) Guessing intelligently	25
A1 Using linguistic clues	12
A2 Using other clues	13
(B) Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	112
B1 Switching to the mother tongue	6
B2 Getting help	31
B3 Using mime or gesture	11
B4 Avoiding communication partially or totally	12
B5 Selecting the topic	0
B6 Adjusting or approximating the message	7
B7 Coining words	0
B8 Using a circumlocution or synonym	45

Table 14 Types of compensation strategies reported

Of the two large sets of compensation strategies, guessing intelligently (A) is reported by more than half of the subjects, while strategies making up the set of overcoming limitations in speaking and writing (B) are employed by all of them. The individual strategies in this set, however, are not evenly popular. Whereas *using a circumlocution or synonym* (B8) and *getting help* (B2) are commonly used, no subject has reported using *selecting the topic* (B5) or *coining words* (B7).

Table 15 presents the use of metacognitive strategies by the respondents under study.

Metacognitive strategies	Number of respondents reporting the use of metacognitive strategies
(A) Centring your learning	8
A1 Overviewing and linking with already known material	0
A2 Paying attention	8
A3 Delaying speech production to focus on listening	0
(B) Arranging and planning your learning	98
B1 Finding out about language learning	0
B2 Organising	4
B3 Setting goals and objectives	27
B4 Identifying the purpose of a language task	30
B5 Planning for a language task	0
B6 Seeking practice opportunities	37
(C) Evaluating your learning	74
C1 Self-monitoring	44
C2 Self-evaluating	30

Table 15 Types of metacognitive strategies reported

Subjects in this sample seem to employ metacognitive strategies extensively. More particularly, strategies which aim at planning (B) and evaluating (C) one's learning. While *setting goals and objectives* (B3), *identifying the purpose of a language task* (B4) and *seeking practice opportunities* (B6) are employed by quite a few subjects, *finding out about language learning* (B1) and *planning for a language task* (B5) are not. As for the strategy set of evaluating and monitoring oneself and one's learning (C), both strategies in it are rather common.

Table 16 presents the use of affective strategies by the respondents under study.

Affective strategies	Number of respondents reporting the use of affective strategies
(A) Lowering your anxiety	10
(B) Encouraging yourself	12
(C) Taking your emotional temperature	6

Table 16 Types of affective strategies reported

Various affective strategies are only reported by about the quarter of the subjects. The ones who use them at all report employing various actions for lowering anxiety (A) and for encouraging oneself (B).

Table 17 presents the use of social strategies by the respondents under study.

Social strategies	Number of respondents reporting the use of social strategies
(A) Asking questions	48
A1 Asking for clarification and verification	46
A2 Asking for correction	2
(B) Co-operating with others	51
B1 Co-operating with peers	30
B2 Co-operating with proficient users of the language	21
(C) Empathising with others	1
C1 Developing cultural understanding	1
C2 Becoming aware of others thoughts and feelings	0

Table 17 Types of social strategies reported

Strategies in the sets of asking questions (A) and co-operating with others (B) are rather frequently reported. Interestingly, while *asking for clarification and verification* (A1) is a strategy all the subjects report using, *asking for correction* (A2) is virtually unknown. As regards the set of empathising with others (C), except for a single subject, no one has reported employing it.

3.3.3 Variations in strategy use

3.3.3.1 Variation by gender

To decide if variation in strategy use by gender is significant, *t* tests were applied, using the SPSS. The results of the *t* test applied to the SQ2 data have yielded results which had been expected on the basis of the literature, confirming that females exhibit significantly higher levels of strategy use, in terms of both range and frequency.

Table 18 (next page) presents the statistics referring to the frequency and range of strategy use by female and male students, completing SQ2.

Dependent variable	Independent variable: Gender	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Significance
Range of strategy use	Male	18	12.67	3.20	sig.*
	Female	28	19.14	4.00	
Frequency of strategy use	Male	18	16.50	4.62	sig.*
	Female	28	28.50	6.47	

*p<.01

Table 18 Variation by gender in the frequency and range of strategy use revealed by SQ2

The results of the *t* tests applied to the SILL data, however, did not confirm expectations, having failed to produce significant relationship to gender in overall strategy use, and in 5 of the 6 strategy categories. These are shown in Table 19.

Dependent variable	Independent variable: Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Significance
Memory	Men	26	2.33	.39	sig.*
	Women	53	2.61	.45	
Cognitive	Men	26	3.04	.41	n.s
	Women	53	3.06	.42	
Compensation	Men	26	3.24	.47	n.s
	Women	53	3.27	.63	
Metacognitive	Men	26	3.12	.56	n.s
	Women	53	3.16	.58	
Affective	Men	26	2.27	.44	n.s
	Women	53	2.41	.56	
Social	Men	26	2.98	.64	n.s
	Women	53	3.18	.71	
Overall	Men	26	2.85	.30	n.s
	Women	53	2.96	.35	

*p<.01

Table 19 Variation by gender in overall strategy use and use of strategy groups revealed by SILL

As clear from the table, the only strategy group with a significant relationship is that of memory strategies, where females were found to have a higher mean than males. As regards all the other strategy groups and overall strategy use, no significant relationships were demonstrated.

3.3.3.2 Variation by other factors

The ANOVA results demonstrated no significant variations by perceptual learning styles in either the SILL or the SQ2 data.

No significant difference was found in the SQ2 data for any of the other independent variables tested. That is, neither the range nor the frequency of strategy use varied significantly by how long respondents had learnt English, the number of English classes per week, proficiency level (course level) or teacher grading. From now on, the independent variable: how long respondents have learnt English will be referred to as ‘length of English studies’.

In the SILL data, several significant relationships in the use of various strategy groups to the number of English classes per week, proficiency level, and length of English studies have been demonstrated by the ANOVAs, as well as the significant effect of teacher grading for some strategy groups and overall strategy use. These results are shown in Tables 20, 21, 22 and 23.

Independent variable: Number of hours/week						
Dependent variable (SILL category)	2-3 hours (n=59)		6 plus hours (n=20)		Sig.	Comments
	M	SD	M	SD		
Memory	2.51	.44	2.55	.50	n.s.	Post-hoc Tukey test not performed because fewer than three groups
Cognit.	2.99	.43	3.24	.29	.019	
Compens.	3.22	.62	3.40	.43	n.s.	
Metacog.	3.10	.63	3.28	.29	n.s.	
Affective	2.33	.53	2.49	.50	n.s.	
Social	3.11	.71	3.12	.65	n.s.	
Overall	2.88	.36	3.04	.20	n.s (.081)	

Table 20 Variation in overall use and in strategy categories by the number of hours/week as revealed by SILL

Independent variable: Proficiency level (course level)								
Dependent variable (SILL category)	Elementary (n=16)		Pre-intermed (n=43)		Intermediate (n=20)		Sig.	Comments
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Memory	2.51	.32	2.51	.48	2.55	.50	n.s.	
Cognit.	2.88	.51	3.03	.40	3.24	.29	.032	E1<Interm*
Compens.	3.05	.61	3.28	.62	3.40	.43	n.s.	
Metacog.	2.90	.85	3.17	.52	3.28	.29	n.s.	
Affective	2.29	.57	2.34	.52	2.49	.50	n.s.	
Social	3.17	.52	3.09	.77	3.12	.65	n.s.	
Overall	2.80	.38	2.92	.36	3.04	.20	n.s.	

*The symbols < and > under the heading 'Comments' in Tables 21, 22, and 23 indicate the groups of an independent variable between which significant relationship was detected by the post-hoc Tukey test. They also indicate which group had significantly lower (<) or higher (>) mean values.

Table 21 Variation in overall use and in strategy categories by proficiency level as revealed by SILL

Independent variable: Length of English studies								
Dependent variable (SILL category)	2-3 years (n=19)		4-6 years (n=26)		7 plus years (n=34)		Sig.	Comments
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Memory	2.51	.43	2.59	.49	2.47	.44	n.s.	
Cognit.	2.83	.45	3.16	.42	3.09	.36	.025	2-3<4-6*
Compens.	3.19	.51	3.31	.72	3.27	.52	n.s.	
Metacog.	2.83	.87	3.33	.44	3.18	.35	.013	2-3<4-6*
Affective	2.26	.54	2.43	.59	2.38	.46	n.s.	
Social	3.18	.66	3.19	.69	3.02	.71	n.s.	
Overall	2.79	.38	3.02	.37	2.92	.26	n.s. (.076)	

Table 22 Variation in overall use and in strategy categories by the length of English studies as revealed by SILL

Tables 20, 21 and 22 demonstrate that significant relationships have been found between the independent variables of number of English classes per week, supposed proficiency level, and the length of English studies, and the use of cognitive strategies. In the case of the length of English studies, metacognitive strategy use also showed a significant relationship, while overall strategy use approached

significance when tested for the number of English classes per week, as well as the length of English studies.

Students studying English in 6 or more classes a week use significantly more cognitive strategies than students with 2-3 classes/ week. Overall strategy use of the latter group is also lower, though not significantly, than that of students having 6 or more classes (Table 20).

As regards supposed proficiency level (Table 21), the post-hoc Tukey test showed that students at the intermediate level use significantly more cognitive strategies than elementary ones. Pre-intermediate students also use more cognitive strategies than elementary ones, while less than intermediate students, but the difference is not significant between either of the two groups.

The effect of the length of English studies (Table 22) has been found to work in exactly the same way for both cognitive and metacognitive strategy use. Subjects who have been studying English for 4-6 years use significantly more strategies of these two categories than students with 2-3 years' experience with English. Interestingly, the means for these two categories and for overall use by subjects with 7 or more years of studying English are lower, though not significantly, than those of students having studied English for 4-6 years.

Independent variable: Teacher grading									
Dependent variable (SILL category)	Top (n=30)		Medium (n=41)		Poor (n=8)		Sig.	Comments	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Memory	2.47	.41	2.56	.46	2.51	.56	n.s.		
Cognit.	3.11	.39	3.11	.39	2.57	.32	.002**	T>P, M>P*	
Compens.	3.30	.56	3.29	.60	3.02	.61	n.s.		
Metacog.	3.37	.43	3.11	.45	2.48	.96	.000**	T>P, M>P*	
Affective	2.18	.42	2.50	.59	2.39	.36	.038	T<M*	
Social	3.12	.75	3.18	.62	2.75	.76	n.s.		
Overall	2.95	.30	2.97	.31	2.60	0.42	.014	T>P, M>P*	

*see explanation under Table 21

**p<.01

Table 23 Variation in overall strategy use and in strategy categories by teacher grading as revealed by SILL

Table 23 shows that in three of the six broad categories and in overall strategy use significant variations have been found. Subjects ranked into the top and medium

categories by their teachers use significantly more cognitive and metacognitive strategies, and show significantly higher level of overall strategy use than poor students. The differences in the use of these categories and in overall use between top and medium students are not significant. According to the post-hoc Tukey test, only students in the medium group use significantly more affective strategies than students in the top group. Between top and poor, and medium and poor subjects no significant relationships were found.

3.3.4 Motives for learning English

In this subsection we will examine the reasons for learning English that respondents reported in answering the relevant questions in the cover questionnaires appended to the strategy assessment instruments (see Appendices B1, B2). Also, the degree of importance they attached to the various reasons will be presented. Then the reported motives will be grouped into clusters that reflect various motivational orientations.

First, a list of reasons as reported by the subjects can be seen in Table 24, in an order of the importance attached to them. (For the procedure to calculate the scores see description in section 3.2.3.2.4.)

As can be seen (next page), a variety of motives have been indicated. The fact that English is a world language and a major language in the EU has been reported as the most significant motivating drive to learn it. Equally important for the subjects is English for their further studies. Many of the reported reasons suggest that the subjects are fully aware of the usefulness of the knowledge of English as regards their future in every respect, ranging from career to entertainment. This is reflected in the fact that three of the first four most important reasons are related to the utilitarian value of English. Reasons stemming from the various properties of the language itself, rather than the gains it is hoped to bring along have also been indicated. It is remarkable that this motive is third of all in importance. Motives deriving from sources beyond the subject or the language, such as the wish to meet external or institutional requirements, have also been given great importance.

MOTIVE	SCORE
World language, language of EU	216
Needed for further studies	207
Like the language, interested in it, beautiful	175
Indispensable, a must, important	138
Compulsory to study	127
Useful	119
Want to visit, work abroad	104
Needed for future job	90
Easy to learn	70
Wish to communicate, make friends abroad	66
Want to pass state language exam	65
Part of general knowledge	50
Needed for the use of computer	43
No other choice at school	42
Used for entertainment: pop music, watching TV	37
Score needed for entrance exam to college/university	36
Like the culture, customs and people	14
Like languages generally	12
Compulsory subject of school leaving exam	12
To boost self-esteem	10
Promotes intercultural understanding	5
Parents' wish	2
(n=125)	

Table 24 Motives for learning English in the order of importance attached to them by respondents

The reported motives have been grouped into clusters according to what kind of motivation they reflect. These are shown in Table 25 (next page).

MOTIVES GROUPED	SCORE	TOTAL	MOTIVATION REFLECTED
World language, language of EU	216	954	Cluster 1 INSTRUMENTAL
Needed for further studies	207		
Indispensable, a must, important	138		
Useful	119		
Want to visit, work abroad	104		
Needed for future job	90		
Needed for the use of computer	43		
Needed for entertainment: pop music, watching TV	37		
Like the language, interested in it, it is beautiful	175	317	Cluster 2 INTRINSIC
Easy to learn	70		
Part of general knowledge	50		
Like languages generally	12		
To boost self-esteem	10		
Compulsory to study	127	284	Cluster 3 EXTRINSIC
Want to pass state language exam	65		
No other choice at school	42		
Score needed for entrance exam to college/university	36		
Compulsory subject of school leaving exam	12		
Parents' wish	2		
Wish to communicate, make friends abroad	66	85	Cluster 4 INTEGRATIVE
Like the culture, customs and people	14		
Promotes intercultural understanding	5		

Table 25 Clusters of motives to learn English

As the table shows, four clusters have been formed by the researcher. About a third of all the motives have been grouped into the cluster first in importance. The motives in *Cluster 1* - which far outweighs all the remaining clusters separately or even totalled - reflect that respondents regard English as a useful and indispensable instrument in fulfilling their studies-, work- and entertainment-related needs, that is, recognise the pragmatic, utilitarian value of the knowledge of English. It has been

labelled the *instrumental* cluster. Motives in *Cluster 2* have been categorized *intrinsic*, because they reveal language learning geared towards internal rewards of some sort. That is, they reflect activities which learners engage in for the joy of doing the particular activity, or for satisfying their interest or curiosity. *Cluster 3* contains the motives that reflect *extrinsically* motivated behaviours, which learners perform in order to fulfil external/institutional requirements or in the hope of receiving some external reward, and in order to avoid punishment. The smallest cluster in respect of both the number of motives subsumed within it and the scores it received is that of the *integrative* motives. All of them exhibit a favourable attitude towards the language, the culture surrounding it and its speakers, and the recognition of the communicative value of English.

In sum, the learners under study are motivated to learn English primarily by instrumental motives. These are shown to be far more significant for them than the wish to fulfil either internal or external requirements or, reasons stemming from the qualities and the love of language, or the benefits accruing from its communicative potential. This statement holds even when it is acknowledged that because of the likely overlaps between some of the categories (e.g.: integrative/intrinsic) allocating motives into one or the other is often problematic, thus there might be motives in the present data the categorisation of which is arguable.

3.3.5 *Perceptual learning preferences of the student respondents*

The perceptual learning preferences of the learners participating in the study have been assessed by the application of the LCPC. These are presented in Table 26.

PERCEPTUAL PREFERENCE	N	%
Balanced	6	4.8%
Visual	82	66.7%
Auditory	20	16.2%
Haptic	15	12.2%
TOTAL: 123*		

*Two missing cases.

Table 26 *Distribution of learners by sensory learning preferences in the whole sample*

The visual orientation dominates, followed by the auditory orientation, which is typical only of less than a sixth of the whole sample. The ratio of haptic learners is not far below that of auditory ones, and less than 5% of the 123 assessed learners proved to be balanced. (As for the two missing cases, one subject did not complete the LCPC, and another could not be categorised into any of these four.)

These findings will only be meaningful when compared to the style of teaching in terms of the sensory preferences it favours. The issue of the match or mismatch between learners' perceptual styles and the perceptual style favoured by teaching will be addressed in the following section.

3.3.6 *Style of teaching as reflected in the observation data*

All the data presented in this section have been collected by the researcher observing altogether 24 classes in the 5 schools involved with the research.

3.3.6.1 **Modality strengths accommodated by teaching**

First, we will examine the ratio of class time in the observed classes appealing to the various perceptual learning preferences. The data illustrating this aspect of teaching follow in Table 27. The numbers not in brackets indicate minutes.

GIMNÁZIUM	AUDITORY	VISUAL	AUDITORY/ VISUAL	HAPTIC	TOTAL
ADY	79 (35.6%)	48 (21.6%)	90 (40.5%)	5 (2%)	222 (5 classes)
TÁG	100 (55.5%)	26 (14.4%)	48 (26.6%)	6 (3.3%)	180 (4 classes)
FAZEKAS	96 (45.7%)	34 (16%)	75 (35.7%)	5 (2.3%)	210 (5 classes)
MEDGYESI	114 (50.8%)	42 (18.7%)	57 (25.4%)	11 (4.9%)	224 (5 classes)
KOSSUTH	83 (36%)	67 (29%)	69 (30.9%)	4 (1.7%)	223 (5 classes)
TOTAL	472 (44.6%)	217 (20.5%)	339 (32%)	31 (2.9%)	1059 (24 classes)

Table 27 Class time appealing to various perceptual preferences

Between 35.6% to 55.5% of all the time was spent on activities favouring auditory learners (44,6% of the total), while the numbers attached to activities appealing to visual learners range between 14.4% to 29%; 20.5% of all the observed time. Tasks that are favourable for both auditory and visual students had second biggest amount of time devoted to them in all schools, except in Ady, where these

activities occupied 40.5% of all the time, making tasks with an auditory appeal second (35.6%). Haptic learners' perceptual preferences were catered to in less than 3% of all the class time, ranging from 1.7% to 4.9%, when broken down into school-specific units.

These data are interesting to compare to the data on the modality strengths of the learners as revealed by the LCPC. The figures below present percents of subjects with various perceptual preferences, and the percents of time spent on activities favouring the various modality strengths.

These figures clearly demonstrate that the majority of students - nearly 67% - are dominantly visually oriented, while only 20% of the teaching time appeals primarily to them. Whereas auditory students take up 16% of the subjects, 45% of teaching appeals most to auditory learners. 32% of time favours both auditory and visual students. The small group of haptic learners - 12% - is in a disadvantageous position, since their dominant sensory preference is accommodated in less than 3% of all the class time.

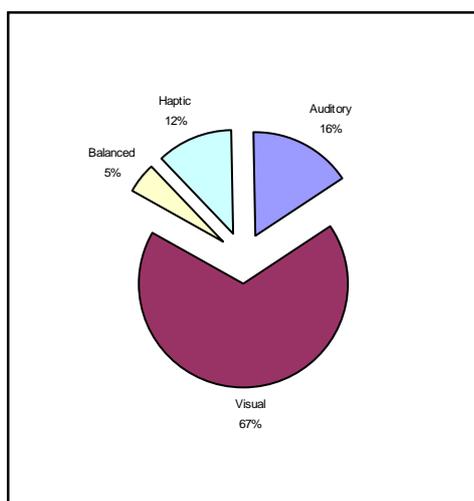


Figure 6 Distribution of learners by sensory preferences in the whole sample

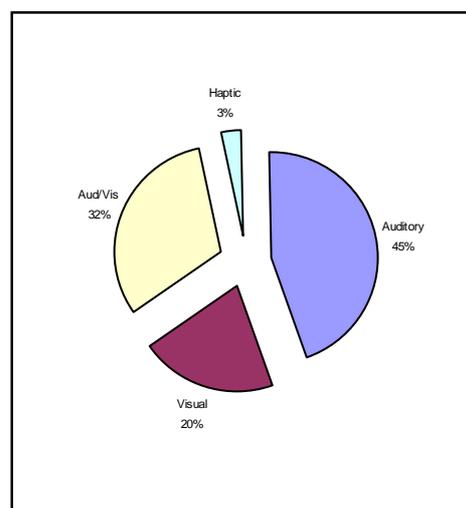


Figure 7 Distribution of class time appealing to various sensory preferences

3.3.6.2 In and out-of-class tasks

First, it will be presented what in-class tasks were observed during the classes. The tasks are grouped according to what aspect of the language they focus on, that is, if

their target is language systems (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) or language skills. The information in brackets refers to whether the tasks were carried out in the classroom orally, or in writing, or in an integrated fashion.

IN-CLASS TASKS	
Tasks focusing on grammar:	Teacher-led presentation (oral)
	Teacher-led review (oral)
	Translation of sentences (oral/written)
	Translation of paragraphs, texts (written)
	Transformation of sentences (oral/written)
	Gap-filling (written)
Tasks focusing on vocabulary	Correcting grammatical errors (written)
	Teacher-led presentation (oral)
	Giving synonyms, antonyms (oral/written)
	Creating/filling in mind maps (oral/written)
Tasks focusing on pronunciation	Grouping vocabulary items (oral/written)
	Practising sounds
	Practising word stress
Speaking tasks	Practising intonation
	Answering teacher's questions
	Teacher-led discussions
	Information gap activities
	Role plays
Listening comprehension tasks	Describing pictures
	Transferring information into charts, maps, graphs
	Gap filling
	Answering comprehension questions
	Sequencing pictures, paragraphs
	True/false statements
Reading tasks	Answering comprehension questions
	True/false statements
	Completing graphs, charts
	Sequencing paragraphs
	Matching paragraphs and pictures
	Reading aloud
Writing tasks	Copying material from board
	Recording material/note-taking

Table 28 Tasks set for in-class work

Table 28 shows that a wide variety of task types were employed. As regards the number of task types focusing on language systems and developing skills, there is almost a balance, though skills development tasks slightly outnumber those that focus on language. This statement does not refer to writing tasks, though, as no in-

class task developing writing skills was observed, only writing which aimed at providing written record of the material delivered at class.

In Table 29 the type and frequency of the tasks teachers set for homework assignments are presented. The frequency figures show how often the particular task was set in the 24 classes observed.

HOME ASSIGNMENTS	FREQUENCY
WRITTEN TASKS	
Grammar exercise from coursebook/workbook	6
Vocabulary exercise from coursebook/workbook	5
Translating sentences/texts from Hungarian into English provided by teacher or in practice books	4
Translating paragraphs/texts from English into Hungarian provided by teacher or in coursebook/workbook	2
Letter writing (guided)	2
Composition writing (set topic)	2
Multiple choice grammar test	1
INTEGRATED TASKS	
Reading texts with accompanying comprehension tasks	3
Reading texts provided by teacher or in coursebooks, looking up and learning unknown vocabulary	2
ORAL TASKS	
Grammar review	6
Vocabulary review	5

Table 29 Tasks set for homework

Not surprisingly, the majority of tasks set for home assignments involved writing. Most of these were grammar and vocabulary exercises from workbooks, followed by translation (Hungarian into English) of individual sentences or short paragraphs, normally with a grammatical focus. Reading tasks accompanied with written comprehension checking or vocabulary tasks were also often set. These were typical in classes where proficiency level ranges from elementary to pre-intermediate.

Translating texts from English into Hungarian, multiple choice grammar tests and composition writing were set for classes at higher levels of proficiency, where the majority of students were preparing to take the intermediate level state exam. (For a detailed description of the participating groups in terms of the proficiency level and number of English classes per week, see Table 31.)

As can be seen in Table 29, no tasks were set which rely on the independent work or the initiative of the student, such as projects or reports, and teachers did not encourage learners to work for extra credits. However, the use of resources, particularly grammar reference materials and dictionaries was regularly involved and encouraged.

Next it will be examined how much time in the 24 classes was spent on the variety of tasks listed in Table 28. Table 30 shows the tasks learners were involved with during the 24 observed lessons in an order of the amount of time spent on them.

