THE POSSIBLE CAUSES OF FAILURE IN FRENCH CLASSES IN THE ENGLISH

AND FRENCH PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO IN STUDENTS

REGISTERED FROM 2003 TO 2005

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ABSTRACT

This research project attempts to get deeper in the possible causes for the failure in french classes. Because it is observed that french seems to be a problem for students and consequently they fail the course and have to repeat it. Some authors find that low performance is due to internal and esternal factors. Some of the reasons of this problem have been found by studying a group of students who failed a french course. It was found that there are factors such as motivation and attitudes of the students, problems in methodology and materials used influece in failing french.

RESUMEN

Este proyecto de investigación pretende profundizar en las
posibles causas para la pérdida de francés. Porque se observa que
francés parece ser un problema para los estudiantes y
consecuentemente pierden la materia y deben repetirla. Algunos
autores encuentran que el bajo rendimiento es debido a factores
internos y externos. Algunas de las razones de este problema han
sido encontradas estudiando un grupo de estudiantes que perdieron
francés. Se encontró que hay factores como motivación y actitudes
de los estudiantes, con problemas en metodología y materiales
usados que influencian en el fracaso de francés.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Delimitation

The topic of this research is "The possible causes of failure in French classes in the English and French program at the University of Nariño in students registered in the years 2003, 2004 and 2005".

This research project was based on looking for some people who have failed some French courses and to ask them about the reasons of this fact. This study can contribute to the analysis of the possible factors that generate the problem and try to find solutions to avoid the increase of this difficulty in the university.

Important aspects that have been the cause of failure in French are presented and discussed. There are external and internal factors that influence the failure in French classes in the English and French program at the University of Nariño and they are identified. This fact has been happening in the University of Nariño along different semesters. There are some relevant delimitations which help to clarify the research process.

Conceptual delimitations.

Failure: it is a phenomenon that occurs when students have low academic performance and so, low grades. Because of that, the

University takes out the student and he or she has to repeat the course. (Portilla and Recalde, 2007, P.3).

Repetition: It refers to the number of times that the student has to repeat the course while he or she is studying his or her career. Also, it refers to the number of registrations in the academic history, which may be due to academic performance of the students or for other reasons in the academic environment. The repetition is reflected in the scholar delay.

Environment: Physical, economic, social and pedagogical circumstances which support or obstruct the learning and teaching process. (Oviedo, 1980 p.28).

Geographic Delimitation

The University of Nariño is the place where the research project has beeen carried out. Especially at University of Nariño at VIPRI (Vicerrectoria de Postgrados y Relaciones Internacionales) located in the Panamericana Avenue. Formulation of the problem.

A description of the possible factors that have influenced failure in French courses at the English and French program at the University of Nariño in students registered in the years 2003, 2004 and 2005.

Problem Description

    Due to different reasons, the French language causes problems for some students and so, some of them fail the subject. Certain students in the English and French program have low grades in the French subject, consequently, they have to repeat it, or in other cases they drop out the career. This is a problem that is present in the University of Nariño. So, it has been important to find the reasons for this situation.

    A representative number of students start studying languages in the English and French program at the University of Nariño. But, along the ten semesters, many students for different reasons get low grades in the French course and so, they fail.

Problem

    The problem could be understood as follows: The factors that influence failure in French classes have not been identified and there is a need to do a study in order to analyze the reasons of this problem.

Problem statement

    Taking into account that there could be different reasons for failure in French classes at the University of Nariño, the study tries to find the answer to this question:

    What are the possible factors that influence failure in French courses at the English and French program at the University of Nariño?

Justification

A large number of students at the University of Nariño in the English and French program have failed some French courses. It was considered necessary to carry out a research process to understand and know the possible reasons of the problem. Also, the causes of low academic performance in the French subject and the causes of students dropping out from the area have been provided in this study.

This research paper intends to find out indicators about what is happening in the French area. Then, solutions can be applied by people who are interested in working with students in this situation as well as people that need to get information about this kind of problems: teachers, students or senior staff of the institution.

This study is important because it contributes to the improvement of the educative aspects and all the elements related to the teaching and learning process. The research can help the development of other research works related to it and also to point out possible solutions for this fact. This research paper can contribute to develop some future solutions to the problem. It can also generate interest to make more related research to go deeper in some aspects that are related to the problem. In this way, at the Linguistics and Languages Department, decisions can be taken to solve this problem.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are presented to show the intention and the purpose of the study.

General objective

This project has the purpose of analyzing the possible factors that contribute to failure in French classes through the study of some individuals involved in the problem.

Specific objectives

To define what failure refers to in the teaching and learning of French language.

To identify the factors that influence failure in French classes.

To understand the most difficult linguistic patterns in the learning process that the students face in listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.

Limitations

It was difficult to track down the students who failed some French courses, so other people with a similar situation were chosen to do the study in order to find out a solution to it.

Maybe, the people with whom this research is been Carried out give wrong Information or in the worst case, false or not accurate one.

Bad attitude on the interviewed people have been a problem.

If these kinds of difficulties are presented in the research, the information gathered will be compared with opinions and information given from other people such as teachers and other students.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical framework

In order to support this research project some theories developed about the language learning-teaching process and the findings about academic performance will be presented. Now, some variables such as educative, social, psychological and cognitive factors that intervene in this process are exposed. Most of the causes of the problem to be studied will be found in the deficiencies that are into the aspects related to learning-teaching process such as language acquisition, safe environment, motivation of students and teachers, cognitive process in language learning or psychological problems in learning a language.

Due to the different causes that could be found in failure, the different subjects that intervene in the problem and the relation that some factors keep according to the literature review will be presented.

Second Language acquisition

The study is oriented in a problem with the process of second language acquisition. Consequently, it is important to consider the literature developed about second language acquisition and the variables that intervene in it.

According to Gass and Selinker (2001) Second Language Acquisition is a very used term; it refers to "the process of

learning another language after the native language that has been learned". They also define it as "the learning of a nonnative language in the environment in which that language is spoken" an example could be a Japanese speaker who is learning Spanish in Colombia or an English speaker learning French in France. This may or may not take place in a classroom setting and they say that it is important the presence of a speaker of the language that is being learned in the place where it is being learned.

The definition of Second Language Acquisition that Rod Ellis (1997) gives is "any language learned subsequent to the mother tongue. The learning of a third or fourth language whether you are learning a language naturally as a result of living in a country where it is spoken or learning it in a classroom through instruction".
Factors that intervene in the process of acquiring a second language.

In second language acquisition there are internal and external factors that intervene in the learning process of a language. The external factors refer to the social environment in which the learners are studying. For example, learners who have confidence with native speakers develop the language in a different way from those that do not feel comfortable when they relate with them (Ellis, 1997, p.4). Another external factor is the type of input that learners are exposed to. The quality of

the input determines the way of learning. In this way an inappropriate use of methodology and materials influence the way students learn (Ellis, 1997, p.4). The internal factors refers to the cognitive characteristics of students such as the knowledge of the world to understand the input provided, strategies of communication to solve problems in language tasks, the knowledge of how language generally works that help learners to acquire a particular language and the language aptitude of some learners that makes the acquisition easier than others (Ellis, 1997, p.6). Problems in foreign language teaching.

According to Brown (2004) one problem in the teaching of a foreign language is that the teacher focuses only in the form and he does not pay attention to the function. It's necessary that the learner is exposed to communication in order to have success in learning a language.

A person who is learning a second language can make mistakes because he or she has internalized the first language and applies its linguistic structures to the target language, but obviously what procedure does not always work. He or she can think that the second language has the same structures as the first language. For example: he or she can ask a question in the same way as he would ask it in the first language, "Me ayudas?" "Moi aide?" or one sentence like it: "Carlos y yo" "Charles et Je". This factor can interfere in learning the language correctly and

so, students do not feel comfortable at the moment of studying the language when they face this problem.

Language Conditions

The status of a language in society is significant in a community learning other languages. The educational and political context determines the importance given to the languages that are being learned. There is a difference, talking about French, for example, in the Anglophone provinces of Canada, where French is taught as a second language and is considered one of the two official languages of the country. And in some parts of USA it has not official status, being a foreign language, but, with prestige (Byram, 2008, p.6).

The native language is the language that is learned in a natural way, in the first years of existence. Here a normal child in his or her affective cognitive world learns along the time his or her linguistic system. In this case a high knowledge of the language is accomplished (Oviedo, 1980, p. 20, 21).

Subjects involved in the process.

Teachers and learners are two of the most significant variables that intervene in the failure causes phenomena. Therefore, it is important to distinguish and differentiate their characteristics.

Teacher

The preparation, aptitudes and attitudes of teachers influence directly the accomplishments in language learning. For this reason it is important to know some important characteristics related to the language teachers in general.

Language learning effectiveness depends a lot on the teacher training quality (Strevens, 1977, p.21). Therefore, the teaching profession should have at least these characteristics: scientific knowledge, a period of rigorous and assessed instruction, the purpose of serving the community, high standards of professional conduct and show the ability to handle demanding and practical tasks in a competent way (Wallace, 1993, p.5). The language teachers as professional persons are supposed to have a demanding and hard academic study for a long time. The idea is that this effort rewards him because of the difficulty of achieving it (Wallace, 1993, p.5). In this way the quality of teaching can be minimized if there is a lack of these features in teachers training. Teacher training includes an initial and an advanced preparation (Bastidas, 1991, p.144). With this training, it is possible to think that teachers are ready to teach a foreign language. But, according to Bastidas (1991), in his experience as a teacher trainer, he can affirm that the results of the courses are unsatisfactory and consequently, questionable. So, many students that have finished their studies of "Licenciatura" and many teachers of high school have a low performance in English,

and poor theoretical and methodological bases. Therefore, these factors affect the foreign language learning process in a negative way.

