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FRENCH IMMERSION STUDENTS' LANGUAGE GROWTH IN FRENCH: PERCEPTIONS, PATTERNS AND PROGRAMMING

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
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ABSTRACT

This action research study aims to investigate how eighth grade French immersion students perceive and understand aspects of the French grammatical system and how programming decisions, particularly group work, might assist or hamper the development and application of this knowledge. A sociocultural framework, based on the work of Vygotsky and Leont'ev, is used to observe students and the second language learning process.

Questionnaires were used to collect data about students' understanding of aspects of the French language, their learning preferences, and strengths and weaknesses in using French. The study uncovered a wide range in students' metalinguistic knowledge and misconceptions that some students had developed about grammatical functions and relationships between words at the sentence level.

Based on these results, functional-analytic materials designed to teach students about the use of the passé composé and the imparfait were used in the program. A pre-test, an immediate post-test and a delayed post-test were administered to the class to measure growth. Students made and maintained gains in their use of the passé composé and the imparfait, and, at the end of the year, scored higher, although not significantly so, on a comparison test with two classes from the same school. Data from a composition task show how students' understanding of these aspectual markers developed.
Throughout the year, students were also audio-taped as they completed collaborative activities with a focus on form: a language production task, a metalinguistic task and a proof-reading task. The interactional data showed that communicative activities could be designed that provided students with the opportunity to study form and function links, as predicted in part by Swain's output hypothesis. Students could provide appropriate feedback to one another and appeared to deepen their understanding of how aspects of the language "worked". There was evidence that by working together students collaborated, co-constructed knowledge and were able to achieve greater accuracy than by working alone.
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From my perspective as teacher-researcher, conducting this study was exciting and very gratifying. Now the study is complete I have, thanks to my students, a better understanding of teaching and learning relationships in the second language classroom and I have uncovered other areas I would like to explore in more detail.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a description of the overall aims of the study. A review of the literature regarding the teaching of grammar in second language (L2) education is provided as a general psycholinguistic introduction to some of the factors which have and are currently influencing programming in the French immersion (FI) classroom. This is followed by a review of research conducted in FI programs with a view to showing how this study builds on previous research in the field and attempts to answer some questions which have previously not been discussed in the FI literature.

1.1.1 Purpose

This case study is designed to provide a detailed understanding of the way in which students in a grade eight French immersion class perceive and understand aspects of the French grammatical system and how programming decisions, particularly the use of group work, might assist or hamper the development and application of this knowledge. An action research design was used because it would be a means of collecting authentic classroom data while illustrating some of the teaching/learning processes involved in learning French in a FI context, thereby contributing to FI pedagogy. The focus is primarily on students' grammatical skills as measured in their written production. It was hypothesized that an approach which encouraged students to discuss how the French language functions and to raise their awareness of particular form-function links might be a useful aid for improving students' written production.

The major research questions were as follows: 1) What knowledge of French grammar have FI students acquired by the grade eight level and how do students express and apply this knowledge? 2) What is the relationship between existing grammatical
knowledge and the appropriation of new grammatical knowledge? 3) Can collaborative
tasks be designed which encourage students to investigate links between the form of words
and their communicative function? 4) Are certain types of student grouping more effective
than others? 5) Are there particular features which appear to contribute to the efficacy of a
task? 6) Expert teachers work hard to provide the sort of interactions which challenge
students in their thinking and encourage them to refine their grasp of the linguistic system.
Can immersion students provide the same quality of feedback in completing assigned tasks
or will they reinforce each other's misconceptions about the French language?

1.2.1 Grammar Instruction and the L2 Classroom

With the advent of communicative language teaching philosophies and Krashen's
comprehensible input hypothesis (1982) the role of grammar instruction in helping L2
learners' production to become closer to the TL became, in many L2 classrooms,
subordinated to an emphasis on conveying one's meaning (Krashen and Terrell. 1983).
This situation included immersion classrooms where it was assumed that students exposed
to enough comprehensible input would learn to communicate through content based
learning. Although Krashen may still disagree, (1992. 1994) subsequent L2 research and
theories have taken the view that some explicit instruction in grammar can have a positive
influence on L2 learning (e.g. Long. 1983).

White (1987) in her critique of the comprehensible input hypothesis points to some
weaknesses in Krashen's argument and consequent implications for L2 teaching. In
concentrating on the role of context and meaning i.e. input, the extent to which the learner's
grammar can emerge as a result of the learner's current lexical and syntactic knowledge is
ignored. According to White, we need to know more about how new input interacts with a
learner's existing grammar to bring about change. As she explains, learners impose a
structure on the input they receive in the form of a personal grammar or interlanguage (Selinker, 1972). Change in one's interlanguage can be caused by various aspects of the interaction between learner and second language input which may be cognitive, maturational, semantic or linguistic (White, 1987:99). Input that is inappropriate in one of these aspects may impede development of an individual's interlanguage. If the input the learner receives is too simplified then some structures will never be introduced to the learner, for example the *tu/vous* distinction in the immersion classroom (Lyster, 1987). Finally, the learner's L2 development depends on the learner being able to detect gaps between their current grammar and the input. Yet, as White pointed out, there are "a number of situations where there will be no obvious gap, where inconsistencies will not be apparent from examination of the input." (1987:103). She concluded by suggesting that grammar teaching, although not a return to grammar translation methods, can be a potential source of useful second language input (1987:107).

In encouraging us to investigate how new input interacts with the learner's interlanguage, White was suggesting that we attempt to find ways of studying McLaughlin's process of restructuring (1990). Restructuring for McLaughlin is a "process in which the components of a task are coordinated, integrated, or reorganized into new units, thereby allowing the procedure involving old components to be replaced by a more efficient procedure involving new components" (1990:118). Any study of restructuring focusses on the mechanisms of transition that the learner uses as internalized cognitive representations are modified. Generally taken, it implies a development from exemplar type knowledge to an analyzed rule-governed form of knowledge. As McLaughlin points out, restructuring can occur at different times for the same learner in different areas of the linguistic system.
Often in the process of restructuring an apparent regression in learner performance occurs. Kellerman (1985) illustrates this phenomenon in his "U-shaped curve" of learning. As the learner reformulates theories about a certain aspect of the language and reorganizes learned "chunks" of language into systematic mental representations, learners may try to mark newly perceived functional differences by giving them a distinct surface form which does not exist in the TL. Another form of this phenomenon occurs through overgeneralization of newly acquired rules illustrated in the research of Cazden. Cordeiro and Giacobbe (1985) in their study of the acquisition of punctuation rules in young children. For McLaughlin, the process of restructuring continues until learners sort out form-function relationships in the language being learnt although, as he points out, some learners may never reach native speaker levels. This would seem to be the case in immersion programs where analyses of students' errors suggest that complete mastery of certain linguistic subsystems is not achieved by all students. It is presumably in such areas that grammar instruction could be helpful as Harley (1993) has suggested.

Terrell too. (1991), has since recognized a role for explicit grammar instruction (EGI) in communicative language learning situations but emphasizes that any EGI must be carefully planned by the teacher. He cites research that suggests that learners have an internal timetable for grammatical development which depends on factors such as frequency of appearance in the input, communicative need, and linguistic complexity rather than instructional sequence (1991:61). He lists three ways in which second language acquisition might be aided by EGI. These include using grammar 1) as an advanced organizer to help the learner make sense of input; 2) as a meaning-form focus in communication activities where there are many examples of a single meaning-form relationship and 3) to encourage monitoring of one's second language output to prevent acquisition of incorrect forms from this output. This can be the case with fossilizations that occur in the immersion context, for example phrases such as je suis fini, which some students use so often that they begin to
"feel" correct. Grammar's main role for Terrell is in making certain grammatical structures more salient for the learner, an argument previously made by Rutherford (1987).

For Rutherford, grammar is not a body of knowledge that the L2 student must learn but an organism which is regenerated and developed by L2 learners as they progress in their second language learning (LL2). Grammar, semantics and discourse exist in a complex interrelationship which results in the grammaticalization of language. He reminds us that at times in the LL2 process, grammatical consciousness-raising, "selective grammatical exploitation of textual material chosen" (p.170), will be necessary to make students aware of particular structures or forms which may otherwise not have developed in their interlanguage and to promote the grammaticalization process. Research from cognitive psychology provides support for the effectiveness of consciousness-raising (e.g. Robinson, 1995, 1996). However, as Robinson points out, there are many factors, for example attention and memory, which can affect a person's performance which also need to be considered when considering the benefits of consciousness-raising as an approach to be used in LL2.

Sharwood Smith (1991) takes the argument one stage further. He re-analyses the notion of consciousness-raising in language learning, preferring to refer to the "process by which language input becomes salient to the learner" (1991:118) as "input enhancement". In doing so, he makes the important point that "Externally generated input enhancement does not automatically imply the internalisation of that enhancement by the learner" (p.131). Indeed, input enhancement may occur in ways which the teacher (enhancer) may not have envisaged i.e. there is no direct mapping of what is enhanced and what is learned by the learner. Consequently, drawing L2 learners' attention to a particular feature will not necessarily lead to its appearance in their production.
As far as grammar instruction is concerned, it appears that one of the major tasks confronting L2 teachers is to develop programs which provide students with declarative knowledge (knowledge about grammar) (Anderson, 1982) as well as providing them with opportunities to develop procedural knowledge (knowledge about how to use grammar) (ibid.). While Krashen's model of LL2 views declarative and procedural knowledge as existing independently of one another, more recent models suggest that there is an interface between the two types of knowledge (e.g. Ellis, 1993). One task for the L2 teacher is to develop programs which provide opportunities for learners to develop both types of knowledge. As Johnson (1994) points out, the paths to acquiring these two kinds of knowledge will vary according to the language learning context. He identifies two paths, the "learning path" which begins with declarative knowledge which then needs to be converted into procedural knowledge, and the "acquisition path" which moves from procedural knowledge to declarative knowledge. Teachers of intermediate level FL programs tend to be faced with the challenges associated with the second of these paths, in particular how to raise students' awareness of the fact that some of the proceduralized forms they have acquired are incorrect forms of the TL.

It would be naive however to suggest that providing students with more knowledge about grammar would be sufficient to redress the balance in French immersion programs. Research by Green and Hecht (1992) provides a useful illustration of this point. It was obvious from the correction task they used with a sample of L1 and L2 learners that students did not need to know the rule in order to get an item correct. Conversely, knowing an explicit rule did not always result in students completing an item correctly. Whether or not an item "felt" right was also an important factor for the students in determining how they completed an item. Nevertheless, there was a high correlation between being able to refer to a specific rule and being able to correct an item appropriately, particularly as far as simple rules were concerned, for example when to use a/an in English. The authors
conclude that it is probably more beneficial to concentrate on teaching easy rules than complicated rules such as those regarding aspect where it is probably better for the learner to work out the rules for themselves. However, it could also be argued that it is precisely when the rules, or concepts are complicated that the learner needs help in working them out for her/himself, particularly if the L2 system contains features which are not present in the learner's own language. Research conducted by Robinson (1996) suggests that there are benefits for the explicit teaching of both simple and complex rules.

Those authors agreeing that grammar needs to be explicitly taught in the second language classroom (e.g. Celce-Murcia, 1985; Harley, 1993; Lyster, 1987; Swain and Carroll, 1987; White, 1987) all point out that this does not imply a return to traditional methods of teaching grammar. Rather it means providing students with the opportunity to become aware of the role of grammar in comprehending and communicating in the target language (Adair-Hauck and Donato, 1994; Garrett, 1986; Lightbown and Spada, 1990; Long, 1991).

Batstone (1994) suggests that the value of teaching students about grammatical structures and systems is that it provides them with "a strong sense of position and direction, and this in itself can generate a much needed feeling of security and purpose which can have a motivating effect." (p.226). However, he also states that teaching students about grammar in this way, as a "product", is not sufficient for the effective learning of grammar. What is also needed is "process" teaching of grammar which places emphasis on language use, providing students with the opportunity to internalize the product knowledge through meaningful communicative activities. Viewing grammatical instruction from this perspective highlights for the language teacher the importance of developing programs which provide a balance.
To summarize, many L2 researchers agree that there is a role for explicit grammar instruction in the L2 classroom. A key issue for instruction appears to be how to integrate learners' procedural and declarative knowledge about L2 grammar, to promote student interlanguage development. L2 grammar instruction needs (1) to take account of L2 learners' LL2 experiences and their current interlanguage (their perceptions of how the L2 "works"); (2) to raise student awareness of some forms to promote interlanguage growth: (3) not to imply a return to descriptive grammar instruction but to emphasize the communicative function of grammar. These recommendations are taken up in the present study as follows.

In order to provide grammar instruction which is appropriate to FI learners' needs, a first step to take is in finding out more about students' interlanguage. In this study, it is suggested that to do so does not necessarily mean conducting more error analyses of immersion students' written production. These analyses tend to be the researcher's interpretation of students' interlanguage (e.g. Schachter and Celce-Murcia, 1977). Instead, this study attempts to find out directly about learners' perceptions and misconceptions of aspects of French by asking them how the TL functions in their eyes and by listening to them as they complete activities which require them to apply their interlanguage knowledge. The results obtained are then used in determining subsequent instruction with the class.

To raise student awareness of particular forms, programming decisions need to be made which encourage students to strive for appropriacy and accuracy as well as getting their message across. Lyster (1994) sees teacher feedback as having an important contribution to make by encouraging students to self-correct mistakes in their output and by requiring them to draw on their own linguistic resources. This study investigates whether tasks can be developed that would encourage students to adopt this role, further supporting teacher efforts.
Finally, in teaching grammatical concepts, this study attempts, as other FI studies have done, to adopt an approach which emphasizes the communicative aspect of grammar and to describe the effects of such an approach on students' written work. The following section shows how this study follows from and contributes to existing FI research.

1.3.1 Review of FI Research: Students' Strengths and Weaknesses

It has been found repeatedly that while immersion students can reach native-speaker levels on receptive tasks such as listening and reading comprehension, their productive skills, spoken and written, remain different from native-speaker norms (for example Harley 1992; Harley and King, 1989; Lapkin, 1983, 1984; Swain, 1984; Swain and Lapkin, 1982). Indeed, the immersion classroom environment which might typically consist of approximately twenty-five learners of French and one native speaker (NS), or near native speaker of French, the teacher, produces a distinct interlanguage which is well developed by the grade eight level (Lyster, 1987). Teachers are faced with the challenge of finding ways of helping their students to move beyond this stage in their second language development, yet are offered few research-based solutions. Thus, an important item on the research agenda for FI at present is to look at ways of overcoming the situational factors which produce this interlanguage.

