



English Teaching and Learning Strategies and Tactics for Tertiary Education

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Keywords: English Language Acquisition, Tertiary Education, Motivational Construct, Learning Experience, Differentiated Instruction, Language Learning Strategy.


Abstract: This paper provides an in-depth examination of the interplay between motivational constructs, differentiated instruction, and language learning strategies development in a systemic view on the efficiency of English language acquisition by non-language students at tertiary level. These three components are viewed as guidelines for developing teaching strategies and tactics when delivering the EFL university course and generating sustained motivation for autonomous learning. The paper explores the L2 motivational theories and determines the constructs contributing to achieving success in language learning, i.e integrative and achievement motives, positive attitudes, learning context and learning experiences. Differentiated instruction is regarded as a powerful pedagogical approach that can offer homogeneous learning environment based on expanding motivational constructs, tailoring instruction to meet diverse learning needs and abilities, and creating supportive atmosphere that fosters integrative motivation. Language learning strategies are explored as integral to the course content, the process of acquiring English language skills, enhancing motivation and enabling self-regulated or self-directed learning. The theoretical exploration of each component concludes with practical recommendations.

1 INTRODUCTION

The English language has long been considered a global *lingua franca* connecting people from diverse linguistic, academic, and professional backgrounds across the world. In modern Ukraine's context with its even more growing integration into the global community and development of new national language policies, the demand for effective teaching and learning strategies in English language acquisition (ELA) has significantly increased, particularly in non-language higher education settings. On June 28, the draft law "On the Use of English in Ukraine" was registered in Ukraine's Parliament (No. 9432 of June 28, 2023) that envisages the official consolidation of the status of English as the language of international communication and defines the categories of positions which can be held by the candidates with the obligatory knowledge of English. This fact even makes a stronger contribution to the necessity of developing a comprehensive system of English language education for tertiary non-language students. It has the Univer-

sity course of "English as a Foreign Language" (EFL) at its core and is expected to grow into a continuous process of improving English language skills. It can be done through using either electives, training different aspects of the English language, or taking courses and participating in programmes based on using English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) catering to the specific needs of students in disciplines outside the language studies. Such strategic approaches aligned with their consolidated vision of being competency-based and student-centred are now increasingly regarded as such requiring motivating learning environment, flexible learning paths, personalised learning, diversity of instruction delivery modes, technology enhancement, and increasing role of self-regulated, self-directed or autonomous learning that is the key to realising the concept of Life Long Learning (LLL) as a skill or mission of the 21st century. As it is claimed by UNESCO, "universities of applied sciences, polytechnics and technical institutes, play a crucial role in providing LLL opportunities" within the context of knowledge society that demands continuing professional development (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2022, p. 78).

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Common challenges faced by the second language learners in non-language institutions of higher education arise due to usually insufficient quantity of practical hours or “not much space to learn foreign languages as part of the subject curriculum” (Lai et al., 2022); lack of persistence and continuity in foreign language learning (Davis, 2020); psychological challenges, low self-esteem and demotivation (Zaytseva et al., 2021); uneven English proficiency entry level (from sometimes elementary to more frequently pre-intermediate and, in rare cases, advanced level) that leads to distinct academic group’s heterogeneity (Kupchyk and Litvinchuk, 2020; Jørgensen and Brogaard, 2021); often low self-regulation abilities in foreign language acquisition (Przybył and Chudak, 2019), which have become especially evident during distance learning. In addition, the situation in Ukraine is exacerbated by the ongoing full-scale Russian invasion that in many cases demands mixed-mode learning, unexpected interruptions in delivering in-class training, more pedagogical and psychological support. Such challenges require exploring effective approaches to address these obstacles and discussing teaching strategies and tactics to support learners with varying language backgrounds, proficiency levels, and academic goals.

Among the most powerful instruments that really matter in studying a foreign language are claimed to be motivation, differentiation and strategic language learning behaviour (Sapan and Mede, 2022). Motivation and its constructs are regarded as key factors determining students’ success or failure and their rate of progress in any learning situation (Al-Hoorie and MacIntyre, 2019). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), even arguing the complexity and inability of motivation to become a “super-theory” in foreign language acquisition, provide some practical implications of motivation theory for the language classroom with special emphasis on motivational teaching strategies, the value of cooperative learning and contextual influences (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011), which are still under consideration and constant adjustment or further development. To sustain language learning motivation “through the vicissitudes of the learning process”, there is a need to develop certain skills and strategies to “keep the learners on track” (Griffiths, 2008). Development and employment of appropriate language learning strategies, as such implying and embracing the conscious actions and behaviours used by language learners to foster and continuously support the acquisition of the English language, are in the focus of current methodological research with particular reference to self-directed language learning (Lai et al., 2022) or self-regulated learning (Oxford,

2016), distance education (Neroni et al., 2019), and technology-enhanced language learning (Lai et al., 2022; Bećirović et al., 2021). This scope can be completed with differentiation as a pedagogical approach that enables adjusting instruction to address varying students’ needs and abilities. It was pioneered by Tomlinson (2001) and Gregory and Chapman (2013), and is still on the agenda regarding the theory and practice of personalising student language learning paths (Kupchyk and Litvinchuk, 2020; Jørgensen and Brogaard, 2021).

