

Investigating students' motivations to learn French Foreign Language at the University of Namibia

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Abstract

This paper is based on a case study carried out to instigate the motivation in students studying French as a foreign language in a tertiary institution, in an Anglophone country. There is general consensus among applied linguists that all learning is stimulated by motivation. The type of motivation is a determining factor in a student's performance. This study presented a first of its kind in a Namibian context. Using Gardner's self-determination theory, the study sought to establish motivation patterns in students of French as a foreign language; to determine the attitudes of students towards the French language, culture and its speakers; and to determine students' objectives of learning French. Using Gardner's theory, the concurrent mixed methods approach, a questionnaire was administered to the participants. The study revealed that the French community enjoys a positive image among students. However, a lack of exposure to Francophone speakers outside the classroom was a demotivating factor.

Introduction

It is common knowledge that motivation impacts any learning process. Therefore, researches and educational practitioners are eager to determine the motivational process so that they can try to positively influence learners' achievements. This study aimed at investigating what were the students' motivations to choose registering in French Foreign Language (FFL) at the University of Namibia (UNAM) so that lecturers could reflect and adapt their teaching practice and content to students' needs and goals. Even though the study under discussion was involving a small scale research, it is expected that results could serve as a foundation to other sections of Foreign languages at UNAM.

Literature Review

The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1985) defines the term motivation as “The factors that determine a person’s desire to do something”. The Merriam-Webster dictionary enriches this definition by adding two other aspects: (1) the act or process of giving someone a reason for doing something; the act or process of motivating someone; and (2) the condition of being eager to act or work: the condition of being motivated.

Gardner (1985) affirmed that motivation together with attitudes “are important because they determine the extent to which individuals will actively involve themselves in learning the language.” (p. 56). According to him, “When a desire to achieve the goal and favourable attitudes toward the goal are linked with the effort or the drive, then we have a motivated organism.” (Gardner, 1985, p. 11). Crump (1995) defined motivation as “exciting the mind of the student to receive the instruction. Excitement, interest, and enthusiasm toward learning are the primary objectives in motivation.” (p. 3). Dornvei (1998) even stated that “Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement.” (p. 117). Gardner (1985) explained that “Effort alone does not signify motivation. The motivated individual expends effort toward the goal, but the individual expending effort is not necessarily motivated. Many attributes of the individual, such as compulsiveness, desire to please a teacher or a parent, a high need to achieve, might produce effort as would social pressures, such as a demanding teacher, impending examinations, or the promise of a new bicycle.” (p. 10). Gardner (1985) adds that:

Language courses are different from other curriculum topics. They require that the individual incorporate elements from another culture. As a consequence, reactions to the other culture become important considerations. Furthermore, because the material is not merely an extension of the students’ own cultural heritage, the dynamics of the classroom and the methodology assume greater importance than they do in other school topics. Such considerations place considerable emphasis on the concepts of attitude and motivation in the learning of the second languages. (p. 8).

He distinguishes two categories of motivations; instrumental orientation and integrative orientation. As explained by Dornyei (2001), “Integrative orientation is associated with a positive disposition toward the L2 group and a desire to interact with and even become a valued member of that group; and an instrumental orientation describes reasons for L2

learning related to the potential pragmatic gains, such as attaining an academic goal or getting a better job” (p. 49).

The second main stream in this research field is the self-determination theory developed by Deci and Ryan in 1985. The researchers based their analysis on Gardner’s theory and tried to improve his classification by defining two new types of motivations: the “intrinsic and extrinsic motivations”. The first one is related to the learner’s desire to learn because he/she thinks it is enjoyable or interesting and the latest because the learner targets a none-language goal. Of course, each individual will present a specific complex pattern mixing these motivations that can also evolve in time. Waninge, Dornyei and De Bot (2014) confirmed learners’ motivation variability by assessing his students’ degree of motivation over a period of two weeks at 5 minutes intervals. Results showed that learners’ motivation: “is susceptible to variation even on a rather short time scale: We have observed considerable ups and downs and shifts within the learners’ motivational state within a single classroom session of 45–50 minutes, even if the time frame of the study only spanned two weeks.” (p. 718).

These various definitions and their implications on language learning show that studies long agreed on the importance of individual motivations in the learning process but still differ on how to further define and classify motivational factors and how to assess them.

Shearin developed six variables based on various motivational theories and regrouped as follow (as cited by Al-Bustan & Al-Bustan, 2009):

- Attitudes (i.e. sentiments towards the target language).
- Beliefs about self (i.e. expectations about one’s attitudes to succeed, self-efficiency, and anxiety).
- Goals (perceived clarity and relevance of learning goals as reasons for learning).
- Involvement (i.e. extent to which the learner actively and consciously participates in the learning process).
- Environmental support (i.e. extent of teacher and peer support).
- Personnel attributes (i.e. aptitudes and language learning experience).

These variables have the advantages of equally focusing on psychological and educational language learning motivational factors. Shearing’s proposition is also reader friendly in its holistic thus detailed motivations classification. This data analysis structure that has been

selected for the current study. Nevertheless, Lumbu and Zannier slightly modified the sub-categories of Shearing's structure by firstly adding 'and community' in the category "Attitudes". This modification intended to use Gardner's motivation of dedicating a large part to factors linked to the attitudes towards a language community. Secondly, 'aptitudes' were removed in the category 'Personnel attributes' and replaced by 'the motivation evolution'. To investigate learners' aptitudes needs a feedback and an analysis on learners' individual achievements, but the framework of this study could not afford these delays. Finally, as the population studied was in 3rd year, the motivation evolution could be addressed.

