A person-centred perspective on agency in language learning: insights from a pilot study

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Abstract: This pilot study investigates key components of language learner agency, including intentionality, self-efficacy, and self-regulation. It relies on insights from a group of foreign language majors seeking learning support at Studio KOUCZ. Drawing on a theoretical framework grounded in the psychology of language learning, the study explores participants' perceived competence in directing and managing their own language learning process. Data was collected from 28 university students using a Polish adaptation of the Agency for Learning Questionnaire Short Form (AFLQ-S, Code 2020), and analysed using descriptive statistics and non-parametric comparisons. The results reveal relatively high levels of intentionality and self-efficacy, alongside critically low levels of self-regulation. These findings point to specific areas for targeted intervention and suggest that even highly motivated and self-aware learners may lack sufficient strategies for managing their learning process and academic stress. The discussion highlights the importance of personalised coaching and metacognitive support in fostering learners' self-regulation. The study contributes to the emerging literature on learner agency in foreign language education and provides practical insights for institutional support mechanisms aimed at empowering students in higher education contexts.

Abstrakt: Niniejsze badanie pilotażowe dotyczy kluczowych aspektów związanych ze sprawczością osób uczących się języków obcych, takich jak intencjonalność, przekonanie o własnej skuteczności oraz samoregulacja. Analizie poddano dane uzyskane od osób, które zgłosiły się po wsparcie w procesie uczenia się do Studia KOUCZ. Odwołując się do ram teoretycznych osadzonych w psychologii uczenia się języków obcych, badanie koncentruje się na postrzeganej przez uczestników zdolności do kierowania i zarządzania własnym pro-

cesem uczenia się. Dane zebrano od 28 studentów uczelni publicznej za pomocą polskiej adaptacji kwestionariusza Agency for Learning Questionnaire Short Form (AFLQ-S, Code 2020) i poddano analizie statystycznej (statystyki opisowe i nieparametryczne testy istotności różnic). Wyniki wskazują na stosunkowo wysokie poziomy intencjonalności i samooceny skuteczności, przy jednocześnie krytycznie niskim poziomie samoregulacji. Sugeruje to konkretne obszary wymagające interwencji i wskazuje, że nawet zmotywowane i świadome osoby uczące się języków obcych mogą mieć trudności z zarządzaniem procesem uczenia się. W dyskusji podkreślono znaczenie spersonalizowanego coachingu oraz wsparcia metapoznawczego w rozwijaniu samoregulacji. Badanie wnosi wkład w rozwijającą się literaturę na temat sprawczości w edukacji językowej oraz dostarcza praktycznych wskazówek dotyczących wsparcia instytucjonalnego dla osób studiujących.

Key words: Foreign language learning, person-centredness, agency, self-efficacy, intention, self-regulation, language coaching

Słowa kluczowe: uczenie się języków obcych, podejście skoncentrowane na osobę, sprawczość, przekonanie o sprawczości, intencja, samoregulacja, dialog coachingowy w nauce języków obcych

1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the importance of learner agency in the context of higher education, including the area of foreign language learning (FLL). Agency, that is, the capacity to act purposefully and autonomously, has been widely acknowledged as a key determinant of academic success and a vital ingredient of lifelong learning (Bandura, 2006; OECD, 2019). In the domain of language education, agency is especially crucial given the long-term, effortful, and self-directed nature of language acquisition (Oxford, 1990; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2020). Despite its centrality, research on agency in tertiary language education remains relatively scarce, with many studies limited in scope, scale, or methodological diversity (Stenalt & Lassesen, 2022).

This study is grounded in a psychological framework that conceptualises agency as a dynamic interplay of three core constructs: intentionality, self-efficacy, and self-regulation (Code, 2020). These constructs, drawn from Bandura's (1991, 2001) social cognitive theory, describe the mechanisms by which learners initiate, direct, and sustain their learning efforts. Intentionality refers to the learner's capacity to plan and pursue meaningful goals (Brandt, 2024), while self-efficacy captures confidence in one's ability to manage academic demands (Raoofi, Tan & Chan, 2012). Self-regulation, in turn, describes the ability to control one's behaviour, attention, and emotions in service of learning objectives (Zimmerman, 2000; Greene, 2017). While each construct has received attention in isolation, fewer studies have examined how they interact within the broader framework of agency—particularly in real-life learning contexts outside formal instruction.