ACTIVITY	AMOUNT OF TIME IN MINUTES SPENT IN 24 CLASSES
Written grammar practice	242
Oral grammar practice	240
Oral activities	193
(Teacher led discussion)	(73)
(Information gap)	(46)
(Role play)	(40)
(Picture description)	(34)
Listening	97
Vocabulary presentation	61
Checking homework	60
Silent reading	45
Grammar presentation	42
Vocabulary practice	28
Pairing/grouping activity	26
Pronunciation practice	19
Reading aloud	6
TOTAL	1059

Table 30 Time spent on various tasks in the observed classes

As can be seen, the majority of time, nearly half of all, was spent on practising grammar, either orally or in writing. If we add time devoted to presenting grammar, vocabulary presentation and practice and pronunciation practice, it becomes obvious that activities focusing on language far outweigh ones developing skills. This might be due to the fact that the majority of the observed groups are at lower proficiency levels and have a limited number of classes per week (cf. Table 31), where teaching with a focus on the development of language systems (cf. Scrivener, 1994) and geared towards accuracy at the expense of fluency seemed to be perceived by the teachers as essential. This assumption is supported by the fact that the majority of the oral communication activities were carried out in classes at the

intermediate level and above, while lower level classes mainly had - besides oral grammar practice - simple information gap and role play tasks and teacher-led discussions, for developing oral communication skills.

Table 31 below shows the distribution of the participating groups by proficiency level and the number of English classes a week.

SCHOOL	YEAR	LEVEL	NUMBER OF CLASSES/ WEEK
TÓTH ÁRPÁD	11	Pre-intermediate	3
MEDGYESSY	11	(Upper) intermediate	6
	10	pre-intermediate	3
FAZEKAS	11	Pre-intermediate	3
	11	Intermediate	3
KOSSUTH	10	Beginner	3
	10	Pre-intermediate	6
ADY	11	Pre-intermediate	2
	11	(Upper) intermediate	6

Table 31 Distribution of groups by proficiency level and number of English classes per week

3.3.6.3 Strategies instigated by teachers

Table 32 lists the strategies that were stimulated by the teachers' explicit or implicit questions and suggestions. The (E) next to the strategies shows that the suggestion was judged to be an explicit one by the observer.

STRATEGY GROUP	STRATEGY
Cognitive	Analysing expressions
	Analysing contrastively
	Reasoning deductively
	Using resources (dictionary) (E)
	Translating (E)
	Highlighting
	Recognising and using formulas and patterns
Compensation	Taking notes (E)
	Guessing – using linguistic clues
Memory	Guessing – using other clues
	Reviewing well (E)

Table 32 List of strategies teachers encourage students to use

As can be seen, all the strategies teachers stimulate with their questions or suggestions about how to approach tasks belong under the umbrella of direct strategies (cf. Oxford's taxonomy). Nearly three quarters of all those strategies - eight - subsume within the cognitive group. Another two belong to the category of *guessing* within the group of compensation strategies, and there is one memory strategy, *reviewing well*, which teachers were observed suggesting or encouraging.

No suggestion or instigation was observed as to the use of the indirect metacognitive or affective strategies. The use of two social strategies, - *asking questions for clarification and verification*, and *co-operating with others*, particularly *with peers* – (which also belong to the indirect group in Oxford's system) was not encouraged either explicitly or implicitly by the teachers, therefore they are not included in the table. These strategies, however, were constantly applied by the students.

3.3.7 Teacher interviews

In this section the findings gathered from the interviews conducted with the participating students' English teachers will be presented. The language of the interviews was Hungarian. (For interview questions in Hungarian and English see Appendix G.)

In presenting the findings, the approach taken by Pearson (1988) will be followed. That is, a brief introduction of the teacher's professional background and the summary of what she said (or wrote, in one case) will be presented. The transcripts of the entire interviews (in Hungarian) can be found in Appendix L.

3.3.7.1 Interview One

Teacher One (T1) has a university degree in Russian and English. She has been teaching English for nearly fifteen years. Her teaching experience, accumulated in prestigious schools, covers primary as well as secondary levels. Since she graduated, she has attended hundreds of hours of further training at various courses, including preparation for the new secondary school leaving (matura) exam and mentoring. For some time, she has been a mentor in English for the five-year programme.

Her understanding of the students' learning styles and strategies is based partly on teaching experience and intuition, and in part on questioning the students about how they tackle various L2 learning problems. Her main concern is helping students, particularly at the beginning of their secondary school career, develop strategies for learning vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. She has a lot of ideas, all based on her own L2 learning experience, about how these aspects of the language should be approached, and she emphasises the importance of regular revisions.

In her view, the prevalent learning method, even among the best students, is rote memorisation, in that learners read and repeat the material several times. Few if any attempts are made at separating essential from non-essential information, either by underlining important bits or by some other means. She attributes the dominance of this method to the traditional style of teaching students got used to in the primary school, which encouraged its development, and where alternative methods were not offered. This is also due in her view to the prevailing testing practices at both the primary and secondary levels, in that the majority of written tests, irrespective of the subject, test factual knowledge instead of the skill of applying or critically analysing facts, or recognising interrelations among facts.

It is mainly students with good language aptitude, appropriate learning circumstances and no affective concerns for whom L2 learning causes no major problems. The prerequisites of effective learning are aptitude, diligence, regular preparation and reviewing, and the gradual development of strategies suitable and appropriate for oneself. Appropriate physical conditions for learning and intensive contact with the L2 in and outside of the school are also deemed important by T1.

Learning problems, although quite common even in her school, which attracts the best students, are not institutionally handled. However, T1 does deal with learning problems. In so doing, she can only rely on intuition, and on her own learning and teaching experience, but not on any instruction provided in pre- or in-service training. Teacher training in her view should address learning issues so that teachers be prepared to help their students in an informed manner.

Her criteria for ranking a student in the top category are: excellent results in written and oral tests, diligence and active participation at classes. As for the poor category, there are hardly any in her school, but the few students who find

themselves in that do so because of being lazy and lacking in a positive attitude towards the language.

Regarding the trends in foreign language teaching and learning in present day Hungary, T1 is of the view that trends are favourable among the young, particularly when one considers the number of secondary grammar school students holding one or two state language exam certificates. Keeping this up, however, is becoming difficult. For one thing, because the number of L2 classes decreases, and for another, because the L2 knowledge students arrive with from the primary school also becomes poorer.

3.3.7.2 Interview Two

Teacher Two (T2) has a university degree in Hungarian, Russian and Finnish, and a college degree in English, which she gained in the three-year programme. She has got over ten years' of L2 teaching experience, including teaching English at primary and secondary levels, and to adults. She is also experienced as a teacher of Hungarian as a foreign language.

The concepts of learning styles and strategies are new for T2. However, employing strategies for the learning of various aspects of the language and introducing these to her students are not. Like T1, T2 emphasises the importance of strategies for learning vocabulary, structures, and pronunciation, but she also deals with strategies of dictionary use and skills work, e.g. translation and reading.

She deals with these learning strategies and issues because in her experience students who had developed ineffective strategies in the primary school need it, and the teacher cannot progress with the material without her students mastering basic learning techniques.

She thinks that addressing learning issues should happen at the primary level, because later a lot of students find it childish, on the one hand, and starting dealing with learning at the secondary level is too late, on the other. However, as a lot of students lack the ability to learn or have a very limited repertoire of strategies in the secondary school, teachers need to tackle the problems somehow. How exactly, if teachers decide to deal with it at all, is up to the individual teacher to decide. Teachers are neither prepared for this task nor obliged by the school. T2 thinks that it

is not only language teachers who should be concerned with addressing questions of learning.

Good language learners in her view are talented, hard working and have got an environment that inspires rather than discourages foreign language learning. The lack of talent or deficiencies in language aptitude can be compensated for, to a certain extent, by hard work. However, an environment lacking in tolerance and acceptance of otherness works against successful L2 learning. Unfavourable attitude towards the foreign language, which results in poor performance, may be a consequence of an intolerant environment.

Students put into the top category by her are interested in the L2, have a positive attitude towards it and are hard working. Poor learners lack all these. But the main reason for poor performance in her view is the lack of interest and motivation.

She attributes the unfavourable tendencies in Hungarians' foreign language knowledge to the negative attitudes towards otherness on the societal level, and to the state of affairs in state education, which has to do with poor resources, and underpaid and overworked teachers.

3.3.7.3 Interview Three

Teacher Three (T3) has a university degree in English and German. She has been teaching English for nearly twenty years. All her teaching experience was acquired in one prestigious secondary school. Since she graduated, she has not taken part in any further training. She works as a mentor for the five-year programme.

Her understanding of her students' learning styles and strategies is based on intuition and experience. She thinks that most students are visually-oriented and the prevalent strategy is rote memorisation. The reason for the dominance of this technique is attributable to the school requirements, more particularly to the amount of the material. This is why students adjust their learning to external considerations, such as the likelihood of an oral or written test, the strictness or otherwise of the teacher, whether they will have to sit for the final school leaving exam in the subject or not, etc. Interest in the subject and motivation to learn it do not really affect the way it is learned. This state of affairs should be altered by making secondary requirements more up-to-date.

Prerequisites of successful L2 learning are language aptitude, diligence and motivation, on the one hand, and sufficient contact with the language. Motivating students to learn English is easier than to learn other subjects, even the product-oriented nature of the educational system can be positively exploited so that students are inspired to do extra work in English for extra scores.

Top students in her interpretation speak and write the L2 well, are diligent, active, resourceful, and have a good mastery of also their mother tongue. Poor students are not diligent, do not participate actively at classes, are reluctant to talk, write poorly, and do not like the language.

As for the tendencies in the foreign language proficiency of Hungarians, she thinks that these are improving. This is due to the prospect of Hungary joining the EU and society recognising the importance of foreign language knowledge. External circumstances, however, are not favourable to satisfy the demands dictated by the EU, because of the decrease in the number of hours, lack of financial resources in schools, and the decline of the quality of teachers, particularly the young ones, which is due to the low esteem that society attaches to the profession in all respects.

3.3.7.4 Interview Four

Teacher Four (T4) has got a college and a university degree in English. She graduated from a three-year programme 5 years ago, then upgraded her degree. She graduated from university last year. She has been teaching English in a secondary grammar school for 5 years. She is the youngest of the interviewees.

Though T4 is not familiar with the concept of learner strategies, she is with that of learning styles. As the most recent university graduate, she attended a course in learning styles. She knows what the understanding of the concept implies for the classroom teacher, but because of the limited number of weekly hours in English typical in most classes at her school, and her being overloaded, she is not able to address the issues involved.

She does not know much about learner strategies consciously, but she tries to help her students employ some for learning vocabulary and grammar. In her experience, students fresh from the primary school have hardly any strategies to tackle the material, nor for organising their learning. Even the most basic vocabulary learning strategies are new for them, they use rote memorisation, irrespective of the

task, have difficulty applying grammatical rules, and are not aware of the importance of structured reviewing, planning, organising and evaluating themselves and their learning.

The reason for the above in T4's view is the way they are taught in the primary school. The kind of learning inspired in the primary school is fully developed by the time students are at the secondary level, thus it is very difficult to change. The kind of learning students perform is also due to the amount of the material in all subjects in the school, which makes students deal only with subjects of current importance, and by the application of strategies yielding the fastest results.

Teachers have not got the tools to help students solve their learning problems. They are not trained for it. But even if they were, there would be no time for this.

Successful learners in her view are able to use the language for communicative purposes, are not inhibited, are not afraid of making mistakes, and speak freely at classes. For this to happen, students need to be motivated to use the language for their own purposes, need to have clear goals and plans, and need to experience success in the classroom. Besides these learner variables, for effective learning to take place appropriate resources in the schools and enough weekly hours are needed. Poor learners do not dare to speak and are so inhibited that their performance reflects even poorer knowledge than they have. T4 consciously tries to help these students overcome their inhibition. She thinks that in the background of learning problems there is usually a lack of interest in the L2.

Tendencies in foreign language teaching today are favourable in her view, teaching practices as well as materials are more up-to-date and more effective than in her secondary school years. However, there are still a lot of teachers who do not provide enough communicative practice in the classroom. Students who do not learn to use the language confidently at school will not be able to do so later, after their formal schooling ends.

3.3.7.5 Interview Five

Teacher Five (T5) has a university degree in English and Hungarian. She has been teaching English for over 20 years. Most of her experience has been accumulated at the secondary level. Since graduating, she has attended a number of further training courses, among them a course in mentoring in Hungary, but she is not working as a

mentor at present. She started an MEd course in mentoring in Manchester as well. Since she feels she does not get support of any sort from her school to continue, and she cannot see any benefit from it when it is completed, she has recently decided to give up.

T5 is in an exceptional situation, working for the only school of the five involved with this study that has recently introduced the teaching of study techniques ('tanulás módszertan') into the school curriculum. Prior to the introduction of the 30-hour, general study techniques course in the curricula of 7th and 9th graders, teachers of the school had been approached to attend a fast-track course, which aimed at preparing them for running the study techniques classes.

Besides this new development, there were other inspirations for T5 to enquire about her students' learning. Part of the requirements for the MEd course was to conduct a small-scale survey in order to find out about her students' learning habits. But even before that, she had regularly conducted whole class interviews with the students fresh from the primary school, to discover how they approach the task of learning in general, and English, in particular.

Based on the information thus gained, she regularly reviews learning methods with her junior students, but occasionally, should the need arise, with senior students, as well. Before the organised instruction in study techniques was introduced in her school, she had relied partly on learner training ideas provided in the (British) coursebooks she used, and concentrated a lot on methods of memorising vocabulary.

As regards the prerequisites of effective L2 learning, T5 is of the view that motivation is the most important of all. With highly motivated students, good results can be achieved, even in classes with a restricted timetable (3 hours/week). But the importance of external variables, such as good physical conditions in the school and a reasonable timetable (more than 3 classes/week) are also emphasised.

T5 thinks that it is rather difficult for the teacher to interpret and apply the information gained about the factors that motivate students to learn English, but demotivated students can be handled to an extent by the teacher incorporating the teaching of the culture of the L2 into the syllabus. Besides motivation, a significant learner variable for T5 is learner autonomy, that is, being independent of the teacher as a learner, and taking the initiative to enlarge one's knowledge on one's own resources. T5 recognises that with autonomous learners her role is different. Instead

of being the ultimate source of knowledge and learning ideas, the teacher should assume the role of a guide or helper.

Top learners in her view are intelligent learners, who have a sense of the foreign language, and are able to think in it. This involves the ability of abstract thinking, flexibility and tolerance of ambiguity. Being a top learner is not necessarily reflected in the course grades, which are based on the testing of a wide variety of skills and other aspects of the language. Poor learners are not flexible, are not able to think in abstract terms, cannot look beyond their mother tongue or the other FL that they study at a higher level than English, and are not tolerant of ambiguity.

About the unfavourable tendencies of adult Hungarians' foreign language competence she thinks that besides the highly motivated students, who will study the L2 in any circumstances, only those will learn the L2 properly and continue with it after their state education is over who have the opportunities and/or are forced to *use the language* in real situations.

3.4 Discussion

In this section we will examine what the findings presented in 3.3 suggest and to what extent the hypotheses and assumptions (section 1.2, p. 4) have been confirmed or disconfirmed by them.

3.4.1 Hypothesis 1

SILL-based research into the learner strategy use of students around the world seems to be unequivocal in suggesting the dominance of *medium or low overall strategy use*, and one or two high level uses when the six broad categories are examined (Oxford & Bury-Stock, 1995; Oxford, 1996). As anticipated on the basis of these findings, the data about my SILL subjects' global strategy use have confirmed the expectation put forward in Hypothesis 1, that Hungarian grammar school students' overall learner strategy use varies between low and medium, in terms of range as well as frequency.

We have seen that more than 50% of the SILL sample is below the medium level in their overall strategy use. The findings from SQ2 reveal similar patterns.

Concerning the frequency of strategy use, more than 60% of the sample qualified as medium or low in their strategy choice. The figure for low or medium level of use concerning the range of reported strategies is nearly 80%.

When subjects' mean values for the *six strategy groups* are regarded, the picture is more varied, though not radically different from the one depicting overall tendencies. The majority of the SILL sample is shown to exhibit low levels of strategy use in two (memory, affective) and medium levels in four groups (cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, social). High levels of use in broad strategy groups are only typical of over 30% of the sample in one category (compensation), and of around 30% of the respondents in two categories (metacognitive and social).

Although SQ2 data allowed different calculations and produced different mean values, further, strategy group mean values by respondent could not be calculated, the trends are similar to those with the SILL. Put another way, the dominance of low strategy use has been found for affective and memory strategies, whereas medium or high uses have been exhibited with cognitive and metacognitive ones. As regards compensation and social strategies, the mean values for the range are low, whereas those for the frequency are high. This finding may seem contradictory, but only in the first instance. For a better understanding of the trends behind the figures, one needs to have a look at the number of individual strategy items subsumed under Oxford's broad categories. This ranges from 6 (compensation, affective, social) through 9 (memory, metacognitive) to 14 (cognitive). (See Appendices A1 or A2.) This explains why a high frequency of compensation and social strategies in the SQ2 data is accompanied with low figures for the range. As the range of strategies is not measured by the SILL, a similar trend could not have been detected. Seen in this light, strategy uses in terms of low, medium and high levels as revealed by the two instruments are really similar.

In sum, the numbers from both the different sources provide substantial support for the hypothesis that the subjects under study exhibit low to medium strategy choice. As the phenomena under study in Hypotheses 1 and 2 strongly interrelate, the possible explanations lying behind the patterns depicted above will be discussed further under Hypothesis 2.

3.4.2 Hypothesis 2

In Hypothesis 2 the assumption is put forward that while the cognitive and metacognitive aspects of learning are attended to on a satisfactory level, the social and affective sides are not. This claim draws on the postulation - based partly on the literature (cf. Oxford, 1990, Wenden, 1991, Drozdziel-Szelest, 1997, Oxford, 1999, online) and in part on my personal experience - that both teachers and students regard any kind of learning, foreign language learning included, as primarily a cognitive and metacognitive exercise. This requires above all the cognitive and metacognitive potential of the learner to be developed, ignoring the fact that learning is very much a social activity, and affect might have a great impact on hindering or enhancing learning outcomes.

When we examine the relevant data from the SILL and SQ2, it is clear that Hypothesis 2 is only partly confirmed. As for the cognitive and metacognitive domain, findings support the hypothesis. As regards catering for the affective dimensions involved with learning as reflected in the reported use of affective strategies, the hypothesis seems also to be true. With social strategy use, however, patterns are more complex.

We have seen that in both samples lowest mean values of all have been found with *affective* strategies (Appendices I, J). Means calculated for individual SILL items show that with the exception of items 39 (*I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English*) and 40 (*I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake*), all the affective strategies have means around 1 and 2. This finding is not at all unexpected, since the few studies that investigated the *frequency of affective strategies* found very low values indeed. About one L2 learner in every twenty reported using them (cf. Oxford, 1990, Chamot et alia, 1987). Still it is puzzling, and is difficult to decide what is behind it. Does it suggest that these strategies are virtually never employed, that is, students hardly ever try to do anything to control their nervousness, tension, unpleasant feelings, anxiety? Or does this rather suggest that subjects are not aware of their own ways of handling affect, or do not want to reveal their solutions to affective problems, regarding them as something to be personal enough to remain hidden?

As the analysis of neither the SILL data nor of subjects' responses to relevant items in SQ2 allow answering these queries, one implication is that other means of data gathering also need to be included when one strives to explore *why* respondents do or do not do things in terms of giving strategic answers to affective problems. The investigation of the data yielded by the observations on the tasks typical in these classes and the strategies instigated by teachers (sections 3.3.6.2, 3.3.6.3) clearly reveals that virtually no explicit attention is given to students' affect-related problems by the teachers, who encourage their learners to apply mainly cognitive means in their approach to learning, but never affective ones.

As regards *social strategies*, a rather complex picture has emerged. Unlike the group mean of affective strategies, that of social strategies in the SILL is not very low (3.12). Some social strategies are frequently used, particularly *asking questions for clarification and verification* (item 45), while *co-operating with others* (item 47) has a low mean of 2.43. At the same time, besides the frequent use of *asking questions for clarification and verification*, SQ2 subjects reported both *co-operating with peers* and *co-operating with proficient users of the language* as frequently employed strategies. Although the mean value of the range of social strategies reported by SQ2 subjects is among the lowest, this trend, as discussed under Hypothesis 1, is most likely due to the low number of existing social strategies.

Seeking to explain why certain social strategies are not equally frequently used by respondents in both groups (SILL and SQ2), one is inclined to think that practising English with peers outside the classroom (item 47) is not normally done by the SILL subjects for some reason, or they did not take that into consideration when completing the SILL. Whichever way, *why* SILL subjects do not employ or do not report employing this social strategy - which is generally regarded as imperative for language learners (cf. O'Malley et alia, 1985a; Reid, 1987; Oxford, 1990) - needs to be investigated further by the application of other research tools.

Yet, an explanation suggesting itself may be that the subjects do not regard co-operation with their classmates - a strategy that, we saw, was constantly observable during the classes - as a strategy. This is probably because this co-operation normally takes place during activities carried out individually, or during frontal teaching, when they are not expected, though tolerated to co-operate, by their teachers. Real co-operation, within the framework of group work, which they could regard as the 'official' forum for *co-operating with others* was typical in less than

5% of all the time of classes. Although the situation regarding co-operative work in class is not different in the case of the SQ2 subjects either, a lot of their responses reveal that they employ the strategy of *co-operating with their peers*, but mainly outside the classroom. The contradiction in the data of the two groups related to the same strategy may stem from the differences in the way the two instruments aim to elicit the use of the particular strategy.

The dominance of *asking questions*, and within this, asking first of all the teacher, over any other social approach to solving learning problems is indisputable in the responses to SQ2 questions, as well. This can be interpreted as a sign of a strong tendency to rely on authority, irrespective of the task or the context in relation to which the strategy is employed.

Going back to the first claim in this hypothesis, which is that the *cognitive and metacognitive aspects of learning* are more adequately attended to, the data seem to substantiate this. If we add the strategies subsumed within the memory strategies' group in Oxford's system to the arsenal of tackling the *cognitive demands of learning*, this hypothesis is confirmed further. Subjects exhibit a relatively large repertoire of ideas about how to solve the problems cognitive in nature, and prove to be quite resourceful in the use of metacognitive strategies, as well.

The examination of the SILL item means reveals that except for one of the most basic practice strategies (item 10, *I say or write new English words several times*), all the cognitive strategies with relatively high means (items 18, 21, 22) are the ones that teachers suggest employing. SQ2 uncovered the frequent use of essentially the same cognitive strategies, and elicited some more, for example, various strategies of *using resources for receiving and sending messages*. SILL subjects could not indicate strategies in this set, since these are not included in the instrument they completed. This, however, is also something teachers often ask or encourage their students to do.

As for the *metacognitive aspects of L2 learning*, the indicators of both samples are good, particularly those suggesting the frequent use of various strategies for arranging/planning, and evaluating one's learning. This is demonstrated in the mean values of items 31, 32, and 33 of the SILL (*I notice my English mistakes and use this information to help me do better; I pay attention when someone is speaking English, I try to find out how to be a better learner of English*), and in the high numbers for the frequency of the relevant strategies in the SQ2 data.

Interestingly, the crucially important strategies of seeking practice opportunities, which subsume extracurricular activities to improve one's speaking, writing, listening and reading skills, have yielded less satisfactory results. Most subjects have reported engaging in activities to improve their listening, and, though less so, speaking skills. This is demonstrated in the high values of items 11 (*I try to talk like native English speakers*), 15 (*I watch English language TV shows or go to movies spoken in English*), and 32 (*I pay attention when someone is speaking English*).

The low values of items 16, 17 and 36 (*I read for pleasure in English; I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English; I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English*), however, suggest that seeking practice opportunities is employed sporadically and with a limited focus, without much sense of their importance (cf. Oxford, 1990). This finding, consonant with results of a study by Oxford and Nyikos (1989), could in part be explained by the fact that the present research context is a *foreign* as opposed to a *second language environment*, thus less rich in offering extra practice opportunities.

