

Basic Spanish for Malaysian Students: Learning Difficulties

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Abstract: The present study identifies the difficulties in learning Spanish as a foreign language among Malaysian students. The data presented in this study was collected through; 1) interviews with ten (10) students between 20 to 23 years old enrolled in the Basic Spanish Language course at the Universiti Putra Malaysia and 2) in-class activities and assessments answered by these students. The data collected were analysed using a qualitative-descriptive approach. The results show that Malaysian students face a series of difficulties that hinder them from acquiring adequate competence in Spanish, namely the lack of lexis, pronunciation ability and grammar, particularly verbal conjugation. The findings of this study have implications for the teaching and learning of Spanish as a foreign language in Malaysia, whereby it can be used as guidance for Spanish language educators to design suitable teaching and learning activities to facilitate Malaysian students' understanding and mastery of Spanish as a foreign language.

Keywords: Learning difficulties, Learning strategies, Spanish as a foreign language, Malaysian students.

1. Introduction: Learning Spanish as a Foreign Language in Malaysia

Learning and correctly handling a second language (L2) is a complex task. Apart from learning grammar structures and acquiring vocabulary, learners are also required to develop communication skills and an awareness of another culture, as all are inextricably connected. López (1991) suggests that a second language is understood to be "any non-mother tongue" (p.91), while a foreign language can be defined as "the language of another country to which one is not a native" (p.91). Baralo (2004), on the other hand, proposes that a second language is associated "[with] the language that is learned in communities that have two linguistic systems in contact, whether in a situation of bilingualism or diglossia" (p.22). Meanwhile, he uses the term foreign language to refer to the language learnt by adults in specific institutional contexts such as schools or universities. To avoid possible terminological

confusion, this paper uses the term foreign language to refer to all the non-native languages of Western countries that Malaysian students learn at universities.

Besides English, which is Malaysia's official second language (Nor Hashimah, 2008), the demand for the teaching and learning of foreign languages is also increasing. Globalisation and mobility have made conversing in a foreign language desirable. In addition to European languages such as French and German, Spanish, the second most commonly spoken language in the world, has also received significant demand.

Among the main reasons motivating Malaysian university students' enrolment in foreign language courses are the desire to work in foreign countries, to secure opportunities to study or migrate abroad, or for the sheer pleasure of learning the language(s). Some Malaysians also believe that Western or European countries exude the impression of superiority in terms of culture and sophistication hence the desire to learn their languages.

In Malaysia, the University of Malaya (UM) became the first public institution to offer Spanish language classes to its students in 1972 (Martínez Vellón, 2007). Currently, the number of universities teaching Spanish has increased to ten, and this includes Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), where this study was carried out (Makhtiar Singh et al., 2021). UPM offers Spanish to its students as an elective course consisting of three difficulty levels: Basic level A1, Intermediate level A1-A2 and Advanced level A2-B1. Although this is not a compulsory course, the number of students who choose to enrol continues to increase every semester. In the first academic semester of 2019/2020, the university accepted 200 students to the course, but the actual number of applicants was higher than the final enrolments. However, due to the limited number of teachers, the university had to limit student enrolment. Most of the students enrolled in this course begin with little to no knowledge of the language and minimal exposure to its usage in context, which consequently poses a significant challenge for teachers.

Due to the growing number of students learning Spanish in Malaysian universities, there is a critical need to carry out a study to identify the challenges to learning Spanish among Malaysian students and propose potential solutions for teachers to overcome these difficulties and limitations. At present, there appears to be a bibliographic scarcity of studies related to the challenges of acquiring Spanish among Malaysian speakers compared to other communicative contexts, such as among English speakers and Francophones, making this study timely and vital to the corpus of knowledge.