1.3.2 Suggestions For Improving FI Students' French Production Skills

Some researchers (Harley, Allen, Cummins and Swain, 1990) believe that the program could be improved by balancing the analytical approach and the experiential approach to second language learning in the French immersion classroom. These two approaches are based on Stern's (1981), distinction between a functional approach to
learning a language (through use in the environment), and a formal approach to learning language (through the study and practice of the language). For the immersion program it has been suggested that the amount of helpful analytic teaching needs to be increased (Stern, 1990). Harley et al. (1990) suggest that teachers should explore ways of developing focussed input within the context of meaningful task-based activities (ibid.:773). Researchers have suggested possible pedagogical approaches for promoting interlanguage development (Swain, 1988; Harley, 1993; Lyster, 1990). These sometimes include the application of successful first language teaching strategies to the immersion context, for example peer tutoring, cross-age tutoring, pair/group work, cooperative learning, (Lapkin and Swain with Shapson, 1990), but as yet we have little information on their effectiveness in this context.

1.3.3 Some Possible Pedagogical Factors Influencing FI Students' Production Skills

It would be naive to suggest that FI programs do not already have a grammatical component and that adopting an analytic approach will resolve FI students' production weaknesses. However, it is possible that the approaches used for the teaching of grammar in FI programs are not as effective as they might be.

Observation studies conducted in immersion classrooms as a part of the Development of Bilingual Proficiency Project (Harley, Allen, Cummins and Swain, 1988) show form and function to be kept distinct in immersion classes at the grade three and grade six levels (Swain and Carroll, 1987:191-192). Grammar was taught at a particular time during which rules, paradigms and grammatical categories were learnt. Content based activities were not set up to focus on form related learning. The forms of the categories that were being taught were also separated from their meaning. Examples show that students
tended to focus on the form of words rather than on their function in the sentence. Swain and Carroll conclude that more regularity and systematicity are required in the immersion classroom as far as error correction and attention to linguistic analysis are concerned.

Harley (1985) also points to a problem of input in the immersion classroom. In their readers the students are being exposed to so many different verb inflections at once that they tend to pass over them in extracting the essential meaning from other clues in the text (p.276).

She suggests more emphasis in the immersion context on providing language input that is explicitly designed to clarify the meaningful use of particular grammatical forms.

1.3.4 Suggestions for Program Planning

Using Allen’s (1983) three-level curriculum for second language education as a theoretical framework, Harley (1985) concluded that immersion classes at the grade three and grade six levels were paying little attention to the functional-analytic level of the language curriculum and that the structural-analytic second language oriented activities should be taught in ways that were geared towards the specific needs of second language learners rather than francophones. This is a point that is supported by Lyster (1990). He adds a sociolinguistic element to Allen’s framework which he claims also needs to be taken into account when considering the types of focussed input which might be useful for immersion students.

Harley and Swain (1984) suggest that L2 learners' needs could be met by increasing the exposure students receive to language which is specifically designed to focus their attention on problematic grammatical forms (enhanced input) and also by providing
students with more opportunity for productive output, using the relevant forms in meaningful situations.

Harley (1993) describes principles that could be applied to the teaching of grammar in immersion programs. She suggests that analytic teaching is needed for those aspects of the French language that differ in non-obvious ways from English; for those aspects of the French language that are irregular, infrequent, or lacking in salience; and for those aspects which do not carry a communicative load. It is also needed for problematic features where misanalysis can block entry to major subsystems of the French grammatical code and for differences from the target language that create confusion in interpretation or negative attitudes among native speakers. A wide range of grouping and teaching techniques should be used and analytic teaching should take place at any time as long as it is geared to the students' immediate linguistic needs and allied to experiential and content goals of relevance to the learners. These principles are theoretically sound but offer no practical suggestions for implementation by the classroom teacher.

Swain (1985, 1988) suggests that giving students the opportunity to produce extended discourse in French that is integrated with content themes could be a way to improve the syntactic awareness of French immersion students. In response to Krashen's emphasis on the importance of providing L2 students with comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982) Swain proposes that the role of output in LL2 must not be overlooked. Comprehensible output involves "the delivery of a message that is not only conveyed but that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately . . . Its role is, at minimum, to provide opportunities for contextualized, meaningful use, to test hypotheses about the target language, and to move the learner from a purely semantic analysis of the language to a syntactic analysis of it" (1985:249).
Yet, as Swain points out (1993), just providing opportunities for extensive speaking and writing activities in the immersion classroom may not be sufficient impetus to activate all the potential functions of output in the classroom. Through the extensive opportunities that FI students have for communicating in French, they do develop good fluency. As will be shown, they do hypothesize about how the French language functions, and as current research suggests, as they write, students do "reprocess" their own linguistic output using their resources to generate new knowledge or consolidate existing knowledge (Swain, 1994; Swain and Lapkin, 1995). Yet, because there is little social or cognitive pressure for the students to produce language that reflects more appropriately and accurately their intended meaning and TL forms, the development of syntactic processing is one feature of the output hypothesis which is inherently weak in the immersion learning situation and which might be strengthened from programming intervention.

There are at least three principal pedagogic factors which may contribute to this weakness. First, in terms of content, immersion teachers are required to make their programs as similar as possible to those of their English counterparts. This is quite understandable. Parents of students enrolled in immersion programs and the students have been told that the overall education (i.e. knowledge and skills acquired) provided through immersion programs will be similar to that of their English counterparts. This may encourage teachers to concentrate more on the content to be covered than the language that is used to communicate this content (Chaudron, 1986; Swain, 1988).

Second, we must consider the adoption of L1 teaching techniques to an L2 teaching context: for instance, whole language approaches to language learning which encourage process-writing techniques. In itself, the adoption of good L1 practice is highly commendable. Process-writing in particular has been shown to be a useful technique in second language classrooms (Hudelson, 1989; Krapels, 1990) and Hall (1993) makes a
convincing case for using the approach in immersion classrooms. Process-writing and literature studies (in particular novels) are more interesting to students, more learner-centered and provide opportunities for extended second language output but it is how they are adapted to the L2 teaching context which is important. For example, it is possible that instruction in grammar for second language learners might be reduced, in the belief that syntactic awareness will develop naturally through interactions with the teacher and French language materials. Although this may work for some students, it is definitely not the case for all L2 learners.

Finally, as discussed earlier, the way in which the task of formal grammar instruction is approached must also be considered. The approach to grammar instruction which many FI students seem to have predominantly experienced is one which regards grammar as a set of prescriptive rules to be learned and which is not necessarily the most effective way of approaching EGI.

1.3.5 Results of Quasi-Experimental Research Designed to Promote FI Students' Interlanguage Growth

Classroom experiments have been conducted to see if FI students' interlanguage can be enhanced by increasing the amount of analytical instruction in FI classes in a way that makes students aware of functional aspects of certain French grammatical features. For instance, Harley (1989), at the grade six level, used curricular materials designed to provide focussed teaching on the semantic distinctions between the present perfect and the imperfect while providing the students with extended opportunities to use these two
aspectual markers of past tense\(^1\) in meaningful situations. Significant short term effects were observed for the experimental group, which were maintained in the long term.

Day and Shapson's research (1991), conducted in grade seven immersion classes, showed significant gains were made by the students in the experimental groups in their ability to use the conditional tense in writing. The treatment consisted of a thematic unit designed to teach the conditional tense and which made use of cooperative learning techniques. Statistically significant gains were not revealed in speaking, although some growth was observed. The authors conclude that there is a need for the systematic introduction of curricular materials which integrate a formal, analytic and functional approach to the teaching of language in communicative activities. They also call for observational research to be conducted in immersion classrooms so that effective strategies currently being used by immersion teachers to promote growth can be identified.

Lyster (1993) developed a set of functional-analytic materials for teaching sociolinguistic competence to grade eight FL students. Students' sociolinguistic competence improved in three ways, (1) in their ability in oral production to use *vous* appropriately and accurately in formal situations; (2) in their ability to use *vous* in formal letter writing (3) and in their ability to recognize contextually appropriate French. Through classroom observations, he also discovered that one teacher's feedback and questioning techniques together with his skill at integrating analytic teaching with experiential strategies positively influenced his students' receptivity to the materials and helped to foster student reflection on their communication through discussions on language use and analytic group activities.

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\(^1\)Although commonly referred to as tenses in many school grammar texts, the passé composé and the imparfait are strictly speaking different aspects of the past tense. Both the passé composé and the imparfait refer to events which occurred in the past, but they are associated with different intervals on the time line. That is, the passé composé is used for conveying complete meaning and past time reference, while the imparfait conveys imperfective meaning and past time reference. No distinction was made between aspect and tense in my work with the students. Consequently, questionnaires and student responses use the term tense rather than aspect in referring to the passé composé and the imparfait.
Finally, Harley, Howard and Hart (in press) conducted research at the grade two level on grammatical gender; teaching students strategies for identifying the gender of French nouns. The experimental students made significant gains and outperformed the comparison groups on three out of four tasks.

1.3.6 Gaps in Research to Date

While these studies do suggest that functional-analytic approaches to EGI can have positive effects on FL students' interlanguage and provide suggestions to guide practice, they provide us with less information about the teaching/learning processes (teacher-student, student-student) in the immersion classroom, apart from Lyster's observations regarding teacher feedback and questioning techniques mentioned earlier. Weber and Tardif's study (1991) and the research of Christiansen and Froc (1991) are helping to fill this gap at the junior and primary levels but little is known of the language learning process at the intermediate level.

Nunan (1991) in his review of classroom-oriented second language research found few studies that derived their data from language classrooms. His recommendations for future research include "the implementation of more contextualized research that is classroom-based, as opposed to classroom-oriented research, and a more active role for classroom practitioners in applied research" (p.259). He also points out that classroom-based research can contain an extension of the range of research tools, techniques and methods used, adopting and adapting them where appropriate, and reevaluating the distinction between process-oriented and product-oriented research. These recommendations are in keeping with a general thrust in educational research at the present time (e.g. Wells, 1992; Connelly and Clandinin, 1988; McNiff, 1989; Atwell, 1989) which
urges teachers to play a more active role in applied research. In the context of this study, it is maintained that it is through this type of research that the theories and recommendations from previous research in the field of immersion programs can be tried out and developed.

In conclusion, current L2 theory suggests that grammar instruction can have an important role to play in L2 learning, although some approaches to the teaching of grammar may be more effective than others. Functional-analytic approaches to the teaching of grammar in FL programs do show evidence of enhanced learning. The research which has been conducted to date provides only limited information about how programming decisions affect student learning outcomes. Research conducted by teacher-researchers might be one means of gaining a clearer insight into the process of L2 learning in classroom contexts.
CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH ORIENTATION AND METHODOLOGY
AND THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This chapter begins with a rationale for the research orientation used. Next follows a description of certain elements of socio-cultural theory which were influential in determining the directions that the research took and which provided a framework for the analysis of much of the data. The chapter concludes with a description of the classroom context in which the study was conducted.

2.1.1 Action Research: Combining Theory and Practice

As the previous chapter showed, research contains very few accounts of the LL2 process in FL classrooms. In this case study, an action research orientation was adopted as one way of contributing to classroom-based FL data by (1) providing a means of studying learners in a "real-world" classroom setting and (2) showing how the organization of learning influences the learning process. It is argued that well-conducted action research can provide an important interface for linking L2 theory and practice, producing useful information for L2 practitioners and theorists.

2.1.2 Models of Action Research

Action research is a self-reflective, teacher based form of inquiry which is ideal for individualized, small-scale projects where the researcher is also the teacher in the research situation. A brief history of its development as a research paradigm is provided here as an introduction to the way in which the current study was developed and conducted.
The origins of action research can be traced to Kurt Lewin (1946), a social psychologist, who formulated a model to help people conduct their own systematic enquiries. His model describes action research as a spiral of four stage steps consisting of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (See Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1 Lewin's model of the action research spiral**

Kemmis (1982) adapted Lewin's self-reflective spiral to include a stage of replanning that leads into the next stage of the spiral. Each cycle now grows out of previous one. Carr and Kemmis (1986) developed a model for "educational action research". They used their model in combination with Habermas' critical theory (1971) to provide a framework of "research for education" (p.179), a means of enacting a "critical educational science" (ibid.) which would be capable of transforming educational practices, resulting in improved learning conditions.

McNiff (1988:43), working within a comparable framework, adapts the spiral again to enable it to cope with the "random hurly-burly" nature of educators' lives. Her adaptation depicts "a three-dimensional spiral of spirals" (p.45) in which the researcher can investigate more than one problem at once. Her model shows how the action researcher often needs to switch focus at various stages of the research to accommodate the unanticipated, for example student needs that arise during and, perhaps as a result of, the research (See Figure 2.2.).
Finally, Wells (1992) places the researcher at the centre of the research spiral in recognizing the importance of an individual's personal theory and makes the order of the stages flexible to accommodate the dictates of practice (p.5).

2.1.3 Strengths and Weaknesses of Action Research

Supporters of action research regard it as an important vehicle for improving classroom practice. It can be a means of returning control of educational knowledge to the teacher, an idea not outrageous to John Dewey (1904), but one that was devalued during the middle years of this century when administrative convenience was the order of the day (Giroux, Penna and Pinar, 1981:2). Teachers were viewed as curriculum deliverers rather than curriculum makers. However, as LL2 theory moves beyond the concept of "the best method" to use (Kumaravadivelu, 1994), this image of the teacher as curriculum maker is one which we can expect to see mentioned much more frequently in LL2 research. Action research is one way to help teachers explore their role as curriculum makers for it can "enable teachers to acquire the competencies and resources to be systematic and intentional
learners in and about their own professional situations and the confidence and disposition to use them" (Wells, 1992:25).

Action research can also be a means of uniting school and university educators in collaborative enterprises to improve LL2 education and to add to the theoretical knowledge base. The "operational" relationship between theory and practice (McKeon, 1952) where the former drives the latter becomes instead a more empowering dialectical relationship that many would claim has the power to transform practice, an idea that is also present in the work of Joseph Schwab (1969, 1971, 1973, 1983). Through this dialectical relationship, practice can in turn contribute to the development of the theoretical knowledge base.

