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HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS LEARNING STRATEGIES: AN INSIGHT INTO CZECH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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Abstract

The paper is a presentation of key empirical findings related to Czech teacher-oriented higher education students´ learning strategies in the process of teacher-oriented students´/prospective teachers´ education. As to methodology and structure of the employed questionnaire, the survey is inspired by topic-related questionnaires and surveys, and further empirical contextualisation. Foreign language learning strategies are shown from the perspective of the Faculty of Education University of Hradec Králové students. The presented findings provide an insight into selected conditions crucial in relation to the learning performance and learning-friendly conditions. Based on the focused empirical findings both the presentation and paper reveal how teacher-oriented students/prospective teachers in the sample view their use of foreign language learning strategies, to what extent the respondents employ the conceptualised foreign language learning strategies, also in relation to some other learning conditions and predictors of potential success.

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Keywords: Foreign language learning strategies, need for successful performance, need for failure escape, performance-oriented motivation.

1. Introduction

Foreign language learning strategies are often viewed as *operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information* in foreign language learning (Wenden & Rubin, 1987 as cited in Vlčková, Berger, & Völkle, 2013). This is valid generally as well as in case of prospective teachers within the pregraduate education at the higher education level. As to foreign language learning strategies there might be identified some more joint features, and for example referring to Cohen and Macaro, 2007 as cited in Vlčková et al., 2013) the strategies are "intentional, and conscious procedures by which a learner reaches his or her learning goal, they do not occur in isolation but in sequences or clusters and the quality of their orchestration is important for learning" (p. 94). It is no doubt that foreign language learning strategies determine language acquisition. However, due to rather numerous approaches, there are rather numerous   classifications of the strategies. In case of the Czech prospective teachers of foreign languages the focus on foreign language learning strategies has deeper roots also in the character of the Czech as well as European educational system, Europe-oriented school curriculum (see the Framework Educational Programmes that articulate the learning competency as one of the key competencies, including the field of foreign languages. Other very important sets of strategies, skills, attitudes and knowledge for life in the field of foreign language learning should include *´critical thinking skills´*, *´culture oriented learning´*, *´intercultural sensitivity´* and motivation as a basic principle.

´Intercultural sensitivity´ in the Czech education belongs to quite new concepts in the Czech Republic and should be viewed also in a wider context of the Czech school curricular reform undergoing since the beginning of the century. The key change aspects include: framework educational programmes (FEPs), school educational programmes (SEPs), pupils´ key competences, electronic evidence of pupils, statelevel of maturita examination, school optimization (merging and closing down of schools), school self-evaluation, teaching standards, innovative teaching technology, inclusive teaching practice. The Czech school curricular reform might be divided into three stages (Janík, 2013): 1. systemic reconstruction (1999 – 2004), 2. general implementation (2005 – 2011), 3. reform modification (2012 - …); for more details on the stages see for example Vrabcová, (2015) and Vrabcová and Menšík (2016).

Motivation, particularly, performance-oriented motivation accompanies the learning strategies in this paper. For more on *´critical thinking skills´* and *´culture oriented learning´* in the Czech and Slovakian setting see for example Suk & Černíková (2018), Horváthová (2018). Aimimg at the Czech prospective teachers´ motivation for foreign language learning (due to the tight relation) some questions arise:

- *Do the students enrolled in teacher-oriented programmes learn foreign languages more because they want to communicate better with their friends abroad, or because they simply want to get better no matter whether at the level of personality or a foreign language acquisition?*

- *Do the students learn foreign language more because they want to succeed, or because they do not want to fail? Or are there other reasons that play a key role?*

Teacher-oriented students are various and numerous[1], and they differ at learning as well in the ways of properly individualised motivation. Moreover, the students´ learning and motivational profiles are under

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[1] And a bit complicated as a consequence of implementing the objectived of the Bologne Process wchich even in the Czech Republic brought the diferentiation of teacher-oriented study programmes (apart from the programmes for primary education teachers). „*Structuring of these studies is highly problematic, merely due to the fact that, under the*

a change; evidence of the occurring change, inter-generational shifts and transformations appears to be omnipresent throughout various studies at all levels of education. The 1995 – 2005 8 % decrease in students who declare agreement with statements marking the quality and active teaching/learning appear to support the omnipresent idea that students´ needs, expectations and profiles have been changing.[2] This paper provides an insight into how a sample of teacher-oriented students, e.g. prospective teachers, approach their own foreign language learning in terms of learning strategies as well as in terms of what drives them forward. Relations and some success predictors, key motivation factors, are monitored and introduced too. The paper works with some of the empirical results from Valtová and Juklová survey (2019) that was realised among students of teacher oriented programmes/prospective teachers at the Faculty of Education University of Hradec Králové.

