

Motivation: A Determining Factor for Successful Language Learning

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Resumen: Esta investigación revela que la motivación tiene un papel muy primordial en el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua. Por una parte, si los estudiantes están motivados, el aprendizaje se facilita y se promueve. Por el contrario, si la motivación es baja, el aprendizaje se impide y el proceso enseñanza-aprendizaje no alcanza las metas establecidas en un currículo específico. Por lo tanto, es el deber de los profesores el identificar los problemas que afectan a los estudiantes, analizarlos, y proveer soluciones para mejorar el proceso de aprendizaje. Por consiguiente, un estudio etnográfico se llevó a cabo en la carrera de turismo impartida en la Universidad Nacional Sede Regional Brunca para aclarar el tema de motivación en dicha carrera. Esta investigación se realizó con un grupo de la carrera de *Gestión Empresarial del Turismo Sostenible*. Dichos estudiantes estaban recibiendo el segundo de cuatro cursos de inglés que incorporan las cuatro habilidades básicas llamado Inglés Integrado II. Por ende, esta ponencia reporta los resultados de dicha etnografía. Los resultados muestran que el tipo de evaluación utilizada por los profesores, los cambios hechos a la maya curricular, la metodología empleada por profesores previos al curso, y la falta de instrucción de estrategias de aprendizaje que los estudiantes pueden emplear para mejorar el aprendizaje tienen un impacto notorio en la habilidad comunicativa que los estudiantes de esta lengua extranjera podrían alcanzar. Para llegar a estas conclusiones, los investigadores utilizaron múltiples instrumentos de recolección de datos. Éstos incluyeron: observación no-participativa, observación participativa, entrevista no estructurada, foto etnografía, y recolección de artefactos relacionados al proceso enseñanza-aprendizaje. Ellos permitieron que los investigadores realizaran una interpretación confiable de la situación específica de esta población.

Palabras clave: Motivación, estrategias de aprendizaje, currículo, evaluación continua, enseñanza

Abstract: This investigation reveals that motivation is a key factor in learning a foreign language. On the one hand, if learners are motivated, learning is eased and promoted. On the other hand, if motivation is low, learning is prevented and the teaching-learning process does not attain the goals proposed in the specific curriculum. Therefore, it is the task of teachers to identify problems that affect students, analyze them, and come out with solutions to improve the learning process. As a result, an ethnographic study was carried out in the Tourism major at Universidad Nacional Brunca Campus to shed light on motivational issues. This investigation was conducted with one group of *Gestión Empresarial del Turismo Sostenible*. These learners were taking the second of four English courses that incorporate the four skills, which is called Integrated English II. Consequently, this lecture reports on the results of this ethnography. These results show that the type of assessment by professors, the changes made to the curriculum, the methodology employed by previous teachers, and the lack of instruction on learning strategies that students can use to improve learning have a notorious impact on the communicative ability of these foreign language learners reach. To come to these conclusions, the researchers made use of multiple data-collection instruments. Among them were non-participant observation, participant observation, an unstructured interview, photo ethnography, and collection of artifacts. They allowed the researchers to have a reliable interpretation of the learning situation of this specific population.

Keywords: Motivation, learning strategies, curriculum, assessment and evaluation, instruction

I Introduction

The ethnographic research in the classroom has the purpose of helping the teacher and the academic institution to observe if there is any phenomenon going on with a determined group of students that may show particular behaviors. In fact, every group has a culture and it is interesting to find out, through observation, that certain patterns of behavior are repeated most of the times. The first thought that the ethnographers who carried out this project had about the phenomena that could possibly be observed was the use of learning strategies that students of Tourism from Universidad Nacional in the region of Pérez Zeledón employed to learn a second language. But in the course of the observations, more behaviors emerged and they are explained in the following chapters of this ethnography. Moreover, the purpose of any investigation is to determine the weaknesses or strengths of the programs, literature employed, and classroom conditions, among others. The institution or the teacher should work on the solutions or improvements of the problems (if any) that can arise during an ethnographic study.

The two ethnographers who carried out the project decided to observe a group of students that were enrolled in the Tourism major at Universidad Nacional, Sede regional

Brunca during a semester. This group was composed of twelve boys and nine girls with ages ranging from 18 to 23 years. Most of them came from San Isidro de El General and surroundings (13 students) and the rest come from San Vito and Osa (8 students), two counties that belong to the province of Puntarenas, Costa Rica. These learners were taking the second of four English courses that incorporate the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). These courses were based on the books that are part of the *Interactions* series from the McGraw Hill Company.

The students' proficiency levels were varied. Some learners had a good command of basic grammar while others had notorious flaws in grammar and pronunciation. The students used basic vocabulary and had some trouble using some basic structures, such as the simple present and the simple future tense. In their course they took before the one where the ethnography was conducted, they used the *Interchange* textbook by Jack Richards, but they manifested that they received little instruction in skills other than speaking.