According to Carr and Kemmis (1986), action research gains its superiority over positivist and interpretive research approaches through a series of dialectical relationships that form the centre of educational action research: theory/practice, individual/society: retrospective analysis/prospective action (p.184). Action research aims at improving educational practices, understandings and situations based on the notion that truth and action are "socially constructed and historically embedded" (1986:182).

Action research encourages practitioners to undertake systematic inquiry into a problematic area of their teaching and encourages practitioners to become a part of the research community. It can be an excellent means of generating authentic classroom data over a period of time. These data are interpreted within the context of the research setting, of which the researcher is an integral part, as opposed to other forms of research where the researcher observes and collects data during isolated visits to the research situation. In the case of classroom teachers its outcomes result in professional development, a deeper understanding of the teaching/learning relationship, and improved learning environments
for their students while contributing to an increase in professional and theoretical knowledge bases.

The advantages of action research can be reduced if the criterion of systematicity or becoming a member of a research community are compromised in any way. If the approach is not systematically conducted, the resulting understanding and critical, self-reflection may not be developed to their full extent. As Strickland (1988) has shown, this is a point often raised by opponents of teacher based research, who claim that teachers lack the necessary expertise, time and resources to conduct high quality research. Some practitioners have a distrust of theory, another possible area of weakness that needs to be overcome if the quality of the research is to be maintained (Atwell, 1989).

Action research projects can have limited generalizibility because they involve small sample sizes (a single class or group of students within a class). Their external validity may also be seen to be limited by some because the measures used to determine the success of a project may appear to be subjective. The success of an action research project can be judged by the amount of professional development achieved by the individual researcher (Wells, 1992) and can therefore be very context specific. The question that needs to be asked in this instance is whether the results of more "objective" forms of research produce any greater changes in practice. The current literature on educational change (Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991) would suggest this is not the case. Moreover, as this study attempts to show, systematically conducted action research, which draws on previous research findings and makes use of existing measurement instruments if appropriate, can reduce these possible "weaknesses", contribute to the theoretical knowledge base and be inspirational in encouraging other educators to try out changes to their own practice.
2.1.4 Relevance of Action Research for the Present Study

This study investigates L2 learners' understanding of aspects of French and the L2 process in a classroom setting. Teaching/learning relationships are complex and dynamic. Many factors can influence the learning process for example the tasks used, student/teacher characteristics, grouping patterns. As shown, well-conducted, systematic action research can be an excellent model for understanding the dynamism/"messiness" of real world classrooms. It provides a way of examining theory in action and action contributing to theory, and thereby, in the case of this study, contributes to FL pedagogy.

As there was little previous research into the areas examined in this study, much of the present research was of an exploratory nature. While some of the areas to be investigated could be planned in advance, for example finding out about students' approaches to learning French and their understanding of particular aspects of the language, many issues would only be identified as they arose out of each cycle of action, data collection and reflection (see Figure 3.1). In particular, the dual roles of teacher-researcher meant that the direction of the study, although guided by previous L2 research findings, would also be dictated by the needs of the students, reviewed upon completion of each cycle of the research. An action research paradigm offered the necessary flexibility in planning. Nevertheless, as much preplanning as possible was undertaken to maintain high levels of systematicity and to arrange for the collection of appropriate comparison data.

2.2.1 Socio-cultural Theory and its Relevance in L2 Learning

Socio-cultural theory is a cross disciplinary theory of learning based principally on the work of L.S. Vygotsky and his colleagues and students. As Schinke-Llano (1993) has pointed out, the domain of LL2 has not yet explored the full extent of the applicability of
socio-cultural theory, although as will be shown, some researchers have begun to appreciate the productiveness of this theoretical model for conducting research and contributing to L2 theory. Socio-cultural theory focusses on the development of human knowledge which, it is claimed, is both socially situated and constructed. Adopting a socio-cultural framework enables the L2 researcher to focus on the process rather than the product of L2 learning. It is a framework which is well-suited to analyzing the teaching/learning processes captured through action research. The purpose of this section is to describe some basic tenets of socio-cultural theory which are of relevance to this study.

2.2.2 The Social Construction of Knowledge

According to Vygotsky's *general genetic law of cultural development* (1981) all knowledge is co-constructed through interactions with others and is therefore co-knowledge.

Any function in the child's cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category. This is equally true with regard to voluntary attention, logical memory, the formation of concepts, and the development of volition...internalization transforms the process itself and its structure and functions. Social relations or relations between people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships (Vygotsky, 1981:163).

It follows therefore, that for the L2 researcher interested in studying the process of L2 development, observation of the individual's achievements (a unit frequently used in research) is not the only valid level of analysis, nor necessarily the most appropriate one. Interactions between teachers and their students or between students are an important part of the learning process and now become a major focus of attention.


2.2.3 The Zone of Proximal Development

The internalization/appropriation\(^2\) of knowledge is mediated by others. Vygotsky used the metaphor of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) to refer to interactions in which children appropriate a culture/society's knowledge through the mediation of others. The ZPD is described as, "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978:86).

As Wertsch and Tulviste have pointed out (1992), by studying interactions which occur within the ZPD we can gain an understanding of the participants' current cognitive status and observe certain features of interactions which appear to promote one's intrapsychological development, and perhaps discover ways of changing intermental and intramental functioning as exemplified in the work of Palincsar and Brown (1984).

Four stages have been identified within the ZPD through which individuals pass in appropriating knowledge, in passing from other to self regulation (Wertsch, 1979). At the first level, the novice may fail to recognize the expert's utterances in relation to the task; at the second level the novice becomes aware that the expert's utterances are related to the task in hand but is not able to make all the inferences necessary to participate fully in the task; third, the novice begins to take over some of responsibility for her/his own activity, the transition from other to self regulation; fourth, the novice is able to perform the task without expert assistance, self-regulation is complete.

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\(^2\)The term appropriation, defined by Leont'ev (1981:55) as "the transition that results in the conversion of external processes with external material objects into processes carried out on the mental plane, on the plane of consciousness" is preferred over the term internalization because it conveys better the social dynamic inherent in the development of self-regulated concepts.
2.2.4 Studying Consciousness

Vygotsky was dissatisfied with the compartmentalization characteristic of psychological practice in his time (Wertsch, 1985). By isolating functions such as memory, attention and thinking, psychologists were unable to study their interconnectedness, their functional unity and their effects on consciousness. They were also neglecting to study the dynamic organization of consciousness.

Once higher mental functions have emerged on the basis of certain dynamic preconditions, these formations themselves influence the processes that spawned them....Above all the interfunctional connections and relationships among various processes, in particular intellect and affect, change (Wertsch's italics)(cited in Wertsch, 1985:190).

The researcher's task becomes more complicated, as s/he searches to find an approach which can accommodate the interfunctionality and dynamism of consciousness. One solution, adopted in this study, is offered by activity theory (Leont'ev, 1981) which proposes studying consciousness through human activity.

2.2.5 Activity Theory

Activity theory was developed by Leont'ev out of many of Vygotsky's ideas on the analysis of higher mental functions (Wertsch, 1981). It rejects both behaviourist stimulus-response interpretations of knowledge acquisition and idealist views of consciousness as the result of individual self-reflection, proposing instead that the way to understand our developing knowledge of the world in which we live is through our interactions with it, through the activities in which we participate. As the structure of our social interactions changes, according to the activities in which we are involved, so too will the structure of our thought change.
Activity mediates the connections between subjects (humans) and the objects (the world) with which they come into contact. For Leont'ev then, consciousness is determined by people’s social being... the system of activities which succeed one another...In activity the object is transformed into its subjective form or image. At the same time, activity is converted into objective results and products. Viewed from this perspective, activity emerges as a process of reciprocal transformations between subject and object poles ... Activity has its own internal transformations and its own development. It is a system which exists in the system of social relations. It does not exist without these relations. (p.46)

Activities always have a motive and are realized by actions, that is, a process which is used to achieve a conscious goal. There are many alternate ways of achieving one’s goal, depending on various factors, for example, the tools at our disposal, the time we have to carry it out. Each action can be made up of different operations that need to be performed in order to complete the action, for example, writing a story in French. The operation is the means by which an action is carried out, for instance applying correct grammatical markers. We may be conscious of the operations but they usually become automatized. Observing L2 students as they complete a task can be one way of investigating the operations they have or are in the process of appropriating; a means of gaining an insight into aspects of their interlanguage development.
Wertsch (1985) believes that it is at Leont’ev’s level of action that human mental functioning can best be studied.

When one considers a goal-directed, tool-mediated action such as that involved in constructing an object in accordance with a model, one sees that perception, memory, thinking (or problem-solving) and attention are all necessarily involved and coordinated in a unit of actual psychological life. The analytic unit involved is fundamentally different from the units typically employed in psychological research...it makes possible the study of consciousness as defined by Vygotsky. Given the fact that for him the fundamental defining criterion of consciousness is its dynamic interfunctional organization, the notion of a tool-mediated action provides a "manageable microcosm" within which consciousness may be studied (p.207).

2.2.6 Summary

To summarize, socio-cultural theory provides a framework for the study of human development and consciousness, and, for the purposes of this study, a framework for investigating aspects of LL2. The appropriation of new knowledge by the individual is a social phenomenon. Knowledge is mediated through our interactions with the world and in particular through our interactions with others. In order to study this phenomenon in its entirety, we need to study tool-mediated actions, that is to observe L2 students as they complete various activities in the classroom. Consequently the talk which occurs between two or more individuals as they complete a task is highlighted. It may be possible to observe what stage students are at in terms of the appropriation of knowledge, the transition from other to self regulation; it may also be possible to observe some of the processes through which this transition occurs. We shall now consider how the above principles have been used in L2 research to date, and how they have influenced the research conducted for this study.

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3 No distinction is made here between tool mediated and semiotic mediation.
2.2.7 Socio-Cultural Theory and L2 Research

A principal contribution of those researchers interested in applying socio-cultural theory to the L2 setting has been a shift in the focus of how classroom interaction is studied. Many studies have investigated interaction in the L2 classroom (e.g. Long and Porter, 1985; Duff, 1986; Olson Flanigan, 1991; Pica, 1992; Pica and Doughty, 1985; Pica, Holliday, Lewis and Morgenthaler, 1989; Varonis and Gass, 1985), but their research is centred on quantitative analyses of interactions. Such studies have shown 1) that learners have many more opportunities to use the TL in group work than in teacher-fronted classes; 2) that through the conversational modifications that occur in student-student interactions, input is made more comprehensible, 3) that as a result of specific conversational features of interaction such as clarification requests, learners modify their output both semantically and syntactically. This research has been useful in demonstrating quantitatively what goes on when learners and learners, or learners and teachers, interact. It provides numbers about how many clarification requests, confirmation checks, repetitions, or output modifications, are made, allowing for comparisons among different tasks. However, this research does little to inform the field about the substance of the interactions. For instance, is there any evidence on the part of the student of understanding something about the way language "works", or of refining a hypothesis? There is certainly evidence to the contrary which suggests that quantitative analyses of interactional data can provide misleading impressions of the actual discourse which occurred. For instance, in a study by Fotos and Ellis (1991) the quantitative analysis of discourse collected during a grammar task elicited a large number of interactional modifications, but the qualitative analysis revealed that the nature of the exchanges was mechanical and involved very little extended use of the TL. Qualitative accounts of learner discourse, particularly those adopting a socio-cultural framework, are beginning to provide us with a chance to observe the L2 learning process.
The ZPD metaphor for instance, has proven to be a useful means of examining instruction in L2 settings, in particular for showing how teachers in tutorial situations structure their instruction to facilitate their student's learning (Adair-Hauck and Donato, 1994; Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994). Such research focusses on the discourse strategies and interactional features used by the expert in guiding the novice's learning from other to self-regulated. Away from one-on-one student-teacher interactions Donato and Adair-Hauck (1992) have also illustrated how formal, teacher-fronted lessons can also consist of negotiated and co-constructed instruction.

Peer-peer interactions have also been studied as means of studying the L2 learning process. Lantolf and Donato (1990) use the setting of a collaborative L2 language activity to show how individuals process information, including language, arguing that monitoring may play a more important role in L2 learning than hitherto acknowledged by Krashen's Monitor Theory. In so doing, they also show how group work is not just a means of accumulating the knowledge of individual members, but provides situations in which new knowledge and solutions are created by the group members, enabling the group to achieve more than the members could have achieved individually, thus supporting the position of the usefulness of group work in the L2 classroom. Brooks and Donato (1994) and Donato (1994) have also been able to document instances of the co-construction of knowledge in L2 group work situations.

These studies have shown that socio-cultural theory is a productive framework to use in studying LL2, but there is still much to be discovered, particularly in the FL setting. The interactional data in this study with their primary focus on peer-peer interactions begin to describe how the co-construction of knowledge is affected by various grouping patterns, task requirements and to show the potential for students to act as mediators in one another's
learning. Finally, they provide an insight into how members of a community such as the participants in a L2 class are introduced to and appropriate new knowledge.

2.3.1 The Study

This action research study uses a socio-cultural framework to investigate certain aspects of LL2 in a grade eight Fl class. Three implications of adopting such an approach are (1) instruction is planned around the current developmental levels of the learners; (2) there is an increased interest in how an individual's appropriation of knowledge is mediated through interaction with others (as a result, assessment focusses not only on the individual, but also on the knowledge generated by groups of individuals as they perform tasks within the classroom setting); (3) in order to understand instructional practice and the learning process, we need to investigate at the micro-level. This means studying the interactions which take place in the classroom to gain a clearer understanding of how knowledge is co-constructed and generated by the participants in a community. These implications are reflected in the research plan and methodology used in this study.