Furthermore, the limited interest in extra reading activities is in line with world wide trends suggesting a general decline in reading, irrespective of language (cf. Elley, 1992). Finding out what lies behind the low levels of engaging in extra writing activities requires further investigations. Nevertheless, this phenomenon, the lack of seeking sufficient writing practice opportunities, coupled with the kind of writing tasks set for in- and out-of class work (cf. section 3.3.6.2), might at least partly explain why Hungarians perform so poorly on writing tasks at international forums (cf. Fekete et alia, 1999a).

Whereas the frequent application of cognitive strategies seems to be strongly linked to classroom teaching, the relatively high use of metacognitive strategies can only be indirectly attributed to classroom-related situational factors. The frequent use of *self-evaluation* and the *use of one's own mistakes to improve learning* (item 31) could in part be a spin-off effect of the emphasis laid on accuracy and correction in most foreign language classrooms. Explanations for the frequent uses of some other metacognitive strategies must be sought for in other sources. This issue will be further explored under Hypothesis 3.

3.4.3 Hypothesis 3

As anticipated on the basis of discussions of strategy use patterns and research results widely reported in the literature (cf. Ehrman and Oxford, 1989; Ehrman and Oxford, 1995; Oxford and Nyikos, 1989; Oxford et alia, 1993; Phillips, 1991; Green and Oxford, 1995) it is primarily two variables, the proficiency level, and success with L2 learning, which are most likely to manifest themselves in higher levels of strategy use.

As the ANOVA results demonstrated, *significant relationships* were detected *between* means for *cognitive strategies and the declared proficiency level* of the subjects, and between *cognitive strategy* use and the *number of English classes per week*. In the latter case the relationship between the independent variable and the mean for *overall strategy use* also *approached significance* level. The length of studying English was also found to be in significant relationships with means for both cognitive and metacognitive strategies. As expected, students studying English in more classes a week, those having studied the language for a longer period of time, and those who attend classes at more advanced proficiency levels use significantly more of the strategies for which the significant variation was found.

As the number of classes a week and the length of the L2 studies are closely linked to supposed proficiency level, in that students having studied the L2 for a longer time and in increased classes are probably in groups at higher proficiency levels, the significant effects that were found are not at all surprising. The fact that it is again dominantly cognitive strategies and, though less so, metacognitive strategies the uses of which vary significantly with the rise of the level of proficiency, provides further support to the claims in Hypothesis 2.

In terms of explanations, one should remember that, we saw, classroom teaching is geared to a large extent towards language systems and exam preparation. Tasks dealing with grammar and vocabulary building, and exam-related ones prevail. Coupled with the dominance of cognitive strategies in teachers' suggestions concerning learning, these stimulate, above all, the application of cognitive strategies.

The significant variation in the use of *metacognitive strategies* by the *length of studies* might be attributable to the growing experience with L2 learning.

Increasing exposure to the language, language learning, and rising proficiency allowing involvement in more learning activities outside of the classroom, are probably important factors explaining this finding. More experienced learners are likely to develop with time the strategies essential for keeping up language learning above a certain level, such as overviewing/linking new to already known materials, organising one's learning, setting goals and evaluating one's progress, without which they may lose focus. Findings of the Polish study of secondary learners' strategy use (Drozdziel-Szelest, 1997) also support this assumption. In that study, the use of metacognitive strategies in relation to all tasks specified in the assessment instrument was found to rise with the level of proficiency. (Proficiency level was measured in school grades, and subjects in grades 2 and 3 were examined.)

The importance of developing metacognitive awareness and appropriate strategies to organise one's learning, besides frequent overall strategy use is clearly demonstrated in the ANOVA results, which show the *significant variation by success with language learning* in the use of the subjects' *cognitive, metacognitive and overall strategy use*. Learners allocated into the poor category by their teachers use significantly less cognitive and metacognitive strategies, besides having significantly lower overall strategy use values than their more successful peers. Successful learners, on the other hand, besides having a wider repertoire of cognitive answers to learning problems, are probably in the top category because they understand the need and know the ways of going beyond purely cognitive devices to facilitate their own learning process.

At first sight, the finding which shows that *more successful* learners use significantly *less affective strategies* may seem puzzling. We have seen that affective strategies are rarely, if at all, used, whereas their significance to effective learning cannot be overemphasised. The successful SILL subjects, however, have been found to use significantly *less affective strategies* than learners in the middle and poor categories. This finding is in line with results of a study by Green & Oxford (1995), where the only strategy used significantly more often by less successful learners was item 42, the affective *noticing tension and nervousness*. Supported by this finding from Green & Oxford, the result of the present study can be interpreted as suggesting that top students do not use affective strategies very frequently because they do not need them. They are probably self-confident enough with high self-esteem not to have to recourse to affective strategies. As controlling their affect and anxiety does

not consume much of their resources, those can be channelled towards more effective cognitive and metacognitive operations, which can be a further explanation for the significantly higher cognitive and metacognitive strategy use by more successful learners.

Unfortunately, with the other group of respondents (SQ2) under study, no significant relationships were found between overall strategy use and either proficiency or success with language learning. This, however, is probably due to the relatively small sample size. Another explanation might be that significant variation in the use of strategy groups could not be examined, since, we remember, strategy group mean values by respondent were not calculated.

No doubt, alternative ways and means of discovering significant relationships to proficiency level and success need to be found for the findings to be more generalisable, and to see if patterns similar to the ones shown in the SILL data suggest themselves when different data are available for analysis.

3.4.4 Hypothesis 4

With very few exceptions (cf. Tran, 1988, in Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992), the literature that examined the *gender-related patterns of strategy use* suggests that women report more overall strategy use, and more frequent use of broad strategy groups (cf. section 2.4.2.2 in Chapter 2 on the effect of gender on strategy use). In a large-scale SILL study, Green & Oxford (1995) found significant variation by gender on the individual item level. Fourteen items were significantly more frequently used by women, while in one item men reported a significantly higher level of use.

The results produced by this study, however, are far from unequivocal, are somewhat mixed, thus provoke various interpretations. Although females showed higher levels of overall strategy use, as well as of every broad category, significant variation by gender in the SILL data was only found with the use of memory strategies, where females showed a higher level of use than males. The mean value (2.61) for the use of this category by females was still at the bottom of the medium level (2.50-3.49) defined for the SILL data, thus only with caution should one conclude that a gender-related feature of foreign language learning is females' pronounced reliance on memory strategies.

No doubt, gender differences in the way males as a group and females as a group approach the task of learning an L2 exist (cf. Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Nyikos, 1990; Green & Oxford, 1995; Julkunen, 1999), with huge amounts of individual variation within the groups, though. With this sample size and the statistical tests applied to the data, however, no more can be said than that for some reason to be explored further, females rely more, or reveal more freely their reliance, on memory strategies. This conclusion in itself is not powerful enough to provoke instructional implications.

The *t* test applied to the SQ2 data, we have seen, confirmed expectations. That is to say, both in terms of frequency and range, female students were found to show significantly higher levels of use. Given the considerable difference in the findings produced by the two different instruments (SILL and SQ2) and the fact that it has not been typical in any other issue under study, one is inclined to think again that the discrepancies are to an extent due to the differences in the data elicitation of the two instruments.

An important difference is that far more writing, and probably more thinking is required of respondents completing SQ2 than the SILL. Answers to why females in the SQ2 sample report significantly higher levels of strategy use may need to be sought for in explanations offered by sociolinguistics. Studies in gender-related language use seem to agree that women prove to be more co-operative, more socially sensitive, and - most important of all in this case - more willing to disclose themselves than men.

As regards expectations of the school, female school students in the cultures where the issue was explored are normally expected to behave well. It can be assumed that our school context is in line with this. While male students are more freely tolerated to be undisciplined, female students are less so. They are rather expected to behave well, to remain silent, and to conform to rules (Lakoff, 1975; Thorne et alia, 1983; Bennett et alia, 1993). These differences in teachers' and society's expectations towards girls and boys in education result in different socialisation patterns of the two sexes (Nyikos, 1990).

The apparent willingness of female subjects to satisfy school requirements, to please others' wishes and to disclose themselves, and the equally apparent reluctance of the males to do so might, at least partly, be attributed to the social factors brought to light by sociolinguistic research. Independently of each other, the two teachers in

charge of having the SQ2 completed by their students confirmed the existence of these phenomena, in expressing their concerns about the quality of the data produced by the boys. They based their concerns on seeing the male students' reluctance to complete the questionnaire, as opposed to the female respondents' acceptance of it as an ordinary school requirement.

In sum, on the basis of my data, significantly more cannot be added to what has been found about gender-specific strategy use already. It is clear, however, that an item-by-item analysis of the SILL data, on the one hand, and the application of assessment techniques more welcome by both sexes, on the other, would be needed to gain quantitatively and qualitatively more valuable data on the gender-related aspects of learner strategy use to provoke instructional implications.

3.4.5 Hypothesis 5

It is stated in Hypothesis 5 that the majority of the subjects are expected to fall into the category of visually-oriented learners, whereas the observation of classes is expected to reveal a dominance in the perceptual style of teaching to cater to auditory learners. According to expectations which draw solely on American data (Kinsella, 1995), about 80-90% of the class time is supposed to appeal to the auditory channel. Further, it is hypothesised that the discrepancy between the students' sensory preferences and the sensory appeal of teaching may cause unfavourable learning outcomes.

The relevant findings (presented in sections 3.3.5 and 3.3.6.1), however, are mixed. The nearly 67% of all the students with a visual orientation supports the expectations. The dominance of the auditory appeal in foreign language instruction is also unequivocal, but the ratio is different from what was expected. It is only about 40% of the class time that exclusively favours auditory learners, and another 32% was found to be suitable to both the visual and the auditory learner.

Not surprisingly with this age group, haptic learners make only 12% of the students in this sample. Yet, the very low percentage of the class time favouring this modality strength (3%) is way below what would be desirable for teaching to properly acknowledge the presence of the haptic sensory preference.

On the basis of the data gathered for the present research it is impossible to support the assumption that learning difficulties apparent in course grades and the unfavourable grading of some students by their teachers are at least to some extent attributable to learning and teaching style mismatches. However, the data which show the distribution of perceptual preferences among top and poor learners (see Appendix K) are notable. The distribution of modality strengths among top learners (n=45) is similar to what we find in the whole sample. That is, the majority of top learners are visually oriented, while there are some auditory and haptic ones, as well. Among the poor learners (n=14) we find 6 visual, 3 auditory and 5 haptic ones. This means that more than a third of the poor learners are haptic. When we add the data showing that 40% of the haptic students have been ranked as poor by their teachers, some thoughts are provoked. At least it may be cautiously suggested that limited as they are in number at this age, haptic students, for whom sitting at a desk for very long can be detrimental, are at a disadvantage in the secondary school.

This is further supported by the anecdotal evidence provided by one of the teachers. On familiarising herself with the data about her students' perceptual preferences and finding out about who the haptic ones were, she said: "So this is why these students are so hopeless and immature".

Undoubtedly, more and different research would be needed to establish for sure the extent to which perceptual style matches or mismatches are responsible for learning outcomes. But it is definitely implied that the teacher should be aware of the diversity, on the one hand, and make students aware of their potential and limitations due to their dominant perceptual styles, on the other, so that the students can expand their styles and become able to select the right strategies to attack tasks not easily compatible with their styles.

3.4.6 Other findings

The following three subsections will discuss the findings which have been yielded by:

(1) *the observations* (results in sections 3.3.6.2, 3.3.6.3);

- (2) *students' responses to the question inquiring about their motives to learn English* (see cover questionnaires, questions 9, 11, Appendices B1, B2, results in section 3.3.4); and
- (3) the *teacher interviews* (results in section 3.3.7).

These findings will be analysed in the light of the assumptions that learner strategy use reflects the style of teaching (section 3.4.6.1) and the motivational orientations of the respondents (3.4.6.2); further, that learning issues are not satisfactorily dealt with by the classroom teachers for a variety of reasons (3.4.6.3).

3.4.6.1 Style of teaching

As anticipated prior to the observations carried out by the researcher, the observations revealed a kind of teaching which focuses on language systems (cf. Scrivener, 1994) at the expense of skills, and is geared towards exam preparation. This is consonant with findings presented in the classroom observation report in Nikolov (1999a).

As highlighted in the section where the tasks teachers set for in and out-of-class work are presented (3.3.6.2), in most of the observed classes grammar practice in various forms take up the majority of the time, carried out in teacher-dominated, frontal teaching. Skills development tasks, although numerous in type and number, are subordinated in time mainly to practising grammar. Most speaking skills development occurs in teacher-led discussions, where few students have the chance to contribute. Genuinely communicative oral tasks are only observable in classes where the students prepare for the intermediate level, oral state exam. In these classes picture descriptions, discussions and role plays take place. Groupwork that provides genuine communicative practice is rare.

Unlike in the research context of Nikolov (1999a), where focus was on disadvantaged secondary classrooms, teachers in the classes under study here provide a lot of listening tasks, all from the coursebooks they currently used, such as information transfer and gap-filling exercises, comprehension checking questions, true/false statements, and sequencing activities. Proper reading skills development tasks also take place. As regards writing, creative writing skills are not developed by in-class tasks, they are, though, by some homework assignments. Letter and composition writing is assigned mainly in classes preparing for the state language

exam. On lower proficiency levels, grammar and vocabulary practice or translation exercises dominate. Activities involving movement are hardly ever observed.

Concerning materials, there is a reliance on the course materials, with a few exceptions British publications, built on a communicative syllabus. Similarly to the classes reported in Nikolov (1999a), with the overabundance of traditional approaches to utilising the materials, the communicative potential of the materials is often far from fully exploited. Extra materials are not extensively used, only exam preparation and practice materials, such as discrete-point multiple choice tests, and texts for practising translations and reading comprehension. These clearly reflect the washback effect that the state language exam has on classroom teaching in secondary grammar schools. Students exposed to such teaching can be assumed to develop advanced structure and vocabulary manipulating and good reading skills, moderate speaking and listening skills, and it is no wonder that they perform poorly in writing (cf. Fekete et alia, 1999a).

The strategies that teachers, mainly implicitly, instigate their students to use, which are analysing, reasoning, translating, recognising and using formulas and patterns (cf. section 3.3.6.3), are in complete harmony with the focus of teaching, inasmuch that they also target at manipulating the language. Clearly, the socio-cultural context of the classroom mediates the strategic behaviour reflected in the findings on strategy use. Students are socialised to rely extensively on cognitive answers to the challenges posed by the task of FL learning.

3.4.6.2 Motivation

It was emphasised that instead of uncovering significant relationships between the motivational patterns and the strategy choice of the subjects under study, the objective was to outline a global picture about the respondents' major drives to learn the English language. This is meant to provide background information when peculiarities of strategy choice are accounted for.

According to the data (section 3.3.4), the subjects of the study are motivated to learn English more than anything else by the recognition that the mastery of this language is indispensable, and will potentially bring along various benefits. That is, they regard the knowledge of this language as instrumental in fulfilling their studies, career, or entertainment-related needs. This is clearly shown in the scores allocated

to motives expressing the subjects' awareness of the importance of English as an international/world language and the understanding that one can hardly do without it in any walk of life. The motives in *cluster 1* (Table 25) suggest the primacy of *instrumental* orientations.

Though only third in importance, but very close to cluster 2, further, strongly related to instrumental motives are those in *cluster 3*, which reveal *extrinsically* motivated English language learning. The reasons subsumed within this cluster reflect, first, the respondents' motivation to meet institutional requirements (*compulsory to study*), and second, working towards external rewards (*state language exam, scores at entrance exam, Matura*). Having seen that teaching at more advanced classes is concerned primarily with preparing students for the state language exam, one is not surprised to see the few scores allocated to learning English as a compulsory Matura subject, especially when compared to the scores of learning English in order to pass the state language exam or gain extra scores for university and college entrances. This reflects upon the relatively low prestige the Matura in foreign languages bears, compared to the prestige attached to the state language exam (cf. Major et alia, 1999). Also, it reflects the practical fact that students who pass it at the intermediate level in a foreign language get exemption from the Matura, what is more, from attending classes of the particular language. The summary of state language exam results in Appendix K demonstrates that with the exception of a few students, they either have already tried or will try to pass the state language exam. English language learning geared towards external rewards in this cluster probably has overlaps with instrumental components. For example, a successful state language exam and the scores it means are clearly external rewards, but may also be regarded as instrumental in helping the respondents fulfil their studies- and job-related goals.

The reasons grouped into *cluster 2* provide evidence for *intrinsic* motivation being slightly even heftier than extrinsic motivation for these respondents. Motives for learning English for the joy of participating in the activity, either because this language is found interesting, or beautiful or easy to learn are the third most significant of all the motives reported. Motives reflecting what Dörnyei (1994:275) calls a 'knowledge orientation' (*part of general knowledge*) and working towards the internal reward of *boosting one's self-esteem* have also been grouped into this cluster. Reasons reflecting a positive attitude towards the language, its speakers and

the culture in which it is spoken, and those showing a ‘friendship orientation’ (Dörnyei, 1994:275) (*wish to communicate, make friends abroad*) have been labelled *integrative* orientations.

Clearly, a wide variety of reasons exist, confirming that FL learning motivation is a multifaceted amalgam of all sorts of motives and orientations. The data attest to the side by side existence of instrumental, intrinsic/extrinsic as well as integrative orientations. All these are shown to work in tandem, supplementing, rather than excluding one another. Still, trends emerge, which indicate the indisputable prevalence of instrumental orientations, followed by intrinsically/extrinsically motivated FL learning, and integrative orientations having by far the smallest share. Even when the obviously overlapping intrinsic and integrative clusters are merged, they are only second to instrumental motivation in importance.

These results are not at all contrary to expectations. All the findings of research conducted with adult or secondary learners in Hungarian contexts reveal the primacy of instrumental orientations (cf. Dörnyei; 1990, Nikolov, 1999a) or instrumental and knowledge orientations strongly clustered together (cf. Clément et alia, 1994). These clearly reflect the status of English as not just one foreign language, but one with an international standing, with the pragmatic and utilitarian gains accruing from its mastery outweighing internal and external rewards, let alone integrative orientations. Interestingly, the English media orientation, which Clément et alia (1994) identified as a distinct one among Budapest secondary learners, did not appear as a very important motive with the subjects of this study.

Though the primacy of integrative orientations over instrumental ones in FL learning contexts has for long been questioned, with the effectiveness of instrumental motivation acknowledged at the same time, research seems to show that instrumental motivation is probably only sufficient to meet limited FL learning goals. Dörnyei (1990) found instrumental motivation to be adequate to take foreign language students to an intermediate level but not to go further or to maintain the attained level. He concludes that integrative motivation may also be important for those who aim at more than a minimal working knowledge of English.

As for the extrinsic/intrinsic dimension, the data reveal that both extrinsically and intrinsically motivated FL learning is in evidence, the latter even slightly prevailing over the former. Traditionally regarded as undermining intrinsic

motivation, extrinsic motivation used to be seen as undesirable. Some studies even pointed out that students' natural intrinsic interest in learning activities is killed if they have to do them in order to meet external requirements (cf. Dörnyei, 1994:276). More recent research, however, suggests that extrinsic and intrinsic rewards can be combined and lead to intrinsic motivation (Ramage, 1990). The data in the present study provides further support for the sustainability of intrinsic motivation in circumstances where one would expect the host of institutional/external constraints to promote extrinsic motivation.

Finally, about the meagre importance attached to integrative orientations in the sample. In the light of Nikolov's findings (1999c) among Hungarian children aged 6-14 years, this is not a major surprise. In her study the emergence then strengthening of instrumental and knowledge orientations around puberty was not accompanied by any rise of integrative motives. The present data suggest that the increase of the importance of instrumental motives continues with adolescents, who realise the pragmatic value of English. Integrative orientations reflecting positive attitudes towards native speakers and the target culture, however, do not emerge on such a scale. This is slightly perplexing, given that one would expect more positive attitudes towards the cultures that give the world most pop music. In our country, however, English language learning does not seem to be motivated by desires to integrate with the culture to the extent as by the wish to master English for pragmatic reasons and internal/external rewards. This finding would not be considerably modified even if the reasons of learning English for pop music and TV viewing were removed from the cluster of instrumental motives.

In the light of the fact that the direct link between motivation and the frequency and type of learner strategy use, with it the influence of motivation on learning efficiency has been substantiated by a lot of research (cf. 2.4.1.2, Oxford & Shearin, 1994), the understanding of what motivates students to learn is essential. The snapshot of the respondents' main reasons to learn English hopefully provides a basis for the further exploration of the motivation issue with instructional implications.

3.4.6.3 Teachers' awareness of learning

It was assumed that, for reasons beyond them, most teachers are not fully aware of how their learners learn, what is the impact of a wide variety of factors on learning outcomes, and that the style of teaching has a direct effect on strategy use. Another assumption was that teachers cannot address learning questions in their everyday classroom work for several reasons. A most significant one is that the curricular and institutional requirements compel teachers to focus on purveying content rather than methods of learning. Another reason may be that teachers lack the methodological preparation necessary for this.

The interviews, which were meant to support these assumptions, suggest that though teachers have a clear understanding and opinions of the ways their students learn, these draw on experience and intuition, not on the application of an informed assessment procedure. Teachers think that the majority of their students have a limited repertoire of solutions to learning problems, with the mechanical rote memorisation technique enjoying a most favoured status. This view agrees completely with Balogh's (1995). The overwhelming application of this strategy is attributed by the interviewees to the style of teaching prevalent in primary schools, where the forming of this strategy was inspired, while no alternatives were taught or suggested. Further, in the background of the prevalence of this strategy is testing practices at both the primary and the secondary level, which emphasise facts instead of application or the critical analysis of facts, and the oversized amount of the material in all subjects at the secondary school, which leaves neither time nor energy for the development and application of a variety of strategies.

The interviewees are of the opinion that it is mainly at the primary school where learning issues should be addressed and strategies developed. As this does not happen, however, teachers in the secondary school, particularly in the first years (that is, 7th or 9th form), need to deal with learning questions, even if learning habits formed in the primary school may prove difficult to alter at this stage. Therefore, nearly all of them deal with teaching L2 learner strategies to varying degrees. The majority of these strategies aim at vocabulary and structures, and to a lesser extent, pronunciation, reading, and dictionary use. All the strategies fall into the memory or cognitive categories. Although the teachers are aware of the importance of

metacognitive strategies, especially organising, planning and evaluating one's learning, they do not lay emphasis on introducing the conscious application of those to their students.

Teachers' understanding of the factors affecting L2 learning are reflected in what they consider essential for successful learning to take place. Language aptitude, hard work, and favourable conditions in and outside of the school, including a high enough number of contact hours a week are mentioned by all of them. The importance for the student to have a favourable attitude, to be motivated and interested to learn the L2 are also deemed important.

As instruction or training of these teachers in what L2 learning involves was limited, their views reflect that teaching experience enlarges teachers' intuitive knowledge of the process and factors of L2 learning. But teaching experience and reliance on one's own learning experience are not sufficient to make teachers realise that learning has more to it than cognition and metacognition, the importance of the huge individual learner differences, what those imply for the classroom teacher and their role in affecting these variables or in helping their students handle them.

As regards the assumption that teachers are not able to deal with learning in the classroom for curricular or institutional reasons, this is not entirely confirmed. As has been seen, teachers are able to and do tackle learning questions, to varying degrees. As there are not any curricular or institutional requirements to satisfy in this respect, the teachers who address these issues do so of their own accord, while relying completely on their own resources.

There are few curricular constraints that a teacher of English in a secondary grammar school needs to consider today. Only one foreign language is compulsory to sit for at the Matura exam. With the status of English, being the most popular L2, students usually strive to pass the state language exam in it, thus teachers of English prepare students mainly for the latter. Indeed, preparing learners for the state language exam has become a normal part of a secondary grammar school teacher's responsibilities, whereas it is not in the curriculum. With the introduction of the Matura reform this may change. Today, however, there is huge pressure on the schools to help their students pass the state language exam. Thus parents, students, the management, and even fellow teachers in a secondary grammar school expect teachers of English to focus mainly on the state language exam. This is important for

the schools because good state exam results help the school recruit the most able students (Dr Korponayné dr Nagy Ildikó, personal communication).

