

FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING: EXPLORING THE STRUGGLES OF FILIPINO STUDENTS IN LEARNING THE SPANISH LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

Learning and knowing a foreign language has become an advantage and a valuable skill, particularly for students seeking more job opportunities after graduation. The Spanish language, which is the fourth most spoken language in the world, is a popular foreign language for students to learn. However, studies have demonstrated that learning Spanish offers significant struggles to learners from varied backgrounds and that there is a need to identify these individual challenges in order to improve the teaching and learning of Spanish. Thus, this study highlighted the challenges that Filipino students faced in learning Spanish and proposed potential solutions to overcome those difficulties and limitations. The researchers utilized the qualitative research method, specifically the descriptive phenomenological type, and used thematic analysis to analyze the data gathered from 10 participants who are learning Basic and Advanced Spanish as a foreign language. The findings of the study revealed that students struggle with the four domains of language: syntax, semantics, morphology, and phonology. Low motivation due to the perceived irrelevance of Spanish to their major, limited opportunities to practice the language, as well as lack of teacher engagement in the course also adds to their struggles. In addition, the results showed that students try to overcome these challenges by exploring opportunities for target language exposure, utilizing self-learning methods, using online translation software applications, and collaborating with peers.

Keywords: Foreign language learning, Spanish language, Struggles, Filipino

INTRODUCTION

Foreign language learning is the process of acquiring a language other than one's native language, which includes speaking, listening, reading, writing, and recognizing culture. It developed the ability to understand the cultural norms and values associated with the language,

improving linguistic and communicative competence [1] (Santos, 2019). The Spanish language ranks fourth among the most popular foreign languages to learn worldwide, with 14.5 million learners [2] (Maria, 2022). As the world's fourth most spoken language and the official language of 20 countries (Berlitz, 2023), Spanish is

undeniably a key language in trading and commerce, and knowledge of this language has become a valuable skill, particularly for students seeking more job opportunities after graduation.

With the outgrowing demands of the Spanish language, there is a need for students to master Spanish linguistic competence. In an article by [3] Middlebury Language Schools (2022), one reason to study the Spanish language was to prepare students for international standardized tests like Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), in which a foreign language like Spanish is required. International standardized tests are significant because the findings create the foundation for data-driven instruction and provide insightful data on student achievement and teacher and district accountability. It also provides an opportunity for students to seek a higher level of educational attainment abroad.

In recent data, Spanish language was placed as the top 'Language for the future' with over 62 million of United States' hispanic population, making it a huge key marketer of Spanish language speakers. An average of 1.5% bonus in earnings is considered to be received by speakers of Spanish as foreign language or more than \$51,000 by the time of retirement [4] (The Economist, 2014, as cited by McGibney, 2022). This yields a greater landing of job opportunities and a higher chance of success after college. It bridges the gap between cultural differences and language barriers that is pre-existing even up to these days. Hence, pursuing the Spanish language and exploring the students' learning deficits is a phenomenon to examine in answering the underlying problems of foreign language learning. However, learning Spanish is not an easy task, as shown by the challenges that foreign language learners face all around the world.

According to the study of [5] Mansor et al. (2022), students who were learning Spanish faced challenges at the phonetic-phonological level, morphological level, and the complexity of the grammatical structure. Meanwhile, the [6] Spanish Forum (2018) stated that the initial circumstances that most learners face in learning Spanish were proper use of gender, number, grammar agreement, and mastering different verbal tenses. Hence, according to the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), Spanish belongs to category I by difficulty, which means that an average person takes up to 600 hours, or about 24 weeks to learn it [7] (Justlearn, 2020). These findings support the assertion that learning Spanish as a foreign language presents significant difficulties to learners of various backgrounds, and that there was a need to identify these specific challenges in order to improve the teaching and learning of Spanish.

In most countries, the number and selection of foreign languages offered in the educational system were determined by historical, political, cultural, and sociolinguistic factors. In the Philippines, basic and advanced Spanish courses were offered in line with the Senate Bill No. 1716, also known as the Foreign Language Education Act, which mandates the inclusion of a foreign language other than English as an elective course in the higher education curriculum. It was introduced by [8] Senator Grace Poe (2020), who stated that foreign language skill is a notable 21st-century social skill that fosters intercultural and international awareness, knowledge, understanding, critical thinking, and communicative skills.