2.   Problem Statement

Effective learning strategies become one of the key goals, and teachers should be ready to teach the foreign language learning strategies, to guide the pupils, and facilitate their learning, and prospective teachers/teacher-oriented students specializing in foreign languages constitute a key agent in their pupils´ foreign language learning process[3]. Prospective (as well as in-service) teachers unaware of their foreign language learning strategies and those aware of the foreign language learning strategies only inadequately represent a risky factor/condition that might lower the effectiveness of the foreign language learning process. The phenomenon of ´awareness´ and ´metacogntion´ becomes crucial; similarly compare its importance in case of intercultural competence in accordance to Vrabcová and Menšík (2016) or critical thinking skills according to Suk and Černíková (2018):

> The first aim of any teacher should be to make students aware of how they process and analyse information and make sense of the world in general. Listening to classmates name their own individual thought processes will also make our students aware of both similarities and differences in their approaches. To combat passivity and laziness, metacognition can serve as a bridge between complet novice and skilled critical thinker, (p. 27).

The paper does not aim to overview all theories of foreign language learning strategies and relevant classifications; the paper applies the classification by Oxford (1989, 2003). The survey provides an insight into how teacher-oriented students, e.g. prospective teachers, approach their own foreign language learning

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[2] conditions of pedagogical studies in the Czech Republic, a Bachelor's degree is linked with almost zero practical change in the job market. As a result, every Bachelor's graduate is forced to continue to obtain a Master's degree due to the non-recognition in practice, irrespective of his/her abilities and personality and also regardless of the required number of graduates in the educational terrain." (Juklová, et al., 2015, pp. 11-12)

[2] Examples of the statements: ´Most of the offered lectures and seminars are taught in a quality and interesting manner. (1995: 78.4 %, 2005: 67.8 %). ´Lectures provide space for students to voice their opinions and to take part in discussion´ (1995: 65.1 %, 2005: 59.1 %). (Juklová et al, 2015, p. 47)

[3] For some studies illustrating the positive effect of consistent usage of learning strategies and relation to good foreign (or second) language learners see for example: Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1975; Rubin, 1975, Abraham & Vann, 1987; Chamot et al., 1996, Green and Oxford, 1995, Nunan, 1991, In Oxford, 2003, pp. 10 – 11. Less able learners used strategies in a random, unconnected, and uncontrolled manner (Abraham & Vann, 1987; Chamot et al., 1996), while more effective learners showed careful orchestration of strategies, targeted in a relevant, systematic way at specific foreign language tasks. (In Oxford, 2003, p. 10). According to Nunan (1991 In Oxford, 2003, p. 10, more effective learners differed from less effective learners in their greater ability to reflect on and articulate their own language learning processes.

in terms of learning strategies, and in terms of what motivates them. *What foreign language learning strategies and motivation types do the students/prospective teachers at the Faculty of Education sample use?* Relations and some success predictors are monitored.

2.1. Main research concepts

The main research concepts: a) learning success, b) performance-oriented motivation, c) individually perceived learning experience, d) individually perceived learning-friendly conditions, e) foreign language learning strategy:

a) Learning success: This concept is viewed as a weighted mean of school results in the foreign language, in a particular semester. The values are used to differentiate two types of students: more successful (with the weighted mean 1.5 or lower), and the less successful students (with the weighted mean 1.6 or higher). Similarly, the students were assessed as to the overall school results in accordance to the *Study Code of the University of Hradec Králové*. As to the sample (n = 102 students), 37 % have been evaluated as more successful and 63 % as less successful students.

b) Performance-oriented motivation: Within the survey the performance-oriented motivation has been tested by questionnaire items inspired by Hrabal and Pavelková (2011). There are differentiated two types of performance-oriented motivation. According to the applied view students are differentiated as to two types of inner need: need for successful performance (NSP), and need for failure escape (NFE).