Methods

Waninge, Dornyei and De Bot (2014) explained that "over the last decade, applied linguistics has seen an intriguing dynamic turn in research approach as an increasing number of scholars started to adopt aspects of a complex dynamic systems perspective on language development." (p. 706). Motivation dynamic system followed suit.

Data for the study leading to this paper were collected by means of a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was adopted from Gardner (1985). The study employed a concurrent mixed methods approach, combining the quantitative and qualitative approaches, to carry out a case study survey of all 16 students of the third year module on French as Business and Applied Language at the University of Namibia.

Data Analysis

1. Attitudes (i.e. sentiments towards the target community and the language).

Most studies pointed out that the learning context infers on the complexity of language learning motivations. At a macro level, the historical linguistic panorama of a country, the status of the target language and the community in the country, the status and valorisation of languages in the educational system can affect the interest in languages. At a micro level, variables can include individual language experiences, status and valorisation of languages at home, personal

language aptitudes and attitudes.

On its official website, the Consello Da Cultura Galega (an official independent organisation promoting Galicia culture) defines language attitudes as “opinions, ideas and prejudices that speakers have with respect to a language. For example, it is often said that in order to learn a language, it often helps to have a positive attitude towards that language”. (<http://consellodacultura.gal/arquivos/cdsg/loia/socio.php?idioma=2&id=5>) One can add to this definition that the language learners also have opinions on a language community that will affect his/her motivations towards learning.

Interest in foreign languages

According to Gardner (1985), “A measure like ‘interest in foreign language’ is more general for two reasons. First, the attitude object is ‘foreign languages’ which is a more general construct than only one language (i.e. French). Second, there is no particular activity associated with the languages.” (p. 40).

This part is, therefore, of general interest with regard to students’ perceptions of foreign languages. Results show that students’ attitudes towards foreign languages are very positive. A marked majority of students wished to speak and learn more languages (Figures 1 and 2) and considered them as very important subjects (Figures 3 and 4).



Figure 1: Question 1: I wish I could speak many foreign languages perfectly.

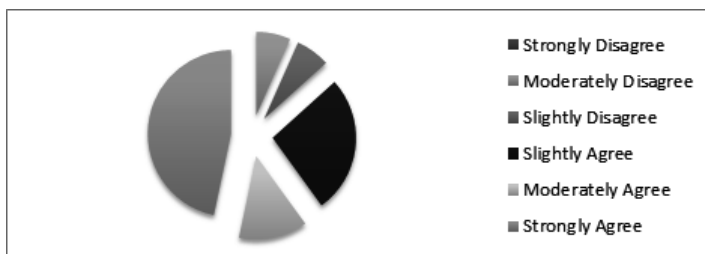


Figure 2: Question 37: I would really like to learn many foreign languages.



Figure 3: Question 48: It is not important for us to learn foreign languages.

The students' level of interest in foreign languages was equally very high (Figure 4), with 94 % of the studied population declaring that they enjoy learning foreign languages.

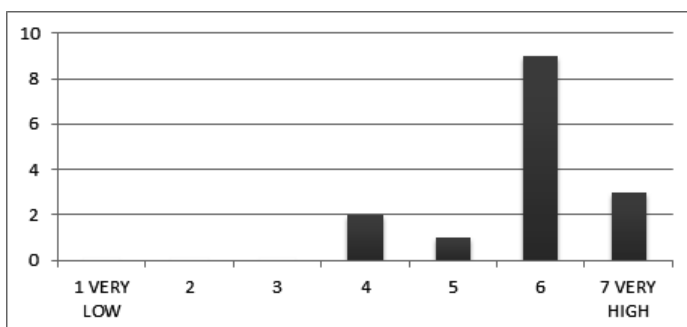


Figure 4: Question 3 Part 3: My interest in foreign languages is:

Questions 19, 73 and 80 targeted students' attitudes towards foreign languages outside the classroom. Figure 5 shows that students believed foreign languages gave them access to different media. Figure 6 illustrates that students preferred original video versions and most of them would select subtitles to dubbings. This result is interesting as it shows that students place the language at the centre of the interaction

even if their language level is insufficient to avoid translation. Figure 7 proves that students in their large majority enjoyed interacting thanks to foreign languages.

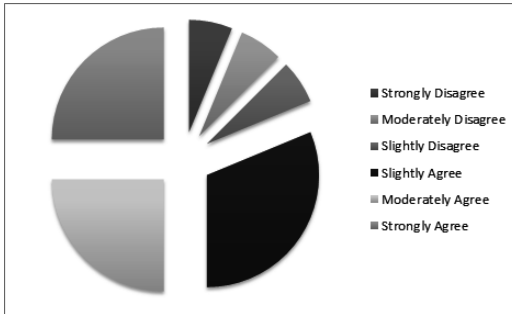


Figure 5: Question 19: I wish I could read newspapers and magazines in many foreign languages.

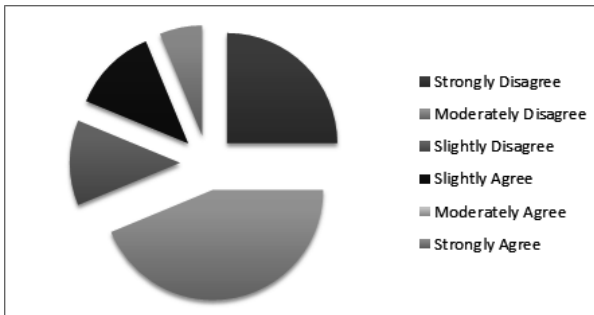


Figure 6: Question 80: I would rather see a TV program dubbed into our language than in its own language with subtitles.