Thus, this paper aims to contribute to methodological considerations and highlight the key provisions to effective English language education through creating opportunity for developing sustained motivation in ELA; designing the EFL university course on the basis of differentiated instruction to tailor training content for different learners; developing in students the relevant language learning strategies as powerful tools to help learners be more independent and autonomous that contribute either directly or indirectly to gaining positive learning experiences, boosting their self-confidence and progress.

2 BACKGROUND

The research into the theory of language learning motivation, launched by Gardner and Lambert in 1959, gave rise to numerous studies recognising that attitude and motivation matter in second language acquisition alongside aptitude and intelligence “as factors contributing to language learning success” (MacIntyre, 2010), and it continues to inspire further studies into this issue. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), when contemplating on the complexity of motivation, agree that it is responsible for “why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it” (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, p. 4). They also consider the importance of social context and study the way in which changing contextual perspectives reshape motivation theory in L2 learning (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011).

As it is claimed by Dörnyei (2005), since “motivation is a dynamic, ever-changing process, its research should also evolve over time” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 66). When exploring the central motivational constructs, researchers distinguish achievement motives, achievement goals and achievement values, self-efficacy, positive competence beliefs, developing feeling of autonomy and relatedness (Elliot et al., 2017). Viewing contextual and dynamic aspects of learner motivation, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) also

developed the L2 Motivational Self System, which among other constructs, embraces L2 learning experience described as long-term, when affected by social and cultural influences, and short-term, when influenced “by specific features of the instructional context” (e.g. course content, task and material design, grouping structures and evaluation practices) (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). It is supported by other research in which motivating instructional context along with L2 teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, and experiencing success in language learning are described as executive motives in creating motivating learning environment (Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015). Deci and Ryan (2015) come up with self-determination theory (SDT) focusing on human three basic psychological needs: the needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness either driven or prevented by social and contextual conditions (Deci and Ryan, 2015). Other researchers focus on general implications of SDT for formalised learning education and identify how self-determined motivation develops in different contexts (Brenner, 2022; McEown and Oga-Baldwin, 2019).

University language education settings and options can create the basis for generating and sustaining motivation in students throughout their studies. It demands considering the conditions and integrating the motivational constructs to create positive learning environment taking into account student’s expectancy, values and attitudes, creating the sense of achievement on the one hand, and adjusting the instructional context on the other. These conditions are aligned with differentiation or differentiated instruction (DI) as an approach appealing to each student’s language learning ability and described as “a philosophy that enables teachers to plan strategically in order to reach the needs of the diverse learners in classrooms” (Gregory and Chapman, 2013). The need for differentiated instructional planning is emphasised by Tomlinson (2017), who explores the role of the teacher in the differentiated classroom, creation of appropriate learning environment when differentiating content, process, and products, and application of the relevant strategies and tactics (Tomlinson, 2017). The proponents of this philosophy place emphasis on DI as a possibility to “develop learning routes for each student based on insights into their abilities and learning needs” (de Graaf et al., 2019), and a necessity to make ongoing choices based on a range of well-considered students’ goals and needs (van Geel et al., 2019, p. 62).

Creating the necessary motivating learning environment based on differentiation will not be complete without discussing language learning strategies

(LLSs) as powerful tools for training competent and effective language learners. The studies of LLSs dated back to the 1970s being pioneered by Rubin (1987) in order to identify good learner behaviour. Since then, they have been under the researchers’ focus to classify them (Rubin, 1987; Oxford, 1990; O’Malley and Chamot, 1990; Stern, 1992) and to develop questionnaires in order to assess students’ use of strategies (Oxford, 1990). LLSs are viewed as a useful mechanism to succeed in both self-directed (Lai et al., 2022) and self-regulated learning (An et al., 2021; Redmer, 2022). However, it is necessary to give LLSs due consideration since they should not be perceived as a comprehensive solution in handling all language learning problems and are likely to be heavily affected by learner’s changing behaviour, techniques and technology used. Thus, current insights into this domain are mostly related to developing tech-enhanced LLSs for learning effectiveness (An et al., 2021; Zhou and Wei, 2018), to the effectiveness of mobile learning in developing LLSs (Garzón et al., 2023; Lai et al., 2022), as well as to applying learning technologies in fostering language learning skills in order to become strategic and autonomous language learners (Sanchez and Lidawan, 2020).