c) Individually perceived learning experience: This construct is based in the questionnaire CEQ (*Course Experience Questionnaire*, Ramsden (1991), and adaptation for Czech university students, by Juklová, Chvál and Michek (submitted). The questionnaire determines how a student perceives the instruction with a focus on several aspects that turn out to be the key ones in relation to school results: good instruction, clear goals and standards, adequate assessment and load.

d) Individually perceived learning-friendly conditions: This invariable is represented by one questionnaire item where students are asked to consider several conditions to select those with deeper influence upon their successful learning (options: internal motivation, external motivation – threat/reward, environment – family/friends/school, teacher, talent/natural ability, skills and abilities, attitudes, learning styles and strategies, school results, other).

e) Foreign language learning strategy: This construct within the survey is inspired by Oxford (1989, 2003) SILL and questionnaire *Strategie učení se cizímu jazyku (lnventory of Foreign Language Learning Strategies* by Vlčková (2007, 2010). This inventory monitors strategies that are used by students. For the overview of the strategies see Table 01.

Table 01. Overview of foreign language learning strategies (Oxford, 1989, pp. 18–21, modified, Vlčková, 2007, pp. 212–213)

Strategy groups	Subgroups	Specific strategies
MEMORY-RELATED STRATEGIES	Creating mental linkages	Grouping Associating/elaborating Placing new words into context
	Applying images and sounds	Using imagery Semantic mapping Using key words Representing sounds in memory

	Reviewing well	Structured reviewing
	Employing action	Using physical response or sensation
		Using mechanical techniques
COGNITIVE STRATEGIES	Practising	Repeating
		Formally practising with sounds and writing systems
		Recognising und using formulas and patterns
		Recombining
		Practising naturalistically
	Receiving and sending messages	Getting the idea quickly
		Using resources for receiving and sending messages
	Analysing and reasoning	Reasoning deductively
		Analysing expressions
		Analysing contrastively (across languages)
		Translating
		Transferring
	Creating structures for input and output	Taking notes
		Summarising
		Highlighting
COMPENSATION STRATEGIES	Guessing intelligently	Using linguistic clues
		Using other clues
	Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	Switching to the mother tongue
		Getting help
		Using mime or gesture
		Avoiding communication partially or totally
		Selecting the topics
		Adjusting or approximating the message
		Coining words
		Using a circumlocution or synonym
METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES	Centering your learning	Overviewing and linking with already known material
		Paying attention
		Delaying speech production to focus on listening
	Arranging and planning your learning	Finding out about language learning
		Organising
		Setting goals and objectives
		Identifying the purpose of a language task (purposeful listening /reading/speaking/writing)
		Planning for a language task
		Seeking practice opportunities
	Evaluating your learning	Self-monitoring
		Self-evaluating
AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	Lowering your anxiety	Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation
		Using music
		Using laughter
	Encouraging yourself	Making positive statements
		Taking risks wisely
		Rewarding yourself
	Taking your emotional temperature	Listening to your body
		Using a check-list
		Writing a language learning diary
		Discussing your feelings with someone else
SOCIAL STRATEGIES	Asking questions	Asking for clarification or verification
		Asking for correction
	Cooperating with others	Cooperating with peers
		Cooperating with proficient users of the new language
	Empathising with others	Developing cultural understanding
		Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings

3.   Research Questions

The survey (and paper) is conceived as a baseline for further investigation of this dimension of teacher-education in the Czech teacher-oriented education. Raising awareness of the foreign language learning strategies is a good step towards more consistent strategy-oriented instruction and more effective foreign language learning/teaching.

The paper focuses on two key research questions (related to research hypotheses):

1. Do the more successful students use different foreign language learning strategies/strategy-types when compared to the less successful students?

2. Do the more successful students differ from the less uccessful students at the level of performance-oriented motivation?

The paper also deals with aspects linked to individually-percieved foreign language learning-friendly conditions.

4.   Purpose of the Study

The research questions specify a more general goal of the empirical study, to reveal main relations between: prospective teachers´ approach to foreign language learning strategies with a focus on performance-oriented motivation, in particular. The empirical search constitutes a source for better understanding the following aspects and issues - from the perspective of the sample:

• What are the main foreign language learning strategies as well as types of foreign language learning strategies that the teacher-oriented students use at home?

• Do the types of the strategies differ according to the learning success in the sense of academic achievement and average school results?

• What type of performance-oriented success domains among the prospective teachers in the sample?

• What individually perceived learning conditions do the prospective teachers find as most supportive and important to learn foreign langues?