Although the Philippines was colonized by the Spaniards for a long time (333 years), Filipinos still find it challenging to learn the Spanish language. The studies of [9] Sarmiento (2018) and

[10] Vargas & Mayo (2022) highlight the impact of cross-linguistic influence on Filipino students learning Spanish, particularly in terms of pronunciation and linguistic structure. Both studies show that students have several phonetic-phonological errors, with few mispronunciations prompted by similar words between the target language and other known languages and intralingual causes. This shows that, aside from the common difficulties in learning Spanish due to its linguistic features, Filipino students also struggle because of their previous knowledge of language learning connected with their mother tongue and second language. This problem calls for the conduct of a study focusing on Filipino learners' experiences in learning Spanish to provide strategies and solutions that works best in the cultural context of the Philippines.

That being said, and given the growing number of students learning Spanish in Philippine universities, the researchers conducted a study to identify the challenges that Filipino students faced when learning Spanish and proposed potential solutions for teachers to overcome those difficulties and limitations. Currently, there appears to be a bibliographic scarcity of studies related to the challenges of Filipinos in learning the Spanish language compared to other communicative contexts, such as among English speakers, making this study timely and vital to the corpus of knowledge.

The researchers patterned this study with goal number 4 of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the [11] United Nations Development Program, which focuses on providing inclusive and quality education for all. The inclusion of foreign language learning in the curriculum of the Philippines is an attempt to promote SDG by enabling the students to learn about the language and culture of

foreign countries and expand their global perspective. However, foreign language education in the Philippines still needs improvement as students struggle to learn the foreign languages offered in the country. In line with this, this study explored the common language learning difficulties second-year college students encountered in their Spanish foreign language classes. The researchers found out why these learning difficulties existed and how foreign language learners dealt with them.

The primary purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the struggles of second-year Filipino students in learning the Spanish language at the Bataan Peninsula State University - Balanga Campus.

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the common struggles or challenges that Filipino students encounter while learning the Spanish language?
2. What are the strategies or techniques that Filipino students use to overcome their struggles while learning the Spanish language?
3. What insights can be drawn from the lived experiences of second-year Filipino students in learning the Spanish language?
4. Based on the findings of the study, what action plan may be proposed for improving the learning of the Spanish language?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the qualitative method of research. The researchers used phenomenological research design to explore the struggles of Filipino students in learning the Spanish language. According to [12] Stefanie Mckoy and Natalie Boyd (2019), a phenomenological

study explores what people experience and focuses on their experience of the phenomenon. In line with this, the researchers used the descriptive type of phenomenological research which is focused less on the interpretations of the researcher and more on the description of the experiences [13] (Creswell, 1998).

This study employed purposive sampling under the non-probability sampling technique, and participants were chosen following the inclusion and exclusion criteria indicated in the study. Wherein, the participants must be Filipino and bonafide second-year students from the College of Education (CoEd) or College of Social and Behavioral Sciences (CSBS) at Bataan Peninsula State University-Balanga Campus. They must be enrolled in both Basic and Advanced Spanish Language courses during A.Y. 2022-2023, and are of legal age to consent to their participation. In line with this, the participants are ten (10) students from the Bataan Peninsula State University - Balanga Campus, mainly composed of five (5) participants from CSBS' Bachelor of Science and Arts and another five (5) from COED's academic majors, English, Filipino, and Social Sciences.

In addition, the researchers utilized a researcher-made questionnaire with open-ended interview questions as the main instrument to gather data for the study. The researchers consulted with their research adviser, who is a language education teacher, and asked for guidance as they wrote the questionnaire. Significantly, the researcher-made questionnaire was also presented to a panel of experts in the field of language research to ensure that the instrument is valid and reliable. Once approved and validated, the researchers administered the questionnaire through face-to-face and online interview, depending on the preference and availability of the participants of the study.

Furthermore, the researchers also sent a formal letter to the college deans of the College of Education (CoEd) and College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (CSBS) of Bataan Peninsula State University-Balanga Campus. The formal letter contains the researcher's request for approval from the college deans in conducting the said research. In the same manner, the researchers asked for the approval of the selected participants to take part in the data gathering procedure of the study. This is to observe the research ethics and confidentiality of the interview process.

