



UNIVERSIDAD DE QUINTANA ROO

**División de Estudios Internacionales
y Humanidades**

**ENROLLING IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE MAJOR:
REASONS AND EXPECTATIONS**

TESIS RECEPCIONAL
Para obtener el grado de
Licenciado en Lengua Inglesa

PRESENTA
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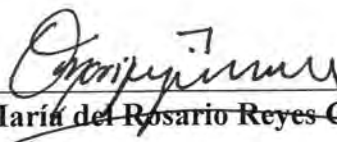


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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem

Since the English language is a very important tool all around the world, as well as a mechanism for learning or understanding many issues, people try to study the “Lengua Inglesa” major for their own benefit. Some may study English only for being able to communicate, while others go deeper and get into a major like “Lengua Inglesa.” But what is the main reason that they have for studying this major? Are they forced to study it? Do they really want to study English? Are they really motivated to enroll in a program like this?

There have been many people who register in the English Language major in the University. But, there have also been many of them who drop out from it and even though that does not apply to all of them it does not give a good impression of the college. Some of the students have problems and stay behind one or more years. When that occurs they waste time, money and effort. Therefore, there have always been questions about this situation, when and why does that happen?, and how can we avoid it? Those are the main questions raised and led to this research.

1.2 Object of Study

As mentioned before the goals of the research was to find out the reason or reasons people had for choosing “Lengua Inglesa” as their major. It is considered that there may be several reasons, but also that some may be very general and might apply for most of the people that had problems while studying this major. Perhaps they were running away from math; they may have liked English but they were not really informed about the implications major involves, they wanted to learn English for specific purposes, or just because this was either their second or

third option. In other words, they wanted to enroll in a different major, but as they could not make it, they might be studying something else.

1.3 Objectives

The main objectives for this research are quite simple, to know the reasons people had for choosing this major; what motivated them to undertake this major, as well as the perspectives or expectations they had before starting to study. Besides, the purpose is to guide future students of the "Lengua Inglesa" major. It can provide the guidance some students have not had during the whole major.

1.4 Research Questions and Hypothesis

Many students at the Universidad de Quintana Roo enroll in the English Language Major in order to have better opportunities in the labor market.

Many students that enroll in the English Language Major do not wish to become English teachers.

What is the main reason that they have for studying this major? Do they really want to study English? Are they really motivated to enroll in a program like this?

1.5 Implications

The main benefits of this research are:

- a) To inform those students who want to enroll in the degree.

- b) To inform those students who already are in the degree of the effort they need to put into it to be successful. Besides, they are going to see the implications this major has, therefore they will realize if what they are doing with their major is the best or the appropriate way for reaching their goals.

- c) Also, students would have the opportunity to check their election with the results of it and to change to something else if that is the case, if it is the English language major that they should have chosen for studying..

Whether students should change their major or not , they only have to remember that sometimes one may choose incorrectly, but it is still not too late for refocusing and getting into the correct major. Currently, it is very common to find people changing their majors, however as the University of Richmond says:

“Choosing or changing your major can be a time of frustration and anxiety.”

Nevertheless, students should realize that many other students have gone through this same experience and have had some of the same feelings as anyone. “If you change your major, do not feel like a failure. Rather, look at this as you having eliminated one major and experiencing the opportunity to select another one.”¹ Then, it is better to having corrected your way than having failed or dropped out from a major. This search would provide them some of the most essential elements for doing a correct election. This way they could do the best for themselves.

- d) Through this research tutors would have information of great relevance to be used towards their tutees. That would be for helping the students to achieve their objectives. In other words, tutors would know the areas where it is common that students have problems and help them to do a better performance within the major.

¹. Adapted from the Eastern Oregon University.

URL: <http://www.eou.edu/career/choosingamajor.htm>. December 15, 2001

- e) Besides, the information that could be collected with this study could be used by the people in charge of the CIU (Curso de Introducción a la Universidad) for improving it (if necessary) and for organizing and making a better content of the course. A better content that really applies to the goal of the course, perhaps it needs some kind of refocusing on the goals.

- f) Finally, it is considered that this study could show the evidence of the significance of diversifying the English Language area. In other words that there must be other majors related to the English, not only the known major. Perhaps, the Universidad de Quintana Roo would consider the possibility of creating new branches of the mentioned Major.

As expressed on the main hypothesis of the research many of the students who are in this major seem not to want to be teachers, they want the language for something different. Thus, maybe the University should satisfy the necessity and demand of the increasing number of students that are coming to this institution.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The election of the major becomes a central stage on the students' life. It has to be done according to several aspects. Those aspects must be considered carefully before choosing the major. Otherwise, some problems may appear and cause trouble on their way to get a major.

Then, orientation becomes a vital aspect for students. They need to have enough information about all the majors, as well as all the aspects each one of these majors involve. It is not just choosing a major that may sound good, there are several elements that are directly related to this process.

Therefore, in order to support, organize and have a conclusion there was a revision of what some authors think about any of those aspects related to the topic.

2.1 Vocational Guidance

Orozco, G.M. (1993)² presents a psychoanalytic device for vocational orientation called 'Metodo Proairetico'. His proposal is based on the 'lacanianan' psychoanalytic thought. It sees vocation as a function: the relationship of the subject with the significance of the major.

From this author's point of view we can conclude that:

1. The election of the major is the result of a series of identities joined together.
2. Self –identification can be conscious or unconsciously.
3. The strength of the 'self' has an important role in the young school performance.

Another author who gives his view on this aspect is Knapp Robert (1965). He holds that to orient students through their way around in the election of the major is part of a process that consists of a calculus of the individual's abilities, interests and needs to recommend and asses the person. Then, the person can make plans for taking advantage of those abilities and help him to make decisions and to do all the necessary changes to promote his own well-being at school, home and life.

² This research was awarded a very valuable prize by the SEP towards Investigation in Educational Orientation in 1991. Pp.23.

Orientation is necessary for helping the person to improve his school situation and to integrate society. It also helps the individual choose a career or to get a better personal and social development, which in the end seems to be the objective of a student when he or she decides to get a professional degree.

Sommers(1953) states that "vocational difficulties show the personality basic disorders" and he also argues they have their origin in the self-identity conflicts. The main aspect again in this theory is the self-identification. There is a great need of a self analysis in order to find out maybe who we are, what we want and we are going to do so we can reach our objectives.

Roe(1957)⁵ explains the election as a result of a combination of three main factors that may be influential in the process :

- a. Genetic factors – people have certain innate abilities and interests.
- b. Childhood experiences –this will determine the behavior and the kind of necessities the person will try to satisfy.
- c. The strength of the necessities – It will usually be unconscious and the requirements of the personal satisfaction that will determine motivation and therefore the election of a major.

All these points, which were mentioned by the authors, make a reference to the vocational election and all what it involves. The most important aspect is the person itself, which is referred to as the student's necessities, abilities and interests. They must be considered to make a good choice of the major and avoid future problems that might rise.

⁵ Taken from 'the Psychology of Occupations', Pp 34-36. New York 1956.

2.2. Vocational Election

This is a very serious issue which must be considered as it is a decisive step that a person must take for his future life. The step that the person takes will change into good or bad the person's future life.

Vocational election is a voluntary action that does not need any sort of effort. The individual has many options from which he must choose the one that best fits for him. On the other hand, according to the Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary "if you elect to do something, you choose to do it; a formal use" and also says that "it is a strong feeling for choosing something in which you fulfill the skills needed for a particular profession".⁵

Then again Cortada (1983) argues that if a person does the vocational election only looking for some social prestige, then the election will be mistaken and might be also the cause of many problems. The best vocational election must create a personal satisfaction and the possibility of developing new aptitudes and reassure the interests the person has.

According to Cortada⁶ it is necessary to consider the stages in the process of the vocational election. And they are:

1. The stage for elections based on the fantasy. This stage is located in the childhood, when the child sees himself as a doctor, lawyer, actor, etc.
2. The stage of the projects. It is located from the adolescence to near the 17 years old. In this period the teenagers pay a little more

⁵ Adapted from Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary. Pp. 455, 1629.

⁶ Taken from 'El Profesor y la Orientación Vocacional'. Pp.85-87.

attention to their interests but they are not completely sure of what they want.

3. The stage of the realistic election. This stage starts when the teens are around 18. They are more convinced of what they want and they pay more attention to their future.

However, as expressed on the hypothesis sometimes the election is not free. The student will do the election having in mind several aspects and confines, which will definitely affect the student's life. Powell (1981)⁷ mentions some of these factors:

1. Economic status. The economic aspect can be very attractive for a person and cannot be for some others, mainly because it is a vital factor in determining the possibility for reaching a goal.
2. Intelligence. It is something that must be considered according to the area the person wants to be involved in. Because the student has to set the limits for himself.
3. Personality. The individual has to consider the relation among each one of the aspects of his personality. All of them are closely related and they have an important role in the student's life. And if they are not taken into consideration when choosing a major, the person would not feel satisfied in the future.
4. Socio-economic factors. This factor is related to the parents of the student. If the parents are in a well economic status, they expect that their children get to the same point within the society. That results in a pressure for them, and then that would lead to a bad election.

⁷ Taken from 'Psicología de la Adolescencia'. Pp. 65-66.

5. Experience in a job. If the students have already had a part-time job, they usually choose what they want to study based on the previous experience that they had.

Moreover, Sanchez⁸ adds some other aspects that have a direct relation to the aspects that are being considered. He thinks that vocational election is based upon the following factors:

1. Aspirations level, which is what the student wants and what his family wants from him.
2. Contradictions, which is the contrasts between what he wants and the skills and conditions required for reaching his objectives.

In this last point, the problem was clearly identified because some students who don't want to be teachers of English, do not find the conditions required for satisfying their necessities.

For instance, there were some students who expressed their willingness of working in the translation area, although they can find some subjects to help them, the knowledge acquired is still not enough to use it to make a living out of that. The major is focused on something different, the teaching of the English language. Hence, it is not possible for them to completely reach their goals.

Furthermore, Cortada⁹ explains that parents must never forget that the best election is which satisfies the personal interests and conditions of the youngster,

⁸ Taken from 'Familia y Sociedad'. Pp. 23. Cuadernos de Joaquín Motriz.

⁹ Taken from 'El Profesor y la Orientación Vocacional'. Pp.105-106.

which at the same time provides a social benefit. In other words a correct election needs to have:

1. A balance between personal and psychological conditions.
2. The possibility of developing a positive action. It means, trying to be as positive as possible and show it with facts.

In addition, it is worth to consider what Samuel Osipow¹⁰ analyzed on the available theories related to the election of the major. He divided them into three categories:

1. Sociological theory: the circumstances that a subject cannot control affect the person's decision towards the major.
2. Theory of Oneself or theory of development: "Choosing the major is the result of an evolution process", states that as an individual grows and develops himself, he obtains a better concept of himself, so when it is time to decide which major to study the student knows what to choose.
3. Theory of risks factors ('riesgos factoriales' in Spanish), this is the oldest theory and considers that choosing a major is a result of a blending of all the abilities, interests and opportunities that society offers to the individuals. (Parsons [1909], Hull [1928] and Kitson 1925))
4. Theory of personality: It is supported by psychologists that define the structure of the personality. Within this theory the principal point they argue about is the relation between the personality and the student. Questions such as "is the major chosen because of a necessity? Is a career affecting

¹⁰ Taken from 'Teorías Sobre la Elección de la Carrera' pp. 24 -25.

so that it takes a person to decide studying a specific major?" arise in this theory.

The Western Washington University, which is one of the institutes that lead students to choose correctly a major, also comments on the students' self-identification abilities. Besides, it advises that before getting into a major we have to begin by knowing oneself (be honest); to consider our aptitudes, interests, values and limitations, particularly as they apply to our academic performance.

"We need to ask questions such as what classes have we done well in, so far? Which ones have we enjoyed the most? Which ones do we tend to avoid? What are our career goals after finishing school?" ¹¹ For this university these are the most important questions students should ask themselves when choosing a major.