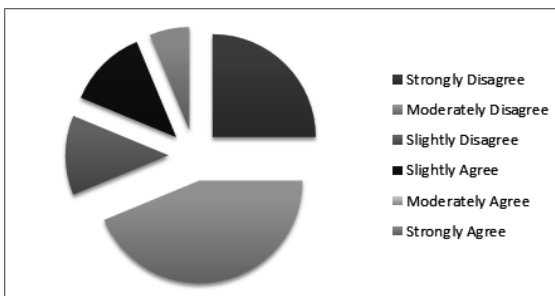


Figure 7: Question 73: I enjoy meeting people who speak foreign languages. 1 blank

Question 56 solicited students to operate a link between living in a community and the necessity to learn and know its language and culture.

Again, 94% either moderately or strongly agreed with the affirmation that one needs to know a language if planning to live in another country.

1.2 Attitudes toward the French speakers

Namibia and France, as nations, do not share any particular historical link. In the Namibian education system, the French language holds the status of foreign language and is taught from Grade 8 until tertiary level, since 1995. In 2016, the population of French natives in Namibia was estimated at around 286, spread across the country, with the majority located in Windhoek. African Francophone speakers (from Congo Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi) are predominantly residents of urban areas and of towns in the northern borders of Namibia. Contact with Francophone speakers is, therefore, obviously limited in Namibia.

The economic presence of France in Namibia is also very humble. There are very few French companies settled in Namibia – one of the most active in recent years being *Innosun* specialized in alternative energies. Most of the French businesses are found in tourism: tour operators, guesthouses... Professional perspectives within Namibia are then fairly restricted in many areas but have a great future in tourism. Within this context, it is interesting to study students' representations of French speakers and culture that are *a priori* not dominating and relatively visible in the country.

Questions 24, 43 and 85 presented personality traits associated with the French community. The first two provoked some division among learners. Their trust in native French speakers was not so high as 36 % disagreed that one could always trust native French speakers. However, 66 % answered that French speakers are 'so friendly' and 'easy to get along with' and 80 % asserted that they are 'very sociable and kind'. 93% conceded that the more they know French natives, the more they like them (Figure 8) and 94% wished to have more native speakers friends (Figure 9). Students' general feelings towards the French community are incontestably positive and optimistic. Questions 77 and 35 also underlined learners' lack of interaction with French speakers.

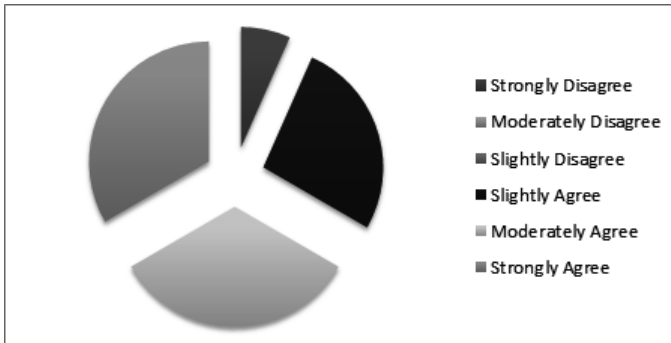


Figure 8: Question 77: The more I get to know native French speakers, the more I like them.

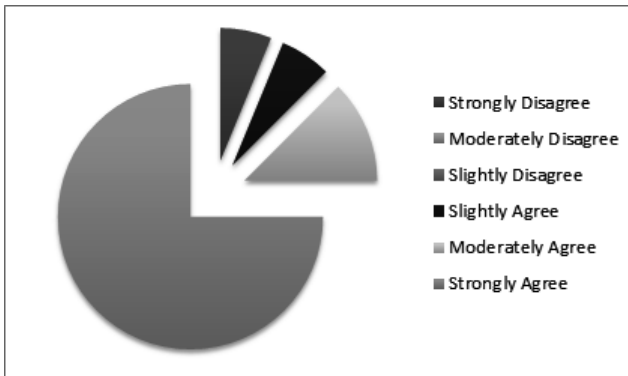


Figure 9: Question 35: I wish I could have many native French speaking friends.

Question 46 investigated learners' image of French culture as an influential international value reference. 75% recognized a certain French impact on the world. One can consider this question slightly too broad to be fully relevant.

In Part 3 of the questionnaire, students valued their attitudes towards French speaking people as:

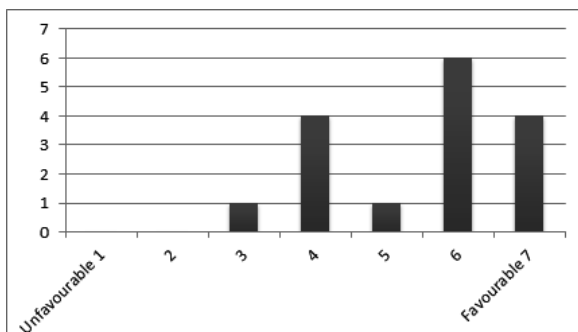


Figure 10: My attitude towards French speaking people is:

1.3 Attitudes toward learning French

As explained by Gardner (1985), “Attitudes toward learning French and attitudes toward the French course are obviously more relevant to learning French in the classroom than are attitudes towards French Canadians or interest in foreign languages.” (p. 41).

The questionnaire proposed to assess attitudes toward learning French by testing students’ feelings about the French language and the French course.