Thematic analysis, a qualitative data analysis method, was utilized to interpret the data gathered to determine the recurring themes or topics from the participants' responses.

This research was also guided by the conceptual framework provided below:

Figure 1

The I-P-O Framework of the Struggles of Filipino Students in Learning the Spanish Language

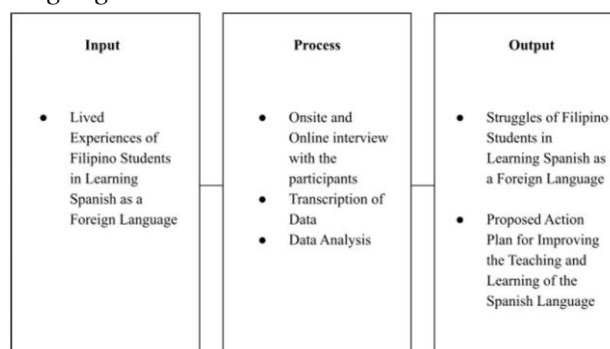


Figure 1 shows the I-P-O framework of the struggles of Filipino students in learning the Spanish language, by which the researchers' process started with the input of the lived experiences of Filipino students in learning Spanish following the documentation process conducting the face-to-face interview with the participants, the transcription of data acquired from them, as well as the data analysis and lastly by creating an action

plan for improving the teaching and learning of the Spanish language.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section concentrates on the findings and results from the data collected. It includes the central themes that are generated through the use of Thematic Analysis by [14] Caulfield (2022), as well as the excerpts from the interview to support it.

Part I reveals the participants' struggles in learning Spanish. Part II explains the participants' strategies for overcoming their difficulties in learning Spanish. Part III shows the insights from the participants' actual experiences in studying Spanish. Lastly, part IV presents the action plan for enhancing Spanish language acquisition.

Part I. Struggles Experienced by the Participants in Learning Spanish

Themes	Significant Statements on the Thematic Analysis of Struggles Experienced by the Participants in Learning Spanish
Syntax & Semantics: Difficulties in Conjugations, Pronouns, and Sentence Construction Leading to Incomprehension	<p><i>"Iyong pinaka-nahirapan po ako ay yung sa Spanish lessons namin is yung conjugations. Tapos bakit? Kasi ang dami niyang kailangang i-memorize. Though parang meron na siyang naka formula na siya, naka-table, pero ang dami kasi, ang dami niyang kailangang i-memorize."</i></p> <p>What I struggled with the most in our Spanish lessons was the conjugations. Why? Because there is a lot to memorize. Although it seems like it already has a formula and a table, there is so much to memorize.</p>
Morphology: Confusing Spellings and Unfamiliar Vocabulary	<p><i>"Sa reading po, I find it difficult po yung mga terms, yung mga salita po as di po ako ganun ka-familiar sa ganong language, as well as sa writing</i></p>

	<p><i>po sa spelling, which is similar naman siya sa tagalog pero yung spelling niya kasi ay naiiba."</i></p> <p>In reading, I find it difficult to understand the terms because I'm not that familiar with the said language. As well as the spelling in writing where it is somehow similar in Tagalog but the spelling differs.</p>
Phonetic-phonological System: Difficulties in Pronunciation	<p><i>"Yung speaking naman po in Spanish, it is difficult for me to pronounce some of the Spanish words which are unfamiliar with me."</i></p> <p>As for speaking in Spanish, it is difficult for me to pronounce some of the Spanish words which are unfamiliar to me.</p>
Low Motivation due to Perceived Irrelevance	<p><i>"Wala akong maisip na pwedeng i-apply yung Spanish no, sa real life kung ano man ang maitutulong nya sa akin 'di ba, sa totoong buhay. Parang wala akong maisip na application ng Spanish in terms of my, sa skill ko gano'n, kaya gano'n lang yung motivation."</i></p> <p>I can't think of anything where I can apply Spanish, in real life, on how it is going to help me. I can't seem to think of any application of Spanish in terms of my skill, so that [is why my] motivation [is low].</p>
Limited Opportunities to Practice the Language	<p><i>"Yes po. Kasi nga po 'diba language yung pinag-aaralan. So hindi ka naman magsasalita ng sa sarili mo 'diba? Gano'n. Syempre yung language pinag-aaralan natin to communicate with others, ayun. Kaya isa siya sa nagiging struggle."</i></p> <p>Yes, because [you're] studying a language. So, you won't just talk to yourself, will you? Of course, the reason why we study a language is to communicate with others so it becomes one of the struggles.</p>
Lack of Teacher's Engagement and	<p><i>"Sa time na rin po na binibigay sa paglearn po ng Spanish and 'yung mga articles, 'yung mga</i></p>

