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## Students' linguistic difficulties facing bilingualism in high school in Madagascar

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### ABSTRACT

*Besides the political side, one of the reasons pushing the successive leaders of Madagascar to continuously change the language of instruction is its lack of mastery by teachers and students, especially French. This article reveals the results of surveys carried out among students and teachers in the final year of some high schools in Antananarivo concerning their linguistic difficulties. The observation and the report showed that Malagasy pupils do not master their mother tongue nor French.*

**Keywords:** Language, Language Of Instruction, Language Difficulties, Language Proficiency, Language Insecurity

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the field of formal education and in some spheres of society, language is not only seen as a mere tool for communication between individuals, but is above all a medium of the teaching/learning process. In general, an individual's mastery of a language is closely related to his or her education and culture.

Early pedagogues advocated the effectiveness of traditional methodology, defining **language** as « a set of rules and exceptions observable in sentences or texts »<sup>1</sup>. This would mean that the user of a language is obliged to respect its forms and rules which are, in a way, the guarantors of its survival. And it is here that the function of the school as a place of propagation of knowledge - linguistic and non-linguistic - is justified, and that of the educator as the agent of their transmission. Thus, languages, whether taught or used as language of instructions, have a very important role in the transmission and acquisition of that knowledge.

In view of the bilingualism adopted in schools since 1985 after the back-and-forth between Malagasy and French as the language of instruction, it must be admitted that the Malagasy educational system has failed to improve the linguistic skills of the country's young people. Ranaivo states that "Among the subjects that feed social demand and periodically agitate the world of education in Madagascar, we can mention that of languages and the skills of their users"<sup>2</sup>. For Rakotozafy, the change in status of the Malagasy language and the French language through the different political regimes has an "undeniable consequence on the mastery and practice of these languages"<sup>3</sup>.

In order to shed more light on these linguistic difficulties of Malagasy pupils, we must try to answer the question: "How do the linguistic difficulties of Malagasy pupils manifest themselves facing the bilingualism at school in Madagascar?"

Two research questions were asked:

- What languages are involved when talking about the language difficulties of Malagasy pupils?
- What are the areas of language difficulties among Malagasy students?

As both languages are to be mobilized, each has its place and role in the teaching/learning process. Our hypotheses, to answer these questions provisionally, are

- When we talk about the linguistic difficulties of Malagasy pupils, we are talking about the two languages that are used in bilingualism at school: Malagasy and French.

- In every language activity, whether oral or written, pupils encounter problems in both reception/comprehension and expression/production in both languages

The aim of this article is therefore to show the linguistic difficulties of pupils in Madagascar. Here it is to examine this point in the light of surveys carried out among students and teachers in the final year of some high schools in the city.

We tried to represent the types of high schools that exist in Antananarivo, and took two high schools to represent each type. Lycée Nanisana, which is located in the far east of CISCO (school administration) Antananarivo center, and Lycée J.J. Rabearivelo, in the centre of CISCO, were chosen to represent the public high schools. For the private high schools, four were selected: the first two are attended by children from modest backgrounds (Lycée Privé Lahatra Soamanandrarinny, and Lycée Don Guistino Ankadindramamy), and the other two are renowned high schools in the city (Lycée Saint François Xavier Antanimena and Lycée privé Les Capucines d'Ankerana). We would like to point out that we have chosen to investigate the language practice of the teacher, because the question that arises concerns the way in which he or she transmits knowledge. Then, when we talk about bilingualism in schools, we are talking about the teaching of non-linguistic subjects, which led us to survey the teachers of Philosophy, History - Geography, SVT, Physics - Chemistry and Mathematics which concern bilingual teaching, and the teachers of French and Malagasy to confirm the linguistic levels of the pupils. As for the number of witnesses, we received 383 responses from students, divided into art and scientific options per school: Lycée Nanisana 154, Lycée J.J.R 68, SFX 58, Les Capucines 23, Don Guistino 53 and Lahatra 27. For the teachers, 43 questionnaires were returned, only the teachers of the classes chosen by the school officials were concerned, distributed as follows: Nanisana 15, JJR 8, SFX 8, Les Capucines 3, Don Guistino 5 and Lahatra 4. All subjects were also considered: Philosophy 7, History and Geography 10, SVT 6, Physics-Chemistry 9 and Mathematics 10 (one teacher did not mention his subject). The survey sample is thus composed of 43 teachers of non-language subjects, 17 teachers of French, 19 teachers of Malagasy and 383 students.

## **2. LANGUAGES OF INSTRUCTION IN MADAGASCAR**

UNESCO defines the **language of instruction** as *"the language used to deliver a specific curriculum in a formal or non-formal educational setting"*<sup>4</sup>. As there have always been formal schools in Madagascar whose objectives depend on the leaders of each era, the languages of instruction change.

During the pre-colonial period, the London Missionary Society (Protestant missionaries) used Malagasy as the language of instruction, while the early Catholic missionaries, represented by the Jesuits, used French. By 1869, the Protestant schools were much more flourishing, the Catholic missionaries, arriving later, also used Malagasy.

Then Madagascar was colonised by the French in the period between 1896 and 1960. There were two systems: alongside the French system, the indigenous system used Malagasy as the language of instruction.

At the dawn of independence, the two languages were declared as languages of instruction according to Ordinance 60049 of 22 June 1960: for the 1<sup>er</sup> 4-year cycle it was Malagasy, and for the 2<sup>nd</sup> 2-year cycle it was French. The secondary system applied the French curriculum in its entirety, and Malagasy was considered as a taught or living language, and was considered as a foreign language for the baccalaureate. French continues to occupy an important place in the Malagasy educational system, while Malagasy was gradually regaining its status as a National Language. No official text has specified the language of instruction in secondary education. Policy decision makers adopted institutional bilingualism, but the decision on the education system was dictated by the French government.

During the transitional period 1972-1975, the "Malgachisation", which meant using Malagasy system in the school administration and system, was gradually introduced, and French was used as the language of instruction.

Thus, in the three years that followed, the language of instruction was somewhat blurred, as even the school curricula were written either in French or in Malagasy, or successively in both languages.

The revolutionary power of Ratsiraka changed the meaning of "Malgachisation" by making the national language the language of instruction, as specified by law 78 040 of 17 July 1978: The "malgachisation", which is defined in this field as the adaptation of curricula and teaching methods to national needs and objectives, also implies the use of the national language as the language of instruction. Thus, the period between 1976 and 1990 was marked by the imposition of the use of the Malagasy language as the language of instruction at primary and lower secondary levels, but its application in high school varied from place to place.