Some of the questions were crossed-conceived with opposite statements such as: *I think that learning French is dull / I really enjoy learning French.*

Question 16 was formulated in a quite provocative manner using the term ‘hate’ to qualify French language. Results were equally radical as a very small proportion of the group (19% of them) agreed with the statement (Figure 11).

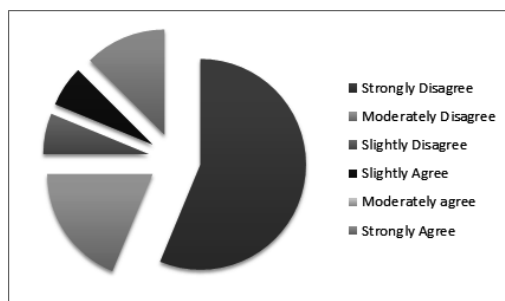


Figure 11: Question 16: I hate French.

No students thought that “learning French is dull” as seen on Figure 12.

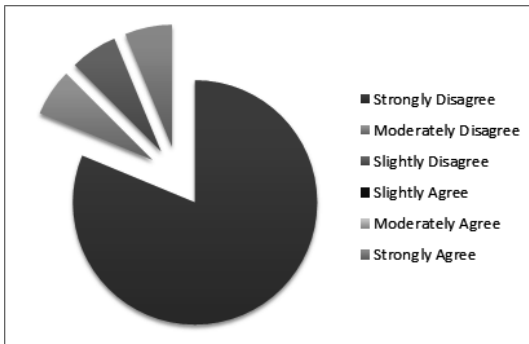


Figure 12: Question 72: I think that learning French is dull.

On the contrary, students rather expressed a desire and enjoyment learning French as illustrated in question 71 (Figure 13), question 7 (Figure 14) Part 2, and question 4 (Figure 15) Part 3.

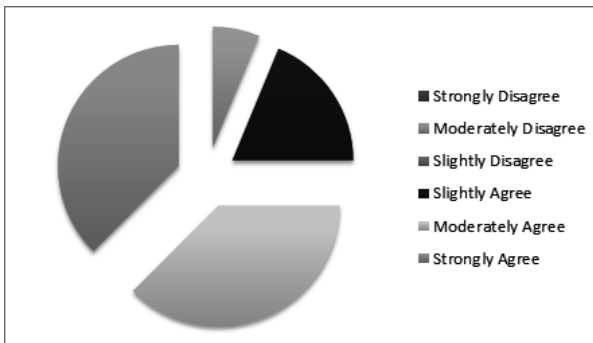


Figure 13: Question 7: I have a strong desire to know all aspects of French.

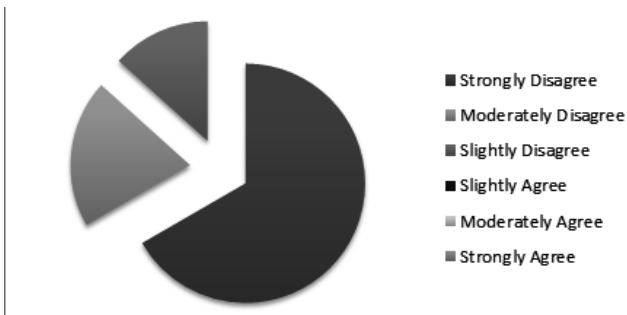


Figure 14: Question 71: To be honest, I really have no desire to learn French.

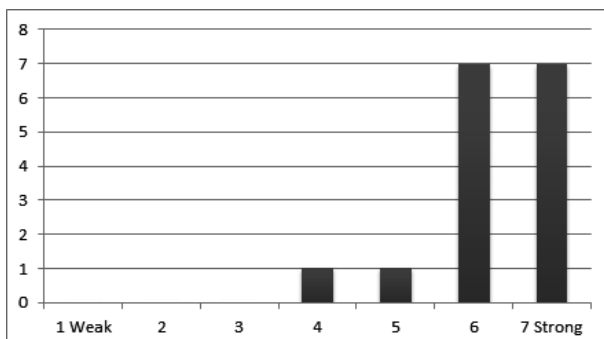


Figure 15: Question 23: I really enjoy learning French.

Nor students had a negative attitude towards their French classes as showed in questions 8, 64, 27, 55, 53 and 33. For the majority, French classes were attractive and a motivation to study more. In question 8, the quasi totality of the group stated that the French class was not a waste of time (94% complied with the statement).

Questions 26 and 33 directed students to think about the time spent to French learning. Students thought at 63% that they wished to spend much more time learning French. These results are confirmed by question 33: 75% affirmed that they wished they spent more time on French courses rather than other subjects.

Students appeared receptive to the importance of French as a subject in the university programme as shown in Figure 16. They considered French as a very important subject in the programme.

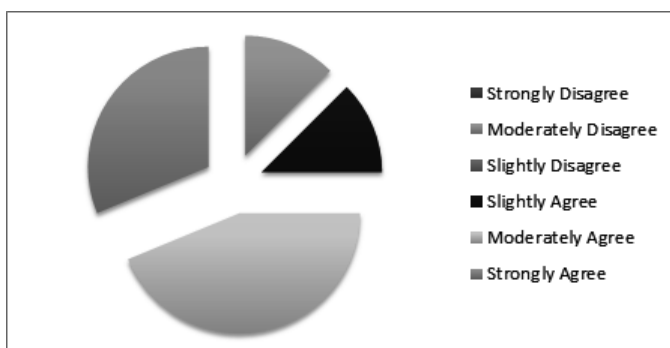


Figure 16: Question 41: French is a very important part of the university programme.