3 THE IMPACT OF MOTIVATIONAL CONSTRUCTS ON TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Motivation has been widely recognised “as a significant factor influencing the success or failure in second or foreign language learning” and it encourages significant attention from researchers in delving into this issue (Yue et al., 2022). It is considered to provide “the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long, often tedious learning process”, and is claimed to make up possible deficiencies in language learning ability and learning context (Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015). The fundamental research into language learning motivation theory started with Gardner’s theory distinguishing between integrative and instrumental motivation (Gardner, 1985). Integrative motivation or orientation in Gardner’s theory, which stems from personal interest and enjoyment, is regarded as a potential factor in sustaining students’ engagement and commitment to language learning. When students have a genuine desire to learn a language, they are more likely to persevere

through difficulties and stay motivated over time. Instrumental motivation in students arises from external factors such as academic achievement, i.e. receiving grades or certificates, gaining career opportunities, or simply satisfying social expectations that can provide additional incentives and reinforce students' commitment (Lamb et al., 2020).

One of the most influential embodiment of Gardner's theory is socio-educational model, which schematically outlines how motivation is related to other individual variables like intelligence, language learning ability, and language achievement (Dörnyei, 2005). It has the integrative motive at its centrepiece which describes a person's eagerness and inclination for engaging in social interactions with individuals from different groups. The integrative motive pertains specifically to language learning, highlights the social and cultural dimensions of language learning. By recognising and supporting students' desire to integrate with a new culture or community, teachers can tap into this powerful motivational construct and create meaningful language learning experiences that go beyond linguistic proficiency (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). However, integrative motive by itself does not account for the learner's degree of success, but rather is embodied in a "continuous interplay between the characteristics of the integrative motive and the language learning process itself" (Lamb et al., 2020). Among other components of this model are such motivational constructs as effort, desire, and attitude toward learning on the one hand, and attitude toward the learning situation or context comprising evaluation of the L2 teacher and the L2 course on the other (Eraldemir Tuyan and Serindağ, 2019). In the context of our research, these constructs become guidelines in developing the strategies and tactics of ELA. In educational settings, fostering the integrative motive involves creating opportunities for students to connect with the target language community, promoting intercultural competence, and encouraging positive attitude towards cultural diversity. Teachers can incorporate authentic materials, cultural discussions, and collaborative activities that foster cross-cultural understanding and interaction. It is also recommended to encourage students to participate in academic exchange programmes or to assign students various personal and group projects to investigate different issues of English-speaking countries and societies aimed at developing their positive attitudes (Eraldemir Tuyan and Serindağ, 2019), along with sense of belonging to the global society.

Another decisive construct in the motivational system is claimed to be the achievement situation that comprises achievement motive, achievement goal,

and achievement values "promoting more positive regulatory processes" (Elliot et al., 2017, p. 47). Achievement motive refers to the learner's internal drive or desire to attain and excel in their language learning endeavours with such indicators "as measures of proficiency, classroom behaviour, participation in bicultural excursions" (Lamb et al., 2020). Achievement goals can determine specific objectives that students set for themselves in their language learning journey. Achievement values may refer to the personal beliefs, attitudes, and priorities associated with language learning. They are interconnected factors that influence students' motivation and engagement in ELA. They are also claimed to indicate "a concern with success in competition with some standard of excellence", as well as they influence and positively correlate with language learning strategies (Han and Lu, 2018). Understanding and addressing these aspects can contribute to a supportive and purposeful learning environment, enhance students' motivation and nurture their sense of accomplishment and fulfilment.

Further considerations of the issue of motivation lead to developing the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011), one of the components of which is the L2 learning experience that "focuses on the learner's present experience, covering a range of situated, 'executive' motives related to the immediate learning environment (e.g., the impact of the L2 teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, and the experience of success)" (Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie, 2017). It suggests that this experience encompasses various situated motives related to the immediate learning environment that can impact students' motivation, engagement, and overall language acquisition. For example, L2 teaching methods, approachability, and supportiveness can significantly influence students' attitude towards learning and their motivation to succeed. It is implemented through the curriculum design, materials, employed instructional strategies and tactics that can shape students' experience and determine their level of engagement. The phrase "situated 'executive' motive" suggests that the students' motives are context-dependent and influenced by specific factors in the learning environment, e.g. interactions with the teacher or peers, the feeling of progressing and achieving success (Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie, 2017). In addition, positive experiences of success, recognition, or positive feedback are believed to enhance motivation and reinforce the students' desire to continue learning and improving in L2 (Han and Lu, 2018).