Therefore, the study might be viewed as an example of meta-analytical type of self-evaluation sources that also should be used, and that can bring partial but still interesting data and information for higher education teacher-oriented institutions in the Czech Republic.

5.   Research Methods

The survey is methodologically grounded in content analysis, and questionnaires by Vlčková (2007, 2010), Hrabal and Pavelková (2011), Ramsden CEQ (1991, Juklová, Chvál, & Michek (submitted). As to foreign language learning strategies there is primarily employed the *Questionnaire on Learning a Foreign Language* (Vlčková, 2007, 2010).

The questionnaire identifies what specific strategies the students in the sample use. The main strategies are monitored in 6 major groups according to Oxford (1989, 2003):

a) memory-related strategies,

b) cognitive strategies,

c) metacognitive strategies,

d) compensation strategies,

e) affective strategies,

f) social strategies.

The strategies have been identified by Oxford (1989) and overviewed also in 2003 as six main categories of learning strategies in the field of English as a second or foreign language (ESL or EFL) but she admits that *"information about language learning styles and strategies is valid regardless of what the learner′s first language is"* (Oxford, 2003, p. 2). The performance motivation test is based in Hrabal and Pavelková questionnaire (2011). More on the employed questionnaire and sample see below.

5.1. Questionnaire: Basic Structure and Attributes

The first part of the questionnaire determines basic variables, i.e. sex, foreign language being studied, knowledge of other foreign languages, and grade point average in the foreign language being studied**. The second part** of the questionnaire consists of three items (items 5–7) and deals with the individually perceived role of a foreign language in one's future life, individually perceived success, and individually perceived learning-friendly conditions during one's studies. *Does the knowledge of a foreign language play a role in your plans for the future? Do you think that you will use your knowledge of a foreign language/foreign languages in your future professional as well as private life? If so, how? According to you, what constitutes success in learning a foreign language? What do you think affects your own success in learning a foreign language?* For this item, students answered by choosing any of the following options: internal motivation, external motivation (threat, reward), environment (family, friends, school), teacher, talent/natural ability, skills and abilities, attitudes, learning styles and strategies, school results, other.

The third part of the questionnaire (12 items, 8–19) focuses on students' performance-oriented motivation using the *Students' Academic Performance-oriented Motivations questionnaire* by Hrabal and Pavelková (2011). Items 8–13 relate to the need for successful performance and items 14–19 deal with the need for failure escape. A five-point scale is used; therefore, the respondent can score 6–30 points for each item. **The fourth part** of the questionnaire (items 20–21) deals with foreign language learning strategies, with the aim of finding the dominant strategy. The starting point is a questionnaire by Vlčková (2010). The strategies that the students use most frequently at school versus at home are investigated. As to the home-used foreign language learning strategies the questionnaire consists of 30 sub-items monitoring 6 types/groups of foreign language learning stratiegies; they are divided this way: memory-related strategies (4 sub-items), cognitive strategies (12 sub-items), compensation strategies (1 sub-item), metacognitive strategies (4 sub-items), affective strategies (2 sub-items), and social strategies (7 sub-items).

The fifth part of the questionnaire (items 22–25) uses an adapted version of the *Course Experience Questionnaire* (CEQ) by Ramsden (1989, as cited in Juklová, Chvál, & Michek, submitted) and focuses on individually perceived study experience. Respondents answer on a five-point scale (completely agree = 5 points, completely disagree = 1 point) (Table 02).

Table 02. Items from the shortened version of CEQ (Juklová, Chvál, & Michek, submitted)

Item	Relevant CEQ scale
The teacher could explain the subject matter well.	Good instruction
The teacher motivated me for good performance and better work.	Good instruction
Standards and study requests were announced and known well.	Clear goals and standards
The teacher devoted adequate time for comments on my work.	Adequate assessment
I usually had enough time so that I could get a grasp of the subject matter	Adequate load

The collected data have been transformed from Google forms to Microsoft Excel (further processing focused on the main research questions). Performance-oriented motivation is referred to standards by Hrabal and Pavelková (2011). Vlčková (2007, 2010) and Oxford (1989) itinerary have been used for the conceptual consolidation of the questionnaire items.

5.2. Research Sample

The respondents represent potential teachers, current students of the Faculty of Education University of Hradec Králové. The data were collected electronically, through an online questionnaire during the period: December 2018 - January 2019. The sample consists of students enrolled in teacher/education oriented study programmes (bachelor, master) with at least one foreign-language specialisation. The data were exported in Microsoft Excel to be processed.

