



Factors impeding the learning of a second language in Spanish school system: Valladolid University Sample

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APA Citation:

Kocaman, O. (2017). Factors impeding the learning of a second language in Spanish school system: Valladolid University Sample. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 13(2), 578-592.

Submission Date:18/08/2017

Acceptance Date:09/09/2017

Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the factors which harden learning English as a foreign language in the classes of the Faculty of Education in the University of Valladolid, Spain. As it is unquestionable today, English plays a significant role in the field of education as a Lingua Franca. Yet, learners of English experience various kinds of difficulties because of several reasons in the process of learning a foreign language. Hence, a descriptive study was conducted to bring about the problems students face while learning English in the educational system of Spain. A hundred and twenty (87 female and 33 male students) university students (1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade) participated in the study from different departments of Palencia Education Faculty of the University of Valladolid in the academic year 2015-2016. The data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The data were analysed and classified thematically. The results revealed that university students experience linguistic, instructional, and affective barriers along with the lack of assistance. Considering the findings, some underlying factors and suggestions were provided to serve as a guideline for teachers and learners to overcome the difficulties in learning and teaching English as a foreign language in Spain.

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Keywords: Instructional barriers; affective barriers; linguistic barriers; lack of assistance; process of learning a foreign language.

1. Introduction

English as a lingua franca possesses a crucial role in various areas such as economy, politics, technology, and education (Kırkgöz, 2014 cited in Çelik, and Kocaman, 2016). It has also gained the popularity of the fundamental language of communication and globalized advertising, business, and culture (Held et al., 1999:346 cited in Sawir, 2005).

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With the spread of English, the tendency towards teaching and learning English has increased in Europe. Reichelt (2006) indicated in her article that learning English started at very young ages because of the increasing interest towards the English language. Moreover, she stated that the percentage of the Spanish people speaking, reading, and writing English is only 18% among the non-native speakers of English in the European Union (Reichelt, 2006). However, some reservations have been observed in learning English.

Accordingly, as Sawir (2005) examined language learning difficulties in his study with five different Asian students, he reached the findings in parallel with the current study. These difficulties have been classified as linguistic, instructional, and affective barriers together with lack of assistance. In order to investigate the obstacles in learning English, the study centred on the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the barriers faced by Spanish language learners in the process of learning English?

RQ2: What are the factors causing difficulty while learning English for Spanish students?

1.1. Literature Review

There is some research on the language barriers students face while learning English. There have been a number of factors affecting the success of learning English under several subject matters.

1.1.1. Linguistic Barriers Experienced by Learners

First of all, the perception of many people when the word ‘English’ is uttered is unfortunately only the grammar. However, the grammar has been misinterpreted, and it has been reflected as a medium of language learning (Crivos and Luchini, 2012). The current consensus is in line with teaching grammar implicitly by exposing the learners to comprehensible input (Cullen, 2012; Richards and Reppen, 2014). According to Underwood’s study (2012), many teachers find the integration of grammar instruction with the activities based on communication-oriented effective.

While many people emphasize grammar as the core of language learning, vocabulary is one of the crucial points that should be considered initially. Besides, it is believed to be the core element by most researchers (Harley, 1996; Coady and Huckin, 1997; Read, 2000; Nation, 2001; Kocaman and Cumaoglu, 2014). Language cannot exist without vocabulary, and a healthy communication cannot occur in the absence of proper vocabulary. On this basis, it can be inferred that vocabulary and proficiency are two inseparable and closely integrated components (Luppescu and Day, 1993; Kocaman and Cumaoglu, 2014). However, memorizing vocabulary and achieving fluency have been a barrier for language learners (Demir, 2013; Oxford, 1990). At this point, speaking appears to be another problem for language learners.

In line with the aforementioned statements, Aslan (2016) underlines that vocabulary is one of the most crucial and necessary components of language and recommends that enrichment of vocabulary knowledge eliminates a big obstacle in learning another language. Moreover, Yin and Zhang (2009) put forward that “among many other factors, the most prominent is phonetics, which, to a large extent, weakens the learner’s confidence both in speaking and listening.”

1.1.2. Instructional Barriers in Teaching English

Not all the difficulties are related to linguistic items. A teacher can be one of the significant factors in the matter of experiencing problems in language learning. A teacher who continuously refreshes himself/herself on current issues should be favoured in educational institutions. Otherwise, successful language learning cannot be realised due to the problems caused by teachers, methods, and techniques applied in class. Gándara and Maxwell-Jolly and Driscoll (2005) indicate that what makes a difference

in students' success is qualified teachers, detailed content knowledge, educational background of the teachers, degree of certificates, and their experiences.