In agreement with these statements, the mentioned questions are vital before choosing a major because what they decide to study may be in a short period of time what they are going to do for a living. Moreover, other nine theories about choosing majors are presented. They are all related to the same issue. The author's viewpoints are:

Brill, A.A. (1949) mentions that "deciding a major is not accidentally, there are factors and necessities which must be satisfied. This decides the person to choose a major over other ones".

In a psychoanalytic theory, pleasure of achieving objectives is what motivates the person to choose studying a certain major. And through work is that society allows the person to satisfy the principles. If the person's work can help him to achieve his

¹¹ Adapted from the internet site of the Academic Advising Center of the Western Washington University.

objectives, an amount of pleasure will be added. There will be an extrinsic satisfaction such as economic factors and society recognition.

Physical and mental abilities take an important part in the selection of the major, even though it is partial, sublimation is the main ingredient. It is the defense mechanism that the person uses to separate the libido and search for more important cultural goals.

Ginzberg et al.¹³ (1951) point out that "election is a compromise between the individual's ancient needs (wishes) and the requirements and restrictions of reality (possibilities)" The election is related to evaluation aspects and when doing it, it adds another basic concept: the self identification.

This theory suggests the existence of two types of personality, which are basic in the work field: the labor and the pleasure oriented person. The self-identification process has an important role in the election of the major to study, therefore, Ginzberg et al. describe the three stages that mark his evolution:

1. Fantasy (4 – 10 years old). Children take as models their parents, teachers' relatives, etc. The main characteristic of this stage is the lack of a real orientation. "Children play as to work and assume the identities that they want" The child ignores three important ingredients: reality, his abilities and time.
2. Tentative (11–18 years old). In this stage a limitation of identifications is produced. There is a tendency of the teenagers to identify themselves with their parents. But this same stage divides itself into four stages: interests, capacities, values and transitional, in which the teen has to make immediate decisions

¹³ Taken from 'Occupational Choice'. Pp 65-66. 1951.

which must be concrete and realistic. Otherwise, the person himself has to face the possible problems that may rise.

2. Realistic (18–22 years old). New changes in the young's perception emerge. They realize that there are some other models from adults, different to their parents', that could be more appropriate for them and which help them to decide their major. Three new stages derive from this one:
 - a. Exploration- It is entering college with certain ways of fear and doubts. They have some problems with the time and they relate the career with work and school abilities.
 - b. Crystallization – vocational patterns emerge due to success or failure experimented during the exploration stage. The teens know by this time what chores they have to avoid in order to succeed.
 - c. Specification – this is the stage when the subject chooses a major. Even though there might be some who never seem to reach this level.

Vocational election seems to be clearer in a progressive way. It will be according to Ginzberg et al. who mention that as the time passes and that the person goes from a stage to another, evolution should be involved.

Other supporting ideas associated to this matter are brought by Hoppock¹⁴, who states that the election is a way to satisfy internal necessities. Holland¹⁵ (1959), mentions that there are types of personality for each major. Roe¹⁶ (1954), argues

¹⁴ Taken from 'Occupational Information'. Pp. 57.

¹⁵ Taken from 'Some Explorations of Theory of Vocational Choice'. Pp. 22

¹⁶ Taken from 'Psychology of Occupations' Pp. 93.

that when choosing some genetic factors interfere hierarchy of necessities and childhood experiences as well.

All those available theories related to the theoretical work on the area were analyzed, and they all had an outstanding result, that they are integral theories that include several aspects from different authors. They are complemented from one another to be worth it enough.

2.3 Vocational Decision

When we talk about a decision we are referring to any situation in real life. Even with the simplest things decision is implied. Larroyo¹⁷ (1983) says that it is a resolution taken into a problem. On the other hand, he also says that it is an attitude based on a specific behavior line. Then, it is possible to say that decision is the resolution and the determination showed when facing a problem that may arise. When election and decision are implicit the process is complete.

Once we have the definition of decision, it is time then to apply it to the vocational matter. According to Rodríguez¹⁸ (1982) it is a technical, psychological and sociological process. He argues that it is a process because there are some stages, with a technical and logical order, that is necessary to follow because it is important to have all the required techniques and resources.

The problem of choosing the correct major turns into a bigger problem at this stage because almost all students who are starting their majors are young people on their teenage years. At this stage everything seems not to be clear, confusing and also conflictive.

¹⁷ Adaped from 'Diccionario Porrúa de Pedagogía', Pp. 10-11. 1983.

¹⁸ Taken from 'Teoría de la Decisión Personal'. Pp. 17. 1983.

Grinder ¹⁹(1982) states that the decisions that a teenager makes will be significant in his future. He also states that the decision will have an impact in one way or another on the student's life. He says that it is important to have a good decision because it will also affect his social relations. So, it is vital to do a plan of the major and the career that the student is going to follow. It is an evolutionary and systematic process, in other words the preference to a certain major begins in infancy.

It starts to become true in the adolescence, although it has many interference and the students can change it very easily. According to what is being said Cortada²⁰ (1982) mentions that it is relevant to consider two aspects:

1. Stability of the vocational election during the adolescence.
2. The influence of the residence, economic position, gender, the father's career, the attractiveness of the major.

Likewise, Bohoslavsky²¹(1974) also comments on this matter and expresses that the election an adolescent makes is the result of a search, a wish of forming an identity through a profession. For this author the searching is for 'becoming' in a near future.

This theory highlights the importance of the personal characteristics of the subject: the adolescent. The person finds himself in a period of changes of various types: ideological, religious, ethical and sexual.

¹⁹ Taken from 'Adolescencia'. Pp. 521 – 522.

²⁰ Taken from 'El Profesor y la Orientación Vocacional'. Pp. 548.

²¹ Adapted from ' Orientación Vocaional. La estrategia Clínica'. Pp. 92.

However, sometimes the student's decision is the result of the relation between what he wants to be and what he can become. That is why the student needs to have a high self-esteem. Mussen ²²(1982) said that it is a personal judgment which is expressed in the individual's attitudes in relation to himself. This judgment leads them to accept their own opinions, to be self-reliable in their reactions and conclusions.

In contrast, those students who do not rely on themselves are afraid of expressing their thoughts, their feelings and also they do not want to make other people angry. They do not want to catch anybody's attention.

Tyler ²³(1983) talks about two problems on the election. First, he says that sometimes because a person is insecure, election turns into a persistent and irrational problem. Secondly, he also mentions about another problem, which is a kind of insecurity . He says that it is a psychic state that is shown in the interviews when there is a session of vocational orientation. That might be called immaturity.

A question appears now, how can the decision be considered as good or bad? According to Tyler (1983) the decision was correct if the person assumes its consequences and at the same time there is a compromise with it. It can be not completely satisfactory but may work correctly and have good results.

2.4 The family in the vocational election.

Before going directly to the subject, it was considered necessary to express the current concept of the family. Teja Andrade ²⁴(1994) argues that the family is a

²² Taken from 'El Desarrollo en la personalidad del niño'. Pp. 741-74.

²³ Adapted from 'La Función del Orientador'. Pp. 206-208.

²⁴ Taken from 'Educación Cívica'. Pp.156.

social institution and at the same time the economic nucleus, juridical, formed by the parents and children who live in the same house and who share vital functions.

According to the same issue Satir (1985) says that the family is the place where it is possible to find love and support and where we can get some new energy. But this definition sometimes applies and some other times it does not.

The family is the first educational institution in a person's life because there is informal education somehow involved. This education is supported and reinforced by the school where the person gets formal education.

Tavella (1983) mentions that there is certain pressure on the children to study a specific major but that this is done without taking into consideration some kind of social factors, which are practically unknown. Sometimes, when the father or the mother is trying to impose his or her own point of view, which they think is the best for them, the only thing they reproduce is their own social and cultural environmental aspects. If a father or a mother has succeeded, it does not mean that the children are going to study the same thing, but that they may be different in their election. "Thousands of people are led to register in majors which are already crowded and which are to be a good aid for the country".

On this same aspect Cortada²⁷ mentions that long before the child decides his own path or major to study, parents have already foreseen a good one for the child. They already have projects for the child's life. Even some mothers decide what their children's careers are going to be. In most of the cases the decision is purely emotional and with no reflection on the issue, such as the child's own name.

Luckily some times in the past, the careers and the attitudes chosen to the children by the parents applied to those of the children, as a result, they may have succeeded. However, when the children's goals were different to the parent's,

²⁷ Adapted from 'El Profesor y la Orientación Vocacional'. Pp. 49.

some problems would have arisen. The person in charge of these problems, and who also had to look for a solution to them, was the father. These children were not following the family tradition. In which the adults see their children as a future portrait of themselves, who need to continue an activity that was started some time ago.

On the other hand, Cortada says that the family environment plays a very outstanding role on the orientation of the professional life. Thus, what parents can do in order to orient their children is of great help. It becomes fundamental. Parents must place their children in touch with the social and natural context that surrounds the child. All the child's senses must be stimulated with the intention of making the student think carefully about his future major. Parents have to understand that choosing a major is not a sudden decision; it must be the result of a deep and calm reflection.

"Parents may help by not considering only their own points of view, but with real communication".²⁸ There should be a real conversation, as well as sharing of ideas from both sides, between the parents and the child. Then parents would make the child realize all the problems he or she might face on the way to achieve his goals. Therefore, he would make the right decision at the end.

Leao²⁹ (1980) comments also on the same issue that almost always when students enter high school, parents tend to worry more about their future. It is on the students' behavior and attitudes if parents feel better or worse on this matter. At the same time, it is when students feel the necessity to walk by themselves and do what they consider they have to.

It is a period of adaptation, and it is also the time when because of an excessive pressure from parents the student decides to do everything against their advice.

²⁸ Adapted from 'El Profesor y la Orientación Vocacional'. Pp. 49

²⁹ Taken from 'Adolescencia, sus problemas, su educación'. Pp.26

There is separation with the parents, and problems begin, such as lack of comprehension, bad humor, lack of communication and some others.

Hence, the family is a very essential aspect to consider. It may be a cause of choosing correctly or incorrectly what a student wants for his or her own future.

2.5 Choosing the English language as a major.

While doing the research, some theories related to choosing the English language major instead of any other one were found. For instance Rubin and Thompson³⁰ (1994) analyze the reasons people have for choosing studying language (English) instead of Science or Math. They make some suggestions about attitudes and strategies students should use for their success. "What are the reasons for learning languages? Why do people learn foreign languages? Why do people want to study English? Is it for pleasure? Is it because they want to understand Shakespeare?"

They also provide some pieces of advice for succeeding in the language learning process, such as the attitudes a student should show while learning the language, or the way a language learner should keep record of his or her learning process, as well as the motivations students have when studying a second or third language. For instance, the need for having the language to perform a certain job.

Those are the main reasons this information is considered to be valuable. It is very important for the research because it is directly related to the topic of the research and the objectives.

Harmer (1996) states that the language learner is the most important factor in the language learning process. What will in the end, determine success or failure, is

³⁰ Adapted from Rubin, Joan and Thompson, Irene. "how to be a more successful language learner", Second edition. Heinle and Heinle, 1994.

what a learner contributes to it. Many learners tend to blame teachers, circumstances, and teaching materials for their lack of success, when the most important reason for their lack of success can ultimately be found in themselves.

“There are several learners' traits that are relevant for learning a foreign language, they usually appear in combination. A positive combination of these traits is probably more important than any single trait by itself”.³¹ They are indispensable for the students' learning process and for the achievement of the objectives.

Then, as we have information about the teachers and the student's roles in the language learning process, we can see if teachers provide the needed facilities to improve and take advantage of those traits to do a good performance. Additionally, we can see if students make use of those traits to improve themselves. Teachers and students' roles involved are directly related in the process, they cannot be separated. Otherwise, the process cannot be completed.

Rubin, Thompson and Harmer provide very useful information regarding all aspects involved in the learning process. As one of the research aims is to give students possible solutions to the problem of not choosing the right major, it was relevant to take all these aspects into consideration when the surveys were structured and also for all the tools that were used for gathering the data.