As to the gender the research sample (n = 102 students) consists of 76 % women and 24 % men. In the sample there are 83 % respondents studying English language, 11 % respondents studying German language, and 6 % respondents studying Russian language as one of the specialisations. Respondents have stated that beside the major foreign language there are also some other foreign languages that they learn, for example: German, Spanish, Russian.

6. Findings

The findings are presented in two parts (6.1 – 6.2), and provide an insight into selected aspects of how students at the Faculty of Education University of Hradec Králové approach to foreign language learning.

Section 6.1 describes the sample in more details, particularly in relation to these issues: *How, in future, do the students/prospective teachers view potential usage of the foreign language? In what sense do the students/prospective teachers view their success in the field of foreign language learning and what supports and motivates them?* Section 6.2 provides an insight into foreign language learning strategies, particularly the issue: *What strategies are used more frequently/less frequently according to the sample?* The foreign language learning strategies are compared not just one by one, but also grouped, as strategy-groups/types of strategies. Comparisons are done in dependency to success, and the so called more successful and less successful students are compared (for more on the criterion See 2.1. a) Learning success).

6.1. University students´ view of foreign language usage, success and motivation

How, in future, do the students/prospective teachers view potential usage of the foreign language? In what sense do the students/prospective teachers view their success in the field of foreign language learning and what supports and motivates them? Those and related issues are presented in the following paragraphs.

Students´ view of the future usage: ***"Should I learn the foreign language for future and why?"***

According to the survey 51 % of the respondents enjoy learning a foreign language. A total of 33 % of the respondents believe that they are good at learning a foreign language. 88 % of the respondents think that at work or while travelling (or both) they most probably will use the foreign language. 11 % of the respondents see the usage of a foreign-language mainly while searching for information on the internet, reading books, or watching films or TV series in their original language. Not more than 6 % of the respondents in the sample think they will use their foreign language when communicating with friends from abroad. In the sample there were also two respondents who cannot see any use for their foreign language in their future life.

Students´ view of the success and the role of performance-oriented motivation: Is ´self ´important? *How about other learning conditions?*

The ability to communicate in a foreign language and to make themselves understood is viewed as a kind of success for 29 % of the respondents. At a qualitative level, among other aspects to be considered a success from the respondents´ point of view there appear: a person´s willingness for further improvement in the foreign language, rich vocabulary, good knowledge of grammar rules, and ability of a person to think in the language, a person´s perceived need to learn a foreign language, motivation/determination for further foreign language learning, studiousness, feelings of comfort while communicating in a foreign language, regularity, use of the foreign language in their life, and simple *"passing the exam"*.

As to the performance-oriented motivation, a very interesting result can be found in a respondent whose average grade-point in the studied foreign language is 1 and who scores 10 points in NSP (need for successful performance) and 20 points in NFE (need for failure escape)[4]. Based on the aforementioned points, it can be said that this student has a low need for successful performance (further as NSP) and a very high need for failure escape (further as NFE). On the other hand, one can also find a student scoring 28 points in the first part and 11 points in the second part; i.e. the respondent is very strongly motivated and at the same time has a very low failure concern. Hrabal and Pavelková (2011) say that such a type of student is persistent, hard-working, motivated, and at the same time not slowed down by fear. Other attributes of the respondents include: success orientation, ability-based success (which means that the internal invariable cause is prioritised) and efforts-based success (internal influenceable cause highlighted). This respondent tends to have better grades than students similarly intelligent but with weaker motivation, and does not perceive failure as a loss due to his/her motivation for further improvement and due to the view that learning from mistakes is good.

The respondents find their internal motivation as the main predictor of success when learning a foreign language; this option has been ticked by 88 % of the respondents. The second, most important

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[4] Standards by Hrabal and Pavelková (2011). For more on this concept See also above: 2.1 b) Performance-oriented motivation.

predictor appears to be the ´teacher´; this condition has been chosen as one of the predictors by 64 % of the respondents. A total of 62 % of the students view the talent and environment (family, friends and school) as having an impact on one's success when learning a foreign language. 54 % of the respondents think that skills and abilities influence the effects upon the teaching/learning process. Other predictors according to the sample include foreign learning styles and strategies (mentioned by every other respondent). The respondents have also marked external motivation, attitudes and academic achievement. 5 % of the students have provided their own comments, for example: "*Successful foreign language learning is conditioned by the real need for the knowledge.*"

Based on comparing the more and less successful students as to the views of the learning-friendly conditions, the internal motivation appears to be the most frequent and most important (see: 86 % of the less successful students, and 89 % of the more successful students). University students consider the self as the most important factor for language acquisition. Also based on comparing the more and less successful students in the sample it is possible to confirm that there are differences at the level of performance-oriented motivation between the more and less successful students (see Table 03).