This reform was a failure. The change in the language of instruction caused difficulties for the pupils as they had to make a lot of effort to understand the new Malagasy terms. This situation led to a return to French after 1990, although the decision of the National People's Assembly was called for in its Resolution n°7-PR/82 on 10 December 1982 by instituting the French language as "the language of instruction in the same way as Malagasy in all schools in Madagascar"<sup>5</sup>. Thus, the transmission of knowledge was bilingual from then on: the explanation was in Malagasy, the language most mastered by pupils to acquire knowledge, and the written traces or summary in the notebook were given in French.

The Malagasy language was given a better place in the country's language policy, but the importance of the French language could not be ignored. Despite the reduction of its role in education, its radical rejection is to be avoided because it is an opening to the world.

Thus, the Malagasy education system has undergone frequent changes in the languages of instruction, moving back and forth between Malagasy, French and finally bilingualism.

Malagasy educators and teachers are aware that this issue of language of instruction is problematic in Madagascar. Many researchers talk about it, but the problems persist. Both languages are now used in the teaching/learning process of non-linguistic subjects, but students still encounter difficulties in their tasks. Pupils educated in French-speaking schools or renowned private schools suffer less, as they have "remarkable ease in handling the language " (*"une aisance remarquable quant au maniement de la langue"*)<sup>6</sup> , compared to those attending public schools or private schools that do not favour French.

### 3. THE CHALLENGES OF LANGUAGES OF INSTRUCTION

When the languages used are not mastered, users find themselves in **linguistic insecurity** which manifests itself on two levels: lexical, syntactic and phonological.

No precise definition for language insecurity is given, but Francard sees it as "the gap between the legitimacy of the linguistic usages attested in the community and (...) the legitimacy of the 'correct usage' conveyed by the school institution"<sup>7</sup> . This means that the linguistic practice in a community is not at all correct, which would have a repercussion on the meaning of a message to be sent. Faced with formal situations, outside the community where one lives, one would find oneself in a situation of hesitation, one is not sure of being able to transmit a correct message, not to mention feeling ashamed, stressed and inferior to others when faced with the "punctual or lasting corrections, to which the dominated, in a desperate effort to correct, and consciously or unconsciously subject the stigmatized aspects of their pronunciation, their lexicon, their syntax; or in the disarray that makes them lose all their means, rendering them unable to find their words"<sup>8</sup> . They are aware that their practice does not follow the norm, because "... speakers in a situation of linguistic insecurity measure the distance between the norm they have inherited and the norm dominating the linguistic market. The state of linguistic security, on the other hand, characterizes speakers who feel that their linguistic practices coincide with legitimate practices"<sup>9</sup> . It is certainly true that it is in the regional varieties in relation to the official language that this problem arises, but it can also be felt in the context where the language of instruction or the second language is not mastered. The students preferred the teacher to use Malagasy during the explanation for fear of not understanding and mastering the knowledge they had to acquire. But this is also the case for some teachers who do not master French.

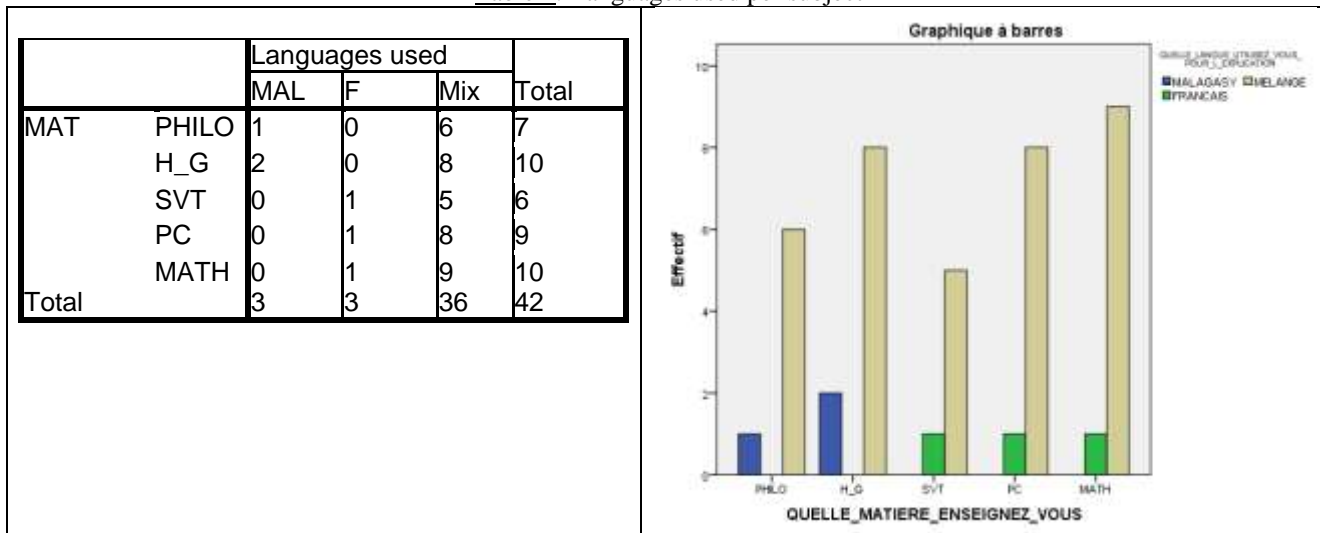
On the other hand, **linguistic incompetence** or lack of linguistic ability distorts and affects communication. This has become a real problem at the national level to the extent that newspapers report that because of the lack of mastery of the language of instruction "students do not succeed in carrying out the exercises properly. Teachers feel helpless in the face of students' inability to participate"<sup>10</sup> Whereas the participation of pupils during the course justifies that they learn something, and at least it will help the teacher to evaluate himself. Nevertheless, this situation does not at all obscure the observation of many citizens that the use of a non-mastered language as a medium of instruction slows down the learning process, reinforced by Tirvassen, according to his observation as a researcher of language of instruction: "Educating children exclusively in languages that are foreign to them leads to delays and deficiencies in the appropriation of knowledge and the mastery of language as a cognitive tool."<sup>11</sup> . Moreover, French teachers in public schools "experience, in the majority of cases, significant difficulties in teaching the French language. The majority of Malagasy teachers are pseudo-bilingual. They are supposed to transmit knowledge while their academic level in French is deficient."<sup>12</sup>

This leads us to the finding of language difficulties among Malagasy pupils, expressed by 43 teachers of non-linguistic subjects, 17 teachers of French and 19 teachers of Malagasy.