2. Teaching and Learning Methodology of Spanish as a Foreign Language in Malaysia

The teaching methodology used by teachers in Spanish classes in Malaysia is reduced to grammatical, deductive and audio-lingual. This scenario matches Takala's (2016) statement that learning a language is somehow learning its grammar. The latter refers to the narrative, dialogic texts and structural exercises that are not heard as audios during the classes, but are read, normally aloud, either by the students or by the teacher him/herself (Yagang, 2017). Evidently, the teaching activities employed by the language instructors to teach Spanish in Malaysia are closely related to the traditional teaching activity known as Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) model. According to Cook (2008), the PPP model has been the trend among foreign language instructors for the past thirty years. However, Criado (2013) argued that it is imperative to understand that the PPP model is not a "method" or "approach" but a pedagogical strategy used by teachers to teach the language component to adult language learners.

In general, the teaching of Spanish in Malaysia places only moderate importance on competency or communication skills. It focuses more on the acquisition and analysis of the written language. Hence, the grammatical and sociolinguistic sub-competencies are fundamentally normative in that they are transmitted explicitly and deductively. For the present elementary level students of the Spanish class in UPM, the exercises primarily centre on filling in the blanks, transformations of gender and number either at the word or sentence levels and sentence writing using the correct verb forms.

Here are some sample activities for basic level students in UPM:

- a) Grammar activities
- Write an appropriate definite article to complete the sentences:
 - _____ padres de Marta son muy simpáticos.
 - _____ d _____ madre se llama Irene y es también muy alta y delgada.
 - Tiene _____ pelo largo y rubio.
 - Complete the following sentences with the correct form of verbs in parentheses:
 - Me llamo Aiman y _____ (vivir) en Kuala Lumpur.
 - ¿Tú _____ (estudiar) español en la universidad?
 - María no _____ (comer) verduras.
 - Choose the correct form of adjective:
 - Silvia es una chica *alta* / *alto*.
 - Su tío es *sudamericano* / *sudamericana*.
 - Todos mis hermanos tienen los ojos *oscuras* / *oscuros*.
- b) Vocabulary activities:
- Complete the following sentences with these words: *soltera, joven, cuñada*.
 - La hermana de mi marido es mi _____.
 - Begoña es muy _____. Solo tiene 15 años, pero parece que tiene más.
 - Lucía está _____. No tiene planes de casarse.
 - Write the name of profession accordingly:
 - Emilio pinta cuadros. Es un _____.
 - Pablo trabaja en un hospital. No es médico. Es un _____.
 - Ella canta canciones muy bonitas. Es una _____.
 - Write the given price in words:
 - 78€: _____
 - 113€: _____
 - 65€: _____

In addition to the exercises presented above, students are required to sit for examinations and a series of tests, including quizzes, throughout the academic semester to pass each grammar level. The examinations cover the four skills of language learning, namely reading, writing, listening and speaking; however, due to the teaching methodology used, most teachers prefer written tests when assessing their students.

In unfolding the importance of studying a foreign language and its complexity, the purpose of this paper is to provide educators with a brief understanding of the challenges and obstacles commonly faced by students. This study seeks to accomplish this objective through the following research question: What are some of the difficulties and constraints faced by university students in learning Spanish as a foreign language?

3. Methodology

The study employed a qualitative research design, and the data for this study was extracted from video-recorded interviews with the respondents. The interview was conducted with ten students between 20 to 23 years old taking the Basic Spanish Language course at the university. During the interview, the researcher teased out the difficulties they faced in learning a foreign language and the obstacles that prevented them from mastering the language.

There were no specific criteria in the selection of participants for this study, and respondents' participation was voluntary. The data collection process was explained to the respondents in advance to prevent any possible apprehensions or ethical concerns. To create a more natural setting for the interviewees, the interviews were conducted outside of the classrooms. This encourages them to feel more relaxed when expressing and sharing their opinions. Since the students possess only basic Spanish,

they could not maintain intelligible communication in full Spanish throughout the 15 to 20-minute interview. As a result, the researcher and the students used a mixture of English, Malay and Spanish.