When discussing strategies and approaches of language learning motivation in practice, Dörnyei and

Ushioda (2011) focus on creating positive attitudes and learning context through increasing students' self-confidence by five approaches:

- fostering students' belief in changeability and controllability of competence as an aspect of development;
- promoting favourable self-conceptions of L2 competence through success experiences and focusing on abilities;
- engaging hard-to-reach students by making them feel important, allowing them to contribute, and demonstrating positive qualities;
- praising and encouraging every student's effort, reducing classroom anxiety by creating a less stressful learning environment, and equipping students with coping strategies.

The research into confidence-competence development and reducing anxiety laid the foundation for elaborating Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (2015), which is called a theory of human motivation and well-being aimed at explaining how and why sustainable motivation occurs (McEown and Oga-Baldwin, 2019). As it is claimed, its goal in language learning "is to build more high-quality autonomous motivation so that students are willing to use the new language to interact and learn without requiring constant effort from the teacher" (McEown and Oga-Baldwin, 2019). This theory posits that intrinsic motivation flourishes when individuals have a sense of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 2015). Autonomy refers to the ability to make choices and have control over one's learning. Competence applies to feeling capable and skilled in the language. Relatedness involves connecting with others, such as teachers and fellow students. When these three psychological needs are fulfilled, students are more likely to be intrinsically motivated and engage actively in language learning, make decisions and monitor progress. It allows applying language learning to multiple contexts both in formal classroom or outside it that often helps integrate real life experiences, in which learning may occur even unintentionally (McEown and Oga-Baldwin, 2019). According to Davis (2020), in terms of autonomy support, SDT research identifies "a number of general and subject area-specific need-supportive teaching strategies" that include "incorporating students' input", acknowledging their emotions and needs, experiences and perspectives, arousing curiosity, providing choices and options, as well as being flexible and open-minded.

Such ability to autonomously and intrinsically motivate oneself is related to self-regulation that implies student's ability to manage and control their cog-

nitive, affective and behavioural processes during the learning experience. It is of special importance under the conditions of distance or online learning environments enforced by first COVID-19 (Przybył and Chudak, 2019), and then combat operations on the territory of Ukraine that undoubtedly challenge students' motivation and cognitive abilities. It calls for higher capacity of autonomy including goal-setting, preparing for the actual learning, choosing optimal learning strategies, self-monitoring and self-assessment, and finally, self-reflection on the effectiveness of one's actions (Przybył and Chudak, 2019). When describing self-regulated learning theory attending to the development of such learning processes as metacognition, motivation, and strategic action, Brenner claims that "metacognitive learners are aware of their personal learning strengths and challenges", "motivated learners are willing to attempt challenging tasks", and "strategic learners have large repertoires of learning strategies" (Brenner, 2022). This means in practice that such self-regulated learning behaviours can be exhibited by self-determined students who are able to take control of their learning and achieve their language learning goals. Davis (2020) also considers persistence and continuity in language learning, which are substantial positive outcomes "of basic psychological need fulfilment and autonomous motivation".

These insights into motivational constructs help us generalize the strategies and tactics of ELA for motivating and supportive learning environments in the key aspects:

- developing competence: designing a well-structured and progressive curriculum, incorporating meaningful topics, including a variety of engaging language activities that target different skills;
- creating achievement situation: acknowledging and reinforcing students' efforts and progress, personalising the learning process;
- arousing integrative motives or relatedness: encouraging peer interaction and collaborative learning, integrating cultural aspects when creating a deeper connection to the language and its speakers, fostering a sense of community among learners, e.g., through discussion forums or social media groups dedicated to language learning;
- developing autonomy or self-regulation: offering a variety of resources and learning materials allowing students to choose what works best for them with the needed guidance and support.

In addition, these considerations help identify the two key pedagogical approaches for effective imple-

mentation of these practical suggestions: differentiated instruction aimed at constructing highly personalised learning environment and motivating student's learning experience, as well as developing English language learning strategies enabling high-quality autonomous motivation. By combining DI and LLSs based on motivational constructs, educators can create inclusive, engaging, and student-centred ELA environments. DI contributes to addressing students' diverse needs by applying varied instructional techniques and customising material, while LLSs development can offer explicit strategy instruction, scaffolded practice, and self-regulation that are discussed further.

4 DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION IN DELIVERING THE EFL UNIVERSITY COURSE

Differentiated instruction (DI), according to its proponents, is a philosophy and not just a set of tools (Gregory and Chapman, 2013). In modern pedagogy, it is seen as an approach that implies modification of teaching and learning routines to address a broad range of students' readiness levels, interests, and modes of learning (Tomlinson, 2001), since "one size doesn't fit all" (Gregory and Chapman, 2013). It involves tailoring instruction and learning experiences to meet the individual needs of students, taking into account their varied learning styles, strengths, and challenges.