Table 03. Performance-oriented motivation of more/less successful students

Type of motivation	More successful students	Less successful students
Need for successful performance (NSP)	21.36	20.68
Need for failure escape (NFE)	18	19.35

With reference to Table 03 the following statements might be articulated: 1. The more successful students in the sample feel high need for successful performance (NSP) and average need for failure escape (NFE). On the opposite, however, the less successful students have average NSP and high NFE.[5] 2. Consequently, both of the student types belong to not very strictly marked types, the performance-oriented motivation being not the core source of success in the sense of academic achievement (comparison rooted in the standards[6] set by Hrabal & Pavelková, 2011). 3. And based on comparing the more and less successful students´ views of the learning conditions it is possible to state that the more successful students are identified with good instruction more while the less successful student are identified more with clear goals and standards, and adequate assessment. The study load is important for both compared goups to a similar extent.

6.2. Foreign language learning strategies used by university students at home

As to the foreign language learning strategies that are in the sample declared to be used at home/outside school there are several findings that should not be omitted. This paper highlights five

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[5] The value of the average score of the NSP among the respondents is 21.13 (according to the norm: high need). The value of the average score of the NFE among the respondents is 18.75 (according to the norm: average/medium need).
[6] Upper secondary education standards for NSP (need for successful performance) and NFE (need for failure escape): NSP stages (values): very high need (22.01 and more), high need (21.06 - 22.00), average need (20.16 – 21.05), low need (19.01 – 20.15), very low need (19.00 and below). NFE stages (values): very high need (19.84 and more), high need (19.01 - 19.83), average need (17.71 – 19.00), low need (16.60 – 17.70), very low need (16.59 and below). (Hrabal, Pavelková, 2011, In, Valtová, 2019, attachment 2)

strategies identified as used most intensely, and similarly five strategies identified as used least of those being monitored. The strategies are also compared from the perspective of the more and less successful students. And finally, the strategies are focused within the context of groups of strategies: memory- related, cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, affective, and social strategies (Oxford, 1989, 2003).