The data was collected using a structured interview method. A list of open-ended questions was created specifically to answer the main objective of this study. The answers to these questions were extracted in transcripts with alphanumeric combinations to refer to specific participants. As an example, [P1] refers to the first participant, [P2] to the second, and the list continues until [P10], which is the tenth and last participant. After collecting the data, we proceeded to its analysis, considering the interpretations and descriptions of the researcher-student interactions. To facilitate the understanding of potential readers of this study, we also produced a Spanish translation of students who responded in English and Malay.

4. Findings

Foreign language learners encounter various challenges in learning the target language, especially if there is a considerable typological distance between the learners' L1 and L2. The challenges that a Malaysian student faces in the process of learning a foreign language, such as Spanish, come from several aspects. Thorough analyses of the data collected revealed three main challenges in foreign language learning shared by all the participants. These challenges were categorized into three linguistic elements: 1) the phonetic-phonological level, 2) the morphological level, and 3) the complexity of the grammatical structure that the Spanish language possesses. Note that the coding [P2], [P3], [P5], [P9], etc. refers to the participants who participated in the interviews.

4.1 The Phonetic-phonological System: Pronunciation

Pronunciation emerged as one of the difficulties in learning Spanish, as reported by the participants. In addition to Malay being the first language, English is the official second language in Malaysia. The use of English is widespread, and in specific contexts, namely education and businesses, English is the primary language of communication. English is also seen as one of the tools for the nation's effort toward achieving a fully developed country status. Given this context, there is a strong demand for English language fluency, and most of the younger generation has adopted it as their preferred language of communication. The strong focus given to English seems to affect the learning of other foreign languages, and in the context of this research, Spanish.

According to the classification of the positive or negative transfer in learning and acquiring a third language established by Ringbom (1987), speakers tend to establish constant similarities with other language(s). Establishing constant similarities refer to language learners' tendency to find common characteristics between their mother tongue and the language they are learning with the intention of making learning a new language easier (Ringbom, 1987). However, given the stark difference between the languages' grammatical aspects, this tendency may further complicate language learning and confuse the students.

In this study, the learning of another European language (Spanish L3) is significantly affected by the students' Asian mother tongue and the strong influence of a European L2 (English). For example, in the case of vowels, the participants revealed that they were confused between the vowel pronunciation of Spanish words that have the exact spelling as English, such as the word *autobús* 'bus' or *un' a' / 'an'*. Since /u/ that appears in the word *bus* in the English language is pronounced as /a/ [b a s], students tend to use the same pronunciation in Spanish, although the correct pronunciation should be /u/ [a u t o b u s]. For consonants, the Spanish /c/, phonetically, should be pronounced with a /k/ or /θ/ sound depending on the vowels that follow (Yagang, 2017). Hence, in the word *cuñada* 'sister-in-law', /c/ is pronounced /k/, while in *cintura* 'waist', /c/ is pronounced as [θ]. This poses a significant problem for Malaysian students since they regularly fail to distinguish the /c/ sound in Malay that is pronounced as [tʃ] like in *cukup* ([tʃ u k u p]) 'enough' or in *cinta* ([tʃ i n t a]) 'love', irrespective the vowels that follow. It is evident that Malay-speaking students' mispronunciation of Spanish words is attributed to their first language interference.

Additionally, students face difficulties pronouncing certain words because the phoneme does not exist in any of the spoken languages in Malaysia, including Malay and Mandarin, such as *ñ*. Another challenge for Malaysian students is the identification and vocalization of the vibrants for both simple

and multiple *r*. Although Malay and Spanish use the same alphabetical system¹, the pronunciation of the vibrant is different. Mandarin, on the other hand, is similar to Spanish in this sense because it also uses the vibrant system in its language.

Although Malay and Spanish are written in much the same way as they are spoken, which in part can be beneficial for Spanish learners, the pronunciation of some words in Spanish is not as straightforward as its spelling and can be quite deceiving. Two participants mentioned that they had trouble pronouncing Spanish words that contain a combination of contiguous vowels, such as *guerra* 'war', *guitarra* 'guitar', *aquí* 'here', and *o que* 'that'. Below is the excerpt from the interviews.