In the educational context of our study, the transition from secondary to tertiary education remains a critical moment for language learners, who are expected to assume greater responsibility for their learning without adequate support. Studio KOUCZ was established as a response to this challenge, offering individualised coaching to students seeking help with academic goal-setting, stress management, and language learning strategies. The learners who approach the Studio are not passive recipients of instruction but individuals actively searching for ways to enhance their educational experience. Their perspectives offer a valuable opportunity to examine agency in action.

Our pilot study investigates the perceived levels of intentionality, self-efficacy, and self-regulation in a group of foreign language majors who reached out to Studio KOUCZ for learning support. In doing so, it addresses two main research questions: (1) What are the participants' levels of intention, self-efficacy, and self-regulation? and (2) Which areas emerge as most critical for intervention? The study thus aims to contribute to the empirical understanding of learner agency in FLL and inform future intervention strategies.

2. Person-centred language learning: Agency, intention, self-efficacy and self-regulation

According to Bandura (2006:164) „(t)o be agent is to influence intentionally one's functioning and life circumstances". Agency arises as a result of the interplay between individuals' behavioural and social factors. With respect to the latter, fostering learners' agency is as a key goal (Brod et al. 2023:1) and an upcoming priority in education (Crowhurst & Cornish, 2020:24). It is also believed to be a fundamental pillar of society and strongly pertains to taking responsibility for one's own life. In other words, "(i)t is about acting rather than being acted upon; shaping rather than being shaped; making responsible decisions and choices rather than accepting those determined by others" (OECD, 2019: 2). This does not mean supporting learners is unnecessary – on the contrary, they do require guidance from teachers, parents or other significant persons in identifying their potential (OECD, 2019: 4). Furthermore, the emergence of agency requires constant reflection and evaluation of the learning progress (Code, 2020:19). In normative terms, its development should start in childhood and can be facilitated by tutoring or collaboration among peers (Crowhurst & Cornish, 2020: 27). Critically, it constitutes a part of lifelong learning (OECD, 2019: 5, Maritsch et al. 2023: 2) and is subject to change arising from meaningful interactions (Driver et al., 2021: 6). At tertiary level it can be fostered not only by adopting the person-centred approach by the teaching staff and co-construction of the learning process (Chen, 2025), but also by coaching (Andrews & Munro, 2018), all of which nurture learner agency. Among the characteristics of agentive learners, previous studies have identified the feeling of control over the learning process (Driver et al., 2021: 6),

responsibility for the learning process (Vyshnevska, 2024: 212), making choices aligned with long-term goals (Zimmerman, 2000), linking educational decisions and learning behaviours to learning efficiency (Mercer, 2012: 41), being in charge of the learning environment (Crowhurt & Cornish, 2020: 25, Chen, 2025: 230) and the ability to regulate, control and monitor his own progress (Code, 2020: 32).

Agency underlies goal achievement, successful learning and is required in overcoming adversities (OECD, 2019: 2). It is crucial in foreign language learning (FLL), as the latter is a long-term, often lifelong, process, which demands systematic, considerable effort, reviewing and (re)evaluating of one's own learning strategies, methods and their influence on the progress as well as, if necessary, changing them (Oxford, 1990) and (co)constructing of one's own learning environment (Chen, 2025). Apart from deciding what, how, with whom any learning content should be learnt, language learners need to be agentive. As Teng (2019: 65) suggests, "the precondition for a learner to take actions in his/her learning is to have a personal sense of agency, or a belief that they regard it helpful to make a difference to their learning". This implies that not all aspects of agency are observable, or, as Mercer (2012: 42) aptly comments, being agentive includes also „non-visible behaviours, beliefs, thoughts and feelings all of which must be understood on relation to various contexts and affordances from which they cannot by abstracted" (Mercer, 2012: 42). Thus, to be in charge of the FLL process, one needs to be aware that finding a right learning strategy or requires time much in the same way that the development of communicative competence does, and the FLL is best approached as a process rather than a product, constantly requiring new investments of effort (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2020) and expanding beyond obligatory involvement in classes. In the following sections we outline three agentic properties, that is, self-efficacy, intentionality and self-regulation, which are the core constructs in our study.

