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Clusters and Sequences of Foreign Language Learner Strategies in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening in their Relation to Achievement

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Learner strategies have presented a basic concept within cognitive psychology since the 1960s. In the theory of second language acquisition they have been understood as "operations to acquire, retain, retrieve or perform" (Rigney, 1978) until nowadays. As conscious or potentially conscious "thoughts and actions that a learner takes to achieve a learning goal" (Chamot, 2004), they capture a wide range of linguistic behaviours like taking notes, planning for learning, guessing meaning and others. Learner strategies are most often classified according to their psychological functions into cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990), or four language skills (Cohen & Weaver, 2006), i. e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In our research, Cohen and Oxford (2002, in Cohen & Weaver, 2006) and Oxford's (1990) classifications are used. The last mentioned author, R. Oxford (1990), divided strategies into direct (memory, cognitive, compensatory) and indirect (metacognitive, affective, social) ones. One of the basic features of learner strategies is that they are naturally not used separately, but in sequences and clusters (Cohen & Weaver, 2006) and each strategy group supports the others (Oxford, 1990). Therefore the quality of their strategy orchestration is crucial for effective learning (Cohen & Macaro, 2007).

It is also possible to infer the relationship between learner strategies application and achievement of learners. As some results of the Czech Republic national testing show (NIQES, 2013), many students do not reach the expected level of English language communicative competence even after many years of learning the foreign language. According to an explorative research study *Eurobarometer* only 11 % of Czech people perceive own English language communicative competence as a good one, 27 % perceive it as basic, not sufficient for natural communication. Czech results unfortunately are the worst within the context of European Union, together with Spain and Bulgaria. On the contrary, more than 50 % of self-confident language users were identified in Sweden and Denmark; very good results were further achieved in Finland, Cyprus and Austria (*Eurobarometer*, 2013). The unsatisfactory results of the Czech population are not even increased by the young population, which is quite surprising in the context of *Eurostat* data showing that in ISCED 1-3 same (in some levels even higher) amount of Czech, Danish and Finish learners study English language, however, their results differ greatly (*Eurostat*, 2012). This fact might be caused by the lack of students' knowledge about how to learn a foreign language, i.e. lack of language learner strategies and their natural sequencing (Lojová & Vlčková, 2011).

As it is little known about natural sequences and clusters of strategies, especially in the learner terminology, our main research aim was to uncover the typical clusters and sequences of learner strategies in typical foreign language tasks for the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking). To fulfil the aim quantitative and qualitative data collection and data analysis are used. In this paper, the focus is put on the qualitative part in order to answer the following research questions: What strategies do students use in different language tasks in the four language skills? What clusters and sequences can be identified in the reported students' strategies use? Furthermore, we will attempt to create a typology of learners based on their reported strategy use and their strategy clusters/sequencies.

Methodology, Methods, Research Instruments or Sources Used
Data sample consists of approximately 200 students of the last year of lower secondary compulsory comprehensive education (ISCED 2) in the region of city Brno and its surrounding in the Czech Republic. The students complete ten selected tasks from standardised English language test KET (Key English Test, A1 level, University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations). KET tasks focus on: (1) reading and writing; (2) listening; (3) speaking. Current research on learner strategies suggests investigating the strategies in connection to particular tasks, primarily in relation to students' achievement (Artelt, 2000). We use tasks from all three areas in order to uncover the strategies learners use to solve tasks in all four language skills, receptive and productive. To provide students with enough time and concentration on various language skills, each task is solved separately. Students are given a chosen task and a prepared answersheet to note down own steps and strategies used while solving the task. The answersheet was designed in a format of cartoon to suit the specific age group. The procedure is as follows: students are given instructions how to work with the answersheet; after completing the KET task students report the procedures / steps used while solving the tasks, consequently, for each step they note down how they approached its realization (i.e. the strategies). The steps (what they did) are noted down in a rectangle, the strategies (how they did it) in bubbles. The templates will be analysed by the means of content analysis based on a system of categories (learner strategies). Collected data will be coded by two independent coders. The inter-rater reliability will be estimated at the whole process. Consequently, we will analyse the identified learner strategies in a broader context, i.e. in the context of solving the whole language task/s. For each language skills, typical strategy clusters and sequences will be derived. Furthermore, we attempt to uncover the students' indirect view on the strategies used. Our aim is to analyse the data according to categories derived from students' views / terminology and try to interconnect the achieved findings with the framework of learner strategy theory.
Finally, students' achievement in each of the language tasks is evaluated by expert rating according to KET evaluation criteria. Findings of the content analysis will be complemented by an analysis of students' achievement in the tasks in order to draw conclusions about the impact of students' used strategies (strategy clusters).

Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings
Two pilot studies were realized with two students of the relevant age group in order to verify and improve the data collection instrument. Currently we are in the process of continuing data collection. Regarding the results we expect to present following type of findings: Quantitative-qualitative data analysis based on a theory driven system of categories formulated according to the strategy taxonomy of R. Oxford (1990) and to Cohen, Weaver and Oxford´s classification of strategies used for the four language skills (2002, in Cohen, Weaver, 2006). This theory driven view on the collected data will be accompanied by data driven analysis based on categories derived from students' reported view, reality structure and their terminology. Subsequently, this indirect students' view on the concept of strategies will be presented in the framework of strategy theory and classification. Typical strategy clusters and sequences for chosen representative language tasks for the four language skills will be presented. The strategy clusters and sequences used for particular tasks and language skills and their relation to the students' achievement will also be analysed, as well as general achievement in English as a foreign language at schools.
Results of the study will thus also bring a typology of students based on their strategy use and their strategy clusters/sequencies, which might contribute to current theories of learner types (individual learner differences) and to development in foreign language didactics at a national and international level.

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