2.3.2 The Class

The research was conducted in a grade eight French immersion classroom of a dual-track, kindergarten to grade eight, school in a lower-middle to middle-class area of Toronto. In total, there were three grade eight immersion classes in the school, all of similar size, ethnicity and socio-economic make up. All three classes were of mixed ability. The two classes which were not taught by the teacher-researcher were used as comparison classes during the experimental part of the study. For these two classes, all of the subjects conducted in French were taught by the same teacher.
The class which is the focus of this research consisted of students of a wide range of academic abilities, with generally similar educational backgrounds. At the beginning of the school year and in early December, I sent letters to the parents of the students in my class requesting permission for their children to participate in the study. (Appendices A and B). Permission was received for nineteen of the twenty-one students in the class. As this was a relatively small number and because all of the students were eager to be a part of the study it was decided to make all 19 students the focus of the research and not just 12 as originally intended.

Of these nineteen students, all but one were early immersion students, that is, they had been in the program since senior kindergarten. The exception had transferred from a mid-immersion program which had started in grade four. The majority of the students had attended the school from kindergarten, with all but two of the remaining students joining the school at the beginning of grade seven from local feeder schools. The two exceptions were new to the school at the beginning of the school year. Four of the students participated in the school board's part-time gifted program, (a one day a week withdrawal program delivered in English): one student was receiving individualized, remedial French language support from the school learning centre in addition to the regular French program. At the beginning of the school year, there were four students who were considering the possibility of leaving the French immersion program upon completion of the eighth grade because of low achievement in previous grades. (In Ontario, grade eight is the end of elementary school, so for students wishing to leave the program the end of this year can be an appropriate time). The immersion program for this particular class was delivered by two teachers. One teacher, not involved in the study, was responsible for the *histoire/géographie* component and the other, the teacher-researcher, for *français* and *mathématiques*. 
2.3.3 The Teacher

When I began this research, I had been teaching in the French immersion program for five years, an anglophone with near native command of French. I had had experience teaching younger (grade three and four) students as well as intermediate level (grade seven and eight) students. Group work, cooperative learning strategies and cross-age tutoring activities ("reading buddies") had all been regular features of my teaching, features which I had first become familiar with in the younger grades and which I adapted for the intermediate level. There were many opportunities for extended student output, both oral and written, in terms of large and small group discussions, drama activities, story and report-writing. Students would often assume responsibility for teaching particular aspects of the course material through group and individual projects. Language was not something that was studied only in language periods, it was seen as an integral component of all learning. Many techniques often associated with whole language approaches to learning such as process writing and independent reading programs were extended into other areas of the curriculum. For instance, it would not be unusual for my teacher-student conferences to be centred around the preparation of an oral geography report for the whole class, or for a student's personal reading choice for the month to be an historical novel which was set in the period being studied in the history program.

Formal grammar instruction would occur in one-on-one teacher-student conferences and in small and large groups. Grammar and language use were not regarded as things to be talked about only in language arts periods. For instance, in reading a math problem I might draw students' attention to grammatical features that were often a source of student

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4 As this is an action research study, the teacher and researcher are the same person.
5 In the year that this study was conducted, the students' immersion program was delivered by two teachers. One consequence of this situation was that my opportunities for integrating language and histoire/geographie were more limited, although I and the other teacher did plan parts of the program together to overcome this situation. Opportunities for cross-age tutoring were more limited but still used. There were still many opportunities in all areas of the program for extended student output.
errors. In teaching grammar, I believed and worked to show in my teaching that it was important to make students aware of the function of particular aspects of the grammatical system in relation to the meaning students wanted to communicate (Harley, 1993), rather than to teach isolated rules and paradigms. This does not mean that my students, particularly at the intermediate level, were never taught verb paradigms or grammar rules, rather that these were accompanied by functional explanations and, whenever possible, by activities which highlighted these functions. In this way, I hoped to encourage my students to appreciate that grammar as well as vocabulary had an integral role to play in conveying meaning.

When I first began to teach in the intermediate division, I was surprised, disappointed and puzzled that students were making many of the same mistakes they had been making as younger students. Yet my knowledge of instructional practices in the younger grades convinced me that this performance was not due to a lack of effort to teach grammar on the part of the students' previous teachers. Moreover, my students actively sought out answers to questions regarding grammar. Grammar was often seen by them as a thorn in their side, a system of prescribed rules, ignorance of which constituted that element of their writing which pulled down their overall language grades. They wanted to start "getting it right". The problem, in their eyes, was not that they had never been taught about French grammar, (although they recognized that they still probably had a lot to learn) but that they "had forgotten" the rules they had been taught.

I was aware of an underlying tension in the learning situation. On the one hand teachers were trying to provide students with tools (for example grammatical paradigms) to enable them to communicate effectively and accurately in French (and yet in many ways these tools were proving ineffectual). On the other hand, the highly experiential nature of language learning in the immersion classroom, coupled with the need to use the second
language to communicate new and often complex subject matter encouraged students to communicate with each other by relying more heavily on strategic competence (based on gestures, common knowledge etc.) than on grammatical competence (based on accurate, verbal communication).

I began to wonder what type of conception of the French grammatical system the students had acquired during their years in the immersion program, for it seemed possible that students had misinterpreted certain aspects of the way in which the French grammatical system worked. In order to find out more about my students' understanding of the French language I began, in grade seven, to ask them questions about specific areas of French grammar which appeared to be problematic for them.

From such informal questioning, I discovered that although students had been introduced to the rules of French grammar, they appeared to have had less opportunity to understand the meaning particular grammatical forms conveyed. For example, in response to a problem about the formation and use of the passé composé I asked my students to explain when one would use the following forms: je suis allé, je suis allée, *j'ai allé, j'allais. Many incorrect hypotheses were offered, including the suggestion that *j'ai allé (a structure frequently observed in immersion students' writing) means "I have gone" (masculine speaker), whereas "je suis allé means "I went". Students were hypothesizing about how the French language "worked" and as is to be expected, some of their hypotheses were incorrect. However, while I had considered these errors in student production to be careless student slips, the students had in fact been consciously using them to convey a particular meaning.

I wanted to find out more about my students' understanding of French and to look for possible instructional approaches to help them restructure their understanding. One
hypothesis I wanted to try out was that students' French interlanguage might improve if they were given more opportunities to talk to one another and me about how French "worked". It is out of these interests that the present study grew.

2.4.1 Summary

This chapter began with a rationale for the adoption of an action research orientation in this study and described some of the characteristics associated with research conducted within such a framework. Certain aspects of socio-cultural theory which influenced the design of the study were also discussed. The context of the study was then described. Chapter 3 describes the timetable and procedures followed for data collection.
CHAPTER THREE: THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This chapter describes the plan of the study and the activities and tests used in data collection. The development of testing instruments designed for use in this study is also included.

3.1.1 Overview of the Data Collection Period

Data from my class were collected throughout the school year. Comparison data using the remaining two grade 8 classes were collected during the first and third terms. Table 3.1 provides an overview of the timetable for data collection, while Figure 3.1 shows how this action research study developed as a series of reflective cycles.

3.2.1 The Collection of Comparison Data

In October 1992 and June 1993 all three grade eight classes in the school completed two test tasks (Appendix C). The tasks were from the French Language Test Package of the Modern Language Centre Testing Service for use with French immersion students in grades six to nine. This battery of tests is designed to evaluate students' general L2 performance. Only the tests of written performance were used in this study. They were used to see if 1) the classes could be considered similar for the purposes of comparing scores from the experimental part of the study; 2) to measure aspects of students' language development over the course of the year; 3) to compare the competence of these students with other FI students of similar educational background and age from other Early French Immersion programs, thereby situating the results in a wider context.
The first task, Test de mots à trouver niveau C, consisted of a 25 item cloze test designed to measure students' general L2 ability and reading comprehension. It was based on the legend of the abominable snowman. After completing the cloze test, a second task was administered in which students were asked to write whether or not they believed in such incredible creatures and to provide reasons for their answers. For this second task, students' answers were scored according to two measures, (1) their ability to state and support an opinion in French (measured on a scale of 1-3); (2) a global score of "good writing" which looks at syntactic sophistication (measured on a scale of 0-3).

3.3.1 Exploratory Data Collection

I used the first term primarily as an exploratory stage. I observed the students and collected information regarding their understanding of French and their strengths and weaknesses. As well as gathering information through regular class activities such as writing and reading assignments, there were two other major means of collecting data.

3.3.2 The Dictogloss Procedure

From the end of September to November part of the language arts program was devoted to the dictogloss procedure (Wajnryb, 1990). It was used both as a research and a potential learning tool. Dictogloss is a procedure which involves students in collaborative, text reconstruction exercises. Students use their productive grammar (Wajnryb, 1990:6) as they work from notes to produce a text which is similar to one which has previously been read aloud by the teacher. Students are expected to produce a text that is grammatically accurate, textually cohesive and whose content is factually accurate.
Table 3.1 Timeline of data collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Comparison Data Collection</th>
<th>Experimental Class Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September - December 1992</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing exploratory data collection: regular classroom activities, teacher observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning October 1992</td>
<td>Pre-test Students' General L2 Performance: Written tests</td>
<td>Pre-test Students' General L2 Performance: Written tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of October 1992</td>
<td></td>
<td>Audio-taping of 3rd, dictogloss activity: student-student interactions, follow-up teacher-led discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1992</td>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire One: Students' attitudes and approaches to learning French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire Two: Students' Understanding of Aspects of French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>Passé composé /Imparfait Pre-test: cloze activity, essay activity (Tests A/B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>Audio-taping of Fill in the Blanks activity: student-student interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning of April 1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>Passé composé /Imparfait Post-test: cloze activity, essay activity (Tests B/A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid May 1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>Passé composé /Imparfait Delayed Post-test: cloze activity (Tests A/B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>Audio-taping of Proof-reading activity: student-student interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1993</td>
<td>Passé composé /Imparfait cloze activity (Test C)</td>
<td>Passé composé /Imparfait cloze activity (Test C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1993</td>
<td>Post-test Students' General L2 Performance: Written Tests</td>
<td>Post-test Students' General L2 Performance: Written Tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher-conducted interviews with the students (audio-taped)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Figure 3.1 The development of the present study in terms of cycles of action research**

| Act: Teacher-conducted interviews with students |
| Reflect Plan |
| Cycle Six |

| Act: Comparative testing L2 ability |
| (Comparative) |
| Act: Comparative-testing passé composé imparfait |

| June 1993 |
| Act: Delayed post-testing |

| May 1993 |
| Act: Post-testing |

| April 1993 | Cycle Five |
| Reflect/Plan |
| Act: Audio-taping of metalinguistic activity |

| March 1993 |
| Act: Teaching of unit Parlons du passé |
| Act: Pre-testing |

| February 1993 | Cycle Four |
| Reflect/Plan |
| Act: Adapting of unit Parlons du passé |

| December 1992 | Cycle Three |
| Reflect/Plan |
| Act: Questionnaires |

| October 1992 |
| Act: Pre-test Students' General L2 Performance |

| September 1992 | Cycle Two |
| Reflect/Plan |
| Act/Observe: Teacher observations of students' strengths/weaknesses in language use |

| Spring 1990 | Cycle One |
| Observe: Teacher-researcher first becomes aware of some student misconceptions of aspects French |
There are four stages in the dictogloss process. The first is the preparation stage when the grammatical point is taught and general discussion takes place about the theme to be presented in the dictogloss. Any new vocabulary is presented to the students. The second stage consists of the reading aloud of the short text which is to be reconstructed by the students. It is read aloud twice with the students being allowed to take notes during the second reading. The third stage involves the students working in pairs or groups to reconstruct the text, checking for grammar, textual cohesion and factual accuracy. In the fourth stage, the teacher and students work together to analyze and correct the student texts. Wajnryb suggests that, "Through active learner involvement students come to confront their own strengths and weaknesses ... In so doing, they find out what they need to know" (p 10).

The texts used with this class were all of an expository nature. This was for two reasons. First, I used parts of the language arts program to reinforce vocabulary and themes from the students' histoire/geographie program. Second, the expository genre is one which students at this grade level are frequently still not adept at using. As a learning tool therefore, I believed that students would benefit from working with the technical items of vocabulary and in reconstructing texts which contained features particular to the expository genre. In keeping with the spirit of action research, it was important for me that the research not only provide useful data but also be used to promote students' learning whenever possible.

Four dictoglosses were given to the class over a two-month time period at bi-weekly intervals. During the third dictogloss, the pair work interactions and the subsequent teacher-fronted correction period were audio-taped. It was thought that by this stage, the students would be familiar with the procedure and that the data collected would be representative of the students' overall abilities to reflect on their output.
In devising the third dictogloss (Appendix E) I was careful to draw on specific items of vocabulary which the students had encountered during their studies in a unit on *L'environnement*. The previous two dictoglosses had also been based on the same theme. As it was the present tense which had been most recently reviewed with the students, this was the grammatical structure on which the students were told to focus during the dictogloss.

Students were grouped in pairs with one group of three students due to the odd number of students in the class. I believed that for this particular task, dyads would be more productive in terms of individual effort than larger groups. For the most part, the pairs were self-selected which gave rise to both heterogeneous and homogeneous groupings. At this age level, and in view of the cooperation and openness of discussion required by the task, it was my opinion that self-selected groups would provide the best learning conditions for the students and data for the study.

Students were given approximately twenty minutes to work together on reconstructing the passage. At the end of this time, students were given another ten minutes to write their reconstructed sentences onto an acetate for consideration by the whole class. At the end of this period I chose a selection of acetates at random for the whole class to discuss. The students' names did not appear on the acetates, although most students chose to identify their work during the correction process. I corrected the remaining acetates and handed them back in a subsequent class to provide these students with feedback on their work.
3.3.3 Questionnaire Data

At the end of the first term the students also completed two teacher made questionnaires (Appendix F). By this stage I had a good impression of students' strengths and weaknesses regarding French grammar. Both questionnaires were piloted with the two comparison classes to see if the instructions were clear and how much time was needed to complete them. The questionnaires were then administered to the class over two periods, on consecutive days.

The first questionnaire was primarily concerned with students' attitudes and approaches towards writing in French and English with regard to personal practices and opinions about programming decisions. The second questionnaire was designed to gather information about how students understood the French grammatical system. It consisted of three sections. The first contained nineteen sentences, each of which contained an underlined mistake which the students were asked to correct providing an explanation for their correction. The second section consisted of sentences referring to past events which the students were required to translate into English to see if they understood the notion of complete and incomplete actions with regard to the passé composé and the imparfait. The third section was a proof-reading exercise. Students were to identify five errors concerning verbs used in the passage. After identifying the errors, students were asked to provide an explanation for each mistake. Mistakes in the use of tense/aspect and the form of verbs were a major feature of this questionnaire because this was an area which my informal observations had shown to be one in which all of the students were experiencing difficulties.