The concept of self-efficacy was also introduced by Bandura, who defined it as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (1986: 391). Self-efficacy is therefore a driving force of human action. The level of self-efficacy has a direct impact on how outcomes (success and failure) are attributed. Individuals characterised by high self-efficacy attribute their results to their actions and have a feeling of being in control. This means that they attribute failure to insufficient effort, as opposed to those whose self-efficacy levels are low, who find the cause of failure in fixed or external factors, like abilities (Bandura, 1991, 1999). In the latter case, further attempts may be inhibited, especially if threatened with adversity (Graham, 2022). This finding is in line with the studies on attributions by FLL researchers (Raoofi, Tan & Chan, 2012: 64). An interesting interplay exists between achievements and self-efficacy. It was found that FL learners might perceive their self-efficacy through the lens of language competencies (Sağlam & Arlan, 2018: 5), while on the other hand, the metanalysis conducted by Raoofi, Tan and Chan (2012) pictured self-efficacy as a strong predictor of performance

in FLL and highlighted the link between grades in language courses and learners' self-efficacy beliefs. Another meta-analysis by Goetze and Driver (2022) also linked self-efficacy to L2 achievement. Raoofi, Tan and Chan (2012) found and analysed also studies indicating, that high-efficacy learners used more learning strategies than those with law-efficacy level. Their findings also suggest that self-efficacy in FLL can be affected through interventions, such as feedback and encouragement (p. 67).

Another construct under consideration in our study, that is, self-regulation (SR) can be considered as a process in which a person exercises control over their own behaviour, thoughts and emotions in order to accomplish a set goal (Bandura, 1991). Broadly, SR is defined as the ability to motivate oneself, set goals, plan strategies, evaluate and modify one's own behaviour (Cervone & Pervin, 2022). Critically, this also involves avoiding environmental distractors and controlling emotional impulses. In other words, FL learners charactersied by low self-regulation can experience difficulties in controlling the whole learning process, adapting their learning strategies, when necessary and not succumbing to their negative emotions and distractors (Przybył & Urbańska, 2020). Moreover, the ability to resist distractions – whether externally- or internally driven – enables learners to remain in pursuit of their goals (Duckworth & Gross, 2014). Studies confirm that self-regulation is a significant predictor of FLL achievements and proficiency (e.g., Seker, 2015: 600). Self-regulated language learning can be investigated as a cyclical process (Zimmerman, 2000; Pintrich, 2004) of learning, including planning, monitoring, control, and reflection, and has been shown to be responsive to interventions in the FLL context (Przybył, 2023).

The final construct under investigation in our study, that is intentionality, is defined as "the capacity of individuals to imagine a desired future state, establish a goal or outcome, and plan a course of action to achieve it" (Brandt, 2024: 5). Code (2020) distinguishes two dimensions of intentionality, namely: planfulness and decision confidence. While planfulness encompasses constructing a plan, which is oriented on mentally represented goals, decision confidence consists in the confidence that individuals have about their choices in the learning process. In the context of FLL, teachers can predict intention of students to engage in classes relying on contextual clues. Chen (2025) highlights that looking at FL learning through the lens of agentic engagement, it can be described as "a dynamic interplay between individual initiative and contextual support". Intentionality is linked to proactive engagement (Bandura, 2001), which should be noticed and supported. Otherwise some learners can get stuck having the will, goals and plans, yet not knowing, how to approach them due to insufficient strategic competence or insufficient control of the learning process (Oxford, 2017).

Research on agency in the context of higher education has largely been conducted in the form of qualitative or descriptive studies, and frequently involved relatively samples of learners (Stenalt & Lassesen, 2022). When it comes to measuring levels of intention, self-efficacy and self-regulation among high

education students, we are referring to several publications focusing on the formal, institutional context of foreign language learning, relying on relatively large number of participants (Maretha & Waluyo, 2022; Przybył & Chudak, 2022a, b; Przybył, 2023).

