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An Investigation on the Problems Encountered by the First Year Students Following French Certificate Course for Beginners at the University of Kelaniya

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The Department of Modern Languages, University of Kelaniya being the leading language teaching Department in both undergraduate and graduate levels in Sri Lanka has granted the opportunity for the undergraduates from all the four faculties of the University to learn French language as beginners. This study intends to analyse the problems of the undergraduates who follow the Part one of the Certificate Course in French encounter at the initiative period of learning the language. In doing the research the undergraduates who follow the Level one of the Certificate Course in 2016 are taken into consideration. The students are interviewed at the end of each lesson individually by distributing a questionnaire to make a database about each and every difficulty that they came across in terms of syntax, dictation, pronunciation etc. This process is going to be followed during a period of six months that can be considered as the initiative period and at the end it is expected to analyse the data with the intention of designing the pedagogy, teacher techniques and exercises in order to minimize the commonly faced problems by a majority of the students. Moreover the research findings will be utilised to select substantial studying materials that can cater to the needs of the beginners of the language which will enable the students to improve their vocabulary, dictation, pronunciation and listening. Especially the research findings will make it easy in selecting the materials that give extra practice to the difficult areas of language. Additionally, the research will open the gates to find out the language acquisition levels of the undergraduates who follow the subjects related to Science, Commerce and recognise the extra exercises that will help them master the language while following their major courses as a lack of enthusiasm towards language learning within the undergraduates from the mentioned faculties has been observed in the last few years owing to the workload in their main Degree course.

Key words: exercises, language acquisition, pedagogy, studying materials, teacher techniques