DI can be applied in two different ways considering its format: convergent (within one classroom) or divergent (division of students into homogeneous groups) (de Graaf et al., 2019; Jørgensen and Brogaard, 2021). Tomlinson (2017) positing convergent DI defines it as an instruction that "encourages the lifting of ceilings and testing of personal limits and advocates "teaching up," otherwise known as working from a complex curriculum that will challenge advanced learners and providing scaffolding for other students to enable the greatest number possible to access and succeed with the key elements of the complex curriculum and meaning-rich learning experiences" (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 13). Convergent DI takes students from different starting levels towards the same goal, offering "motivating and challenging complex or whole tasks and different levels of support to complete the whole task" (de Graaf et al., 2019), and is implemented through the use of various means like different tasks, tips and assistance, learning aids,

support from the teacher, etc. In case of divergent differentiation, the starting level is assumed to be the same, but ultimately the teachers "set goals and develop learning routes for each student based on insights into their abilities and leaning needs" (de Graaf et al., 2019).

The key to successful DI is "the actual adaptation of teaching to the thoroughly identified needs of all students", and the core of DI lies in "deliberate and accurate choices" that are based "on a variety of well-considered goals and the analysis of students' instructional needs, in combination with continuous monitoring of student progress and adapting on the fly" (van Geel et al., 2019, p. 62). Thus, while applying DI, teachers do not "seek or follow a recipe for differentiation, instead, they combine what they can learn about differentiation from a range of sources with their own professional instincts and knowledge base in order to do whatever it takes to reach each learner" (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 10).

Chamberlin and Powers (2010) outline seven core principles guiding DI:

1. Clearly communicated link between curriculum, instruction and (ongoing) assessment that informs about student understanding of material, personal interests and learning profiles.
2. Teachers respond to student differences.
3. Students are challenged at a level that is attainable through lessons that emphasise critical thinking intended to promote individual growth, while expected to participate in respectful work.
4. Teachers and students collaborate in the learning process.
5. Group work is intermixed with whole class discussions and activities. Student groupings are based on readiness, interests, or learning profiles.
6. The approach to differentiated teaching is proactive rather than reactive.
7. Space, time, and materials are utilised to suit the needs of various learners.

Despite obvious advantages of applying these principles in practice, convergent DI is claimed to be complicated due to some aspects (Waiter, 2005, p. 38):

- didactic: it's not easy for the teacher to integrate learning content in a differentiated way, i.e. to distinguish 'fundamentum' for all learners and 'additum' for high performers;
- organisational: DI requires considerable resources at the preparation and implementation stages, e.g., necessary instructional materials,

premises, but when it comes to learning time requirements, they often reach the limits of institution organisation;

- diagnostic: the teacher needs accurate understanding of the students' prior knowledge, both in terms of learning development and the extracurricular learning environment, in order to be able to provide individually tailored learning opportunities that highly demands teacher's diagnostic competence;
- motivational: the incentive for the weaker to orientate themselves towards higher-performing students can fail. This tends to be more positive and motivating for learners with higher performance and those with an average level of performance, while those with lower performance often fall even further behind that may create or validate a negative self-image;
- performance assessment: the comparability of student performance and their fair assessment are made more difficult by working under performance-differentiated working conditions.

Considering the above aspects, the limited time that higher education teachers have at their disposal as "a topic will be covered only once in class" (Turner et al., 2017, p. 492), and the fact that "effective differentiation requires a significant amount of time, effort, and dedication on the part from the instructor" (Santangelo and Tomlinson, 2008, p. 320) as "teaching is one among several other tasks" (Jørgensen and Brogaard, 2021, p. 106), a reasonable and appropriate model of divergent DI can be chosen in order to deliver students as much learning content as it is possible in a limited time period during the EFL University course.

The EFL University course is often related to secondary in significance courses rather than core ones in non-language universities in Ukraine. Nevertheless, it is integrated in all study programmes, and proficiency in the English language is essential for each higher education student to fully engage in the educational process and research activities. It must be considered that the prior language learning experience and aptitude of first-year technical student population is often characterised by apparent discrepancy and unevenness of the entry level of language proficiency ranging from A2 to even C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) that complicates the design and implementation of language instruction programmes for this diverse group of students. By "juxtaposing knowledge of increased student diversity with insights related to teaching and learning" (Santangelo and Tomlinson, 2008), higher

education language teachers in non-language universities don't have to use uniform and didactic instructional practices in order to "address the experiences and learning needs of the students newly enrolled" (Pliner and Johnson, 2004, p. 106). From this perspective, DI can be regarded as the foundation for applying a student-centred approach when creating favourable conditions of English language learning for a group of students after determining some uniformity or similarity of individual and cognitive factors.