Maretha and Waluyo (2022) investigated the levels of agency for learning and further investigated its properties. The participants in their study were 389 Thai EFL learners, undergraduate students of non-English disciplines, whose proficiency level in English ranged from A1 to B1. Their results revealed that the learners indicated a high level of agency for learning, including intentionality, self-efficacy, and self-regulation. Several studies have addressed self-regulation in the context of tertiary language learning in Poland, which is particularly relevant to our research. Here, Przybył and Chudak's findings (2022a, b) from quantitative investigations involving a representative sample of 321 participants, show, that tertiary language learners majoring in different languages (German, English, Russian) demonstrated a relatively low level of self-regulation in almost all its stages during transition from face-to-face to online teaching in COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers also compared tertiary students' self-regulation in standard and enforced online education and indicated that self-regulation had significantly declined during the shift from standard classroom-based learning to online classes. Interestingly, they identified a dramatically low level of SR in the reflection over the learning process (Przybył & Chudak, 2022a). These results prompted them to investigate the reasons underlying low self-regulation levels, and drove them to a qualitative investigation of the cohort of 321 tertiary language learners. Here, the interviewees pointed to a decrease in their motivation to learn and indicated a number of reasons for it, including insufficient support from their language instructors, lack of strategic instruction, difficulties with time management or missing face-to-face contact, both with teachers and peers, just to name a few. At the same time, the insights revealed difficulties experienced by the participants in the time of transition from standard to online education regarding multiple aspects of agency for learning, beginning with intentionality (decrease in the will to act – lack of motivation) through self-efficacy (attributing their difficulties to external factors and not their efforts) and ending with self-regulation (in terms of struggling to organise of their learning process, using metacognitive skills or being overwhelmed by environmental distractors and adversities). Their responses also highlighted the important role of teachers and peers in supporting self-regulation, particularly through interaction, face-to-face contact, and instruction in learning strategies (Przybył & Chudak, 2024), with the latter aspect further supported by research on self-regulatory interventions (Przybył, 2023).

These findings underscore the importance of examining language learners' agency – particularly in terms of intentionality, self-efficacy, and self-regulation—not only in standard academic contexts but also in alternative learning environments that provide individualised support. In light of the challenges identified in previous studies and the demonstrated relevance of targeted interventions,

our study seeks to explore the specific needs of foreign language majors who contacted our Studio for academic coaching and guidance. While this pilot study primarily serves to test the rationale and research instrument in preparation for a larger-scale investigation (Mackey & Gass, 2022), it is also guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the participants' levels of intention, self-efficacy, and self-regulation?
2. Which areas emerge as most critical for intervention, based on the measured levels of intention, self-efficacy, and self-regulation?

3. Method
3.1. Participants

Participants were 28 young adults who consulted Studio KOUCZ for learning guidance, mostly women ($N = 24$), majoring in English and German. They were all students of a state university in western Poland. According to admission criteria and curricular regulations, their level of proficiency in their first major ranged from B2 to C1. Crucially to the scope of the present pilot, they approached the Studio seeking support in three fundamental areas, that is, effective language learning strategies, stress management, and academic goals. With respect to the latter, the Studio assisted them in aligning their personal, professional, and educational goals.

3.2. Instruments

Participants in the study completed a Polish translation of Code's (2020) Agency for Learning Questionnaire Short Form (AFLQ-S), developed in the process of forward and backward translation and expert review by a psychologist (Hambleton et al., 2005). The inventory consists of five scales assessing different aspects of intentionality, motivation, self-regulation, and self-efficacy:

a) Intentionality: Planful Competence (PC), which measures deliberate and systematic decision-making, consideration of options and collection of information (items 1–5);

b) Intentionality: Decision Competence (DC), which assesses confidence in one's decision-making abilities and perceived success in making good decisions (items 6–8);

c) Forethought: Extrinsic Motivation (EM), which captures reasons for attending university such as personal development, responsibility, or performance improvement (items 9–13);

d) Forethought: Intrinsic Motivation (IM), which reflects enjoyment and satisfaction derived from learning and academic exploration (items 14–18);

e) Self-Regulation (SR), which evaluates one's ability to manage emotions and reduce stress effectively (items 19–23);

f) Self-Reflectiveness: Self-Efficacy (SE), which measures confidence in academic self-management, including concentration, organisation, and motivation (items 24–28).