Students' sentiment towards the target language and community was fairly favourable. Results carry evidences of a positive image of the community and a strong will to interact with it. Students also expressed a quite huge motivation to learn and to improve. They had pre-set goals of proficiency.

2. Beliefs about self (i.e. expectations about one's attitudes to succeed, self-efficiency, and anxiety).

Brown explains that (cited by Al-Daihani, Al-Yaman & Almutairi, 2016):

Attitudes, like all aspects of the development of cognition, affect in human beings, develop early in childhood and are the result of parents' peers attitudes, contact with people who are different in any number of ways, and interacting affective factors in the human experience. These attitudes form a part of one's perception of self, of others and of the culture in which one is living. (p. 28).

Brown's last sentence shows the extent to which students' beliefs about them and others will impact their motivation.

Clement, Dornyei and Noels (1994) in their article on motivation, self-confidence and group cohesion confirmed that self-confidence and anxiety do influence learners' language learning process. They refer to Horwitz and Cope's work that demonstrated that "certain types of classroom activities may promote language anxiety, particularly those that expose the students to negative evaluations by the teacher or by peers." (1994, p. 423). They also pertain to Bailey's analysis on second language learners that "linked the type of rapport established with the teacher and other students to their experience of anxiety in the L2 classroom." (1994, p. 423). They conclude that: "It is therefore possible that anxiety and, by extension, self-confidence in the L2 classroom are intimately linked to classroom processes." (1994, p. 423).

Gardner (1985) also wrote that:

Considering all [these] studies, the conclusion seems warranted that a construct of anxiety which is not general but instead is specific to the language acquisition context is related to second language achievement. There does not appear to be much justification to conclude that in general anxious individuals are less successful than non-anxious ones in acquiring a second language, but rather that individuals who become anxious in the second language learning context will be less successful than those who do not. (p. 34).

2.1 Inside the classroom

Answers in this section were generally quite divided (Table 1). Students' estimated that they were "calm" when they needed to speak in French (75% of them) but 60% admitted "feeling nervous" and 75% "feeling anxious and not confident". This is correlated by question 70, where 75% answered that they don't feel very much at ease to speak French. It also embarrasses them to volunteer in the class to answer (87% of them) and 75% understand why students feel nervous about speaking French. But the others' judgment does not seem to really impact their speaking attitude towards French: only 44% are scared to be judge by their classmates. Even though a majority is worried to see others speaking better than they do. These general figures show how speaking French is a psychological challenge to students.

Question:	% of agreement	% of disagreement
3. I don't get anxious when I have to answer a question in my French class.	40%	60%
14. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in our French class.	60%	40%
21. I feel confident when asked to speak in my French class.	25%	75%
32. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in our French class.	87%	13%
39. I am calm whenever I have to speak in my French class.	75%	25%
52. It worries me that other students in my class seem to speak French better than I do.	75%	25%
58. I don't understand why other students feel nervous about speaking French in class.	25%	75%
70. I get nervous when I am speaking in my French class.	60%	40%
75. Students who claim they get nervous in French classes are just making excuses.	17%	83%
79. I feel anxious if someone asks me something in French.	75%	25%
82. I am sometimes anxious that the other students in class will laugh at me when I speak French.	44%	56%
17. I feel very much at ease when I have to speak French.	25%	75%
34. It doesn't bother me at all to speak French.	44%	56%

Table 1: Results on students' anxiety and self-confidence level when speaking French in the classroom.

Part 3, question 10 (Figure 17) also reflects students' uncertainty and lack of self-confidence in speaking in the French class.

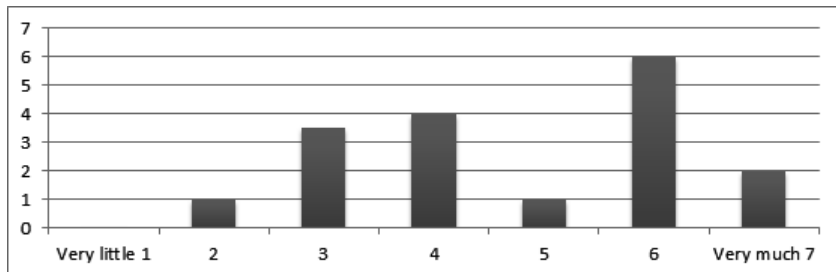


Figure 17: Question 10 Part 3: I worry about speaking in my French class:

2.2 Anxiety outside the class

In this study, researchers extended the anxiety assessment outside the classroom to test learners' self-confidence in using the language in a non-educational context. Students seemed not so nervous to speak outside the classroom in general (56% answered they would feel comfortable) and 75% did not feel worried to speak French anywhere. But once asked about specific situations, students were less confident: 75% of them underwent nervousness to speak to a tourist and 69% to give directions to a tourist. The telephonic task was less anxiolytic for them (50%) maybe because there is no face to face involved.

Question	% of agreement	% of disagreement
9. I would get nervous if I had to speak French to a tourist.	75%	25%
28. Speaking French anywhere makes me feel worried.	25%	75%
47. It would bother me if I had to speak French on the telephone.	50%	50%
54. I would feel quite relaxed if I had to give street directions in French.	31%	69%
65. I would feel uncomfortable speaking French anywhere outside the classroom.	44%	56%

Table 2: Results on students' level of anxiety to speak French outside the classroom

This section is about students' beliefs and anxiety, results are often inconsistent. In many crossed questions, students contradicted themselves (example with questions 14 and 21). Nevertheless, the main conclusions drive to a quite high degree of anxiety, nervousness once students need to speak French in or outside the class. The researchers believe that uneasiness and apprehension in speaking a foreign language (that is in addition modestly represented in the society) is highly expectable and that lecturers should adapt their teaching methods and extra curriculum activities accordingly.