[P5] *Sistem sebutan bahasa Sepanyol ni susah sangat.*
(The Spanish pronunciation system is very difficult.)²

[P9] *Spanish punya sebutan macam senang, tapi susah sebenarnya.*
(Spanish pronunciation seems easy, but the truth is, it is very difficult.)

Based on the data analysis, it is clear that pronunciation in the target language is influenced by the sound patterns of the learners' first language (Zhang, 2009; Lin, 2014), ultimately making the learning process more challenging.

4.2 Morphology: Nouns and the Abundance of New Vocabulary

Apart from phonetics, the students highlighted that verbal morphology and gender variations in Spanish pose another challenge for them in learning the language. During the interviews, the participants reported that they had difficulty distinguishing masculine and feminine nouns and adjectives. In this case, Malaysian students get confused when using the same words but with different endings depending on the sexual designation and the number of elements, be it singular to plural or based on the concordance within the noun phrase.

[P2] *susah betul nak ingat pasal masculine dengan feminine for every word. Memang confuse every time I tried to memorize it.*

(it is very difficult to remember both the masculine and feminine forms of each word. It's pretty confusing every time I try to remember.)

[P3] *nak memorize masculine and feminine satu hal, then kena juga tahu tentang singular and plural.*

(One thing is to memorise the masculine and feminine forms, and another is that we also need to know about the singular and plural system.)

The Malay language has its own system and procedures for expressing grammatical systems that differ from Spanish. For example, in demonstrating grammatical genders, in Spanish, most masculine nouns end with *-o*, and the feminine nouns end with *-a*. This basic rule, sometimes, is too complex for Malaysian students to learn, assimilate and memorize to enable them to distinguish gender and apply noun-adjective agreements. This struggle happens because the Malay language does not have a gender structure; hence there are no masculine or feminine word indicators, and this applies to adjectives as well as nouns. In Malay, the words 'él' (he) and 'ella' (she) are represented using the same Malay word, 'dia'. In this context, learning challenges are manifested mainly in the language exceptions, which include: 1) the use of singular definite articles before certain common singular nouns that begin with *a*: *el agua/las aguas, el águila/las águilas*, 2) cultism such as Latinism *el mapa/los mapas* or Hellenism *el problema/los problemas* ending in *-a* for the feminine gender but *y* for the masculine gender 3)

¹ Specifically, these languages use a glottographic system of phonographic writing, the characters of Mandarin, for their part, respond to a semibiographical system based on ideograms. For more information see Sampson, 2015.

² All the translations are ours. Therefore, in order not to be repetitive, from here on we delete the note.

shortening such as *la foto/las fotos*, *la radio/las radios* o *la moto/las motos* with ending in *-o* for feminine gender. Such exceptions can be difficult for students to master because these morphological procedures do not exist in Malay or any other language spoken in Malaysia. The inability to master this rule can cause students to feel demotivated and adversely influence the students' language learning process.

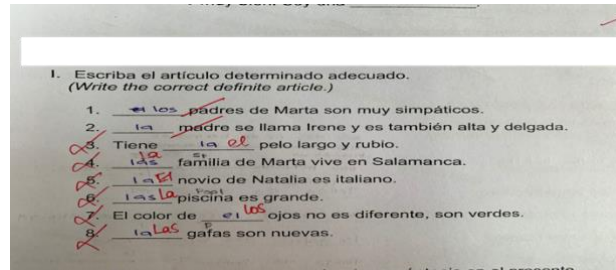


Fig 1. Confusions with the Definite Article

Figure 1 shows an exercise on Definite Articles that the students completed in class. In this example, some basic mistakes can be seen, such as *las familia*. Four (4) forms represent Definite Articles in Spanish, namely *el*, *la*, *los* and *las*. Each form is used with a specific gender and number of nouns. For example, *el* is used with the singular-masculine noun such as *el hermano* 'the brother', whereas *los* is used with the plural-masculine noun such as *los hermanos* 'the brothers'. Meanwhile, *la* is used with the singular-feminine noun such in *la hermana* 'the sister' and *las* is for plural-feminine noun *las hermanas* 'the sisters'. In this exercise, the student made mistakes by using a plural-feminine definite article *las* with the noun *familia* 'family'. Sociolinguistically, the word *familia* 'familia' represents more than just one person (plural), but grammatically, the word *familia* itself is singular. In this case, the correct definite article to use with *familia* is *la*, not *las*.