According to Wenden and Rubin (1997) “learners may have quite general purposes which will require a variety of language using skills and consequently the best type of learning experiences for them cannot always be determined from the perspective of highly specific purposes”.³²

³¹ Adapted from “The Practice of English Language English”. Harmer, Jeremy. Third Edition. 1996.

³² Adapted from “Learning Strategies in Language Learning”. Rubin, Joan and Wenden, Anita. Prentice Hall International Language Teaching. 1987.

Once again these authors provide information on the methodology a student follow when studying a second language and also, it points out the different reasons students may have for learning a second language.

They mention that learning a language is very different to other subjects. Thus, the learning process is quite different. Students should follow a series of strategies for having success in this process. Each skill needs some attention in order to achieve our objectives. To illustrate that, they mentioned some strategies for memorizing vocabulary, such as the *visual methods*, *the physical response methods*, *the verbal elaboration methods*, *the self testing*, *the real life practice* and some others.

Those are aspects, which seem to be very useful for the search; therefore this information must be applied and added to the study. It appears to be of great importance for the project.

It is worth enough also considering the aspects and the theoretical argues of the failure and consequently the abandoning of the students at this level. They are directly related to the objectives of the study and within them it would be possible to find the reasons of these problems.

Most teachers perceive failure as a serious problem in the University. Somehow it is known that it affects the college's image. It may seem that professors or the whole school system are not doing the appropriate work to be recognized as a qualified educational institution by society.

2.6 Dropout.

It is relevant to mention that there have been many investigations done in the desertion area. Most of them have been analyzed and considered as an educational phenomenon associated to social and economical conditions.

Vincent Tinto, for instance, in a recent research published by the ANUIES on the terminal proficiency and school dropout talks about a revision he carried out on the societal theories of the school desertion. He concluded: "the theories consider that the students' success and failure in the university is formed by the same forces that form success in general."³³

Korabel (1972) and Pincus (1980) say that university level is structured only for serving the dominant groups within a society. They point out that "school desertion must be understood not only as an individual's matter but as a part of a wider social stratification that works for protecting the existing patterns of social and educational inequality. School desertion must be seen as from the viewpoint of how the occurrence, not accidentally but with patterns among different people and institutions helps to reinforce general social inequity."

2.7 Failure

Then, school desertion and failure, seen through theoretical points of view, seems to constitute one of the ways, that society in general and school in particular, has as a process to stop many students of their rights of forging a profession. In the following paragraphs some authors' point of view are presented to be considered when doing the analysis of the reasons of failure.

It is said that within the causes for school failure there can be three main theories that have been used to explain it. Among those that are influential, are the student's peer or group identity, parental influence, and economic factors.

According to Henry (2000)³⁴, the most influential factors that affect students are peer and family influences. These theories, "look as if they were only addressing

³³ Adapted from *Una Reconsideración de las Teorías de Deserción Estudiantil*. Pp. 359–360.

³⁴ Taken from Henry (Spring 2000). *Peer groups, families, and school failure among urban children: Elements of risk and successful interventions*. *Preventing School Failure* 44 (2), pp. 97-104.

the students' personal involvement and their problems within the school setting." McNeal, (1997)³⁵ argues that these theories "do not address the school's role in school failure that may push the students out of school" . Maybe there are more aspects involved in this problem

A Mexican source, INEGI (Instituto Nacional de Geografía e Informática), agrees with all the statements the previous authors gave. INEGI in Mexico provides some information on the respect and concludes that the main causes for failure and dropout from the elemental levels to university was the lack of motivation and / or family or economical problems, mainly.³⁶

To sum up, all the supportive theories will lead this research to achieve the objectives. All the aspects that were considered in the theoretical framework were thought of being significant and helpful for the understanding and analysis of its results.

3. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

What classes have we done well in, so far? Which ones have we enjoyed the most? Which ones do we tend to avoid? What are our career goals after finishing school? These are questions, which are pondered to be vital before choosing a major because what they decide to study may be in the future their career. Those questions are the basis for designing the surveys, one of the most important parts of the research. Consequently, it is indispensable to keep all this information in mind to be able to apply this previous knowledge and make the searching to be worth it.³⁷

³⁵ Taken from Vocational-technical education: A logical approach to dropout. Preventing School Failure, 45 (3), pp. 108-114

³⁶ Taken from Aspectos sociodemográficos de Jalisco. Indicadores sobre educación 199-2000, INEGI, junio 2001.

³⁷ Adapted from the internet site of the Academic Advising Center of the Western Washington University.

This was a descriptive research. Through the major it was seen that some students were having problems with the major and then questions raised related to this matter. Such as what were the reasons of failing? And what were the reasons of too many people failing during the major? That definitely catches anybody's attention and so it was decided to carry out this research. It seemed as if a current problem which was affecting several students, and that needed a careful examination in order to find a solution, was going to be researched.

It was definitely necessary to get all kind of information about this problem, so it was possible to do an analysis and then to find the causes of the problem; and perhaps a possible solution. It was necessary to do questionnaires for making this study more precise. Moreover, It was also of great importance doing some interviews to the students in order to have a more valid and reliable information.

1. Setting

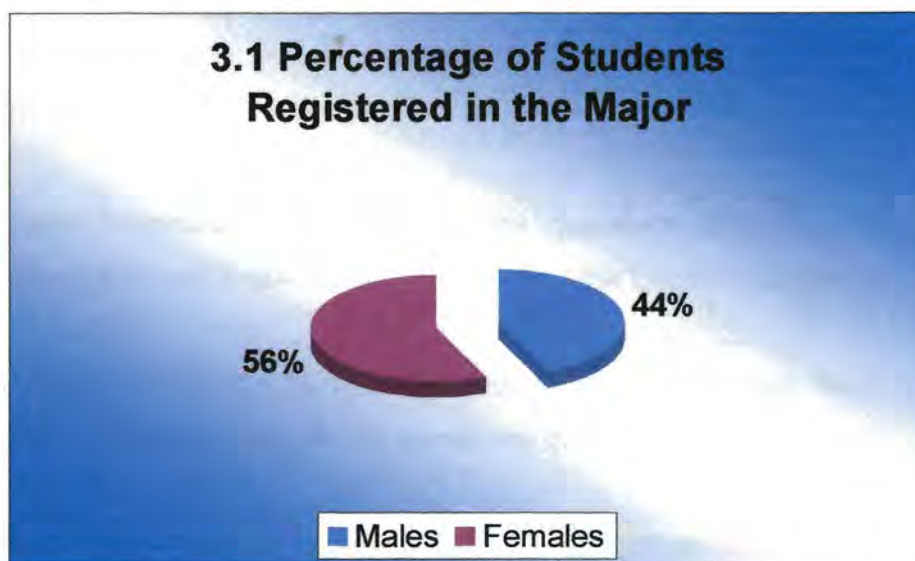
This investigation was carried out at the Universidad de Quintana Roo. The University was founded in May 24, 1991. Its motto is '*fructificar la razón, trascender la cultura*' and its mission is to prepare people for the challenges of the future and to help forging an identity for the state. There are seven majors and three technical studies. Those are: Derecho, Sistemas Comerciales, Economía y Finanzas, Antropología, Lengua Inglesa, Relaciones Internacionales, Ingeniería en Sistemas de Energía, Recursos Naturales, Turismo Alternativo, Redes.

This is the only state university that offers the major throughout the region. Moreover, this is a public university and it is one of the most prestigious in the state. There are more universities in the region but they only offer majors or technical studies related to the main economical activity: Tourism.

Day by day universities open and offer new alternatives, but this university is considered to be the Maximum House of Studies. Perhaps, it is still growing and needs improvement; nevertheless it has reached a very good prestige.

2. Participants

This study was carried out with students that entered the Lengua Inglesa major in 2001. Most of them came from a common high school. Almost all of them came from COBACH 1 or 2; or from CBTis. They were 33 males and 44 females, as shown in the graphic below. Their ages were within a range of 18 and 21. Even though some students came from different parts of the state, around 90% were from Chetumal City.³⁵



Moreover, there was an interview to four teachers who have taught the first level of English. They have had some experience working with beginners or newcomers and it was thought to be of great help for the research. As a result, some questions were asked to them related to the students' performance and also about the students' situation while they are studying the major.

3. Instruments

Due to the nature of this kind of research, it was necessary to design a questionnaire. In this questionnaire students who were just entering the university were asked about the reasons they had for choosing this major and also the main goals they had from the first moment they decided to enroll in this program.

The questionnaire consisted of 43 questions (see Appendix 1). There were 39 closed questions and only 4 open questions. The open questions were only for an opinion about future issues and about the university.

The questionnaire was divided in five parts:

1. Demographic Information.
2. General Information. It involved some questions about their parents or relatives that might have been involved with the English Language.
3. Academic Background. It contained information about their previous academic system. Such as the name and data of their last school.
4. Reasons they had for choosing this major. In other words, what were the causes and possible influences from other people?
5. Expectations. What they expected from this major and what their future plans about their careers were.

³⁵ Taken from *Universidad de Quintana Roo, Gaceta Número 18. Abril – Junio 2001.*

These questionnaires were administered to 77 students who took the University introductory course. (2001)

Questionnaires are a very good source of information. Nevertheless, they were complemented with some interviews to explore more deeply the students' reasons and the teachers' perceptions of the issue.

First, there was a need of deciding who was going to be interviewed. It was necessary to have a sample of students, then, it was feasible to use the "randomizer" (It is a method or system provided in the internet to obtain a sample of elements for doing interviews or questionnaires). With the help of this tool it was possible to get all the students for the interviews.³⁶

The students' interview consisted of 22 questions. (See appendix 2) It was divided into five parts: 1) demographic Information, 2) general Information, 3) questions about their parents or relatives that might be involved with the English Language. 4) Academic Background. It had information about their previous academic system. Such as the name and data of their last school. 5) Causes they had for choosing this major. In other words, what were the motivations and possible influences from other people? And moreover about their perspectives. What they expected from this major and what their future plans about their careers were.

These interviews were applied to a sample of 11 students that started the major within the past few months; With the interviews it was expected to get information from their inner thoughts, their perspectives and expectations they had for this major. Perhaps the information I got through these interviews was more accurate.

³⁶ Taken from the internet site:

URL: http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~scholp/ig475_575webinf.htm

Besides, the interviews were applied to the teachers (see appendix 3), who have given English classes to newcomers (freshmen) to the institution. That was for asking them about their opinions and perceptions of the students they had when they taught these classes. There were only 9 questions, but with them it was enough to get the necessary information for the study.

Definitely, the questions about their opinions were focused on the students' election; whether they considered that the students were studying this major because they wanted to be teachers or because they wanted to be something else. Some recommendations were asked, if they had any towards the freshmen of this new school generation.

To finish, the final results of the English subject in its first level were used to make a comparison. It was thought to be necessary to take the grades into consideration because that way it was possible to support the arguments expressed at the beginning of the research.

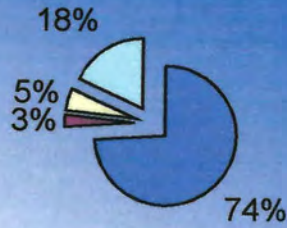
4. Results and Discussion

As this was a descriptive research, only descriptive statistics will be shown in this part: numbers, percentages, etc. of what was seen through the questionnaires. It will show some factors and elements involved in the election and consequently, the results.

4.1 Students' Questionnaire results (see appendix)

- 57 students are still living with their parents. Two students are living with relatives. Four of them are living in a friend's house, and fourteen with somebody else.