Learning Resources	<p><i>binibigay po na activities, somehow di naman po gaanong nadi-discuss and ipapanood lang po then self-learning lang po talaga."</i></p> <p>The time also that is given to learn Spanish, the articles, and the activities that are given. Somehow, they are really not discussed instead just watched, so it is really just self-learning.</p>
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	<p><i>'yung isa sa mga ginagamit ko kapag nahihirapan akong maintindihan yung mga lessons ko, 'yung Duolingo."</i></p> <p>Perhaps, I enhance it through using several uhm... online apps. Because even in Duolingo, that's possible. You can make it as a starter to enhance your Spanish [language] skills. That's one of the things I use when I have trouble understanding my lessons, the Duolingo.</p>
Peer/ Collaborative Learning	<p><i>"I practice with my friends po with the speaking and writing practices po like halimbawa po after po ng klase tapos may vacant then maoopen up po yung class namin sa Spanish, then magkakaroon po ng tanungan then ayun po magstart po kaming mag-exchange ng knowledge gano'n po. Parang nagiging group study about the subject po ganon."</i></p> <p>I practice speaking and writing in Spanish with my friends. For example, if we have a vacant time after class and the topic about our Spanish class gets brought up, we will raise and answer questions and just like that, we will start exchanging our knowledge. It is like it is becoming a group study about the subject.</p>

Part II. Strategies the Participants Use to Overcome their Struggles in Learning Spanish

Themes	Significant Statement on the Thematic Analysis of Strategies that the Participants Use to Overcome their Struggles in Learning Spanish
Exploring Opportunities for Target Language Exposure	<p><i>"Iyon, gaya po ng sabi ko kanina, nanonood rin po ako ng mga telenobela in Spanish. Tapos, pati 'yung mga YouTube videos as well as nakikinig din po ako ng mga kanta na Spanish."</i></p> <p>Like what I have mentioned earlier, I also watch telenovelas and YouTube videos in Spanish, and I listen to Spanish songs as well.</p>
Self-learning Methods: Re-engaging with Learning Materials	<p><i>"Nagte-take notes po ako para pagka-yari po namin or pag-uwi ko po, pwede ko pong ma-aral ulit o kaya mabalikan ko [yung inaral] kasi mahirap rin po kasi 'yung stock knowledge lang."</i></p> <p>I am taking notes so that after class or after I get home, I can review or revisit [the lesson] because it's difficult to rely solely on stock knowledge.</p>
Use of Online Translation Software Applications	<p><i>"Siguro, I enhance it through using several uhm... online apps. Kasi kahit Duolingo, pwede 'yun. Pwede niyo 'yung gawing starter para ma-enhance 'yung sa skills niyo sa Spanish [language]. Ayun</i></p>

Part III. Insights drawn from the Lived Experiences of the Participants in learning the Spanish Language

The following are the insights drawn from the lived experiences of the participants in learning the Spanish language.

1. The students struggle with the four domains of language namely the syntax, semantics, morphology and phonology.
2. The motivation level of the participants is low because they think Spanish is irrelevant to their

- major and it influences how they learn the language.
3. More opportunities to practice and learn Spanish inside and outside the classroom are deemed beneficial to foreign language learners to develop their proficiency in Spanish.
 4. The students view digital videos as a reliable source for learning Spanish as well as gaining more exposure to the target language.
 5. There is a duality in using online translation software applications to aid Spanish language learning because while it helps students to understand the language, it also makes them dependent on technology instead of their own learning.
 6. Flexibility was observed from the learners in dealing with target language difficulties as they employ self-learning methods, but are also open to engage in peer or collaborative learning when necessary.

Part IV: Action Plan for Improving the Learning of Spanish

After exploring and identifying the struggles of foreign language learners in learning the Spanish language, the researchers utilize an action plan framework adapted from “Action Planning for Global Education” by [15] World View (n.d.), an International Program for Educators at the University of North Carolina.