3. Involvement (i.e. extent to which the learner actively and consciously participates in the learning process).

Students' attitudes towards their learning efforts are not necessarily reflected in their achievements but indeed a student will need a great share of talent to positively achieve without any learning inputs. This degree of learning input can be steered by language goals achievement. Questions 60, 7, 74 and 83 were assessing this aspect. Figures 18 and 19 showed that students had a great desire to learn French in all its aspects and as much as possible.



Figure 18: Question 60: I plan to learn as much French as possible.

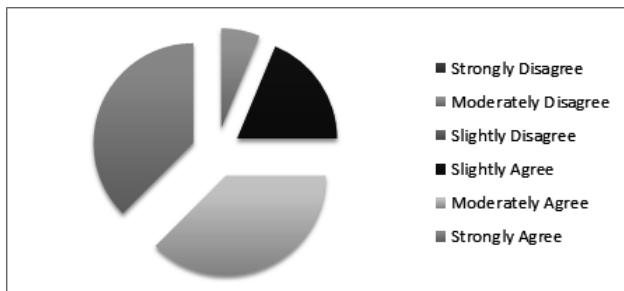


Figure 19: Question 7: I have a strong desire to know all aspects of French.

These figures are correlated by questions 74 and 83 where students scored at 75% their will of learning more complex aspects of French and 87% of them confirmed their wish to know more than the basics in French.

Students' general appetite for understanding French language is showed in Figure 20.

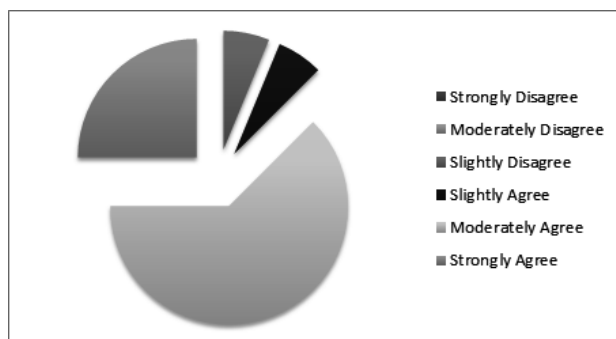


Figure 20: Question 11: I make a point of trying to understand all the French I see and hear.

These favourable conditions can be matched with students' work inputs. How do students understand their work inputs in the learning process?

62% believed that they paid attention to the learning feedback that they received in class. 93% declared checking their assignments. 62% said that they continued to pay attention even when they did not understand the lecturer's explanation. But 52% admitted that they do not regularly work on their French course by themselves. 80% stated that they did not 'put off' their French homework as much as possible and 81% believed that they were really working hard to learn French.

4. Goals (perceived clarity and relevance of learning goals as reasons for learning).

Referring to Gardner's theory, Al-Daihani Al-Yaman and Almutairi (2016) recall that the learners' attitudes towards attaining a goal, a reward, a job can be considered as an instrumental motivation that: "requires learning a language as a means for attaining instrumental goals, furthering a career, reading technical materials, translation and so forth" (p. 28).

In the present case, as Namibia is an Anglophone country with few professional perspectives, it is interesting to know what goals students want to achieve with French in or outside Namibia.

Table 3 summaries the instrumental reasons for students to learn French. Questions 51 and 13 stressed career opportunity. 94% believed that French language gives them access to a 'good job' whereas 87% attested needing it for their future career. Surprisingly, only half of this class was studying Tourism that could indeed require French language, others were in psychology which unlikely requires the use of French language unless it is practiced in a francophone country. Answers proved that students are aware that French can make them meet and communicate with more varied people (Question 25, 94% are convinced about the statement) and that of course it would allow them to converse with French speakers (88% agreed), to be more at ease with them (94% agreed) and would make them better understand their way of living (94% agreed). Knowing French was seen as an asset in education (88% believe that they will be more educated learning French). Nevertheless, speaking French was not associated to the fact of being 'more respected' by others (56% disagree with this statement).

Question	% of agreement	% of disagreement
51. Studying French is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.	94%	6%
13. Studying French is important because I will need it for my career.	87%	13%
15. Knowing French isn't really an important goal in my life.	25%	75%
44. Studying French is important because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate the French way of life.	94%	6%
25 Studying French is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.	94%	6%
6. Studying French is important because it will allow me to be more at ease with people who speak French.	94%	6%
62. Studying French is important because I will be able to interact more easily with speakers of French.	88%	12%
31. Studying French is important because it will make me more educated.	88%	12%
69. Studying French is important because other people will respect me more if I know French.	44%	56%
41. French is a very important part of the university programme.	88%	12%
84. When I leave university, I will give up the study of French because I am not interested in it.	25%	75%

Table 3: Results on students' goals to learn French.

Figure 21 completes students' goals towards practical purposes. Once again, students seemed highly motivated to use the French language.

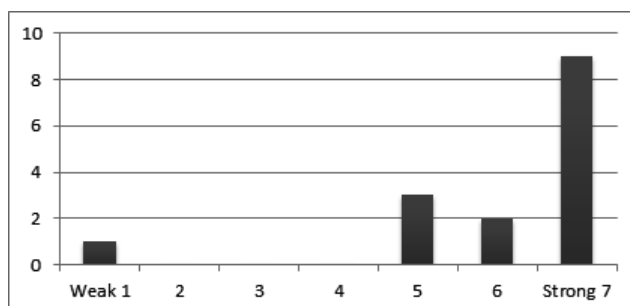


Figure 21: Question7: My motivation to learn French for practical purposes (e.g., to get a good job) is:

In this section, results disclosed that instrumental motivation, as defined by Gardner, is a strong impetus. The image of French language as an effective tool to get access to professional opportunity was emphasized in the students' outcomes.