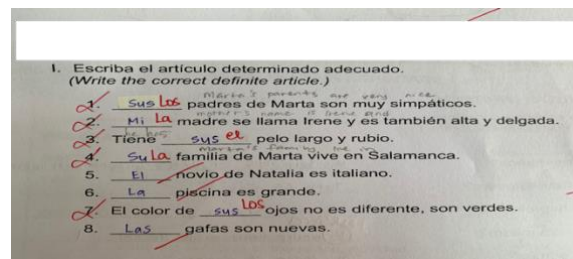


Fig 2. Confusion between Definite Article with Possessive Pronoun

Figure 2 shows the same exercise on Definite Articles. However, in this case, the student was confused between Definite Articles and Possessive Pronouns. This confusion is common for Malaysian students since their mother tongue does not have articles or possessive forms of words. In the case of possessive pronouns, the Malay language uses personal pronouns instead, such as:

Ini beg saya
This bag I
'This is my bag.'

Differences between Malay and Spanish have caused significant confusion among Malaysian students learning the language. In this case, the teachers may have explicitly taught Spanish alphabets, sounds and word bits, pointed out cognate words, etc. However, students should try to employ the most suitable learning approach and strategies to help them cope with new vocabularies and put the knowledge into practice.

4.3 The Complexity of Grammatical Structure

One of the aspects that concern most Malaysian students enrolled in Spanish courses is the grammatical complexity, especially related to verb conjugation. In Malay, there is no such conjugation when it comes to the use of verbs for stems:

<i>Saya</i>	<i>makan</i>	<i>nasi</i>
<i>I</i>	<i>eat</i>	<i>rice</i>

In the example given, we can see that in Malay, only the first-person pronoun is needed *saya* (I) + verb *makan* (eat) + subject *nasi* (rice). The agreement in number and person of the personal pronoun with the verb is something new in learning Spanish for Malaysian students, which causes constant confusion.

When it comes to past tense, the grammatical structure in Malay is much simpler than in Spanish, where the adverb *sudah* 'already' refers to past actions. For instance:

<i>Saya</i>	<i>sudah</i>	<i>makan</i>	<i>nasi</i>
<i>I</i>	<i>already</i>	<i>eat</i>	<i>rice</i>

Most participants indicated that Spanish has a rather complicated grammatical structure, especially when learning verb conjugation, and students tend to compare the structures of their mother tongue with Spanish. For this reason, they consider verb conjugation difficult to handle, and this affects their acquisition and proper use of Spanish grammatical structures:

(P5) *talking about grammar, I would say tatabahasa Spanish paling susah. Susah sangat nak faham. Kena ingat macam-macam, mmm..verb -ar, -er, -ir..then, kena buat conjugation lagi... susah sangat..*

(talking about grammar, I would say that Spanish grammar is the most difficult. It is very difficult to understand. We have to memorise a lot of things... mmm... the verb -ar, -er, -ir..., then, we need to do conjugation... it is very difficult.)

(P6) *tatabahasa Spanish susah sangat nak faham, sebab lain sangat dengan tatabahasa bahasa Melayu. Ada conjugation lah, ada macam-macam verbs. Tapi regular verbs senang sikit la dari irregular.*

(It is very difficult to understand Spanish grammar because it's different from Malay grammar. There are a series of conjugations and lots of verbs. But after all, the regular verb is easier than the irregular.)