### 4. LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES AS SEEN BY NON-LINGUISTIC TEACHERS

The following tables show the languages used for each subject, followed by the reasons for their choice

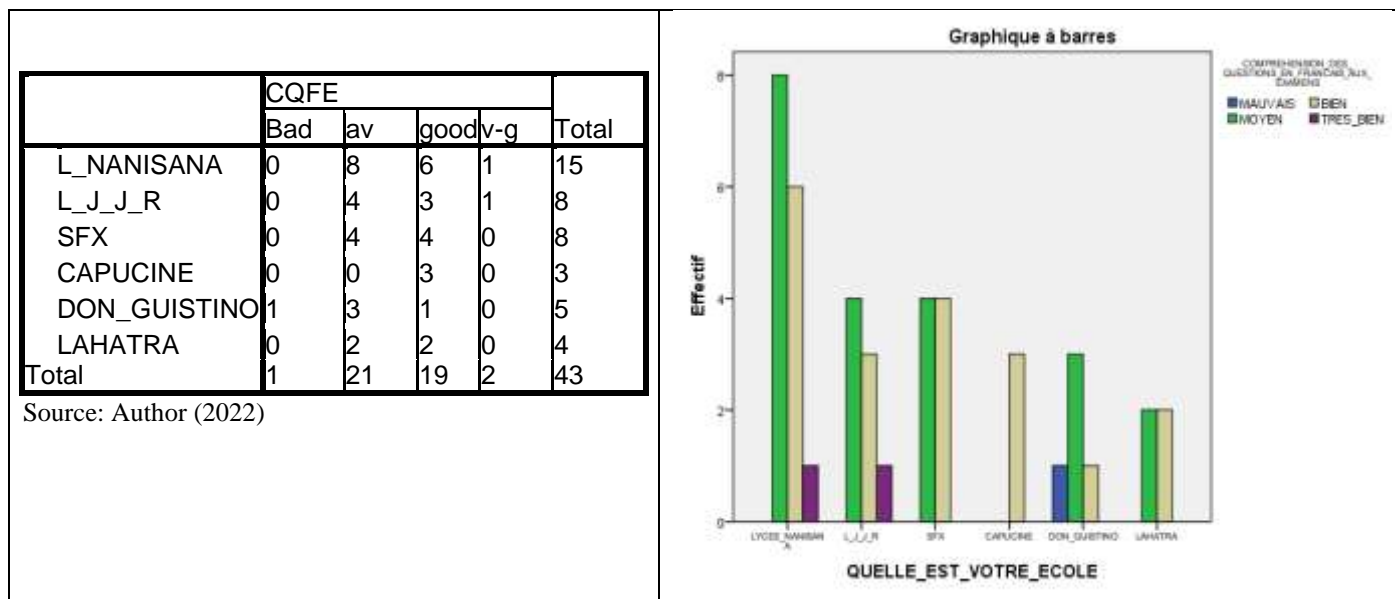
Table 1: Languages used per subject



Source: Author (2022)

At the outset, we would like to point out that according to the results of our survey of teachers, 39 out of 43 use French during the explanation of the lesson. More precisely, 3 of them use French exclusively, and 36 use it alternately with Malagasy. For the exclusive use of Malagasy, 2 history and geography teachers do so, while only one philosophy teacher does so. In any case, the number of teachers using a mixture of the two languages, by teachers of all subjects, is very high.

Table 2: Understanding the questions in French



This table shows that of the 43 teachers surveyed, 21 (48.8%) found the level of understanding of the questions given in French to be average. 19 (44.2%) said that the students understood the questions well, 2 (4.7%) thought it was very good and 1 (2.3%) thought it was bad. Combining these results, 22 teachers out of 43 (51.16%) agreed that the students' comprehension skills were below "good". However, only one teacher said it was bad.

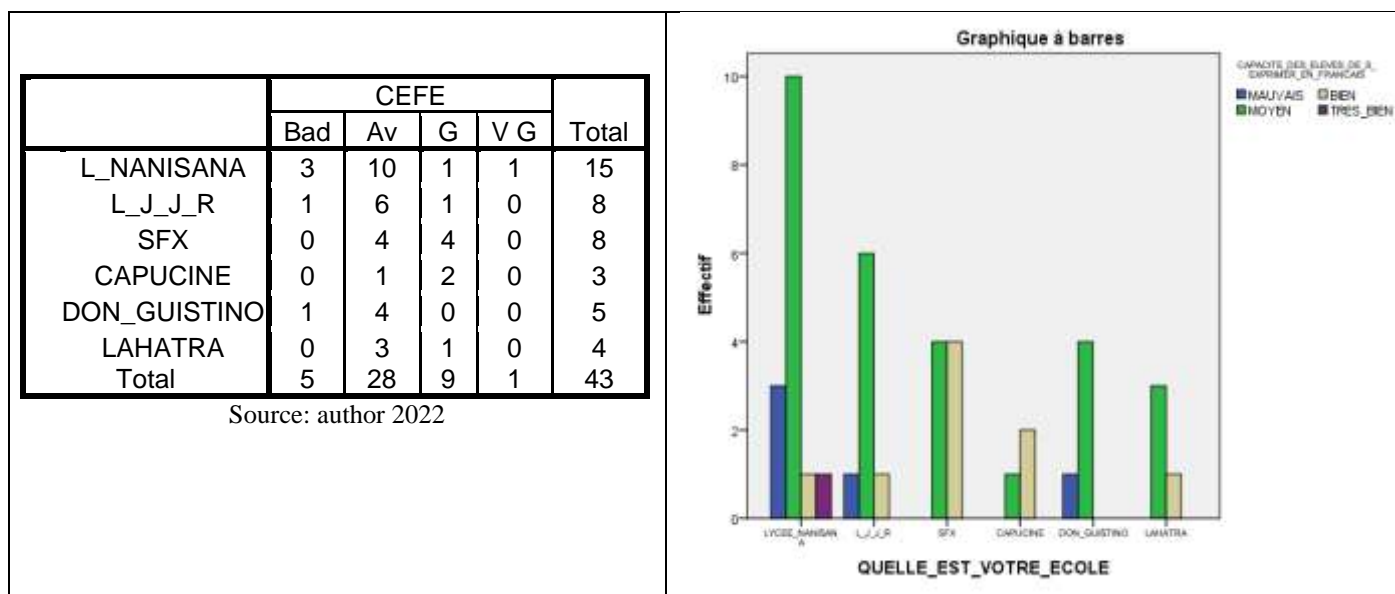
For the results per school, only the public high schools consider that the students understand the questions asked in French very well, but the rate is low: 1/15 or 6.66% for the Nanisana high school, and 1/8 or 12.5% for the L.J.J.R.

As for the renowned private high schools, good and average are equal at SFX, and the teachers at Lycée Les Capucines are unanimous for good.

The only teacher who answered that the level of understanding of the students is bad is from the Don Guistino high school, and 3, or 60% of the teachers from this high school say that it is average.

As for the Lycée Lahatra, average and good are also equal.

