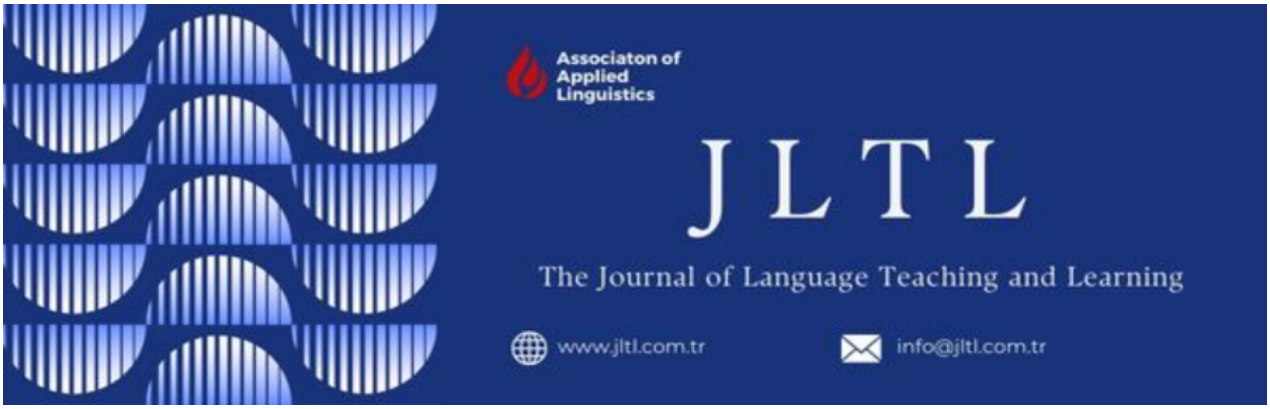

The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning™

2026 Volume 16/Issue 1 Article 4

Language Learning Strategy Use and Multilingualism: Examining the Impact of Linguistic Background

Marianna Lőrincz, Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, Berehove, Ukraine, lorinc.marianna@kmf.org.ua
László Szilágyi, Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, Berehove, Ukraine, szilagyi.laszlo@kmf.org.ua
Katalin Fodor, Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, Berehove, Ukraine, fodor.katalin@kmf.org.ua
Katalin Hnatik, Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, Berehove, Ukraine, hnatik.katalin@kmf.org.ua

Recommended Citations:

APA
Lőrincz, M., Szilágyi, L., Fodor, K., & Hnatik, K. (2026). Language learning strategy use and multilingualism: Examining the impact of linguistic background. *The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*, *16*(1), 54-69.

MLA
Lőrincz, Marianna, et al. "Language Learning Strategy Use and Multilingualism: Examining the Impact of Linguistic Background." *The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2026, 54-69.

Contents lists available at www.jltl.com.tr

The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning

Published by the Association of Applied Linguistics

www.jltl.com.tr

The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning, 2026*(1)*, pp. 54-69

Language Learning Strategy Use and Multilingualism: Examining the Impact of Linguistic Background

Marianna Lőrincz[1], László Szilágyi[2], Katalin Fodor[3], Katalin Hnatik[4]

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:
Received 7 Mar 2025
Revisions completed 5 Jul 2025
Published 31 Jan 2026

Key Words:
Language learning strategies
Multilingualism
Monolingualism
English as a foreign language
Linguistic background

ABSTRACT

While multilingualism is fast becoming a life reality coupled with and fast-forwarded by human mobility and lingual globalization, research on language learning strategy (LLS) use through this lens is disproportionately scant. The present study aimed to partially address this gap by providing insights into how linguistic background influences strategy preferences and usage patterns among EFL majors. Specifically, it explored whether monolingual and multilingual learners differed in their strategic behavior. Deploying Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, the study compared strategy use between two student groups: monolingual students with Hungarian as their first language and speakers of Hungarian and Ukrainian as their first and second languages, respectively, with the latter group enrolled in an institution with both languages serving as instructional mediums. Inferential statistical analysis revealed significant differences of small effect size, with multilingual students reporting higher usage of memory and social strategies, while their monolingual peers showed a stronger preference for cognitive strategies. Even so, overall strategy use frequency was comparable between the two groups, with multilingual students only insignificantly surpassing their monolingual peers. Lastly, both groups strongly endorsed cognitive and metacognitive strategies, while affective strategies were the least frequently employed, reflecting a common trend in their strategy profiles. Hence, these findings suggest that while linguistic background influences EFL majors' LLS use, its overall impact is modest, and strategic behavior is more stable than expected.

[1]Department of Philology, English Language and Literature, Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, Berehove, Ukraine, lorinc.marianna@kmf.org.ua
[2] Department of Philology, English Language and Literature, Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, Berehove, Ukraine, szilagyi.laszlo@kmf.org.ua
[3] Department of Philology, English Language and Literature, Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, Berehove, Ukraine, fodor.katalin@kmf.org.ua
[4] Department of Philology, English Language and Literature, Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, Berehove, Ukraine, hnatik.katalin@kmf.org.ua
Lőrincz, M., Szilágyi, L., Fodor, K., & Hnatik, K. (2026). Language learning strategy use and multilingualism: Examining the impact of linguistic background. *The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*, *16*(1), 54-69.

In an increasingly mobile and interconnected world, multilingualism is fast becoming omnipresent, transfiguring linguistic reality and contributing to lingual globalization. Multilingualism describes an individual's ability to use multiple languages or a broader linguistic makeup of a community (Clyne, 2017). In many educational contexts, multilingual students appear to become more of a norm, placing multilingualism high on the academic agenda (Mitits et al., 2021). Consequently, researchers have turned their attention to language learning strategies (LLS) framed through the prism of multilingualism (Pawlak & Kiermasz, 2018). However, the available literature looking specifically into the effect of linguistic background on strategy use is still lagging behind the advancements in mainstream multilingualism research and LLS studies (Noprival et al., 2024).