The framework suggests the process of incorporating and embedding research into action that aids existing problems through planning, problem diagnosing, goal setting, and determining actions needed. Hence, the researchers proposed an action plan addressing the struggles experienced by the second-year students from the College of Education and

College of Behavioral and Social Sciences.

The following are the student’s learning activity program included in the action plan.

- a. Classroom Spanish Writing Contest
- b. Spanish Language Learning Workshop
- c. Spanish Film Viewing
- d. Seminar on the Importance of Learning Spanish for Career Development

DISCUSSIONS

On the basis of the data gathered, the following were disclosed as the discussions of the study:

Part I. Struggles Experienced by the Participants in Learning Spanish

a. Syntax & Semantics: Difficulties in Conjugations, Pronouns, and Sentence Construction Leading to Incomprehension

The participants of the study pointed out that Spanish lessons like conjugations, pronouns, and sentence construction are the topics they find hard to comprehend. This affects the students’ ability to produce communicative language using appropriate sentence formation (syntax) and the use of meanings (semantics). This finding of the study resonates with existing literature on language acquisition, particularly highlighting the difficulties encountered by learners in mastering the syntax and semantics of the Spanish language. [16] Koyfman (2021) and [17] Vasseur et al. (2022) have previously identified challenges in verb conjugations, reflexive pronouns, imperative tense, and syntactic complexity. The consequences of these struggles extend beyond the immediate comprehension issues,

impacting individual writing abilities and, subsequently, academic success.

b. Morphology: Confusing Spellings and Unfamiliar Vocabulary

Participants in this study echoed concerns regarding morphology, citing confusing spellings and unfamiliar vocabulary as significant hurdles. [5] Mansor et al. (2022) observed similar challenges in their research, emphasizing the broad impact on spelling, vocabulary, and comprehension. These shared experiences underscore the need for targeted interventions to address morphological difficulties in Spanish language learning.

c. Phonetic-phonological System: Difficulties in Pronunciation

Speaking using the Spanish language projects a certain problem for most of the participants in the study and mentioned that Spanish pronunciation is one of their struggles. The pronounced difficulties in pronunciation reported by participants align with the findings of [5] Mansor et al. (2022) and [18] Sinco and Villareal (2019). Pronunciation, intonations, and tones emerge as persistent challenges in the acquisition of the Spanish language's phonetic-phonological system. Addressing these challenges may require targeted interventions, such as pronunciation exercises and interactive learning approaches.

d. Low Motivation due to Perceived Irrelevance

The study revealed that most foreign language learners have a low level of motivation to learn the Spanish language due to their perceived irrelevance toward their career path. Low motivation levels among participants, as identified in this study, parallel the observations of [19] Gardner (1972, as cited in Ai et al., 2021). The Language Learning Motivation Theory underscores the importance of eagerness, willingness, and enjoyment in effective language acquisition. The

predominance of instrumental orientation, driven by external stimuli rather than intrinsic interest, raises concerns about the perceived relevance of learning Spanish among the student population.

e. Limited Opportunities to Practice the Language

Participants pointed out that the instruction given to them lacked language practice among peers, which affected their development in learning the Spanish language. The participants' concerns about limited opportunities to practice the Spanish language align with [20] Yobouet's (2021) emphasis on the significance of sociocultural

considerations and real-life learning experiences. Creating an environment supportive of foreign language learning, both within and outside the classroom, emerges as a crucial factor in fostering language proficiency.

f. Lack of Teachers Engagement and Learning Resources

The reported struggles, attributed to a lack of teacher engagement and inadequate learning resources, underscore the critical role of educators in language instruction. Teacher engagement, as defined by [21] Wang et al. (2022), influences student motivation, attention, and overall learning experiences. Moreover, the scarcity of learning resources exacerbates the challenges faced by learners, emphasizing the need for comprehensive support systems to enhance Spanish language learning outcomes.