Another feature that contributes to the success or the frustration of the student in learning a foreign language is the attitudes of a teacher. This is a factor that can benefit or not the students learning process. Teacher should have empathy and a cooperative style to improve the learning conditions (Klippel, 1992, p.6). In relation with the attitudes, we find a very important variable that contributes to the success or frustration of a student in learning a foreign language. This is the *personality.* Personality is all the characteristics that a person has in total composed by a lot of things: The sentiments and how they are expressed, the values, the prejudices, the attitudes and the temperament, etc. (Bastidas, 1991, p.145). According to Bastidas (1991), it influences negatively or positively the students and their learning. And he sets that most of teachers are not conscious of this fact and with their attitude they are contributing to the failing of the students.

For learning to take place, the affective part plays a very important role in language learning acquisition. For that, it is considered important that teachers show a good attitude towards their students all the time (Reina, Valderrey & Moreno, 2008, p. 2). Another variable in personality is emotion that refers to

experiment complex, subjective, biological and behavioral changes. Emotions are the feelings, and thoughts of the human that provoke certain behaviors and reactions which can be expressed by some attitudes and actions (Reina, Valderrey & Moreno, 2008, p.1). These things affect the learning results. Therefore, it is an aspect that determines the way of learning.

Learner

As said before, learners acquire a second language according to the external and internal factors. The external factors refer to the social situation in which learning occurs and the way the language is exposed to the learner. Internal factors refer to the mental processes that the learner uses to acquire the language (Ellis, 1994, p.16).

The aptitude and attitude of learners are variables that determine the success in learning another language. Aptitude can be measured in components, such as the ability to identify and memorize new sounds, the ability to understand the function of particular words in sentences, the ability to figure out grammatical rules from language samples and memory for new words. These components are applied in standard tests. (Lightbown and Spada, 1996, p.53).

Most of the causes of failure in French classes might be found in students motivational and personality variables which

would determine success in language learning. So, it is important to know how these variables work.

Most researchers say that attitudes and motivation play and important role to have success in second language acquisition. Students can be highly motivated because they are successful in learning or they can be successful because they are highly motivated (Ligthbown and Spada, 1999, p.56). In this way students are motivated to achieve proficiency in the language because they need to talk to people who speak the target language. On the other side, students who have facility and fluency with native speakers will look for them frequently (Ligthbown and Spada, 1999, p.56). Motivation is one of the most important variables. Motivation is the desire of achieving a goal, which takes students to work actively and to fulfill the requirements of any course (Reina, Valderrey & Moreno, 2008, p.2). According to Gardner and Lambert (1972 as cited in Reina, Valderrey & Moreno, 2008:2) there are instrumental and integrative motivation. In language learning, instrumental motivation refers to the desire of learning the language to get practical goals such as employment or travel. A student with instrumental motivation wants to learn the L2 with particular objectives such as: to get a needed grade, to improve the prospectus of employment, to have a high grade, etc (Bastidas, 1991, p. 141). Integrative motivation refers to the desire to

integrate in the target community (Reina, Valderrey & Moreno, 2008, p.2). The student desires to learn the foreign language to communicate with people who speak that language. He or she wants to relate with them and to understand their culture (Bastidas, 1991, p. 141).

There are some characteristics in personality such as extroversion which can contribute to learn a language and inhibition which can be an obstacle for learning the language. Also, there are other characteristics such as self-esteem, empathy, dominance, talkativeness, and responsiveness (Ligthbown and Spada, 1999, p.55). These features can partially affect the success in learning, taking into account that these characteristics are difficult to measure.

According to Ausubel (1968 as cited in Oxford, 1996:33) there are six needs or desires responsible for being motivated: knowledge, exploration, activity, ego enhancement, stimulation, manipulation. Also, Crookes and Schmidt (1989 as cited in Oxford, 1996 p.33)state that the internal factors that construct motivation are: interest in the subject, relevance to personal needs, expectancy of succes or failure and perceptions of the value of the outcomes and other external ones such as: decision to learn the language, persistence over a long period and high activity level. According to Scarcella and Oxford (1992 as cited in Oxford, 1996, p.33) the lack of any of these factors can cause

the lack of motivation. So, a student is hightly or low motivated because he needs to know about the language or he is being stimulated by someone or simply because he considers the language sophisticated. Seeing the internal factors, a student prefers to learn a language rather than another one because his/her perception of the importance of the language is different; he/she thinks that it is more used, more interesting and there are more opportunities to work or to get money.

According to research done so far, another variable that influences learning of a language in students is that they have different ways to learn, that is, they have a preferred learning style. In second language acquisition the cognitive learning style has been more deeply investigated. Here, there is a distinction between field dependent and field independent learners. A field independent learner looks for acquiring knowledge in a separate way from the general information; on the other hand a field dependent learner tries to acquire it holistically. So, in some kinds of activities field independent learners demonstrate a higher performance than field dependent learners (Lightbown and Spada, 1996, p.58).

Pedagogy, methodology, instruction, teaching.

These elements are relevant in the teaching and learning process. Here, teacher interacts with students in order that they learn something. According to the aptitudes of the students, the

teacher needs to realize that every student has different strengths and weaknesses. This can be used to apply the methodology, pedagogy and instruction in an appropriate way and to put students in an adequate teaching program (Lightbown and Spada, 1996, p.54). Every one has a preferred way of absorbing and retaining new information. For example, when learners tell the teacher that they prefer to see something written or memorize material instead of learning it in a less formal way, it is not convenient to say to them that they are wrong, but encourage them to use all the necessary means to learn a language (Lightbown and Spada, 1996, p. 58).

Materials

The way of using material can contribute to the success or failure of a course in learning a language. The materials are very important to carry out a productive class. Most techniques need to be supported and enhanced by materials. They are instructive and today there are many materials that can be used in all levels and for several purposes. Textbooks are the most used material for language instruction which should be used in an adequate way, if not, that kind of material can have a negative influence in learners. (Brown, 2001, p.136).

It is considered that commercial prepared materials take away the capacity of teachers to think professionally for supplying the needs of students in class (Richards and Renandya,

2002, p. 80). About textbooks, this material can obstruct the role of teacher to analyze preplanned events and the real needs of students. Also, the opinion says that textbooks are for lacking teachers without creativity (Richards and Renandya, 2002, p.81). Another problem with textbooks is that most of ESL books are British or American and so they do not adjust to students of other cultures (Richards and Renandya, 2002, p. 81). But, on the other hand, commercial materials can be a useful tool for preparing an authentic class rather than restrictive, because a 'good' teacher knows how to use textbooks or published materials in a particular class in order to respond the needs of students and he or she also can create them. In this way teachers do not slavish following a textbook (Richards and Renandya, 2002, p. 81).

How does anxiety affect academic performance?

Anxiety is not considered an awful thing. A high level of anxiety affects the mental process of memory and it is a problem for the concentration, and so it is difficult to have success in the academic performance. But also, not having any anxiety can result in not having motivation to study for exams, write papers, or do daily homework. Therefore it is a positive thing to have a moderate amount of anxiety that aids academic performance by creating motivation (Cornell University., from

http://lsc.sas.cornell.edu/Sidebars/Study_Skills_Resources/anxiet
y.pdf).

In language learning anxiety is experienced when the learner
feels afraid or being intimidated at the moment of using the
target language in any form and any context. It can be the result
of an event, but in other cases it can be a learner trait
(Oxford, 1996, p.59).

Some studies of French learners carried out by Desrochers
and Gardner (1981) showed that anxiety is an incident of fear
when the learner has to speak the second language, but it can
disappear slowly. Sometimes anxiety is the reason by which the
learner does not want to participate in class, so motivation is
reduced and there are negative attitudes and beliefs (Oxford,
1996, p.59).

According to Dörnyei (2006, p.198) anxiety is considered a
complex factor that has different characteristics classified in
these categories: Beneficial/facilitating vs.
Inhibitory/debilitating anxiety: it refers to the cognitive
component of anxiety that is 'worry'. It can affect performance
of the students negatively. And the emotionality that not always
has negative results in proficiency of the students. Trait vs.
State anxiety: Trait anxiety refers to the predisposition to be

anxious in predetermined situations and state anxiety is the

emotional reaction considered as a passing state in a common

situation.

Low grades in French language classes.

In many cases, there are many causes by which some learners

cannot acquire easily the second language in this case, the

French language. Penny Ur in his book 'A course in language

teaching' mentions some of them:

"Many learners find it difficult to acquire the French

language because they cannot understand natural native speech,

that is, they need each word to be pronounced separately, and

they also need to hear things more than once".

"Some learners feel that there is a lot of information which

they should keep on their heads, that is, they feel overloaded

with incoming information; therefore, they need to be encouraged

to relax and stop trying to understand everything, in other

words, they need to pick out what is essential".

Many of them have trouble with sounds, they think, they will

perceive the second language sounds in the same way that perceive

the mother tongue sounds.

In speaking, some learners find it difficult to acquire the

French language because they do not spend enough time in real

communicative situations. They are inhibited because they are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply because they are shy.

Sometimes, learners do not perform speaking skill because they have low participation, maybe because there is not enough time to do it or because there is nothing to say.

Another important problem is that some learners are not exposed to the language expected to be learnt. The teacher uses the mother tongue into the classroom, that is, there is no use of the target language.

In Reading, some learners do not have the opportunity to do as much reading as possible.

They do not read varied types of reading.

They are not encouraged to recognize common words and word combinations.

The vocabulary is not still studied; the language of the text is too difficult.

The reader pays the same amount of attention to all parts of the text.

The reader does not have interest in reading and he or she does not use background information (Penny Ur, 1996).