Extant research has yielded insights into the key role of LLS in language learning effectiveness. Among their numerous mileages, LLS were found to enhance learners' academic achievement (Agustin et al., 2021; Balci et al., 2018) and language proficiency (Ranjan et al., 2021; Syafawani & Hashim, 2022). Furthermore, strategy application has been linked to increased learner autonomy (Noprival et al., 2024) and motivation (Mitits et al., 2021). However, the extent to which linguistic background influences the strategy preferences of language learners remains an open question.

In LLS research, strategies have been conceptualized as "thoughts and actions, consciously chosen and operationalized by language learners, to assist them in carrying out a multiplicity of tasks from the very onset of learning to the most advanced levels of target- language (TL) performance" (Cohen, 2011, p. 7). Yet, as Oxford (2018) argues, strategic behavior can only be fully perceived when contextualized since "strategy users are embedded in their contexts (environments) and are constantly influencing and being acted upon by elements of their contexts" (Oxford et al., 2018, p. 6). Reflecting upon the role of context in LLS research, Gu (2021) underscored the need to examine "the will, the thrill (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016), and the social construction of language learning strategies" (p. xxii), arguing that LLS research must account for learners' sociocultural contexts. Recognizing the situated nature of language learning, scholars increasingly emphasize the centrality of sociocultural background in molding strategic behavior (Griffits & Canczis, 2015).

Building on this perspective, the present paper looks comparatively into the influence of linguistic background on the LLS application of two learner groups: monolingual and multilingual EFL majors. In this study, monolinguals predominantly speak one language in their daily lives, while multilingual students are speakers of more than one language receiving simultaneous instruction in Ukrainian, Hungarian, and English. The research thus seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge on LLS use across different linguistic backgrounds by investigating whether multilingualism fosters distinct or more efficient patterns of LLS application.

The paper begins by succinctly considering the available literature on LLS use, with an emphasis on comparative studies of monolingual and multilingual learners. This is followed by a detailed presentation of the study's methodology and findings, finalizing with concluding remarks, implications, and directions for subsequent research.

2. Literature Review

Since its inceptive explorations on successful language learners, LLS research has expanded exponentially (Kölemen, 2021). The extensive effort invested into uncovering how learners utilize LLS offers insights into the link between strategy use and language learning success. Groups of variables determining the selection and utility of strategies have been examined. Additionally, refinements in research methodologies have led to the development of more reliable instruments (Gavriilidou & Mitits, 2021; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018; Pawlak, 2021). Yet, a persistent challenge complicating strategy research is the complex interplay between multiple learner-related and environmental factors mediating strategic behavior (Grainger, 2012). Among these, learners' language

proficiency, age, gender, nationality, language learning experience, sociocultural background, target language, and motivation collectively contribute to variations in learning preferences and have been the focus of intent research attention (Mitits, 2015). Given the plethora of influences, it remains notoriously difficult to establish clear patterns in strategy use, as learner preferences and the effectiveness of specific LLS often vary depending on linguistic, educational, and sociocultural contexts.

One of the issues recently brought into the limelight is the effect of linguistic background and knowledge of multiple languages on LLS applications. Pondering over the implications of the existing research, Pawlak and Kiermasz (2018) pointedly remarked that in their majority, the studies unraveling the impact of multilingualism on strategy use were written to one end, i.e., to emphasize "the benefits of multilingualism with respect to the application of LLS… ." However, they fall short of offering conclusive insights into the learning process, leaving gaps in our understanding of how multilingualism shapes strategic behavior (p. 431). Acting upon this comment, several studies were located to scrutinize the issue with a more critical lens. This body of literature was expected to serve as a reference for interpreting the findings of this study. It aimed to determine whether the overall positive perception of multilingualism is applicable to the specific learner population in question and to assess whether they indeed possess a strategic advantage.

A pool of publications with comparable objectives was identified, showcasing the benefits and superiority of multilingual speakers in their strategic behavior. Thus, Tuncer (2009) demonstrated that bilingual learners used LLS more frequently than their monolingual peers. This advantage was attributed to learners' prior success and experience in learning multiple languages. Additionally, the author found that gender and proficiency level coupled with bilingual capacity all played a role in LLS use, with bilingualism emerging as the most impactful variable. Grainger (2012) likewise showed that multilingual capacity and language learning environment were significant factors in determining language learners' strategic preferences. The study examined how cultural background and multilingual competence in both academic and daily contexts contributed to the use of strategies. In line with previous research, the author concluded that multilingual students (Asian in this study) resorted to the use of more LLS and in more varied ways than the group of students speaking only one language in their daily lives. In the study by Sholah (2019), bilingual learners adopted a more varied approach to learning English, drawing on their previous language learning experience. Thus, they used a wider range of LLS, particularly social and cognitive. Bilingual students also demonstrated higher metacognitive awareness, enabling them to reflect on and regulate their learning process effectively. These results support the idea that bilingual learners appear cognitively at an advantage, which boosts their strategic behavior.