Part II. Strategies the Participants Use to Overcome their Struggles in Learning Spanish

a. Exploring Opportunities for Target Language Exposure

Six participants actively engaged in Spanish shows, movies, telenovelas, YouTube videos, and songs to immerse

themselves in the language. This aligns with [22] Albiladi, Abdeen, and Lincoln's (2018) findings that media tools, including movies, are reliable resources for enhancing language skills. Such exposure not only aids vocabulary development but also fosters cultural sensitivity, essential for proficient language use.

b. Self-learning Methods: Re-engaging with Learning Materials

The participants employ different self-learning methods to learn the Spanish language and most of them involve making a habit of reengaging with learning materials given by the teacher, as well as the ones they found on the internet. This reflects [23] Bowen's (2008) popular techniques such as vocabulary-based learning, double translation, grammar-based approaches, communicative approaches, and immersion methods. This approach emphasizes the flexibility and autonomy that self-learning provides, allowing students to tailor their study strategies to individual needs and preferences.

c. Use of Online Translation Software Applications

The learners consider the usage of online translation applications such as Google Translate and Duolingo as helpful in learning a foreign language, resonating with [24] Urlaub and Dessein's (2022) assertion that technology aids foreign language learning. However, the discussion underscores the potential risk of overreliance on these tools, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach to prevent hindering the development of linguistic competence.

d. Peer/Collaborative Learning

Peer learning, otherwise known as collaborative learning, is a popular learning strategy among foreign language learners as it allows them to ask questions about what they do not understand and share their knowledge with what they know in exchange, supporting [25]

Sunggingwati's (2018) findings on the positive outcomes of cooperative learning. Peer interaction provides opportunities for better preparation, mastery of materials, increased confidence, and learning from one another, making it a popular and effective strategy among language learners.

Part III. Insights drawn from the Lived Experiences of the Participants in learning the Spanish Language

1. Struggles with the Four Domains of Language

Participants highlighted struggles in phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, mirroring findings from [26] Cabilan (2018), [5] Mansor et al. (2022), and [18] Sinco and Villareal (2019). These challenges underscore the need for improved language proficiency through effective teaching strategies and learning plans tailored for foreign language classes.

2. The Motivation Level of Participants

The low motivation level among participants, influenced by perceived irrelevance, echoes the significance of motivational factors in language learning success [26] (Cabilan, 2021). Addressing motivational challenges becomes imperative to enhance the overall Spanish language learning experience.

3. More Opportunities to Learn Spanish

Participants expressed a desire for more opportunities to practice Spanish, aligning with [20] Yobouet's (2021) emphasis on sociocultural factors and [27] Tatlonghari and Ayson's (2019) call for task-based training. Tailored teaching strategies and resources are essential to address the unique needs and difficulties faced by learners.

4. Digital Videos as Reliable Source for Learning Spanish

The reliance on digital videos for language exposure supports the effectiveness of visual media in language learning, as identified by [22] Albiladi, Abdeen, and Lincoln (2018). Incorporating these resources into language instruction can enhance vocabulary and macro skills, providing a valuable supplement to traditional teaching methods.

5. The Duality of Using Online Translation Software Applications to Aid Spanish Language Learning

The dual nature of online translation tools, offering linguistic awareness yet posing a risk of dependence, highlights the importance of a balanced approach in integrating technology into language learning. Educators should guide students to harness the benefits of these tools while fostering independent linguistic competence.

6. Flexibility of Learners in Dealing with Target Language Difficulties

Participants' reliance on self-learning methods emphasizes the significance of flexibility and autonomy in language learning, echoing [23] Bowen's (2008) methods and [25] Sunggingwati's (2018) positive outcomes of cooperative learning. Acknowledging and supporting diverse learning approaches can contribute to a more effective and inclusive language education environment.

Part IV: Action Plan for Improving the Learning of Spanish

1. Classroom Spanish Writing Contest

The proposal for a Classroom Spanish Writing Contest is grounded in the acknowledgment of common writing problems and the lack of motivation among students learning the Spanish language. Writing, as highlighted by [28] Durga and Rao (2018), is a complex cognitive and linguistic task, especially when undertaken in a foreign language. To

address these challenges simultaneously, the contest serves as a viable solution, aligning with [29] Wongvorachan's (2023) findings that competition-based and cooperation-based learning activities positively influence student engagement and foster a positive attitude towards learning.