Some students could not assimilate easily a number of grammatical French patterns. For that, they have problems in a French course. There has been found that there are some problems

at the moment of learning some features of French grammar. There are difficulties in the grammatical gender. Students find it complex to recognize the gender of nouns. For example: In Spanish it is said 'el carro' which is masculine. In French it is said 'la voiture' which is feminine (Grauberg, 1997, p.38). Students also have to learn the pronunciation and spelling of many adjectives in the appropriate way and select the correct determiners according to the gender of nouns. Therefore it is important to learn in a right way the gender of nouns in order not to have difficulties learning French. Also, the concord and agreement of adjectives and pronouns with the gender and number with the noun to which they refer to represents a problem for students. They find difficult to make cohesion and apply the rules, especially, when the grammatical distinction forms of the adjectives and pronouns is not audible. Students must pay attention to the sound of the final syllable of adjectives and realize if it is feminine or masculine. There is a distinction in a vowel sound and a consonant sound (vert/verte; heureux/heureuse), a nasal vowel and the consonant [n] (certain/certaine), [e] and [r] (premier/première), [f] and [v] (actif/active) (Grauberg, 1997 p.40). The partitive article is considered a problem for students who do not use this grammatical feature in their mother tongue. The forms *du, de la, de l'* can produce confusion to learners when they will apply it as a

partitive article (Grauberg, 1997, p.41). About pronouns and verb phrases French is complex because of the large number of verbal forms, the use of tenses and moods where students must learn the form and also apply it. For example, it is difficult for students to make a distinction between perfect and imperfect past or also in the use of subjunctives (Grauberg, 1997, p.41-45). Also in the complementation of verbs, students have to see when the verbs are followed by a noun object, with or without preposition, or an infinitive clause, with or without preposition, or also by a noun object that is itself followed by an infinitive. For example there are complementation patterns such as: "Il regarde sa mere", "Je pense à ce que tu fais", "Rieux fit assesoir le visiteur", "obliguer les hommes valides à participer au sauvetage civil" (Grauberg, 1997 p.46). Spanish uses different kinds of complementation that in some cases are the same in French, but, in others cases uses different prepositions. Therefore French grammar represents a problem for students learning this language in a given course. Related investigations

The study that was done at the University Eafit named "Deserción Estudiantil en los Programas de Pregrado" (1995-1998) indicates that there is a crisis in the educative ambit, because many students abandon their university activities. So, more than half of the Colombian students start the career and do not finish it. The phenomenon of low academic performance can be caused due

to economic problems. The study "Estudio del Fenómeno de la Deserción Voluntaria estudiantil de la Jornada Nocturna en el Programa de Administración de Empresas de la Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia Seccional Santa Marta en el periodo 1986" finds that the economic instability pressures the young to look for a job in an early age for helping at home, and therefore they give less importance to the university activities. Some people with money problems enter the university thinking in getting better life opportunities. So, it is very difficult for them to supply the study expenses and for this reason they cannot focus on in their career and leave their responsibilities of the studies (Vinasco, 2000).

According to the Colciencias study (Dane,2005) "Colombia al Filo de la Oportunidad" explains that all the efforts to transform the middle education as a mean to produce work have not given results because the universities do not give enough choices, but that the educative system pretends to force to the young to accommodate to the university offers. Also, the study indicates that the quality of the education in the universities is low, there is lack of research, and the professionals are not update.

In the study "La Deserciòn en los Programas Tecnológicos del Sed, 1983-1986", found that the students enter to study a career

not as a decision but as the only possibility offered (Portilla and Recalde, 2007, p.23).

Academic performance.

There are many reasons of low academic performance. This fact provokes the failing of the course. This situation is considered as a big problem in the educative system, so, some factors related to it have been found.

According to Agyeman (1993, as cited in Etsey (2005)) there are many factors that can cause low academic performance. Teachers need to have academic and professional teacher qualifications in order to be successful in teaching, but if a teacher fulfills these requirements and has to work under bad conditions, the teacher performance would be poor and worse than an unqualified teacher but working with favorable conditions of service.

According to Neagley and Evans (1970 as cited in Etsey (2005)) established that supervision instruction helps the teacher to develop the skills of teaching in the classrooms. Etsey, Amedahe and Edjah (2004) in a study of 60 schools from peri-urban (29 schools) and rural (31 schools) areas in Ghana observed that in private schools the education was better than in public schools because there was more effective supervision work (Etsey, 2005).

The motivation is another factor; the high motivation makes a person works with all his or her capacities in his or her job. One study observed the job satisfaction of school teachers in USA and saw that the amount of earned salary was a factor to know how the motivation is. Studies by Lockheed et al (1991 as cited in Etsey, 2005 p.2) indicated that low motivation produces inadequate attitudes towards the students that affect negatively the performance of students.

The existence and use of teaching materials promote the success of teaching. According to Broom (1973 as cited in Etsey, 2005 p.2), the ability of using and applying the materials in a creative way increases the probabilities of learning. Ausubel (1973 as cited in Etsey, 2005, p.2) stated that young children can comprehend abstract meanings if they are provided with sufficient materials.

Class sizes influence in a considerable way the academic performance. Researches show that schools with smaller class sizes learn more effectively than schools with larger class sizes. According to Kraft (1994, as cited in Etsey, 2005, p.2) groups of 40 have bad results on students' accomplishments.

Buttler (1987 as cited in Etsey, 2005, p.3) found that the way in which teachers assigned the homework determines the academic performance. Therefore, the given exercises have to be

relevant and clear according to the learning objectives (Etsey,
2005, p.3).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

After having presented some researchers and their points of view in the theoretical framework, it is important to talk about the procedures that were used in order to collect data. This chapter will present the type of research to be carried out, and the techniques used for gathering data will be included. .
Research Design.

This project corresponds to a qualitative paradigm. The objectives of the qualitative research are the description of the social and human facts, the hypothesis formulation and the descriptive diagnostic of the social phenomena. As a qualitative research the interaction is going to be with those who were studied.

Ethnography was the type of research chosen in order to develop this project. It consists of the direct immersion of the researcher with the phenomenon to study, the permanent interaction with the chosen cases, the meaning was built through the acts of speech and the actions of the participants.
Population

In this research, the students who were registered in the different semesters of the English and French Licenciatura belonging to the Linguistics and Languages Department of the Human Sciences School of the University of Nariño were the population. They are young people from 17 to 25 years of age that

have failed the French course in any semester. They belong to different social status, middle-class most of them. They are females and males.

Sample

The students who failed a French course from the different semesters of the English and French "Licenciatura" were the sample population. They were 16 students.

Setting

The setting was the places where we interacted with the chosen students from the English and French program of the Linguistics and Living languages department at the University of Nariño located in the Panamericana Avenue and other places where we plannnd in advance to meet with the people to be interviewed. Also, any place inside Pasto where we could apply the interviews and questionnaires.

Data collection procedures

In order to develop our research, we chose two techniques of data collection: interviews, and questionnaires. These two instruments will be explained below:

Interviews

The interview consists on a conversation which has the objective of getting information. In an interview the interviewer takes the initiative of the conversation and the interviewee facilitates the information about himself or herself.

In qualitative research the most typical interviews are those which are open, informal and unstructured. In second language acquisition research, interviews are used to collect data on covert variables such as attitudes and motivation for learning the second language. They can be used as tests for obtaining information about the learner's language proficiency.

Interviews can be differentiated by their degree of explicitness and structure, ranging from very open interviews to very structured ones. 'Open' interviews provide the interviewee with broad freedom of expression and elaboration and often resemble informal talks. They allow greater depth, and one question leads to another without a pre-planned agenda of what will be asked. There is usually a topic for the interview but, by allowing the respondent maximum freedom of expression, ample and often unexpected information emerges. This kind of information probably could be obtained if the interview was more structured. Therefore, this type of interview is mostly used in qualitative and descriptive studies.

In semi-open interviews there are specific core questions determined in advance from which the interviewer branches off to explore in depth information, probing according to the way the interview proceeds, and allowing elaboration, within limits.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires are printed forms for data collection, which include questions or statements to which the subject is expected to respond, often anonymously. In second language acquisition research, questionnaires are used mostly to collect data on phenomena which are not easily observed, such as attitudes, motivation, and self-concepts. The questionnaires demand specific questions about aspects such as: the classroom environment, the curriculum or the teaching method.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out which objective was to prove the mechanisms that were used. We chose 9 people that had to repeat the semester. We had to meet them in the places where they wanted to do the interview and the questionnaires prepared in advance, asking them and also giving them the questionnaires.

The participants were women and men who for any reason had to repeat a French course. The purpose of the pilot study was to find out if the questions were appropriate to do a good research project and to see if it is possible to know what changes are needed to do and what actions to be taken into account. For that, some tools such as a tape recorder and questionnaires were used; this allowed us to keep the information for analyzing it.

Data analysis.

To get more reliability and validity in the study the following procedures were applied: Triangulation, member check and constant comparative method.

Triangulation is the most common technique in the qualitative research. It consists on contrasting methodically the collected data. It is the application and combination of several research analysis of data design.

Here, not only the opinion from those who were involved in the problem were taken into consideration, but also the classmates opinions, the opinions of the French teachers and the head professors about the performance leading to failure and their points of view about their classmates in some French courses. In this way, we got a mayor credibility in the findings and strengthen the information obtained from the others participants.

Member check procedure consists on gathering information, analyzing it, interpreting it and after deliver that information to the person who gave it, so, that person can say whether or not he or she agrees with what he or she answered.

Constant comparative method consists on gathering, analyzing and comparing the data several times with the data collected along the time.

Tables

The following tables were used for the analysis and categorization of the data gathered. According to the responses in the interviews and questionnaires, it was put the information in the appropriate section.

STUDYING LANGUAGES

	The only career I got access	To travel abroad	Pressure from family	Being a language teacher	To know about other cultures	I like Languages
Student 1						
Student 2						

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

After having worked on methodological aspects, chapter four is presented to provide the readers with the information about the analysis and outcomes from the interviews and questionnaires applied to some students who failed the French course in any semester in the years 2003, 2004 and 2005.

Students' Interviews Analysis

Interviews were a useful tool to know the motivation, attitudes and aptitudes of the students who have failed French.

These responses were obtained from a group of students who have failed the French course in any semester registered in the years 2003, 2004, 2005 at the University of Nariño. Their responses are transcribed in the same way as they answer them. Questions and answers:

1. Why did you decide to study languages?

Student 1: "Because I liked languages to know new cultures"

Student 2: "Because I always wanted to be an English teacher. When I was in the high school, I considered that I was very good in English".

Student 3: "At first because I wanted to be a teacher and I like languages but especially I like English".