Responses use a 5-point Likert scale, with variations in the wording of scale anchors depending on the subscale. The instrument is available online and can be used in research (Code, 2020).

Data collection took place prior to a consulting session at the Studio and was preceded by signing an informed consent form by participants. Most participants' completed the AFLQ-S in less than 10 minutes. Their responses were saved in Microsoft Teams and anonymised for statistical analysis in jamovi (The jamovi project, 2023). The reliability of the research instrument was assessed by calculating Cronbach's alpha (a) and McDonald's omega (w) coefficients of internal consistency across scale items, whose values are presented in Table 1.

Scales	PC	DC	EM	IM	SR	SE
a	.73	.74	.39	.87	.83	.80
w	.77	.79	.45	.89	.85	.81

Table 1. Cronbach's aplpha and McDonald's omega values for the AFLQ-S subscales used in the study

Since the EM subscale demonstrated unsatisfactory reliability (a < .7), we abstained from analysing motivational variables (EM and IM, constituting a scale of motivation) in statistical analyses and presenting the outcomes regarding motivation in the present pilot study. Conversely, the Intentionality, Self-Regulation, and Self-Efficacy scales all demonstrated satisfactory reliability and are included in statistical analyses and the presentation of outcomes.

3.2. Analytical procedures

In order to answer RQ1, concerning the levels of participants' levels of intention, self-efficacy, and self-regulation, descriptive statistics were calculated for the scales of PC, DC, SR, and SE. RQ2 was accounted for by calculating Friedman's Repeated Measures ANOVA due the distribution of the PC scale, which differed significantly from normal distribution as shown by the Shapiro-Wilk test results ($W = .887$, $p = .005$). Durbin-Conover tests were conducted for pairwise comparisons.

4. Results

Regarding RQ 1, as can be seen in Table 2, the distribution of values did not vary considerably across participants, as shown by the values of the standard deviation. While no norms were described by Code (2020), an attempt at interpreting the values can be made by referring them to a benchmark in self-regualtion studies, that it the SILL Profile of Results (Oxford, 1990). According to these, suggested for 1–5 Likert scales, such as the scales used in the present study, the values should be interpreted as medium for the SR, DC, and SE scales, and high for the PC scale.

	PC	DC	SR	SE
Mean	4.09	3.07	2.63	3.22
Median	4.00	3.33	2.55	3.38
Standard deviation	0.667	0.711	0.706	0.849
Minimum	1.80	1.67	1.40	1.50
Maximum	5.00	4.33	4.10	4.88

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the AFLQ-S subscales used in the study

In terms of comparing the scales, Friedman's nonparametric ANOVA revealed significant differences across the four measures, $\chi^2(3) = 33.30$, $p < .001$. Pairwise comparisons using the Durbin–Conover test indicated statistically significant differences between the following pairs: PC–DC ($p < .001$), PC–SR ($p < .001$), PC–SE ($p < .001$), and SR–SE ($p = .006$). A significant difference was also observed between DC and SR ($p = .021$), whereas no significant difference was found between DC and SE ($p = .638$). These differences are illustrated in Table 1. As shown, self-regulation demonstrates a critically low level compared to the other scales.

Median values across scales
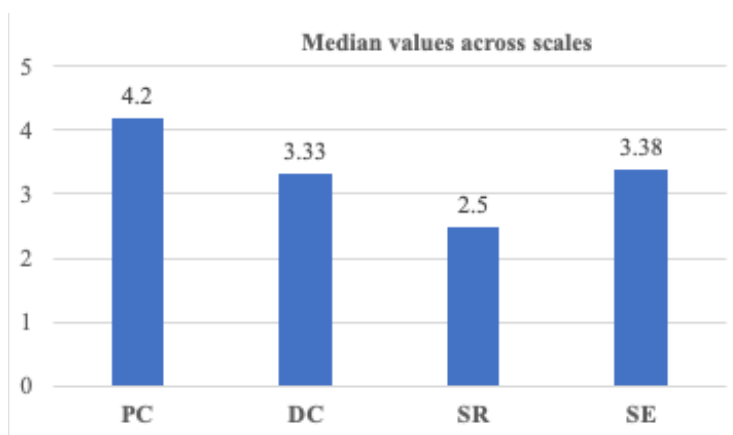
5. Discussion