Table 3: Students' ability to express themselves in French during examinations



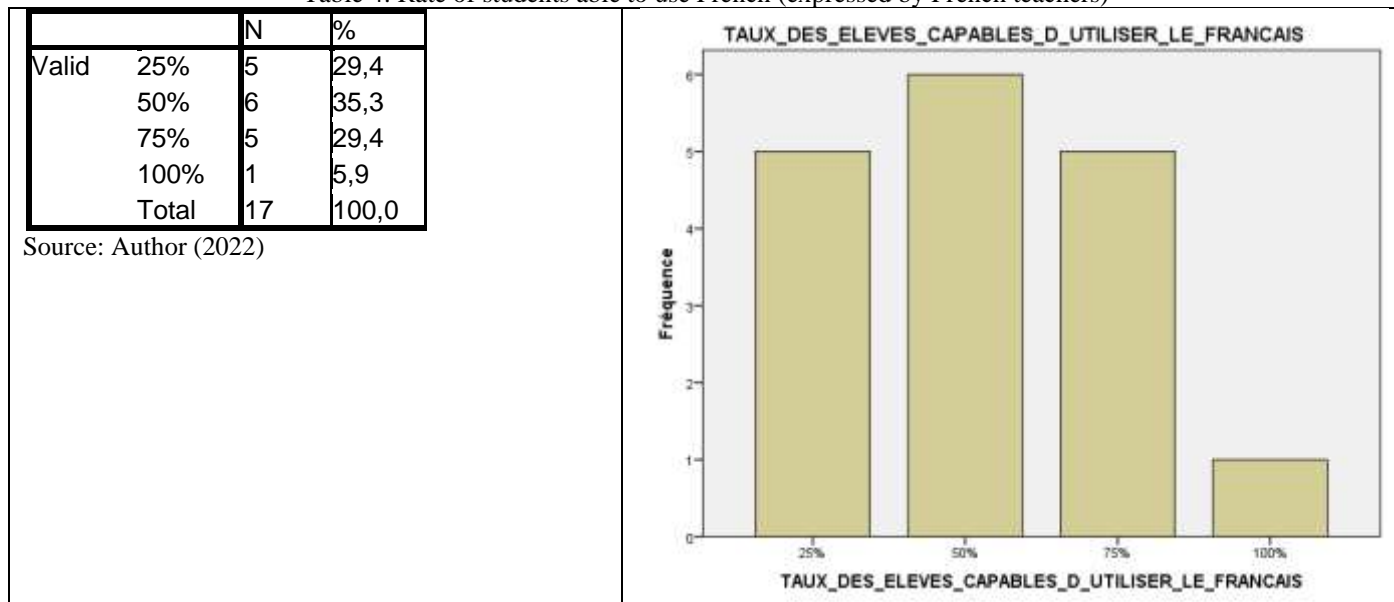
For the students' ability to express themselves in French, 28 teachers (65.1%) said it was average, 9 (20.9%) good, 1 (2.3%) very good and 5 (11.6%) bad.

Observation per school shows that only one teacher out of 15 at Nanisana High School says it is very good. As for the "good" level, Nanisana 1/15, L.J.J.R 1/8, SFX 4/8, Les Capucines 2/3, Don Giustino 0/5, Collège Lahatra 1/4.

For the middle level: Lycée Nanisana 10/15, LJJR 6/8, SFX 4/8, Les Capucines 1/3, Don Guistino 4/5 and L.P Lahatra 3/4

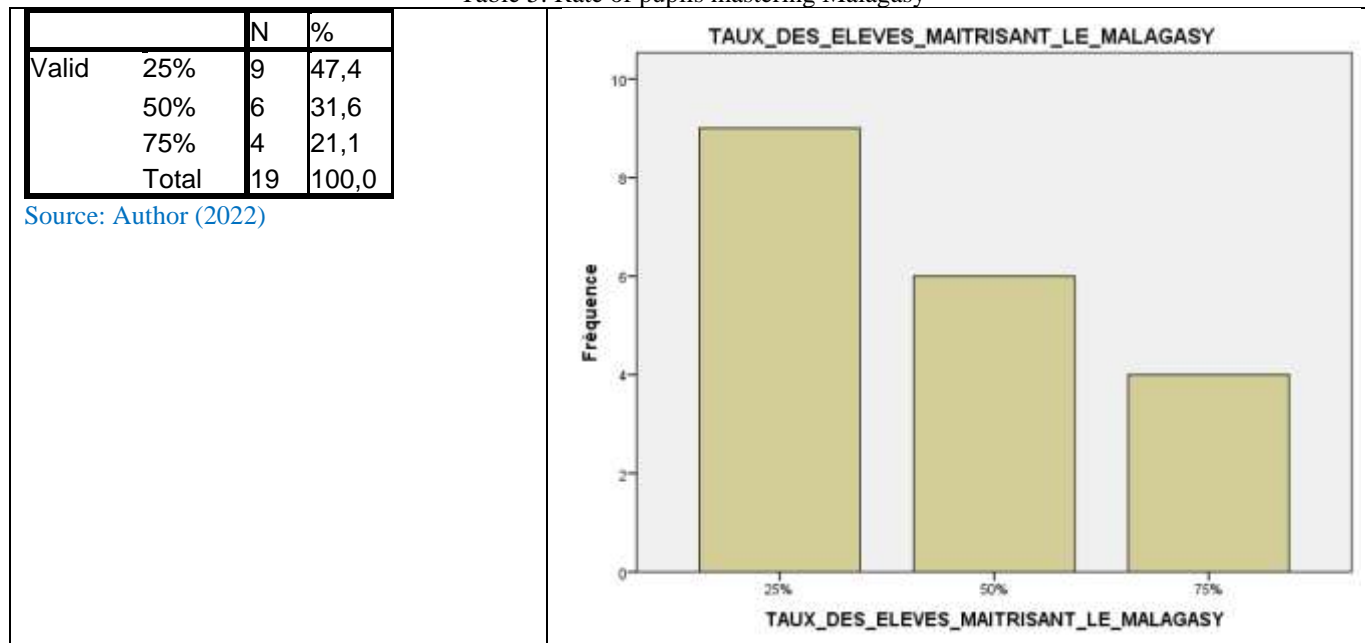
As for the poor level: Lycée Nanisana 3/15, L.J.J.R 1/8, SFX 0/8, Les Capucines 0/3, Don Guistino 1/5 and L.P Lahatra 0/4

Table 4: Rate of students able to use French (expressed by French teachers)



Here we see the percentage of students being able to use French, expressed by the French teachers themselves: 5 teachers or 29.4% (3 from Lycée Nanisana, 1 from LJJR and 1 from LP Don Guistino) said that 25% of the students are able to use French, 6 or 35.3% (4 from Lycée Nanisana, 1 from LJJR, and 1 from LP Lahatra) judged that it is 50%, 5 or 29.4% (1 from Lycée Nanisana, 3 from Lycée SFX and 1 from LP Les Capucines) said it was 75% and one teacher, 5.9%, rated 100% of his students as able to use French. It should be noted that there is one missing answer in this table. 16 out of 17 teachers answered this question.