1.1.3. Affective Factors (anxiety, attitude, motivation, self-confidence, and peer pressure)

Some additional factors causing difficulty in learning English are affective factors, which consist of attitude and motivation, self-confidence and peer pressure. Motivation is one of the major factors affecting the learners in the field of second language learning. Within this subject matter, according to Rifai (2010), motivation provides the learners with reasons to acquire a second language. Furthermore, he asserts that students get to learn the language not only to understand it but also for instrumental reasons. Some demotivating factors for learning English have been listed in the study of Meshkat and Hassani (2012). The study conducted on Iranian students revealed the obstacles such as exaggerated grammar teaching, teachers' methodology, and gender differences in learning contents. On the other hand, Zhu and Zhou (2012) found some personal problems such as anxiety, demoralization, and lack of self-confidence, which affect the achievement of language learning. It is likely that anxiety plays a tremendous role in learners' success of learning a new language. When investigating students' attitudes towards language anxiety in speaking classes at a northeastern state university in Turkey, Kayaoğlu, and Sağlamel (2013) examined some underlying factors in anxiety, which are mostly about being humiliated while speaking to other people and the presence of native speakers.

Other factors include in-class activities such as oral presentations, role-play activities, question-answer sessions, and performing in front of the class in general (Kayaoğlu and Sağlamel, 2013; MacIntyre, 1999). Likewise, Chen and Chang (2004) investigated the relationship between anxiety and language learning difficulties with the use of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) on college students in Taiwan learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The findings showed that students suffering from anxiety had a background of English learning problems such as low grades, problems with classroom learning, and subject poor developmental skills.

1.1.4. Lack of Assistance (family, resource, materials, technological support)

Second language learners tend to search for some support while learning. However, learners who lack in being assisted face some difficulties that affect their second language development. One significant factor while learning a second language is family or family background. Khan (2011) referred to the countries like Saudi where the people living there are poorly educated and do not possess a qualified educational background. Additionally, the income of those families is largely not adequate and hence families are not interested in providing adequate education for their children. Within this framework, Salameh (2012) defined family and school as two primary social environments in which a child grows. Hence, a learners' socio-psychological perspective is hugely influenced by these social environmental factors. The study was conducted in EFL classrooms in Dubai public secondary schools and aimed to assess the impact of "parents' education, parents' financial status and parents' occupation" on students' English language performance.

The results showed that there is a relative impact of the aforementioned factors (Salameh, 2012). Besides the family factor as assistance, students also seek for some useful resource such as text/course books, dictionaries, materials or any technological support to provide necessary information for their second language development. Considering this fact, Khan (2011:1252) mentioned that, "in the context of modern teaching, strategies based on novel and sophisticated software or conceptual strategies are always needed to deal with the day to day teaching/learning situations in which the learners face difficulties, and without some strategies they perhaps cannot achieve the target."

1.1.5. Other difficulties

Apart from the mentioned subjects, there are some other crucial issues confronted by second language learners. Khan (2011:1256) listed some of them briefly as “lifestyle, discipline, punctuality, future aim, family pressure, social status, excessive freedom, etc.”. Moreover, Griffiths (2015) referred to the importance of practice as strategy training. He suggested that with the awareness of new strategies provided, learners would become automatic to use their own strategy repertoire on new tasks when needed to achieve their learning goals. Furthermore, Griffiths, (2015) pointed out some individual variations of learners that need to be taken into account:

- the learning stage (since learners may use different strategies at different points in the learning process),
- the learner’s age (since adults may be better cognitively, but children are often more active, and this may affect the strategies they choose),
- the culture to which the learner belongs (since culture provides both affordances and constraints on behaviour),
- learning style (since preferences for how to learn can vary considerably from individual to individual, this may influence strategy selection).

1.2. Research questions

RQ1: What are the barriers faced by Spanish language learners in the process of learning English?

RQ2: What are the factors causing difficulty while learning English for Spanish students?

2. Method

The methodology which contains information about participants, setting, data collection methods of the study and how the data were analysed are presented below in detail.