In response to RQ 1, the analysis revealed relatively consistent response patterns across participants, with only moderate variability in scores. When interpreted against a commonly used benchmark in self-regulation studies—the SILL Profile of Results (Oxford, 1990)—the mean values for the subscales suggest medium levels of decision control, self-regulation, and self-efficacy, and a high level of personal control. Although no normative values have been proposed for the AFLQ-S (Code, 2020), the observed distribution aligns with prior interpretations applied to similar Likert-scale instruments. Regarding RQ 2, self-regulation emerged as the weakest of the four dimensions assessed, which corroborates the results of previous studies.

Central to our study are, indeed, the language learners who provided insights regarding their learning intentions, self-regulation, and self-efficacy. It is worth remembering that these learners have all reached out to Studio KOUCZ because of challenges in becoming in charge of the learning process, and requiring support in coping with stress, deepened self-reflection, as well as setting or appraising their personal development goals. Therefore, it is critical to interpret our results bearing in mind the specific context of the study – and the specificity of our informants, that is, individuals looking for support in the language learning process. The component rated highest by our participants was the planning competence (PC), which suggests that students visiting Studio KOUCZ are characterised by considerable maturity in designing their learning patterns. Decision-making competence (DC), which complements the category of intentionality, was only rated slightly lower. However, it indicates that the participants are, to some extent, transitioning from the planning stage to making decisions about actions that support them in important areas, which in turn, sometimes results in facing a challenge. This relatively high score may also reflect their maturity – when faced with the opportunity to address their weaknesses or aspects in which they feel uncertain, they take the initial steps at least. Intention, in a sense, represents the first step on the path that students must take towards self-regulation (Boekaerts, 1997; Zimmerman, 2000) and it cannot be overestimated as a predecessor of actions, behaviour (such as visiting the Studio for consultation), and, indirectly, also language learning outcomes. While the results of our study allow us to attribute high intentionality to the learners visiting Studio KOUCZ, they remain in stark contrast to the reported self-regulation levels. At this point, it is important to emphasise that self-regulation is often associated with learning strategies (Przybył & Urbańska, 2020), but it is a broader concept, which, apart from the ability to control one's learning (Greene, 2017) also pertains to the ability to effectively manage stress and emotions accompanying the learning process (Przybył & Chudak, 2024). Our participants reported extremely low levels of self-regulation in comparison to intentionality or planfulness. This may be due to the lack of either sufficient learning skills or knowledge on how to guide themselves in the learning process

(Cottrell, 2015) in order to achieve their learning goals, which, in the long run, overrides their high intentionality. Previous studies conducted in the same co-hort of language learners have linked low levels of self-regulation to individuals' insufficient capability to reflect on the learning process and, consequently, their ability to benefit from the feedback loop in learning (Przybył & Chudak, 2022).

In our study we found that our participants' academic self-efficacy (SE) was relatively high in comparison to other investigated constructs, thus overall con-tributing to the their sense of agency. This allows us to suggest that our partici-pants focus more on personal development and pursued fulfillment, most likely with a broader goal to self-actualise as learners. However, in the context of their plans, they typically found it difficult to determine their top priorities or what they truly wanted to do. This may stem from a lack of self-reflection and self-awareness, which prevents them from turning goals into concrete decisions and actions (Przybył & Chudak, 2022ab). As advocated by Mercer (2011), foster-ing learners' reflectiveness and awareness may be supported by pearson-centred teachers' attitudes, which facilitate the development of foreign language skills, reduce students' dependency on language instructors, and foster relationships. Language educators may support learners' self-reflection by a greater inclusion of open-ended questions in communicative activities as well as routine classroom interactions In this vein, Dörnyei (2009) also points out that learners' sense of agency is tied to their positive self-perception in mastering or specific language skills, such as writing or speaking.