Table 5: Rate of pupils mastering Malagasy

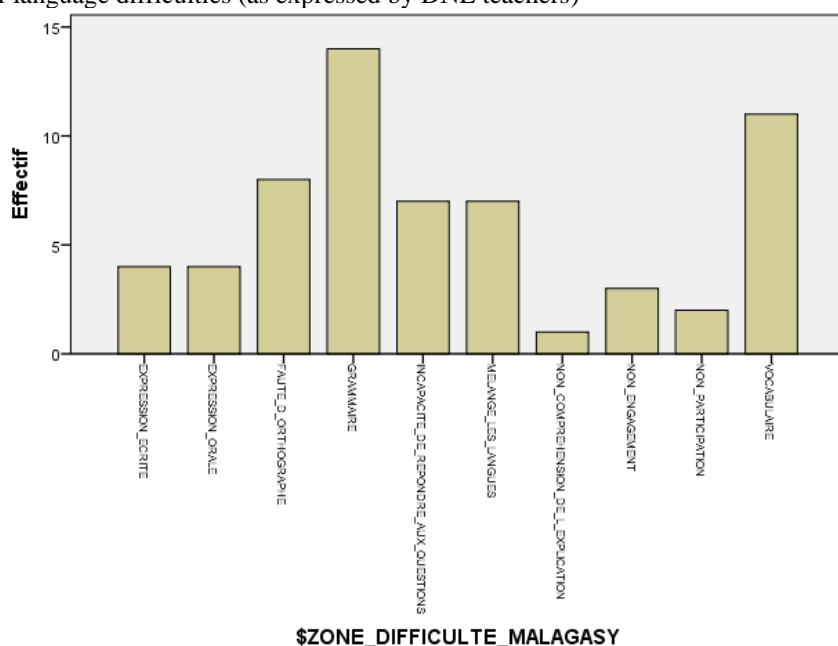


This table shows that none of the 19 teachers of Malagasy said that the pupils had mastered this language. On the other hand, 47.4% of the teachers thought that 25% of the students had mastered it. This is the highest rate in the result. Then, 31.6% of the teachers said it was 50% and 21.1% felt that 75% of the students were able to use French.

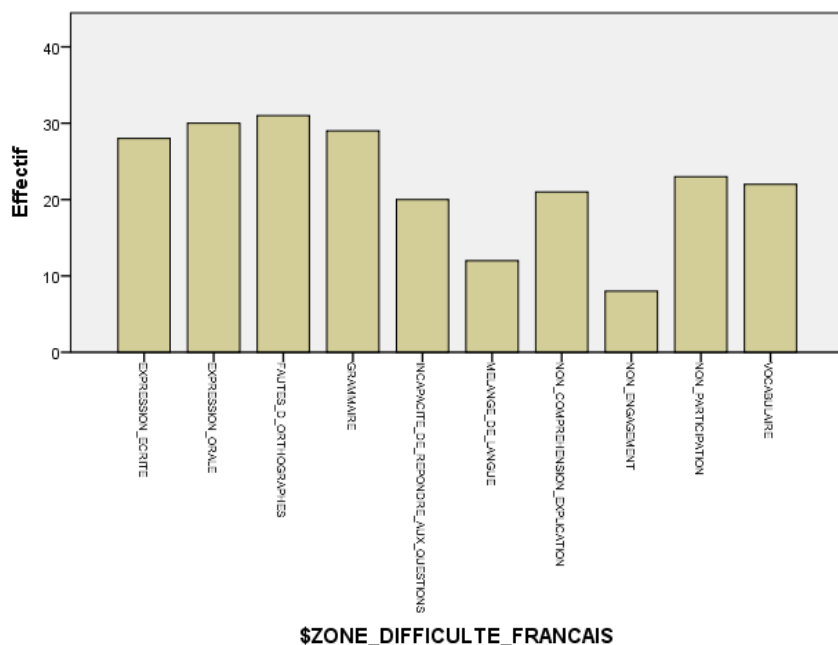


Table 6: Manifestation of language difficulties (as expressed by DNL teachers)

	MAL		EN	
	N	%	N	%
NCE	1	1,60%	21	9,40%
NE	3	4,90%	8	3,60%
NP	2	3,30%	23	10,30%
EO	4	6,60%	30	13,40%
EE	4	6,60%	28	12,50%
ML	7	11,50%	12	5,40%
INC_R_Q	7	11,50%	20	8,90%
FO	8	13,10%	31	13,80%
VOC	1	1,60%	22	9,80%
GR	1	1,60%	29	12,90%
TOTAL	6	100,00%	22	100,00%
	1	%	4	%



Source: Author (2022)



With the observation of what happens during the use of the Malagasy language: 1(2.32%) teacher said that the students do not understand the explanation (NCE in the table). 3(6.97%) teachers said that the students are not committed to listening to the explanation (NE : Non-engagement), 2 (4.64%) notice students' non-participation (NP), 4(9.30%) say they have difficulties in speaking and writing, 7(16.27%)argue that they mix up languages, 7 (16,27%) found that they could not answer questions properly, 8 (18.60%) found that they made spelling mistakes, 8 (18.60%) said that they lacked vocabulary and 14 (32.55%) felt that they did not master grammar.