2.1. Participants

A descriptive study was implemented on 120 university students from different departments consisting of 87 female and 33 male students from the University of Valladolid, Campus of Palencia, Faculty of Education (1st, 2nd, 3rd grade) in this study. The detailed information about the participants’ grade, age, and gender are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. The number of the participants

Gender	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Female	21	19	25	22
Male	7	12	14	0
Total	28	31	39	22

2.2. Data collection

The data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The students were asked to write the difficulties they face while learning English via the open-ended questions, and to examine the underlying factors, and some of them were interviewed via the semi-

structured interview. The students were properly informed about the research, its aim, and the content of the questions. They were also informed that any information or personal details gathered would be kept confidential and no individual would be identified in any publication of the results.

2.3. Data analysis

Using content analysis, the data were analysed and classified thematically. Each barrier mentioned was classified in the tables consisting of themes, codes, sub-codes, and the frequency of answers. To demonstrate the detailed analysis of the results, extracts from the students' answers and interviews were transcribed and presented.

3. Results

The results of the study were indicated on the related charts. According to the results, Spanish learners experience various problems in the process of learning English. The barriers are classified in Tables between 2-9.

Table 2. Students' perceptions of the linguistic barriers: Vocabulary

Theme	Codes	Sub-codes	f	Students
Linguistic barriers 1	Vocabulary [Total f: 42]	Memorization – Vocabulary Knowledge	24	S1, S11, S12, S20 S28, S29, S31, S37, S51, S53, S55, S57, S59, S68, S71, S77, S81, S83, S85, S100, S104, S109, S111, S112
		Phrasal verbs, idioms and chunks	16	S1, S2, S20, S55, S56, S68, S100, S101, S102, S106, S107, S108, S109, S110, S111, S112
		Multiple meanings of a word	2	S61, S111

As it is seen in Table 2, Spanish learners have difficulty in learning vocabulary. Most of them (f=24) have specified that they do not have a large vocabulary knowledge. The problems on learning phrasal verbs, idioms, and chunks (f=16) have been other difficulties for the learners. Two of the participants have also specified that they are confused because of the multiple meanings of the words and one of them is confused on differentiating the actual meanings of the borrowed words. Their perceptions are provided below:

S1: "I do not have enough vocabulary knowledge, and it is hard for me to learn some chunks."

S11: "I have a weak memory to memorize vocabulary for an exam."

S51: "...Besides, I think that our vocabulary knowledge is deficient and we have difficulty while we are expressing ourselves in a second language."

S55: "Generally, vocabulary. Besides, learning idioms and making jokes are hard, too."

S61: "... I have difficulty in the meanings of the words."

S111: "...I have difficulty in false friend words' meanings in English and their meanings in Spanish."

Table 3. Students' perceptions of the linguistic barriers: Grammar

Theme	Codes	Sub-codes	f	Students
Linguistic barriers 2	Grammar [Total f: 31]	Sentence construction	6	S27, S31, S65, S68, S99, S118
		Grammatical rules (Tenses, subject-verb agreement)	24	S2, S5, S20, S26, S27, S29, S35, S36, S56, S58, S65, S69, S71, S77, S83, S86, S101, S103, S104, S107 S109, S110, S111, S115
		Conjunctions	1	S69

A number of the participants (f=33) have indicated that they have difficulty in English language grammar. Especially, 'grammatical rules' (f=24) constitute the biggest part in Table 4. Spanish learners also have difficulty in sentence construction (f=6). One of the students specified that she found the use of conjunctions correctly hard. Some of the students' comments have been stated as below:

S69: "...On the other hand, to use suitable conjunctions is hard for me."

S27: "Grammar and syntax."

S31: "...I have difficulty in understanding sentence construction."

S65: "...Composing sentence is difficult for me."

S68: "...Other difficulties are... and sentence structures."

S99: "...Sentence construction..."

S109: "Some verb conjugations... Vocabulary knowledge: I use dictionary."

S110: "Idioms and phrasal verbs because there is no direct translation in my L1."

S118: "...A problem on linguistics is to construct text and sentence."

Table 4. Students' perceptions of the linguistic barriers: Speaking skills, Pronunciation, and Writing Skills

Theme	Codes	Sub-codes	f	Students
Linguistic barrier 3	Pronunciation, Speaking Skills and Writing Skills [Total f: 73]	Difficult (Speaking and pronunciation)	45	S6, S11, S12, S26, S34, S37, S41, S42, S44, S47, S48, S50, S51, S53, S54, S57, S59, S60, S61, S63, S68, S74, S75, S76, S78, S89, S93, S95, S96, S99, S100, S101, S102, S103, S104, S105, S106, S107, S108, S109, S110, S112, S113, S116, S120
		Fluency	6	S4, S34, S58, S77, S86, S98
		Communication	11	S34, S37, S39, S47, S62, S63, S64, S79, S81, S86, S91

		Writing	11	S42, S48, S50, S58, S65, S77, S98, S106, S107, S108, S118
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The Spanish learners have difficulty in pronunciation, speaking, and writing skill (f=73). As marked above, the number is more than half of the participants. The biggest problem is the difficulty of speaking and pronunciation (f=45) for Spanish learners. After that, communication (f=11) and writing (11) problems have been seen, and six of the participants have a problem in fluency. Learners' opinions about these issues have been shown as:

S4: "...At the same time, speaking fast and fluently is hard for me."