Clearly, curricular constraints do not keep teachers from addressing the entirety of L2 learning, but institutional ones do, in that preparation for the state language exam necessitates the prevalence of certain tasks. These tasks in turn result in the prevalence of the particular strategies that teachers and students find appropriate and necessary for carrying those tasks out.

Concerning the methodological preparation of teachers for the task of dealing with learning, this does not seem to be adequate. Though teachers think they could utilise some understanding of how L2 learning could be improved, it is still rare in Hungary that pre- or in-service teacher training curricula offer courses that concerned teachers could attend.

In sum, one can state that teachers know a lot about their students' learning as well as about the significance of a great deal of factors in affecting learning outcomes. Their understanding, however, is not based on informed inquiry but intuition, experience or self-directed investigation, therefore crucially important factors may be beyond the scope of their interest. Though the English curriculum for secondary grammar schools does not hinder teachers' addressing L2 learning issues, institutional constraints do. Teachers who want to help their students to tackle learning find difficulty relying on information provided in their training, thus have to recourse to their own resources.

Chapter 4

Summary and Conclusions

Chapter 4 starts with a summary of all the results that the research has yielded. This will be followed by a look at what the results imply for the foreign language classroom and teacher training, both pre- and in-service. Section 4.3 presents recommendations for further research. Finally the conclusions from the whole study will be drawn.

4.1 Summary of results

The research into the FL learner strategies of Hungarian secondary grammar school learners and into the factors that affect their strategy choice has been revealing. It has highlighted typical patterns of strategy choice among various groups of the sample and has refined my understanding of the reasons behind these patterns. The insights into the strategy-related aspect of L2 learning have contributed a great deal to my understanding of the state of foreign language learning and teaching in present day Hungary. Learner strategy research has investigated in a wide variety of contexts the role that L2 learner strategies play in affecting learning, either negatively or positively. The present research has generated some insights into the relationship between strategy use and L2 learning in a foreign language learning context, at the secondary school level of Hungarian state education.

A sample of learners (n=125) and their English teachers have been included in the present, cross-sectional research. The effect of a number of variables - proficiency, success with language learning, gender, perceptual learning preferences, motivation, and the style of teaching that the learners under study are exposed to - has been investigated. Regarding these facts, one can state that the research has yielded results which allow cautious generalisations in this context. That is, the patterns of strategy use as well as the reasons behind them, as disclosed by this study, can be assumed to be typical among other groups of 16-17-year old secondary grammar school students in Hungary. Therefore, the findings have pedagogical implications of a wider concern.

As regards strategy use, it has been found that, as anticipated on the basis of the literature, in terms of both frequency and range, *medium and low levels* are typical. This refers to *overall strategy use* as well as to the majority of the *six broad strategy groups* in Oxford's taxonomy (Oxford, 1990, section 2.3.2), which was used as a frame of reference for the identification of the strategies reported by the respondents.

Although not all the individual strategies that research has identified and are subsumed within Oxford's scheme are equally important or applicable in all contexts by all learners, research has convincingly shown that all the strategy groups have got their significant roles to play in L2 learning. High levels of strategy use, overall or in broad categories, then, is supposed to reflect effective learning. Among the subjects of this study, however, *high level of strategy use is not typical*. With the exception of some cognitive, compensation, metacognitive and social strategies, medium or low levels are reported by the vast majority of the respondents. This suggests that the *repertoire of strategies* these learners employ in order to facilitate or improve the whole or various aspects of their learning is rather *limited*. Being very much in line with findings of other research, thus expected, these results are not a surprise. Still, one puzzle is what the reasons are in this particular context.

Several explanations suggest themselves. One is linked to the nature of the *instruments selected for the study*. As was emphasised, such strategy assessment instruments had to be selected that yield a large amount of quantifiable data on the typical strategy use of a large number of subjects in a short time and at low cost (sections 2.5.2, 3.1). This is why self-reporting questionnaires were used. Like all the other instruments available for learner strategy research, however, this one also has limitations (cf. 2.5.5). One is that respondents may report using strategies they *think* they use, or think that the *researcher wants to see* them reporting. Another is that respondents may use a lot of *strategies* which *remain hidden* when assessed in this way. This may happen either because respondents do not think of them at the moment of filling in the questionnaire, or become tired of reading all the items and writing, or a questionnaire such as the SILL does not include all the strategies they use. In any case, the picture gained about the strategy use may be incomplete, provoking false conclusions.

Another probable explanation is that these students, and maybe Hungarian secondary grammar school students in general, are not aware of the means of making

their L2 learning more effective or easier. They simply do not know of, thus do not employ, enough strategies. Though, as the results clearly demonstrated (sections 3.3.1, 3.3.2), they do employ certain cognitive, compensation, metacognitive and social strategies relatively frequently, they do not master a large enough repertoire in any broad category. This refers even to the group of cognitive and metacognitive strategies in which a lot of strategies exist, and which, as was expected and seen, are really more frequently used.

Clearly, if we associate the knowledge of approaching the L2 learning task with the frequency and range of strategy use, the learners under study present themselves as being in need of help, in the form of some explicit instruction in learning. Irrespective of proficiency, success, gender or perceptual preferences, the majority of the respondents operate in the realm of L2 learning with a restricted range of means that could make it a better experience for them.

By investigating the *relationship between gains in proficiency and success, and relatively higher levels of strategy use*, this research has produced another finding that needs commenting on. It has confirmed results yielded by other studies conducted in other contexts, namely that learners more advanced in proficiency and more successful in their L2 learning demonstrate higher levels of overall strategy use, as well as higher levels of broad strategy categories. Seeking to explain why more proficient and more successful L2 learners in this study, the majority of whom still exhibit medium or low levels of strategy use, demonstrate higher levels in two broad categories, cognitive and metacognitive, we arrive at several conclusions. One confirms the pattern referred to above and shown in the literature, too, that high levels of strategy use and bettered achievement are strongly related. Besides, in my interpretation, this finding reflects the *direct effect of L2 teaching practices on learners' strategy use*, and is also a *reflection of the view of learning* widely held in the Hungarian educational context. Though the teachers in this study intuitively know and express that both learning and the learner are highly complex 'phenomena', for classroom purposes they seem to handle learning as something that comprises essentially cognition and metacognition, and the learner as primarily "a cognitive and metacognitive machine" (Oxford, 1999, online).

A somewhat restricted interpretation of learning appears in teachers' views disclosed by the interviews, and in the way they approach the task of helping their students master the L2, as experienced during the classes I observed. As was seen

(section 3.3.6.3), the vast majority of their explicit or implicit suggestions as to how to learn inspire the use of cognitive strategies. Although they are of the view that the strategy of mechanical repetition prevails among their students, which they think is not adequate, apart from some cognitive and compensation strategies, they do not really suggest alternatives.

While there is no overemphasising the importance in L2 learning of cognition and metacognition, more recent models of L2 learning (cf. 2.2.2.1; 2.2.2.2) highlight the interrelationships between learning outcomes, learner strategies, and, among others, social and affective factors. Still a view of L2 learning in its entire complexity, as the function of a wider web of interrelating factors than as the product of cognition and metacognition is not reflected in the data yielded by any instrument utilised in this study.

The area of language study that most of the teaching focuses on is structures, vocabulary and exam preparation (for relevant observations results, see 3.3.6.2). In complete harmony with this are the strategies that teachers inspire their students to apply, which are primarily strategies of vocabulary and structure manipulation, and mainly cognitive in nature. This results in the type of strategy use disclosed by the research, and reflects a widely-held view whereby language for teaching purposes is seen as consisting of language systems, that is, vocabulary and structures and pronunciation, while skills are to an extent subordinated to these in the classroom.

Besides these, I posit that the *exclusive attention to the cognitive and metacognitive sides of learning at the expense of the social and affective components* in the classroom may be *detrimental to learning* in the long run. This is meant to suggest that ignoring these significant components may lead to learners' failure to exploit opportunities for taking part in learning as a social activity and to affective problems left unhandled. This position is supported by the strategy-related results of the two strategy assessment instruments, SILL and SQ2. Both reveal that students have hardly any means of handling their affective problems, and their repertoire of social strategies is also insufficient. Given that the respondents are secondary grammar school students at the age of 16-17, with several years of L2 learning experience behind them, one could propose that affective problems do not prevail among them, thus strategies to handle affect are not in great demand. But this is unlikely to be the case. Both teachers' opinions and respondents' answers to questions in SQ2 reveal that students do have difficulties of affective origin. Lacking

in means of handling them out of their own resources or mediated by instruction, students are left on their own with their affective problems. Considering the fact that “the affective side of the learner is probably one of the very biggest influences on language learning success or failure” (Oxford,1990:140), the ability to gain control over emotions or attitudes is essential for the learner to acquire. The application of affective strategies can help learners gain the necessary control. This is certainly not to suggest that these strategies can help tackle deep psychological problems, but are “useful for learners with ordinary hang-ups and difficulties” (Oxford, 1990:143), thus the use of affective strategies should be built into regular classroom instruction.

As regards social strategies, the indicators - when looked at in isolation - are quite promising. This, however, is due to the high use of certain ones, particularly *asking for clarification and verification* and, to a lesser extent, *co-operating with others*. If one considers that most of *asking for clarification and verification* is manifested in students’ *asking the teacher* before applying any other means, the high use of this strategy reflects reliance on authority. In my view and experience, in a lot of classroom situations other resources could also be activated and other strategies applied, thus ways of gradually relying on oneself should be introduced. Though this strategy may be very useful in a number of learning situations, over-reliance on it is certainly not to be encouraged.

Co-operating with others came out as a strategy with quite high values in the SQ2 data, but not in the SILL data (sections 3.3.2, 3.3.1). As the SQ2 respondents indicated the frequent use of this strategy in outside-of-the-class situations, it confirms findings from the observations, namely that co-operative learning is not a regular part of these secondary grammar school classes.

As the interviews with the teachers show, they intuitively know a lot about the complexity of L2 learning, including the affective problems their students may have. Having received very little or no instruction in how to address these in the classroom, thus lacking in the tools of handling related problems, and above all, lacking in time to deal with such issues is reflected in the way they teach, which in turn is reflected in the way their students approach the task of learning. With this I do not mean to imply that providing teachers with instruction in learner training would automatically cause different practice. In lack of instruction, however, even the likelihood of different practice to gain ground is rather limited.

While most of my expectations (expressed in my hypotheses and assumptions) have been confirmed by the findings of this research, the investigation of the *gender-specific pattern* has produced mixed results. As opposed to expectations, female students involved with the SILL-based component of the research did not demonstrate significantly higher levels of strategy use than males. The female students completing SQ2, however, did show significantly higher levels - both in frequency and range - of use. These conflicting results may in part be due to the limitations of the instruments employed.

One of the limitations, pertaining mainly to strategy assessment instruments such as the SILL, was discussed above in this section. Another limitation, characteristic rather of an instrument like the SQ2 (which consists of open-ended questions), must have impinged on the data elicited from the male respondents. As was seen (section 3.3.3.1), they reported the use of significantly fewer strategies and less frequent strategy use than females. Yet, this does not necessarily suggest that they do use significantly fewer strategies, significantly less frequently. As the two questionnaires (SILL and SQ2) have yielded basically conflicting data in only the gender-specific aspect, further investigations utilising data gathering tools of a different nature are necessary. This finding warns, above anything else, about the significance of selecting the most appropriate instrument in every sense, so that an equal chance to disclose their strategy use should be guaranteed to every respondent, irrespective of gender or other variables.

Summarising the results on the *perceptual preferences of learners* and the *sensory preference appeal of teaching*, it can be said that the vast majority of the students are visually oriented. This is what the findings suggest and some of the respondents' teachers also assume, their assumption relies on experience, though. Most of the teaching, at the same time, caters to the competent auditory learner. One could argue at this point that due to the inevitable abundance of auditory elements in the instruction of any foreign language, there is nothing wrong with this. Indeed, the discrepancy is not as large as had been expected and put down in Hypothesis 5, and no substantial evidence for the negative effect of the mismatch between the perceptual style of the teaching and the student on learning outcomes was found. However, it is common knowledge in ELT that developing listening comprehension is normally a demanding task for teacher and learner alike, particularly in an FL context. Thus teachers should develop an awareness of the dominance of the visual

learning style with a view to helping students ‘stretch it’, so that they could be better prepared to operate within activities demanding on the auditory channel. As no significant relationships between strategy choice and perceptual preferences were found, more and different research is needed in this field. Possible directions for future research into this area will be outlined in section 4.3.

Finally, about the *patterns of motivation* uncovered by the research. As we saw (section 3.3.4), the dominance of instrumental orientations, followed by intrinsic and extrinsic motives have been found. Seen in the light of research results found in various Hungarian contexts (cf. Dörnyei, 1990; Clément et alia, 1994; Nikolov, 1999a, 1999c), the trends are not at all surprising. With the status of English as a most useful foreign language for Hungarians, instrumental motivation is probably effective in promoting the learning of this language. However, as research suggests (Dörnyei, 1990), it may not be adequate on its own beyond the intermediate level, therefore ways must be found, first, to foster other types of motivation, second, to capitalise on existing instrumental orientations (cf. Dörnyei, 1994). The Hungarian education system is grade, product and competition-oriented. This is truly reflected in the present data showing the significance of extrinsic reasons for learning English. Still, intrinsically motivated English language learning is also in evidence. Research shows that students who continue FL studies attribute more significance to intrinsic motives than to extrinsic ones (Ramage, 1990:208). Therefore emphasis should be given to the strengthening of existing intrinsic motives in a way that teachers help students better see the intrinsic rewards of FL learning, while providing the extrinsic rewards most students want at the same time. This agrees with one of my interviewees’ opinion, as well (see interview 5, section 3.2.7.5).

The pedagogical implications of the findings summarised above will be discussed in the following section.

4.2 Pedagogical implications

Employing learner strategies when one is engaged in the task of learning an L2 makes learning more effective, easier, and more fun (Oxford, 1990). Frequent use of foreign language learner strategies, in an orchestrated fashion and appropriate to the learning task, facilitates learning (Oxford, 1990; Chamot and Rubin, 1994; Oxford,

1999, online). In the light of the dearth of published research and the findings of the present study, it is reasonable to argue that one way of improving L2 learning outcomes at secondary schools is to introduce students to the ways and means of increasing their L2 learning efficiency by increasing their learner strategy use in an informed, instead of an ad-hoc manner (cf. section 2.6.6).

The process whereby this can be achieved, we remember, is called *learner strategy instruction* or *training*, or simply *learner training*. There have been a number of research efforts with learner strategy instruction recently. Though not all have been successful or conclusive (cf. section 2.6.2, Oxford, 1999, online), there have been far too many successful and effective attempts at teaching students learner strategies (cf. section 2.6.4) for one to remain sceptical about its efficacy.

As regards Hungarian state education, this research has shown that the majority of learners need instruction in approaching the task of learning. Learning an L2, even at the secondary level, where students can be expected to be experienced as L2 learners, is a task that demands conscious tackling by learner and teacher alike. Besides Dörnyei & Thurrell (1991) and Dörnyei (1995), other researchers experienced in the Hungarian school context recommend introducing strategy instruction into the classroom. Introducing the teaching of strategies appropriate to the tasks which are normally set by the school is recommended by Mónos (1999), Bukta (2000) and Elekes (2000), as well. Although their conclusions are based on research with foci different from those presented in Dörnyei (1995) or in this dissertation, moreover, the authors utilised totally different methods of data collection, they argue for the explicit teaching of certain strategies in Hungarian state education.

I argue that *a model of learner training*, which is fully integrated with regular language development, informed, explicit and relevant to the students' needs (cf. sections 2.6.6, 2.6.7) should become a regular part of L2 teaching at the various levels of the school system. It would serve students' immediate as well as long-term interests, and the long-term interests of all the other parties involved.

A learner training programme *aimed at increasing learning efficiency* should include the following steps: developing and broadening learners' understanding of learner strategies and the role of strategies in facilitating learning; raising learners' awareness about the ones they use; teaching learners to use and evaluate new ones; teaching learners to find the strategies that fit them best; teaching learners to apply

strategies in a concerted fashion and appropriate to the task; and finally, teaching them to transfer strategies to new tasks (cf. 2.6.7). Researchers in the field unanimously suggest pursuing a programme organised along similar lines (cf. Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1991; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994, Chamot & Rubin, 1994; Dörnyei, 1995). Strategic teaching has been validated by a number of successful experiments and research efforts, the teachability of strategies is not being questioned any more. As McDonough comments, based on an extensive review of the related literature: "... (there is) a firm basis for the claim that strategy-based instruction makes a measurable difference in both how students perform... and how *well* they perform..." (1999:13).

However, with this dauntingly long list of steps to include in a programme, the task of *implementing strategy-based instruction in the classroom* may seem insurmountable for most teachers. Indeed, though arguing for the introduction of learner training in the L2 classroom is what the findings of this research imply, further issues and implications emerge. For learner strategy instruction to happen, teachers' awareness of the importance of strategic learning and strategic teaching also needs to be raised. Learner training cannot be realised without the teachers fully understanding its importance and the issues involved, on the one hand, and the perception of their role in creating the framework for it, on the other. It follows that teachers need not only develop an understanding of the impact of their teaching on their students' learning, but also need to discover how learners learn and find out more about how strategy instruction can be incorporated into regular language instruction. This is a huge task for any teacher, but especially for the one who does not receive any training or methodological preparation for it. Clearly, teacher training needs to create a forum to address the theoretical issues of L2 learning and the classroom application of strategy-based instruction.

Though the implications apply to both pre- and in-service training, the preparation of teachers for the task of providing strategy training needs to be implemented in different ways, depending on the level of teacher training. The *pre-service level* is suitable for providing trainees with a firm theoretical grounding for understanding the issues in L2 learning and the pedagogical implications. This is probably happening to varying extents in most pre-service programmes today, in that the study of language learning theories, second language acquisition, and psycholinguistic disciplines tend to appear in teacher training curricula.

Applying the knowledge thus gained and gathering experience with it in language teaching, however, is rather problematic at the pre-service level. Not even in the practically-oriented classes can trainees try teaching learner strategies. It is not only because a course where this could be practised is not normally part of the curriculum. This is because the main concern of trainees at this level is familiarising themselves with basic principles and techniques of L2 teaching, not with teaching students learning strategies. Further, in educators' view, investing in the preparation of pre-service trainees for tasks to be implemented by them in the classroom in a not foreseeable future does not promise fast enough returns (Mónos, 1997). Therefore, the more appropriate level where the preparation of teachers for providing strategy instruction could occur seems to be the *in-service level*. Teachers with a certain amount of classroom experience can be assumed to have progressed beyond the level where their major concerns are to create the appropriate ways of teaching and establish themselves as teachers. Not worried about immediate, practical problems any more, experienced teachers are more likely to be open to issues of broader concerns and look towards the learner and his problems.

In order that practising teachers be able to handle the tasks posed by learner strategy instruction, they should have training relevant to their instructional contexts in several areas. First, they need a basic and firm theoretical understanding of the essentials of L2 learning and the role of strategies in this process. Second, they need to be trained in the ways of identifying their students' current learner strategies, that is, in the application of questionnaires, interviews, self-revelatory and self-observatory verbal reports, diaries, etc (cf. sections 2.5.2, 2.5.3, 2.5.4). Third, they need to be able to help their students reflect upon the strategies employed so that the students can decide if those are relevant to the tasks, and appropriate to their goals and learning styles. Fourth, teachers need to be trained in helping students develop new strategies as well as a concerted strategy use.

An in-service curriculum planned along the above guidelines has the potential of preparing teachers for the task of adequately handling learning, besides making teachers confident enough to do so. It is also this level of teacher training where candidates are more likely to perceive the dangers inherent in applying the learner training materials appearing in most modern coursebooks today, or as put by Sinclair & Ellis, "jump upon the learner training bandwagon without fully considering its implications" (1992:223). That is to say, the evaluation of published learner training

materials with a view to adapting and applying them in the classroom is also to form part of in-service teacher training curricula.

As regards the theoretical grounding, understanding learning and learner strategies in basic terms is essential for teachers at any level. However, when learner training is the goal, it is the practicalities rather than the conceptualisation of strategies or the exploration of the theoretical foundations that should enjoy priority (cf. Cohen, 1998, Oxford, 1999, online).

As emphasised, learners need to be helped to develop strategies that work well for them and fit their learning styles. Two further implications can be drawn from this. One is that classroom teaching should be as varied as possible so that the inevitable diversity of students' learning styles be accommodated. The other is that teachers should help learners discover their own learning styles. Without this, finding the activities and strategies that best suit their learning style is virtually impossible. Moreover, the awareness of one's learning style is the prerequisite for developing oneself into a better learner by 'stretching' one's styles, that is, develop confidence in working in a variety of modes. The teacher training implications in my view speak for themselves. Without being properly prepared for the tasks outlined in the previous paragraphs, teachers cannot help their students turn into better learners. That is, besides learner strategies, the study of learning styles should also form part of pre- and in-service teacher training programmes.

4.3 Recommendations for future research

A number of directions for further research can be suggested, which derive partly from the findings and partly from the limitations of the present study.

Though some of the limitations of the utilised instruments were discussed in section 4.1, it is important to summarise them at this point. We have seen that inherent in retrospective methods, that is, in self-reporting *questionnaires* and learner strategy *interviews* (section 2.5.2) are several dangers. One is that responses may reflect in terms of strategy use what *respondents think* they do, instead of what they really do. Another problem is that respondents may give answers that they think the researcher wants them to give. A solution to the first problem is normally offered in the implementation of triangulation, which in this case means assessing the strategies

of the same respondents by the subsequent or parallel application of other methods. The second problem can be avoided if data gathering takes place in confidential circumstances, anonymity is guaranteed, and items included in the instrument are as neutral as possible.

Besides these problems typical of all retrospective methods, there are additional, SILL-specific problems that have shadowed this research. In principle, all the fifty SILL items are 'good' learner strategies, that is, are potentially effective. We saw that most learner strategies, however, are not inherently 'good' or 'bad'. Whether they qualify as good or bad will depend on the learners, tasks and contexts in relation to which they are employed. Still, respondents may employ some strategies that may be negative in a number of contexts. As such strategies are not included in the SILL, these will remain uncovered. (For example, the cognitive strategy of *using resources*, e.g.: the dictionary, is an ineffective strategy when applied to certain reading comprehension tasks.) Further, there may be yet other strategies that the respondents use but which will remain hidden, not being included in the SILL. Moreover, some strategies in the SILL cannot realistically be applied by students below a certain proficiency level, or in a *foreign (not second) language context*, or which are less widely-applied in *certain educational cultures* (e.g.: items 16, 17, 23, 35, 43, see Appendix A1).

Whichever of the above applies, the finding about a student's strategy use assessed by the application of solely the SILL may be false. The problems depicted above may lead to a picture in which the levels of strategy use are shown to be lower than in reality.

Seeking to avert the problems stemming from an exclusive reliance on the SILL, the SQ2 was developed and utilised for this study. Though designed with the specific problems of SILL and the tasks typical in the Hungarian context in mind, the SQ2 (section 3.2.2.1.2) may still leave some learner strategies uncovered that respondents generally use. It was pointed out when the gender-specific patterns revealed by the two different instruments were discussed that questionnaires with open-ended items are probably not favoured by male students, whereas they may be more welcome by females. This is certainly a limitation of the study stemming from SQ2.

Further, most, though far from all, SILL-based research reviewed in Oxford & Burry-Stock (1995) and Oxford (1996) included hundreds of respondents. Because

of the variety of statistical analyses that SILL data are usually subjected to, it is advantageous and desirable to include large numbers of respondents, in order that the statistical tests could be reliable. In my case, however, due to feasibility considerations (cf. 3.1), only a relatively small sample of 79 respondents were examined by the SILL. Finally, it must be pointed out that though retrospective methods are very useful in providing the researcher with a lot of quantifiable data on the general patterns of learner strategy use, they are not the appropriate means of uncovering *why* respondents use the particular learner strategies that they indicate, and why not others.