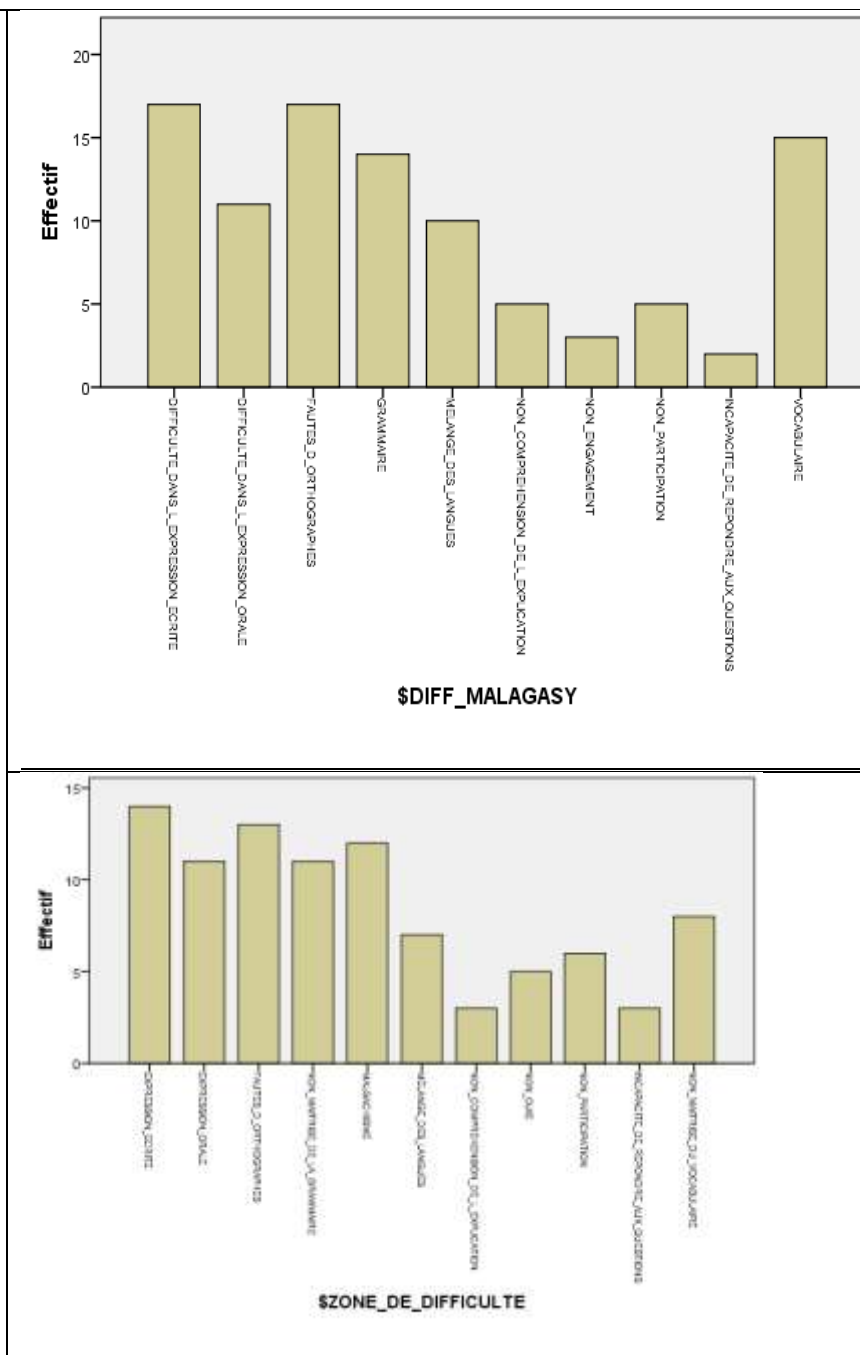
The manifestation of difficulties in French is expressed as follows: non-understanding of the explanation expressed by 21 (48.83%) teachers, non-commitment to learning expressed by 8 (18.60%) teachers, non-participation (23 (3.48% of teachers), difficulty in oral expression (30:69.76% of teachers), difficulty in written expression (28 or 65.11% of teachers), language mixture (12 or 27.90% of teachers), inability to answer questions properly (20 or 46.51% of teachers), spelling mistakes (31 or 72.09% of teachers), lack of vocabulary (22or 51.16% of teachers) and lack of mastery of grammar expressed by 29 or 67.44% of teachers.

These are the responses from non-language teachers, but the following table shows the responses from language teachers.

Table 7: Areas of language difficulties (expressed by French and Malagasy teachers)

	MAL		FR	
	N	%	N	%
NCE	5	26,31 %	3	17,64 %
NE	3	15,78 %	5	29,41 %
NP	5	26,31 %	6	35,29 %
EO	11	57,89 %	11	64,70 %
EE	17	89,47 %	14	82,35 %
ML	10	52,63 %	7	41,17 %
RQ	2	10,52 %	3	17,64 %
FO	17	89,47 %	13	76,47 %
VOC	15	78,94 %	8	47,05 %
GR	14	73,48 %	8	64,70 %
M			11	70,58 %
			12	

Source: Author (2022)



The area of greatest difficulty is written expression (82.35% for French and 89.47% for Malagasy), followed by spelling mistakes (76.4% for French and 89.47% for Malagasy), grammatical errors (64.70% for French and 73.48% for Malagasy), lack of vocabulary (47.05% for French and 78.94% for Malagasy) and oral expression (64.70% for French and 57.89% for Malagasy).

The lowest results concern the manifestation of linguistic difficulties by mixing languages (41.17% according to French teachers and 52.63% according to Malagasy teachers), non participation (35.27% for French and 26.31% for Malagasy), non-commitment to learning (29.41% for French and 15.78% for Malagasy), lack of understanding of the question (17.64% for French and 10.52% for Malagasy), difficulty in answering questions properly (17.64% for French and 10.52% for Malagasy). 12 French teachers, i.e. 70.58%, noticed that students write in French while thinking in Malagasy, this is called “malgachisme” (a term we used ourselves)

### 5. STUDENTS' LANGUAGE REPRESENTATION

If these are the views of the teachers, what about those of the students? 383 students returned the questionnaires

Table 8: Students' language preferences

	explanation		Summary		Exam subject		writing		discussion		Presentation	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
MALAGASY	217	56,7	49	12,8	31	8,1	38	9,9	234	61,1	82	21,4

FRENCH	74	19,3	279	72,8	240	62,7	262	68,4	73	19,1	220	57,4
BOTH	91	23,8	53	13,8	112	29,2	83	21,7	75	19,6	80	20,9

Source: Author (2022)

For the learning process itself, 56.7% of students prefer the explanation of the lesson to be done in Malagasy, 23.8% prefer it in mixed languages and 19.3% in French. While for the summary in the notebook or the written traces, 72.8% like French, 13.8% prefer the mixture and 12.8% like Malagasy.