Student 4: "Because I would like to be a teacher and to travel around the world because I like children and young people

and to learn things that they can teach me and also I would like to work around the world teaching my things, my experience ".

Student 5: "Because I like languages, for example I like listening to English music; I like to watch TV in English, no, just because I like English language".

Student 6: "Because I didn't have a good score in the ICFES test, really I think that was the reason by which I didn't follow another career".

Student 7: "Firstable, because I had a bad score in the ICFES tests, it wasn't what I really wanted to study but I decided to study languages".

Student 8: "I really liked languages. They caught my attention since the high school, so, it was an option. It was not because I had to do it, but, because I liked it. Maybe, I did not know the difficulties of studying it".

Student 9: "I decide to study languages because I like it so much, also because I wanted to speak other languages to travel to other countries".

Student 10: "Because I liked it since the high school".

Student 11: "Because I liked English and I wanted to teach it".

Student 12: "Because I think that studying languages gives us many opportunities to travel to a foreign country. Also,

English and French languages are very useful. English language gives us opportunities to work".

Student 13: "I decided to study languages because I always wanted to be an English teacher".

Student 14: "Mainly, I decided to study languages because they are an essential tool nowadays and it's very useful to speak another language because there are more possibilities to travel abroad".

Student 15: "Because I wasn't admitted to the career that I wanted to study. I wanted to study Psychology.
Then I decided to study languages because I was influenced by my sister who spoke English when I was a child".

Student 16: "Because I think that Languages are important in all the careers at the University. I consider that it is a possibility to travel and to know other cultures".

According to the answers given to this question it is observed that most students like languages especially English language. Nobody said to have a preference for French. Another important amount of students answered that they wanted to travel abroad and being a language teacher. And few students chose the career because it was the only one they got access to and because they wanted to know other cultures. Nobody was pressured to study it. These answers show that they had a motivation to follow the career and it is important to point out that they had a

predisposition to study English rather than French. According to Ausubel (1968 as cited in Oxford L, 1996:33) there are six needs or desires responsible for being motivated: knowledge, exploration, activity, ego enhancement, stimulation, manipulation.

2. Did your family agree with you to follow the English-French career? Why?

Student 1: "*Yes, they have always supported what I have wanted to do*"

Student 2: "*At the beginning they wanted me to study medicine and engineering but after they understood that I was* good in English and I wanted to be an English teacher. Nowadays, I am studying languages".

Student 3: "Not all my family, just my mom, she was the *only one who told me that I had to follow my dream. My uncle, my sister and others didn't like it because they said that this career doesn't have enough opportunities*".

Student 4: "*Firstable, They did not like it, but through the time they began to like it and they accepted what I decided. They like it*".

Student 5: "*Yes, my family agreed with me because they think that to learn English is very important and because they always support my decisions*".

Student 6: "Yes, they were the principal motors to follow this career; they were who supported to me".

Student 7: "Yes, because my parents consider that this career gives us a good future; you can travel, know, explore and so on".

Student 8: "Yes, because they knew that I loved so much the languages".

Student 9: "Yes, my mother's family agreed with me to do that but, when I told my father that I wanted to follow this career he told me that there were other better ones because the teachers don't have many opportunities to work".

Student 10: "Yes, because my mother has always supported me".

Student 11: "Yes, they supported my decision, they agreed with me".

Student 12: "At the beginning they didn't agree because they wanted me to study medicine. But later they agreed because I had a good score in the English subject in the ICFES test".

Student 13: "No, because my parents wanted me to be a lawyer, he told me that there were many teachers without job and that it was a job very bad paid".

Student 14: "Yes, they did. Although I wanted to study Biology, Languages seemed interesting to me because I have family

who lived in other countries and when I learn another language I will be able to study more things".

Student 15:"Yes, they agreed. Although they told me to change later to another career, I continue to study because I like so much languages and I decided to finish the career. But I didn't think to fail the French course".

Student 16: "No, they didn't. They preferred other careers such as Engineering and Medicine. I have always like languages and I was motivated to study it".

Most students said that their family agreed with them to study that, other made clear that their parents did not agree at the beginning, and very few students did not have his parents `support. It is possible that the point of view of parents was not the main responsible for students' problems in French.

3. Were you prepared to begin a career? Yes or not? Why?

Student 1: "No, because we didn't receive any help in the high school to choose a career, for that reason I think that I wasn't really prepared".

Student 2: "Yes, because when I finished my high school I was one year doing nothing, I was longing to study it. After, my family agrees with me to study languages and I was accepted at the University of Nariño".

Student 3: "I think yes. I enter the university when I was nineteen so I was prepared".

Student 4: "No, I wasn't, but through the time I began to learn a lot of things and at the final I liked it a lot, but it is good to be prepared to follow a career because if you don't have a purpose, the steps you can become angry, sad".

Student5: "Yes, because when I finished the high school, I did two English courses in the languages center, as I told you I like English".

Student 6: "Really, I think that yes, because I was one of the best students in that subject in my high school".

Student 7: "Yes, because I had a very good score in the ICFES test in the part of English, so there was nothing else to do".

Student 8: "No, because I was working and I didn't have time to prepare homework, presentations and exams".

Student 9: "I considered that I was really prepared to begin this career".

Student 10: "I think not, because the English that we learn in the High school is weak. But at the University it is complete".

Student 11: "Yes, I was prepared".

Student 12: "At the beginning I wasn't prepared because I was nervous and I had economic problems and I thought that all the teachers spoke in English. But later I could solve it".

Student 13: "Yes, I wanted to finish the high school rapidly for beginning the University".

Student 14: "Yes, when one is graduated, one is ready to study in the University".

Student 15: "For this career I was, because I knew the basic things of English language".

Student 16: "I think I had the enough knowledge about English but I didn't know anything about French. I came to learn it in the first semester".

According to these answers, most students were prepared to begin the University, and only some students did not. The problem is that the students prepared said to be ready because they knew something about English, that is, they did not know anything about French. Nobody received any recommendation before beginning to study French; they did not have any bases. They notice a big difference between English and French languages and that they needed a special help to acquire French because of its difficulty to be learnt.

4. What do you prefer the most, English or French?

Student 1: I prefer English but, I consider that both languages are interesting".

Student 2: "English, because I think that it is more useful than French. I am studying French only because I want to learn it, but I don't want to be a French teacher".

Student 3: "English of course, because I like English before entering the University. It doesn't have so complicated structures like French; I think French has small details so difficult".

Student 4: "English, I think, because it is easier I also know more grammar about it".

Student 5: "I prefer English, because I learnt English in the high school and I didn't know anything about it and to learn French is difficult".

Student 6: "I prefer English because we have other subjects in English such as TESOL, Psychology and others that help us to practice it. French is more difficult to learn than English".

Student 7: "I prefer English because is easier to learn".

Student 8: "I prefer English it is easier to learn and it is more important than French".

Student 9: "I like both, but, I consider that English is easier to learn. However, I think that French is more exciting than English".

Student 10: "I prefer French because it is more exigent and romantic".

Student 11: "I like both. I feel comfortable when I use these languages".

Student 12: "I prefer English because French is as complicated as Spanish, the grammatical structures are very difficult".

Student 13: "English, I have always loved it, it was my favorite subject in the high school".

Student 14: "English, you know, with this language we can go to any place in the world and any person can help you speaking English".

Student 15: "I like so much French but I had difficulties with this language, so, I prefer more English because you have a lot of opportunities, for example, in Equator you find many tourists and you can communicate with them. Also you can get a job in places like hotels or in touristic places as a guide".

Student 16: "At the beginning, I preferred French; I was motivated to study a new language different to English that is more known in our country. Later, I was more motivated for English because I had better results".

Here, it is very notorious that English is more preferred than French, for that reason, they are more interested in learning English, and they spend much more time in English for that reason. Their reasons is that English is a language that give people more opportunities to work, to travel, and to know

about others, it is also easier to learn. According to Scarcella and Oxford(1992 as cited in Oxford R,1996:33)a student prefers to learn a language than another one because his perception of the importance of the language is different; he thinks that it is more used, more interesting and there is more opportunities to work or to get money.

5. What is your opinion about French teachers?

Student 1: "I think that they have a good level of French, they are collaborative when a student asks them something, they are very prepared and some of them have a good accent".

Student 2: "We have good French teachers at the University of Nariño, but I consider that the French language is not taken into account as English because we have more time for studying English".

Student 3: "I think they are good teachers but they must be prepared in all aspects in French for example, in English we have a teacher who teaches Morphosintax and we don't find in French a teacher that teaches Morphosintaxis".

Student 4: "They are good but they have to study more, they have to be prepared to give a class related to pronunciation and the use of the book".

Student 5: "They are a little lazy; I also think that they don't have a lot of experience to teach French, they don't have a good pronunciation".

Student 6: "They are prepared, but I think that they have to be more engaged for teaching French and to spend more time in it".

Student 7: "I had teachers that spent little time to give a class, but, they know so much and are well prepared".

Student 8: "I think that they are very prepared but some of them are apathetic, but other ones motivated to us to learn".

Student 9: "I think that every teacher is well prepared, they know so much, they write and speak the language in an appropriate way, but I think the methodology is not well used for that reason it doesn't motivate to us to consider the subject important and interesting.

Student 10: "It depends on the teacher; some of them are more exigent than others".

Student 11: "The teachers base the teaching on memorization and it is not applied in real situations".

Student 12: "I consider that the French teachers are very prepared but they should take into account the communicative aspect".

Student 13: "They have received a great preparation, they know so much, however; I think that they don't apply new strategies, they are old fashioned, in relation to the teaching of languages".

Student 14: "Well, they are good teachers and I can't say something bad about them. They are good but I think they lack of methodology. They should be more patient because the acquisition of French is a little more complicated than English. The conjugation of tenses and the structures are more complicated".

Student 15: "Teachers teach French as a 'materia de relleno' and they don't pay attention to the grammar explanation, they teach what they want to us and don't worry about if we are learning or not, who learnt is okay, who not is okay too".