Having sufficient experience of teaching in heterogeneous groups where lower-level students are not given enough opportunities to review or practice to catch up and thus lack self-confidence, while higher-level students are deprived of challenging and competitive learning environment to improve, a reasonable decision is to modify the university EFL course on the basis of divergent DI and provide some organisational arrangements in the form of homogeneous language-level grouping. Tomlinson (2004; 2017), Gregory and Chapman (2013), Santangelo and Tomlinson (2008), etc. have made a comprehensive analysis of teaching practices within the DI framework. Chamberlin and Powers (2010), Kupchyk and Litvinchuk (2020) have contributed to the idea of applying such differentiation not just within one classroom but by placing first-year students into different groups according to the results of the English language entry placement test. They justify the efficiency of implementing DI in non-language universities by claiming that "DI made it possible to design and deliver instruction, starting from where the students were and moving them forward on a learning continuum" (Kupchyk and Litvinchuk, 2020). Jørgensen and Brogaard (2021) also demonstrate in their empirical study that the results of DI application in higher education "include better fulfillment of intended learning outcomes, teaching that is perceived to be meaningful by students at varying academic levels, and a more inclusive learning environment" (Jørgensen and Brogaard, 2021, p. 105).

Considering the definition of DI described as an instructional process of "ensuring that what a student learns, how he or she learns it, and how the student demonstrates what he or she has learned is a match for student's readiness level, interests, and preferred mode of learning" (Tomlinson, 2004, p. 188), divergent DI allows matching content (what the student learns), process of learning (how she or he learns), and product (demonstration of what one has learned), depending on the varying student needs and responding to "student's learning profile characteristics" (Santangelo and Tomlinson, 2008, p. 309). In practice, it is of necessity to investigate, find, and

design solutions about the procedure from assessing the student needs to identifying, analysing, and arranging a hierarchy of objectives of learning and teaching, and then designing and implementing DI, evaluating and possibly redesigning the EFL teaching approaches depending on the students' learning aptitudes, style and conditions. The EFL university course can be presented as a developmental process, in which "language learning must be provided with successive stages each of which represents growth and expansion of the learners' ability to learn, know, use and critically think in a new language" (Kupchuk and Litvinchuk, 2020).

Thus, it allows identifying the key aspects or principles to integrate divergent DI in a non-language university setting:

- didactic: it is much easier for the teacher to deliver learning content in a homogeneous group, where the 'fundamentum' and 'additum' are equal for all students;
- organisational: although considerable time resources and premises (computer classes with the Internet access) are required at the preparation stage (e.g., to diagnose the students' English entry level and divide them into homogeneous groups), it saves time at the implementation stage and requires much less effort in terms of selecting or devising necessary instructional materials thanks to the group homogeneity;
- diagnostic: a reliable English language entry placement test has to be used (devised) in order to precisely identify students' English entry level that reveals the students' prior knowledge, which highly demands teacher's diagnostic competence;
- motivational: a homogeneous language learning environment is considered to be less stressful, most enlivening and stimulating for all students, since being in a group with peers at the same language level adds to more positive learning experience based on creating achievement motives and experiences of success for each student;
- performance assessment: it is much easier to monitor students' progress, compare and fairly assess them on a continuous basis (ongoing formative assessment), and provide timely feedback to guide their learning as working conditions concerning performance are the same.

This will also facilitate the development of LLSs in such a classroom since it helps considering the proficiency levels, abilities and learning styles, scaffolding instruction, explicit teaching and modelling of LLSs, providing resources and support, fostering collaboration and encouraging effective reflection.

5 TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

The term *content of learning* is a basic category in the methodology of foreign language teaching that accumulates everything what a student has to acquire in the process of learning and answers the question "What to learn?", thus embracing such components as (Nikolaieva, 2013):

- 1) spheres and types of communication, functions, psychological and communicative situations and roles, nonverbal means of communication, communicative goals and aims; themes, problems and texts; communicative skills and exercises for their development;
- 2) linguo-sociocultural material, social situations; skills to operate these materials and relevant exercises; skills to start an interaction, orient in social situations and lead them, exercises for their development;
- 3) language material; skills to operate it and exercises for their development;
- 4) learning and communication strategies; skills to operate them and exercises for their development.

According to the definition above, learning strategies are a constituent part of foreign language learning content in any learning environment and can forward the process of ELA in both formal and non-formal settings.

The term *learning strategy* is characterised by a confusing variety of attempts to define the concept of a strategy. Oxford describes learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). O'Malley and Chamot (1990) provide a more extended definition of learning strategies and define them as "techniques and devices used by second language learners for remembering and organising samples of the second language. ... Strategies are the thoughts and behaviours that learners use to make them comprehend, learn, or retain information" (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p. 43). A more recent definition of LLSs is provided by Schipor and Hammershaug (2022), who consider them to be "systematic and conscious steps, including both thoughts and actions, that are selected and used by learners to enhance their language learning and use, both in a short- and long-term perspective" (Schipor and Hammershaug, 2022, p. 272). Griffiths and Cansiz (2015) do not limit the definition of LLSs

by their intentional use by students, but define them in a broader sense as “actions chosen (either deliberately or automatically) for the purpose of learning or regulating the learning of language” (Griffiths and Canziz, 2015, p. 476). Neroni et al. (2019) specify them as “processes that involve generating, organising, or converting data for academic achievement” (Neroni et al., 2019), also embracing both intentional and deliberate use of LLSs that may self-regulate the learning process.