A notable contribution to the investigation of the effects of multilingualism on strategy use comes from Mitits (Mitits & Sarafianou, 2012; Mitits, 2015; Mitits et al., 2021). In one of her studies, the author examined the extent to which daily use and competence in multiple languages influenced learners' selection and frequency of LLS (Mitits, 2015). Additionally, the study explored how gender, age, language proficiency, and motivation shaped the type and frequency of strategy use. As hypothesized, the strategies applied by monolingual and multilingual adolescent learners diverged in terms of both frequency and type. Other factors, such as gender and language proficiency, also influenced the patterns of strategy use. Hence, the study acknowledged the advantages of multilingualism in language learning, with the experience of engaging in multiple languages being the key contributing factor. In a similar vein, Mitits and Sarafianou (2012) found that bilingual students employed a larger number of strategies more frequently than their monolingual counterparts. Furthermore, bilingual students were more inclined to take risks and engage in naturalistic practice, which contributed to the growth of learner autonomy. Their increased participation in genuine communication, such as engaging with native

speakers, allowed them to enhance their self-directed learning skills.

Building on her earlier research, Mitits et al. (2021) investigated how multilingual learners in Greek schools utilized LLS and how the school type (mainstream vs. minority/dual-immersion) impacted strategy use and motivation to learn English. As it turned out, multilingual students attending minority schools reported higher overall strategy use than mainstream school pupils. Hence, multilingual students in dual-immersion settings appeared to rely more on strategic learning approaches. Both student groups showed a strong preference for metacognitive LLS. Minor differences in rankings were observed in affective, compensation, social, memory, and cognitive strategies. The study concluded that language dominance and cultural differences, mediated by teaching methods, proficiency level, and parental expectations, all played a role in shaping multilinguals' strategic behavior and motivation.

Yet another area of research focuses on how the degree of multilingualism influences LLS application. A case in point is the study by Dmitrenko (2017), who established a correlation between the degree of multilingualism and LLS use, especially in third language acquisition. The author introduced the notion of a "threshold effect," where the benefits of multilingualism in the strategy use tended to become more pronounced at a certain level of linguistic competence and language learning experience. Similarly, Pawlak and Kiermaz (2018) garnered evidence that strategy use was higher in second-language learning than in third-language. In the latter case, learners deployed more traditional and memory-based strategies. Multilingual learners applied more strategies than those with experience in only one foreign language. In addition, the perceived status and utility of an additional language affected strategy preferences. These findings were further supported by Psaltou-Joycey and Kantaridou (2009), who revealed that trilingual students used strategies more frequently than bilinguals, especially those that enhance metalinguistic awareness. Advanced trilingual students relied more on cognitive and metacognitive strategies, implying that a richer language learning experience fosters higher-order thinking. Overall, these studies show that multilingualism enhances strategic competence in language learning. However, they also confirm that the degree of multilingualism plays a key role in determining strategy use patterns.

As evidenced, the existing literature is replete with commendations highlighting the positive impact of multilingualism on LLS applications. Thus, Chostelidou et al. (2015), Hayati and Nejad (2010), Kostić-Bobanović and Bobanović (2011), Qasimnejad and Hemmati (2014), and Yayla et al. (2016), to name just a few, produced comparable findings, where multilingual students were more effective and flexible in the application of strategies and had a deeper awareness of strategic knowledge than monolingual learners (lending credit to Pawlak and Kiermaz's above comment). On this note, the present study undertook to examine how linguistic background affected LLS preferences and their frequency of use among EFL majors from monolingual and multilingual sociocultural and academic backgrounds. With most studies conducted in monolingual educational settings, this study is positioned advantageously in an environment where three languages simultaneously serve as instructional mediums, and at least two languages are used daily by the study's participants. Governed by the above considerations, the following research questions were formulated: What is the effect of linguistic environment on EFL students' LLS preferences? Is there a difference in the frequency of LLS use between students from monolingual and multilingual backgrounds?

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey research design to investigate whether students' linguistic background influenced their use of LLS. The independent variable in this study was linguistic background, operationalized as either monolingual (speakers of Hungarian) or multilingual (Hungarian-Ukrainian bilinguals). The dependent variable was LLS use, measured using

Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning. The rationale for employing a comparative design lay in the need to explore group differences between linguistically distinct cohorts of EFL majors.

3.2. Participants and Context

The study involved a total of 147 university students majoring in English Language and Literature who participated voluntarily after providing informed consent. The participants were recruited through a purposeful sampling technique from two distinct linguistic contexts (Griffee, 2012, p. 45). Embedded in Ukrainian and Hungarian higher education systems, the research explored the impact of monolingual and multilingual milieus on LLS preferences. In these academic contexts, one or multiple languages served as the primary medium of instruction alongside English.

Among the participants, eighty students came from a primarily monolingual background where a single first language (L1) was used as the medium of instruction alongside English in their academic setting. The given group (Group 1), primarily from the Hungarian institution, was mainly exposed to only one language in daily interactions and were native speakers of Hungarian. The remaining sixty-seven students were from a multilingual environment where Ukrainian and Hungarian languages served as instructional mediums, in addition to English. This group (Group 2) consisted of multilingual students with Hungarian as their first language and Ukrainian as their second, experiencing daily exposure to both languages in their university, social, and personal lives.

The division into monolingual and multilingual groups allowed for a comparative analysis of LLS preferences, intending to uncover the effects of linguistic environments on strategy use. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 27, and all demonstrated at least intermediate proficiency in English, as verified by academic records. The research followed ethical guidelines, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation throughout the study.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The principal instrument utilized in this study was Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) Version 7.0 for Speakers of Other Languages Learning English, a widely recognized tool specifically designed for ESL/EFL learners. Extensively used in LLS research, the SILL has been translated into numerous languages, reflecting its robustness (Amerstorfer, 2018) and adaptability across contexts (Hardan, 2013; Zou & Lertlit, 2022). Described as "a default data collection instrument" (Pawlak & Kiermasz, 2018, p. 433), it has proven to be a reliable instrument, especially conducive to cross-cultural studies that explore strategy use among diverse linguistic backgrounds (Alharbi, 2017; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018).