Both ethnographers used observations in the first phase of the investigation. At the beginning, it was non-participant observation. Later on, as the ethnographers and participants were getting to know each other better, there were some useful interactions that allowed the ethnographers to gather valuable data. Three more data collection instruments were used, first, a single interview. Another instrument used during the first phase of the research was photo ethnography. This strategy was simple, but it could show interesting aspects of the people in class if pictures are well selected for the purposes of the investigation.

In addition, for data collection purposes the ethnographers used another method called participant observation; this technique consisted of becoming involved in some activities inside the classroom or engaging in some conversations with students in order to obtain useful information about the learners and how they behave in their natural environment. Also, it served as a way to approach students and ask questions in a way that they did not feel interviewed, and that was the manner to collect complete and reliable information from pupils.

Some artifacts collected by the ethnographers were also used to gather more information about students' performance and their curriculum. Using these instruments allowed the observers to determine that some patterns were repeated almost in every class in addition to gathering other aspects that could not be proven just by talking or by observing.

The second phase of the ethnography consisted of extracting the constructs in order to define each one and categorize them. After that, the ethnographers made some judgments' about the behaviors that they thought were most important. This ethnographic project may be useful for authorities of Universidad Nacional in the area of tourism for them to carry out a needs assessment before implementing changes in the major's curriculum. These authorities should consider the points of view of the students to establish major modifications to their curriculum since there was discomfort that they showed several times when the ethnography was in its first phase.

Besides, this project had a lot to do with the second language field in the way that it helped the teacher to see if students were aware of the use of language learning strategies and how frequently learners employed them in order to be successful language learners. Also, it helped to analyze the factors that affected their performance and proficiency in the learning of the target language.

II Literature Review

The learning process of a second language is composed of a series of stages that lead the learner to the mastery of that target language. For this process to be successful, many aspects must be considered in addition to the learner and the context where the learning is taking place. The first aspect that can be mentioned is the design of the curriculum. This involves ways of organizing and planning language teaching and learning. This organization and plan, according to Brown (1995), must be based upon a careful “gathering of information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the learning needs of a particular group of students” (p. 35). He went on to say that “once identified, needs can be stated in terms of goals and objectives which, in turn, can serve as the basis for developing tests, material, teaching activities and evaluation strategies...” (p. 35). When referring to students’ needs, Jere Brophy (2001) provided a synthesis of research on motivating students to learn. There are five levels that provide a model in order to satisfy student’s needs. First, there must be essential preconditions, which are basically to give learners the appropriate supportive settings. Motivating them by maintaining success expectations is the second. This aspect has a lot to do with instructing students on how to set goals and pursue them. Third, motivating by capitalizing on students’ intrinsic motivation, in essence, is to adapt tasks to the learners’ interest in a novelty way. Brophy included the premise where instructors can and should stimulate motivation to learn. The last aspect seeks to involve the students into thinking and problem-solving tasks, to project enthusiasm, model interest in learning and motivation to learn (as cited in Jones, p. 191).

After the needs have been carried out, curriculum developers must organize and arrange the needs according to priorities taking into account the characteristics of the learners, the circumstances in which the educational institution operates, and the setting where the language- learning and teaching process is to be conducted. In this way, the needs of the learner can be fulfilled because of the process that was followed to develop the curriculum.

The second aspect has to do with the use of resources. Resources must be carefully evaluated to have a clear notion of the equipment, infrastructure and academic personnel that can be used to develop the curriculum. There is no point in implementing a perfect syllabus without the physical and human material necessary to develop it. Thus, the syllabus and the resources available must go hand in hand to assure that the learning and teaching process can be fruitful. Brown (1995), in his book *The Elements of Language Curriculum*, stated:

Curriculum development is a series of activities that contribute to the growth of consensus among the staff, faculty, administration, and students. This series of curriculum activities will provide a framework that helps teachers to accomplish whatever combination of teaching activities is most suitable in their professional judgment for a given situation, that is, a framework that helps the students to learn as efficiently and effectively as possible in the given situation. In a sense, the curriculum design process could be viewed as being made up of the people and the paper-moving operations that make the doing of teaching and learning possible. (p. 19)

This clearly indicates who the participants in the construction of the curriculum are. Thus, the learners opinions and needs must be considered when making decisions about the curricular design they will be part of. If they are not taken into account, the curriculum itself may not be in the student's best interests, and this may cause a demotivating effect on them.

Another important factor is the mastery of the target language by the instructors in charge of putting the syllabus to use. In addition to a well-designed curriculum and accessible resources, the instructors who are going to implement it must be knowledgeable and able to make the target language learning and teaching process easier for students. They must help the learners to acquire the language by carrying out activities that promote the use of the language for real purposes. They should also teach their pupils learning strategies that can help them overcome difficulties they may face while they are approaching the target language. This will help the students attain the goals and objectives that were set in the syllabus and really communicate using the target language with accuracy and appropriateness to the contexts. With the help of their instructor, students will be able to reach higher proficiency levels in the target language and culture.