S34: "I have difficulty in speaking fluently and expressing myself."

S37: "Even though I understand what they ask me, I have difficulty in communicating them."

S48: "...It is hard to write in that language."

S79: "If the level of the other speaker is high, I cannot communicate and follow the speech."

Table 5. Students' perceptions of the linguistic barriers: Reading Skills and Listening Skills

Theme	Codes	Sub-codes	f	Students
Linguistic barriers 4	Reading Skills and Listening Skills [Total f: 30]	Reading Comprehension	3	S10, S76, S111
		Listening Comprehension	21	S6, S10, S16, S34, S38, S39, S60, S52, S62, S63, S73, S74, S76, S78, S79, S80, S87, S96, S99, S105, S113
		Translation	6	S53, S79, S86, S99, S100, S112

According to the results of Table 5, Spanish students have difficulty in reading and listening skills as well (f=30). An important point is listening comprehension (f=21). Other parts are related to translation (f=7) and reading comprehension (f=3). Some of the students' comments on this part are as:

S10: "I have difficulty in reading comprehension..."

S76: "Understanding written language (reading comprehension)."

S100: "When I translate from literature, the meaning does not match in my language"

S112: "On the contrary to Spanish, translation."

Table 6. Students' perceptions of the instructional barriers: Teacher, Material, and Instruction

Theme	Codes	Sub-codes	f	Students
Instructional barriers	Teacher, Material, and Instruction [Total f: 63]	Lack of practice	17	S11, S18, S29, S35, S43, S49, S67, S70, S71, S79, S87, S100, S113, S114, S115, S117, S120
		Teaching skills, methods, techniques, activities	30	S17, S19, S30, S40, S43, S46, S49, S56, S59, S66, S70, S74, S75, S80, S84, S85, S90, S91, S94, S96, S97, S100, S102, S105, S112, S114, S116, S117, S118, S119
		Educational system	1	S116
		Course book	2	S35, S65
		Teacher (behaviour, competence)	4	S72, S85, S118, S119
		Background	9	S25, S52, S67, S71, S90, S94, S95, S114, S119

As it is seen in Table 6, there are instructional barriers (f=63) in learning English for Spanish learners. This part constitutes more than half of the participants. Most important part of this table is the difficulties in teaching skills, methods, techniques, and activities (f=30). On the other hand, lack of practice (f=17) is another problem for the students. Spanish learners have difficulty in learning English due to their backgrounds (f=9). They also have problems with teachers (f=4) and course book (2). One of the students stated that he has difficulty due to educational system at the university. The comments of some of the students have been presented below:

S25: "I have difficulty in all of the areas of English because I have not got a good background."

S35: "...There is no enough explanation on our course books..."

S52: "...My primary school teacher made us listen to songs while she was reading. That's why my English level is low."

S72: "Non-dynamic teachers' lecturing style."

S116: "...On the other hand, we take English course only for one year, and we have not any opportunity to continue."

In line with the comments of students of English course, Bergil and Sariçoban (2017) emphasize the importance of teachers' self-efficacy and teacher identity as well as teaching practices of ELF teachers.

Table 7. Students' perceptions of the affective barriers

Theme	Codes	Sub-codes	f	Students
Affective barriers	Affective factors [Total f: 30]	Anxiety (fear, excitement, peer pressure, shyness)	13	S5, S15, S20, S24, S26, S41, S46, S52, S64, S70, S92, S93, S113
		Attitude	8	S9, S14, S16, S32, S46, S82, S96, S101
		Motivation	8	S7, S32, S45, S56, S76, S96, S114, S120
		Self-confidence	1	S89

Another quarter of the participants have problems concerning affective factors in language learning. Anxiety (f=13) is regarded as important point in Table 7. Attitude towards English language (f=8) and motivation of the students (f=8) has an equal value. One of the students has problem with self-confidence. Related sentences have been given below:

S7: "My level is not quite good. When I was a child, it was told me that it was hard to learn a new language as well as I had to go a therapist."