Therefore, a number of ways for the possible extension of the present study, on the one hand, and directions that future research in the Hungarian context could take, on the other, can be suggested. First, about the ways that the present research could be extended. It would be very important to confirm the reliability of the data gathered through the application of the SILL by replicating the research with (1) the same lot of 79 students, and (2) another, preferably larger, sample of secondary grammar school students of the same age. Replicating the research with the same sample, though there is a test/re-test problem involved here, would develop the present study into a longitudinal one. That would provide valuable insights into how learner strategy use changes over time with the changing of the interrelating factors that have an impact on it.

Moreover, extending the research to larger samples of students, either from secondary grammar or other school types, would allow creating a large enough data base which can be subjected to a number of statistical tests, for example, factor analysis. Factor analytic studies have the potential of uncovering the underlying factors that affect strategy use. A more in-depth understanding of the underlying factors that normally remain uncovered would have extremely useful implications for the foreign language classroom. A number of (non-Hungarian) SILL-based studies have utilised factor analysis. As Hungarian results could be compared to results produced in other cultural contexts, the culture specific aspects of strategy use, which is one of the most recently rising fields of learner strategy research, could also be included in the investigations.

A logical continuation of both the present research and SILL-based research in general could be to include: larger samples of secondary grammar school students from around the country; subjects from other types of secondary school; subjects

from other school types, such as primary/tertiary level and other age groups. Extending learner strategy research onto these groups would certainly be revealing about the state of affairs in foreign language education in Hungary.

This research has shown that data gained from the examination of overall strategy use or the use of broad categories may not be sufficient to discover where significant relationships between strategy use and the factors affecting it lie. Therefore, an analysis of the variation in the use of individual strategy items as the function of a variety of factors would be needed. This claim is supported by the fact that though it had been anticipated, this study did not find any significant effect of the perceptual preferences on strategy use. Consequently, examining significant relationships between the use of individual items and various factors, such as gender, intensity or type of motivation, proficiency level, and last but not least, perceptual preferences, would probably be revealing.

This research, as was seen, utilised SQ2 to compensate for the deficiencies specific to the SILL, and to bring to light other strategies (not included in the SILL) which the respondents may use. Interestingly, neither strategies which are potentially negative in nature, nor strategies which could not be identified or classified within Oxford's taxonomy have been revealed. Besides providing a means of triangulation in data gathering, an instrument such as the SQ2 in future research should be used to disclose clusters of strategies in the respondents' verbal reports, instead of individual strategies.

Besides the possible directions for future research outlined above, further directions can be recommended. Fully exploring Hungarian students' learner strategies, both in general and specific terms, is justified on the ground that the information is essential to provide the basis for learner training content. Learner training, as I argued in section 4.2, should become a regular part of classroom teaching in state education. For this to happen, future research needs to address the question of *developing a means of gathering data on the typical patterns of strategy use which is suited specifically to the Hungarian school context*. It would be desirable to create an instrument which covers a wide array of the general (not task-specific) strategies that Hungarian secondary school students potentially use. It should be a tool with wide applicability, fast and easy to administer, easy to score and interpret. As regards the format, a questionnaire like the SILL with responses offered in a Likert-type scale seems suitable for most likely respondents. In order

that it should not contain items alien in the Hungarian school context, the design of this instrument in terms of the items to include would best be built on the results of SILL-based research conducted with Hungarians, on the one hand, and on the findings produced by an open-ended strategy assessment instrument, on the other.

With an improved instrument developed along these lines and subjected to the necessary processes of validation, teachers could be given a tool whereby to gain information about the typical strategy use of their students. Such an instrument, written in Hungarian, would be suitable to assess learner strategies in all the foreign languages taught in Hungary. That is, it would be useable in FL teaching in general, not only in teaching English.

Research utilising this instrument by the classroom teacher could then be followed by the investigation of the particular strategies that individual students apply in relation to various learning tasks. This part of the teacher-conducted investigation requires the application of different methods, such as various forms of self-revelatory verbal reports, e.g.: think-aloud protocols or diaries, which potentially disclose if strategies appropriate to the task and the learner are used in a concerted fashion. The means outlined above would yield invaluable information for the planning of learner training content.

Concerning learning styles in general, and perceptual preferences, in particular, roughly the same applies. That is to say, classroom teachers should be provided with the appropriate tools of collecting information about the variety of learning style dimensions which have a more immediate relevance and implications for the classroom. Teachers equipped with these tools could easily assess whether their learners prefer perceiving input through the visual, auditory or haptic channel, or whether they prefer learning individually or in groups. Not only could they then adjust their teaching in an informed fashion to the learning styles of their learners, but could also help the students identify the activities and strategies that suit them best, and strengthen themselves in other styles, as well. The findings thus gained are also indispensable for the design of learner training content. Future researchers in the Hungarian context will definitely need to address these issues.

4.4 Conclusions

In spite of its three decades' past, learner strategy research is still a "fledgling field" (Cohen, 1998:47). Nevertheless, over the past thirty years, the great deal of research interest in the subject has contributed invaluable insights into what answers learners give to their learning problems, having refined our understanding of L2 learning and the role learner strategies play in it. Although uncertainties remain, so the number of areas for the future researcher to explore is still high, application of the findings uncovered thus far has become possible and a widespread practice. No doubt, the lack of a coherent theory about how exactly strategies work, how they are selected, applied or discarded in favour of others leaves areas open for further investigation (McDonough, 1999). The delicate link between strategy use and proficiency gains is yet another complex issue in need of further enquiry.

However, substantial evidence shows that the use of the appropriate strategies in ways appropriate to the task and the learner has a beneficial effect on learning. Further, the teaching of strategies when incorporated into the teacher's normal classroom instruction and involving teacher training can be effective and successful. The research into the learner strategies of 16-17-year old Hungarian secondary grammar school learners and into the factors that affect their strategy use has brought to light some significant findings. One is that rather low levels of strategy use are typical. This reflects inadequacies in the foreign language learning practices of the target population. This needs tackling at an institutional level. The other finding is that in a formal foreign language learning context like the one under study, the style of teaching, which comprises teaching methods, task types and course requirements, exerts a powerful influence on learner strategy use.

A first conclusion to draw from this is that an improved strategy use needs to be extended to large groups of learners, as strategic learning has the potential of making any learning, L2 learning included, more effective, more successful and more enjoyable. Enhancing L2 learning by the incorporation of strategy instruction into the normal course of classroom work is the responsibility of state education. One can see reassuring developments in the attempts at providing training in study methods in several schools. Besides being very different in approach from the kind

of learner strategy instruction that would be desirable, however, these initiatives are sporadic. The issue of addressing student learning should be elevated to the level of educational policy, it should pervade educational thinking, the whole curriculum.

Promoting strategic learning would be imperative in order to develop learners' strategic competence. Though foreign language teaching programmes in Hungary today have the developing of communicative competence as their declared goal, one of the components, strategic competence, is as yet a neglected one. The research has revealed a more traditional approach to the development of communicative competence, whereby grammatical competence is still emphasised over the other ones, thus over strategic competence as well.

A second conclusion to is that for strategic learning to become an integral part of students' L2 learning in state education, changes should be implemented at all levels of teacher training, too. Teachers with a clear understanding of the components of L2 learning, of the role that learner strategies play in it and of the variety of factors that affect learner strategies can realistically help learners improve their learning efficiency. Teachers who are prepared for this task in a principled fashion can show their students the ways of developing strategic thinking, thus giving strategic answers to learning problems, that is, help them discover the ways of selecting and applying the right strategies to particular learning situations.

The process of finding out about the learners' current strategies and working out the possible directions that strategy training could take further refines teachers' understanding of the process of L2 learning and the issues involved, and also of their own role in mediating strategic learning. This brings along teachers' professional development, which is a beneficial side-effect of learner training becoming a regular part of foreign language instruction.

An increased understanding of the learning process and experience with the practical application of strategy training in the classroom would deepen the knowledge about learner strategies, in general, and the role of strategies in our educational context, in particular. Experience with and evaluation of learner training could bring to light what those strategies are which are general in nature, and are more useful and of wider applicability in our school context. Teaching the transfer of these more useful and more generally applicable strategies to new tasks would benefit education on a larger scale, as the strategies transferred to other subjects can affect learning of other subjects positively.

Tasks, we have seen, exert a great influence on strategy choice, determining to a large extent what strategies students apply. Teachers in state education cannot really aim at adopting considerable changes to the tasks typical in the school system they operate in, even if they fully understand that some tasks may have a negative effect on the learners' strategy choice. The pressure exerted by the institutional and curricular requirements and constraints make it impossible for teachers to implement major changes in the tasks. However, they can show their students the ways of fulfilling the tasks in an informed manner, by selecting the tools appropriate to the given situation. This is the responsibility of teachers and of the educational system.

Learning outcome is the function of the interplay of a wide variety of factors. Learning is a highly complex phenomenon and a unique experience for the individual learner, thus learning problems demand solutions unique to the situation and the learner. Therefore the prerequisite of the effective operation of any educational system is the teacher who is prepared to provide her learners with the means of handling their own learning in ways appropriate and unique to themselves.

A very final conclusion is that the school should become a place that is populated by learners who know how to attack the task of learning effectively, for whom learning is a sensible and enjoyable activity. Such a school should be the ideal of any modern educational system. There may be better goals for education to achieve than such a school, but I cannot think of any. It is really high time we started the groundwork for establishing this ideal school.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A1

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

Version 7.0 (ESL/EFL)

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1. Never or almost never true of me.
2. Usually not true of me.
3. Somewhat true of me.
4. Usually true of me.
5. Always or almost always true of me.

Part A

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.
2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.
3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.
5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.
7. I physically act out new English words.
8. I review English lessons often.
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.

Part B

10. I say or write new English words several times.
11. I try to talk like native English speakers.
12. I practise the sounds of English.
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.
14. I start conversations in English.
15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.
16. I read for pleasure in English.
17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.
18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.
19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.
20. I try to find patterns in English.
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.
22. I try not to translate word-for-word.
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.

Part C

24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.
25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.
26. I make up new words if I don't know the right ones in English.
27. I read English without looking up every new word.
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.
29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Part D

30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.
31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.
35. I look for people I can talk to in English.
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.
37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.
38. I think about my progress in learning English.

Part E

39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.
42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.

Part F

45. If I don't understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.
46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
47. I practise English with other students.
48. I ask for help from English speakers.
49. I ask questions in English.
50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

APPENDIX A2
SILL - Hungarian version
(Tanulási stratégia kérdőív)

Az alábbiakban kijelentéseket találsz. Ezeket minden esetben arra vonatkoztatod, ahogy az ANGOL nyelvet tanulsz. Figyelmesen olvasd el a kijelentéseket, és próbálj meg őszintén és gondosan válaszolni. A külön lapra írva válaszaidat (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) mondd meg, mennyire *jellemzőek vagy igazak* Rád a kijelentések. A számok az alábbiakat jelentik:

1. Soha vagy szinte soha nem jellemző rám, (azaz *nagyon-nagyon ritkán*).
 2. Általában NEM jellemző rám, (azaz *50%-nál kevésbé*).
 3. Valamennyire jellemző rám, (azaz *kb. 50%-ban*).
 4. Általában jellemző rám, (azaz *50%-nál többször*).
 5. Mindig vagy szinte mindig jellemző rám, (azaz *szinte 100%-ban*).
- (Válaszaidat a külön lapra írd!)

Fontos tudnod, hogy itt **nincsenek „Jó” és „Rossz” válaszok**. Azt válaszold, amit *tényleg csinálsz*, és *ne azt*, amit szerinted csinálnod kellene, vagy amit szerinted mások csinálnak, vagy elvárnak Tőled. A kérdőív gyors, *gondos* kitöltése kb. 20-30 percbe telik.

'A' rész

1. Amikor új dolgokat tanulok angolul, megpróbálom valahogyan *kötni ahhoz, amit már tudok*.
2. Az új szavakat *mondatokba helyezve* tanulom, hogy jobban emlékezzek rájuk.
3. Összekötöm az új szavak *hangzását és képét vagy kinézetét*, hogy jobban emlékezzek rájuk.
4. Úgy tanulok új szavakat, hogy egy olyan *szituációnak a képét* alakítom ki az agyamban, amiben azt a szót használni lehetne.
5. *Rímelő versikékbe* rakva tanulom az új szavakat.
6. Az új szavakat *külön kártyákra* kiírva tanulom.
7. Az új szavak *jelentését fizikailag eljátszom* magamnak, úgy tanulom őket.
8. Gyakran *átismételem* az órai anyagot.
9. Úgy emlékszem vissza az új szavakra és kifejezésekre, hogy *pontosan felidézem azt a helyet, ahol* a könyvben, az iskolában a táblán vagy egy utcai feliraton *voltak*.

'B' rész

10. Néhányszor *hangosan kimondom vagy leírom* az új szavakat.
11. Megpróbálok úgy beszélni, mint az angol anyanyelvűek.
12. Gyakorolom az angol hangok *kiejtését*.
13. Sokféleképpen próbálom *használni* az általam ismert angol szavakat.
14. Szívesen kezdeményezek angol nyelven *társalgást*.
15. *Angol nyelvű TV programokat/moziban* angol nyelvű filmeket nézek.
16. Saját szórakoztatásomra *olvasok angol nyelven*.
17. *Angol nyelven írok* jegyzeteket, üzeneteket, leveleket.

18. Amikor angolul olvasok valamit, először gyorsan átfutok rajta, majd visszamegyek az elejére, és figyelmesen újra olvasom.
19. Tudatosan keresem az olyan *magyar szavakat, amelyek hasonlítanak* az új angol szavakhoz.
20. Megpróbálok *sémákat, rendszert felfedezni* az angol nyelvben.
21. Úgy találom ki egy új szó jelentését, hogy olyan részekre bontom le, amiket értek/ismerek.
22. Amikor angolról fordítok, megpróbálok *nem szó szerint fordítani*.
23. Rövid tartalmi összefoglalót készítek magamnak abból az információból, amit angolul olvasok vagy hallok.

'C' rész

24. Az ismeretlen szavak jelentését megpróbálok *kitalálni/ kikövetkeztetni*.
25. Amikor angolul beszélek és nem jut eszembe egy szó, *gesztikulálok*, azaz kézzel-lábbal próbálok elmagyarázni.
26. Ha nem jut eszembe egy szó, ami kellene beszéd közben, *kitalálok* helyette egy (saját gyártmányú) új szót.
27. Úgy olvasok angolul, hogy nem nézem meg minden egyes ismeretlen szónak a jelentését.
28. Amikor angolul beszélgetek valakivel, megpróbálok előre kitalálni, hogy mit fog a következőben mondani.
29. Ha nem jut eszembe egy szó, olyan szót vagy kifejezést használok helyette, ami közel ugyanazt jelenti.

'D' rész

30. Megpróbálok olyan sokféleképpen használni, amit angolul tudok, ahányféleképpen csak lehetőségem van rá.
31. Észreveszem, ha hibázok, és ezt arra használom, hogy tanuljak belőle, azaz, javítsam az angol tudásomat.
32. Tudatosan odafigyelek, ha valaki angolul beszél.
33. Megpróbálok megtalálni a módját, hogyan tanulhatnék hatékonyabban angolul.
34. Gondosan *előre tervezem az időbeosztásomat*, hogy legyen elég időm angolt tanulni.
35. *Keresem azokat az embereket*, akikkel angolul *beszélgethetek*.
36. *Keresem annak a lehetőségét*, hogy annyit *olvassak* angolul, amennyit csak lehet.
37. Világosan megfogalmazott *céljaim vannak* arra, hogyan fejlesszem az angol nyelvi készségeimet.
38. Szoktam gondolkozni azon, hogy milyen a fejlődésem angoltól.

'E' rész

39. Amikor nem merek angolul megszólalni vagy írni, megpróbálok tudatosan nyugtatni magam.
40. Még akkor is bátorítom magam, hogy angolul beszéljek, ha félek attól, hogy sok hibám lesz.
41. Megjutalmazom magam valamivel, ha jól teljesítek angoltól.
42. Észreveszem, ha az angol tanulás vagy a nyelv használata idegességet okoz nálam.

43. (Nyelvtanulási) naplóba írom le a tanulással kapcsolatos érzéseimet.
44. Szoktam beszélgetni másokkal arról, hogy milyen érzéseim vannak a nyelvtanulással kapcsolatban.

'F' rész

45. Ha valamit nem értek angolul, megkérem a beszélőt, hogy beszéljen lassabban, vagy mondja újra.
46. Megkérem az angolul beszélőket, hogy javítsanak ki, ha hibásan beszélek.
47. Más tanulókkal együtt gyakorlom az angolt.
48. Megkérem az angolul beszélőket, hogy segítsenek.
49. Angolul teszek fel kérdéseket.
50. Megpróbálok a lehető legtöbbet megtudni az angol anyanyelvűek kultúrájáról.

APPENDIX B1

Cover questionnaire to the Hungarian version of the SILL

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Kedves gimnáziumi tanuló!

*A középiskolások tanulási szokásaival foglalkozom, azokat kutatom. Szeretném, ha két kérdőívet is kitöltenél. Az egyiket arra találta ki egy (amerikai) kutató, hogy megtudjuk belőle, **hogyan szeretsz tanulni**, azaz milyen tanulási stílussal rendelkezel. A másik kérdőívből (szintén amerikai „találmány”) azt tudhatjuk meg, **hogyan, milyen módszerekkel tanulsz idegen nyelvet**, azaz milyenek a tanulási stratégiáid. A kérdőívek kitöltésével sokat nyerhetsz, mert az információ hozzásegíthet ahhoz, hogy javíthass tanulási hatékonyságodon.*

Először válaszolj néhány általános kérdésre. A nevedet mindenképpen írd ide. Annak alapján én adok Neked egy kódszámot, és utána már a kutatási anyagban csak azon szerepelsz.

Köszönöm együttműködésedet:

Mónos Katalin

Debreceni Egyetem, Angol Nyelvi és Módszertani Tanszék

1. NÉV:.....
2. SZÜLŐK LEGMAGASABB ISKOLAI VÉGZETTSÉGE: (általános, szakmunkásképző, szakközépiskola, gimnázium, főiskola, egyetem)
APA:ANYA:
3. HÁNY ÉVE TANULSZ ANGOLUL?:
4. TANULT IDEGEN NYELV (ANGOL MELLETT):
.....
5. TUDÁSOD SAJÁT MEGÍTÉLÉSED SZERINT, AZ ISKOLAI KÖVETELMÉNYEKET TEKINTVE: (töltsd ki a táblázatot, x-et téve a megfelelő helyre)

	Beszéd- készségem	Olvasott szöveg értése	Hallott szöveg értése	Íráskészsé- gem	Nyelvtani tudásom
Nagyon jó					
Elég jó					
Közepes					
Elég gyenge					
Nagyon gyenge					

6. ISKOLAI ÉRDEMJEGYED ANGOLBÓL EBBEN A TANÉVBEN:

.....

7. ÁLLAMI NYELVVIZSGÁM VAN (töltsd ki értelemszerűen, NYELV, SZINT /alap, közép, felsőfok / és TÍPUS /írásbeli, szóbeli, komplex = írás és szóbeli is / megjelölésével.)

Pl: orosz alacsony szóbeli, angol közepfokú komplex

.....

.....
HÁNYADIK PRÓBÁLKOZÁSRA SIKERÜLT A NYELVVIZSGA?:

.....

8. ÁLLAMI NYELVVIZSGÁM NINCS, MERT (húzd alá értelemszerűen
MÉG NEM PRÓBÁLKOZTAM (DE FOGOK)
NEM SIKERÜLT A-DIK PRÓBÁLKOZÁSRA (SEM)
MÉG NEM TUDOM AZ EREDMÉNYT
NEM AKAROK / FOGOK NYELVVIZSGÁZNI
9. MIÉRT TANULSZ ANGOLUL? (sorold fel az öt legfontosabb okot, fontossági sorrendben):

APPENDIX B2

Cover questionnaire to Strategy Questionnaire 2

Questions 1-8 are identical in the cover questionnaires to the SILL, and to the Strategy Questionnaire 2. Thus for Questions 1-8, see Appendix B1.

9. MIT SZERETSZ A *LEGJOBBAN* AZ ANGOLBAN ÉS AZ ANGOL TANULÁSBAN?
10. MIT SZERETSZ A *LEGKEVÉSBÉ* AZ ANGOLBAN ÉS AZ ANGOL TANULÁSBAN?
11. MIÉRT TANULSZ ANGOLUL? (sorold fel az öt legfontosabb okot, fontossági sorrendben.)
12. SZERINTED MILYEN NYELVTANULÓ VAGY? (Ne az érdemjegyre gondolj most. Pipáld ki a rád illőt.)
nagyon jó
jó
közepes
gyenge
nagyon gyenge

APPENDIX C

Strategy Questionnaire 2 (SQ2)

Ebből a kérdőívből azt szeretném megtudni, mik a TE tanulási trükkjeid, hogyan tanulsz angolt. Kérlek, gondolkodj el néhány percig az alábbi kérdéseken, és röviden, de pontosan válaszolj rájuk. Fontos tudnod, hogy lehetetlen rosszul válaszolnod, ugyanis itt nincsenek jó vagy rossz válaszok. Azt írd le, amit valóban szoktál tanuláskor csinálni, ne azt, amit szerinted csinálnod kellene, vagy szerinted mások csinálnak, vagy elvárnak Tőled.

MINDEN KÉRDÉSRE ANNYI VÁLASZT ADJ, AMENNYIT CSAK TUDSZ.

NÉV:

1. Hogy tanulsz új SZAVAKAT?
.....
2. Biztos van valamilyen módszered, amivel megpróbálsz jól a FEJEDBE VÉSNI a SZAVAKAT, és sokáig ott tartani őket. Írd le ezeket.
.....
3. Milyen módszered van az új NYELVTAN *megértésére*?
.....
4. Hogyan *gyakorolod / véssed a fejedbe* a NYELVTANT?
.....
5. Hogy gyakorolod a KIEJTÉST?
.....
6. Teszel külön erőfeszítéseket azért, hogy fejleszd az OLVASÁSI KÉSZSÉGEDET? Ha igen, részletezd.
.....
7. Teszel külön erőfeszítéseket azért, hogy fejleszd a HALLÁS UTÁNI MEGÉRTÉS KÉSZSÉGEDET? Ha igen, részletezd.
.....
8. Teszel külön erőfeszítéseket azért, hogy fejleszd a BESZÉDKÉSZSÉGEDET? Ha igen, részletezd.
.....
9. Teszel külön erőfeszítéseket azért, hogy fejleszd az ÍRÁSKÉSZSÉGEDET? Ha igen, részletezd.
.....
10. Mit csinálsz akkor, ha OLVASOTT SZÖVEGBEN ISMERETLEN SZÓ/ SZAVAK vannak?
.....

-
11. Mit csinálsz akkor, ha angolul BESZÉLSZ / BESZÉLGETSZ, és NEM JUT ESZEDBE az a SZÓ vagy kifejezés, ami éppen kellene?
.....
12. Mit csinálsz akkor, ha angolul BESZÉLGETSZ valakivel, és NEM ÉRTED, amit mondott/ mond?
.....
13. Általában észreveszed, ha HIBÁZTÁL beszédben? Ha igen, írd le, mit csinálsz akkor.
.....
14. Vannak TERVEID az angol nyelvtudásod fejlesztésére? Ha igen, írd rá példá(ka)t, hogy ezek miből állnak.
.....
15. Szoktál IZGULNI, amikor meg kell szólalni angolul? Ha igen, írd le, mit teszel azért, hogy csillapítsd az izgalmadat.
.....
16. Ha JÓL vagy ROSZUL TELJESÍTESZ angolból, szoktad magad JUTALMAZNI, vagy BÜNTETNI? Ha igen, írd le, hogyan.
.....
17. Ha valamilyen feladat megoldásával PROBLÉMÁD VAN ÓRÁN, mit csinálsz?
.....
18. Ha feladat megoldásával PROBLÉMÁD VAN ÓRÁN KÍVÜL, mit csinálsz?
.....
19. Biztosan van valami olyan (eddig még nem szerepelt) nyelvtanulási trükköd / módszered, amit szeretsz, ami nálad mindig beválik. Röviden írd le.
.....
20. Honnan tanultad az idegen nyelvtanulási módszereidet? (pipáld ki a megfelelő választ, többet is lehet)
iskolai tanáraimtól
magán tanáromtól/ tanáraimtól
osztálytársaimtól, barátaimtól
szüleimtől
testvére(i)mtől
magam alakítottam ki őket
egyéb válasz:
21. Szerinted az idegen nyelvtanulás különbözik más tantárgyak tanulásától? Ha igen, mennyiben, miben?

