

## **Abstract**

From some general observations, we know that the quality of English language teaching and learning in secondary schools of Macao is not very satisfactory.

Many research findings inform us that, apart from students' abilities, the curriculum, teaching methods and learning strategies are among the most important factors influencing students' performance in learning a foreign language.

The purpose of this research is to find out more about the factors influencing Form One students of Macao in their learning of English. It attempts to get a better understanding of their English learning situation and of the curricular factors affecting their English learning progress. Suitable ways to trim the English curriculum in order to meet the students' need are also discussed.

This study investigates three major factors influencing Form One students of Macao in their learning of the English language—students' personal factors, teachers' factors and social factors. On the basis of the research findings, the study has made some suggestions to both teachers and the educational authorities.

The methods of the study are composed of questionnaire surveys and interviews. The information obtained has then been analysed thoroughly.

Findings emerging from this study are:

### **Students' factors:**

1. Low motivation and lack of interest in learning English;
2. Lack of correct learning attitudes, strategies and methods;
3. They cannot handle because of too difficult content and too much pressure

from tests and homework.

**Teachers and curriculum factors:**

1. The English subject is divided into many categories, as a result the knowledge and the skills become scattered;
2. Poor teaching skills, boring and inefficient teaching methods that do not meet students' real needs.

**Social factors:**

1. English is not an official language in Macao either before or after the handover;
2. Macao lacks an English-speaking environment.

**Recommendations:**

Having analysed the factors influencing students in their English learning, some suggestions have come up to improve students' English learning.

**The educational department should:**

1. Provide more opportunities for the students to use English and create English speaking environment;

**Class teaching and family should:**

1. Find ways to motivate the students' interest and motivation in learning English;
2. The schools should arrange suitable curriculum and create more relevant and interesting teaching designs;
3. Reduce students' pressure in their homework, tests and exams;
4. Extra support and help should be given to Form 1 students.
5. Teach students suitable ways to learn English and encourage them to innovate their learning strategies;

**The teacher training department should:**

1. Enhance the quality of in-service teacher development programs;
2. The school should encourage teachers to innovate their teaching and develop a sense of responsibility as well as their teaching techniques, in order to help their students solve their problems in learning.