6 Responses from the piloting stage of the two questionnaires revealed that this section did not provide particularly rich data. All students were capable of translating the sentences but there were of course other elements of the sentences (e.g. adverbs) which indicated the incomplete or complete nature of the actions. Nevertheless, this section was left in for the final version of the questionnaire although the responses were not analyzed.
3.4.1 The Treatment Stage

After an initial analysis of the exploratory data it was decided to make the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* the focus of the treatment phase. This phase took place during the second term. The treatment materials used (Appendix H) were adapted from Harley's grade five unit "Parlons du Passé" (1989) which was designed to provide instruction in the appropriate use of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* (See 3.4.5. and Appendix D for a description of the activities and how they were used). A pre-, post-, delayed-post treatment design was followed. Cloze and composition\(^7\) test activities were used with my class and a final comparative cloze test involving all three grade eight classes in the school was given in June 1993 at the end of the school year. Table 3.1 shows when testing took place.

3.4.2 Development and Use of the *Passé Composé/Imparfait* Cloze Tests Used with the Experimental Group (Versions A and B)

For the pre-test, students in my class completed a cloze test, adapted from Harley's 1989 study, in which they were required to supply the correct form of a particular verb (*passé composé* or *imparfait*) after being supplied with its infinitive (Appendix G)\(^8\). There were two versions of the test, *Le Monstre* and *Le Vol*. Students were randomly selected to complete one of the tests and given thirty minutes in which to do so. In order to see whether the internal reliability of the tests had been affected by the changes, Cronbach's alpha was calculated using the pre-test results. The results (Version A alpha = .9177; Version B alpha = .9037) showed that the internal reliability of the tests was good. In order to see whether the two tests could still be considered to be of approximately the same

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\(^7\)The composition test was given at the pre- and post-test stages only.

\(^8\)In the original version of the test, students were given the *passé composé* and *imparfait* versions of the verb and required to choose the correct tense. In the revised form of the test, students were not only being tested on their ability to use the right tense but also on their ability to form the tense.
difficulty, a t-test was performed on the pre-test score data (Table 3.2). As the maximum scores were not the same (Max. Version A=38, Max. Version B=40), percentage scores were used in the calculations. No significant difference was found between the means of the two tests at the p<0.05 level, which was taken to support the hypothesis that there was no significant difference between the levels of difficulty of each test. This meant that in subsequent statistical computations, no distinction was made between the versions of the test students had taken. For the post-test, students completed the version of the test which they had not completed during the pre-test. For the delayed cloze post-test students completed the version of the test they had originally completed in February. It was considered that the time period of three months between the first and second time that the students completed the task would not influence the results.

Table 3.2 *Passé composé* and *imparfait* pre-test percentage score results - Experimental group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Version A (Max.=38)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version B (Max.=40)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>17.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.3 Development and Use of the Composition Task used with the Experimental Group

At the pre- and post-test stages, students completed the composition task (Appendix J) in the next French period after the cloze test. The composition task was also adapted from Harley's 1989 unit and consisted of two different but comparable story introductions. Both were narratives and introduced themes which were considered to be relevant to the experiences of students of this age. The first concerned an accident which occurred when two girls were asked to look after one of the girl's younger brother. The second was about
a group of students who were caught shoplifting during the lunch hour and their subsequent encounter with the school principal. Both story openers were similar in structure and length and both were set in the past, making use of the passé composé and the imparfait. Students were randomly assigned one of two story starters and were instructed to continue using the passé composé and the imparfait as modelled in the story introductions. They were given time to read them and to ask questions about anything they did not understand. The meanings of balançoire and friandises were explained as a result of student questions. Students were told that they had thirty minutes to complete the composition they had been given. In keeping with the process-oriented approach to writing with which the students were familiar, they were encouraged to plan what they were going to say first and to edit their work as necessary.

At the end of the treatment period students completed the other composition as a post-test activity. In administering the activity, I referred to notes I had written during the pre-test activity to ensure that the procedure used was as similar as possible to that used during the pre-test phase. I explained the meaning of balançoire in response to a student's question.

3.4.4 Development and Use of the Comparative Passé Composé/Imparfait Cloze Test (Test C)

The cloze test used for collecting comparative data on students' use of the passé composé/imparfait was administered in mid-June 1993 one month after the delayed post-test. It was a new test designed specifically for this study.

The passage used, Un grand magicien was adapted from one which had already been used as a cloze test activity at the grade eight level (Bild, 1987). It was therefore
assumed that the comprehension level of the passage would be suitable for students of this age. The test which described major events in the life of Houdini contained many instances of past tense forms. Before the test was piloted, two francophone educators, one from Ontario and the other from New Brunswick, were asked to complete the test to see if any of the items were ambiguous in the sense that either the *passé composé* or the *imparfait* could be considered correct. Such items were omitted from the test and appeared in their finite form as part of the regular text.

The test was pilot tested using grade eight students from FI programs in two other schools in the same school board. Their teachers indicated that the comprehension level of the test was suitable for their students and that all students were able to complete it within ten to forty minutes with the average time required being twenty-five minutes. The pilot tests were scored using a scoring procedure based on written accuracy (Appendix H) and the results are shown in Table 3.3. The scores were considered low enough for the test to be of suitable difficulty for students of this age.

**Table 3.3 Pilot Test Results: *Un grand magicien***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, before the cloze tests were scored, they were completed by three additional Francophones (1 from Quebec and 2 Franco-Ontarians) for a final check on the ambiguity of the test items. Their answers were compared with one another and with the results of the two Francophones who had read the original version of the test. All items for which there was not complete agreement about which aspect to use were omitted in the scoring of the tests. Six ambiguous items were discovered and these are indicated in Appendix L. The final test consisted of 39 items.

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9One person misinterpreted the task instructions; consequently this feedback was not considered.
The reliability of the final version of the test was checked using Cronbach's alpha which resulted in a score of 0.86. Item 20 was subsequently removed from the scoring to bring the alpha score to 0.88 which was considered to be satisfactory (0.9 being considered a very good level of reliability).

3.4.5 Development and Use of the Treatment Activities

During the six weeks immediately following the pre-test tasks, students worked on a series of activities designed to review the formation of the passé composé and the imparfait and to make them aware of the form-function links associated with each. The activities are described in Appendix D. Once again, they were adapted for use at the grade eight level from Harley's 1989 study. The activities were designed to provide practice in the formation and appropriate use of the imparfait and passé composé and were based on a conte folklorique, Le loup-garou et le châle. Students completed all classwork activities in pairs or groups of three. This was a deliberate attempt to provide students with opportunities to complete activities which would require them to externalize some aspects of their interlanguage grammar and to receive feedback from their peers and the teacher.

The activities used covered Batstone's product and process aspects of grammar. The original story was read and discussed in class as an introductory activity. Students then worked in pairs with an abridged version of the story. They were told to read the story and to underline all instances of the passé composé and the imparfait. Once this stage was complete, the class worked with me to discuss the functions associated with the passé composé and the imparfait. We also reviewed the rules regarding their formation. Throughout the unit, mini-tests and quizzes requiring the students to provide passé composé and imparfait forms of particular verbs were used as introductory activities to
language periods to provide the students with additional practice in this area. In their first term questionnaires, the students had talked about the importance of activities which allowed them to practice the application of grammatical knowledge: seven application activities (oral and written) were used with the students. These activities are described in Appendix D and consisted of activities from the original unit together with adapted and new activities based on the interests of the students in this class. Students were audio-taped as they completed one of these, a fill-in-the-gap activity.

This activity (Appendix D, Activity D:5) was a metalinguistic task designed to encourage students to discuss their reasons for using the passé composé or the imparfait in a given context and to help them make connections between the meaning of the verb and the form which conveyed this meaning. The activity used a second abridged version of the conte. Whenever the context required the use of the imparfait or the passé composé, the students were given the infinitive form of the verb to be used and instructed to provide the correct form of the appropriate aspectual marker. They were also requested to provide a written reason for their choice of aspect, i.e. to state the function being performed by the verb in that particular context. Students were told they could provide explanations in French or English, whichever they felt most comfortable using.

3.5.1 Additional Data Collection

It became obvious to me that the audio-taped material contained a rich source of data both in research terms and in terms of the L2 learning process in general. It provided information on students learning collaboratively and on student and task interaction. Once the data for the treatment stage of the study had been collected, I taped the students working in groups to complete a third activity (proof-reading) in order to complete my
understanding of how students interacted with one another on different tasks at various stages in the writing process.

The proof-reading task was completed at the beginning of June 1993. Working in groups of two or three, students were given an extract from one student's history project describing the life and accomplishments of Sir Alexander Fleming (Appendix L). The student was asked prior to the activity for his permission to use part of his work in this way. He had no objections. Students were first of all presented with an unmarked version of the passage. Working together they were asked to try and identify the 22 mistakes contained in the passage. When they had located an error, they were asked to write down the correct version and to give an explanation of the mistake. After twenty minutes, students were given a second version of the activity in which the errors had been underlined. Their task was now to correct the errors that they had not found and once again to provide an explanation. With the completion of this task, I now had data from three stages of the writing process. (1) the acquisition of structures; (2) the composing/writing stage; (3) the proof-reading stage.

At the end of the year, I conducted individual interviews with all the students about the activities they had participated in during the study. It was my intention to find out more about the students' reactions to the activities, those they had particularly enjoyed or felt to be particularly useful. Occasional reference to these data is made throughout the sections reporting research findings.

3.6.1 Summary

This chapter has described the research plan for the study, the development of test materials, procedures used for data collection and the teaching approach adopted for the
treatment stage of the study. The results from the various stages of data collection are presented in chapters 4, 5, and 6.
CHAPTER FOUR: STUDENT PERCEPTIONS AND CONCEPTIONS OF
ASPECTS OF FRENCH

This chapter presents the results of data collected during the first term: the results from the dictogloss procedure and the two questionnaires. This stage of the research was designed to gain (1) an understanding of students' impressions of writing in French (strategies and preferences for increasing and applying their knowledge of French) and (2) an understanding of the level of sophistication of their grammatical knowledge. Grammatical knowledge was observed in terms of aspects of the students' metalinguistic knowledge (knowledge about language in general) and their interlanguage grammar (the knowledge they used to write correctly in French and to identify and correct errors in completed work). The data were gathered to answer the first of the initial research questions: What knowledge of French grammar have FL students acquired by the grade eight level and how do students express and apply this knowledge?

4.1.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, in order to provide grammar instruction which is appropriate to FL learners' needs, we must first find out more about students' interlanguage. What understanding of French have FL students acquired by grade eight? The data discussed in this chapter provide an initial appreciation of how this group of students understood aspects of the French language.
4.2.1 Analysis of the Dictogloss Data

The dictogloss was used to gather on-line data of students' grammatical knowledge/sophistication. If we accept the Vygotskian view that knowledge is socially constructed, then observing student-student interactions can provide us with a window "into the evolution and appearance of cognitive structures" (Newman, Griffin and Cole, 1989:73); in this case, students' understanding of the French language. However, as these authors also remind us, we cannot assume that mental representations are static. Representations are dynamic and will vary according to task and situational demands. The data presented here can only be considered a snapshot of students' thinking at a particular moment in time. Comparison of the data collected informally from my observations from previous dictogloss sessions and student classwork suggest that the data presented here do provide a reliable representation of students' general capabilities with respect to the areas discussed.

All the data from all the groups were transcribed. The transcripts contained many different types of talk. Some was related to language; some, relatively little, was off topic; and some was metatalk used by students to define and carry out the task (Brooks and Donato, 1994). The amount of rephrasing that occurred in the reconstruction of the sentences depended on individual pairs. One pair in particular found the activity more of a challenge and more interesting to complete if they rewrote the passage in their own words. The majority of students made only minor changes.

For the purposes of coding the data, critical language-related episodes (CLREs), based on the studies by Samuda and Rounds (1993) and Swain and Lapkin (1995) were

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10In this chapter the dictogloss is considered as a research tool, designed to provide insight into students' understanding of the French language and grammatical system. In Chapter 5 the results are reanalyzed and the procedure is viewed as a learning tool.
identified and categorized. A CLRE was defined as an episode in which language was the focus of the discussion (either meaning-based, as in how to say something in French, see example 4.1, or relating to issues of accuracy, (grammatical or orthographic in nature) see examples 4.2 and 4.3. A CLRE began with the identification of a grammatical point to be discussed or a sentence or phrase which needed to be reconstructed and ended once the discussion was completed. It was possible for one episode to be embedded within another, as shown in example 4.4.

In example 4.1, Lee\textsuperscript{1} is trying to rephrase the notes he has taken in his own words.

**Example 4.1 Meaning-based**

054: Lee:\textsuperscript{12} OK, pour numéro trois. OK. Um, pour un exemple, non, par exemple, on, comment xxx. Est-ce qu'on peut utiliser un autre mot pour 'par exemple'?

055: Roman: Um, um.

056: Lee: Un cas c'est, les plastiques . . . les plastiques, um biodégradables. Dans un cas, oui, in one case.

057: Roman: OK. Dans un cas, uh les plastiques biodégradables . . .

In example 4.2, Martin is telling Andrew that the problems are described as unforeseen, (*imprévu*) and points out the adjectival agreement required. He mistakenly believes that *problème* is a feminine noun.

\textsuperscript{1}Pseudonyms have been used throughout.

\textsuperscript{12}The following notations have been used in the transcriptions; ( ) indicates editorial comments added to facilitate comprehension. <...> indicates text added by the transcriber to aid comprehension; (?) indicates that it appears to be this student who is still talking; _____ indicates utterances made simultaneously; xxx indicates a word which the transcriber could not understand; "..." indicates that students are reading text. (F) said in French.
Example 4.2 Grammatical

042: Andrew: OK.
043: Martin: Avec un e-s (F) à la fin.

In example 4.3 the students are discussing the spelling of the noun *progrès*.

Example 4.3 Orthographic

152: Kristin: Comment est-ce que tu um as épelé ‘progrès’?
153: Ann: Progrès? P-r-o. (F) um g-r-e (F) accent aigu -s (F) c’est bien?
154: Kristin: C’est ‘e’ accent um grave.