APPENDIX D1

The Learning Channel Preference Checklist

Lynn O'Brien (1990)

Read each sentence carefully and think about how it applies to you. Write the number that best describes your reaction to each sentence.

5 – almost always, 4 – often, 3 – sometimes, 2 – rarely, 1 – almost never

1. I can remember something better if I write it down.
2. When reading, I listen to the words in my head or I read aloud.
3. I need to discuss things to understand them better.
4. I don't like to read or listen to directions; I'd rather just start doing.
5. I am able to visualise pictures in my head.
6. I can study better when music is playing.
7. I need frequent breaks while studying.
8. I think better when I have the freedom to move around; studying at a desk is not for me.
9. I take lots of notes on what I read and hear.
10. It helps me to LOOK at a person speaking. It keeps me focused.
11. It's hard for me to understand what a person is saying when there is background noise.
12. I prefer having someone tell me how to do something rather than having to read the directions myself.
13. I prefer hearing a lecture or tape rather than reading a textbook.
14. When I can't think of a specific word, I use my hands a lot and call something a "what-cha-ma-call-it" or a "thing-a-ma-jig".
15. I can easily follow a speaker even though my head is down or I am staring out the window.
16. It's easier for me to get work done in a quiet place.
17. It's easy for me to understand maps, charts, and graphs.
18. When beginning an article or book, I prefer to take a peek at the ending.
19. I remember what people say better than what they look like.
20. I remember things better if I study aloud with someone.
21. I take notes, but never go back and read them.
22. When I am concentrating on reading or writing, the radio bothers me.
23. It's hard for me to picture things in my head.
24. I find it helpful to talk myself through my homework assignments.
25. My notebook and desk may look messy, but I know where things are.
26. When taking a test, I can "see" the textbook page and the correct answer on it.
27. I cannot remember a joke long enough to tell it later.
28. When learning something new, I prefer to listen to information on it, then read about it, then do it.
29. I like to complete one task before starting another.
30. I use my fingers to count and move my lips when I read.
31. I dislike proofreading my work.
32. When I am trying to remember something new, for example, a telephone number, it helps me to form a picture of it in my head.
33. For extra credit, I prefer to do a report on tape rather than write it.
34. I daydream in class.

35. For extra credit, I'd rather create a project than write a report.
36. When I get a great idea, I must write it down right away or I'll forget it.

APPENDIX D2

The Learning Channel Preference Checklist, Hungarian version

Tanulási stílus kérdőív

Olvasd el figyelmesen az alábbi kijelentéseket, és dönts el, mennyire igazak / jellemzőek Rád. Válaszaidat (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) a külön lapra írd. A számok az alábbiakat jelentik:

1. Soha vagy szinte soha nem jellemző / igaz rám.
2. Ritkán, vagy inkább nem jellemző / igaz rám.
3. Néha jellemző / igaz rám.
4. Gyakran jellemző / igaz rám.
5. Mindig vagy szinte mindig jellemző / igaz rám.

1. Jobban emlékszem dolgokra akkor, ha leírom őket.
2. Olvasás közben „hallom” a szavakat a fejemben, vagy önkéntelenül mormolok.
3. Meg kell, hogy beszéljek dolgokat valakivel ahhoz, hogy jobban megértem őket.
4. Nem szeretem sem az írott, sem a szóbeli utasításokat. Inkább egyszerűen csak nekifogok egy feladatnak.
5. Képes vagyok arra, hogy „fejben lássak” dolgokat, azaz, hogy magam elé képzeljek valamit fejemben.
6. Jobban tudok úgy tanulni, ha közben zene szól.
7. Gyakran kell szünetet tartanom tanulás közben.
8. Könnyebben gondolkodom, ha közben mozoghatok. Az íróasztalnál ülve tanulást nem nekem találták ki.
9. Amit olvasok vagy hallok, arról sok jegyzetet készítek.
10. Segít a megértésben, ha NÉZEM azt a személyt, akivel beszélgetek. Ez segít koncentrálni.
11. Nehezen értem meg, amit mondanak nekem, ha a háttérben zaj van.
12. Jobban szeretem, ha valaki szóban adja az utasítást, mintha magamnak kell elolvasnom.
13. Szívesebben hallgatom a tananyagot a tanár vagy valaki elmondásában, vagy magnóról, minthogy könyvből elolvassam.
14. Amikor nem jut eszembe valami konkrét szó, akkor kézzel sokat mutogatok, és olyanokat mondok, hogy az a „hogyishívják” vagy az az „izé”.
15. Könnyen megértem, amit mondanak nekem, még akkor is, ha közben le van hajtva a fejem vagy kinézek az ablakon.
16. Könnyebben végzek el dolgokat, ha egy nyugodt, csendes helyen dolgozhatok.
17. Könnyen megértek és értelmezek térképet, ábrákat, grafikonokat.
18. Amikor elkezdek újságcikket vagy könyvet olvasni, mindjárt megnézem a végét.
19. Jobban emlékszem arra, amit mond valaki, mint ahogy kinéz.
20. Jobban emlékszem dolgokra akkor, ha valakivel együtt, hangosan tanulom meg.
21. Jegyzetelek, de soha nem lapozok vissza, hogy átolvassam a jegyzeteimet.
22. Amikor írásra vagy olvasásra koncentrálok, zavar a rádió.
23. Nehezen képzelem magam elé (fejben) azt, ahogy a dolgok kinéznek.
24. Segít a tanulásban, ha felmondom magamnak az anyagot.
25. Lehet, hogy a füzeteim és az íróasztalom rendetlennek tűnnek, de én tudom, hogy mi hol van.

26. Amikor tesztet írok, fejbem „látom” magam előtt a tankönyv vagy a füzet megfelelő oldalát és rajta a helyes választ.
27. Nem emlékszem vissza viccekre elég sokáig ahhoz, hogy el is tudjam mesélni őket.
28. Amikor újat tanulok, először hallani szeretem, aztán olvasni róla, végül megcsinálni.
29. Mielőtt hozzáfogok egy új feladathoz, szeretem teljesen befejezni az előzőt.
30. Számolásakor használom az ujjaimat, olvasáskor mozgatom az ajkamat.
31. Nem szeretem ellenőrizni és kijavítani, amit egyszer megcsináltam.
32. Ha megpróbálok valamit megjegyezni, pl. egy telefonszámot, segít, ha „lefényképezem” az agyamban, azaz azt próbálom megjegyezni, hogy néz ki.
33. Plusz pontért szívesebben csinállok valamilyen magnós anyagot, mint írásbelit.
34. Álmodozom órák alatt.
35. Plusz pontért szívesebben csinállok bármilyen projektet, mint írásbeli feladatot.
36. Amikor van valami jó ötletem, azonnal le kell írnom, különben elfelejtem.

APPENDIX E
Permission to use O'Brian's LCPC

APPENDIX F
Observation sheet

Location (School, class):

Date:

Number of learners present:

STAGES Activity, procedure, timing, interaction pattern, materials/aids used.	PERCEPTUAL LEARNING PREFERENCE FAVOURED	TEACHER'S SUGGESTIONS FOR STRATEGY USE E(xplicit), I(mplicit)

OBSERVER'S COMMENTS:

APPENDIX G

Interview questions to teachers

Main questions are italicised.

Mit tudsz a diákjaid tanulási szokásairól, módszereiről?

Amit tudsz, honnan tudod?

Tanulási stílus és stratégia. Mit tudsz vagy tudtál régebben ezekről? A mindennapi oktatásban tudsz kezdeni valamit ezekkel a fogalmakkal? Mit, hogyan?

Tudnak tanulni ma a gimnazista gyerekek? A Te diákjaid konkrétan? Honnan tud, aki tud és a többi miért nem?

Szerinted kellene ezzel az iskolarendszer valamelyik szintjén foglalkozni? Melyiken? Kinek? Szaktanároknak vagy valaki másnak?

Te mennyire avatkozol be, ha azt tapasztalod, hogy a diákoknak nem megy a nyelvtanulás? Mit csinálsz, miből áll az, ha beavatkozol?

Felkészültnek érzed magad arra, hogy segíts a tanulóid tanulási gondjainak megoldásában?

Honnan vagy erre felkészülve? Egyetem? Továbbképzések?

Szerinted egyetemi tananyagba vagy továbbképzések tantervébe bele kellene foglalni a tanulás tanításának módszertanát?

Szerinted mik azok a tényezők, melyek jelentősen befolyásolják a nyelvtanulás eredményességét, mik az eredményes nyelvtanulás feltételei?

Mitől jó/eredményes, illetve gyenge, eredménytelen nyelvtanuló valaki?

Milyen kritériumok alapján soroltad be a tanulókat a top – medium – poor kategóriába? Tudnál mondani 3-3 dolgot, ami szerint valaki top, illetve poor?

Milyennek látod a nyelvtanulás/tanítás helyzetét ma Magyarországon, illetve a Te szűkebb környezetben?

Eredményes? Jó? Javuló vagy inkább romló tendenciát látsz? Mi az oka? Tanterv, óraszám, feltételek, tanárképzés?

Mit szólna a statisztikákhoz? Mi lehet az oka annak, hogy még mindig kevesen tudnak idegen nyelveket, még a fiatalok körében is?

English translation

What do you know about your students' learning methods, habits?

How do you find out about these?

Learning styles and strategies – What do you/did you know about these concepts? Can you incorporate them into your everyday classroom work in any way? If yes, how?

Do gymnasium students today know how to learn? Your students concretely? How do they know how to learn? How about the ones who cannot? Why don't they know how to learn?

Do you think that at any level of the school system this issue should be addressed?
At which level and whose responsibility should this be? Of L2 teachers or someone else?

How far do you intervene when you realise that your students have learning difficulties?

What does it involve when you intervene? What do you do then?

Do you feel prepared to help your students with their L2 learning problems?

Where are your skills/preparation from? University? Further trainings?

Do you think that university curricula pre- or in-service should deal with questions of learning methodology?

What are the factors that largely affect the effectiveness/success of L2 learning?

What are the prerequisites of successful L2 learning?

What makes someone successful or unsuccessful as a foreign language learner?

What are your criteria for ranking your students into the top – medium – poor categories?

Could you list three-three things that make someone a top or poor learner?

What do you think about the state of L2 teaching-learning today in Hungary and in your local context?

Effective, successful, good? How about the trends? Improving or the opposite? What is the reason? Curriculum, number of hours, conditions, teacher training?

What do you think about the statistics? Why is it that even among the young, still few people know foreign languages today?

APPENDIX H
Oxford's taxonomy of learner strategies

DIRECT STRATEGIES

MEMORY	A. Creating mental linkages	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grouping 2. Associating/elaborating 3. Placing new words into a context.
	B. Applying images and sounds	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using imagery 2. Semantic mapping 3. Using keywords 4. Representing sounds in memory
	C. Reviewing well	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Structured reviewing
	D. Employing action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using physical response or sensation 2. Using mechanical techniques
COGNITIVE	A. Practising	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repeating 2. Formally practising with sounds and writing systems 3. Recognising and using formulas and patterns 4. Recombining 5. Practising naturalistically
	B. Receiving and sending messages	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Getting the idea quickly 2. Using resources for receiving and sending messages
	C. Analysing and reasoning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reasoning deductively 2. Analysing expressions 3. Analysing contrastively (across languages) 4. Translating 5. Transferring
	D. Creating structure for input and output	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Taking notes 2. Summarising 3. Highlighting
COMPENSATION	A. Guessing intelligently	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using linguistic clues 2. Using other clues
	B. Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Switching to the mother tongue 2. Getting help 3. Using mime or gesture 4. Avoiding communication partially or totally 5. Selecting the topic 6. Adjusting or approximating the message 7. Coining words 8. Using a circumlocution or synonym

INDIRECT
STRATEGIES

META COGNITIVE	A. Centering your learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overviewing and linking with already known material 2. Paying attention 3. Delaying speech production to focus on listening
	B. Arranging and planning your learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finding out about language learning 2. Organizing 3. Setting goals and objectives 4. Identifying the purpose of a language task (purposeful listening, speaking, reading, writing) 5. Planning for a language task 6. Seeking practice opportunities
	C. Evaluating your learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-monitoring 2. Self-evaluating
AFFECTIVE	A. Lowering your anxiety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation 2. Using music 3. Using laughter
	B. Encouraging yourself	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making positive statements 2. Taking risks wisely 3. Rewarding yourself
	C. Taking your emotional temperature	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listening to your body 2. Using a checklist 3. Writing a language learning diary 4. Discussing your feelings with someone else
SOCIAL	A. Asking questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asking for clarification or verification 2. Asking for correction
	B. Cooperating with others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cooperating with peers 2. Cooperating with proficient users of the new language
	C. Empathizing with others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing cultural understanding 2. Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings

APPENDIX I
Summary of SILL results

ITEM MEANS:

MEMORY STRATEGIES								
A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9
3,43	2,19	3,35	2,32	1,26	1,79	1,52	3,36	3,48

COGNITIVE STRATEGIES													
B10	B11	B12	B13	B14	B15	B16	B17	B18	B19	B20	B21	B22	B23
4,09	3,31	3,03	3,13	2,86	3,26	2,18	2,03	3,69	2,58	3,27	3,34	3,88	2,22

COMPENSATION STRATEGIES					
C24	C25	C26	C27	C28	C29
3,78	3,05	3,16	3,23	2,40	4,03

METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES								
D30	D31	D32	D33	D34	D35	D36	D37	D38
3,22	3,36	4,10	3,73	2,79	2,68	2,40	2,92	3,12

AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES					
E39	E40	E41	E42	E43	E44
3,06	3,34	1,82	2,74	1,06	2,18

SOCIAL STRATEGIES					
F45	F46	F47	F48	F49	F50
4,27	3,32	2,43	3,01	2,77	2,92

Figures in bold: lowest and highest mean values

APPENDIX J
Summary of the findings yielded by SQ2

	FREQ UEN CY	RAN GE	MEM ORY	COGN ITIVE	COM PENS ATIO N	METAC OGN	AFFE CTIVE	SOC IAL
--	-------------------	-----------	------------	---------------	--------------------------	--------------	---------------	------------

MEDGYESSI GIMNÁZIUM (n=22)

STUD 1	28	18	1	7	3	5	0	2
STUD 2	10	8	0	2	3	2	0	1
STUD 3	36	22	3	7	4	5	0	3
STUD 4	23	16	1	3	4	5	0	3
STUD 5	27	15	3	4	2	5	0	1
STUD 6	18	14	1	5	2	4	0	2
STUD 7	32	19	2	8	2	5	0	2
STUD 8	20	14	1	3	2	5	2	1
STUD 9	33	18	1	6	6	3	1	1
STU 10	22	17	2	6	3	3	1	2
STU 11	13	10	1	3	1	4	0	1
STU 12	28	16	3	5	2	4	1	1
STU 13	22	17	4	5	3	2	0	3
STU 14	28	17	2	5	3	4	0	3
STU 15	34	18	2	6	3	3	1	3
STU 16	22	17	1	5	4	4	0	3
STU 17	41	27	3	7	5	5	3	4
STU 18	29	21	3	7	4	5	0	2
STU 19	31	19	1	6	4	6	0	2
STU 20	22	14	1	4	3	4	0	2
STU 21	31	20	1	7	4	6	0	2
STU 22	23	17	2	5	3	5	1	1

KOSSUTH GIMNÁZIUM (n=24)

STUD 1	15	11	1	3	2	2	1	2
STUD 2	15	12	1	4	1	3	1	2
STUD 3	29	18	3	5	3	3	1	3
STUD 4	13	8	1	2	1	2	0	2
STUD 5	21	12	1	4	2	2	0	3
STUD 6	32	24	5	4	4	6	2	3
STUD 7	16	15	3	4	3	2	0	3
STUD 8	26	21	2	5	4	5	2	3
STUD 9	26	20	2	5	2	5	4	2
STU 10	34	25	3	7	5	4	2	4
STU 11	39	26	5	6	6	5	1	3
STU 12	17	15	1	5	1	5	0	3
STU 13	17	13	3	3	2	4	0	1
STU 14	11	9	2	3	2	1	0	1
STU 15	36	20	4	6	3	4	0	3
STU 16	17	13	2	4	1	4	0	2
STU 17	19	17	2	5	3	5	0	2

STU 18	7	7	1	1	1	2	0	2
STU 19	24	16	2	4	5	3	1	1
STU 20	16	13	0	3	5	2	1	2
STU 21	25	19	3	7	2	4	1	2
STU 22	30	23	4	5	3	7	1	3
STU 23	26	23	7	5	4	5	0	2
STU 24	11	9	1	4	2	1	0	1
TOTAL	1103	763	98	220	137	180	28	100
MEAN		16.6	2.13	4.78	2.97	3.9	0.6	2.17
MEAN	23.9		2.89	7.21	3.32	5.89	0.6	4.02

APPENDIX K
Summaries of other results

Summary of state language exam results

SCHOOL	ONE CERTIFICATE	TWO CERTIFICATES	HAS TRIED/ WILL TRY	WILL NOT TRY
ADY	12	1	15	1
FAZEKAS	4	0	27	3
KOSSUTH	1	0	23	0
MEDGYESSI	10	0	12	0
TÓTH ÁRPÁD	2	1	18	0
SUBTOTAL	29	2	90	4
TOTAL: 125				

Distribution of perceptual preferences among *top* and *poor* learners

	GRADING			
	Top(N=45)		Poor(N=14)	
Perceptual preference	N	%	N	%
Balanced	1	2.2	0	0
Visual	37	82	6	42.8
Auditory	4	8.8	3	21.4
Haptic	3	6.6	5	35.7

Poor, medium, and top grading among haptic learners

Haptic learners (N=15)					
Poor		Medium		Top	
N	%	N	%	N	%
6	40	6	40	3	20

APPENDIX L

Teacher interviews

Interview 1

Teacher 1: University degree in Russian and English; over 10 years' experience in primary and secondary teaching; mentor; attended numerous further training courses, including mentoring, and using computer in L2 teaching.

Milyenek a tanulási szokások, módszerek, mit tudsz róluk?

Ha új csoportot kapok, kicsiket, hetedikeseket vagy kilencedikeseket, elő szokott jönni. Elmondom, hogy én hogy tanultam a szavakat, hogy letakarom, vagy kis ábrát... elmondom, hogy én hogy tanultam vagy mit javaslok. Meg szoktam kérdezni, hogy szokták csinálni, akinek problémája van az írással, annak mondom hogy írja le, vagy kis kártyákra... meg szoktam ezeket beszélni, meg ha valami dolgozat nem sikerül, szó meg nyelvtani, tanácsolom, hogy kis kártyákra írják fel azt a dolgot, ami nekik nem megy, meg hogy mégegyszer nézzék át, a szabályokat, táblázatokat... ezeket meg szoktuk beszélni, szeretik ezeket a dolgokat... Ha megbeszéljük. Új csoportnak mindig elmondom, hogy mit javaslok.

Stílus és stratégia fogalmával korábban nem találkoztam, vagyis nem tudtam, hogy így hívják. Tudom, hogy én vizuális vagyok, és javaslom a gyerekeknek, hogy aki még vizuális, azok húzzanak alá, keretezzenek be dolgokat, felkiáltójelet tegyenek oda.

És hogy ki vizuális vagy nem, azt hogy derítitek ki? Beszéltek erről külön?

Abból, hogy hogyan emlékszik jobban. Én mindig emlékszem arra, hogy a könyvben mi hol van, baloldalon, stb, de azt is mindig mondom, hogy a nyelvet hangosan kell tanulni. Szavakat, kifejezéseket, nyelvtani dolgokat is, ismételtetni.

Tudnak tanulni?

Aki nem olyan drukkos gyerek, annak nem probléma a tanulás, felkészülni a dolgozatokra. Aki viszont gátlásos, vagy másik iskolából jött ide, vidéki, ki van szakítva a megszokott környezetéből, annak már ez nehézség, meg aki kollégista, annak nehéz. Aki jó képességű és megszokta, hogy sikeres, annak nem gond. Viszont a körülmények lehetnek hátrányosak. A módszer, hát az elég egysíku. Minden tárgyból az, hogy elolvassa, és elmondja, ezt látom. Ezt hozzák az általános iskolából, nincs lényeglátásuk, az általános iskolában nem tanítják meg őket. Alá lehetne húzni a könyvben a lényegét, de nem tudja, mi az. Az egészet tanulják, olvasgatják az egész anyagot.

Tehát a módszer a memorizálás?

Igen. Igen. Ilyen magolás szerű.

Miért van így?

Beidegződés, a régi porosz rendszerből, nem? Meg sokszor olyan dolgokra kérdeznek rá, tanártól is függ, adatra kérdeznek, nem az összefüggésekre.

És akkor hol kéne a módszereiken változtatni? Kinek?

Az általánosban, amikor még fogékonyak, és szépen fokozatosan megtanulnának dolgokat, mi itt már nem tudunk mit kezdeni, nincs is idő.

Mitől jó nyelvtanuló valaki? Milyen feltételeknek kell együtt lenni ahhoz, hogy valaki jó legyen?

Én mindig a szorgalmat szoktam kiemelni. A gyerekeknek is mondom, akik azt mondják, hogy nem eredményesek, hogy a szorgalom, a rendszeresség a lényeg. Minden nap kell foglalkozni egy kicsit, akkor is ha nincs angol. Állandó ismétlés, szavak és nyelvtani szerkezetek állandó ismétlése, főleg az elején nagyon fontos. Az, hogy hangosan tanuljanak, főleg eleinte, hogy szokják a kiejtést, utánozni, ahogy én ejtettem, legyen bennük igényesség, meg találjon ki ő plusz módszereket, hogy amiket az előbb említettünk, szavak tanulására, rajzolgani.

Van valami olyan tulajdonság, vagy feltétel, ami nélkülözhetetlen?

Érzék az kell, de szorgalommal sok minden pótolható. Meg a rendszeresség, és órán ott legyen, figyeljen, csinálják, használni a korábban előfordult szavakat, figyeljenek, vegyenek részt a feladatokban.... de ez sokszor elsikkad, nem tudnak odafigyelni.

Ha valamelyik tanulónál tanulási gondokat tapasztaltok, akkor mi van? Azt az iskola kezeli vagy a szaktanár vagy valaki?

Hát én nem tudok másokról, ha érzem, hogy nagyon nem megy valami, még egyszer megbeszélem a gyerekekkel a módszereket, van pozitív visszajelzés. De nincs beépítve a rendszerbe. De jó dolog lenne erről beszélni a tantestületi értekezleteken.

És a te ötleteid honnan jönnek, honnan vagy ezekre felkészülve? Tanultál ilyesmit valahol?

Nem, magamtól találtam ezeket ki, ahogy annak idején én tanultam, meg most is, azokat mondom el a gyerekeknek. Akiket érdekel a nyelv, azok kialakítanak maguknak módszereket szerintem. A nyelvvel aki foglalkozik külön.

És szerinted egy tanárjelöltnek kellene ilyeneket tanulni az egyetemen vagy továbbképzéseken?

Hát valószínű hogy kellene, akkor jobban tudnánk segíteni.

Kritériumok a top, poor, medium besorolásra?

Hogyan írja meg a dolgozatait, tehát az írásbeli munka alapján, ami dokumentálható. Röp és nagydolgozatok. Ott mindig van ponthatár, 50%-ig 1-es, utána arányosan. A másik dolog, az összetettebb, az órai munka, hogyan old meg feladatokat, mennyire lehet rá számítani, aktív, válaszol a kérdésekre, feladatokat mennyire csinálja, szorgalmikát csinál-e. Tehát az órai munka.