(P10) *regular verbs tak susah sangat. Boleh faham dan boleh conjugate. Tapi bila masuk ke irregular verbs... habissss... berterabur semua sekali. Banyak benda kena ingat. Sangat complex dan susah nak faham. Kena banyak buat latihan.)*

(the regular verb is not that difficult. We can understand it and do conjugation. But when it comes to the irregular verbs... finishhhhhed..everything is chaotic. Must remember lots of things. It is very complicated and difficult to understand. We have to do a lot of exercises.)

Therefore, based on the data extracted, we can affirm that Spanish grammar is one of the difficulties that prevent Malaysian students from acquiring adequate command of this language. Likewise, some participants also continually mention the difference between the Malay and Spanish grammatical structures, conceiving the latter as the main obstacle in the teaching-learning process in which they are immersed.

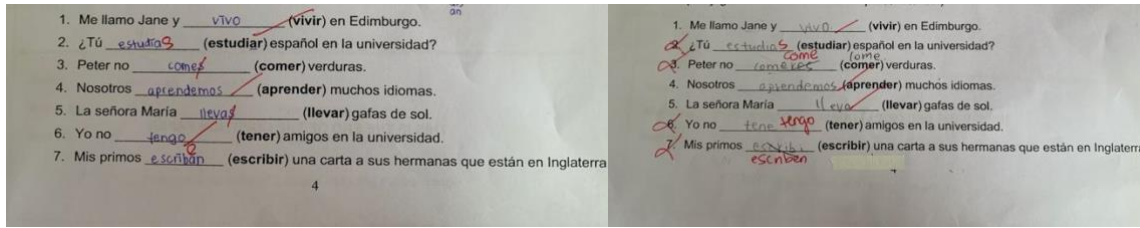


Fig 3. Conjugation of the regular verbs *-ar*, *-er* y *-ir*

Figure 3 shows exercises on the conjugation of some regular verbs *-ar*, *-er* y *-ir*. We see that the students had difficulties in performing the verb conjugations correctly.

Another problem that should be noted about the grammatical structures is the semantic differentiations of verbs *ser* y *estar*, which in other languages such as English, may be referred to as 'to be'. Malaysian speakers learning Spanish tend to have trouble distinguishing the use of these two copulative verbs, *ser* and *estar*. For example, in the exercises they worked on in class, instead of saying *estoy en la clase*, they would say *soy en la clase*.

The same situation that leads to confusion can be observed when it comes to the use of the verb *tener* 'to have', which in Spanish is used to express age and possession. Malaysian students may not have major problems in using *tener* to talk about possessions:

<i>Saya</i>	<i>ada</i>	<i>seekor</i>	<i>kucing</i>
<i>Yo</i>	<i>tener</i>	<i>un</i>	<i>gato</i>
	<i>Yo tengo un gato</i>		

Nevertheless, they tend to make mistakes due to the interference of English on how *to be* (*ser*) and not *to have* (*tener*) are used to refer to age. Here, we highlight the use of the verb *ser* to express age instead of the verb *tener*.

<i>I</i>	<i>am</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>years</i>	<i>old</i>
<i>Yo</i>	<i>soy</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>años</i>	<i>viejo</i>
	<i>Saya</i>	<i>berumur</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>tahun</i>
	<i>Yo</i>	<i>edad</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>años</i>
	<i>Yo tengo 18 años</i>			

The findings of this study show that learning Spanish can be a confusing and challenging process due to the influence of a first or another second language. The level of difficulty increases when the students lack English proficiency and at the same time use their native language as a scaffolding to help them understand Spanish. Thinking in the native language while learning a foreign language causes interference in the learning process, which results in more confusion and a low level of understanding, particularly when the foreign language has a complex grammatical structure like Spanish.

5. Discussion

The process of learning a foreign language is challenging as it requires the mind to construct new cognitive frameworks and a significant investment in time to practice and attain fluency. This study examined the main challenges faced by Malaysian students in learning Spanish as a foreign language in Malaysia. Both the results of the interviews and grammar exercises carried out during classes show that the biggest problem faced by the students is purely related to the language's linguistic aspects, in particular, the grammatical structures of the Spanish language. This finding mirrors the research conducted by Rozita Che Omar on Malaysian students, where she found, through the analyses of the students' written tests, that "[...] without any doubt, verbs, articles, concordance and prepositions

produce greater difficulties for Malaysian students when it comes to learning Spanish". (2007, p. 345). The following paragraphs discuss the detailed findings of this study.