To fully understand and operate the existing classifications of LLSs, it is useful to analyse available taxonomies (theories) developed by the researchers (Rubin, 1987; Oxford, 1990; O’Malley and Chamot, 1990; Stern, 1992). Rubin (1987) divides LLSs, incl. communication and social strategies, into cognitive (clarification/verification, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, practice, memorisation, monitoring), and metacognitive (prioritising, setting goals, self-management). A more comprehensive division is conducted by Oxford (1990), who distinguishes between direct and indirect LLSs, further subdivided into a total of six groups (Oxford, 1990). Direct strategies include memory (creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, employing action, practising), cognitive (receiving and sending messages, analysing and reasoning, creating structure for input and output, guessing intelligently, overcoming limitations in speaking and writing), and compensation. Indirect strategies incorporate metacognitive (centring your learning, arranging and planning your learning, evaluating your learning, lowering your anxiety), affective (encouraging yourself, taking your emotional temperature, asking questions, cooperating with others), and social (empathising with others). O’Malley and Chamot (1990) classify LLSs into metacognitive (thinking about the learning process, monitoring one’s production or comprehension, planning for learning and its evaluating after the completion of an activity), cognitive (direct manipulation of the learning material: repeating/revising, resourcing, translating, grouping, note taking, deduction, recombining, creating images, auditory representation, using keywords, contextualising, elaborating, content transfer), and socio-affective (social-mediating activity, transacting with others, cooperating and guessing for clarification) (O’Malley and Chamot, 1990). Stern (1992) defined five subcategories of LLSs: management and planning (deciding on the commitment to language learning, setting reasonable goals, deciding on an appropriate methodology, selecting appropriate resources, monitoring progress, evaluating achievement in the light of previously set goals), cognitive (targeted at

learning or problem solving and embracing analysis, transformation, synthesis of learning material), communicative-experiential (circumlocution, gesturing, paraphrase, asking for repetition and explanation), interpersonal (monitoring development, evaluating performance, contacting with native speakers and cooperating with them), and affective (creating associations of positive attitude towards the foreign language and its speakers as well as towards the learning activities involved) (Stern, 1992).

Identifying the learning strategies, which “deliver the most optimal benefit for academic performance” (Donker et al., 2014), is vital both for students to succeed in their studies and teachers to provide valuable support. The practical suggestions that can be derived from the available taxonomies to be used by teachers are the following:

- encouraging students to explore and identify the learning strategies that best work for them. This can be done through self-reflection, trial and error, and feedback from teachers or peers;
- emphasising the importance of direct strategies, incl. memory and cognitive such as memorising and analysing, practising and reviewing, etc. Providing students with explicit instruction and guidance on how to effectively employ these strategies to enhance their understanding, retention, and application of English language skills;
- fostering indirect or metacognitive skills by teaching them to prioritise their learning, set goals, manage their learning process, and evaluating their progress;
- integrating affective and social strategies, highlighting the significance of communication and target language interaction.

There has been extensive research on the use of different strategies by primarily good (successful) language learners (Griffiths, 2008). It is believed that the awareness and refinement of the strategies applied are proved to directly depend on the learner’s language proficiency since high-level students are observed to use strategies relating to interaction with others, vocabulary enrichment, extensive reading, dealing with language systems rather than separate patterns, as well as utilising available resources more willingly (Griffiths, 2008). They are often highly motivated, ready to use extensively metacognitive strategies to manage their own learning. The students who are able to self-regulate their learning are defined as “active, responsible learners who act purposefully (i.e. use learning strategies) to achieve their academic goals” (Donker et al., 2014). It supports Gardner’s views that “attitudes and motiva-

tion are important because they determine the extent to which the individuals will actively involve themselves in learning the language. The prime determining factor is motivation” (Gardner, 1985). Han and Lu (2018) empirically justified that the high need for achievement stipulated much wider students’ use of all the six categories of strategies identified by Oxford (1990) than by those whose achievement motivation is lower (Han and Lu, 2018).

Since cognitive learning strategies may be formed through the “teacher-learner” cooperation, the teacher has to understand how to deliver the required learning content to the student and apply appropriate teaching strategies and tactics in practice, depending on students’ learning profile, their needs and interests.