Student 16: "I think they use the same pedagogy that is used in English. It should be different because we already have knowledge about English but French is not still known".

Most of students said that French teachers are very well prepared and know a lot about the language but some of these students consider that teachers should use a more appropriate methodology for teaching it. About the behavior of teachers there were some negative observations but few comments like: They are lazy, not patient, not engaged with the subject, do not pay attention to students learning, spend little time in class, do not motivate to students, have old fashion teaching, bad pedagogy, use memorization so much, have bad pronunciation. To the contrary others said that they are collaborative, have good pronunciation and have a good level of French. It can be inferred that some of the reasons to have problems with French is that

students did not agree with something about French teachers although most of them have a good concept about them.

6. What are the most difficult aspects for you in learning French?

Student 1: I think that the pronunciation is the most difficult aspect because in French there are sounds that Spanish doesn't have. For example, it is very difficult for me the nasal sound".

Student 2: "I consider that he most difficult aspects are: the pronunciation because there are some strange sounds that we don't have in Spanish, and vocabulary because we have to use accents, stress and in English we don't have to use stress in any word".

Student 3: "Grammar, because it has a lot of structures so complicated, for example, in the past tense in the passive voice and details as apostrophes and finally the pronunciation is difficult too".

Student 4: "Maybe grammar, it is too complex".

Student 5: "Grammar and pronunciation but all depends on what students do".

Student 6: "I consider that grammar is complicated and also vocabulary because we don't have the opportunity of speaking with French speakers".

Student 7: "It's difficult for me pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, the last one because there are more tenses and conjugations of the verbs in French".

Student 8: "The conjugations of the verbs".

Student 9: "I think that the most difficult aspect is grammar, and also to write in French because there are many vocabulary. The pronunciation is difficult too".

Student 10: "To learn the conjugations of the verbs and grammar".

Student 11: "The most difficult aspect to learn is grammar".

Student 12: "It is difficult for me the phonetic and phonologic aspect. The pronunciation and vocabulary are difficult too".

Student 13: "The most difficult aspects are the conjugation of the verbs in the simple past tense and the pronunciation of some sounds like "R" and "N"".

Student 14: "As I told you, the grammar and the conjugation of the verbs, it is also necessary the "asesoria" from the teachers to the students".

Student 15: "I think grammar and pronunciation".

Student 16: "Firstable, grammar. To learn it is complicated when you are not adapted to the rules and if you aren't listening French. We know more about English because we are more connected

with this language in daily life. Another problem is the conjugation of the verbs; you have to memorize so much".

It is notorious that the most difficult aspects for all students are pronunciation, grammar, conjugation of the verbs and vocabulary. Few students said something about the writing part, but this aspect is also related. For them, it is difficult to pronounce some sounds that there are not is Spanish. The structures of grammar are complicated for them because of the learning of tenses. The vocabulary is difficult because of the use of several stresses, apostrophes and they have to memorize it and the conjugations of the verbs because it should be memorized too. It can be observed that students had several problems with the main aspects for leaning a language and for that they could not have succeed in the French course.

7. Have you had a bad relationship with any of your French teachers? Why?

Student 1: "No, I haven't".

Student 2: "No, my relationship with my teachers at the university is very good".

Student 3: "No, I haven't had any problem with any teacher and I hope never having it".

Student 4: "No, the most teachers that I had were well prepared, their behavior was good, and they have a good relationship with all the students".

Student 5: "No, I had never any bad relationship with a teacher of French".

Student 6: "No, The teachers are always ready to help us and to collaborate".

Student 7: "No, never".

Student 8: "No, I haven't had any problem with them.

Student 9: "My relationship with the French teachers has always been good and respectful".

Student 10: "No, with any teacher".

Student 11: "No, everything has been normal".

Student 12: "No, my relationship with them has been good I haven't had problems with them".

Student 13: "No, on the contrary, they are very collaborator; they have answered all my questions".

Student 14: "No, I think that I have had a good relationship with all the teachers, the problem is in the academic aspect".

Student 15: "No, but there has had any inconvenient because I think that the teachers prefer the feminine gender, because they have low grades but at the end of the course they pass".

Student 16: "No, but maybe the only problem is that the teacher doesn't motivate us in the process of teaching French".

The whole amount of students said they had not had problems with French teachers. They have a good concept about them and their behavior. Only one made a kind of complain. It can be

inferred that the personal relationship between teachers and students was not a factor to have problems with French.

8. Do you think the University counts with the necessary sources for a complete and good French learning? If not, what do you think the University needs to improve in the field of learning French?

Student 1: "Yes, because there are classrooms to watch videos and there are native speakers".

Student 2: "I consider that the teachers should be more prepared and the French labs should be taken into account; these should be graded as English labs".

Student 3: "It's necessary that they used different materials, not only the book but also flashcards, and others. The classes of French laboratory should be graded".

Student 4: "I consider that French lab must be taken into account until the last semester because the students don't have the opportunity to have French lab in the ninth and tenth semesters. They also have to use different methodologies not only to memorize dialogs and to change the book or use it adequately".

Student 5: "I think we need more native speakers for a better pronunciation, better books and more classes in the laboratory because it is important for improving the accents".

Student 6: "I think it is important to add materials, new books. The environment is very good. To work in Internet could improve French learning".

Student 7: "I consider that the book used is boring, it doesn't have variety to teach. It would be good that the dialogs from the book not to be for memorizing but to interact and increase them with spontaneous sentences".

Student 8: "I can't answer because I don't know about the whole resources that the University has".

Student 9: "The resource center is full of English material, the small material of French is not visible and it is not offered. English is considered more important than French. I don't like the book REFLET very much, I felt better with PANORAMA because the topics were more interesting and motivated. I think REFLETS is disorganized and confusing".

Student 10: "It's necessary more time for French laboratory; the teachers must bring more videos and songs to improve pronunciation and things like that".

Student 11: "The teachers are very good but, we need more books that explain clearly the grammar".

Student 12: "It would be interesting to take into account the communicative aspect, that is, to look for native speakers. The time for laboratory must be increased".

Student 13: "I think the University has very good resources, the problem is that the teachers don't use them in an appropriate way, for example, the laboratory is not used frequently and the topics from the books are explained in a bad way. It is necessary more hours to learn French".

Student 14: "English is primordial in the program, French classes are given only for completing the program, for that reason it is not possible to prepare a research paper in French".

Student 15: "It is necessary more laboratory classes, the material should be up date and to change these teachers for others who can teach better. We should have a 'practica' in French in ninth and tenth semesters in another country".

Student 16: "I think the problem is that the French teachers don't innovate in field of teaching, as the English teachers do. They use different books with current methodology. I think it's important to have more magazines and laboratory classes".

According to the answers given by the students, only one of them thinks that the University has all the necessary sources for a good learning, the other ones seem not to be comfortable with that sources, they ask to give more importance to French language, they need to put in to practice what they have learnt. They say that the use of the traditional methodology should be changed in order to make more interesting the classes. It could

have been a reason to lose interest for the material causes them
to fail a French course.

Studying Languages

St. = Students

	The only career I got access	To travel abroad	Pressure from family	Being a Language teacher	To know about other cultures	I like Languages
St.1					X	
St.2				X		
St.3				X		X
St.4		X		X	X	
St.5	X					X
St.6	X					
St.7						X
St.8						X
St.9		X				X
St.10						X
St.11.				X		X
St.12		X				
St.13				X		

St.14		X			
St.15	X				
St.16		X		X	
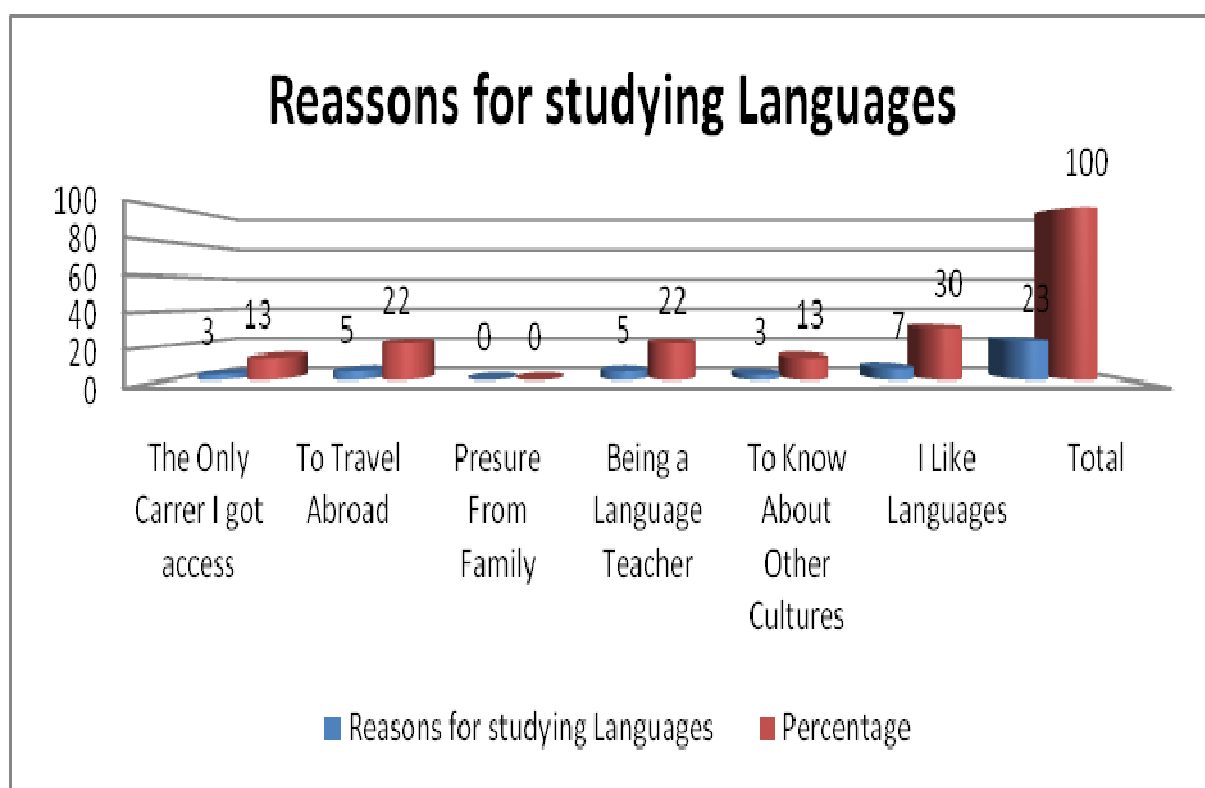
Students `Questionnaires Analysis

The purpose of these questionnaires is to observe the motivation of students for learning French. It was applied to people. The following analysis corresponds to the answers given by the students of English and French Program registered in the years 2003, 2004 and 2005 at the University of Nariño who have failed the French course in any semester.