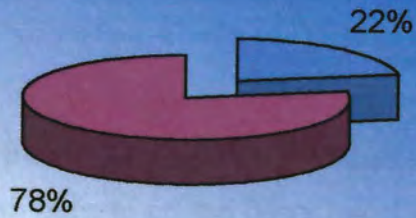
4.1.1 Students Live with



■ parents ■ friends ■ relatives ■ alone

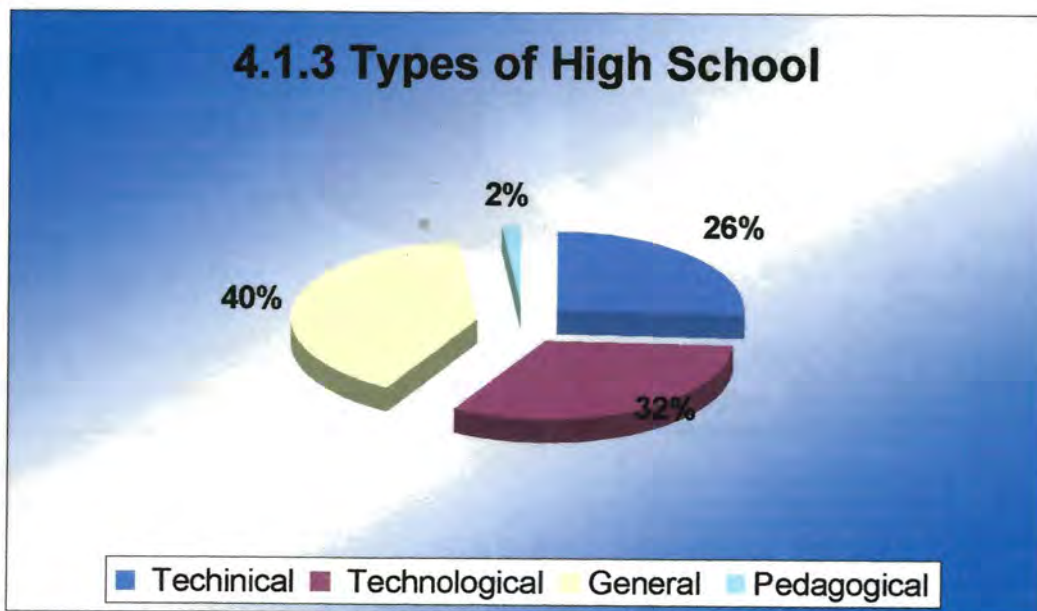
- 17 students out of 77 are working, the rest (60) don't work at all.

4.1.2 Working Students

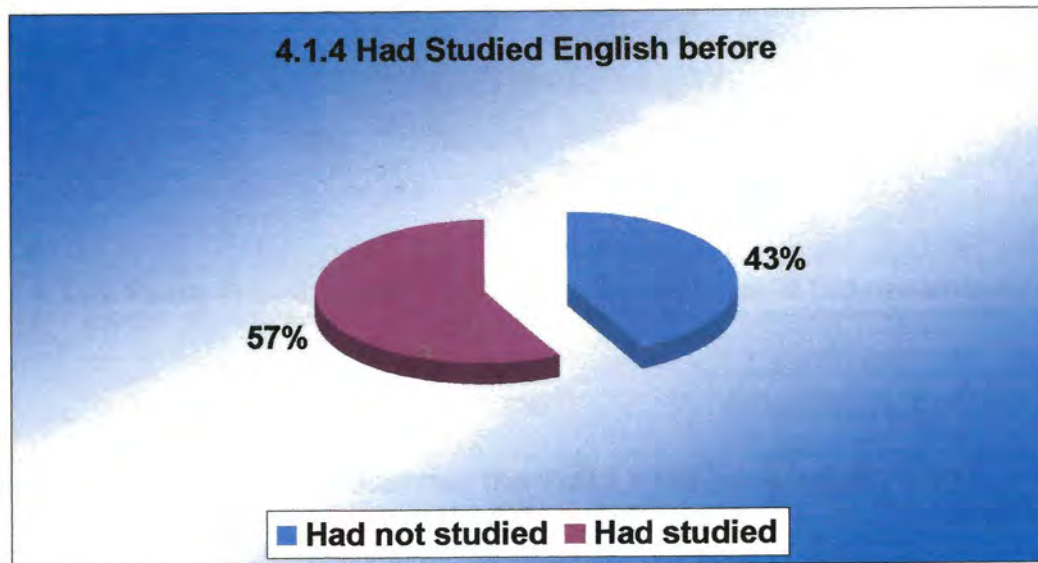


■ Working ■ Don't work

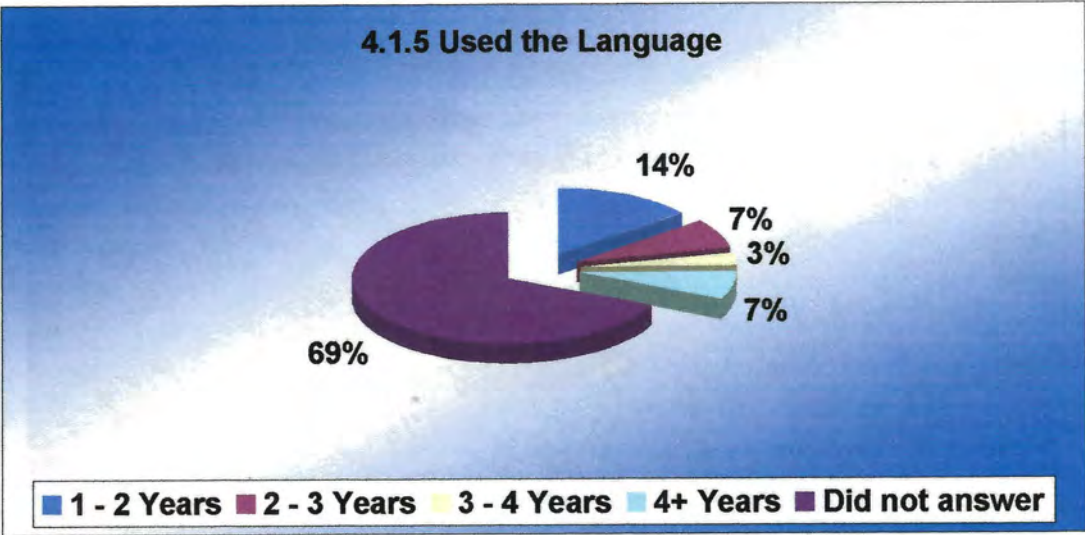
- Their studies are the following: 76 students finished their “bachillerato”, and one has already finished a major.
- The type of “bachillerato” (high school) they studied varies. 16 finished the technician, 20 the technological, 25 the general, 1 the pedagogical and the rest from other types.



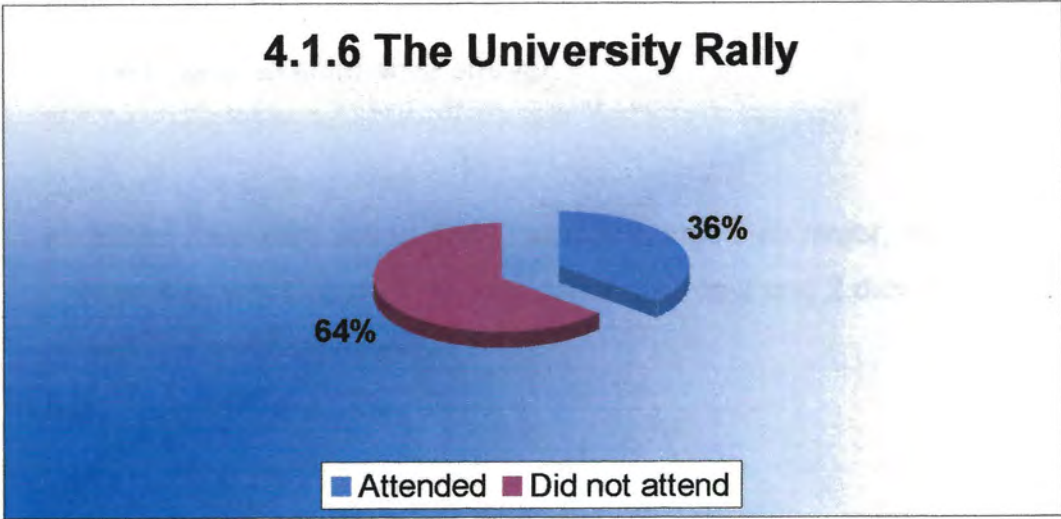
- From all the people that were surveyed, 36 students said that they had never studied English before, on the other hand 41 said that they had already studied this language.



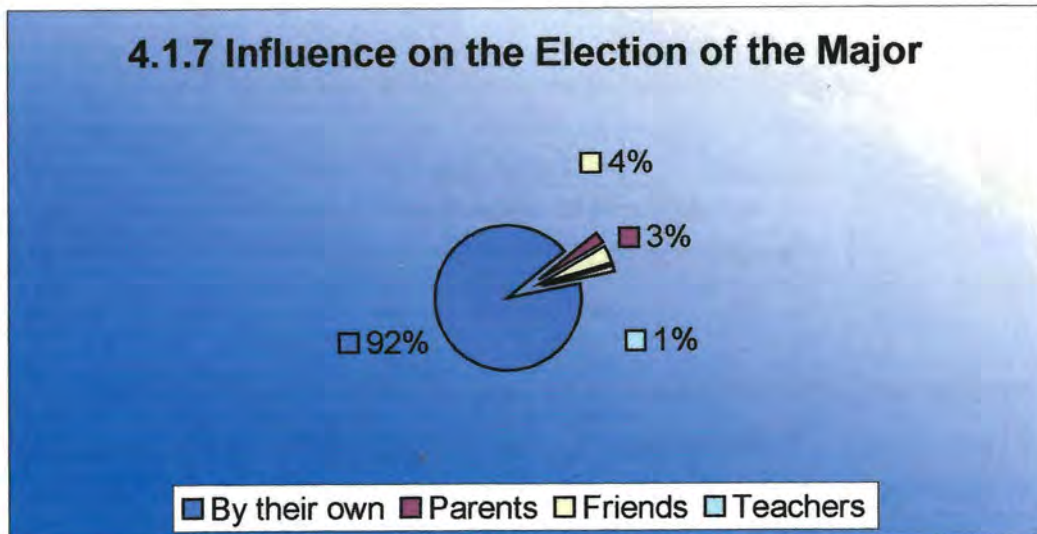
- From those who had already studied the language, 18 students said that they had used the language from 1 to 2 years. 5 students had used it from 2 to 3 years. 2 students, from 3 to 4 years, and 5 said they used the language for more than 4 years.



- 28 students said they attended the 'RALLY UNIVERSITARIO' and 49 didn't.

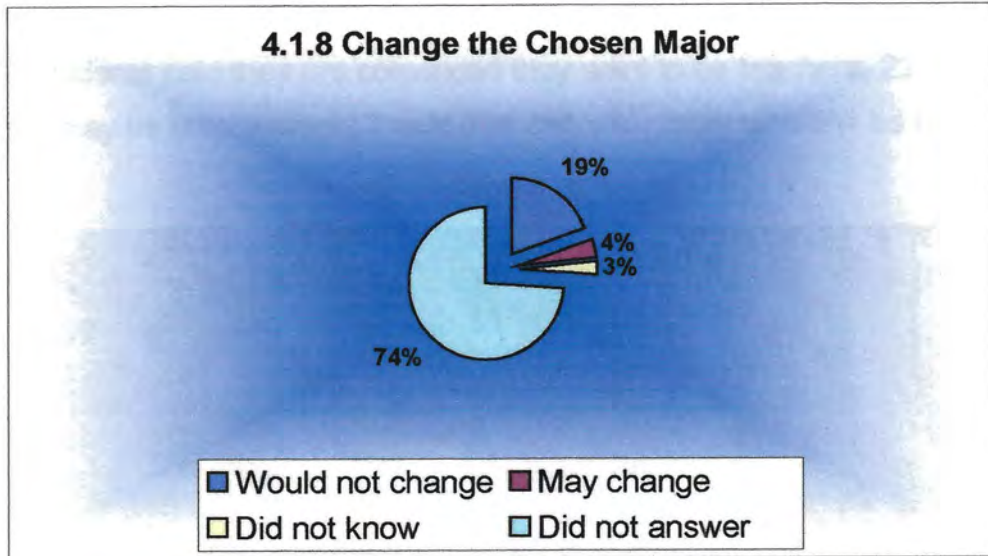


- When these students chose the major they were going to study, 71 expressed that they did it on their own, 6 received some help. From those who received some sort of help, 2 were from their parents, 3 from friends and 1 from a teacher.