In order to promote high proficiency levels, the facilitator must put dynamic activities into practice. He or she has to develop activities that allow for the internalization of the language so as to make its use automatic. In this regard, Krashen stated that "the language which learners are exposed to should be just far enough beyond their current competence" (as cited in Brown, 1995, p. 280). This means that the teacher should provide learners with opportunities to be exposed to the language not just in controlled ways. In addition, the facilitator should use authentic texts to promote the acquisition of vocabulary. Then, they must encourage participation in communicative activities that demand that they use what they are learning. The teacher should promote a non-threatening environment so that students can actually feel at ease to perform the activities proposed.

In addition to the mastery of the language and the implementation of dynamic activities, teachers must evaluate using different instruments and techniques to promote more valid and reliable estimates of their students' proficiency levels. Not only must they use tests, but they should try to have different types of assessment to reach the nearest approximation of students' true ability. They can do this by developing peer assessment and self-assessment of learner's participation and use of the language in the tasks and

activities that are developed in the classroom to ease the automatization of the language learned.

However, the most important factor in the learning of a foreign language is motivation. This term is not easily defined. Instead, the focus is on specific factors that work together to create motivation. Ellis (1994), in an overview of research and motivation, simply asserted that motivation affects the extent to which language learners persevere in learning, what kinds of behavior they exert, and their actual achievement (p. 479). Nonetheless, other authors like Gardner, proposed that theory specify four aspects of motivation. Gardner (1985) was one of the pioneering researchers in second language acquisition to focus on motivation. He chose to define motivation by specifying four aspects of it: 1. A goal 2. Effortful behavior to reach the goal, 3. A desire to attain the goal, 4. Positive attitudes toward the goal (p. 50)

A goal, however, was not necessarily a measurable component of motivation. Instead, a goal was a stimulus that gave rise to motivation. Gardner (1985) focused on classifying reasons for second language study, which he then identified as orientations. He found two main orientations through his research: 1. integrative: a favorable attitude toward the target language community; possibly a wish to integrate and adapt to a new target culture through use of the language. 2. Instrumental: a more functional reason for learning the target language, such as job promotion, or a language requirement (p. 54).

Gardner (1985) specifically delineated the difference between these orientations and actual motivation. Motivation “refers to a complex of three characteristics which may or may not be related to any particular orientation. These characteristics are attitudes toward learning the language, desire to learn the language, and motivational intensity” (p. 54). For example, an integrative orientation was a class of reasons suggesting why a person might undertake language study, including a desire to integrate with a target language community. By itself, this simply reflected a goal which might or might not lack motivational power. On the other hand, an integrative *motive* included this orientation, plus the motivation, which included desire, motivational intensity, and a number of other attitudes involving the target language community. (p. 54)

Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model of motivation focused on the integrative motive. Motivation was the central concept of the model, but there were also some factors which affected this, such as integrativeness and attitudes. These were other factors that influenced individual differences and were seen as complex variables (p. 50).

From this historical review, it can be seen that motivation, even without a single integrated definition, is directly related to the success that a learner reaches in the process of learning a second language. As Ellis (1994) put it, “their affective states tend to be volatile, affecting not only overall progress but responses to particular learning activities on a day-by-day and even moment by moment basis” (p. 483). For this reason, we cannot afford to restrict ourselves to a small set of motivational variables, especially when we know from research in other fields that motivation is extraordinarily complex and multi-faceted. Therefore, it is necessary to do more research to explore the nature of a foreign language setting, language learning, and instruction, how that affects motivation in

learners and to include the possibility of a wide range of motivational factors that influence the language experience.

One specific area in which motivational factors can be appreciated at work is in the use of different learning strategies because the degree of motivation is of great influence on how and when students employ language learning strategies. Learning strategies are “behaviors or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable” (as cited in Ellis, 1994, p. 531).

Learners at all levels use strategies, but sometimes they may not be aware they are using them. Successful language learners do not necessarily use more strategies; instead, they use different combinations of strategies. Many different categories of learning strategies have been documented. Oxford (1990) created a taxonomy of different strategies which are divided into two main, equally important categories. The first one, direct strategies, simply involves direct use of language. Under this heading are three areas: strategies dealing with memory, the entering and retrieving of information; cognition, the manipulation of language for reception and production; and compensation, the overcoming of limitations in existing knowledge. The second main category is indirect strategies, which support language learning, but do not directly involve using the language. Under this heading are three areas: strategies dealing with metacognition, the organization and evaluation of learning; affective strategies, the management of emotions and attitudes; and social strategies, the learning of a language with the help of others (pp. 38-136).

In a Foreign language setting, then, more research is needed to observe the wide range of factors that motivate and influence students to persevere in their efforts. This ethnographic study was intended to find relationships between motivation and students' success in foreign language learning and determine the effect of their motivation in their proficiency in the second language.

III Findings

This ethnographic project was designed to explore if there was any phenomenon going on with the group under study by observing the patterns that they could show and describing these students' behaviors in the classroom and/or during breaks.

