

Abstract

The primary objective of the present study was to conduct an analysis of the presence of cooperative learning in Spanish as a foreign language (ELE) classes in the Czech Republic, with a specific focus on identifying the main challenges encountered by secondary school teachers during this process. To accomplish this goal, a mixed-method research approach was employed, utilizing an online questionnaire specifically designed for Spanish teachers.

The initial section of the questionnaire encompassed an investigation into the participants' level of familiarity with the term “cooperative learning,” as well as their knowledge and utilization of various cooperative techniques. Furthermore, the study explored the specific areas in which cooperative learning was applied, the essential prerequisites for its successful implementation, and the associated benefits linked to this pedagogical methodology.

Conversely, the subsequent section of the questionnaire centred around examining the perceived obstacles encountered by teachers, students, and external factors that negatively impact the integration of cooperative learning within the classroom environment. The research findings underscored the widespread awareness regarding the concept of cooperative learning, with each teacher, on average, demonstrating familiarity with and utilization of three cooperative techniques. The study revealed that cooperative learning primarily played a pivotal role in fostering the development of vocabulary and oral language skills, including oral interaction and expression. Additionally, the application of cooperative learning in reading comprehension was emphasized in relation to written proficiency.

The identified advantages of cooperative learning encompassed motivational enhancement, cognitive performance improvement, stress reduction, the fortification of interpersonal relationships, and personal development. Conversely, the study identified significant challenges in the implementation of cooperative learning, including students' reliance on their native language, interpersonal dynamics among students, and the demanding preparation required by teachers.

This study has provided an empirical view on the presence of cooperative learning in ELE classes in the Czech Republic and on the associated challenges. These findings may provide valuable guidelines for future research endeavours and facilitate the enhancement of Spanish language instruction in similar educational contexts.