In example 4.4, Martin checks to see that Andrew has remembered to include the plural noun marker as the two students discuss whether they should use *des* or *de*.

Example 4.4 Embedded

016: Andrew: Beaucoup *des* problèmes?
017: Martin: Beaucoup de problèmes (reading from notes). Oui, (checking to see what Andrew has written) tu as problèmes avec un ‘s’ (F)?
018: Andrew: De problèmes ou des problèmes?
019: Martin: De problèmes.

Two hundred and twenty-four critical episodes were identified and analyzed from the group work and 53 from the subsequent teacher-fronted session. The reliability of the identification and classification of episodes was checked by a Franco-Ontarian who reanalyzed 20% of the data. In terms of the number\(^{13}\) of CLREs the interrater reliability

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\(^{13}\)As in the Swain and Lapkin (1995) study, this analysis did not take account of discrepancies between at which utterance an episode started or finished, of which there were more. However, this factor had no effect on the analysis of the data as used in this study.
was high at 89%. All discrepancies were due to additional CLREs identified by the second coder. When these CLREs were reviewed by the researcher and second coder, it was discovered that the second coder had misidentified some metatalk as CLREs, and secondly that the context of some talk was misunderstood because the second coder was working from the transcripts alone. When these discrepancies were taken into account, the reliability rose to 93%, which is highly desirable when working with such a small sample size.

Reliability for the categorization of episodes as meaning, grammar or orthographic was acceptable at 77%. Two categories accounted for 80% of the discrepancies. The second coder categorized grammatical episodes as orthographical episodes in 20% of these cases. These episodes concerned verb endings, see example 4.5. To improve the reliability of the categories, it was decided to include all instances where morphosyntactic features were being discussed (for example plural markers, adjectival endings and verb endings) as grammatical.  

Taking into account the reexamined data, interrater reliability rose to 81%.

**Example 4.5**

119: Mac: On a fait . . .
120: Tim: On a fait a un t je pense.
121: Mac: T?

---

14 There was an element of subjectivity involved in this decision. The students were not explaining their rationale for making the change, the context did not require this, so the students' thinking is not obvious. What was needed for reliability of the coding system was a clear understanding of the defining features of each category which the above decision provided.
4.2.2 Dictogloss Results: Quantitative

The dictogloss engendered much discussion and the transcripts provided a rich source of information about the sophistication of students' French language knowledge. A different passage could obviously have elicited different grammatical issues; for instance, all the verbs in this passage were in the present tense. The averaged ratio of meaning-based episodes to form-based episodes (grammar and orthographic combined), 31%:70%, suggests that the dictogloss activity is a good vehicle for promoting discussion on focus on form within a communicative context. In reconstructing the sentences, the students' attention was focussed on both the meaning of the message they wanted to convey and the form that they should use to convey their message accurately. This finding illustrates the interconnectedness of form and meaning, highlighting the importance of not separating focus on form from the construction of meaningful discourse in L2 language teaching. The averaged ratio of meaning to grammar to orthographic based episodes was 31%:42%:28%. In their focus on the form of the message, the students tended to concentrate more on grammatical issues than orthographic ones. More information about the content of the students' discussions is provided in Table 4.1, which provides a description of the issues students discussed in the CLREs and the frequency with which they occurred.

Table 4.1 shows that most of the meaning-based episodes were concerned with students reading from and comparing their notes with one another to reconstruct the sentence. Almost as many episodes centred on students trying to reconstruct the sentences in their own words by looking for synonyms and checking to see if words they wanted to use really were correct. In two instances, students showed their ease of working in French by playing with the language, taking the forms they had heard and using them to derive new words (One of these episodes is discussed more fully in 6.4.2, example 6.4). The scope of the grammatical episodes shows that students discussed many more areas than the
present tense which had been my intention in setting the task. The majority of the orthographic episodes centred on students talking about how to spell a particular word.

Table 4.1 Description and frequency of Critical Language Related Episodes from the dictogloss - Group work\(^1^5\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning-based Episodes</th>
<th>Grammatical Episodes</th>
<th>Orthographic Episodes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reconstructing the meaning of the original sentence in own words or new words</td>
<td>Verbs 36 16%</td>
<td>Spelling 47 21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding synonyms for a word or a phrase</td>
<td>Partitives 12 5%</td>
<td>Accents 13 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking to see if a particular word exists in French</td>
<td>Adjectival agreements 11 5%</td>
<td>Homophones 2 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking the meaning of a word</td>
<td>Noun plurals 11 5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word play</td>
<td>Pronouns 5 2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepositions 4 2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Word Order 3 1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verb + preposition 3 1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noun gender 3 1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>les/des 2 2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>le/les 2 1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beaucoup de 1 1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 69 31%</td>
<td>Total 93 42%</td>
<td>Total 62 28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1^5\)The first figure is a frequency, the second a percentage of the total number of CLREs.

Table 4.2 describes the content of the subsequent whole group discussion. A noticeable difference is that there are no meaning-based episodes because the students' work successfully conveyed the original meaning of the sentences they had heard. The form-focussed issues discussed are similar to those which occurred at the groupwork stage, although the range of features discussed is narrower. It would appear that the whole

\(^1^5\)In the tables included in this thesis, any percentages which do not total 100 are due to rounding inaccuracies.
group discussion provided a further occasion for problematic areas to be discussed, perhaps helping those students who had been unable to produce the correct form from their discussion to increase their understanding.

Table 4.2 Description and frequency of Critical Language Related Episodes from the dictogloss - Teacher-fronted discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Episodes</th>
<th>Orthographic Episodes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbs</td>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partitives</td>
<td>Accents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 11%</td>
<td>5 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectival agreements</td>
<td>Homophones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 13%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun plurals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>les/des</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaucoup de</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 72%</td>
<td>15 28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The first figure is a frequency, the second a percentage of the total number of CLREs.

4.2.3 Dictogloss results: Qualitative

There were however, considerable individual differences in the sophistication of students' grammatical knowledge. These differences can be seen in the interactions which occurred as the students completed the task. The major features of their talk are summarized below in answer to the following questions: 1) What is the extent of students' knowledge of French as elicited by this task? 2) What use do they make of metalinguistic terminology? 3) What reference is made by the students to explicit grammatical rules? 4) What use do students make of reference tools? 5) What differences are observed across groups?

1) The extent of students' knowledge

The students did have a clear understanding of many grammatical concepts including for instance, noun gender, the need for subject-verb agreement and adjectival agreement. These relationships often have important morphosyntactic consequences within
the sentence, although their semantic load, the link between form and meaning, is less significant due to redundancy: other elements of the sentence convey its meaning.

In example 4.6, the students are working out how to say "new problems" in French and show a clear understanding of the relationship between nouns and adjectives. Lee is trying to decide whether to use the masculine or feminine plural form of the adjective nouveau with the plural noun problèmes and asks Roman about its gender. When he learns that the noun is masculine he is able to decide on which form of the adjective to use.

Example 4.6

143: Lee: Est-ce que c'est nouveaux? La problème, le problème?
144: Roman: Le problème.

Other relationships were more problematic. In dealing with the partitive de for instance, students would sense that there was more than one possible form which could be used but were not sure which form was correct for that particular instance, as illustrated in example 4.7.

Example 4.7

013: Martin: Dans l'environnement (pause, Andrew is writing) il y a beaucoup de.
014: Andrew: De problèmes (pause, continuing to write). Est-ce qu'il y a un <s> (i.e., is it des or de?) (looking at his partner's version). Non.
015: Martin: Je ne sais . . .
016: Andrew: Beaucoup des problèmes?
017: Martin: Beaucoup de problèmes (reading from notes). Oui tu as problèmes avec un s (F).
018: Andrew: De problèmes ou des problèmes?
019: Martin: De problèmes, tu dis. Oui?
020: Andrew: (pause) D'accord, de problèmes.

The relationship between subject, verb and object was also confusing for many students. This problem arose frequently in relation to sentence 1 (En ce qui concerne l'environnement, il y a beaucoup de problèmes qui nous tracassent.) Students assumed that because nous preceded the verb it must be the subject of the verb. However, what they had heard, tracassent, reflected in the notes they had taken, did not support this theory. In example 4.8 the students, unable to solve the problem alone, decide to ask the student teacher16 for help.

Example 4.8

041: Roman: Ici pour qui nous dérangeant, ça, est-ce que ça c'est dérangeons?
042: Student-Teacher: Non. parce que le sujet c'est qui, ce n'est pas nous. C'est ça (i.e., qui) qui nous dérange. À nous. Ce n'est pas nous qui dérangeons, tu comprends? Ça c'est le sujet, qui, il y a beaucoup de problèmes qui nous dérangeant. Alors le sujet c'est les problèmes.
043: Lee: Alors c'est e-n-t (F).

The whole group discussion showed that students had been unaware that the phrase beaucoup de is not usually modified even when followed by a plural noun, for example, beaucoup de gens.17 I drew this point to their attention and referred to it several times during the correction of the students' work as with the rule that des when followed by an adjective preceding a noun normally reverts to de. Some students also appeared to be

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16 At the time of data collection, there was also a student teacher completing her practicum in this class. During this session, she assisted the teacher by circulating amongst the groups and providing assistance as necessary.

17 In such cases, beaucoup is being used as an indefinite determiner. Although there are instances where the form des would be used (if the following noun has a complement or is followed by a relative pronoun, e.g. beaucoup des gens qui sont venus ce soir...) they appear less often at this stage of the students' studies.
unaware of the sound-symbol relationship of certain graphemes; for example, students did not appear to be aware that *produisent* and *produissent* were pronounced in different ways. Once again, the majority of the points discussed referred to surface features of French rather than meaning-form relationships.

2) Students' use of metalinguistic terminology

Although students discussed a wide range of grammatical issues, they made little use of metalinguistic terminology\(^{18}\), explicit grammatical terms. It is of course not possible to say whether this is because they did not know the necessary terminology or whether it was not necessary or convenient in many contexts for them to use technical terms as seen in example 4.6 above, where the students were considering whether to use the feminine or masculine version of the adjective *nouveau* in reference to the noun which it is qualifying.

The whole group session contained instances of metalinguistic terminology (from both the students and me) and reference to explicit rules (primarily from me and then from the students once prompted by me to be explicit) but these instances represented only a small part of the overall talk recorded. Explicit reference was made to accents, plurals, verb subjects, (on one occasion by a student), adjectives, feminine and masculine forms, and the infinitive of the verb. On many occasions I did not make use of technical vocabulary even when explaining a grammatical concept to the students. What was important for me was that the concept or the function of the word be understood, the metalinguistic term was of secondary importance.

However, there is evidence to suggest that, on occasion, knowledge of the appropriate metalinguistic term might have helped to clarify the relationship between subject

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\(^{18}\)Technical terms which the students did use were plural, masculine, feminine, the names of accents, (although some still referred to the accent circonflex as the "chapeau") and verbs. One group of high proficiency students also used the term infinitif.
and verb, as shown in example 4.9, taken from a longer episode. The students have been experiencing difficulty in understanding that *nous* in this sentence is the object and not the subject of the verb. George realises this is the case (line 073), but is unable to articulate his discovery.

**Example 4.9**

067: Teacher: Ce sont des **problèmes** qui nous tracassent (deliberately not directly giving the answer).

068: Keith: **Nous tracassons.**

069: George: **Oh** (beginning to realise what is happening).

070: Keith: **Oui?** (so what?).

071: George: Les problèmes qui nous tracassent. Like the (pause) c'est les problèmes (pause) like, that concerns us.

072: Keith: **Oui, mais tracasse n'est-ce pas que c'est <o-n-s> (F)?**

073: George: **Tracasse c'est pas un, c'est pas un.** (pause). oui I dunno (unable to articulate what he has discovered).

3) **Reference to explicit rules**

The students made little reference to explicit rules except when trying to explain a point to their partner as in example 4.10.

**Example 4.10**

87: Kristin: OK, tu as commence, e-n-t (F)?

88: Anne: **Commencent, oui.**

89: Kristin: Parce que c'est pluriel? (Checking to see that Anne, who experienced some difficulty earlier in the activity with subject-verb agreements, has understood the reason).
More frequently, students would point out that an item needed to be changed but rarely supported it with their reason for believing this. This feature of the interactions makes it difficult to determine if students were aware of the rule but that the context did not require them to articulate it, or if they were working according to what "sounded" right. Very often, once a correction was pointed out, or a suggestion made, there was agreement amongst all participants and no rule needed to be given to support the point, as illustrated in example 4.11.

**Example 4.11**

094: Sarah: Trouver des solutions, pluriel (pause while writing). Est-ce que solutions a deux 'ls?
095: Rachel: Non.
096: Sarah: Oui, OK. Ça c'est comment je l'ai écrit.
097: Rachel: Avec s, <n'oublie> pas le s.
098: Sarah: Oui.
099: Rachel: Écologiques.
100: Gaby: Écologiques. É-co-lo-giques, OK avec un q-u-e-s (F).
101: Rachel & Sarah: Oui

My comments, on the other hand, made more reference to explicit rules and at times prompted the students to back up their answers with a reason. For, I believed, being aware of a specific rule might be a means of helping the students to make sense of aspects of the French grammatical system, or a means of eliminating some of the guess work involved when students edit their work, a strategy which leads to students making changes to correct features because they perhaps "sound" wrong or "might be" wrong. In example 4.12 Roman is asked to provide a reason for using *de* instead of *des*. 
Example 4.12

043: Roman: Pas 'des', c'est 'de'.
044: Teacher: De. Pourquoi est-ce que c'est 'de' Roman?
045: Roman: Parce que tu dois, après beaucoup c'est 'de'.

4) Students' use of reference tools

The tools we use and how we use them can also provide insights into our mental processes; if students are unaware of the importance of noun gender for instance we would not expect to see them consult a dictionary to check if a particular word is masculine or feminine. Reference tools which were available to the students included dictionaries (bilingual and French-only), verb reference books, their own grammar notebooks and, within a socio-cultural framework, their peers and teachers.