Figure 01 shows the first five strategies revealed to be employed in the sample most. It is evident that 73 % of the respondents use watching movies in the foreign language, which according to Oxford (2003) taxonomy is a cognitive strategy. 71 % of the students are aware of using listening to songs in the foreign language (another cognitive strategy enabling contact with the foreign language in a way that is natural and emotion-based). For more see Figure 01.
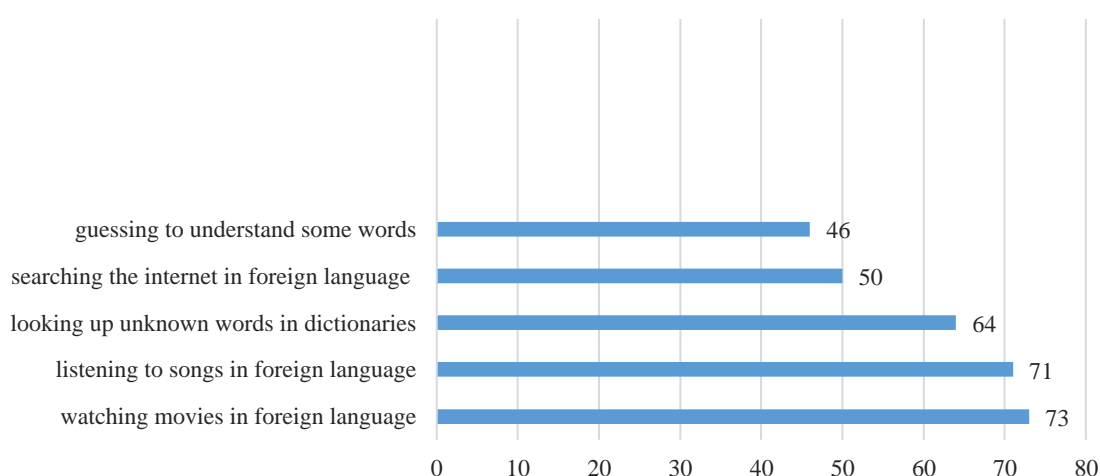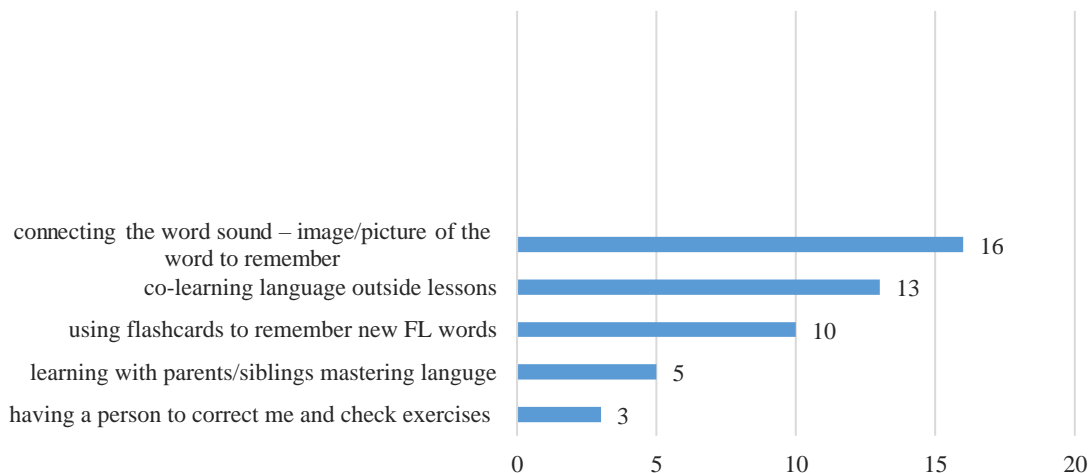

Figure 01. Strategies identifed as employed by respondents in the sample most

Figure 02 shows the five strategies revealed to be employed in the sample least of all. Only 16 % of the respondents/prospective teachers use connecting the word sound with an image or a picture, and only 10 % of the respondents use flashcards though they both are strategies that can be very helpful for their future pupils. A question arises: Do the students tend to exclude those strategies because their learning type and style is different, or is it because they have never learnt to work with these strategies effectively?[7]

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[7] An optional explanation can come from the modern view of a teacher and it might be caused by their own teacher who has not ´captured attention´ and has not ´set the students on the right path´ as Suk, Černíková (2018, p. 29) note: *"The role of the teacher is to capture attention, set stduents on the right path and to introduce new concepts while encouraging practice and even mistakes".*

Figure 02. Strategies identifed as employed by respondents in the sample least

Guessing the meaning in the foreign language (used by 46 % in the sample, see Figure 01) needs to be put in contact with early studies of so-called ´good language learners´ (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1975 as cited in Oxford, 2003; Rubin, 1975 as cited in Oxford, 2003) claiming that such learners consistently use certain types of learning strategies, such as guessing meaning from the context. However, later studies find that there is no single set of strategies always used by ´good language learners´. Nonetheless, it is also necessary to take into consideration some empirical findings saying that the more successful students use cognitive strategies more intensely than compensation strategies.

As to some other findings (though not presented trough Figures in this paper):

- 45 % of the students use these strategies: 1. In case they do not understand the foreign-language text, they read it several times, 2. They read foreign-language literature for entertainment in their spare time. (This one is also used by successful students).

- 42 % of all sample students state they learn from their own mistakes when learning a foreign language.

- Only 37 % of the sample show an interest in the foreign-language country and its customs and traditions.[8]

- 33 % of the respondents state to employ the cognitive strategy of playing foreign-language games on a computer.

- Only 28 % of the respondents learn in rhymes and songs (though it is very effective), therefore they have not the adequate experience to transmit this way of learning towards their future pupils.