Some categories regarding the questions have been created. Here are the answers given by the students.

St. = Students

	Very much	Much	Little	Not at all
1.Like for French classes	St.10	St.2 St.3 St.4 St.11 St.12 St.16 St.8	St.1 St. 5 St.6 St.7 St.13 St.14 St.15	

2. Necessary time spent to develop exercises, out of class work.		St.1	St.2	
		St.3	St.6	
		St.4	St.7	
		St.5	St.9	
		St.10	St.11	
		St.13	St.12	
		St.14	St.8	
		St.15		
		St.16		

1. Like for French classes

2. Necessary time spent to develop exercises, out of class work

Category	Necessary time spent to develop exercises, out of class work	Percentage
Very much		0,0
Much	9	56,3
Little	7	43,8
Not at all		0,0
Total	16	100

Legend: ■ Necessary time spent to develop exercises, out of class work ■ Percentage
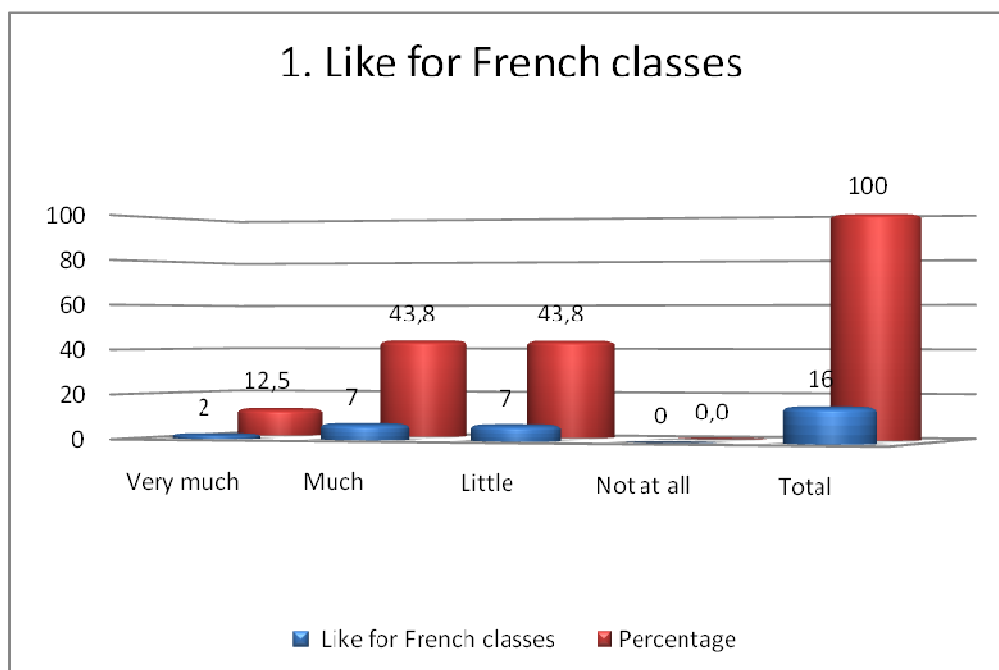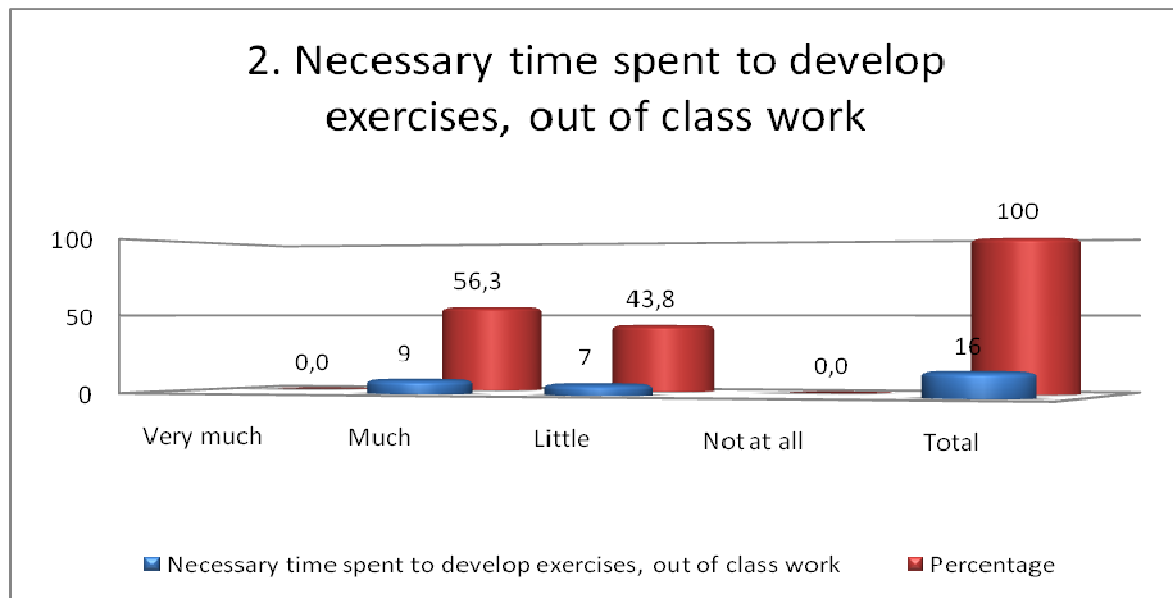
1. Most students like French classes a little and some of them like it much, only one student likes it very much. It could be a cause to fail French. They do not want teachers to use traditional methodologies because the classes become boring and they are more interested for English language. Wallace(1993 p.5) says that the teaching profession should have at least these characteristics: scientific knowledge, a period of rigorous and assessed instruction, the purpose of serving the community, high standards of professional conduct and show the ability to handle demanding and practical tasks in a competent way. The language teachers as professional persons are supposed to have a demanding and hard academic study for a long time. The idea is that this effort rewards them because of the difficulty of achieving it.

2. It shows that some students spend the necessary time to develop exercises, in and out of class work, but almost the same amount recognized that the time spent in it has been very little. It could be a factor of getting low grades and losing the interest to learn. According to Lightbown and Spada (1999), there are other characteristics such as self-esteem, empathy, dominance, talkativeness, and responsiveness. These features can partially affect the success in learning, taking into account that these characteristics are difficult to measure.

	Important	Challenging	Boring	Difficult
3.Learning of grammar structures	St.1 St.2 St.11 St.15	St.3 St.4 St.7	St.6	St.5 St.9 St.10 St.12 St.13 St.14 St.16 St.8

3. Learning of grammar structures
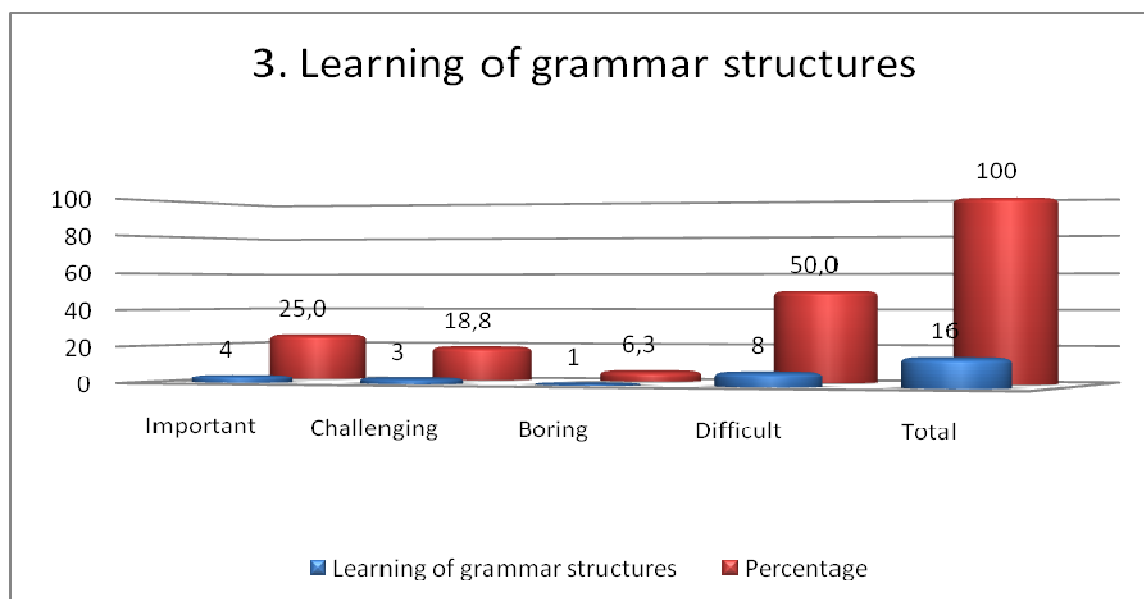
3. It is observed that most of students find it difficult to learn grammar structures, as they affirmed in the interview with their respective reasons. Another amount consider it important, others challenging and one student think it is boring. The opinion of the students shows that grammar is not easy for them but important. They give a special place to it. Grauberg (1997 P.38) says that some students could not assimilate easily a number of grammatical French patterns. For that, they have problems in a French course. There has been found that there are some problems at the moment of learning some features of French grammar. There are difficulties in the grammatical gender. Students find it complex to recognize the gender of nouns. For example: In Spanish it is said 'el carro' which is masculine. In French it is said 'la voiture' which is feminine (Grauberg, 1997

p.38). Students also have to learn the pronunciation and spelling of many adjectives in the appropriate way and select the correct determiners according to the gender of nouns. Therefore it is important to learn in a right way the gender of nouns in order not to have difficulties learning French.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
4.Feelings in using French at conversation	Hesitant	St.16	St.3 St.14 St.8	St.1 St.2 St.4 St.5 St.7 St.9 St.10 St.11 St.12 St.15	St.6 St.13
	Comfortable	St.6	St.3 St.5 St.7	St.1 St.2 St.4	