5. Environmental support (i.e. extent of teacher and peer support).

5.1 Attitudes towards the lecturer

Feng and Chen (2009) highlighted the impact of teacher's behaviour on learning by stating that:

An enthusiastic and considerate teacher can offer satisfaction to the learner's extra needs. This helps strengthen the learner's study motivation. On the other hand, a teacher's attitude towards the learner has major influence on the learner's learning. As regards emotional cramming, a teacher's physically and mentally pouring into his teaching, and being filled with affection, will help arouse the learning enthusiasm of the learners. However, if the teacher only works as a 'teaching craftsman' and puts no emotion into teaching, the classroom will become static to lessen the learning enthusiasm of the learners. (p. 94).

Williams and Burden (1997) also believed that the teachers' personality could influence learners' personal feelings about their teachers or even about the language class as a whole. So much that students' perceptions of their lecturers and of the happening in the classroom

can affect their motivation to learn (p. 133). Finally, they insisted on the teacher’s teaching style’s impact on learners’ degree of motivation.

Part 3 of the questionnaire question 6 revealed, as illustrated in Figure 22 that students’ attitudes towards their lecturer was very favourable even though two persons blank answered to this question.

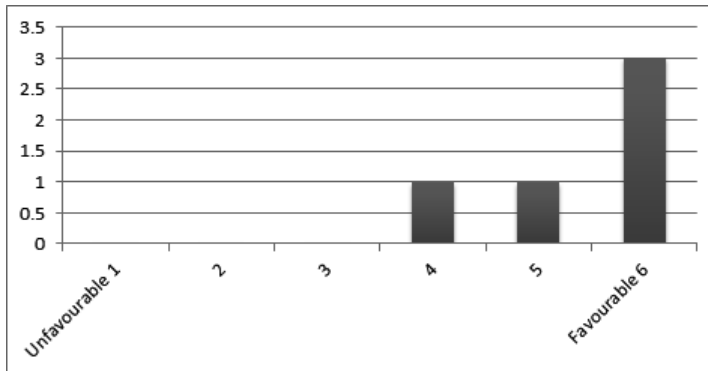


Figure 22: Part 3 Question 6: My attitude toward my French lecturer is:

Questions 4, 12, 22, 30, 50, 59 and 68 in the questionnaire Part 2 targeted the learners’ representations of their lecturer personality as a potential source of motivation. They all concluded that students were attracted by their lecturer personality and were considering him/her as a source of motivation (Figures 23 and 24).

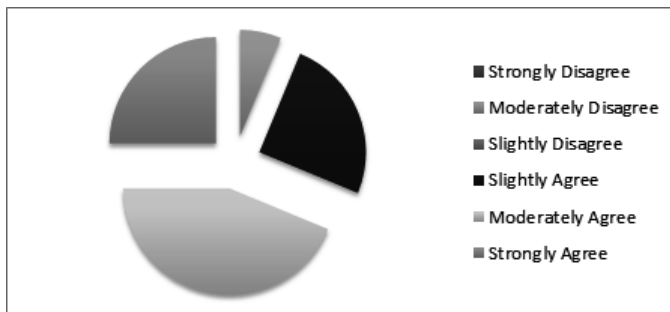


Figure 23: Question 4: I look forward to going to class because my French lecturer is so good.

94% agreed that their lecturer is a source of motivation to attend French classes. This was confirmed by question 12 “I don’t think my French lecturer is very good” which obtained 94% disagreement. Question 30 “The less I see my French lecturer, the better” scored a 100% disagreement minus one blank answer and concurred with question

68 “I would prefer to have a different French lecturer” (87% disagreed).

Students in question 50 confirmed that they enjoyed their relationship with their French lecturer. 87% refused the statement stipulating that their French lecturer was one of the least pleasant people they knew.



Figure 24: Question 50: My French lecturer is one of the least pleasant people I know.

Question 59 pushed the boundaries by asking students whether their French lecturer could be a source of inspiration for them. Figure 25 shows that 80% agreed with the statement.

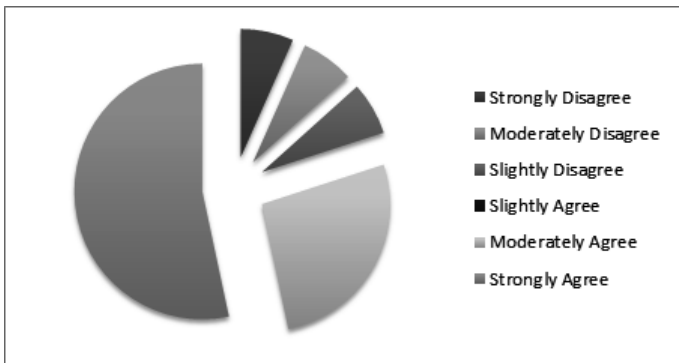


Figure 25: Question 59: My French lecturer is a great source of inspiration to me.

Finally, questions 20 and 49 were related to students' attitudes towards the lecturer's feedback. 94% rejected the statement that they did not bother checking their assignments and 81% consented that they felt free to ask their lecturer when they had a problem understanding something.