És a poor?

Nem nagyon volt a csoportjaimban, német tagozatos, ez már mutat valamit, hozzáállást a nyelvhez. A kezdő csoportban volt egy fiú, ő lusta, néha elkalandozik, más tárgyból is ilyen. De nincsenek itt nálunk gyenge gyerekek, tudod.

Milyennek látod a nyelvtanulás helyzetét ma Magyarországon? Milyen a tendencia? Javuló? Romló?

Hát, rengeteg lehetőség van ma már, videó, TV, computer rengeteget segít. Ha azt nézem, hogy hányan nyelvvizgáznak, nem lehet összehasonlítani a mi időnkkel. Nagyon sokan leteszik ma már, de akkor sokkal könnyebb volt. Megnőtt a súlya, ráfekszenek és leteszik a nyelvvizsgát, van a ki két tárgyból is, meg felsőfokút. Ha ezt nézem, javuló tendenciát látok. De a felnőttek, aki korábban nem élt a lehetőséggel, annak munka és család mellett nincs lehetősége. A mai harmincasok közt sokkal többen tudnak nyelveket, a politikusok, a TV-ben is látszik, de az iskolaigazgatók közt például siralmas, X (munkaközösségvezető) említett felmérési eredményt, az ötvenes generáció nem beszél. Nem mindenki él a lehetőséggel, pedig ma már sok van.

És a statisztikák? Még a fiatalok közt is elég lehangoló.

Nem tudom... a szűkebb környezetemben ez állandóan felszínen van, nálunk rengeteg gyerek nyelvvizgázik. Éppen nekem kellett összeszámolnom őket, nálunk nagyon sok. Meg követelmény is.

Le lehet nyelvvizgáztatni őket az adott iskolai óraszám mellett?

Kezdő csoport heti 3 órában nem nyelvvizgázik le. Meg csökkennek az óraszámok. Nem látom át pontosan a tantervi szervezést, ez X dolga, nem igazán tudom. De a fő gond, hogy egyre kevésbé lehet számítani az általános iskolából hozott nyelvtudásra. Amikor általánosban tanítottam, olyan dolgokat vettünk, ami most másodikban, harmadikban jön elő gimiben.

Miért?

Amit X is mondott, hogy az órákon a jelszó a 'feel good'. Aminek nem okvetlenül kéne azt jelenteni, hogy nem tanulunk.

Interview 2

Teacher 2: University degree in Hungarian, Russian, Finnish, college degree in English. Over ten years' of L2, including English teaching experience at primary and secondary levels, and to adults. Experienced as teacher of Hungarian as a foreign language.

Mit tudsz a diákjaid tanulási szokásairól?

A tanulási stratégiákról és stílusokról nem sokat tudok, de ösztönösen elég sok mindent kifejlesztettem magamnak, amikor én nyelveket tanultam. Azt tapasztalom, hogy a diákok nem ismerik ezeket, ahogy mi sem annak idején. Próbálok nekik segíteni, attól kezdve, hogy a teljesen kezdő csoportoknak megtanítottam, hogy tanuljuk meg az angol szavakat, hogy meg kell tanulni külön a helyesírást, kiejtést, a jelentését, a vonzatokat, stb. csináltunk olyan órát, ami arról szólt, hogy hogy tanuljuk meg a szavakat. Meg a mondatszerkesztést. Más kérdés, hogy a gyerekek ebből mennyit profitálnak.

Tudnál pélpát mondani arra, hogy mit csináltok, például a mondatszerkesztésre?

Bizonyos mondatokat, amiket megértek, passzívan felismerem, hogy mit jelent, leírjuk papírcsíkokra, összevagdossuk, összekeverjük. És utána visszarakjuk. Ezt megcsináljuk különböző mondattípusokkal, ötször, hatszor, és egy idő után ezeket felismerik, hogy ez azért van itt, mert ez a helye, az a helye, stb. Táblázatokba is foglaljuk ezeket, színekkel, cédulákkal, meg ilyenek. Ez segít, bizonyos gyerekeknek. Mert azt is láttam rajtuk, hogy dedósnak találták ezeket a módszereket, hogy játszunk, meg színezünk. Voltak olyan nyolcadikosok, akiken azt láttam, mintha ez teljesen új lett volna nekik, pedig nem lett volna szabad, és ismétlés gyanánt ezeket játszottuk, aztán ráéreztek. Ugyanígy a kiejtéssel is rengeteg ilyen csináltunk. Mindig megtanuljuk a jeleket, felírom a kiejtést a táblára, és akkor párosítani kell a kiejtést szavakkal, és ösztönzöm őket, hogy ezt otthon maguknak csinálják meg, hogy ott van a szólista, melléírja a kiejtést, vágja szét, keverje össze... aztán nem tudom, mennyire tartozik ide a szótározási technika, én azt rengeteget gyakoroltatom velük, végigolvassuk együtt a szócikket, megbeszéljük, miért ezt a jelentést nézzük, miért azt, mit jelentenek a rövidítések... ezek technikai dolgok, de az a tapasztalatom, hogy ezt még a haladók se tudják, akik két-három éve tanulnak.

Miért csinálod ezt?

Mert idegesít, hogy nem tudják, hogy hogy kell.

De mondta neked valaki, hogy ezt csináld, vagy tanította valaki, hogy kell?

Nem, de tudod, foglalkoztam ezzel a fordítással*, és például a szótározás technika keményen kapcsolódik ide. Amikor először fordítottunk, vettem észre, hogy azért nem megy, mert a szótárból a legelső jelentést írta ki, vagy nem vette észre, hogy ige vagy főnév, vagy a szótárból a múlt idejű ige nem első alakját nézte ki, hanem a másodikat, harmadikat, ami ugye teljesen mást jelent.

(*She wrote her dissertation for the English degree on the teaching of translation.)

Te akkor ezeket teljesen magadtól alakítottad ki?

Velem annak idején a tanárom ilyeneket nem csinált, azt hiszem, magamtól találtam ki, meg annyi mindent összeolvastam, hogy már nem tudom, mit találtam ki és mit nem...

Igen, meg a lányomon láttam, hogy az iskolában többet kell csinálni, mert ott nem mindenki annyira jó képességű, és otthon aztán kísérleteztünk. Nála például nem működött az a módszer, amit szoktam javasolni, hogy ilyen listába szedjük a szavakat, és addig írjuk, amíg nem tudjuk, viszont nagyon jól ment nála a kártyás módszer. Mi otthon kipróbáltunk dolgokat, meg teleragasztgattuk a lakást cédulákkal... ez főleg szótanulás volt, de... nyelvtannál is, tényleg, rengeteget gyakorolunk, mondatszerkesztés, kérdés, állítás, tagadás, utókérdés, meghát az olvasási stratégia. Minek hívjuk ezeket, amikor ezt az egyetemen tanultuk, hogy globális olvasás, skimming, meg mit tudom én, hogy nem kell minden szót megérteni, ez nagyon nehéz. Nem tudom miért, de ezt nagyon nehezen veszik. Az a gyanúm, hogy magyarul sem úgy olvasnak. Hogy nem látják át az egész szöveget, és ez azért van így, de ez csak egy ötlet, mert magyarul sem olvasnak újságot. Azt szoktuk példának hozni, hogy ha magyarul kinyitom az újságot, ránézek egy cikkre, és nagyjából tudom, hogy érdekel vagy nem. De ezek a gyerekek nem olvasnak újságot... Ez megint egy tanulási stratégia, hogy magyarul kell ismereteket szerezni, meg olvasni... meg nemcsak a nyelvet tanítom, hanem mindenféle egyebet. Még a szocializmusban mondták, hogy a tanár nem csak tanít, hanem nevel is, mindent tanít hozzá, ami kell... Most is az kellene... A másik hobbim.... mindig azt szoktam mondani, hogy a nyelvtanároknak muszály lenne magyar nyelvi képzésben is részesülni. Volt is egy ideig egy ilyen próbálkozás a nyelvészetben, de nem ment. Mert állítólag nem jól csinálták.

Tehát arra kérdésre, hogy tudnak-e tanulni, vagy nem, már válaszoltál?

Igen, nagyon sokan nem tudnak. Hogy kinek kéne ezzel foglalkozni, az egy érdekes kérdés. A tanárnak mindenképpen kell, de nem csak a nyelvtanárnak. Tehát hogy olvassál magyarul, ha nyelvvizsgázni akarsz. Meg meg kell tanulni a magyar nyelvtant is, ha angolul akarsz tudni... Meg kellene mutatni a különbséget.

Tehát hogy kinek a felelőssége, melyik szinten kellene...?

Mindenhol, de talán még a legjobban az óvodában csinálják, mindenféle játékos trükkökkel. A gond ott kezdődik, valahol a felsőtagozat környékén, hogy azt mondják neki, hogy na ülj le és tanul meg, de senki nem mondja meg, hogy hogy. A gyerek azt gondolja, hogy megtanulta, és akkor kiderül a számonkérésnél, hogy nem tanulta meg, vagy nem úgy tanulta meg. Mit jelent az, hogy megtanult valamit? ... A lányomnak is azt szoktam mondani, meg a gyerekeknek, hogy ellenőrizd magad. Gondold végig, hogy mit lehet arról az egy dologról kérdezni, hogy lehet megközelíteni, tudnál-e válaszolni, tehát ezt nem tudják, hogy ha elolvasnak valamit ötször, hatszor, vagy akinek jobban megy, kétszer, akkor azt tudom. De hogy hogyan tudja, hogy tudná alkalmazni, ez nem megy, nem tudják felmérni. Ez itt már kapcsolódik az értékeléshez, a számonkéréshez. Én amit feladok, utána mindig számonkérem, először nem jegyre, csak próbaszámonkérés van, és akkor kérdezek, hogy mi kellene ide, milyen nyelvtan, szófaj, mit kéne tudnod hozzá, hogy ezzel is lássák, hol kell még rádolgozni.

Kell a tanárnak beavatkozni?

Sajnos kell, még a nagyobbaknál is. Tavaly volt 11-es osztályom, ahol már elvárható lenne, hogy ne kelljen. És a gond csak nő, mert az anyag mennyisége és komplexitása csak növekszik.

Mitől jó valaki? Mik az eredményes nyelvtanulás feltételei?

Én hiszek a nyelvtanulásban. Ezen persze lehet változtatni, javítani. És nagyon fontos, hogy milyen környezetből jön a gyerek, mennyire toleráns a környezet, a család. Ez egy pszichológiai dolog, én azt érzem, hogy a gyerekek elutasítják az idegennyelvet, mert másfajta gondolkodást fejez ki. Nevetnek rajta, vicces, hogy ki kell dugni a nyelvemet egy hangnál, és lehet, hogy megtanulja, de nem fogja mondani. Én olyan faluban nőttem fel, hogy nagyanyámék tótul beszéltek, nekem természetes volt, hogy így is lehet beszélni, meg úgy is, a lányomnak is az... és ma már a TV meg a rádió sokat segíthetne, de ez egy gondolkodásbeli probléma... meg filozófiai... Aztán persze benne van, hogy ki mennyire szorgalmas, vagy lusta, ki mennyire érdeklődő. Nem csak arról beszélek, hogy a nyelv, a nyelvtanulás milyen fontos neki, mennyire motiválja, hanem, hogy mennyire nyitott és érdeklődő általában. Ebben a korban még minden iránt érdeklődni kellene, de ezek a gyerekek eldöntik már korán, hogy őket valami érdekli, és semmi mással nem hajlandók foglalkozni. Ez szerintem nagyon gátolja a nyelvtanulást.

Miért van ez így?

Nem tudom, de eleve elutasítanak dolgokat, mondván, hogy engem ez nem érdekel. Van egy merevség. Nem tudom, hogy ez másoknál is így van-e, vagy csak mi magyarok vagyunk ilyenek?

Kritériumok.

Akkor amikor mondtam, sacra volt, inkább intuíció alapján, de ha jól belegondolok, akkor az az első, hogy valaki érdeklődő legyen, hogy szorgalmas, tehát fogja föl, hogy a nyelvtanulás azért nagyon kemény dolog. Aztán a tehetség, a nyelvérzék, szerintem én soroltam a top kategóriába olyat, aki nem olyan nagyon tehetséges, de igyekszik, ezeket lehet kompenzálni. És az igazán kiemelkedő eredmények akkor születnek, ha tehetség, szorgalom és a környezet párosul. Ezt egyszer Czeizel mondta különben.

És a poor kategória?

Ennek a hiányai, és sokszor van olyan, akiket nagyon szoktam sajnálni, hogy nagyon igyekszik, és mégsem megy. Ez is adódik, de szerencsére ritka, inkább a nem érdekel a jellemző. És olyan is van, aki annyira nem tud tanulni, hogy emiatt vannak kudarcai. Ha kezdő szinten ilyet tapasztalok, azt még meg lehet fogni, lehet neki segíteni, de ha már valahol van, pl. 11.-es, már nemigen lehet mit kezdeni vele, ha nem tud tanulni.

Sok ilyen van?

Igen, és a medium kategóriában is sok van ilyen, aki nem így tanulta, vagy nem jól tanult meg dolgokat. És hiába próbálom én már dolgokat megtanítani, az alapokat nem tanulta meg így, és nem stabilok, és nincs mire építeni. Azt meg nem lehet, hogy visszamegyünk az elejére. Persze csináltunk ilyet is, de ezt nem lehet rendszeresen.

Statisztika?

Nem tudom, de a mássággal, idegenséggel kapcsolatos negatív ösztársadalmi attitűdnek lehet szerepe ebben.

Nyelvtanítás helyzete?

Egyre inkább felborul a dolog, egyre gyengébb lesz az iskolában, és eltolódik a privát nyelviskolák irányába, amik viszont egyre jobbak és sikeresebbek. Ma már sokan azt mondják, hogy megyek a magántanárhoz, vagy a nyelviskolába, mert az iskola reménytelen. És ez visszahat a tanárra is, mert ugyanaz a tanár lehet, hogy az iskolában nem produkál, magántanárként pedig igen. Ami meg már etikai kérdés, meg persze anyagi, és egyre katasztrófálisabb, már az. Abszolút nincsenek feltételek az iskolában, nekem selejt magnóm van, recseg, ropog, használhatatlan. Arról nem beszélve, hogy az anyagok nagy része CD-n meg interneten van, és nekem otthon nincs olyan gépem, amiről a CD-t át tudom írni kazettára. A fizetésemből nem telik, itt meg nincs rá mód. Kész. ... A tanárokat kellene erre ösztönözni, és sok tanárban meg is lenne a nyitottság meg az érdeklődés, de amíg úgy élünk, hogy este 9-kor esek haza a maszekolásból, utána már nagyon kevés az idő.

Tanárképzés?

Én rengeteget tanultam a 3 éves képzés alatt, de nekem rengeteg tapasztalatom volt korábról, tudtam mihez kötni. De hogy egy fiatalnak, aki érettségi után bekerül, mennyit segített, nem tudom felmérni. Módszertan órákon meg spec. kollokon nem tudták, hogy miről van szó. Talán a tanítási gyakorlatnak máshol kéne lennie, korábban vagy nem tudom... A korábbi, orosz és finn, az teljesen bölcsészképzés volt, és egyáltalán semmire nem emlékszem, hogy mit tanultunk módszertan címen. Volt 1 vagy 2 félév, de semmit nem adott.

A tantervi szabályozást megfelelőnek érzed?

Nekem az a tanterv, hogy megmondják, hogy ebből vagy abból a könyvből tanítok. Akkor én megírom magamnak, hogy X leckét hány óra alatt veszek át, kész. Fogalmam nincs az egészről. Senki nem mondta meg nekem. Senki nem szabályoz, a tanári szabadság maximális, kutya nem szól bele. Évvégén fel kellett írnom egy papírra, hogy hol tartok, nagyon el voltam maradva, de senki nem mondta, hogy irtgum burgum. Maximális tanári szabadság van, ami abban is látszik, hogy van olyan, hogy bemege a tanár, és nem csinál semmit. Ez a szabadság hátulütője.

Interview 3

Teacher 3: University degree in English and German. Nearly 20 years teaching experience at secondary level. Mentor for the five year programme. Has not taken part in any further training. The interview was not conducted orally, the teacher answered the questions in writing.

Diákjaim tanulási szokásairól, módszereiről.

Legtöbbször 'tűzoltó technikával' tanulnak, mikor, miből írnak, felelnek, s ha nem ennek megfelelően válogatnak, akkor aszerint, hogy szigorú-e a tanár, érettségi tantárgy-e, felvételiznek-e a tárgyból, viszik-e a pontot, s utolsó helyen marad az érdeklődési kör, motiváltság. Tapasztalataim szerint vizuálisak, s legtöbbször az ú.n. magolási módszerrel tanulják a nyelvet.

Tudnak-e tanulni, mi kell az eredményes tanuláshoz, szükség lenne-e változtatásokra.

Van, aki tud, van, aki nem. Az anyag mennyisége miatt a legfontosabb az időbeosztás és rendszeresség. A középiskola szintjén kellene változtatni, nem a szaktanárnak, hanem a tantervi követelményeket kellene modernizálni, de úgy, hogy a korábbi, bevált hagyományokat őrizzük meg. Az életkor nem beavatkozást igényel a tanulási szokásokba, hanem terelgetést, ha kell, határozottan. Ebben az életkorban nem ismeri fel a saját, jó értelemben vett érdekeit a diák.

Eredményes nyelvtanulás feltételei:

A készségek szintje feltétlenül fontos, megfelelő szorgalommal és motiváltsággal szép eredmények érhetők el (az angol ilyen szempontból kiemelt helyen van, mert a 'C' típusú középfokú nyelvvizsgálóval pontokat visznek a felvételin). Viszont kevés az óraszám a középiskolában, a gyerekek nagy része különóra jár. Motiválni lehet őket, de jegyközpontúság van. Ha olyan feladatot kapnak, amellyel, ha szorgalmasak, jó jegyeket kaphatnak, eredményt lehet elérni. Fontos a dicséret nekik.

Kritériumok a tanulók besorolására.

Kiváló (Top): szépen beszél (gondolatait ki tudja fejezni)
írás-készsége jó (nyelvtani hibák elvértve)
szorgalmas, igyekvő, érdeklődő
vannak ötletei
nagyon jól tudja saját anyanyelvét.

Közepes (Medium): csak azt tanulja meg, amit kell,
írásbeli munkái nem elég színesek, de azért elkészíti azokat,
igyekszik, szorgalmas

Gyenge (poor): még a szóbeli feladatait sem látja el, csak unszólásra szólal meg.
írásbeli munkái vértelenek, silányak,
nem szorgalmas, nem szereti a nyelvet

Nyelvtanulás, nyelvtudás helyzete:

Kevés az óraszám. A nyelvtudás talán javuló tendenciát mutat (ennek feltételezett oka az EU csatlakozás). A tanárság nem divatszakma manapság, az anyagi

el(nem)ismertség miatt a társadalomban, ezért a fiatalok nem mennek erre a pályára, az egyetemek tanárszakos hallgatói közé (jó, ha) a másodvonal kerül be.

A nyelvtudás fontosságát nem ismerték fel korábban. Egyik fontos eszköze az utazásnak, világlátásnak, de mi eddig nem utazhattunk (vasfüggöny, stb). Gazdaságilag is zártak bennünket, üzleti kapcsolataink sem voltak olyan irányúak, hogy szükség lett volna a nyelvtudásra (állami külföldi üzleti kapcsolataink voltak).

Az orosz nyelv kötelező volt, és tanítása teljesen eredménytelen. Lehet, hogy ez is befolyásoló tényezője a mai állapotoknak a nyelvtanulásban.

Több támogatást kellene kapni az iskoláknak a nyelvoktatás fejlesztésére.

Az előírt tantervek és a tanári szabadság helyes arányainak betartása mellett, az óraszám növelésével, a tanárok anyagi és társadalmi elismerésével nagy dolgokat lehetne elérni.

A tanárjelölt hallgatók felkészültsége nem kielégítő. Főleg a fent már említett okokban látom a problémát.

Interview 4

Teacher 4 has a college degree in English from a three-year programme, which she has recently upgraded to a university degree. She has been teaching English for five years in a gimnázium.

Tanulók tanulási szokásairól.

Mostanában sokat szoktam a szavakat tesztelni, és azt tapasztalom, hogy hajlamosak csak a legújabb szavakat tanulni, mert, gondolom, általános iskolában arra szoktatták őket, hogy mindig csak a legújabb szavakból kérdezték őket.

Te mindig mindet kérdezed?

Igen, mindig, a tanév vége felé is mindenből iratok. Sőt, még a másik évben is. Sosem úgy szoktam, hogy most veszek egy olvasmányt vagy történetet és csak azt tesztelem, hanem mindent. Ez ellen lázadoznak. Meg azt mondják, hogy erre ők nem emlékeznek, mert régen vettük... Mert nem ismételnék, csak a legfrissebb anyagot nézik át, más tárgyból is.

Szerinted miért, ha egyszer tudják, hogy nálad például más rendszer van?

Mert nincs idejük. Más tárgyból is sokat kell tanulni. Szerintem a fő probléma, hogy nem jól osztják be az idejüket. Utolsó percben fognak hozzá, és csak tűzoltásra van idő.

És hogy milyen technikával teszik mindezt?

Letakarják, és amit tudnak, pipát tesznek mellé. Ez tőlem származik. A szülők szerint ez teljesen új, az általánosban ezt nem tanulták meg. Nem is tanultak szavakat, nem kérdezték őket. Az írásbelit meg úgy szokták, hogy megcsinálja a feladatot, utána a szavakat megtanulja... Tudnak-e tanulni? Szerintem ezt már megválaszoltam. A fő probléma, hogy nem ismételnék.

És a jók?

Aki jobban érdeklődik a nyelv iránt. Meg a jobb képességű gyerekek több időt és energiát fordítanak a nyelvre. Mert aki gyenge, úgy van vele, hogy neki úgyis mindegy, nem megy. Nincsenek sikerélményeik.

Ha lenne valamikor tanulásmódszertani orientálás, az jó lenne?

Én szoktam nekik mondani elsőben, de nem fogadják meg, sokan mennek a saját fejük után. Az általános iskola 8 éve alatt ami kialakult, azon nem tudunk változtatni. Én különösen a nyelvtannal kapcsolatban tudok nekik ötleteket adni. Főleg azt, hogy mondatokba tanulják meg a szerkezeteket. Gyakori, jönnek azzal dolgozat után, hogy ő teljesen megtanulta a nyelvtankönyvet, és mégsem sikerült a dolgozat. Fel tudják mondani a szabályt, tudják képezni az igeidőt, de nem képesek alkalmazni azt. Azt szoktam mondani, hogy mondatokba rakva tanulják meg és próbálja elképzelni és megérteni, nem csak bemagolni, betanulni a szabályt. Meg mindig szoktam szemléltetni nekik. Eljátszuk az igeidőt például.

Valahol az egyetemen vagy a három évesen volt-e tanulásmódszertani kurzus? Te nemrég végeztél az egyetemet. Volt ilyesmi?

Nem, de hasznos lenne. Létezik ilyen?...Biztos jó lenne, mert van olyan, hogy vesszük egy csoporttal a present perfectet, de már századjára. Általánosban tanulták,

itt vettük nem tudom hányszor, és a szimpla képzést sem tudom beléjük verni, egyszerűen nem jegyzik meg. Ilyenkor nem tudom, hogy ez nekem a csődöm vagy mi van, de ilyenkor biztos jól jönne nekem egy ilyen fajta kis tudás.

És mit csinálsz ilyenkor egyébként, az ilyen osztályokkal?

Nincs időm már több ezzel foglalkozni, tovább megyünk, kész. Mondtam nekik, hogy nekem erre már nincs időm. Bármit csinálok, rajzolok a táblára, elmagyarázom, eljártsszuk és nem. Most mondtam nekik, hogy mostmár nincs mese, dolgozatot írnak belőle. Hátha...

Eredményes nyelvtanulás feltételei, tényezői?