			St.9	St.10	
			St.12	St.11	
			St.13	St.15	
			St.14		
			St.16		
	Confident	St.6	St.1	St.3	
			St.2	St.4	
			St.7	St.5	
			St.9	St.13	
			St.8	St.14	
			St.10	St.15	
			St.11	St.16	
			St.12		
	Talkative	St.6	St.1	St.3	St.13
		St.7	St.2	St.4	
			St.9	St.5	
			St.8	St.11	
			St.10	St.14	

			St.12	St.15	
				St.16	
	Cooperative		St.4	St.1	St.13
			St.5	St.2	
			St.7	St.3	
			ST.10	St.6	
			St.14	St.9	
			St.16	St.8	
				St.11	
				St.12	
				St.15	

4. Feelings in using French at conversation
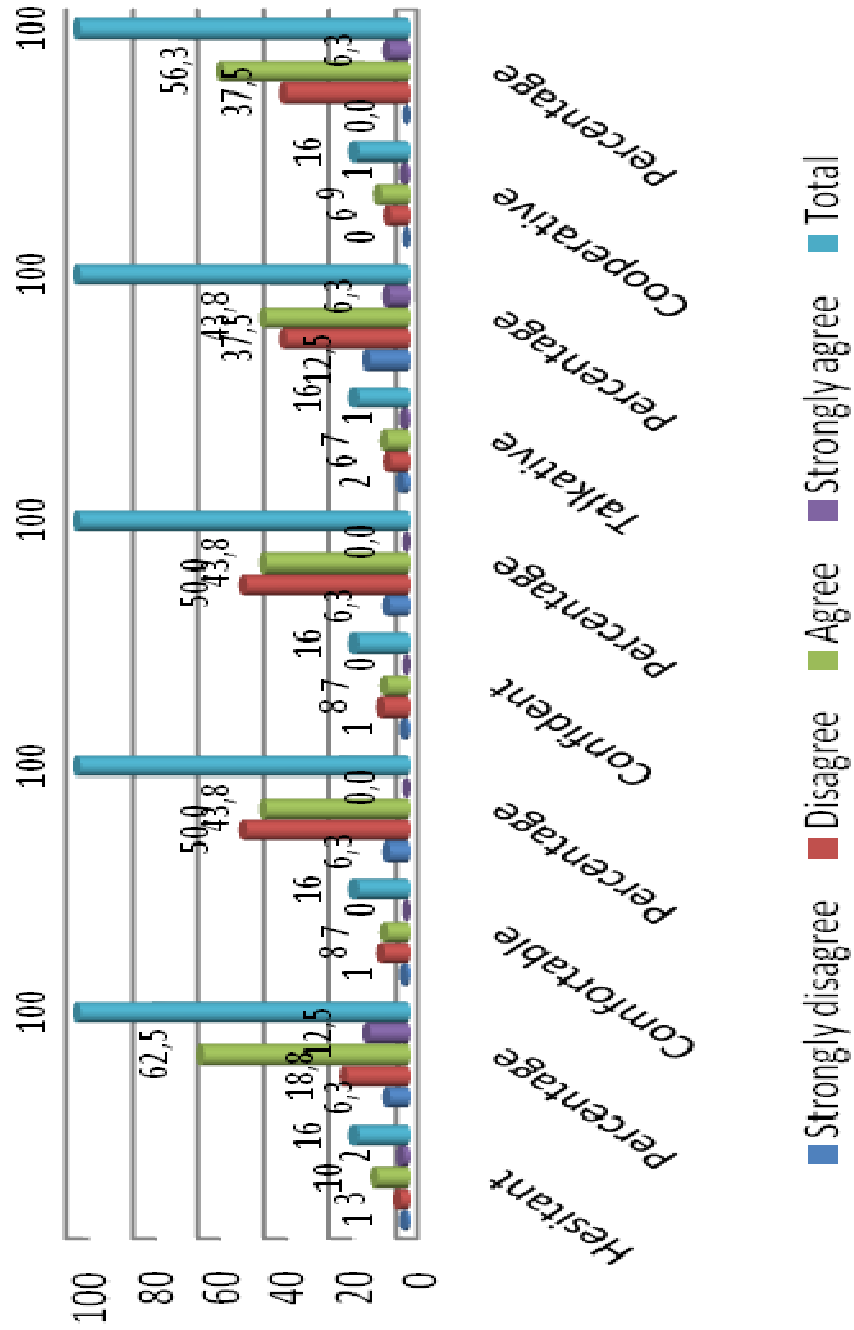
Here, most of the students feel hesitant in conversation, and few of them do not feel that. That means that they have problems in the communicative part and it represents a problem in the French subject. Most of them do not feel comfortable at the moment of speaking. It is possible due to the difficulties in the pronunciation part, and the use of the language is difficult for them in conversation using the communicative skills. Another amount of them feels comfortable maybe because they don't find it complicated so much. Most of student doesn't feel confident in conversation. It is possible that students lack of confidence for several problems that are present in language learning such as anxiety, self-esteem, self-confidence and lack of fluency and knowledge. Almost the same amount of students feels confidence in conversation. Maybe they feel like that because they have a good competence using communicative skills. Most of students feel talkative. It could be that they have a lot of things to say at the moment of conversation and they like to speak the language. It is a matter of personality students too. Others don't feel in talkative maybe because they don't have much to say and because of their personality too. Most of the students feel cooperative. That is that they like to work with their classmates and like to be collaborative in conversation. Another amount show that they don't feel cooperative maybe because of their personalities and

another reason they cannot cooperate because they have problems
using the language and they don't have the sufficient knowledge.

5. Learning other subject matters different from English and French		Good	Important	Boring	Unnecessary
	Phonology	St.1 St.2 St.6 St.9 St.15 St.16 St.8	St.3 St.4 St.5 St.7 St.10 St.11 St.12 St.13 St.14		
	Analisis del Discurso	St.1 St.6 St.15 St.16	St.3 St.7 St.10 St.11 St.12	St.13	St.1 St.2 St.5

			St.14		
	Linguistics	St.1	St.3	St.2	
		St.6	St.4	St.5	
		St.8	St.7	St.13	
		St.9	St.8		
		St.15	St.10		
		St.16	St.11		
			St.12		
			St.14		
	Psychology	St.1	St.2		
		St.5	St.3		
		St.6	St.4		
		St.9	St.7		
		St.15	St.10		
		St.16	ST.11		

			St.12		
			St.13		
			St.14		
	Language Pedagogy	St.1	St.2	St.5	St.13
		St.6	St.3		
		St.9	St.4		
		St.15	St.7		
		St.16	St.10		
			St.11		
			St.12		
			St.14		

5. Learning other subjects matters different from English and French
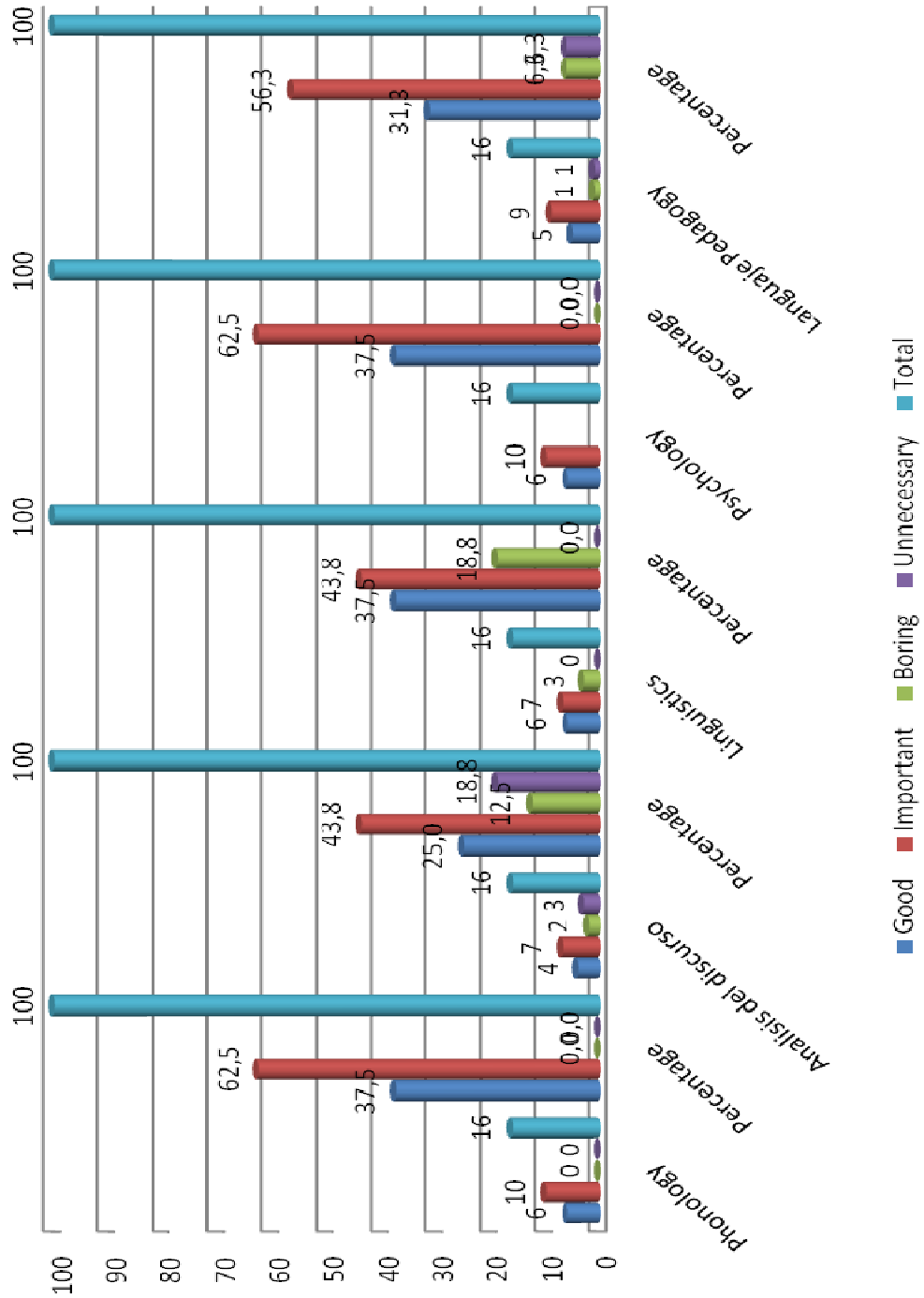
According to the answers given by the students it is found that most of them consider important to study these subjects. Others think that it is good. Very few learners see "Análisis del discurso" as unnecessary and "Linguistics" as boring.