The SILL is organized based on Oxford's (1990) language learning strategy taxonomy, which differentiates between direct and indirect strategies, each containing three categories. The instrument's 50 items fall into six strategy categories: (a) memory strategies (items 1-9) relate to students' establishing mental connections between linguistic elements; (b) cognitive strategies (items 10-23) are the approaches to manipulation and processing of language directly; (c) compensation strategies (items 24-29) involve learners' overcoming gaps in their knowledge by using context or alternative words to communicate; (d) metacognitive strategies (items 30-38) concern students' planning, organizing, and evaluating their learning to promote self-regulation; (e) affective strategies (items 39-44) include emotional and motivational aspects of language learning; (f) social strategies (items 45-50) involve learning through interaction and collaboration with others in the target language.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first section contained the SILL instrument, while the second collected demographic and background information on the student's university, its primary language of instruction, linguistic background, age, and gender. The respondents rated each item on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "1 – never or almost never true of me" to "5 – always or almost always true of me."

Despite its extant application and robustness, as demonstrated by previous research, some limitations of the SILL have been noted. Some issues discussed in the literature include students' difficulties recalling specific strategy choices, limited self-awareness in self-assessment, and potential wording problems that can lead to item misinterpretation (Amerstorfer, 2018; Danko & Dečman, 2019; Griffiths, 2004). However, using the instrument's English version mitigated issues associated with translation that could affect comprehension. Thus, the instrument's verified reliability and validity across diverse learner populations (Oxford et al., 2014) rendered it suitable for investigating LLS use in monolingual and multilingual linguistic contexts in this study.

Data were collected via an online questionnaire and analyzed through the SPSS statistical package. To determine the appropriate analytical approach, assumptions for parametric and non-parametric analyses were evaluated. Tests for normality and homogeneity of variance were conducted, among others. The assumption of normality of data distribution was not satisfied, as indicated by a p-value exceeding 0.5. Consequently, a non-parametric approach was selected, with the Mann-Whitney U Test as the primary test. Among its assumptions are the non-normality of data distribution and homogeneity of variance. Levene's test was run to test the homogeneity of variance assumption. The analysis revealed that the assumption of equal variances was met for all strategy categories (see Table 1). Accordingly, the Mann-Whitney U Test was administered to compare mean ranks between the student groups from monolingual and multilingual backgrounds. In addition, descriptive data were collected for the two student groups.

Table 1
Test of Homogeneity of Variance

Strategy groups		*Levene Statistic*	*df1*	*df2*	*Sig.*
A	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.24	1	117.26	.63
B	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.02	1	122.05	.32
C	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.39	1	121.86	.12
D	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.91	1	122.83	.34
E	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.03	1	121.87	.86
F	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.03	1	122.35	.31

Based on the study's objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1:

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no statistically significant difference in EFL students' LLS preferences between monolingual and multilingual environments.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): The linguistic environment significantly impacts EFL students' LLS preferences.

Hypothesis 2:

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no statistically significant difference in the frequency of LLS use between students from monolingual and multilingual environments.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a statistically significant difference in LLS frequency use between students from monolingual and multilingual environments.

4. Results

The results of the Mann-Whitney U Test performed at the categorical level (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies) are displayed below. The analysis was conducted to observe if there were differences in strategy use between monolingual and multilingual students.

The data provided in Table 2 indicates a statistically significant difference in the use of memory strategies between the two student groups. Participants from a monolingual background utilized memory strategies less frequently than those from a multilingual background (U = 1906.00, z = -2.4, p < .001). The multilingual group had a higher mean rank (MR = 81.73) compared to the monolingual group (MR = 64.96). However, the results provided only moderate evidence against the null hypothesis (p = .017), indicating a small effect size (η^2 = .03).

This finding demonstrates that multilingual students self-reported employing such memory strategies as frequent review of English lessons (item 8, M=2.67, SD=1.1. for Group 1 and M=3.14, SD=.99 for Group 2), mnemonic devices like mental associations or visualization. However, given the small effect size, the multilingual group was only slightly more inclined to rely on memory-based strategies. In a multilingual context, speakers may feel an increased need to retain and recall linguistic items simultaneously during communication, which could encourage the use of memory aids.

Table 2
Mann-Whitney Test Results for Memory Strategies

Context	*Mean Rank*	*Sum of Ranks*	*Test*	*Test Statistics*[a]
monolingual	64.96	5392.00	Mann-Whitney U	1906.00
multilingual	81.73	4904.00	Wilcoxon W	5392.00
			Z	-2.4
			Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.017

As seen in Table 3, there was a statistically significant difference in cognitive strategy use between the two groups (U=1996.00, z=−2.13, p < .001). As in the previous results, the evidence against the null hypothesis was moderate (p=.33). Group 1 exhibited a higher mean rank (MR=78.74) than Group 2 (MR=63.77), demonstrating that monolingual students may use cognitive strategies slightly more frequently than their counterparts in the multilingual setting. For instance, they favor direct engagement with language material, such as reading for pleasure (item 16, M=4, SD=1.04. for Group 1 and M=3.29, SD=1.2 for Group 2) and watching media content in English (item 15, M=4.38, SD=.94 for Group 1 and M=4, SD=1.1 for Group 2). Nevertheless, the small effect size (η2=.03) again implies that while the discrepancy is statistically significant, the magnitude of the impact of the linguistic environment is modest.