The first patterns that emerged were associated with the discomfort with their previous English course in which these learners scored nineties, but they soon noticed, in the course where the research was conducted, that their proficiency in English was very low.

Pupils expressed they had never engaged in activities in which the focus was listening, reading, and writing. What they did most of the time was to role-play given situations. Moreover, they had the chance to prepare a simple role-play in one or two weeks. Every time students went to this class, the professor introduced the topic by using power point presentations, which for them was really repetitive and boring. There were no challenges for the students to develop their English language skills.

In the course where the research was conducted, however, pupils felt there was a linguistic gap between what they really knew and what they were supposed to know at

the beginning of the second course. For this reason, the new professor had to review some of the topics that were supposed to be covered in the previous course. He also scheduled some recovery classes but just few students attended to those lessons. This aspect was the indicator of students' low motivation toward learning English and led to possible behavior such as arriving late to class, or not doing assignments.

Another finding that had an important impact on students' motivation was the fact that the major's curriculum was subject to several changes. One of the major concerns these learners had was that if they failed an English course, they would have to start over again because administrators eliminated some English courses from the learner's curricular program that they had already taken. This meant they took a course called Ingles para Turismo I and II, but the next year they would be called Ingles Integrado I and II, and these courses would not be equivalent with the two former courses. This fact raised the students' affective filter.

Another demotivating factor was that the grades these learners' were obtaining in the second English course were really low in comparison to the ones they obtained in the previous classes. The grades they were obtaining in the course were the research was conducted ranged from forties to seventies. These pupils were worried about their success in the course. The strange thing was that these students wanted to pass the course, but they did not certainly make so much effort to overcome their linguistic problems.

In one class that was observed, there were very few students and they were really tired and did not want to do any of the exercises or read the texts from the book they were supposed to read. Some students were yawning and even a girl commented that she wanted to do something different like singing or dancing instead of reading. Actually, that day students did not cover much material. At the end of the session, the ethnographer asked one student what was going on. This student explained that they were behaving that way because they had to comply with a lot of assignments in the other courses they were also taking.

A noticeable demotivating factor described in many observations was the fact that these students had an assigned classroom since the very beginning of the course but the planning for the distributions of classroom in this university was terrible and inconsistent. There were times that this group arrived at the classroom and it was occupied by students from the scientific high school. There were also improvements in the campus that caused a lot of interruptions and annoyance. For example, one time students were taking a listening quiz and people in the outside were repairing the university's restrooms, the entire group had to move to another classroom. In addition to this, the students of this group could just go to the language laboratory for an hour on Thursdays because other students, especially the learners majoring in English and French, used it all mornings and that was the only space students of tourism could be given. In fact, a girl of this group asked the instructor for the reason why they did not use the laboratory often even when they were charged for its use.

The groups cohesion did not help much either to organize the learning environment since they gathered in two or three main subgroups on their preference. This was observed in many of the sessions and they always sat next to the same people and

friends. They did help each other inside the subgroups, but they rarely worked with classmates that did not belong to their subgroup. This was a negative factor to solve problems that affected the whole group.

Notwithstanding the above, there were also positive aspects associated with motivation found during the observations. The learners expressed that they did feel they were learning the language in the course were the research was conducted because the methodology used incorporated a varied set of activities that were used for developing every one of the language skills. As an illustration, students had to prepare short speeches about a short investigation they did to write a paragraph, or they had to make up a role-play in grammar to practice some structures based on the situations the teacher provided them with.

The evaluation used was also accepted and seen as a motivating factor; they did not just have to take tests. Students' had many chances and types of assessment that let them show their abilities in the second language learning in so many different ways such as oral presentations, writing paragraphs, which involved writing letters, their childhood experiences, and facts that had been outstanding in their lives. Moreover, students were allowed to role-play situations, did listening exercises and other fun activities to develop their language proficiency and competence.

Some other discoveries during these observations were the level of awareness about the use of learning strategies these students had. It is widely known that not many students are aware that they are using specific strategies to make their learning of a second language easier. In this group some students used learning strategies, but they were not really conscious of their benefit and most of these strategies that they employed were cognitive and social in nature. The identified strategies were the use of mother tongue when they could not say something in the target language. Also, students helped each other in different activities. They usually asked a more-knowledgeable classmate to check their outcomes in the English language. Most people on the group that always sat on the right side of the classroom relied on a girl who had been in Canada. They asked her for the meaning of words or their pronunciation. The other big group relied more on the teacher. Another unusual strategy was that a learner used was the repetition of words in order to use them correctly in the future. Furthermore, students went over the material before some of the final quizzes.

IV Conclusions

There are some implications that must be considered after the results of this ethnography are presented. If the authorities of the Universidad Nacional, Sede Regional Brunca in Pérez Zeledón, San José, Costa Rica, take it seriously and start to look at the findings, they may start to take action to reduce, in some way, the demotivation students of the tourism group were showing.