Based on other findings it is possible to highlight some attributes typical for the more successful students. The successful students are interested in the foreign-language country (customs, traditions etc.),

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[8] This low proportion of the students interested in the foreign-language country and its customs and traditions though they are potential foreign language-oriented as well as foreign-culture learning teachers seems alarming. With reference to Cohen et al, 2005 in Horváthová (2018, p. 80): *"Culture learning strategies are conscious processes used to learn about a culture while culture use strategies are conscious processes selected to use the knowledge that is learned. ... langue students lack strategies for culture learning and do not have a coherent plan for learning the culture or developing intercultural communication skills".*

which belongs to social strategies, they also state that to get information, they use websites not only in Czech but also in a foreign language. Successful students use a memory strategy (imagination) and a social strategy (interaction with friends who live in a foreign country in which the studied language is spoken). In addition, all students use a metacognitive strategy (organising and structuring their learning, i.e. they have peace and quiet to learn at home). Successful students point to a memory-related strategy (studying their foreign language using rhymes or songs). The last position for all students is occupied by a social strategy, particularly learning their foreign language at home with parents or siblings, which successful students do not use. More frequently, successful students use memory-related strategies (using flashcards to acquire their foreign language, learning vocabulary by means of rhymes or songs, using their imagination, and regular practising their foreign language at home). There is one item belonging to social strategies that has not been selected by successful students at all, namely cooperation with proficient speakers of their foreign language.

Focus on features of the more successful students continues along Tables 04-05 that illustrate the students´ preferences as to groups of strategies. Table 04 below presents the scores among the more successful students and Table 05 offers the scores of the less successful students.

Table 04. Distribution of foreign language learning strategies among the more successful students

Groups/Types of strategies	How many items in the questionnaire	Maximum potential frequency	Frequency	%	Ranking
More successful students					
Memory-related strategies	4	152	16	11	6.
Cognitive strategies	12	456	180	39	1.
Metacognitive strategies	4	152	41	27	4.
Compensation strategies	1	38	14	36	2.
Affective strategies	2	76	11	14	5.
Social strategies	7	266	73	27	3.

Table 05. Distribution of foreign learning strategies among the less successful students

Groups/Types of strategies	How many items in the questionnaire	Maximum potential frequency	Frequency	%	Ranking
Less successful students					
Memory-related strategies	4	256	38	15	6.
Cognitive strategies	12	768	303	39	3.
Metacognitive strategies	4	256	111	43	2.
Compensation strategies	1	64	32	50	1.
Affective strategies	2	128	27	21	5.
Social strategies	7	448	123	27	4.

The group-strategies used by the more successful students most of all appear to be: cognitive strategies (selected by 39 %), compensation strategies (selected by 36 %), and social strategies (selected by 27 %). Whereas the less successful students employ most of all: compensation strategies (selected by 50 %), metacognitive (selected by 43 %), and cognitive strategies (selected by 39 %). The strategy groups that

appear to be employed least of all by both groups of students are: memory-related strategies (selected by 11 % of the more successful and 15 % of the less successful students) and affective strategies (selected by 14 % of the more successful and 21 % of the less successful students).

7. Conclusion

The empirical results reveal that there are differences between the foreign language learning strategies that are used by the more successful students and the strategies used by the less successful students. The more succcesful students claim more dominant usage of cognitive stategies while the less successful students in the sample claim to use the compensation strategies more. Low ranking (based on self-conscious respondents´ declaration, of memory-oriented learning strategies is surprising; for more on importance of memory-related language learning see for example Besedová (submitted). Internal motivation turns to be the most frequently positively individually perceived foreign language learning-friendly condition. Students/prospective teachers in the sample might be determined by quite high need for successful performance and average need for failure escape.

Thanks to the survey we can see how a sample of prospective teachers approach their foreign language learning. What should not be escaped is a fact that individualised approach is needed with respect to various strategies.

This paper focuses on foreign language learning strategies as a specific area and aims to contribute to further transforming this topic to a more deeply treated topic at pregraduate teacher training, in particular. The fact that the paper works with a survey also within a master diploma thesis appears to be of good news and it signals that learning strategies, students´self-awareness and awareness of the learning strategies has been getting to the core of teacher-oriented progammes. In recent decade the Faculty of Education University of Hradec Králové has been targetting at more intense work in this area (via activities in the field of theory-oriented subjects as well as in teaching practice where students are supported to reflect on their competence of various kinds).

For further improving the teacher education prospective teachers need to be guided to become able to transmit efficient strategies including self-regulation and metacognitive processes to their pupils because it is highly probable that students achieve better results if they are taught to work with the strategies (Juklová, et. al., 2015, pp. 55, 87)**.** The objective is to show or teach or inspire the student/prospective teacher how to utilise the foreign language learning strategies with full self/awareness and individual reflected experience

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