All students made use of a dictionary during the activity, to check the spelling of a word, the gender of a word, and one high proficiency group to find synonyms. It seems that the students were aware of how the dictionary could be a help to them and how to use it effectively. It is probable that this use was because students generally had a well-developed understanding of the importance of correct spelling, (as one would expect by this grade) and of noun gender. Only two groups used the verb reference book. The transcripts show that when students needed to discuss verb endings they often knew which endings were needed and did not need to consult the reference book. On one of the occasions that the reference book was used, the students' confusion between the subject and object of the sentence meant that they could not access the information they needed. This was another example of how a lack of understanding of form-function relationships was a hindrance to the students' ability to write accurately in French. All groups consulted with one another about the correct form to use and did not always check their decisions
with a reference book. Sometimes this was because they knew the answer and sometimes it was obvious that students were working from what sounded right to them for that particular instance. In many instances of noun gender, the students could have consulted the dictionary, but chose not to, probably because it was easier not to do so. Knowing and understanding a rule or grammatical concept was not a guarantee of it being applied consistently, one more illustration of the complex relationship between explicit and implicit knowledge.

The majority of the class primarily turned to the dictionary or one another for help in reconstructing the sentences. Grammatical aids such as their grammar notebooks or the verb reference book were used much less frequently, even though the students did need help with grammatical points as they completed the activity. It would be interesting to find out why. Perhaps these grammatical aids were either tools that the students considered inconvenient to use, did not know how to use, or in the case of the grammar notebooks, did not contain the necessary information (it was early in the year and few grammatical points had been formally discussed).

5) Differences across groups

All groups concentrated on meaning, grammar and orthography in completing the task. As Table 4.3 shows, most groups, regardless of ability, spent as much or more time discussing grammatical issues than issues of meaning and this balance produced good results. There were two groups (3 and 8) whose final versions contained a noticeably higher number of mistakes.
Table 4.3 Percentage of meaning-based, grammatical and orthographic Critical Language Related Episodes by group/dyad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group/dyad</th>
<th>% of meaning-based episodes by group</th>
<th>% of grammatical episodes by group</th>
<th>% of orthographic episodes by group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 H-H(^{19})</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 HM-LM</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 HM-LM</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 HM-L</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 HM-L</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (^{20})LM-L</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 L-L</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 HM-L</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 H-H-HM</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In pair 3, one of the students was convinced that in order to do well on the task, all that was required was to use the dictionary to check the spellings of individual words. Her morphosyntactic sophistication appears to have been relatively weak, particularly at the beginning of the year. She was aware of the importance of form but approached the task of writing correctly predominantly at the level of isolated lexemes.

Pair 8 was also a less successful grouping. Both of the students were low proficiency and the percentages of grammatical and orthographic episodes compared to semantic based episodes was lower than for the other groups. The sophistication of the students' grammatical knowledge in this pair was lower than the other students and there was relatively little reflection on form from this pair during the writing or the revision stages of the task, as illustrated in example 4.13. This finding suggests that, following

\(^{19}\)H-High proficiency, HM-Upper middle, LM-Lower middle, L-Low. On all other occasions 'H' and 'high proficiency' refers to students of high and upper-middle proficiency and "L" and 'low proficiency' to students of low and lower-middle proficiency. There were an equal number (9) of students in each group. This categorization was arrived at by using teacher reports based on students' work in French from the previous year and their final achievement in French at the end of grade 8. Proficiency would be based on students' overall performance in French, and would include such areas as discrete knowledge of grammar, ability to write and talk in French, reading comprehension. Results from the two years were used in an attempt to reduce any subjective bias on the part of the grade 8 teacher.

\(^{20}\)Pair six were the students not participating in the study.
Vygotsky, if the activity is to be a useful learning opportunity for the students, then more heterogeneous groupings should be used. This point is discussed further in Chapter 6.

**Example 4.13**

| 042 | Tim: Mais quelquefois on fait . . . des problèmes |
| 043 | Mac: Mais quelquefois on produit nou, de nouveaux problèmes imprévus |
| 044 | Tim: Mais quelquefois, . . . mais . . . quelquefois on fait des xxx . |
| 045 | Mac: Oh no, on produit |
| 046 | Tim: On produit oh, . . . on produit des problèmes |
| 047 | Mac: Des problèmes, des *nouveaux* problèmes |
| 048 | Tim: Des nouveaux problèmes . . . problèmes |
| 049 | Mac: Im prévu |

**4.2.4 Summary of the Dictogloss Results**

The dictogloss procedure proved to be a useful research tool for gaining insight into students' understanding of French and the complexity of LL2 processes. It is a technique which could be adapted to gather more specific information on students' understanding of form-meaning relationships, particularly if it were designed to include more homophonous forms. If used over a period of time, it could also be used as a means of studying students' language development through the year. As a research instrument, it can be used within the time restraints of the regular classroom program to gather authentic data in one session, and at various stages during the school year.

Even though this activity requires students to focus on linguistic correctness, conveying meaning was also an important feature of all the interactions. This is an
important characteristic for it shows that classroom activities can be designed to encourage students to focus on linguistic features of language but not at the expense of communication. There were areas of French where students had formed misconceptions about the relationship between words, in particular subject-verb-object relationships and aspects of partitive use.

There was little use of metalinguistic terminology. In the majority of instances there was no need for the students to use specific metalinguistic terms. However, on at least one occasion a student was unable to articulate his reasoning because he lacked a specific metalinguistic term. From a pedagogical perspective then, although very often students do not need to use metalinguistic terms such as subject, object, pronoun, to discuss grammatical features of language, there are nevertheless occasions when such terminology would be helpful. Consequently, I now believe its presentation and use should not be avoided at this grade level.

4.3.1 Results from Questionnaire One: Students' Perceptions of Using and Learning French

The presentation of the results from this questionnaire has been organized into five areas: 1) Student perceptions of the writing process; 2) areas of student perceived difficulty or ease; 3) the sophistication of students' metalinguistic knowledge; 4) student preferences for learning; 5) student preferences for instruction. Consequently, survey items are not discussed in the order in which they originally appeared.
1) Students' perceptions of the writing process (Questions 1-3, 6, 7)

Fifteen students (83%) reported that they felt that writing in French was different from writing in English (question 1), 1 high proficiency student (6%) felt that there was no difference and 2 students (11%) had no opinion. The two most frequently given reasons for considering the L2 writing process to be different from the L1 were 1) French is a more complex language than English (in particular French grammar was considered to be more complicated than English), 2) writing in French requires more effort in accessing knowledge and/or composing. The full set of responses and frequencies is summarized in Table 4.4. Examples 4.14 to 4.16 contain illustrations of students' answers.

Table 4.4 Student opinions of the differences between writing in French and writing in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student comments</th>
<th>Writing in French requires more effort in accessing knowledge and/or composing</th>
<th>French is a more complex language than English</th>
<th>Students have less familiarity with the French language and fewer chances to use it</th>
<th>It is harder to write in French than in English</th>
<th>There is no difference between writing in either of the languages</th>
<th>French is a less complex language than English</th>
<th>No answer given</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Proficiency</td>
<td>high low</td>
<td>high low</td>
<td>high low</td>
<td>high low</td>
<td>high low</td>
<td>high low</td>
<td>high low</td>
<td>high low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Some students provided more than one reason so the total is greater than 18.

Example 4.14 In French I have to stop and search for words and *verbe\(^21\) tenses whereas in English I can just write straight through without stopping all the time. (Rachel, high)

Example 4.15 In a way writing in French is different from writing in English because first you have to translate it and you have to structure your phrases in a different way, because all *english phrases *won't end up exactly the same in *french. (Jane, upper-middle)

\(^{21}\) * indicates this is how the word appeared in the original data.
Example 4.16 Yes, because there are more tenses and *irregulated verbs in *french. (William, low)

Students found the writing process more difficult in French because of lack of experience and exposure to it in relation to English, their dominant language. In general, students regarded French to be a more prescriptive, rule-governed language.

The self report results of students' writing skills in French and English are shown in Table 4.5. All students considered themselves to be weaker writers in French than in English. Sixteen (89%) of the students considered themselves to be better French spellers than accurate writers in French, suggesting that they found syntactic features harder to deal with than orthographic ones. 1 (6%) student rated himself a more accurate writer than speller and 1 student (6%) indicated no difference between these skills.

Table 4.5 Student self-assessment of writing skills in French and English: Class mean scores based on a scale of 1-5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Q2 Ability to write/compose in French</th>
<th>Q3 Ability to write/compose correctly in English</th>
<th>Q6 Ability to write correctly in French (grammatical knowledge)</th>
<th>Q7 Assessment of spelling ability in French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average score: Scale of 1-5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Aspects of French perceived by the students to be particularly difficult or easy (Questions 4, 8, 9, 10 and 16)

Question 4 asked students to state what they considered to be the hardest about writing in French once they had planned what they were going to say. Their answers are summarized in Table 4.6. The high proficiency students (50% of the students involved in the study) offered almost twice as many comments as the low proficiency students (63% and 37% of the answers, respectively). These figures reflect a general tendency on the part
of the high proficiency students to discuss the writing process in more sophisticated terms. Whereas most students referred to the application of rules, for example, using verbs correctly, it was more often the high proficiency students who also referred to discourse and stylistic features, that is making their writing sound authentic and not a translation of the English. The low proficiency students referred more often to rules than discourse features than the high proficiency students (73% and 18% respectively). In turn, the high proficiency students made less reference to rules and more to discourse features than the low proficiency students (57% and 33%, respectively). Typical responses are provided below in examples 4.17-4.20.

Table 4.6 Student reported areas of difficulty when writing in French

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features mentioned</th>
<th>What students found difficult about producing a good piece of written French</th>
<th>Class Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>high</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic use of L2 idioms and fixed expressions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying grammar in general</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse features</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding ideas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining interest in the activity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word order</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Column totals</strong></td>
<td>21+</td>
<td>11+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Some students provided more than one answer so the final total is greater than 18.

**Example 4.17** I would find the grammar difficult. I also have problems making my writing sound as if it's truly French. I tend to directly translate from English and I am not familiar with certain sayings, etc. in French and I find that sometimes, though the grammar is correct, it's hard to express my ideas in a good French writing style. (Sarah high)

**Example 4.18** I think finding the right way to say exactly what you mean. In English you have a better vocabulary so you can write more clearly. It is also difficult to find an expression in French which translates to one in English. (Kristin upper-middle)
Example 4.19 The verbs. (Tim. low)

Example 4.20 The tenses. (George low)

Questions 8 and 10 asked students to write about those aspects of French grammar/language that they found the most difficult. The results are shown in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7 Student reported areas of difficulty in using French**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features mentioned</th>
<th>Q8 Most difficult aspects of French grammar/language</th>
<th>Q10 Most frustrating/confusing aspects of French grammar/language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical accuracy</td>
<td>high 2  low 2  Total 4  %* 8</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbs</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
<td>high 5  low 6  Total 13  %* 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form/function differences</td>
<td>high 3  low 3  Total 6  %* 13</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functions of tenses</td>
<td>high 2  low 4  Total 6  %* 13</td>
<td>high 2  low 1  Total 3  %* 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming irregular verbs correctly</td>
<td>high 0  low 1  Total 1  %* 2</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>high 0  low 2  Total 4  %* 4</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophony</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
<td>high 2  low 2  Total 4  %* 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectives</td>
<td>high 1  low 0  Total 2  %* 2</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>high 3  low 0  Total 3  %* 6</td>
<td>high 1  low 1  Total 2  %* 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partitives and demonstrative pronouns</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
<td>high 1  low 0  Total 1  %* 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
<td>high 1  low 3  Total 4  %* 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meanings of words/reading comprehension</td>
<td>high 1  low 1  Total 2  %* 2</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in French</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
<td>high 1  low 1  Total 2  %* 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tests</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
<td>high 1  low 1  Total 2  %* 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False cognates</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
<td>high 1  low 1  Total 2  %* 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
<td>high 1  low 1  Total 2  %* 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of apparent progress</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
<td>high 1  low 1  Total 2  %* 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Nothing at all&quot;</td>
<td>high 0  low 0  Total 0  %* 0</td>
<td>high 1  low 1  Total 2  %* 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses for each question</td>
<td>high 12 low 13 Total 25 %* 52</td>
<td>high 11 low 12 Total 23 %* 48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The percentage of the total number of answers given in response to these two questions.

Verbs were reported to be a major source of frustration or difficulty (47% of the responses for the two questions). One interesting finding from these questions, with obvious pedagogical implications, was a desire on the part of the students (41% of those

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22The following tenses were mentioned by name: passé composé, present tense, imparfait, conditional.

23Two low proficiency students made reference to irregular verbs.

24No distinction was made between form and function.
who reported having difficulty with verbs, compared with 5% who mentioned difficulties forming a tense, and 54% who did not make a distinction) to know more about the function of particular tenses, that is, when to use them: a desire expressed by both low and high proficiency students as illustrated in examples 4.21 and 4.22.

Example 4.21 I find that knowing when to use verb tenses is difficult because no one really taught us when to use them only how to conjugate verbs, and even in English we were not taught when to use the different tenses. (Ruth, high)

Example 4.22 I find that I seem to have problems using the *verbes correctly in a story or a paragraph. I just don't realize when to use it, and that's each year from subjonctif, conditional etc. (George, low)

There was no clear consensus regarding what the students found easiest. question 9. Frequently used verbs, spelling, gender, listening comprehension, speaking French, "nothing at all" were all mentioned by more than one student.

3) Students' metalinguistic sophistication (Questions 5, 17 and 18)

In question 5, students were required to define French grammar for someone who had no experience of French. Students' responses were categorized as unsophisticated if the descriptions were unclear or vague with little or no degree of metalinguistic awareness or if no answer was provided. If students made reference to one metalinguistic aspect of the French language their responses were classed as more sophisticated, and if more than one metalinguistic aspect of the language was referred to then the answer was classed as sophisticated. It was not necessary for a student to use a specific metalinguistic term in order for the response to be considered other than unsophisticated, rather, it was sufficient for a student to show evidence of referring to a particular metalinguistic feature; see example 4.24. A second coder rated all of the responses and the reliability was 83%. Discrepancies centred around whether references to 'spelling' should be categorized as
unsophisticated or sophisticated. It was decided that these responses would be categorized as unsophisticated. Forty-four percent of the responses were unsophisticated. 28% of the answers were more sophisticated and 28% of the answers were sophisticated. Of the unsophisticated answers, 75% were provided by low proficiency students. Of the sophisticated answers, 80% were provided by high proficiency students. Examples 4.23-4.25 show specific examples of each category.