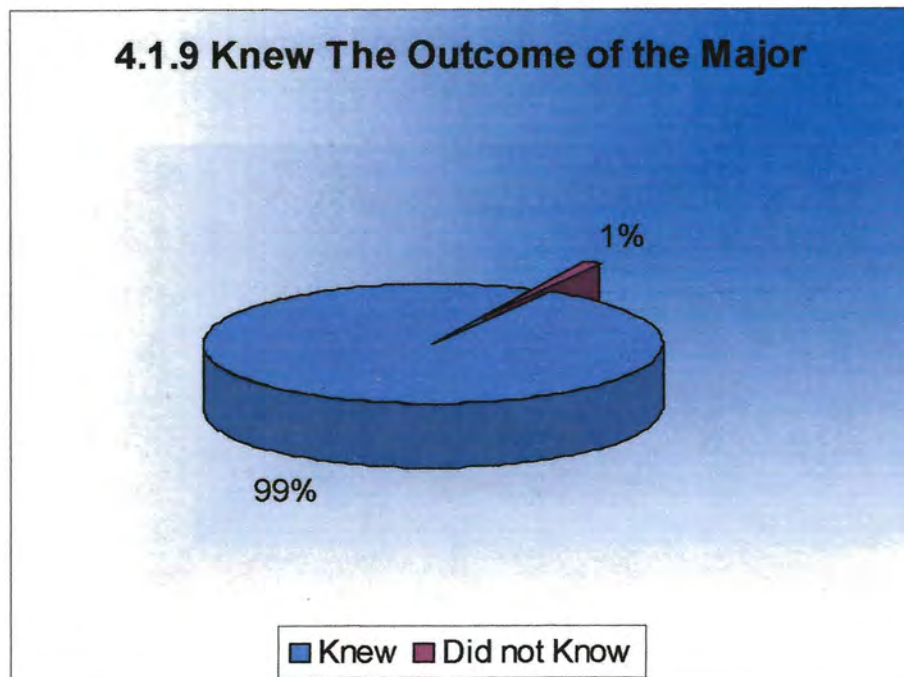
- When they were asked if 'Lengua Inglesa' major was their first choice, all of them gave an affirmative answer.
- When they were asked if they would change their major, 15 students said that they wouldn't do that. 3 students may do it and 2 didn't know. The rest didn't answer this question.

4.1.8 Change the Chosen Major

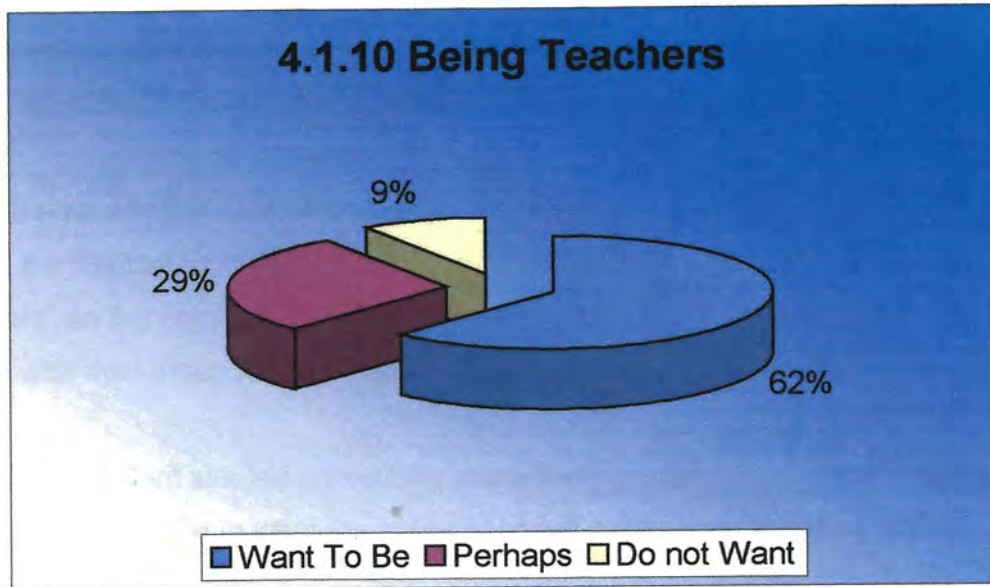


- For those people who said they would change their major, the different majors that they would take are law and economics.
- When they chose the major, 75 pupils said that they knew this major prepares people as teachers. 2 said they didn't know about this.

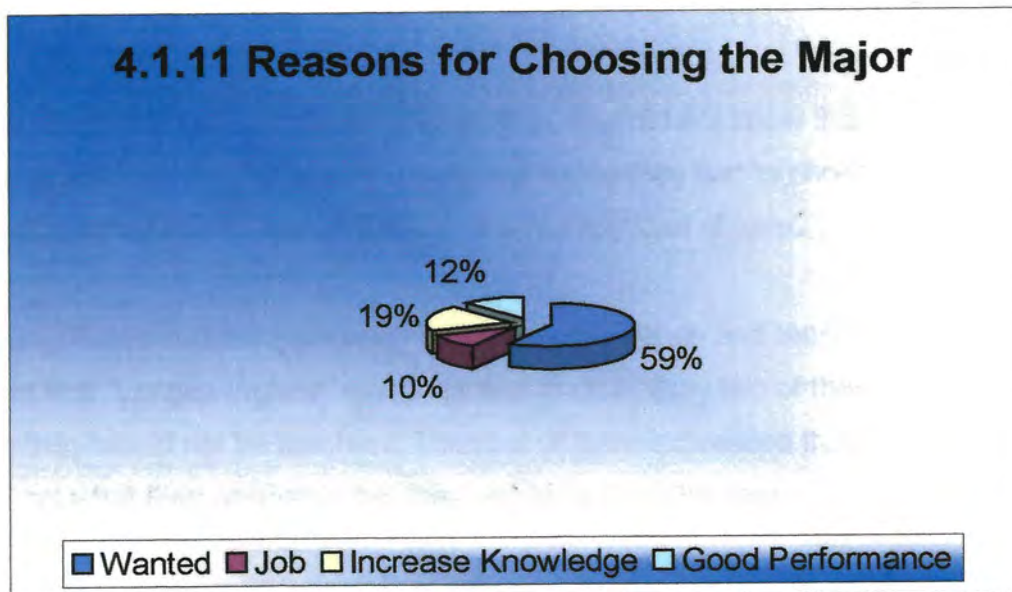
4.1.9 Knew The Outcome of the Major



- 48 students said they are convinced they want to be teachers, 22 said that they may be teachers and 7 said that definitely, they wouldn't be teachers.



- They argued that the most attractive aspect of the major was the area in which they can work on (36 students), the profile when they finish studying (19 students), for learning English (22).



Summary

1) From the questionnaire it was noticeable that most of them are still living with their parents. Just a few of them are working. Which means that almost all of them can spend enough time on their studies.

2) At the time when the questionnaire was applied, only one student had not studied the English language. All of them seemed to be what we call "false beginners" on the learning of the English language. They had already had some contact with the language.

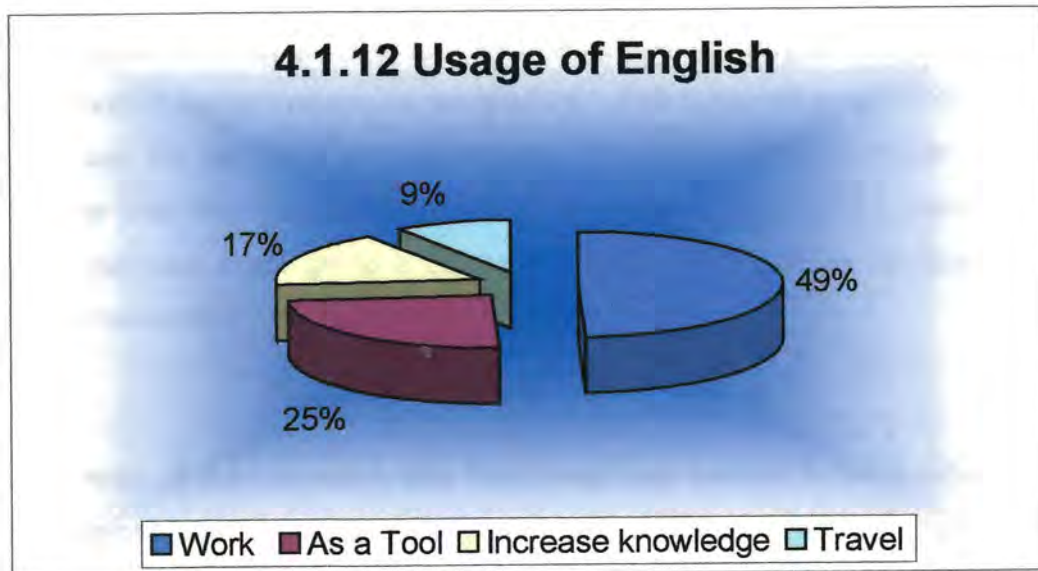
3) Only one student studied something related with pedagogy, the rest of them had a very different profile to what the major is about. In other words, they did not know anything about teaching.

4) Only a third part of all the students wrote that they attended the "rally". Which may mean that only some of them were informed about the objectives of this major.

5) Despite this fact, only two students wrote that they did not know the major prepares people for being teachers. Therefore, when they had to choose their major, they wrote they did it on their own, without any kind of help.

6) They only heard some suggestions from parents, friends and teachers. And they also wrote that "Lengua Inglesa" was their first choice. Only two of them wrote that definitely they would not be teachers. The rest of them expressed that although that was not what they wanted to be, they would work as teachers.

7) They wrote that the most important aspect they could see of this major was the area of work. They consider it is something very important for choosing a major. They seemed to be concerned about that when they had to choose the major. We can see the main reasons they had for choosing the English language major in the following diagram.



8) Even though they expressed they were convinced about their choice when they were asked if they would change their major, most of them said they would change it to law or economics.

4.2 STUDENTS' INTERVIEW

While doing these interviews it was possible to prove what had been stated at the beginning of the research. Maybe there were some differences, but in general what was found out was what was expected. According to them, they want to be

teachers. They decided to study the English Language Major to become teachers but at the same time to use the language for something else.

What students expressed when they answered the interviews becomes remarkable for the research due to the significance of their statements. A first student said "I would love to be a tourist guide or to work in an office; the English language is very important tool for using it when you are working". And a second one mentioned that "I want to use the language for traveling and / or for studying a master degree". Another one said that "the teaching activity is very important and I want to be a teacher. Otherwise, I will go to a company where I can use the language for a better communication."

Although, three of them mention that they absolutely wanted to be teachers, they always expressed that they wanted to work in something else than as teachers. As an example, one of them said that "If I don't work as a teacher, I would like to be a translator or a tourist guide". Another one said that "there is no problem if I work as a teacher but I would rather work as a translator. I think being a teacher is not very difficult but one must have certain abilities for being a teacher. I am definitely going to use the language for getting a better paid job."

Despite this fact, there were some other aspects that appeared while doing the interviews. Different aspects, for instance they said the English Language Major was the major they chose from the others. According to them, they did not receive any kind of help to decide what to study; there was no aid from friends, parents, teachers or any other people but themselves. The results of the rest of the interviews are of great help, according to what they said, as they statements were completely applicable to the goals of the study.

Students' Interview Summary

From these interviews some things were noticeable, such as:

- 1) For all of them, the English major was their first choice. They decided to study English instead of law or marketing or any other major that was offered in the university.
- 2) They don't spend much time out of the classroom for doing a review of what they are learning in the classroom. They do not seem to do any sort of extra work for improving what they are learning. That would be one reason of their problem with a language.

Learning a language is an activity, which is different to other subjects; the learning process involves more than just going to classes. Then, skills are also involved, and therefore it's of great significance to do extra work practicing.