5.2 Material and teaching methods

Crookes and Schmidt (1991) recognized the impact of material on the learners' interest, curiosity and motivations. Kormos and Csizer (2008) share this opinion affirming that: "It is evident that teachers' materials and activities are instrumental in shaping attitudes to learning." (p. 350). Through questions 40 and 81, researchers investigated the students' satisfaction with their lecturer's teaching style and choice of materials. Figure 26 shows that students were very satisfied by their lecturer's teaching methods.

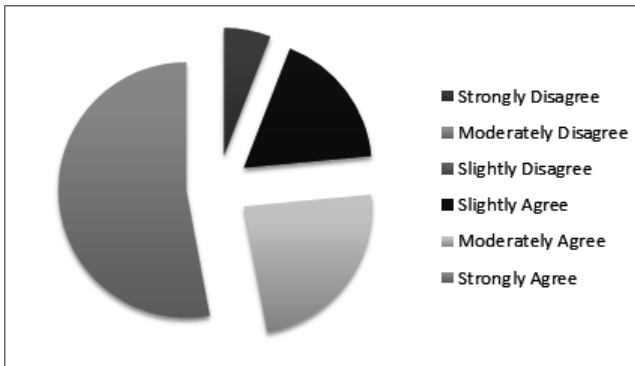


Figure 26: Question 40: My French lecturer has a dynamic and interesting teaching style.

And question 81 indicates that 80% of students found the way their lecturer was presenting very interesting.

The support environment has been assessed as very positive in the case studied. The personality of the lecturer was clearly beneficial and influential. So are the teaching methods and the material that were appreciated by students. However, the questionnaire did not test in details the peer support factor. Still, question 82 could suggest that students were shared on others' reaction to their performance, which could be interpreted as a negative indicator on peer judgment hence could jeopardize peer support (Table 4).

82. I am sometimes anxious that the other students in class will laugh at me when I speak French.	44%	56%
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Table 4: Question 82: I am sometimes anxious that the other students in class will laugh at me when I speak French.

Same interpretation could comply with question 52 that shows that 75% were worried by peer judgment on their language achievement (Table 5).

52 It worries me that other students in my class seem to speak French better than I do.	75%	25%
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Table 5: Question 52: It worries me that other students in my class seem to speak French better than I do.

6. Personnel attributes (language learning experiences and motivation evolution).

Language learning experiences will certainly influence the student's apprehension of the second language acquisition. It is likely that a bad experience will negatively affect the learner's motivation whereas a successful reflection on the learning of a previous language will encourage the students and boost his/her self-confidence. Students are then carrying their past language experiences as a background, a foundation. Of course, once again, this phenomenon will allow exceptions.

With regards to the motivation evolution, Waninge, Dornyei and De Bot (2014), referencing to Gardner, Dornyei and Chamber's studies, recall motivation has a tendency to decrease in extensive long-term engagement. Kruk's research (2016) concluded that "motivation changes not only during a single class but also one language classroom lesson to another over a period of several months."(p.14). The motivation factor over time is then to take into consideration.

In the first part of the questionnaire, students were asked to reflect on their motivations from their first year of learning French and after three years. Only half of the group declared that their motivations changed (Question 2.1, Part 1).

When asked to describe the factors that influenced this evolution, students rated at first place their lecturer's way of teaching (80%), and then their self-motivation (68%) followed by their career objectives (64%), followed by the family's encouragement (15%), the material used in class (36%), the practice of the language outside the class (40%), the lecturer's encouragement (46%) and the improvements in the language (46%). In this part of the questionnaire students could add comments about these factors of motivation. Two wrote that one former teacher demotivated him/her and the second comment blamed the lack of material to practice outside the classroom. On another hand,

one student declared: *"I am motivated because our current lecturer pushes us and tell us where we go wrong."* Students' comments also stressed the will of using French in the 'real world' after they complete their studies.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This small-scale research conducted at the University of Namibia among students' motivations in learning French as a Foreign Language concurred with many other studies in non-Francophone contexts. Attitudes towards foreign languages and French in particular are favourable. The French community equally confers the positive image of an attractive and friendly culture. Nevertheless, results also confirmed the lack of exposure and communication with Francophone speakers outside the classroom. In addition, French language is firmly seen as a springboard to greater career opportunities.

Students' inputs in the learning process have been also highly scored. The studied population believes that it puts great efforts in learning French. They have strong intrinsic motivational factors and achievement goals. They do not seem to consider learning French as a 'short' experience or attempt and they concretely imagine its usefulness in their future professional and practical life.

The internal teaching environment is also uplifting students' motivation to learn French. They see French as an important subject in the University of Namibia curriculum. They also appreciate the teaching methods implemented. According to the study results, it is incontestable that the lecturer plays a major part in influencing the students' motivations throughout the learning process. He/she has not only the ability to interest learners and also to sustain their interest through the years. For one student, one lecturer was also the reason for a huge drop in motivation in French learning. Therefore, these evidences are dual: in this case it is mainly an achievement in terms of lecturers' didactic skills but it remains a whistle-blower on the risk of the lecturer's vital impact on the learning process. As these 'teaching aspect' and 'class ambiance' are more controllable variables, they are worst having all the team intention.

For instance, students experiencing a lot of anxiety communicating in French to native speakers and to classmates could be minimized by teaching methods and activities: positive use of the mistake, relativity on language 'native speakers' level objective, game-like activities... In that perspective, providing more refined teaching techniques and extra

curriculum activities will still improve that aspect.

At this stage of the research, students' motivations were not analyzed on a cause-effect basis. Researchers were under the opinion that studies did yet reached definitive conclusions about defining learning motivational factors and their impact on language achievements. Surely, investigating this relation could be a second valuable persuasive step which would give sound to its results.

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