

**THE EFFECT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY
PREFERENCES ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE ATTITUDE AND PROFICIENCY
AMONG LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

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In recent decades a large body of research has been dealing with EFL learning and many studies proved that language learning strategies (LLS) have a significant role to help students to become more successful learners (Wong & Nunan, 2011). The studies focused on the learner's strategy use in different point of views, however, most of them established that language learning strategies are closely related to attitudes (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Burry–Stock, 1995; Jabbar & Golkar, 2014; Platsidou & Kantaridou, 2014) and proficiency (Green & Oxford, 1995; Khaldieh, 2000; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Yang, 2007; Wu, 2008). In the study we aimed to discover the foreign language learning strategy preferences in connection with foreign language attitude and proficiency indicated by school marks among lower secondary school children in Hungary. For the online data collection Oxford's Strategies Inventory for Language Learning questionnaire (SILL; Oxford, 1990) was adopted and administered to the sample of 448 students online through the Electronic Diagnostic System (eDia). The students' foreign language attitude and school marks were also indicated on a five point scale. The analysis showed that the students moderately used all kinds of strategies, and the use of the metacognitive strategy ($m=3.13$, $sd=.99$; $F=9.114$, $p<.001$) was significantly the highest. Based on the metacognitive strategy use preferences we aimed to provide a more differentiated overview of the effect of strategy use on foreign language attitude and school mark. Therefore we assigned the children to three groups according to their metacognitive strategy use and constructed a theoretical model on the basis of Oxford's strategy taxonomy and the background data. The result of confirmatory analysis showed a good fit both for the entire sample ($\chi^2(6)=11.161$, $p=.084$, $CFI=.988$, $TLI=.996$, $NFI=.995$, $RMSEA=.044$), and also for the high ($\chi^2(6)=7.705$, $p=.261$, $CFI=.995$, $TLI=.971$, $NFI=.980$, $RMSEA=.044$) and the low metacognitive strategy users ($\chi^2(6)=7.120$, $d=6$, $p=.310$, $CFI=.996$, $TLI=.975$, $NFI=.977$, $RMSEA=.041$), which reveals that the appropriate use of foreign LLS and positive attitude towards language learning largely determinate foreign language proficiency. As regards the questionnaire fields, it can be stated that the correlation among the scales was significant. The highest estimates can be registered between memory and cognitive strategies, cognitive and metacognitive strategies, metacognitive and social strategies. Metacognitive strategies are strongly related to proficiency through attitudes. The significance of the study is that it proved that students who use language learning strategies more frequently and more efficiently, become more proficient language learners. At this age the metacognitive strategies have the highest influence, therefore introducing LLS is essential particularly for low strategy user children and children with low and average foreign language school marks.

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