According to Cortada those students who decide to study the English language major need to fulfill with certain specific abilities and attitudes. She expresses her arguments with the following chart.

4.2.1

Math	Verbal	For spatial relations	Of manual motivity	Esthetic	For personal relations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Architect ▪ Astronomer ▪ Scientific in computers ▪ Economist ▪ Statistician ▪ Physician ▪ Engineer ▪ Mathematician ▪ Meteor logician 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lawyer ▪ Librarian ▪ Philosopher ▪ Geographer ▪ Historian ▪ Bachelor in political sciences ▪ Journalist ▪ Teacher of Languages ▪ Teacher of letters ▪ Psychologist ▪ Sociologist ▪ Public translator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Architect ▪ Astronomer ▪ Geographer ▪ Geology ▪ Engineer ▪ Dental mechanic ▪ Optician ▪ Auxilliary radiology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biochemical ▪ Nurse ▪ Specialist in clinical analysis ▪ Dental mechanic ▪ Doctor ▪ Obstetrician ▪ Chemical ▪ Veterinarian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Architect ▪ Musician ▪ Teacher of letters ▪ Teacher of plastic arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lawyer ▪ Manager ▪ Anthropologic ▪ Social worker ▪ Public accountant ▪ Diet specialist ▪ Nurse ▪ Pharmacist ▪ Doctor ▪ Pedagogue ▪ Journalist ▪ Psychologist ▪ Sociologist

3) Most of them said that they had some information about the major. They said that they were aware of the goal of the major, to form teachers of the language. Either they came to the "university rally" or they were informed by some other means, almost all of them declared that they knew about the major.

- 4) Even though they knew what the major was about, neither all of them completely agreed with the outcome, nor wanted to be teachers. Somehow, they seemed to want to use the English language for a different purpose.
- 5) They all think this language is very important for having a good and well paid job. All of them agreed on these comments. Having this language meant a chance for them either to get a better job and therefore a better income or to improve the position they already have by a promotion.
- 6) Some students said that when they finish, they want to use the language for something different to teaching. They did not specify what that activity was but they said that maybe working as tour guides, doing translations or studying abroad.
- 7) Only one person doesn't have teachers in his family. The rest of them have relatives and / or parents as teachers. In one way or another they were directly related to the teaching field.
- 8) All of them agreed that the university must offer at least one more major related to the English language. Specifically, translation. And most of them also mentioned about being tourist guides.

4.3 TEACHERS' INTERVIEW

When these interviews were accomplished it was noticeable the agreement between the professors' perceptions and the author's Cortada (1983), Sánchez (1981), Tyler (1986), Powell (1981), and some others. Hence, it became a support for the author's point of view mainly because of the similarity of opinions. For the

professors students were not really aware of their own choice, as well as for the author. Also, for the professors students did not really understand what they were enrolled in. And as with those two examples, there were some other statements that led to the same part, it was shown that the hypothesis and declarations were not totally mistaken.

Teachers' Interview Summary

- All of them declared that they liked this first level because it is one of the most vital stages throughout the learning process. It becomes the basis of the English learning process and that in it they form students to the new kind of school along with the responsibilities they will have before they finish studying their major.

- Another point they talked about was the willingness for participating. They said that most of them were willing to participate just some times but the rest of the time they showed laziness.

- They agreed with the dropping outs. All of them considered that there was a high rate of dropping outs because of diverse factors, such as a job; didn't know about the major's profile; economical situation, age or because they were not studying what they wanted.

- They also commented about the high rate on failure. A) They said that it was due to irresponsibility and laziness. For instance, when they were asked to hand in homework, either they did not do it or they did it late. Somehow, that affected their grades. B) Another reason teachers gave was that perhaps they just enroll in the major for learning to speak in English. When they

realized that there is more involved in learning a language, they felt disappointed, and because of laziness they failed. C) One more reason they gave was the influence from the mother tongue. Specifically, they said that people who speak Maya find English rather difficult to learn.

- Even though the university has been giving more information to the new students, there is still something to do. Students need to have the whole information about every major that the university offers. They need to know about the objectives of every major and the possible results of having studied one. Choosing a major is a very important issue and must be done carefully.

It is possible to compare all these conclusions with examples of the teachers' statements when they were interviewed. For instance, one of the teachers said that some "students come to the class showing willingness for learning but most of them they don't even know what they are about to start doing. Only those who have been well informed on what is the major about tend to remain in the major."

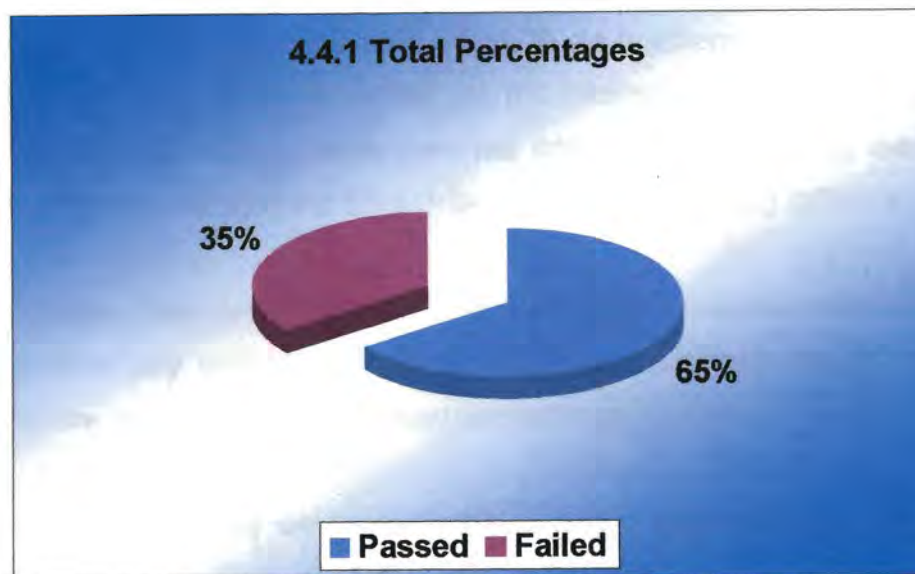
A second one said that "they are not really aware of what they are studying, they think they just go to learn how to speak English and that's all, some of them are not very sure of what they want to study (around 20%). Perhaps they want to learn some English but they do not want to be teachers, they might be interested in working in tourism -in his particular point of view".

A third professor commented that "some students seem to be sure that they want to be in this major, but he's concerned about some kind of influence. He uttered his concern on this issue because students don't want to be teachers; they want to use the language for something else. They want to get the language for getting a good job."

4.4 A REPORT OF THE STUDENTS' GRADES

Another aspect that was necessary to consider for having a better result in the research was the report of the students' final grades. When the students finished their first level of English their results showed what their performance was like and also reflected the result of having selected the English Language as their major.

From these results it was possible to notice that there was too much failure and therefore there must have been too much dropout. There were an initial number of 109 students. Out of those 109 students 78 passed to the next level and 31 did not. It represents a 65 % of the total for those who passed and 35 % for those who did not.



5. DISCUSSION

From the tools that were used they led to a point of conclusion. From the questionnaires it can be said that they were answered differently to what was thought before. Their answers from the questionnaire were different to the answers got from the interviews and verified by the teachers who answered the interviews. Some of the most important elements found in the different tools used were written here.

- Despite of what was stated in the hypothesis; students wrote that they know what the English Language Major profile is. Even though they accepted they did not like the outcome this major has for the students, almost everybody wrote that they wanted to be teachers.
- Even though only one person had taken some kind of preparation related to pedagogy, students expressed their desire to be teachers. But if a revision of what the teachers said that is carried out, the information varies. They said that it seemed to them as if students were not interested in becoming teachers of English. They only wanted the English language for something different.
- Another aspect that was different to what was thought was that they wrote they didn't receive any sort of help. They mentioned that they chose the major because they wanted. They wrote they wanted to be teachers of English.
- They were asked if they would change their major, they wrote that they would change to law or economics. Needless to say, it was surprising. It was thought that as they were very convinced of their election, they would not change their area. Yet they gave two extra options.
- It was possible to notice a disagreement with the initial data collected because they wrote they had chosen this major because they were concerned about the

work. They said that this major has a very wide area for work then if they studied in this major, they would get a job easily.

- In contrast with the data obtained from the students' questionnaires, the information collected from the interviews were a little different. In spite of their statements in the questionnaire, this time they said that they would not work as teachers. They said that they would work in the tourism branch.
- Some people said that they would work in the translation field. Maybe they didn't really want to be teachers. Most of them did not agreed with the outcome of the major. This information was corroborated with the teachers' interviews. Teachers said that there was a high rate of failure because students did not want to work as teachers but for something else. Because of the area where they are living in referred to tourism or to enhance the levels they were working on.
- Maybe some of them wanted to be teachers of English but the rest of them wanted the English language for something else. This statement is proved with what was obtained from the teachers' interviews. The teachers said that most of them don't really know what they want for themselves. Maybe they say that they like the major and the profile it has but they are not sure. They mentioned some factors such as their background, their age, influences, economical, situations and so forth.
- Teachers said that as some of them were working, it was difficult for them to go along with the two tasks. Laziness was also something that teachers mentioned a lot. They said students were not willing to participate and that always affected the students' performance.

- There was a tendency towards the translation preparation. They said they wanted to work as translators. They agreed that this major offers them a big opportunity to work in many fields and most important they will be well paid.
- Differently to what was obtained in the questionnaire about the election of the major, the information obtained this time was a little different. They said that they were all informed the first time, but this time their answers varied. Some of them expressed their uncertainty on the election of the major because they did not really know what was this major about.
- Only a small percentage said that they were really informed of all the details we need to know before enrolling in a major at a university level.
- They agreed on something very important. They expressed their concern about having another major related to the English language. They mentioned specifically Translation. They commented that students would have more options and that would be a benefit for school and for them.
- It is relevant to say that even though all teachers said that now university is giving more information to the students about the majors are offered here, there is still some work that must be done. University must give more information in the "Curso de Introducción a la Universidad" (CIU), maybe improving it by making the necessary changes for having the students better prepared when they enter formally the institution

6. CONCLUSION

With the aid of the tools used for the procedures it was likely to find out results that were akin to what had been thought before doing the study. Hence, it was possible to support the initial argues of this case study after carrying out this research.

Although there was some more expected than what was obtained from the research, in general the data was akin to the main hypothesis. Yet, there were some slight differences to what was expressed in them. As pointed out before, there was a deep concern about the students' failure and also about their desertion. From these studies it was seen that these two problems go along. They are directly related. They definitely derive one from another. In this case, failure leads to desertion in most of the cases.

Moreover, it was possible to see according to what they said that they were not forced to choose a specific major, they chose what they wanted. At least that was what they expressed. Nevertheless, they did not make it clear if they chose that major because they liked or not.

It was confirmed what was said, that students only took this major because of the labor field; not because they wanted to be teachers. They wanted to have a wide range for working in the state. Almost all of them mentioned about the tourism issue. Then, it was easy to conclude that what they are looking for is just the language and not the necessary tools for being a teacher.

This becomes a problem for them due to mainly the objectives of the major. The courses are designed in a way so that students may become teachers. Pedagogy is a very important aspect and it is in the whole university school life.

Students have all their subjects related to the teaching process. Thus, they start facing problems from the beginning of the major. What some teachers commented,

is that because of not being sure of what they want, it happens that students fail a lot and some of them drop out of the school. It turns into a school problem. Students' problems lead to school's problems when there is too much failure. This might mean a failure for the institution, for the teachers and also for the whole system. After that, what would be the students' point of view of the teachers? Even worse, what would the school's image be for the public?