Az eredményességet úgy tudom lemérni, hogy van itt szerencsére egy amerikai cserediák, és egy évet itt tölt, augusztus vége óta van itt, és már tud magyarul. És eredményes az a diák, aki tud vele beszélni, tud kérdéseket feltenni, megértetni magát, tehát tudja használni a nyelvet, tud vele kommunikálni. Tehát az édes kevés, hogy valaki tudja a szabályokat, miközben nem tudja alkalmazni.

Mik ehhez a feltételek?

Motiváltság. Legyen motivált, lássa hogyha külföldre megy, vagy jön egy külföldi, akkor tud kezdeni valamit a nyelvtudásával, mert amíg csak velem beszélget angolul, addig nem biztos hogy ez motiválja. Úgy látom, hogy a kicsik, a kezdők, sokkal bátrabbak, sokkal jobban merik használni a nyelvet. Beszélgetnek ezzel az amerikaival, jobban mint a haladók, akik általános óta tanulnak. A tagozatosok, akik már folyékonyan beszélnek, nem mernek megszólalni, mert félnek, hogy butaságot mondanak, meg hibáznak.

Miért alakul ez ki, és miért nem alakult ki a kicsiknél? Miattad?

Nem hiszem, én magamról is tudom, hogy ha már többet tudok, jobban odafigyelek arra, amit mondok, mint az elején. Lehet, hogy amikor én nem vagyok ott különben, akkor bátrabban beszélnek...

Jó, tehát akkor az egyik feltétel a motiváltság. És még?

Érzék is kell, jövőbeli célok, tervek, és érje el azt, hogy elmegy moziba, feliratos filmet néz és örömet okoz neki, hogy megértette, vagy egy dalszöveget, vagy az, hogy egy könyvet, újságot el tud olvasni.

Iskolai feltételek?

Én amit hiányolok, nincsenek TV-k, videók, a körülményeink nem a legjobbak. Szerintem az óraszám sem, a heti 3 óra kevés ahhoz, hogy olyan plusz anyagokat felhasználjunk, amivel érdekesebbé lehetne tenni az oktatást. Sokkal több magnózás is kellene.

Kritériumok?

Nekem a jó mindig az, aki bátran meri használni nyelvet, helyesen használja, kommunikáció képes. Gyenge, aki nem mer megszólalni, és sokszor van olyan, aki annyira fél, hogy nem mer megszólalni és azt sem mondja, amit tud.

Ezekkel mit csinálsz?

Beszéltetem, és fokozatosan hozzászoktatom a beszédhez. Motyog szegény, zavartan mosolyog, de nem hagyom annyiban, felteszem másként is a kérdést, egyszerűbben,

a többiek segítenek. Csak elkezdtek kinevetni őket az osztálytársak, gonoszkodtak velük. Akkor megbeszéltük, hogy az nem szép dolog... Meg gyenge, aki a nyelvtant többszöri elmagyarázásra sem tudja használni. De igazából itt arról van szó, hogy csak nem érdekli őket. Mert nem igaz, hogy ennyit nem tud megtanulni egy gimnazista. Érdektelen.

Milyennek látod a nyelvoktatás helyzetét?

Ahhoz képest, ahogy én tanultam, mindenképpen javul. Ahogy engem tanítottak, mi egyáltalán nem beszéltünk angolul. Csak olvastunk, feladatokat oldottunk meg, passzívan.

Akkor te hogy tanultál meg ilyen jól?

Magántanártól és külföldön. Szerencsés vagyok, mert a nagynéném kint él Amerikában... A tankönyvek, anyagok általában sokkal jobbak, mint annak idején. A fiatalok körében, hát, amit hallok, magántanítványaimtól is, nagyon sok tanár nem beszélgeti a tanulókat. Nem tudom, hogy azért, mert az megerőltető, vagy mert maga sem érzi biztosnak magát, nem tudom, de minden tanítványom, nevesebb iskolákból is, azt mondja, hogy nem beszélnek órán. Játszanak, meg minden, de beszéd nincs. Szerintem az oktatás még mindig nem olyan, mint kellene lenni. Az általánosból is úgy jönnek ki, hogy hiába tanult 6-7 évig, egyszerűen semmit nem tudnak. Nem tudom... egyáltalán nem beszélnek. Most is van egy tanítványom, annyi az angol beszéd a tanár részéről, hogy sit down, open your books. Kész. Csak a feladatok vannak utána. És tudod, akik nem gyakorolják, ha elmennek egy munkahelyre egyetem vagy gimnázium után, nem beszélnek, nem mernek megszólalni, és utána már minél idősebb az ember, annál nehezebb lesz.

Az interjú elején erről nem beszéltünk, a tanulási stratégia és stílus dologról.

A tanulási stílusról hallottam az egyetemen. Hogy van aki vizuális meg hallás utáni, vagy hogy csoportban vagy egyénileg tanul jobban? Igen, ezeket hallottam az egyetemen.

Azon kívül, hogy ilyen típusok vannak, mit tanultatok még?

Hát csak ezt, meg jellemeztük a csoportokat, hogy ki hogy tanul meg dolgokat... és nekünk kellene a gyerekeknek segíteni megtalálni, milyen stílusuk, rájönni és akkor annak megfelelően tanulnának.

És ezzel foglalkozol az iskolában?

Áh, nincs időm. Az az igazság, hogyha lenne, érdekelne is, megnézném, de olyan sok az anyag és sok osztályban csak három óra van... abban lehetetlen. Egyébként 26 órában van egy héten, szinte minden nap 6. És éppen most jelentették be, hogy az iskola csődben van, így mégcsak túlórákat sem fizetnek. Te mennyit foglalkoznál a tanulási stílusokkal ilyen körülmények között?

Interview 5

Teacher 5 has a university degree in English and Hungarian. She has been teaching English for over 20 years. Most of her teaching experience has been gathered at the secondary level, though she worked in a primary school for the first several years of her career. She is a trained mentor, but does not work as one at the moment. She started an MEd course in mentoring in Manchester, but she is not going to finish it. Besides the mentor course, she has attended a number of others since she has taught.

Tanulók tanulási szokásairól.

Amit tudok, azt egyrészt onnan tudom, hogy személyesen beszélgettem el velük akkor, amikor még idejöttek az iskolába, kimondottan a tanulási szokásaikról és arról, hogy milyen módszert mentenek át az általános iskolából. Másrészt én is csináltam egy kérdőívet velük akkor, amikor harmadikosok voltak. Ez egy kiválasztási technikára épülő kérdőív volt, tehát meg volt ajánlva a válasz és akkor húzd alá, hogy neked melyik a legszimpatikusabb, tehát nem önállóan kellett megfogalmazniuk a tanulási módszereiket. És hogy ezt mennyire lehet hitelesnek elfogadni, hát, volt egy kis feltételezésem, hogy szerepjáték a dolog. Az is volt mögötte, bár név nélkül adhatták be. Elméletben egyébként több mindent tudnak arról, hogy mit kéne csinálni, mint ami a gyakorlatban tapasztalható. A tanulási módszerről egyébként annyit, hogy most nálunk elindult egy tendencia, hogy adjunk a belépő, elsős gyerekeknek egyfajta alapot tanulásmódszertanból. Egy harminc órás tanfolyamot, minden osztályban. Egy hétig az év elején ők erdei iskolában vannak, és ott kapnak egy harminc órás tanfolyamot, minden nap 5-6 óra, a 9-esek meg a 7-esek.

Azt a felmérést, amit az előbb említettél, minden elsőssel meg szoktad csinálni, vagy csak azokkal akkor?

Amikor úgy kapom őket, hogy elsőtől, akkor egy gyors interjú keretében megkérdezem őket órán, hogy milyen szótanulási módszereket tudnának ajánlani, és akkor úgy egymást hallgatva felrémlik nekik, amit a korábbi nyelvtanárok mondtak nekik. Meg olyan tankönyv van mostmár, azt hiszem, a Cambridge English for Schools, aminek az elején a gyerekeknek kimondottan jó tanácsként, ötletként felsorolja, hogy szavakat milyen módon memorizáljunk. Ezzel két legyet ütök egy csapásra, attól függően, hogy milyen szinten vannak persze, mert angolul is van, meg végig is lehet menni a módszereken, és akkor amit ők mondanak, azt próbálom használni a későbbiek során. De az nem olyan nagyon mélyre ható dolog, hogy aztán később nagyobb lehetne rá építeni.

A kérdőíves felmérés ötlete honnan volt, meg maga a kérdőív?

Még az MEd-re csináltam, egy angol vagy amerikai módszertani könyvből vettem ki annak idején. A szerző neve most nem ugrik be, ilyenek voltak benne, hogy amikor tanulsz, szól-e a zene, meg ilyenek. Na, és miután megnéztük ezt, akkor csináltam egy statisztikát, nemek szerint, ami különben abszolút nem számított, és itt éreztem, hogy nem egészen hiteles a dolog. Mintha sejtették volna, hogy milyen választ kellett megadni, nem voltak egészen őszinték.

Miért, volt jó válasz, meg rossz válasz?

Nem tudom már, de azt tudom hogy akkor határozottan úgy éreztem, hogy ezt fenntartással kell kezelni.

És az egyéb tanulási dolgaikról ezek szerint az interjúból tájékozódasz?

Ige. Azt kimondottan nehezményezik, hogy például nem értik, hogy a memoriter mire való. Meg a különféle logikai műveletek nevét ugyan nem ismerték, hogy most analizálok, meg van olyan, hogy indukció, dedukció, ezek a korábbiak során már valahogy beépültek a tevékenységükbe, csak nevet nem tudtak adni a dolognak. Amikor szóba került, hogy matematika órán hogy közelítesz egy dologhoz, vagy magyar órán, akkor rájöttek, hogy tulajdonképpen logikai készséget viszek át az egyik óráról a másikra.

Szóval nálatok ez a tanulásmódszertani képzés mostmár beindult, intézményesen?

Igen, az a hapi fogja tartani, az az AKG-s (Alternatív Közgazdasági Gimnázium), aki a könyvet írta. Ő tartott nekünk, a tanároknak egy gyorstalpalót, mi meg továbbvisszük a gyerekeknek. Van hozzá könyv, meg munkafüzet. Tanulásmódszertan a címe. Hát, akiket összeválogattak, mindenféle szakterületről volt benne tanár. A tanárokat felkérték és erre önkéntesen mindenki azt mondta, hogy hogya, pont ezt vártam. Nagyon jópofa egyébként, csak más a dolog egy osztállyal, meg ilyen one-to-one felállásban, ahogy Oroszlányék csinálják az AKG-ban. 2-3 gyerekkel más, mint 30-al... Én idén nem próbáltam ki, mert nem voltak elsőseim, a negyedikesekkel meg a kéttannyelvűseimmel meg nem akartam most ezzel így visszemenni. Egyébként minden fajta készséget mér, minden fajta produktív meg reprodukív dolgot, nem csak a nyelvtanulást... emocionális ráhangolódást, meg hogy illeszkedsz be egy közösségbe, hogy tudsz ráhangolódni a másokkal való együttműködésre. Jópofa dolog ez, van jövője ... ha a tanárnak belefér az idejébe. Mert iszonyatos felkészülést kíván, és ráadásul a kezdeti visszajelzések nem lesznek nagyon jók, mert a gyerek show műsorként éli meg az egészet, és majd hosszú idő után lehet lemérni, hogy mi maradt meg. Meg a heti 22, 24, 25 óra mellett hogy tudom ezt beépíteni, nem tudom. Mert az sem mindegy, hogy a napnak melyik szakaszában csinálom. Még ki kell alakulni, hogy az év elején lezavarjuk-e ezt a 30 órát, vagy minden héten legyen X óra. Már próbálták azt, hogy hetente egy óra ki lett nevezve tanulásmódszertannak. Az osztályfőnök heti egy ilyet tartott az osztályában, de ez annyira elaprózódik így....

És amikor ez még nem volt, hogy jöttek a gyerekek az általánosból?

Esküszöm, hogy ezt még az alsóban csinálták a legjobban, amikor még csak az aznapi könyv volt velük. Amit aznap tanultak, el lehetett mélyíteni a napköziben, de ahogy felnőnek, úgy döntenek, hogy... valahogy megfordul a gyerekek hozzáállása.

Van olyan gyerek, aki azért nem tud haladni, mert nem tud tanulni?

Pesze. Most 4-ben fogalmazódott meg az osztályomban pont egy ilyen jelenség, hogy egy gyerek, aki nem tud mit kezdeni a történelem anyaggal, hogy mondja már fel magának, és akkor jobban memorizálja. És akkor a többiek azt mondták, hogy jó, ez a spanyol viasz, én meg csak néztem, hogy gratulálok, hogy 18 éves korra itt tartson valaki. Ezt elég döbbenetesen vettem tudomásul.

Sikeres nyelvtanulás tényezői?

Ha a gyerek annyira van motiválva, hogy a saját bőrén érzi, hogy milyen jó, hogy eljutok egy bizonyos szintig, hogy van egy visszajelzése, pl. egy nyelvvizsga diploma, és a gyerek egyedül dönt úgy, hogy ezt meg akarja csinálni, akkor ennél jobb tényezőt nem lehet kitalálni. Amikor a nyelv heti 3 órára szűkül le, és a gyerek

mégis meg akarja csinálni a nyelvvizsgát, akkor vele eszméletlenül lehet haladni 3 órában is. Ha kis csoport van, 12, 13 gyerek, azokkal lehet haladni, meg ha az ú.n. külső tényezők megfelelőek, tehát nem zajos a terem, lehet mozogni, felállni, van olyan felszereltség, ami a figyelmét leköti, akkor az jó. Meg ha van igénye, hogy ne csak a tanárt használja, igénye van, hogy a tanáron kívül más forrásokhoz is nyúljon. Internet elé ül, kivesz egy magazint, mert olyan téma van benne, ami őt érdekli, meg akar tudni belőle valamit... én legfeljebb az irányt mondhatom neki, a többi az ő dolga. Van olyan gyerekeim, aki csak az internettel foglalkozik, ott szörfözget, és minden angol tudását onnan szerzi. Az iskolai dolgokkal aztán persze elhajolgat, és hát sajnos érettségizni még egyelőre kell. Tehát ezek a külső dolgok, meg a belső stimulus a legfontosabbak szerintem. Na most, ezt én fel tudom mérni, hogy a gyerek mire akarja majd használni az angolt, van ugye needs analysis, de azon túl, hogy azt mondja, hogy külföldre akar férjhez menni és akkor ezt én tudom, én ezzel nem tudok mit kezdeni. Mennyire kell akkor neki tudni pl. a present perfectet?

Mi van, ha abszolút nem motivált?

Akkor jön az, hogy a tanár tegyen meg mindent, keltse fel az érdeklődését más nemzetek kultúrája iránt, szokásai iránt. Hogy tudjon azonosulni, legyen toleranciája, tudja elfogadni, hogy azok úgy fogják a villát... most azt csináltam velük pl. Thanksgiving alkalomra, hogy vittem nekik egy receptet sütőtökből, és persze beígértem az 5-öst is annak, aki kipróbálja. Ketten csinálták meg, mi meg meg is ettük... Mit mondjak, el voltam ragadtatva.

Mennyire fontos a nyelvérzék szerinted?

Hát, akinek nincs, annak gondja van, de a hátrány behozható, csak több időt kell fordítani a tanulásra. Van aki ráérez, hogy kell tanulni, és van akinek mondhatod ezerszer, hogy pl. egy szót nem izoláltan tanulunk, mert az semmire nem jó, hanem kapcsolatban, de van, akinek ezt trenírozni kell, van, akinek nem.

Top és poor gyerek nálad?

Akkor top, ha képes angolul gondolkozni. Én akkor leborulok előtte. Akinek nem kell magyarázni, hogy ez most formal vagy informal style, ez egy alapvető intelligencia, ha egy gyerek azt nem érti meg, hogy ez most hivatalos vagy egy baráti levél, és ez különbség, akkor ott vért kell izzadni.

És aki kezdő? Az nem nagyon tud még idegen nyelven gondolkodni. Ott ki a top?

Vegyük akkor úgy, hogy akinek van alapvető nyelvi intelligenciája. A jeggyel ez nem függ össze, azzal annyi féle készséget mérek, hogy az esetleges is sokszor. De ha a szavakat tudja, a nyelvtant tudja használni, és érzi a nyelvi szituációkat, akkor top. Hogy ki poor, az nem állandó, shiftelnek sokan a medium meg a poor között. Aki még mindig ott tart, hogy az angol miért így, ha egyszer a magyar úgy mondja, ez elsősorban fenőtteknél szokott előjönni, az poor. Szóval ez a fajta merevség nem jó, amikor nem képes bevenni, hogy az egyik nyelv logikája szerint így vagy úgy vannak a dolgok, az elvonatkoztatás hiánya.

A statisztikákról azt gondolom, hogy mindig vannak heti 2-3 órás csoportok. Ez egy üvegházi dolog, kikérdezem a házfeladatot, és a gyerek abszolút nincs arra rákényszerítve, hogy velem kommunikáljon angolul, ugyanaz az anyanyelvünk. Akkor már sokkal jobban jár, ha... nálunk vannak ilyen cserekapcsolatok, holland, német, mostmár Manchesterben is, ha kikerül valahova. Az nagyot lendített a dolgon,

annyira élvezték, hogy el tudták mondani a gondolataikat, puszogtak, pletykáltak. Hát, ezt a heti 2-3 órában nemigen élik át. Ezt nem tudom kicsiholni. Aki meg leérettségizik, hát ugye, az egy dolog, hogy hogyan, és utána az egyetemen kezdi előlről vagy teljesen elhagyja a nyelvet. Minden attól függ, mennyire van rászorítva, hogy használja a nyelvet.

Te, mint tanulásmódszertanban járatos, másrészt mint valamikori gyakorló mentor, hogy látod a jelöltek felkészültségét? Mennyire képesek kezelni a gyerekek tanulással összefüggő problémáit?

Semennyire. Egy hallgató erre nem képes, de nem is lehet, meg nem is kell neki ezzel foglalkozni. A gyakorlás alatt mások a prioritások.

APPENDIX M

Excerpts from SQ2

For the full description of the specific strategies referred to in the abbreviations in this Appendix, see Appendix H (Oxford's entire taxonomy of learner strategies). For example, 'memo A1' refers to *memory strategies*, subgroup 'A', which is *creating mental linkages*, and strategy 1 within that subgroup, which is 'grouping'. 'Soc B1' stands for the broad group of *social strategies*, subgroup *cooperating with others*, individual strategy *cooperating with peers*.

Examples for memory (memo) strategies in the respondents' answers:

- „Csoportokra osztom a szavakat, annyit amit akkor egyszerre meg tudok tanulni...” (A1).
- „Szavakat mindig mondatba rakva tanulok” (A3).
- „Általában 'lefényképezem' a fejemben az ismeretlen szavakat...” (B1).
- „Valamivel összekapcsolom az új angol szavakat, pl. filmcím, együttesnév, zeneszám, bármi” (B1, B4).
- „A szavakat összekapcsolom alakjuk miatt, meg a hangzásuk alapján” (B1, B4).
- „Amiket nehezen tudok megtanulni, különleges hangzásával kötök valamihez, egy másik szóhoz vagy bármihez...” (B4).
- „A szavak tanulására egy módszerem van, a folyamatos ismétlés” (C1).

Examples for cognitive (cog) strategies in the respondents' answers:

- „(A szavakat) Ismétlegetem, olvasom, megpróbálom felidézni” (A1).
- „(A kiejtés gyakorlására) Többször ejtem ki a szót hangosan” (A1).
- „Próbálom szépen hangsúlyozni a szöveget, amit olvasok” (A2).
- „Többször átolvasom az elméleti részt, és utána feladatokat oldok meg az új nyelvtanra” (A4).
- „Nem sokat teszek az olvasási készségem fejlesztéséért, maximum annyit, hogy a könyvből elolvasom azokat a szövegeket, amiket még nem vettünk...” (A5).
- „Többször ülök le otthon, és elolvasok idegennyelvű szövegeket. Ez szerintem fejleszti a kiejtést” (A5).
- „Hallás után próbálok leírni szavakat” (A5).
- „(Ismeretlen szó esetén) előveszem a kéziszótárt, és kikeresem a szót” (B2).
- „Nyelvtankönyvben utánanézek a szabályoknak” (B2).
- „Nézem a példamondatot és megpróbálok rájönni a logikájára...” (C2).
- „Ágrajzot készítek, a magyar nyelv alapjaival. Ezzel áttekinthetővé teszem (a nyelvtant) és később már csak ezt kell felidézni” (C3, D3).

Examples for compensation (comp) strategies in the respondents' answers:

- „A szövegkörnyezetből megpróbálom kikövetkeztetni az ismeretlen szó jelentését... (és ez vagy bejön, vagy nem)” (A1).
- „Megszólalok: 'I don't understand'” (B2).
- „Vagy körülírom más angol szavakkal, vagy elmutogatom” (B8, B3).
- „Általában körülírom azt a szót, ami nem jut eszembe” (B8).
- „Valami hasonlót mondok” (B8).
- „Körülírom, más nemzetközi nyelveken elmondom, vagy elmutogatom vagy lerajzolólok” (B2, B8).

Examples for metacognitive (meta) strategies in the respondents' answers:

„Először is órán mindig alaposan odafigyelek...” (A2).

„A német nyelvvizsga után emelt óraszámban fogok angolt tanulni, és különóra járni” (B3).

„Megpróbálok könnyen érthető könyveket (szépirodalom) szerezni, ezekben nagyjából tudom, mi van... (B4, B6).

„MTV-n nézek angol feliratú filmeket, zenéket” (B6).

„Szoktam angol nyelvű leveleket írni, életrajzot, fogalmazásokat hobbiból” (B6).

„Nem mindig veszem észre a hibáimat, de törekszem rá, hogy azonnal kijavítsam” (C1, C2).

„(A szótanulás végén) letakarom az angol szavakat, és sorban vagy összevissza olvasva a magyar szavakat, visszaidézem az angolt, így ellenőrzöm, hogy tudom-e már” (C2).

„Legtöbbször látom, hogy rosszul mondtam valamit, ilyenkor kényszerítem magam hogy visszahalljam és kijavítom” (C1, C2).

Examples for affective (aff) strategies in the respondents' answers:

„(Ha izgulok) Lazítok és mosolygok” (A3).

„Vigyorogva javítom ki, amikor rosszat mondtam” (A3).

„Olyan dolgokkal jutalmazom magam, amit szeretek, pl. csoki, McDonald's, fagy, édesség” (B3).

„A jó vagy rossz eredménynek egy ideig örülök, vagy szomorú vagyok miatta, de mindig elmondom valakinek” (C4).

Examples for social (soc) strategies in the respondents' answers:

„Megkérdezem a tanárnőt az órán, vagy a magántanárt” (A1).

„Ha gond van a házival, megkérdezem a kolliban a szobatársaimat, mert nekik már van nyelvvizsgájuk” (A1).

„Néha szobatársaimmal gyakorlom az angol beszélgetést” (B1).

„Sokat beszélgetek angol anyanyelvű emberekkel, vagy poénból a barátaimmal néha csak angolul beszélgetünk” (B1, B2).

Examples for clusters of strategies reported for one task:

„(A szavakat) ismételve, majd pár nap múlva megpróbálok felidézni. Ha nem sikerül, újra elkezdem olvasgatni, ismételve” (cog A1, meta C2, memo C1)

„Kiválasztok kb. 10 szót, elolvasom hangosan, kiejtés szerint hozzámmondok a magyar megfelelőjét, közben megjegyzem a leírását... később magamtól felkérdezem, vagy egy külön lapra írva a magyar szavakat egyenként kitöltöm és leosztályozom” (memo A1, memo B1, cog A1, memo C1, meta C2).

„(A nyelvtant) jó néhányszor elolvasom, átnézem... gyakorlásnak meg ott vannak a mondatok” (cog A1, memo C1, cog A4).

„Rendszeresen nézegetem a szótárakat, a nyarat magántanárnál fogom tölteni, most meg internetről letöltött szövegeket fordítok magyarra” (cog A5, cog B2, meta B3, meta B6).

„Megpróbálok a többi szövegből rájönni, hogy mi a szó jelentése. Ha nem megy, előkerül a szótár” (comp A1, cog B2).