Table 3
Mann-Whitney Test Results for Cognitive Strategies

Context	*Mean Rank*	*Sum of Ranks*	*Test*	*Test Statistics*[a]
monolingual	78.74	6614.00	Mann-Whitney U	1996.00
multilingual	63.77	3826.00	Wilcoxon W	3826.00
			Z	-2.13
			Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.033

For compensation strategies (Table 4), the test did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the groups (U=2404.50, z=-.63, p>.001). Mean ranks were MR=70.42 for Group 1 and MR=74.88 for Group 2, respectively. Compensation strategies involve overcoming knowledge gaps, including guessing from context or using synonyms when exact words are unavailable. Thus, compensating for language gaps appears to be universal regardless of the linguistic environment, as all non-native speakers experience challenges in covering for missing vocabulary.

Table 4
Mann-Whitney Test Results for Compensation Strategies

Context	*Mean Rank*	*Sum of Ranks*	*Test*	*Test Statistics*[a]
monolingual	70.42	4295.50	Mann-Whitney U	2404.50
multilingual	74.88	6289.50	Wilcoxon W	4295.50
			Z	-.63
			Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.53

The results for metacognitive strategies, displayed in Table 5, show a non-significant difference between the two groups (U=1787.00, z=-1.32, p>.001). Mean ranks were MR=63.97 for the monolingual group and MR=60.29 for the multilingual group. Both groups appear to accord equal value to these strategies, encompassing planning, organizing, and monitoring one's language learning process. The given strategies are employed at comparable levels regardless of linguistic background. Consequently, the multilingual setting may not always foster greater self-regulation in learning strategy preferences than the monolingual setting.

Table 5
Mann-Whitney Test Results for Metacognitive Strategies

Context	*Mean Rank*	*Sum of Ranks*	*Test*	*Test Statistics*[a]
monolingual	63.97	4828.00	Mann-Whitney U	1787.00
multilingual	60.29	3557.00	Wilcoxon W	3557.00
			Z	-1.32
			Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.19

The data obtained for affective strategies (Table 6) failed to indicate a statistically significant difference (U=2088.00, z=−1.691, p>.001). Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The monolingual group had a mean rank of MR=66.96 compared to MR=78.77 for the multilingual group, indicating a slight but non-significant tendency for the former to employ affective strategies more commonly.

Affective strategies, which help students deal with emotions such as language anxiety or motivation issues, were slightly more common in the multilingual setting (Group 1: M=14.9, SD=4.33, Group 2: M=16.25, SD=4.4). Nevertheless, the non-significant difference implies that the emotional aspects are less strongly affected by the linguistic environment. Thus, emotional management mechanisms or self-motivation appear to play a role for all language learners.

Table 6
Mann-Whitney Test Results for Affective Strategies

Context	*Mean Rank*	*Sum of Ranks*	*Test*	*Test Statistics*[a]
monolingual	66.96	5491.00	Mann-Whitney U	2088.00
multilingual	78.77	4805.00	Wilcoxon W	5491.00
			Z	-1.69
			Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.09

As shown in Table 7, the test results for social strategies revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups (U=5584.50, z=−2.05, p < .001). The p-value of .04 provides moderate evidence against the null hypothesis. Group 2 had a higher mean rank (MR=80.93) than Group 1 (MR=66.48), suggesting that students in the multilingual environment more frequently resort to social strategies. Among others, this involves asking English speakers for correction (item 46, M=2.58, SD=1.2 for Group 1 and M=3.45, SD=1.2 for Group 2), engaging with other students for language practice (item 47, M=2.7, SD=1.1 for Group 1 and M=3.2, SD=1 for Group 2), or seeking assistance from native speakers (item 4, M=2.48, SD=1.1 for Group 1 and M=3.11, SD=1 for Group 2). This result was partly predictable as students in multilingual environments may be more accustomed to interacting in multiple languages. Therefore, they may use interactive methods to learn English more readily. Thus, these findings provide reasonable evidence that regular exposure to various languages might stimulate language learners to leverage social interactions more commonly.

Table 7
Mann-Whitney Test Results for Social Strategies

Context	*Mean Rank*	*Sum of Ranks*	*Test*	*Test Statistics*[a]
monolingual	66.48	4855.50	Mann-Whitney U	2014.5
multilingual	80.93	5584.50	Wilcoxon W	5584.5
			Z	-2.05
			Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.04

Table 8 presents the summative findings for strategy use, providing a comparative overview of the relative frequency of each strategy category among the participants. The data pattern suggests high engagement in cognitive (M=47.15) and metacognitive (M=31.37) language learning strategies. The least commonly used were affective strategies (M=15.48). Hence, students may prioritize direct language engagement and self-regulation over emotional management.

Table 8
Strategy Groups Ranked in Ascending Order of Use

	Minimum	*Maximum*	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*
A. Cognitive	29.00	69.00	47.15	7.19
B. Metacognitive	17.00	44.00	31.37	5.69
C. Memory	9.00	38.00	25.48	5.62
D. Compensation	11.00	29.00	19.97	3.68
E. Social	9.00	30.00	18.78	4.48
F. Affective	6.00	26.00	15.48	4.41

Finally, the overall mean scores for strategy use among students from the two linguistic backgrounds indicate that multilingual learners had a slightly higher mean score (M=160.04, SD=20.5) compared to their monolingual peers (M=159.19, SD=21.7). Thus, it documents a relatively similar level of strategy use for both contexts.