7. RECCOMENDATIONS

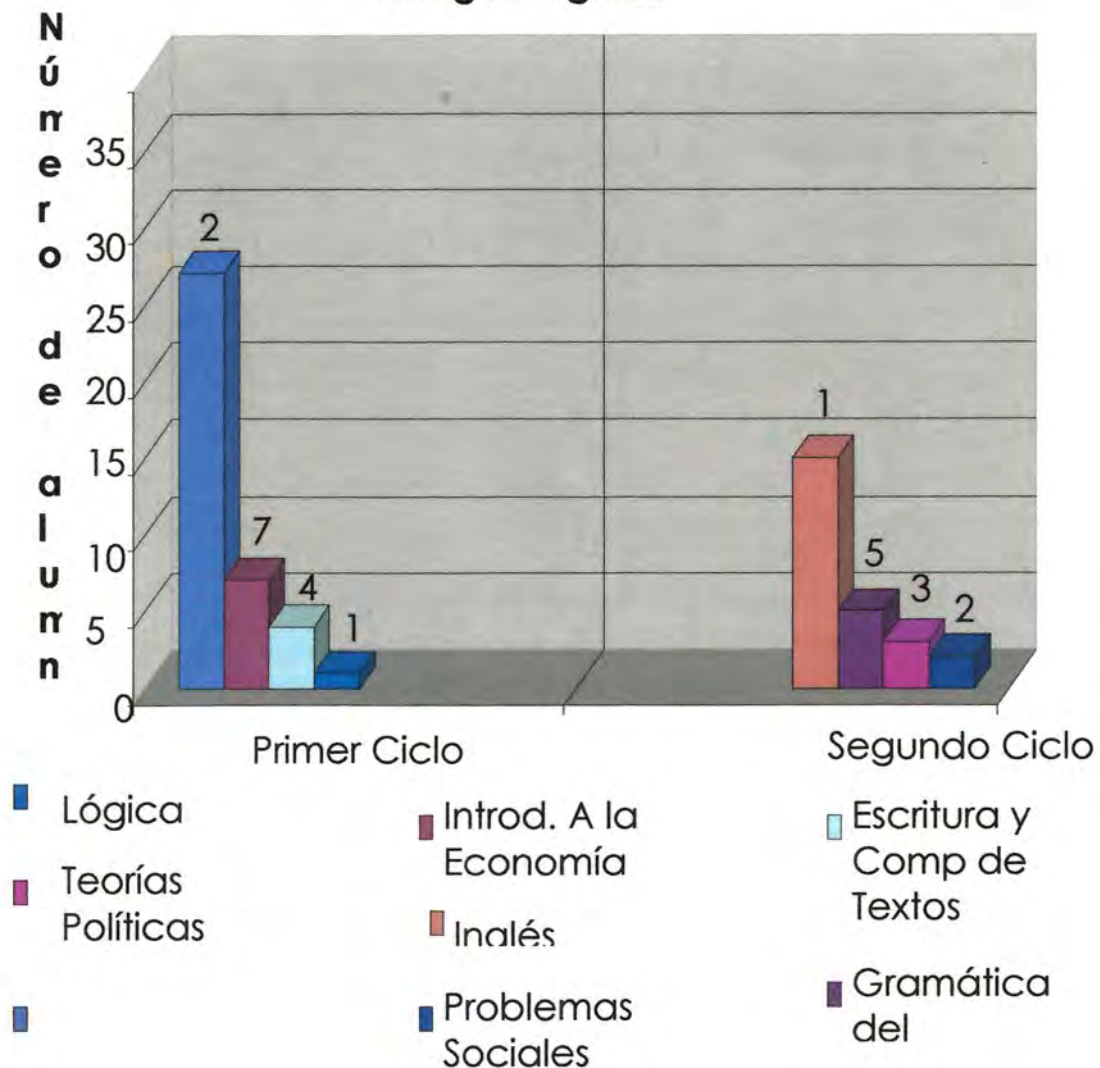
Now that some of the main sources of the failure matter are identified, here are some simple recommendations, which possibly could help the school and most importantly, students, not to drop out school. Probably having less failure within the subjects that are taught during the curricula of the English Language major or helping them to choose a major that really applies their interests, goals and skills.

1. Teachers agreed that even though school offers now more information about the majors. There is still some work we have to do on this major. Thus, it would be a good idea to improve the 'university rally', in order to have better informed students and who will not fail a lot. Maybe the diffusion must be taken to other parts of the state or the city where it is not available.
2. Almost all students agreed that they want to have another major related to the English language major. Specifically, they talked about translation. They talked about it once and again. Therefore, it might be a good idea for the school and for people to set this major within the university. The college would attract more people and then more income. Even though teachers or people who speak English is what most companies and firms prefer to hire throughout the state.
3. It is considered elemental to have a **counseling center** in the school. So that if students want to study a certain major, they can do it with the support

of somebody who has experience. Instead of just going around and wasting their time, they can go directly to what they want or need to satisfy their needs and to achieve their goals.

Somehow the university is now offering help for those students with problems but there is still much work to do. This was reflected in the results of the grades of the students of the major, where it is possible to see that the area in which most people failed was English.

7.1.1 Materias reprobadas por alumnos en el Programa Piloto de Tutorías en la carrera de Lengua Inglesa



4. It's necessary to take some time for improving the program of the CIU. It still needs some time to work on and rearrange the significant information we had in that course.

We need to remember that students are being shown the opportunities they have when they are in the school. If they have to change their major, it's better to do it at the beginning of all the studies, and not to undergo a lot of problems while they are studying something they don't like.

8. GLOSSARY

Major: it's a particular subject and area one studies as the main subject at university. One may major in several areas, for instance economics, history, languages, etc.

L1: this is the mother tongue. It's the language one grows up with. With this language, one automatically is a native speaker of this L1.

L2: this is not the mother tongue. It's a language one may acquire by learning either in the place where it's spoken or in a different place.

Factor: is a single part that combines with others to form the cause of something. In this situation, some factors are together and they have influence on the learning process.

Willingness: is when someone does something fairly enthusiastically and because one really wants to do it, rather than because one is forced to do it. When you're willing to learn a language, you do all the necessary things for succeeding, and you do that because you really want to succeed.

Achieve: is when someone succeeds, fulfills or causes something to happen, usually after a lot of effort. Then, if you achieve the second language (L2), you succeed in the learning process and you are able to speak it.

Refocus: Is when someone that has been going in the wrong way turns around and goes back to the correct one. That person focus his attention to a better point. In this case someone that chose a wrong major, refocus and change to the right one.

Enroll: When somebody enrolls in something, that person becomes part of a list, and therefore of a course of a college. Is when somebody becomes part of the group.

Tutee: It Is a student who works with a teacher, who is responsible of the student's learning process. A tutor and his tutee work together for talking about the student's performance and achievement during the course of their studies.

3

³ Adapted from the "*Cambridge International Dictionary of English*". First Edition. Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge. (1995).

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Attachments

1.

CUESTIONARIO DIAGNOSTICO DE ELECCIÓN DE CARRERA
--

Responde sinceramente las siguientes preguntas:

1. Nombre (opcional)
2. Edad: _____
3. Procedencia: _____
4. Vives con:
a) padres b) parientes c) amigos d) otros
5. Trabajas además de estudiar?
a) si b) no
6. Escolaridad máxima
a) bachillerato b) Licenciatura c) maestria

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38. Taken from the internet site of the University of Essex:

URL: *http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~scholp/lg475_575webinf.htm* Visited March, 19 20002.

7. ¿Tipo de bachillerato que cursaste?
a) técnico b) tecnológico c) general
8. ¿Habías estudiado inglés antes por iniciativa propia?
a) si b) no
9. ¿Por cuanto tiempo?
a) 1-2 años b) 2-3 años c) 3-4 años d) más de cuatro
10. ¿En qué institución?
a) pública b) privada c) otro
11. ¿Asististe al rally universitario?
a) si b) no
12. ¿ Por qué elegiste la carrera?
a) por gusto b) para encontrar un buen trabajo c) para
aumentar tu conocimiento d) lo necesitas para desempeñar bien tu trabajo
e) para complacer a mis padres.
13. ¿Te ayudó alguien a elegir la carrera?
a) si b) no
14. ¿ Si contestaste afirmativamente, ¿ quién te ayudó?
a) padres b) amigos c) maestros d) otro
15. Lengua inglesa fue:
a) primera opción b) segunda opción c) tercera opción
16. Si lengua inglesa no fue tu primera opción, piensas cambiar de carrera en los siguientes semestres?
a) si b) no c) tal vez d) no lo sé
16. Si respondiste afirmativamente la pregunta anterior ¿ a qué carrera piensas cambiarte?
-
17. ¿ Sabías que la licenciatura en lengua inglesa te prepara para ser profesor de inglés?
a) si b) no
18. ¿ Quieres ser maestro?
a) si b) no c) tal vez

20. ¿Qué es lo que más te atrajo para elegir la carrera de lengua inglesa?
a) su campo de trabajo b) el perfil del egresado c) el poder aprender inglés.
d) otro

21. ¿Te gusta la lectura?
a) si b) no c) depende del tema d) cuando tengo que
hacerlo

22. ¿Con qué frecuencia lees?
a) todos los días b) algunas veces c) nunca d) cuando lo tengo que
hacer

23. ¿Te gusta redactar?
a) si b) no c) sólo cuando lo tengo que hacer d)
algunas veces

24. Al redactar, ¿cómo eres con las ideas?
a) rápido b) lento c) promedio d) me cuesta trabajo

25. ¿Dedicas tiempo para estudiar fuera del salón de clases?
a) si b) no c) cuando lo tengo que hacer d)
algunas veces

26. ¿Cuánto tiempo le dedicas al estudio fuera de clases?
a) ½ hora b) 1 hora c) dos horas d) más de dos horas

27. ¿Te gusta practicar lo que aprendes?
a) si b) no c) algunas veces d) cuando lo tengo que
hacer.

28. Cuando tienes dudas:
a) preguntas al maestro b) esperas a que alguien más pregunte c)
te quedas con las dudas

29. En el salón de clases eres:
a) callado b) participativo c) hablas cuando se te pide

30. ¿Cómo te consideras?
a) tímido b) muy sociable c) normal d) otro

31. Cuando no obtienes lo que quieres:
a) persistes b) lo olvidas c) intentas más tarde d) otro

32 ¿Te gusta platicar con personas que no conoces?
a) si b) no c) algunas veces d) otro

33. El inglés que obtengas al estudiar la carrera lo quieres utilizar para:
a) trabajar b) como una herramienta en la vida c) poder viajar a otros países
d) aumentar mis conocimientos

34 ¿En qué te gustaría trabajar al terminar la carrera?

35 ¿Trabajarías en algún otro empleo que no sea el de maestro de inglés?
a) si b) no c) tal vez d) no lo sé

36 ¿Cuál es tu opinión de las oportunidades de trabajo que la carrera te ofrece?
a) son muy buenas b) suficientes c) no son suficientes d) malas

37 ¿Tienes algún familiar relacionado con la docencia?
a) si b) no

38 ¿Cuál será la mayor satisfacción que obtengas al terminar tu carrera?
a) obtener tu título b) empleo

39 ¿Cómo te imaginas tu vida laboral en el futuro?
a) buena b) mala c) regular d) no lo sé

40. ¿Crees poder lograr un buen desempeño en tu carrera?
a) si b) no c) tal vez d) no lo sé

41 ¿Cómo te ves a ti mismo en un futuro cercano?

42 ¿Consideras que la universidad debería brindar mayor información sobre las carreras?

2.

ENTREVISTA A LOS ALUMNOS

1. ¿De dónde eres?
2. ¿Vives sólo o con tus padres?
3. ¿Trabajas además de estudiar? ¿En qué?
4. ¿Le dedicas tiempo al estudio fuera del salón de clases?
5. ¿Qué objetivos tienes con respecto a tus estudios?
6. ¿El inglés es fácil o difícil para ti?
7. ¿Te gusta la lectura?
8. ¿Fue Lengua Inglesa tu primera opción?
9. ¿Qué opinas del idioma Inglés?
10. ¿Cómo supiste de esta carrera?
11. ¿Qué opinas de la carrera?
12. ¿Te sugirió alguien estudiar esta carrera?
13. ¿Que dijeron tus padres con respecto a la carrera que querías estudiar?
14. ¿Qué quieres hacer cuando termines la carrera?
15. ¿Hay algún maestro en tu familia?
16. ¿Qué opinas de la docencia?
17. ¿Te gustaría ser maestro de inglés?
18. ¿Consideras que es difícil ser maestro?
19. ¿Si no quieres ser maestro de inglés, en qué vas a utilizar el conocimiento que adquieras?
20. ¿En qué te beneficia saber inglés?
21. ¿Consideras que con el inglés tendrás una mejor remuneración?
22. ¿Piensas que la universidad debería ofrecer otras carreras relacionadas con el idioma Inglés, pero no para ser maestros?