The first aspect that they can implement if they consider this ethnographic study is a careful needs analysis to determine the real needs these learners have. These language learners need to learn the language to put it into practice daily in their future occupations. Consequently, if the curriculum they follow in their major integrates the

language for the purposes the careful analysis produces, they will see their language learning experience in a more meaningful way since they may be employing what they are learning. They will see a match between the objectives of the English courses and the major's syllabi. Furthermore, a curriculum is not flawless, but through evaluation of its effectiveness, some adjustments can be carried out and implemented. For this, students' and teacher's perspectives must be considered because they are the main participants in the development of the curriculum.

In addition to this, some planning must focus on explicit teaching of learning strategies so that these learners can benefit from their use. The curriculum, and especially some of the English courses, must promote the teaching of learning strategies so that these students can put into practice as many of them as possible for them to find out about the ones that are more effective and efficient for their learning process. After they do this, they can take an active and more responsible role for their own learning, and their motivation will increase because the learners will be able to see the progress they have made in the learning of the target language. In real practice, they will also benefit from the learning strategies because if their level is not so high, these will help them overcome or compensate for their low proficiency. Therefore, the explicit teaching of learning strategies must be incorporated in the curriculum to help the students in their learning of the target language and to increase motivation.

Another action that can be taken based on the results of the investigation is the execution of some workshops by psychologists to help student's lower their anxiety and augment their motivation. In the university life, students have to deal with a lot of stress in carrying out the different tasks that are required of them to complete the courses in the specific curriculum they are immersed in. Most of the time, this process produces a lot of anxiety that may affect student's performance, and this may result in a diminution of their motivation. For this reason, if learners are encouraged to be aware of these factors and the way in which they can deal with them, they can be more motivated and overcome them to make their learning experience more accessible and successful. If these workshops are carried out for specific groups, the relationships and communication among them will also be improved, and the unity of the group will assist in their learning of the new language.

On the other hand, if the authorities in charge of this campus do not pay attention to the results and recommendations the ethnography provides, students will be the most affected. In the long run, students' grades may start to be in the decline, especially the grades of the learners with low motivation. This may subsequently lead to their failing the course they may be currently taking. Later on, their motivation could decrease even more up to the point where other courses' grades could be low or unsatisfactory. If this continues, these learners with low grades may tend to drop out of the university even when they could have overcome their motivational levels. In addition to this, if the authorities see that the number of students choosing the career of tourism leaves it in the first years, they might consider closing it and redirect the budget invested to other faculties and majors. This can affect the region in coming years because tourism will be a great source of income.

Not only the students will be affected but the teachers will face some motivational problems as well. If they see that their pupils obtain low grades, they will start thinking that maybe they do not know how to teach very well. They may even doubt about their talent and knowledge. If this happens, the teaching and learning environment may become in an inadequate place to learn, since most of the material studied will not be taken in by students. Therefore, the professor should implement different techniques and methods to help students overcome motivational and learning difficulties.

4.1 Recommendations

Several pieces of advice are given to improve the preceding ethnographic study. The first aspect that can be mentioned is the time that was devoted to the research. It will be more fruitful if the observations could take longer, for at least a semester, so that other patterns can be identified and more relationships among them can be found. In addition to this, more time will allow the ethnographers to follow up emerging patterns so as to find the roots of these and gather more information that can be used to interpret the behaviors and find solutions to the problems or issues they are evidencing. Plus, a longer period of time will also let researchers inquire more and obtain other perspectives from the administrative staff and directors of the major. This will allow the ethnographers to create a more holistic picture of the events that can be interpreted in a more reliable and valid way.

Another weak point of the investigation was that just some students' opinions were taken into account to describe what they thought about their previous instructor. The description other participants could give could have added to the understanding and perception of the teaching environment in regard to the methodology and activities of the instructor in the previous course. The findings were just based on the observations reports and on an unstructured interview that was carried out. This could have affected, in some way, the results that were obtained after the analysis.

Some recommendations can also be given to those that are immersed in the teaching-learning experience. For teachers, it would be a good idea if they can provide an opportunity for learners to explore which strategies they use and which they find most successful. In this way and as research in these areas continues, classroom methodology will incorporate results so as to maximize the time, experience, and success of language learners. For the students, it would make a difference if they organize and form a group of representatives that can be involved in the decision-making related to their major's curriculum. In this way, they may take action and be more motivated because their curriculum would be a reflection of careful study of their interests and those of the authorities. This will help the teaching-learning process be more effective.

Then, for the data collection, it would be quite helpful if some technological devices can be employed. For example, interviews to different participants can be tape-recorded to be able to write down all of the descriptions and perspectives that are given. This will also ease the review of any important part that can shed light into the problem being investigated. Video recordings of classes can help to identify patterns that otherwise would be skipped, such as facial expressions, or occurrences that cannot be

faithfully described by just written descriptions provided by the ethnographers. These video recordings can show more than a written historical account of events. The general public will be able to see, with their own eyes, what people in the site are doing, saying, and sharing with their non-verbal communication.