S9: "English is harder for me because I do not like English. That's why I do not spend a lot of time for studying it."

S14: "I do not like studying another language, so it is not appealing to me."

S56: "...First, lack of motivation..."

S89: "When you start to learn a new language, you cannot be sure of yourself."

In the light of the remarks of the students, Sariçoban, and Mohammadi Behjoo, (2016) the role a teacher plays an important role since students search for a role model in their classes and adjust their level of learning according to the motivation and stance that their teacher provides. Intimacy and care by the teachers increase the motivation and perseverance of the learners.

Table 8. Students' perceptions of the lack of assistance and resource

Theme	Codes	Sub-codes	f	Students
Lack of Assistance	Lack of Assistance and Resources [Total f: 2]	Resource	1	S77
		Family Assistance (EFL context)	1	S72

Spanish learners have difficulty due to the lack of assistance and resources. However, the number is quite low (f=2). One of the students has a problem in terms of family assistance and the other complains about the lack of resources.

Table 9. Students' perceptions of other difficulties

Theme	Codes	Sub-codes	f	Students
Other difficulties	Individual Variations [Total f: 18]	Unfamiliarity with L1	3	S3, S78, S102
		Not used in environment	5	S56, S63, S65, S70, S117
		Lack of time	4	S21, S23, S85, S89
		Personal issues	6	S25, S3, S76, S82, S88, S92

In this part, students have indicated other problems that they experience. A total number of these students is 18, and they have problems regarding personal issues (f=6), unfamiliarity to English in their environment (f=5), lack of time (f=4), and absence of English in their L1 (f=3). Some of the comments on these issues are as:

S3: "If a language is similar to Spanish, I do not have any problem, but if it is not, it will be more problematic for me."

S21: "Its difficulty and mostly lack of time..."

S36: "...Maybe, it is my fault is not to study with a great discipline and interest."

S70: "...It is not used in our daily life..."

4. Discussion

The aim of the current study was to examine the barriers of the university students in learning English in Spain. After a detailed analysis, the findings showed that the Spanish students face difficulties in the following themes and codes as linguistic (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills), instructional (teacher, material, and instruction), affective factors (anxiety, attitude, motivation, and self-confidence), lack of assistance, and resources (resource and family assistance) as well as individual variations.

To discuss the results considering literature and theories, some probable reasons may be presented. Initially, the main difficulties have been found as pronunciation, speaking, teacher, material, instruction, grammar, and vocabulary. Most importantly, the biggest problem occurred in speaking and pronunciation. The students linked this situation to their teachers' methodology as S72 mentioned (see Table 6), and they also specified that they do not use English in their daily lives. For instance, S62 stated that she faced difficulties in terms of speaking and she explained her situation as follows:

"...Another concerning issue is that we do not live in that particular country, there are fewer people speaking that language."

Considering S62's claim, hiring native teachers can be a fair solution as it is also stated by Sawir (2005). Furthermore, conducting speaking lessons or providing speaking-based tasks would be another way to enhance students' engagement in speaking.

The second major problem faced by Spanish learners is instructional barriers that refer to teacher, material, and instructions in the teaching and learning process. Students associate their difficulties with their teachers' methodology as in the example S70;

“In the lessons, the main importance is given to grammar rather than vocabulary.”

A related solution to this problem can be hiring more qualified teachers and to provide in-service programs for such teachers more frequently. Relatively, S114 and S119 also proposed some other solutions;

S114: *“...To obtain a strong basis, some additional language classes or language institutions can be provided.”*

S119: *“...I think grammar should be taught less and daily used vocabulary should be taught more.”*

In addition, as Akbari (2015) emphasized in his study, the problem with the teachers occurs because of the inappropriate techniques they apply. Referring to this issue, she also suggested that language teaching situations in English as a second language (ESL) context should be rather communicative.