Students' interviews results

1. She's married. She's from Tabasco and she wants to run her own business. She finds easy the English language. She stated that English language is the most important language around the world. She knew about the major through some friends and relatives. She has relatives who work as teachers. She thinks teaching is very important. And she says she wants to be a teacher. Although, she also said that she would like to be a translator or a tourist guide. She definitely thinks that university should provide more information about the major to the freshmen that are about to register. And also that the college should expand the areas related to the English language such as translation.

2. He lives with some relatives. He's from Carrillo Puerto. He said he wanted to work in a private school. He thinks the English language is very important and it's easy for him. He said he knew about this major by teachers and friends. There was a sort of piece of advice from teachers to him. He also said that he has some relatives in the teaching area. He thinks teaching is a very important activity and with the English language, he can earn very good money. He stated that she wants to be a teacher because of the things he can get as a teacher. But, if she has to do something else, she wants to be a tours guide. University should provide more information about the majors.

3. She lives with her parents. She's not working at the moment. She only studies when it is necessary. English language major was her first choice. She said that nobody helped her for making the decision about the major in which she was about the study. Her parents didn't agree with her decision of studying in this area. Her sister is studying the same major at the moment. She has some relatives that are working as teachers. She said that there is no problem if she works as a teacher but she said she would rather work as a translator. She thinks being a teacher is not very difficult but that one must have certain abilities for being teachers. She said she is going to use the language for getting a better paid job. Communication is very important and even better if she can speak more than only her mother tongue. University should offer more majors related to the language. Such as translation and tourists guiding.

4. She lives alone, she's not working at the moment. And her main goal is to finish the major and to get the degree. English language is not very difficult for her. The major was her first choice. She thinks the language is very important nowadays. She also said that nobody helped her with her decision. Her parents didn't say anything about this. She said she wants to be an English teacher. All her family is within the area of teaching. But, she thinks university should offer more than just one major related to the language. She expressed her concern on learning the language. Because through this, she can earn more money. University should give more info to those students who are trying to get in this major.

5. He is from this city. He is not working at the moment. His main goals are that he wants to finish his major with nice grades. He thinks the English language is little difficult for him. He said this major was his first choice. He says it is very important for the university to give enough info of the majors that we have here. He thinks the 'rally' is a nice method. He says in his case that he likes the major. He has checked all the curriculum of the major and he says he likes it. Nobody helped him with his decision of studying this major. He said his parents were not very convinced about the importance of this major. He said he wanted to use the language for traveling and/ or for studying a master degree. He has some teachers in his family. . He said the teaching activity is very important and he said he wants to be a teacher. If he does not work as a teacher, then he will go to a company where he can use the language for having a better communication. And more than that, earn good money. He expressed his concern about the lacking of information in the university about the major. She thinks it must be improved.

6. She is from Chetumal and she lives with her parents. She does not work. Currently, she is not working but, she would like to start as soon as she can. She said she does not spend much time doing review or home-works. Unless it is very necessary because she might have an exam. She said her goal is to get her title automatically (with her average grade of 9 or more). She finds the language very easy. She said English language major was her first choice. She knew about this major through the 'rally'. She thinks the language is a very useful tool and that with it, it is easy to get some more money. In her family there are not any teachers but she said that if there are not options. But she said that she would love to be a tourist guide or to work in an office. This tool is very important to use it when you are working. She said she would like the university to offer more majors related to the English language. Those areas could be like translation and guiding.

3.

ENTREVISTA A LOS DOCENTES

1. ¿Cuál es su nombre?
2. ¿Cuántas veces a dado el primer nivel de inglés?
3. ¿le gusta dar inglés I? Si / no ¿Por qué?
4. ¿qué opina de los alumnos que entran a la carrera de Lengua Inglesa?
5. ¿Considera usted que están seguros de lo que están estudiando?
6. ¿Cuáles son los problemas más comunes con los que usted se ha encontrado cuando da esta materia?
7. ¿Ha observado deserción en este nivel?
8. ¿Cuál cree usted sea el motivo de esta deserción?
9. ¿Considera usted que la universidad debería dar más o mejor información a los alumnos de nuevo ingreso sobre las carreras?

Teachers' interviews results

Subject 1

She has taught the first level of the language three times. She said she likes this level because it's a challenge for her to give the basis of the knowledge. She said she needs to find the best way for providing the material to the students. So, they can learn and produce the new language that they are just working with. She also stated that some students come to the class showing willingness for learning but most of them they don't even know what they are about to start doing. Only those who have been well informed on what is the major about tend to remain in the major.

She said that during the past years students didn't know what was this major about. They didn't know that university train them as teachers. And there's more than just speaking involved in the area. She said that the most common problems she has faced while she's been teaching are the listening skill and the oral production. She stated that they might not have a studying technique, which derives in problems during the learning process.

Fortunately, things are changing now. She said that the program that the school implemented for new comers is an excellent idea. With the CIU, perhaps problems of this kind will not finish, but they'll be less. Besides, she said the college should prepare better this course.

Furthermore, she expressed her concern about the high rate of students who give up their studies. Mainly, the first levels of the language that cause delay during their school life.

She finally stated that university should inform better the students before they enroll in a major. Whatever it might be.

Subject 2

She has taught the first level of the English language only once here in the university. But she has also taught the same level in Veracruz; where she comes from. She said she likes this level because when she gives this level she starts forming the students' image. And that becomes a relevant stage for the students learning process. She also said that she didn't like it because she usually has a lot of students at that level. Then, it's difficult to have a good performance with such a big number of students.

She said that one of the most common and big problems is that they are not really aware of what they are studying. She said that they think they just go to learn how to speak English and that's all. That's very far from reality, there are more things involved in this learning process. There are so many things that go along with the language that complement the major. So, when they realize that, they get disappointed and either they give up studying or they fail their subjects. Perhaps because they were not sure of what they wanted when they registered and besides, they did not know what was the major about.

Another problem that she mentioned was that as the course is made having in consideration that students are false beginners (they already know some English) when teachers start from a certain point of the language students have so many problems. Some may have some quantity of English, but the rest don't know anything.

Moreover, she expressed her concern about the amount of failure and the high rate of people who face problems in their first English courses. She stated two main factors that she considers might be the cause of this problem, that a) for some

people who have some kind of influence from a second language (specifically, Maya) it's very difficult to learn this language. B) They don't realize that by this time they are in a university. They have to consider that fact. University level is different to the other stages of the school life. They must do their best for succeeding in whatever they want.

Finally, she stated that university must give more information to the students before they register in a specific major. It does not matter which one. The important issue involves that the college inform them about the majors and the educational model.

Subject 3

He has only taught once the first level of English, but with two groups, one group in the morning and another one in the afternoon. He declared his concern to one of his groups. He said he liked teaching this level because by this stage most students are very dynamic and willing to participate in whatever the teacher may ask them to do.

* This applied directly to the morning class. With the afternoon group it was different because he found some sort of difficulties when teaching.

He also said he likes this level because he can inculcate the sense of responsibility in the students to do what they have to in order to do a good performance in their school life at this college level.

He said that in his groups the students' levels vary because they may have studied the language before in the prior schools. He also commented about their personalities, because if they were accustomed to participate they would have good results. Otherwise, they would have problems with the learning process.

About the idea of studying the English language major, the professor commented that some of them are not very sure of what they want to study (around 20%). Perhaps they want to learn some English but they do not want to be teachers, they might be interested on working on tourism -in his particular point of view. They seem not to be very motivated to teach what they learn through their studies. One important reason could be their age. They are still not sure of what they want from life.

Of the main factors that he could notice for choosing Lengua Inglesa as their major, he mentioned a very remarkable one, the benefit they can get once they learn the English language. This happens mainly because we are located in an area where English is vital for performing a job. And moreover, they can earn good money

The main problem he could see in this first level was the irresponsibility students showed when coursing this subject. Most of the time, when they were asked to hand in homework, they would always give it with some days delayed. He said it was a very difficult problem to deal with. In general laziness and irresponsibility affected them in their grades and because of this they got low grades.

The average failure was very high. He said it was the same as it has always been with the beginning of the major of every generation when they start studying in this major. In this case as with many others the problems were derived from what he mentioned in the last paragraph. He declared he felt very good with the morning group because they worked more and therefore, there were fewer people who failed.

Dropping outs were also very common in this stage (mainly with the afternoon group). He pointed out that reasons might be a) economical b) job c) or because they are not studying what they really want.

Although he explained that now college gives more information to the students about the majors, there is still need for more information. Students need more information about the objectives of each one of the majors and the result of having studied this major. What is the job they will be able to perform when they finish school.

Subject 4

He has only taught once the first level of English here in the University. He liked it because he says it is the basis for the whole major thus, it is of great importance for them. He also mentioned about the students' attitudes. He said that some of the students who are enrolled in the English Language major are not very sure of what they are doing. Perhaps, the reason is that they are still teenagers who don't know yet what they want to study at college. Their future objectives and perspectives of life are not very defined.

He also expressed that some students seem to be sure that they want to be in this major, but he's concerned about some kind of influence. He uttered his concern on this issue because students don't want to be teachers; they want to use the language for something else. They want to get the language for either getting a good job, or for being promoted in the jobs they already have. Then, everything is related to an issue, job.

The most serious problems he could find in the first level of the English language are very little participation and unwillingness for speaking. And as long as it is a special learning process in which these two elements have an important role they, it becomes a big problem.

He talked about an average of 20% for dropping outs in the group he had lately, which was a high level of failure. Despite this fact, he declared dropping outs were

less in this last course than in the ones before. He said that the main cause of less students dropping out were that they were a little more prepared. They had already learnt some English before and somehow that resulted in an advantage because could manage to pass the course in a very effective way.

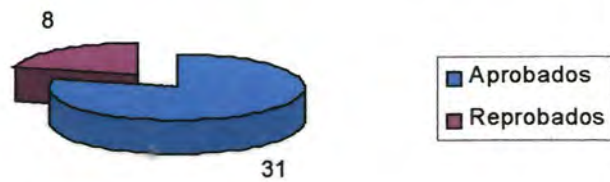
Finally, he concluded that university should inform more the students about the majors they are going to list to. Sometimes they tend to follow what some people do; in this case relatives and friends. And also because they want to work in the tourism area. Then, they just want as tool for getting a good job and incomes.

4.

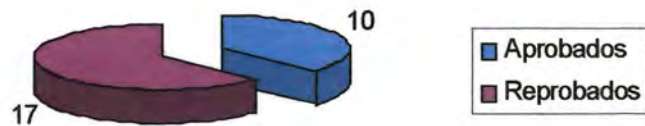
Inglés I Grupo 1



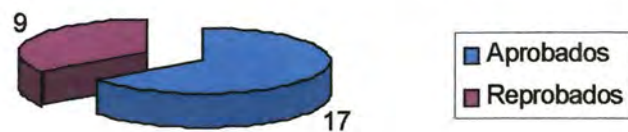
Inglés I Grupo 2



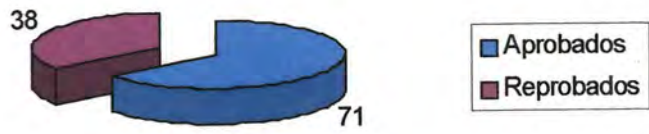
Inglés I Grupo 3



Inglés I Grupo 4



Total de Alumnos



Porcentajes Totales