The development of the ethnographic investigation could be greatly aided if some previous studies on the same field could be provided as a guide. Along these lines, the ethnographers would not have to start from scratch. They could see examples of real occurrences, descriptions, analyses of data, and presentations of findings and conclusions. They can also be able to discover how their research is going to add to the previous knowledge on the subject, and if it is going to reshape the views that are held regarding the topic. This new project can expand one of them or focus on a different side of the same issue on another context and setting.

It is very important to be able to carry out some other ethnographies to become more skillful in noticing the patterns that are hidden in the things people do, say, and keep for themselves when they just make some gestures or remain silent. Besides, the ethnographers should have more practice in gaining access to the population and the participants that can provide the most revealing information. After this, they have to develop skills to explain and analyze the data so that the connections that they make can really picture the issue under scrutiny and can tell why the events occur the way they do because they have gained an understanding of the patterns and can see them as the participants do.

It is difficult, however, to be able to track down the individuals over a long period of time since the historical constraints affect the group under study and the situations and people change as well. Sometimes the ethnographer can face limitations in regard to the collaboration he/she receives from the authorities in charge of giving permissions to the site, such as classrooms or specific groups of learners. Besides, there may be cases where important informants leave the group for different circumstances, and then the ethnographer will be left with a gap to fill and no resource to be able to do it. Thus, a specific amount of time must be set to carry out the ethnography and to prevent the history from affecting the findings that the research could add to our understanding of the phenomenon being investigated.

The last point that can be recommended is the use of diaries on the part of the students for them to record detailed descriptions of their experiences. These diaries can be employed to understand language phenomena and related variables from the learner's point of view. They also help ethnographers to obtain natural data in the most natural setting possible since the learners will write their perceptions, feelings, emotions, advances, mistakes, and strategies that they utilize to overcome obstacles in their day-by-day learning experience. There is always the potential to discover or rediscover factors that appear to be important or meaningful from the learner's perspective, not from the outsider's point of view. Diary studies also raise factors because their authors write detailed and comprehensive descriptions of their experiences; it seems to be the best way to concentrate on individual learner variables. This can also serve as a way to have

students reflect on their own learning process and understand why they are reaching their intended goal, or they are failing to do so.

Another important recommendation that can be useful for the teachers who possibly read this project is to let students know that there are learning strategies that they can use to learn a language faster or easier. The problem is that teachers advise their students just to study for quizzes or tests, but they do not explain how to do it. It is also important to encourage teachers who do not know a lot about this topic to read about it in order to avoid confusions regarding multiple intelligences or learning styles. Language learning strategies also help the teacher organize varied activities to develop enjoyable lessons.

All of these suggestions can help improve the ethnographic study so that the conclusions obtained truly reflect the whole picture of the site under investigation and the perceptions that the people in it have about the issue.

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About the Authors

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Diego Garro Bustamante holds a bachelor's degree in English teaching and a Master's degree in Second Languages and Cultures with Emphasis in English from Universidad Nacional. He started working as an English teacher at Liceo Nocturno de Pérez Zeledón. Since the end of the year 2003 up to the present, he's been a professor at Universidad Nacional Sede Región Brunca. His research interests include writing and grammar.

Appendix 1

G. 88

SEDE REGIÓN BRUNCA PLAN DE ESTUDIOS - GESTIÓN EMPRESARIAL DEL TURISMO SOSTENIBLE		
BACHILLER I NIVEL I CICLO		CRÉD.
CÓD. DE MTERIA	NOMBRE DEL CURSO	
SCB400	Estudios Generales	3
SCB402	Taller de Sistema Turístico	3
SCB403	Geografía Turística de Costa Rica	3
LIY410	Introducción a la Informática	3
SCB401	Inglés Básico Turismo I	3
	Administración Empresarial	3
BACHILLER I NIVEL II CICLO		CRÉD.
CÓD. DE MTERIA	NOMBRE DEL CURSO	
SCB404	Estudios Generales <i>E6C105</i>	3
	Taller de Patrimonio Cultural	3
	Estudios Generales <i>E6F102</i>	3
LIY411	I Optativo <i>SCB41320 Economía</i>	3
	Inglés Básico Turismo II	3
BACHILLER II NIVEL III CICLO		CRÉD.
CÓD. DE MTERIA	NOMBRE DEL CURSO	
SCB406	Estudios Generales	3
SCB405	Gestión de Empresas Gastronómicas	3
SCB408	Contabilidad para las Empresas Turísticas	3
LIY120	Informática para Empresas Turísticas	3
	Inglés Integrado II	6
BACHILLER II NIVEL IV CICLO		CRÉD.
CÓD. DE MTERIA	NOMBRE DEL CURSO	
SCB414	Gestión Ambiental	3
SCB409	Gestión de Empresas Hoteleras	3
SCB407	Introducción a las Finanzas	3
LIY420	II Optativo	3
	Inglés III para Turismo	6
BACHILLER III NIVEL V CICLO		CRÉD.
CÓD. DE MTERIA	NOMBRE DEL CURSO	
SCB411	Planificación del Desarrollo Turístico	3
SCB412	Gestión de Empresas de Agencia de Viajes	3
SCB410	Estadística para Turismo	3
SCB413	Finanzas	3
LIY421	Inglés IV para Turismo	6
BACHILLER III NIVEL VI CICLO		CRÉD.
CÓD. DE MTERIA	NOMBRE DEL CURSO	
SCB415	Manejo y Planificación de Áreas Silvestres	3
SCB416	Legislación Turística	3
SCB417	Mercadeo Turístico	3
SCB418	Seminario de Organización Comunal	3
LIY422	Expresión Oral I Turismo Y Comercio	6
BACHILLER IV NIVEL VII CICLO		CRÉD.
CÓD. DE MTERIA	NOMBRE DEL CURSO	
SCB419	Gestión y Evaluación de Proyectos Turísticos	3
SCB420	Ordenamiento Territorial	3
SCB421	III Optativo	3
LIY423	Turismo Recreativo	3
	Expresión Oral II para Turismo	6
BACHILLER IV NIVEL VIII CICLO		CRÉD.
PRACTICA PROFESIONAL SUPERVISADA		15 CRÉD.