According to Zimmerman's (2000) socio-cognitive model, which is particu-larly appealing among self-regulatory models in formal instructional contexts, students characterised by high levels of self-regulation can set goals and effec-tively monitor and control their metacognitive processes. This, in turn, results in a greater sense of agency, as learners develop strategies to select the most suitable tools for improving specific aspects of their learning and developing language learning awareness. As already mentioned, most participants in our study strug-gled with self-regulation, and their responses suggest that they may have en-rolled in linguistic studies without fully understanding how they would use their knowledge and skills in the future. The answer may lie in a common experience shared by many first-year students: they often begin their studies without a clear plan for the future, guided instead by parental expectations or peer influence. In such cases, it is hardly surprising that they struggle with self-regulation. Their understanding of linguistic studies is often shaped by associations formed during their previous language learning experiences, typically involving communicative practice. As a result, they may not anticipate the broader academic scope of the discipline, which includes diverse areas of language subsystems and introduces them – often for the first time – to explicit instruction.

The reported low self-regulation levels call for interventions. Students who struggle with self-regulation often encounter learning difficulties due to the lack of effective learning strategies, and achieve low academic results. This, in turn,

may lead to high stress levels that debilitative anxiety, preventing them from making use of their knowledge or skills. Empirical evidence pertinent to this suggests that learners who encounter such stressful situations in the context of linguistic challenges may, indeed, exercise greater concentration, yet, they are also likely to withdraw from communication and disengage from learning tasks including collaborative activities (Dewaele, 2018). While we cannot influence a person's innate traits, we can influence how they perceive stress as well as support them in shifting their perspective so that they are also able to appraise stress as a potential motivator for action. This, of course, requires monitoring one's own stress level as well as controlling it so that it does not become overwhelming. This notwithstanding, simply viewing stress in a more positive way can serve as a turning point for many individuals struggling with high levels of stress in everyday life, ultimately improving their academic and personal well-being (Crum et al., 2013). In this vein, Studio KOUCZ serves as an institutional response to the need for intervention and support for students, particularly in the first two years of their studies, as the transition from secondary to tertiary language education presents a significant challenge for many students. It also answers the call by (Przybył & Chudak, 2022ab), whose study, conducted in a relevant context, found that linguistic students might require institutional support in new learning environments, particularly with respect to adapting their self-regulatory mechanisms. The outcomes of the studies discussed above highlight the potential for intervention-induced growth in students' self-reflection, leading to higher self-regulation, but also greater self-actualisation and personal growth. Relying on empirical data from an intervention, Przybył (2025) posits that in foreign language education such interventions may serve a dual purpose – not only enhancing communicative competence, but also fostering personal development. His findings suggest that incorporating a person-centred approach and metacognitive strategy training may positively impact self-actualisation, particularly in linguistic majors. Another possible intervention could be the integration of reflective and self-reflection activities into language studies to enhance students' metacognitive awareness and communication skills (Bieniecka-Drzymała, 2024). This is because self-regulation, understood as as the ability to manage one's own learning process, is often connected with the concept of metacognitive awareness, which can be developed in various ways to empower foreign language learners. One of these approaches is language coaching, offered by Studio KOUCZ, where students seek support. Language coaching is a personalised, collaborative dialogue between a foreign language learner and a trained coach, such as those affiliated with Studio KOUCZ, in which deep, reflective questions are posed and topics meaningful to the learner are explored. Centred on fostering metacognitive awareness and learner empowerment, language coaching has been described as an approach to learning and growth which encourages the learner to take responsibility for their learning and play an active role in making progress towards their goals (Kovács, 2022). Rather than functioning solely as a remedial tool to address

deficits, the coaching dialogue serves as a proactive and co-constructive mechanism for promoting both cognitive and emotional development, while also helping to anticipate and prevent potential challenges. By employing techniques such as active listening and open-ended, cognitively stimulating questions—without offering direct advice or ready-made solutions—the coach supports learners in engaging more deeply with their personal and academic development. Moreover, when combined with structured workshops focused on personal growth, this approach enhances students' capacity to articulate and refine their understanding of self-actualization within the context of foreign language learning. As an intervention strategy, coaching dialogue holds considerable potential for fostering self-regulation and encouraging self-reflection among students.

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