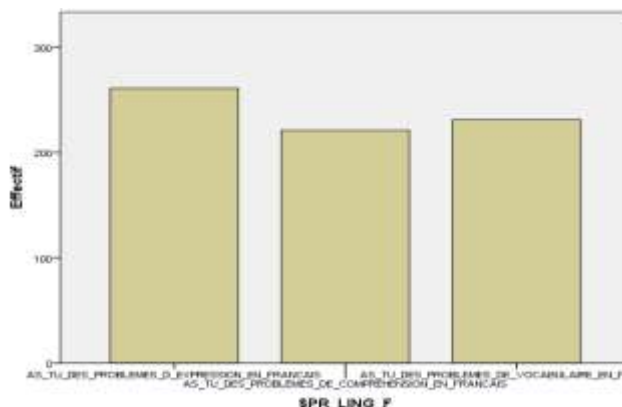
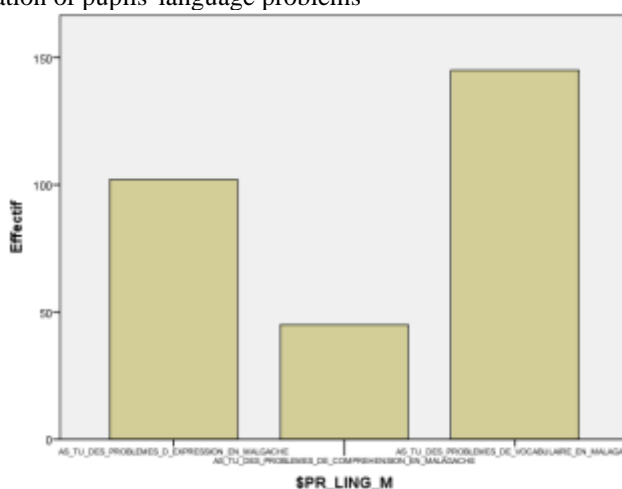
Regarding the exams, 62.7% of students prefer to receive the subjects in French, 29.2% in a mixture and 8.1% like Malagasy. The use of French is still the highest, requested by 68.4% of students, followed by the use of Malagasy, expressed by 21.7%, and only 9.9% for the use of Malagasy.

Finally, for oral activities in class, 61.1% prefer to give the presentation in Malagasy, 19.6% in mixed languages and 19.1% in French, while for the presentation, the use of French is the highest option (although it is not the choice of the majority), expressed by 57.4%, followed by Malagasy (21.4%) and finally mixed languages (20.9%)

Table 9: The manifestation of pupils' language problems

	Mal		En	
	N	%	N	%
NCE	45	15,40%	221	31,00%
VOC	145	49,70%	231	32,40%
E	102	34,90%	261	36,60%

Source: Author (2022)



When the explanation is given in French, 57.7% do not understand it, compared to 15.4% if it is in Malagasy. The problem of vocabulary is manifested by 60.31% for French and 49.5% for Malagasy. Finally, as for the problem of oral expression, 68.14% are unable to express themselves properly in French, while 34.9% find it difficult in Malagasy.

## 6. DISCUSSION

In this section, an analysis of students' language difficulties will be discussed.

We would like to give some explanations about the students' ability to understand the questions asked in French. It is through the way how students answer the questions that the DNL teachers were able to measure or evaluate this ability. So, from the above-mentioned results, we can appreciate that even if the students understand the questions well, they have difficulties in expressing their answers. For more information, let's take the number of teachers who think that the students understand the questions well, they are 19, while only 9 teachers say that the students express their answers well in French. The concern here is that there is no measure to determine the level of understanding of the students. Everyone has their own measure. In the public high schools, there are teachers who say that students understand the questions asked in French "very well", while none of the teachers in the renowned high schools say this. It turns out that the subjectivity of the answers cannot be avoided.



As for mastery of French, one teacher (2.32%) out of the 43 said that the pupils had a very good command of French. While more than half (28 teachers, that is 65.11%) consider the level of mastery of the French language among the students to be average. Only 5 (11.62%) teachers rate the level as poor. However, by studying the results per school, we can see that the majority of pupils in public high schools and those in private high schools attended by a modest class have an average level. On the other hand, for those of the renowned private high schools, the good and average levels are equal (4 against 4 for SFX), or the good level is more numerous than the average (2 against 1 for the case of the private high school Les Capucines).

It is preferable to compare the answers given by the different entities to check the answers.

Speaking about the difficulties of the students in explaining the lesson in French, the confirmation of the answers is presented as follows: 48.83% of DNL teachers, 17.64% of French teachers and 57.7% of students. These results show that the opinion of teachers and students is not shared. Less than half of the DNL teachers confirmed their difficulties, and fewer French teachers confirmed this. It is only 17.64%. While more than half of the students confirm that they find the explanation in French difficult for them. This is reflected in language insecurity: they think they are unable to understand the explanation when the teachers' view is not as negative as theirs.

As for the explanation in Malagasy, the Malagasy teachers notice more that they have difficulties (26.31%). DNL teachers hardly observe this problem, because they are at a very low rate (2.32%), and only 15.4% of students feel that it is difficult for them to listen to the explanation in Malagasy.

When studying the linguistic difficulties in the explanation of the lesson, we see that it is difficult for the pupils to understand it in French.

As for linguistic incompetence in expressing themselves, it is still found that it is more difficult for students to express their opinions in French than in Malagasy. 69.76% of DNL teachers admit that students are unable to express themselves orally in French, and 65.11% in writing. The French teachers found that the students had more difficulty with written expression (82.35%) than with the oral expression of ideas (64.70%). 68.14% of students admit that they have difficulty expressing themselves in French.

As far as expression in Malagasy is concerned, 16.27% of DNL teachers admit that they are not able to express themselves in Malagasy. The result is more serious for Malagasy teachers, because 89.47 of them believe that students have difficulties in written expression, and 57.89 confirm this for oral expression.

For the evaluation of the written answers, 46.51% of the DNL teachers considered that the students could not answer properly in French, and only 16.27% noted the same difficulty in Malagasy. As for language teachers, 17.64% of French teachers said that students were unable to answer in French. According to 10.52% of Malagasy teachers, even answering in Malagasy is difficult for them. If we reconsider the teachers' answers about understanding the questions asked in French, the result obtained here shows the opposite case. It is clear that the teachers feel that the students understand the questions, but it is the way in which the answers are written that causes them problems.

In any case, 23% of DNL teachers find that pupils encounter problems with Malagasy grammar, which are greater than with French grammar. If we note the answers having a relevant difference between the problem in Malagasy and French, it is in the non understanding of the explanation expressed by 48.83% for French and 2.32% for Malagasy, the non participation : 53.48% for French and 4.65% for Malagasy, oral expression: 69.76% for French and 9.30%, written expression expressed by 65.11% of teachers for French against 9.30% for Malagasy and finally the problem of vocabulary: 51.16% for French and 25.58% for Malagasy. From these results, the problem of French among students is confirmed.

But what about the results obtained by language teachers? The answers that coincide with those of the DNL teachers will be discussed first. This is the non-participation expressed by 35.29% for French against 26.31% for Malagasy, oral expression: 64.70% for French and 57.85 for Malagasy. The difference between the two languages is not very significant in relation to the DNL teachers' point of view.

For oral expression, language mixing, spelling mistakes, lack of vocabulary and grammar problems, it is surprising that the problems of students using Malagasy are more serious than in French (oral expression: 89.47% vs. 82.35%; language mixing 52.63% vs. 41.17%; spelling mistakes: 89.47% vs. 76.47%; vocabulary: 78.94% vs. 47.05%; and grammar 73.48% vs. 64.70%). This difference of opinion shows that DNL teachers do not care too much about students' language problems.