As we all know, pronunciation is one of the most fundamental skills in learning any foreign language, and this includes Spanish. Accurately pronouncing words in the target foreign language is necessary to use the language fluently. As explained earlier, although Malay and Spanish are written in much the same way as they are spoken, the respondents still face difficulties pronouncing Spanish words because they are not familiar with this language. Accordingly, there are two things that students must bear in mind: reading words in Spanish is one thing but learning how to pronounce the words correctly and making others understand the words being spoken is an entirely different thing. The influence of the student's mother tongue and the English language appears to be a constraint for the students in mastering the pronunciation of the Spanish words.

In addition, it is imperative for a beginner to learn the words and grammar rules at the first stage and to understand the basic structure of the Spanish language. To acquire fluency in the language, students must know a wide range of vocabulary, and this is the most challenging task where students are required to remember all the words and to know how to use them appropriately (My Duong et al., 2021). Furthermore, the students must deal with the complexity of the Spanish language's grammatical structure. Spanish has a rich and varied set of grammatical structures, with various forms for different types of words. Some Spanish words are conjugated (inflected) to change their shape depending on who is speaking, the object of the sentence, and several other factors. Many Spanish verbs have two or even three different forms, depending on the person and tense of the verb. The Spanish language is also rich in irregular verbs, which don't follow a regular pattern of conjugation or tense. All these constraints mentioned above impede students' understanding of the language.

Another obstacle that Malaysian students encounter when learning a foreign language is the absence of the target language's contextual and natural linguistic environment. These students do not have enough environmental support to practise Spanish naturally, unlike students who learn this language in Spanish-speaking environments. It is believed that such influential environments can assist the students in developing adequate proficiency in this language quicker and more effectively. Mohd Faiz and Mohamed (2021) also reported similar findings in their discussion on the challenges students faced adapting to English as the language of instruction in a non-English culture.

In the context of learning at UPM, the teaching resources are limited to textbooks and some online materials such as movies, soap operas, and web pages dedicated to teaching Spanish. Subsequently, teachers find it challenging to find suitable materials to meet the needs of their students in the classroom. This was highlighted by four (4) participants in the interview who referred to the lack of adequate learning materials as a significant factor in their low proficiency in Spanish.

Ultimately, Malaysian learners face many challenges in learning a foreign language like Spanish in an Asian country such as Malaysia. Knowing the primary sources of the obstacles they face would help teachers prepare suitable and effective teaching materials (Santos de la Rosa, 2012). The researchers also strongly propose that Spanish textbook authors consider and reflect on the needs of foreign learners in other countries, especially in Asia, such as Malaysia.

6. Conclusion

Learning a foreign language, specifically Spanish, is challenging because it requires a lot of time and practice. However, despite all the difficulties encountered in learning Spanish, the findings of this current study indicated that Malaysian students enjoy learning Spanish, and the language continuously receives a strong demand in Malaysia. This finding has implications for Spanish language instructors who not only have the duty to teach the language with a particular focus on grammar but also make the lessons engaging to enhance students' knowledge retention. Essentially, teachers or language instructors must find methods and approaches to teaching grammar according to students' needs, for instance, by incorporating technology and digital media. By understanding the challenges and obstacles to students' Spanish language learning endeavours, this study adds to the body of knowledge that urges teachers and language instructors to reflect and improvise their teaching techniques and learning activities. This exercise will be beneficial for both teachers and students, where the teachers will be better able to design their teaching and learning approaches towards facilitating students' learning while at the same time

mitigating the challenges and constraints of learning Spanish. This will consequently result in students becoming more engaged and motivated to excel in the language.

7. Co-Author Contribution

All the authors carried out the research, wrote and revised the article, conceptualised the central research idea and provided the theoretical framework.

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