Appendix 2



Nivel	Código	Nombre Del Curso	Número De Créditos	Horas por Semana			Total de Horas
				Presenciales / Contacto	Estudio Independiente y Sist. Personal		
				Teoría + Práctica			
NIVEL I							
I ciclo lectivo 18 créditos		Estudios Generales	3	-	-	-	8
		Taller de Patrimonio Cultural Costarricense	3	3	2	3	8
		Administración Empresarial	3	3	-	5	8
		Geografía Turística de Costa Rica	3	3	3	2	8
		Introducción a la Informática	3	2	2	4	8
		Inglés Básico para Turismo I	3	2	2	4	8
II ciclo lectivo 16 créditos		Estudios Generales	3	-	-	-	8
		Taller del Sistema Turístico	4	3	4	3	10
		Contabilidad para Empresas Turísticas	3	3	2	3	8
		Optativo	3	-	-	-	8
		Inglés Básico para Turismo II	3	2	2	4	8
NIVEL II							
III ciclo lectivo 18 créditos		Estudios Generales	3	-	-	-	8
		Gestión de Empresas Gastroalómicas	3	3	3	2	8
		Introducción a las Finanzas	3	2	2	4	8
		Informática para Empresas Turísticas	3	3	2	3	8
		Inglés Intermedio Bajo para Turismo I	3	2	2	4	8
		Francés Básico para Turismo I	3	2	2	4	8
IV ciclo		Estudios Generales	3	-	-	-	8
		Gestión de Empresas Hoteleras	3	3	3	2	8

lectivo 18 créditos	Estadística para Turismo	3	2	2	4	8
	Optativo	3	-	-	-	8
	Inglés Intermedio Bajo para Turismo II	3	2	2	4	8
	Francés Básico para Turismo II	3	2	2	4	8
NIVEL III						
V ciclo lectivo 18 créditos	Planificación del Desarrollo Turístico	3	3	3	2	8
	Gestión de Empresas de Agencia de Viajes	3	2	2	4	8
	Finanzas	3	3	2	3	8
	Gestión Ambiental	3	2	2	4	8
	Inglés Intermedio para Turismo III *	3	2	2	4	8
	Francés Básico para Turismo III	3	2	2	4	8
VI ciclo lectivo 18 créditos	Manejo y Planificación de Áreas Silvestres	3	2	2	4	8
	Legislación Turística	3	3	2	3	8
	Mercadeo Turístico	3	3	2	3	8
	Seminario de Organización Comunal	3	3	3	2	8
	Inglés Intermedio para Turismo IV *	3	2	2	4	8
	Francés Básico para Turismo IV	3	2	2	4	8

Nivel I	Código	Nombre Del Curso	Número De Créditos	Horas por Semana		
				Presenciales / Contacto	Estudio Independiente y Sist. Personal	Total de Horas
				Teoría + Práctica		
NIVEL IV						
VII ciclo lectivo 16 créditos	Gestión y Evaluación de Proyectos Turísticos	4	3	3	4	10
	Ordenamiento Territorial	3	2	2	4	8
	Turismo Recreativo	3	3	3	2	8
	Optativo	3	-	-	-	8
VIII ciclo lectivo 15 créditos	Optativo	3	-	-	-	8
	Práctica Supervisada	15	2	36	-	38

Nivel I	Código	Nombre Del Curso	Número De Créditos	Horas por Semana		
				Presenciales / Contacto	Estudio Independiente y Sist. Personal	Total de Horas
				Teoría + Práctica		
OPTATIVOS						
		Recursos Humanos	3	2	-	6
		Taller de Turismo Responsable	3	2	3	3
		Economía	3	2	3	3
		Seminario Turismo y Género	3	2	3	3

* Se impartirán en el 2007.

- • El Plan de Estudios tiene un total de 137 créditos distribuidos en 8 ciclos lectivos (4 años).
- • En relación con los cursos optativos, al menos uno debe pertenecer a un área disciplinaria diferente al área DE CONOCIMIENTO.