Table 9 presents the results of the Mann-Whitney U Test, which assessed the differences in overall frequency of strategy use between the two student groups. As shown, the mean rank for the monolingual group (MR=62.33) was somewhat lower than for the multilingual group (MR=63.83). Nevertheless, the test statistic and the associated p-value (U=1885.50, z=−.23, $p < .001$) failed to yield a statistically significant difference. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that there is no significant difference in the frequency of strategy application between the monolingual and multilingual groups.

Table 9
Mann-Whitney Test Results for Frequency of Strategy Use

Context	*Mean Rank*	*Sum of Ranks*	*Test*	*Test Statistics*[a]
monolingual	62.33	4300.50	Mann-Whitney U	1885.50
multilingual	63.83	3574.50	Wilcoxon W	4300.50
			Z	-.23
			Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.81

5. Discussion

The current study investigated how monolingual and multilingual linguistic environments affect the use of LLS among majors in English language and literature. The objective was to determine whether students from different linguistic backgrounds vary in their strategic preferences and frequency of strategy use, as outlined in the SILL framework (Oxford, 1990). Quantitative data collected through an online questionnaire were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U Test, allowing for a comparative analysis of mean ranks across the main strategy categories. While previous research showcases the

mileage of multilingualism in LLS applications, the assumed superiority of multilingual learners in this study seems less marked.

The results revealed statistically significant differences between memory, social, and cognitive strategies. Specifically, multilingual students reported higher use of memory and social strategies, while their peers from the monolingual setting exhibited a slightly stronger tendency to employ cognitive strategies. Contrastingly, compensation, metacognitive, and affective strategies did not diverge significantly between the two groups, implying that their utilization was similar, irrespective of linguistic background. Overall, these findings partially support Hypothesis 1 by showing that linguistic background affects LLS preferences. However, this influence was limited, given the small effect sizes in each LLS category.

Previous research has consistently highlighted the strategic advantages of multilingual learners, who tended to adopt more varied strategies (Grainger, 2012; Pryzbyl, 2016). However, the current findings question this assumption, revealing only negligible differences in specific strategy categories. Our results broadly accord with studies where multilingual learners were shown to increasingly draw on memory and social strategies (Alharbi, 2017; Mitits et al., 2021; Mitits & Sarafianou, 2012; Zou & Lertlit, 2022). Indeed, the increased use of memory strategies by multilingual participants in this study, reprising the findings of Pawlak and Kiermasz (2018), may be attributed to their heightened need to retain and retrieve linguistic items across several languages with code-switching forming part of their daily routine (Jessner, 2006). This result also concurs with Alharbi (2017), who demonstrated that the linguistic environment prompted international students to utilize social strategies frequently. This impact was also evident in students' willingness to learn about and openness to cultural diversity. Among students' priorities were establishing contact with representatives of other cultures and socialization, which also aligns with Mitits et al. (2021).

In contrast, the monolingual group in this study showed a somewhat higher reliance on cognitive strategies than their multilingual counterparts. Monolinguals were inclined to directly engage with language input to compensate for limited exposure to other languages. That said, the small effect size indicates that the effect of monolingual settings on cognitive strategies is modest. This result partly deviates from Mitits (2015), who reported no difference between monolingual and multilingual learners in cognitive strategy use. At the same time, of all six strategy categories, both student groups expressed the strongest endorsement for cognitive strategies, as indicated by the overall strategy profile.

Further test results failed to garner discrepancies in the application of LLS between the two groups. The remaining categories (metacognitive, affective, and compensation) were largely unaffected by linguistic background, with monolingual and multilingual groups according roughly equal values to the enlisted questionnaire items. Essentially, a slight mean score increase for affective strategies among multilingual students may illustrate their heightened relevance in this group, likely reflecting the greater need for managing emotions in day-to-day communicative interactions. Multilingual learners might also lay a stronger emphasis on compensation strategies since avoiding communication breakdowns by compensating for knowledge gaps is more common in multilingual settings (Mitits, 2015; Mitits et al., 2021). On balance, both groups reported deploying them with comparable frequency, suggesting that linguistic background may have a limited influence on this category.

Looking at the strategy profile and frequency of application of strategy categories, both student groups favored traditional approaches and direct strategies, echoing the results of Pawlak and Kiermasz (2018). The participants most commonly endorsed cognitive and metacognitive strategies, followed by memory strategies, likely reflecting their prior experiences with language teaching approaches. That affective and social strategies had low ranks in the strategy profile was unsurprising. Numerous studies have consistently shown affective strategies by far the least commonly used (Pawlak & Kiermasz, 2018; Syafawani & Hashim, 2022).

One result running counter to previous research is the absence of a significant difference in the overall frequency of LLS use between multilingual and monolingual students (Kemp, 2007; Mitits, 2015). Although there was a discrepancy in the mean scores between the two groups, with multilinguals somewhat outperforming the monolinguals, subsequent testing revealed it to be non-significant. Hence, the second null hypothesis was retained, yielding no evidence that students from multilingual backgrounds apply strategies more frequently than monolingual students. Consequently, given the lack of evidence produced by inferential statistics, it was inferred that the linguistic environment may exert only a limited impact on the frequency of strategy use among EFL majors.

In contrast to previous studies (e.g., Tuncer, 2009; Yayla et al., 2016), which reported advantages associated with multiple linguistic capacities, this study does not offer compelling evidence that multilingual students are more effective in their strategic behavior. While the analysis indicated specific strategy preferences between the two groups, the overall impact of being proficient in several languages was less pronounced than earlier research suggested. Rather than viewing multilingualism as the sole predictor of strategy use, other factors, such as formal instruction, exposure to EFL teaching approaches, and student's academic field, may collectively play a role in shaping strategic behavior.