Some other factors towards learning English arise from the memorization of vocabulary and lack of vocabulary knowledge. The underlying reason for this issue again was linked to the instructional strategies. However, to help the learners to overcome this problem, different vocabulary learning strategies can be provided. Regarding this view (Ahmadi, Ismail, and Abdullah, 2012) pointed out some useful implications:

- Instructors should think of ways to provide less successful learners with vocabulary learning strategies. This must be done by making them aware of the need to become independent learners by understanding the strategies they possess and those they lack.
- Students' attention should be directed toward the strategies successful learners benefit from.
- Instructors should make learners practice lots of vocabulary learning strategies ranging from de-contextualized and mechanical strategies to contextualized ones. This helps learners to deal with any unknown vocabulary they may encounter both in and out of class activities.
- Instructors should bear in mind that individual learners may vary by which strategies they consider more useful and they apply more frequently. Thus, instructors may first need to have an evaluation of learner's belief regarding vocabulary learning strategies and then try to help them gradually realize the value of other types of strategies not only reciprocal teaching strategy.

Grammar is another factor causing some difficulties for Spanish students while learning English. They consider this situation as a critical point in learning English. In addition to this, the emphasized problem by the students was mostly the grammatical rules such as tenses and subject-verb agreement. As some of the students have stated that L1 (mother tongue) effect can be considered as the major underlying reason. Supporting this idea, S29 stated that:

“I face difficulties because grammar structures are not the same in all languages and it is hard to get used to a new grammar structure...”

As Crivos and Luchini (2012) mentioned in their study, there should be a concordance between grammar teaching approach and communicative framework, which provides meaningful and negotiated instructions for students.

Lastly, other significant difficulties for Spanish learners have been found as listening comprehension and anxiety. As the emphasis is on grammar rather than other skills, students face difficulties in listening comprehension. Furthermore, some also specified that they lack understanding

different accents. Thus, listening activities should be used more frequently and the classroom language should be the target language. On the other hand, anxiety has been considered as another problem for learners. Most of them stated that they feel embarrassed when speaking English in public. As a solution to this problem, decreasing the formality of the situations and providing a friendly atmosphere can be an alternative as stated in Kayaoğlu and Sağlamel's (2013) study.

5. Limitations and Suggestions

The current study has a few limitations which are to be considered before conducting further studies on the same topic. First of all, the participants are limited to only one university in Spain so the findings cannot be generalized to the whole country. In order to overcome this problem, further studies can be conducted on participants from different universities in different countries. Another limitation can be related to the data collection instruments and procedure. In order to fortify the results, different data collection instruments such as diaries, journals or learning logs with classroom observations can be employed. By doing so, deeper understanding of learners' perceptions and attitudes can be realized.

6. Implications

The implications of the present study can be useful for foreign language teachers since they have to deal with the problems their students experience while learning a foreign language. Knowing the factors that impede their students' foreign language learning experience may help them to prevent the problems by applying appropriate methods and techniques. The students can also be informed about the problems they may face while learning a foreign language beforehand so that they would be prepared and not feel disappointed or unmotivated during the process. The results should also be shared with the policy makers so that appropriate precautions can be taken while preparing the foreign language curriculum.

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İspanyol okul sisteminde ikinci dil öğrenimini engelleyen faktörler:

Valladolid Üniversitesi Örneği

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, İspanya Valladolid Üniversitesi eğitim fakültesi sınıflarında yabancı dilde İngilizce öğrenmeyi güçleştiren faktörleri belirlemektir. Bugün tartışma götürmez bir gerçektir ki, İngilizce Lingua Franca olarak eğitim alanında önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Bununla birlikte, İngilizce öğrenenler, yabancı dil öğrenme sürecinde değişik nedenlerden kaynaklı olarak birtakım zorluklarla karşılaşmaktadırlar. Bu nedenle, İspanya eğitim sisteminde, İngilizce öğrenirken öğrencilerin karşılaştıkları sorunları ortaya koymak için betimsel bir çalışma yapılmıştır. 2015-2016 akademik yılında Valladolid Üniversitesi Palencia Eğitim Fakültesi'nin farklı bölümlerinden 1., 2. ve 3. Sınıfta öğrenim gören 120 (87 kadın ve 33 erkek) üniversite öğrencisi çalışmaya katıldı. Veriler, açık uçlu bir anket ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Veriler analiz edildi ve tematik olarak sınıflandırıldı. Sonuçlar üniversite öğrencilerinin, destek alamama ile birlikte dil, öğretimsel ve duyuşsal engellerle karşılaştıklarını ortaya koydu. Bulgular göz önüne alındığında, İspanya'da yabancı dilde İngilizce öğrenimi ve öğretimindeki zorlukların üstesinden gelmek için öğretmenler ve öğrenciler için bazı temel faktörler ve öneriler önerildi.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Öğretimsel engeller; duygusal engeller; dil engelleri; yardım alamama; yabancı dil öğrenme süreci.

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