2. Spanish Language Learning Workshop

The Spanish Language Learning Workshop is positioned as a strategic response to the struggles faced by second-year students in the College of Education (COED) and College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (CSBS) when learning Spanish. This program not only provides targeted support but also aligns with [30] Eton Institute's (2023) recognition of the numerous cognitive, academic, and career-related benefits associated with learning a second language.

3. Spanish Film Viewing

Participants in the study identified Spanish Film Viewing as an effective learning strategy to expose themselves to the language, emphasizing its role in developing speaking and listening skills. This strategy aligns with [22] Albiladi et al.'s (2018) observation that cinema-based approaches facilitate language exposure, vocabulary acquisition, and intercultural awareness, contributing to improved communicative competence.

4. Seminars on the Importance of Learning Spanish for Career Development

Recognizing low motivation among students, particularly due to a perceived lack of relevance to their future careers, underscores the need for seminars. These seminars should illuminate the importance of learning the Spanish language, aligning with [31] Teravainen-Goff's (2022) observation that learners may lack motivation when they fail to see the significance of language learning in their

overall academic and professional pursuits. [32] Carnegie Mellon University (2023) emphasizes the pivotal role of relevance in motivation, highlighting the necessity of clarifying the purpose and benefits of Spanish language acquisition for COED and CSBS students.

That being said, these proposed interventions and strategies collectively address the multifaceted challenges faced by students learning Spanish, aiming to enhance motivation, language skills, and the overall learning experience. The Discussion emphasizes the practical implications of each strategy and their potential impact on students' academic performance and future career prospects.

CONCLUSION

In light of the findings of this study, the researchers came to the following conclusions:

The sophomore COED and CSBS students taking Basic and Advanced Spanish courses struggle in the four domains of language, such as syntax, semantics, morphology, and phonetic-phonology. Students, moreover, have low motivation to learn the Spanish language as they think it has no connection in terms of their career path. The participants only saw the mentioned course as a requirement to finish college and get high grades. Thus, this is a hindrance to their learning about the said course.

Furthermore, the limited chance for students to practice the language has a huge impact on their learning development. They stated that their professor's teaching strategy and instruction do not encourage peer communication and engagement which affected their development in learning the Spanish language. In connection to this, there is also a lack of teachers' engagement to the said course. Students

claimed that some of their instructors only provided video materials or activities, which they felt were insufficient to help them develop their skills in learning the language.

On the other hand, the researchers found that making a habit of reengaging with learning materials and the use of online translation software applications are one of the most effective strategies for overcoming the struggles in learning the Spanish language.

Aside from these, the employment of Spanish shows and peer collaboration in class are also beneficial to the foreign language learning of the learners. Watching and hearing Spanish in different shows has helped the learners to broaden their vocabulary and contextualize the use of the said language. Meanwhile, being able to share their experience with their peers allowed them to resolve their similar problems in learning Spanish, at the same time, contribute to the improvement of one another.

Recommendations

In view of the findings, the following recommendations are hereby forwarded.

There should be highly interactive programs designed to address the struggles of students learning Spanish as a foreign language targeting the students' macro skills, language domains, and cognitive-affective motivation. They should be regularly exposed to numerous workshops, training, and seminars. Teachers must consistently guide and provide corrective feedback to help them with their technical errors, improving their Spanish.

Students must seek out helpful motivation or inspiration in order to maintain or improve their language proficiency when studying the Spanish language. The students should be exposed to various programs to address the

participants' perceived irrelevance of the foreign language Spanish.

Teachers should allow the use of online translation software applications to aid students' learning in Spanish language. Thus, imploring a classroom activity like a writing composition and limited use of translation tools may guide students to enhance their composition skills.

More active activities which include collaboration and participation would be a huge help considering that language is a skill that could be improved through active participation and consistent practice. Students engagement and application of the language in real life scenarios and more simulation activities inside the classroom would help students to utilize their learning.

Likewise, the teachers are encouraged to take a more active role in teaching the Spanish language to the students during class to make sure that they truly learn in the said course.

Finally, the utilization of Spanish shows and other materials that could depict the actual use of the Spanish language in context, as well as the inclusion of activities that allow for interaction of the learners inside the classroom, are recommended. However, this recommendation should be treated with caution due to the small sample size of the study and the diversity of students. Thus, it is also suggested to have an in-depth understanding of the effects of the said materials and activities on different learners through further studies.

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