Additionally, there is a strong possibility that the minimal differences observed among the participants can be attributed to their major, which may have more commonalities than differences due to their specialized field of study. It is plausible that academic instruction diminishes the effect of multilingualism on strategy use, as students develop learning preferences in response to their educational environment to a greater extent than their linguistic background. However, to substantiate this claim, further research is needed in diverse sociocultural settings with large participant pools.

6. Conclusion

This study undertook to tap the influence of linguistic background as part of a broader sociocultural milieu on the LLS use by English majors. Utilizing Oxford's (1990) SILL questionnaire, it explored the patterns and frequencies of strategy application by two distinct groups: students with Hungarian as their L1 and those with Hungarian and Ukrainian as their L1 and L2, respectively, with English as their foreign language.

Two research questions were addressed, and quantitative evidence was adduced to support the analysis. Regarding strategy preferences, the study found that multilingual students reported more frequent use of memory and social strategies, while monolingual students showed a greater reliance on cognitive strategies. Concerning the remaining categories, no statistically significant differences were found. Hence, linguistic background selectively impacts EFL students' strategic behavior rather than exerting a uniform influence. At the same time, comparative data on overall strategy use frequency revealed that students from monolingual and multilingual backgrounds exhibited largely similar levels of strategy use. While the difference was statistically insignificant, the mean scores suggested a slight trend favoring multilingual students, though this finding should be interpreted cautiously. In all, these findings contrast with previous studies overwhelmingly emphasizing the strategic effectiveness of multilingual learners (Pawlak & Kiermaz, 2018).

Even though tentative, the findings from this study can potentially offer several implications for language educators and researchers. Given the participants' high engagement in cognitive and metacognitive strategies strongly endorsed by both groups, it stands to reason that incorporating activities that promote direct involvement with language (e.g., problem-solving activities) and self-regulation skills (e.g., goal-setting, planning) would be highly appreciated by learners, irrespective of linguistic context. On the other hand, the low use of affective strategies might point to the need to incorporate emotional support within language

instruction. Among others, this could include training in positive reinforcement techniques, emotional regulation, stress management, or self-reflection activities. Extant literature pinpoints the challenging nature of EFL student teaching, highlighting that emotional barriers can deter English majors from pursuing language-related careers (Lőrincz, 2023; 2024; Lőrincz & Komar, 2023).

Although insightful in many respects, this study is not exempt from limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the study examined two specific linguistic backgrounds, namely Hungarian and Ukrainian. Therefore, the findings may not fully apply to other linguistic environments or different language combinations, which could yield varying results. Another issue stems from the relatively small sample size, restricting the possibility of generalization of its findings to broader student populations. Also, the study drew on quantitative, self-reported data using the SILL questionnaire, which has been criticized for potential inaccuracies in learners' self-assessment of strategy application. While the quantitative approach enabled a comparison of strategy frequencies, it did not capture the underlying reasons behind students' strategy choices, which could be gained through qualitative methods. Last but not least, the study examined the frequencies and patterns of strategy use without observing the potential effect of bilingualism type on strategy preferences. Existing scholarship shows that the level of learners' multilingualism may influence their choice of strategies (Dmitrenko, 2017), suggesting a venue for future research.

Finally, because only minor differences were documented in overall strategy use between EFL majors from monolingual and multilingual settings, future research could explore the effect of second language proficiency on the strategy preferences of foreign language learners. Additionally, more focused attention to multilinguals' cultural orientation could assist in gaining a deeper insight into their learning preferences.

References

Agustin, W., Wahyudin, A.Y., & Isnaini, S. (2021). Language learning strategies and academic achievement of English Department students. *Journal of Arts and Education, 1*(1), 19-29. https://doi.org/10.33365/jae.v1i1.34

Alharbi, A. (2017). *The Social language strategies of Saudi students in an English as a second language context* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of RMIT, Australia.

Amerstorfer, C. M. (2018). Past its expiry date? The SILL in modern mixed-methods strategy research. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 8*(2), 497-523. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2018.8.2.14

Balci, Ö., & Ügüten, S. D. (2018). The relationship between EFL learners' language learning strategy use and achievement. *International education studies, 11*(2), 1-12. https://doi.org/doi:10.5539/ies.v11n2p1

Chostelidou, D., Griva, E., & Tsakiridou, E. (2015). Language learners' skills and strategies: Assessing academic needs in a multilingual context. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 191*, 1472-1478. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.442

Clyne, M. (2017). Multilingualism. In F. Coulmas (Ed.), *The handbook of sociolinguistics* (pp. 301–314). Wiley-Blackwell.

Cohen, A. D. (2011). *Strategies in learning and using a second language*. Routledge/Pearson Education.

Danko, M., & Dečman, M. (2019). The strategy inventory for second language learning: Tested, adapted, and validated in the Slovenian higher education context. *ESP Today, Journal of English for Specific Purposes At Tertiary Level, 7*(2), 207-230. https://doi.org/10.18485/esptoday.2019.7.2.5

Dmitrenko, V. (2017). Language learning strategies of multilingual adults learning additional languages. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 14*(1), 6–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2017.1258978

Gavriilidou, Z., & Mitits, L. (Eds.). (2021). *Situating language learning strategy Use: Present issues and future trends* (Vol. 146). Multilingual Matters.

Grainger, P. (2012). The impact of cultural background on the choice of language learning strategies in the JFL context. *System, 40* (4), 483-493. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2012.10.011

Griffee, D. T. (2012). *An introduction to second language research methods.* TESL-EJ Publications.