Appendix 3

UNA
UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
COSTA RICA

 SEDE REGION BRUNCA

**REGISTRO DE ASISTENCIA
Y CALIFICACIONES**

Carrera: _____

Asignatura: Inglés Básico para Turismo II Código: L1YH11
Subsede: Brunca Nivel: I Grupo: 89
Profesor: Diego Garro Bustamante

I Semestre II Semestre Anual
I Trimestre II Trimestre III Trimestre

Año 2007

Nº	NOMBRE DEL ALUMNO	Quiz 1	Quiz 2	Quiz 3	Quiz 4	Quiz 5	Quiz 6	Quiz 7
1	David Arias	81.25	72	40	75	56	73.33	60
2								
3	Julian Arias	93.75	92	80	100	80	86.66	0
4								
5	Douglas Azofeifa	81.25	68	73.33	66.66	68	60	50
6								
7	Jaikel Chacón	56.25	60	73.33	50	56	73.33	50
8								
9	Pablo Cordero	56.25	100	80	66.66	88	93.33	60
10								
11	Jhonnathan Rivera	50	60	80	66.66	52	96.66	30
12								
13	Marcela Corrales	62.5	64	80	75	64	56.66	70
14								
15	Leonardo Gamboa	37.5	53	66.66	66.66	44	63.33	40
16								
17	Patricia Ugalde	56.25	48	60	70.83	60	66.66	60
18								
19	David Leiva	81.25	80	73.33	70.83	76	70	60
20								
21	Alejandra Mora	87.5	96	46.66	58.33	60	80	60
22								
23	Susan Naranjo	81.25	84	86.66	66.66	68	70	70
24								
25	Johnny Otárola	75	56	66.66	75	36	43.33	70
26								
27	Laura Quiroz	56.25	68	66.66	45.83	40	70	50
28								
29	Giannina Rodríguez	100	84	100	100	95	90	70
30								
31	Rita Rodríguez	62.5	64	60	58.33	8	30	30
32								
33	Kenneth Rojas	68	60	46.66	66.66	60	60	50
34								
35	Juan Salazar	53	80	93.33	75	36	70	60
36								
37	Silvia Sobrado	81.25	80	80	58.33	48	76.66	60
38								
39	Juan Solís	75	84	80	66.66	92	80	90
40								
41	Lizeth Valverde	43.75	32	60	54.16	72	76.66	30
42								
43								
44								
45								

Quiz 8	11 Exam		Assign	Assign	Assign				
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
		19.99			80	50	92		
		26.7			96	90	0		
	20.09	22.25			96	80	96	9.06	
	17.95	19.12			96	100	100	9.86	
		26.78			92	50	96		
	17.79	20.85			88	80	100	8.66	
		22.76			96	90	96		
	15.9	20.45			100	50	0	0	95.5
		19.53			88	100	100		
	21.9	24.8			92	70	96	8.6	
		20.53			88	70	96		
	18.56	18.87			92	90	96	9.86	
		15.45			92	60	100		
	17.1				88	60	100		
		28.76			0	100	100		
	13.4	15.6			88	70	0	5.26	
	17.19	22.33			92	70	100	8.7	
	20.02	24.62			96	70	0	55	
		23.81			88	0	92		
		26.58			88	0	92		
		16.23			92	60	100	8.4	

Universidad nacional
Sede Región Brunca
Quiz # 5 Turismo

Total points: 20 pts
Points gotten: 19

Score: 95

Student's name: Giannina Rodríguez Rojas

I. Write questions to the answers provided. 10 pts

1. Was Diego at ~~work~~ the restaurant? 9
No, he was at home.

2. Where did Jessie go last month? ?
Jessie went to England last month.

3. Why Mary and Kate didn't go to the party? X
Because they had to study for a grammar test.

4. What did Carlos buy at the store? ?
He bought a pair of tennis shoes and a cap.

5. What did John eat for dinner? ?
John ate a large pizza for dinner yesterday.

6. Where did you sleep? ?
I slept at Jake's house.

7. Did you study for the test? ?
Yes, we did.

8. Was Karla fine after the accident? ?
No, he got hurt.

9. What did Maria send? ?
He sent a present to his grandmother.

10. How was Mary after the game? ?
He got tired.

II. Completion 10 pts

Read the following story and complete it using the verbs below in the past tense:

-go-know-start-study-see-help-plan-buy-leave-take-

Last year my family and me went to the beach, but it was a mess. We took the necessary supplies and left. We bought suntan lotion, some towels, sun glasses, sandals and, of course, food. When we arrived at the beach, the sky was really dark, but we put up our tent anyway. We planned to be there the whole weekend, but it started to rain an hour after we got there. We did not know what to do, so my father decided to go out of the tent and see. He saw that the food was spoiled. For this reason, we decided to go back home. When I got home, I helped my sister to do a home assignment, and then I also studied for a grammar test. I hope that this year the trip can be planned better so as to avoid any problems.