Current education is undergoing rapid changes aimed at improvement through the use of tools such as robotics and augmented reality, which contribute to improving learning scenarios, allowing students to develop their metacognitive skills using technological environments designed to educate and be a medium in the educational process (Muñoz and Morales, 2021, p. 73). Within the landscape of language learning, technology has become “ecological and normalised rather than a supporting tool” (Zhou and Wei, 2018, p. 471). It provides personalised language instruction and materials, advanced access to information, offers more communication possibilities, shapes positive learner identity, and maintains motivation for learning (Bećirović et al., 2021). Computer technology is claimed to be abundant in three language learning skill areas (listening, reading and writing), but scant in speaking (Zhou and Wei, 2018, p. 472). Hence, students have to explore strategies for effective language learning in digital realms (Oxford and Lin, 2011) in order to become self-regulated and further self-directed in English language acquisition.

Zhou and Wei (2018) carried out a meta-analysis of 60 research studies in the field of technology-enhanced language learning to substantiate how it enhances students’ self-regulated learning. The meta-analysis by Garzón et al. (2023) proves positive effects of using mobile devices in learning English since each student has their own learning style and preferences. M-learning is seen as a “versatile and flexible approach” (Garzón et al., 2023, p. 9) to learning as it “yields better results when compared either with traditional lectures, traditional pedagogical tools, or other multimedia resources” (Garzón et al., 2023, p. 12), and mobile devices are regarded as pedagogical tools that encourage students to actively construct their learning. The studies of Zhou and Wei (2018), Bin-Hady and Al-Tamimi (2021) outline that students in the Digital Age who benefit from proper

LLS instruction outperform their counterparts having not received such training both in language learning efficiency and language skills. Strategies-based instruction, which is enhanced by technology, produces impressive outcomes in terms of developing strategic, self-regulated language learners. Thus, curriculum designers need to augment textbook materials by integrating technology-based learning strategies, and teachers have to be ready to encounter and make use of generative AI like ChatGPT, launched by OpenAI in November 2022, as an educational tool both “standalone or integrated into other systems and platforms” (Sanzalievá and Valentini, 2023, p. 8). Dai et al. (2023) stipulate that “the technological architecture of ChatGPT and other GPT models can be leveraged to enhance learning analytic techniques, generate customised scaffoldings, facilitate idea formation, and eventually expand educational access and resources for social justice” (Dai et al., 2023, p. 2). In English language learning, students can benefit as “the personalised learning experiences enabled by ChatGPT highlight the significance of learning how to learn, and AI tools are meant to facilitate student learning, not replace human efforts”, as well “by self-regulating the learning process, students can avoid over-reliance on AI-generated answers and maintain a balance between independent problem solving and seeking AI assistance” (Dai et al., 2023, p. 5). Such assistance can be provided in getting grammar explanations, having grammar and spelling corrected, writing and editing stories, inventing personalised study plans, etc.

Digitally enhanced English language learning connects a student with the recent authentic foreign language content via different online platforms. This format fosters students to develop their own learning strategies (both cognitive and metacognitive, as well as affective), construct their learning environment, add to their learning experience, and increase their progress. Working in a digitally-enhanced environment, a teacher has to differentiate instruction and apply appropriate teaching forms and methods, develop their teaching strategies that are aimed at familiarising students with the existing LLSs that they can use and adjust to themselves.

Thus, *language learning strategies* are a part of *content* that has to be learnt; an essential constituent of the *process* of acquiring English language skills that forwards and facilitates learning, makes it more motivational, and allows students to manage and self-regulate their learning; and finally, LLSs are a *product* of English language acquisition becoming crucial for lifelong self-directed learning.

6 CONCLUSION

The discussed issues may be regarded today as the cornerstones in ELA taking place in both formal and informal settings, since these findings contribute to providing continuous language learning experience. Interruptions in education due to current social challenges, different prior language learning experience and aptitudes of students at tertiary level in non-language educational institutions, as well as their individual learning behaviour, can be compensated by considering and affecting individual factors such as positive attitudes and motivation, broadening motivational constructs, providing structured support and guidance with DI, and addressing cognitive factors like strategic awareness. Considering motivational constructs helps drive and sustain students' engagement and success in ELA, create conducive and supportive learning environment. Divergent DI in ELA in a non-language university setting is proven to be less time-consuming for teachers, and more stimulating and less stressful for students. It fosters students' growth in learning English through following successive routes in a homogeneous peer group. Meanwhile, it entails developing LLSs that are taught as a part of content, help shape the process of ELA and become finally an asset for students enabling them to construct, self-regulate, and further self-direct the process of learning languages in different settings following different goals. In this framework, students are engaged in constructing their learning environments, they can manage the learning process, when using the necessary strategies, and self-monitor their progress. Foreign language teachers, in turn, can effectively reflect on emerging opportunities and create a flexible but ordered system with a higher rate of practicality and personalisation. Thus, DI and LLSs are crucial for developing sustained motivation which is viewed as the greatest incentive to learn languages life-long.

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