6. Comment in a sentence or two what is the thing you don't like about learning the French language?

Student 1: "The grammatical structures"

Student 2: "The only thing I don't like when learning French is that classes are boring"

Student 3: "What I dislike about learning the French language is grammar because is a little complicated due to its diversity of tenses, besides we don't have real materials that really motivate us to learn it".

Student 4: "I do not like the boring way to teach French language, they must be more authentic".

Student 5: "Because of teachers. Because of the lack of knowledge and unusual methods for teaching".

Student 6: "The lack of commitment the teachers have for teaching this area, and the lack of hours for this are, we need more hours per week".

Student 7: "French is a language very complicated, it has more time tenses and the pronunciation is hard".

Student 9: "I don't like the difficulties that I have learning French structures of grammar".

Student 10: "Sometimes teachers are not so good teaching French and they just make students feel bored when learning French".

Student 11: "I don't like the presentations (talk and show) for me are better to talk in a real situation".

Student 12: "I think that French language respecting grammar and conjugations are difficult to learn".

Student 13: "Teachers don't see French as important as English, so they use all methods to teach it".

Student 14: "I don't like the way that teachers do it and the lack of patience and assistance by their side".

Student 15: "I think that we didn't have a good teacher for the subject and this is the consequence of having failed French".

Student 16: "I like French but pedagogy is incorrect, students need motivation in the classroom".

It is very clear that the students consider the French classes boring, and the part of the grammar is something hard to assimilate because of the explanations are difficult to understand for them and there is a lack of time in each class to make every theme understandable. They are not motivated to learn because of the methods used. The difficulty to pronounce some sounds makes the class pathetic for some students. They need to

carry out the process of learning-teaching of French similar to English one.

7. Describe your feelings when using the foreign language (French) in conversation with native speakers.

Student 1: "When I speak with native speakers I feel fear and sometimes shyness".

Student 2: "Talking to native speakers I feel very good but I think I lack confidence".

Student 3: "When using French at conversation with a native speaker, I feel confident at first, but then, my confidence begins to fall down because of the lack of fluency that we have not acquire. I think it happens because an English and French student must be submerged in both languages and by equal part, but that is what our University doesn't do".

Student 4: "I feel a little nervous for the lack of fluency".

Student 5: "Afraid of him or her who is a native speaker and scared".

Student 6: "I feel anxious; I am not comfortable with myself".

Student 7: "Well, when I talk with native speakers I feel bad, cause I don't know how to say some words and how pronounce them".

Student 9: "I feel exciting when I can keep a conversation with them and I feel bad when I can't explain something to them".

Student 10: "Sometimes I feel nervous because I think I have not a good French level and I do not know much grammar".

Student 11: "I feel really hesitant and it feedbacks our knowledge about the language with vocabulary and grammar too".

Student 12: "I feel good; I like to talk with native speakers because I can learn vocabulary and idiomatic expressions".

Students 13: "I don't feel secure because I don't know so much about French so; I think I am making mistakes".

Student 14: "That's good but there isn't the enough level to perform in a good way".

Student 15: "So, for example I feel so nervous and other days I feel sad".

Student 16: "Fear, because I feel that my knowledge in French is not enough".

Almost all the students answered that they feel nervous and afraid and that is very difficult for them to have a conversation with a native speaker generally because of the lack of fluency. Others do not know many grammatical structures. The possible cause for that could the little time spent to give French classes and the lack of motivational material at the moment to explain a French class. To inculcate in the students the feeling of

confidence and relax at the moment of speaking with a native speaker could be a good point to take into account. According to Ur, Penny (1996) many students have trouble with sounds, they think, they will perceive the second language sounds in the same way that perceive the mother tongue sounds. In speaking, some learners find it difficult to acquire the French language because they do not spend enough time in real communicative situations. They are inhibited because they are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply because they are shy. Sometimes, learners do not perform speaking skill because they have low participation, maybe because there is not enough time to do it or because there is nothing to say. Another important problem is that some learners are not exposed to the language expected to be learnt. The teacher uses the mother tongue into the classroom, that is, there is no use of the target language.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

Conclusions

After having done the analysis of the information collected for this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Motivational factor is a relevant element that influences the students to success in learning a language. For that, students need being motivated in order not to fail. It allows the student to acquire different topics in an easy and fast way. The students can not be motivated because they are not comfortable with the way of teaching that some French teachers use. They consider these classes are boring and monotonous. There is a lack of attractive material for motivating them. Their behavior and use of methodology can determine the way of learning.

It is possible to conclude that the students who failed French needed a special help to acquire this language because they do not have any bases as they did in English and they consider French more difficult to learn. As the students give more importance to English than French they spend more time for the English language because they see it more important because it is a language that they handle better, there are more opportunities to work and it is easier to learn for them. Different to English, considered more important than French they spend little time for this French language and they lose interest on it because they consider more difficult to learn.

Another important aspect found is that the most problematic aspects for students in learning French are grammar, vocabulary, conjugation of verbs, pronunciation and lack of fluency in the communicative part. When students face these difficulties in learning a language, they lose interest and motivation, so, they begin to have low grades, anxiety increases, they do not work in the right way and consequently, they do not overcome their own learning problems. The difficulties presented in these aspects represented the failing in French because the students could not overcome the unachieved goals. The result of this fact is the lack of interest in improving and working in their difficulties.

We could see that the preparation of the teacher is a very influent factor for the students learning the language. If they do not have enough knowledge, the students are influenced negatively in their learning, and the language acquisition is weak. When some students notice it, they feel unsatisfied and insecure about what they know.

One more aspect that is important to talk about is the sources and materials used to learn a language and the importance that is given to it is a relevant factor for students learning and very influent in their motivation and interest. It determines the future success or failing in students in learning a language. Today, there are very few materials in the resource Center. The grades of laboratory French classes were not taken into account.

Students consider not having the sufficient knowledge to perform in a right way with French, so, they ask to pay more attention to the methodology used, the materials, and the importance given to this language in order to have more knowledge.

Recommendations

According to the obtained results in this study, there are some relevant recommendations that could be useful for some related studies:

It is important to take into account the motivational factor when the teachers introduce the students in the learning of the French language. They should use strategies in order to create interest in the learners and also to make clear the most difficult aspects in this language such as grammar, vocabulary, conjugation of verbs and pronunciation.
A further recommendation is that when the students have problems in the learning process, they should look for help and assessory from the different kind of existent sources in the University such as: the native speakers who work here, internet, the teachers and some materials that can be found in the Resource Center. The student has to look for the way to implement and improve his/her knowledge.

Since it is important the material in the learning process, it is necessary to provide of update, relevant, interesting and

clear material to the students. Also it is important to take into account the students opinion about the used material because, for example, some of them ask to change the book for a better one.

Another important recommendation is to demand the French teachers to be update with the methodology and material through the different means, such as lectures given or offered by the University and other educational institutions.

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APPENDIX

Interviews

This interview had a purpose: to observe the motivation of students for learning French. The interviews were applied to students who have repeated some French courses.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE REPEATED THE FRENCH COURSE

1. Why did you decide to study Languages?

2. Did your family agree with you to follow the English-French career? Why?

3. Were you prepared to begin a career? Yes or not, why?

4. What do you prefer the most, English or French?

5. What is your opinion about French teachers?

6. What are the most difficult aspects for you in learning French?

7. Have you had a bad relationship with any of your French teachers? Why?

8. Do you think the university has the necessary sources for a complete and good French learning environment? If not, what do you think the university needs to improve in the field of learning languages?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE REPEATED THE FRENCH COURSE

This questionnaire has as a purpose to observe the motivation of students for learning French. The questionnaire will be applied to nine people that are repeating the French course.

Questionnaire

1. Do you like French classes?

Very much _____

Much   _____

Little   _____

Nothing   _____

2. Do you consider you spend the necessary time for the career when developing exercises, class work, out of class work?

Very much   _____

Much   _____

Little   _____

Not at all _____

3. Learning the grammar structures of French is:

 Important   _____

Challenging   _____

Boring   _____

Difficult   _____

4. In using French at conversation, I feel:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Hesitant	_____	_____	_____	_____
Comfortable	_____	_____	_____	_____
Confident	_____	_____	_____	_____
Talkative	_____	_____	_____	_____
Cooperative	_____	_____	_____	_____

5. To learn the other subject matters different from English
   and French (Psychology, Phonology, Análisis del Discurso,
   Linguistics, Language Pedagogy and so on) is:

Good   _____

Important   _____

Boring   _____

Unnecessary   _____

6. Comment in a sentence or two what is the thing you don't like about learning the French Language.

_____

_____

7. Describe your feelings when using the foreign language (French) in conversation with native speakers.

_____

_____