Griffiths, C. (2004). *Language-learning strategies: Theory and research (Vol. 1).* AIS St Helens, Centre for Research in International Education.

Griffiths, C. & Cansiz, G. (2015). Language learning strategies: An holistic view. *Studies in second language learning and teaching, 5*(3), 473-493. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2015.5.3.7

Gu, P. Y. (2021). Foreword: Strategies for sustainable language learning. In Z. Gavriilidou & L. Mitits (Eds.), *Situating language learning strategy use: Present issues and future trends* (pp. xxi–xxiii). Multilingual Matters.

Hardan, A. A. (2013). Language learning strategies: A general overview. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 106*, 1712-1726.

Hayati, A., & Nejad, K. D. (2010). A comparative study of monolingual and bilingual EFL learners on language learning strategies use: A case of Iranian high school students. *Journal of Asia TEFL, 7*(4), 79-101.

Jessner, U. (2006). *Linguistic awareness in multilinguals: English as a third language*. Edinburgh University Press.

Kemp, C. (2007). Strategic processing in grammar learning: Do multilinguals use more strategies? *International Journal of Multilingualism, 4*(4), 241-261.

Kostić-Bobanović, M., & Bobanović, M. (2011). A comparative study of language learning strategies used by monolingual and bilingual EFL learners. *Metodički obzori, 13*(6), 41-53.

Kölemen, Ü. (2021). A systematic review of studies on language learning strategies from 1977 to 2018. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies, 3*(1), 151-169. https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v3i1.485

Lőrincz, M. (2023). *Language teaching challenges: A multilevel approach*. Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education.

Lőrincz, M. (2024). Language teaching challenges through the lens of corpus linguistics. *TEFLIN Journal, 35*(1), 41–66. http://dx.doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v35i1/41-66

Lőrincz, M., & Komar, O. (2023). Weathering the storm: Unraveling the challenges of EFL student teaching in Ukraine. *Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language), 17*(2), 13–33. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10015763

Mitits, L. (2015). *Language learning strategies and multilingualism*. Zaita Publishing.

Mitits, L., Gavriilidou, Z., & Vrettou, A. (2021). EFL learning strategies and motivational orientations of multilingual learners in mainstream and dual-immersion schools. In Z. Gavriilidou & L. Mitits (Eds.), *Situating language learning strategy use: Present issues and future trends* (pp. 200–218). Multilingual Matters.

Mitits, L. & Sarafianou, A. (2012). Development of language learning strategies in multilingual vs. monolingual learners: Empirical evidence from a combined methods longitudinal case study. In Z. Gavriilidou, A. Efthymiou, E. Thomadaki & P. Kambakis-Vougiouklis (eds*), Selected papers of the 10th ICGL*, (pp. 453-462). Democritus University of Thrace.

Noprival, N., Alfian, A., Kaslan, I., & Ginanto, D. (2024). Strategies employed in learning English and other foreign languages: A case study of Indonesian polyglots. *International Journal of Multilingualism*. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2024.2330557

Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know* (1st ed.). Heinle ELT.

Oxford, R. L., & Amerstorfer, C. M. (2018). *Language learning strategies and individual learner characteristics: Situating strategy use in diverse contexts*. Bloomsbury.

Oxford, R. L., Rubin, J., Chamot, A. U., Schramm, K., Lavine, R., Gunning, P., & Nel, C. (2014). The learning strategy prism: Perspectives of learning strategy experts. *System, 43*, 30-49. http://doi.org/10.1016/J.System.2014.02.004

Pawlak, M. (2021). Investigating language learning strategies: Prospects, pitfalls and challenges. *Language Teaching Research, 25*, 817 - 835. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168819876156

Pawlak, M., & Kiermasz, Z. (2018). The use of language learning strategies in a second and third language: The case of foreign language majors. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 8*(2), 427–443. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2018.8.2.11

Przybył, J. (2016). Cultural variation in the use of language learning strategies: A comparative study. *Konin Language Studies, 4*(4), 439–461. http://ksj.pwsz.konin.edu.pl

Psaltou-Joycey, A., & Kantaridou, Z. (2009). Plurilingualism, language learning strategy use and learning style preferences. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 6*(4), 460–474. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790710903254620

Ranjan, R., Philominraj, A., & Saavedra, R. A. (2021). On the relationship between language learning strategies and language proficiency in Indian universities. *International Journal of Instruction, 14*(3), 73-94. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1304555

Qasimnejad, A., & Hemmati, F. (2014). Investigating the language learning strategies used by Iranian monolingual (Persian) and bilingual (Persian Turkish) speakers as EFL learners. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, (136), 26-30.

Sholah, H. M. (2019). English language learning strategies: The case of Indonesian monolinguals vs. bilinguals. *Indonesian EFL Journal: Journal of ELT, Linguistics, and Literature, 5*(1), 1–23.

Syafawani, F. N., & Hashim, H. (2022). A systematic review of language learning strategies used by ESL pupils with different English proficiency levels (2013–2022). *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 12*(11), 1834–1854. https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i11/15698

Tuncer, U. (2009). How do monolingual and bilingual language learners differ in use of learning strategies while learning a foreign language? *Evidences from Mersin University. Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 1*(1), 852-856.

Yayla, A., Kozikoglu, I., & Celik, S. N. (2016). A comparative study of language learning strategies used by monolingual and bilingual learners. *European Scientific Journal, 12*(26). https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2016.v12n26p1

Zou, B., & Lertlit, L. (2022). Oxford's strategy inventory for language learning: English learning of Chinese students in Thai university. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network, 15*(2), 705-723. https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/LEARN/index