The observation of the linguistic preferences of the pupils showed that they particularly prefer the explanation of lessons in Malagasy, but for the written traces, French is the most appreciated. For examinations, the inclination to use French is still noted, even if the rate of students wishing to deal with the subjects in both languages is slightly higher. This means that they are aware that they have to make efforts to use French in their studies, but they are also worried about their ability to answer questions correctly and so they want to resort to using Malagasy. Dealing with the subjects in French should not pose too many difficulties for them as the lessons they learned in their notebooks were in French; and so if they have learned their lessons well, there should not be many difficulties. But isn't this just repetition? Because it turns out, according to the results provided by Daphne Bloch, that "a detailed analysis of the exchanges shows that the pupils' engagement in the pedagogical tasks and their active participation is a delusion and does not allow them to construct the knowledge in question."<sup>13</sup>

For oral presentations, their opinion is divided: they appreciate that discussions are held in Malagasy for fear of not being understood, hence linguistic insecurity; but for presentations, they prefer French because this activity is prepared beforehand, unlike the discussion where they are led to express themselves spontaneously.

The result of the APPRENDRE project directed by Mirindrasoa RAMAMPIANDRARIVOLA (ENS) explains this representation of learners on the usefulness of French:

"The learners interviewed unanimously believe that French is useful in everyday life and in their future lives, but the emphasis was placed more on the importance of this language in the professional environment, especially for access to employment. For this reason, they illustrated, knowledge of French always makes a good impression on a CV, hence their motivation to learn French (...); its mastery is a factor for success (given that this language is used as a language of instruction) (...) Later, in university studies, French is a means of accessing knowledge (...) In the professional environment, mastery of French gives a better chance of accessing a 'decent job', and once in the job, French is considered to be an 'asset'. They also realise that French is a language of communication and openness to foreigners and the world.<sup>14</sup>

The table of language difficulties above shows that "malgachisme" is part of the manifestation of difficulties in French. This proves that the students do not know how to distinguish the structure and functioning of these two languages at all.

The most important point confirmed here is the fact that Malagasy students are fluent neither in Malagasy nor in French.

The observation of the causes of the lack of mastery of these two languages makes it possible to make suggestions for the improvement of teaching in order to raise the level of the pupils.

Their non-commitment is the most important cause of pupils' lack of mastery of French: a cause that can be considered insoluble because it depends on the pupils themselves. Other reasons, however, are the responsibility of the Ministry, such as the reworking or reorganization of the content of the school curriculum, the teachers' training, linguistically as well as pedagogically and didactically. But an increase in the number of hours allocated to the subject matter also is recommended. The result of "malgachisation" is one of the important causes that cannot be solved anymore. The APPRENDRE project adds that the negative representations that pupils make of the teaching/learning of French "come from the nature and density of the content taught with 'too much conjugation and grammar', from the pedagogical approach adopted by the teacher, and from the inadequacy of the explanations on which the majority insisted a lot"<sup>15</sup>

The most important reason for the lack of mastery of the Malagasy language is its stigmatization in everyday life. The development of technology using foreign languages is the second cause that can be considered to have brought about this situation. Malagasy language teachers also claim that students are not committed to the language and that the solution can only come from them. The responsibilities of the ministry in charge of improving the teaching of Malagasy are the same as for the teaching of French: linguistic and didactic training of teachers, review of the content of the curriculum and of the timetable.

Apart from all the other reasons for the lack of mastery of these two languages, what is most striking is the linguistic problem of the teachers: there are teachers of Malagasy who do not master Malagasy, and the same goes for French. What good will it do to develop the curriculum if the teacher does not master the language? The APPRENDRE project confirmed this when it stated that "teachers' difficulties with the language are a real obstacle to the implementation of school curricula, and more specifically to the conduct of lessons"<sup>16</sup>. This applies to both French and Malagasy.

As the amount of time is already high, it is difficult to increase it further, so other strategies should be considered. We suggest to continue in all Madagascar the effort already started inspired by the PES (School program for the Education in Madagascar, conceived by the government) by using new materials because according to the result obtained by the LEARNING project, the French teachers said that "with the use of new materials, the students are much more active, they are more fulfilled in class because the content is out of the classical one."<sup>17</sup>

## 7. CONCLUSION

It has been shown that changes in the country's educational language policy have resulted in students not mastering either Malagasy or French. This can be seen in all language activities in the classroom. It can be argued that the responses given by pupils and teachers on the manifestations of these linguistic difficulties are equal. However, even if these two languages are poorly mastered, it can be observed that they have more difficulty in using the French language, both in passive and active activities, and whether they are oral or written.

The classic answers, considered of little importance, were retained from the reasons given by the teachers for not mastering the two languages; but Malagasy language is seen as the main reason for not mastering French. However, because of the use of bilingualism in schools, the mastery of both languages is necessary for the practice of bilingualism in schools to be truly meaningful and motivated. Thus, the two languages must be complementary and their didactics should ensure this complementarity

## 8. REFERENCES

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- [4] UNESCO (2006)
- [5] Rambelo, (1991) (quoted by S. Babault) (« langue d'enseignement au même titre que le malgache dans tous les établissements scolaires à Madagascar »)
- [6] RAZANAPERA, Ginette ( 2015) Round Table p 75
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- [14] ENS L'enseignement des disciplines littéraires dans le secondaire malgache -des politiques linguistiques aux réalités du terrain. March 2021 p 66 (« Les apprenants interviewés pensent, à l'unanimité, que le français est utile dans la vie de tous les jours et dans leur vie future mais l'accent a davantage été mis sur l'importance de cette langue en milieu professionnel surtout pour l'accès à l'emploi. Pour cela ont-ils illustré, la connaissance du français fait toujours bonne impression sur un CV, d'où leur motivation à apprendre le français (...); sa maîtrise constitue un facteur de réussite (vu que cette langue est utilisée comme langue d'enseignement) (...) Plus tard, dans les études universitaires, le français est un moyen d'accéder aux savoirs. (...) En milieu professionnel, la maîtrise du français donne plus de chance d'accéder à un 'travail décent, et une fois dans l'exercice, le français est considéré comme un 'atout'. » Ils se rendent également compte que le français est une langue de communication et d'ouverture aux étrangers et au monde »)
- [15] ENS p 64 (les représentations négatives que font les élèves de l'enseignement/ apprentissage du français « viennent de la nature et la densité des contenus enseignés 'trop de conjugaisons et de grammaire', de l'approche pédagogique adoptée par l'enseignant, et de l'insuffisance des explications sur laquelle la majorité a beaucoup insisté
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