Example 4.23 Unsophisticated: It's the same thing as in English but harder. (Tim, low)

Example 4.24 More sophisticated: French grammar is something to be taught over many years. It is something that will boggle your mind at the sight of it. Something to adapt to. Something with so many endings for so many words that it's not even funny, it is something complex and creative and unique. (Sofie, high)

Example 4.25 Sophisticated: There are different components of a sentence. Verb, noun, adverb, adjective, (the last two)25 not all the time. Give a definition of each. Teach conjugations and different tenses of verbs. (Sarah high)

A similar pattern occurred in response to question 17, when students were asked to explain the difference in meaning or grammatical function of various pairs of words, some of them homophones. Students' responses were coded as incorrect, adequate or very precise as shown in examples 4.26-4.28. Table 4.8 contains the full set of results.

Example 4.26 Incorrect: Ses/ces ses - those these ces - his, hers. (Martin, upper-middle)

Example 4.27 Adequate: Ses/ces: Ses means his or hers. Ces means these. (Mac, low)

Example 4.28 Very precise: Ses/ces: Possessif his/her. Demonstratif, these. (Rachel high)

---

25 Researcher’s parentheses.
Table 4.8 Students' ability to explain the difference between pairs of French words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Number of students providing incorrect, inadequate or no explanation (N=18)</th>
<th>Number of students providing adequate explanation</th>
<th>Number of students providing very precise explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>high</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mes/mais</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ses/ces</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cet/cette</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mange/mangeait</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regarder/regardé</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marchait/marchaient</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a marché/marchait</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dansera/danserait</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chantait/chanterait</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of the total responses provided by this group of students i.e. high or low proficiency</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This activity proved to be particularly demanding for the low proficiency students who had difficulty in distinguishing between the various tense/aspect forms. All students had difficulty in distinguishing between the passé composé and the imparfait, but 78% of the responses which were given by high proficiency students were adequate or precise explanations of the differences, compared with 51% of the responses from low proficiency students.

In question 18 students were asked to define and give an example of a specific metalinguistic concept such as adjective, or noun. Once again, there were distinct differences between high and low proficiency students, as shown in Table 4.9. Of the examples provided by high proficiency students, 64% were acceptable compared with 19% for the low proficiency students. Low proficiency students had difficulty in all categories whereas over 50% of high proficiency students were able to provide acceptable examples in
all categories except describing a pronoun. For all students, providing a definition was a harder task, as shown in examples 4.29-4.31.

**Table 4.9 Students' ability to explain and provide an example of specific metalinguistic concepts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Number of students able to provide an acceptable example</th>
<th>Number of students able to provide an acceptable definition</th>
<th>Number of students unable to provide an acceptable example</th>
<th>Number of students unable to provide an acceptable definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>high low</td>
<td>high low</td>
<td>high low</td>
<td>high low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>6 0</td>
<td>4 0</td>
<td>3 9</td>
<td>5 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverb</td>
<td>5 2</td>
<td>3 3</td>
<td>4 7</td>
<td>6 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>8 2</td>
<td>7 3</td>
<td>1 7</td>
<td>2 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun</td>
<td>3 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>6 9</td>
<td>9 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imparfait</td>
<td>5 2</td>
<td>5 1</td>
<td>4 7</td>
<td>4 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passé composé</td>
<td>6 3</td>
<td>4 0</td>
<td>3 6</td>
<td>5 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditionnel</td>
<td>7 2</td>
<td>5 0</td>
<td>2 7</td>
<td>4 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Futur</td>
<td>6 3</td>
<td>6 2</td>
<td>3 6</td>
<td>3 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total per group</strong> (high/low)/(72)</td>
<td><strong>46</strong> <strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong> <strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong> <strong>58</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong> <strong>63</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>64 19</td>
<td>47 13</td>
<td>36 81</td>
<td>53 88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example 4.29** Acceptable: Adjective - a word that describes a noun - *petit* (Ann. lower-middle)

**Example 4.30** Acceptable: Perfect tense - *elles ont dansé*, the past, did. *dansed* (Sofie. high)

**Example 4.31** Unacceptable: noun - is the subject and helps to decide how the verb will be conjugated e.g. *je suis être* (Chris, lower-middle).

4) **Students' preferences for learning (Questions 11, 12 and 13)**

This section was designed to gain an understanding of students' strategies and programming preferences with regard to learning new vocabulary and editing their work. In terms of vocabulary development, students reported reading, dictionary activities (providing definitions for assigned words), and translation of unknown words into English as the three most frequently used strategies for learning new vocabulary, see Table 4.10.
Table 4.10 Student strategies for learning new words: Top two preferences per student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage of total responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary activities</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation to English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning lists of words by heart</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-made tests</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Editing was approached primarily by rereading work to see if students could spot any mistakes. 17 students (94%) listed this as one of the two most often used strategies. Beyond this, 6 students (33%) said they then just hoped there were no more mistakes while 5 students (28%) appeared to adopt a more systematic approach, having a checklist of points to look for.

Most students (55%) preferred to edit their work with a friend, justifying their response by saying that more mistakes could be spotted in this way. Of the students preferring to work alone, not being misled by others' opinions was the main reason for preferring this option. Editing was regarded as something to be done before handing in work to the teacher, resulting in the low number of responses to the "with a teacher" option.

5) Students' reactions to teaching approaches (Questions 14, 15 and 16)

In response to question 14, whether they thought it would be useful to have a checklist of things to check for when editing their work, 12 (6 high, 6 low (68%)) of the students indicated they thought this would be useful. Three (17%) did not think it would be useful, 1 student (6%) thought it might and 1 student (6%) did not provide an answer.
In response to question 15, whether the students thought their teachers taught a lot of French grammar, 14 students (72%) indicated their teachers did. 3 students (17%) indicated their teachers did not, and 1 student (6%) did not answer the question.

In response to question 16, whether they would like to receive more or less instruction in French grammar, 10 students (56%) said they would like more. 3 students (17%) said they liked the amount of grammar instruction they received and 4 students (22%) said they would like less. A clear pattern which emerged from the reasons that were given by the students was that they wanted interesting, regularly scheduled lessons in grammar which would provide them with the opportunity of applying grammatical rules.

4.3.2 Summary of the Results from Questionnaire One

For these students, writing in French was a different process from writing in English: they said they were less spontaneous in their writing and more aware of the rules which apply when writing in French than in English. It is not possible to say whether this perception is a result of inherent features of French or indicative of the L2 instruction the students had received to date, but it constitutes an area which needs to be considered in the discussion of pedagogical implications of the research. Students believed that applying grammatical knowledge was more difficult than spelling correctly. For the majority of the students, verbs were a major source of difficulty or frustration, not only in terms of how to form tenses but also from a functional perspective of knowing when to use a particular tense. This finding supports the findings from the dictogloss data that the students' understanding of some form-function relationships was not well-developed.

While all students were aware of rules and morphosyntactic relationships, the high proficiency students had greater metalinguistic awareness and a more developed knowledge
of discrete grammatical rules. In addition, this subset of students was more likely to be concerned about writing idiomatically and making their writing more authentic, although some of the low proficiency students also mentioned the importance of idiomaticity in their writing, suggesting that the grammaticalization process varies from individual to individual.

In terms of learning preferences and strategies, vocabulary development appeared to be achieved primarily through incidental learning through reading. While the majority of students reported that they had received a lot of French grammar instruction, the majority did not want to receive less, suggesting that they believed this instruction to be useful for their language growth. Preferences, where stated, were for opportunities to practice applying grammatical rules.

4.4.1 Results from Questionnaire Two: Aspects of Students' Interlanguage

This questionnaire was designed to investigate aspects of the students' interlanguage. The results from Section A are reported in Table 4.11. Over 50% of the students were able to correct fifteen out of eighteen items in the error correction activity. High proficiency students achieved a success rate of 80% compared with 55% for the low proficiency students. Students were not as successful at providing explanations for the mistakes, but in the majority of cases, explanations when given were correct. Overall, 65% of the explanations provided by high proficiency students were correct, compared with 31% for the low proficiency students, suggesting once again that there is a correlation between explicit knowledge and language proficiency.
Table 4.11 Results from Questionnaire Two - Section A: Students' performance at correcting and explaining highlighted errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Number of students who successfully corrected the item</th>
<th>Number of students providing a correct rationale for their successful correction</th>
<th>Number of students providing a wrong reason for their successful correction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>high</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>%‡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Max.=171‡</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Success rate 80% 55% 65% 31% 8% 12%

† Percentage of the class. ‡ If all students of a particular ability (high/low) had provided a correct answer for each question.

Incorrect forms of commonly used expressions, (item 1, Je suis [ai] fini: item 2 j'étais [avais] à peu près six ans: item 6, J'ai déjà vu ce film sur [à] la télévision) were accurately corrected by the students, as were errors involving the partitive (item 4, J'ai des [d'] autres choses à faire; item 7, Un de les [des] garçons m'a invité à sortir), and errors in the formation of the imparfait (items 12-14 for example, Cet été il pleuvait [pleuvait] presque chaque fin de semaine). There were more errors made in forming the passé

26The correct form is provided in square brackets throughout this section.
composé but the success rate was still 50% or higher (see items 8-11). Item 3, the semantic difference between savoir and connaître, was also accurately corrected (61%).

Item 5. *Le bonheur dépend sur [de] bien des choses*, was attempted by 11 students. All corrections were unsuccessful. Of these attempts, only 5 students changed the preposition. *Avec, à, au* and *pour* were suggested as alternatives. One student was able to offer a reason for his correction. *Le bonheur dépend pour bien des choses.* "*Sur* est utilisé pour 'sur la table'. *Pour est pour quelque chose.*" Other corrections included *sûr, si* and omitting the preposition.

Functional mistakes (items 15-19, for example, *L'année dernière nous finissions* [finissions] *toujours nos devoirs avant les autres*) were also difficult for the students. In 67% of the cases, students realized there was a functional mistake. However, they were unable to correct 40% of these identified mistakes. Students either had difficulty in forming the new tense correctly, or in selecting the appropriate tense. This was a general area of weakness, with a wide range in the students' understanding of tense and aspect.

For the most part, if students were able to correct an error they were able to give a reason for the error. A notable exception was *J'ai des [d'] autres choses à faire* where none of the explanations given was correct. Once again the examples 4.32 and 4.33 show the wide range in the sophistication of the students' knowledge.

Example 4.32 "*des*" is a *feminin* word and *autres* is *masculin.* (Andrew, low)

Example 4.33 It is easier to say *d'autres* and it is unnecessary. (Rachel, high)

Similarly with the functional verb mistakes, very few students, all of them high proficiency, were able to correct the mistake and to explain why a mistake had been made
as illustrated in example 4.34 where the incorrect sentence was *Il arrivait [est arrivé] à l'école à quelle heure hier?* Eighteen percent of the students, predominantly low proficiency students, approached these functional errors as formal errors, see example 4.35, where the original sentence was *Jeudi dernier, je ne mangais [ai mangé] pas de petit-déjeuner avant de venir à l'école.*

**Example 4.34** *Il est arrivé à l'école à quelle heure hier? L'imparfait c'est utilisé pour quelque chose qui était (ongoing "!![sic]) dans le passé. Parce que c'est seulement une fois qu'il est arrivé ça nécessite le passé composé.* (Sarah, high).

**Example 4.35** *je ne mangais pas... Tu dois enlever le "e" avant que tu *mes, ais, ais, ait, ions, iez, aient.* (Nancy, lower-middle).

The proof-reading task, section C, was completed less successfully by the students. See Table 4.12. The factor which probably made the task so difficult for them was that they had not composed the text. They first had to read the text to understand the author's intended meaning and were then required to make corrections accordingly. Three of the errors were formal errors (Item 1: *Quand j'ai [suis] arrivé à l'école ce matin;* Item 4: *j'avais [avais] préparé vos cahiers;* Item 5: *avais demandais [demandé]*), and two of the errors were functional errors (Item 2: *Quand je suis arrivé à l'école ce matin, tout le monde a parlé [parlait];* Item 3: *je vous avais dit que je serais en retard aujourd'hui et je vous ai [avais] demandé de garder le silence et de travailler jusqu'à mon arrivée*).

**Table 4.12 Results from Questionnaire Two - Section C: Students’ performance at correcting and explaining unhighlighted errors in the passé composé and the imparfait**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of error to be corrected</th>
<th>Accurately corrected high low</th>
<th>Acceptable Reason high low</th>
<th>Wrong Reason high low</th>
<th>No reason high low</th>
<th>Wrongly corrected high low</th>
<th>Skipped high low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>18 high</td>
<td>16 low</td>
<td>2 high</td>
<td>1 low</td>
<td>3 high</td>
<td>6 low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3 items, 54 responses)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional</td>
<td>4 high</td>
<td>3 low</td>
<td>0 high</td>
<td>0 low</td>
<td>1 high</td>
<td>13 low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2 items, 36 responses)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Over 50% of the students were able to correct two of the formal errors. Once again, the functional errors proved more difficult for the students to identify and correct. Twenty-two percent of the students, all high proficiency were able to correct the phrase *tout le monde a parlé*, but no student was able to correct the second functional mistake. Overall, the high proficiency students performed better on this activity than the low proficiency students.

In addition to the errors which the students identified, there were also a number of wrongly identified errors, 28 in all, representing 39% of the total errors identified. Seven students (2 low, 5 high) mistook the noun *arrivée* for a verb and removed the final "e", claiming that the subject *mon* was masculine and therefore required no agreement. All but two of the remaining pseudo-errors consisted of formal (as opposed to functional) corrections to the verbs illustrated in example 4.36, where the original phrase was *de les distribuer*.

**Example 4.36** *de les *distribuers - C'était pluriel.* (William, low).

### 4.4.2 Summary of the Results from Questionnaire Two

The data on the sophistication of students' understanding of aspects of French collected in the second questionnaire, support and build on the data from the dictogloss. Students were most successful at correcting and providing reasons for formal errors and errors which they commonly make, such as the difference between *savoir* and *connaître* and idiomatic expressions. The students' explanations of the errors show that all students had developed some misconceptions about how French "works" but the explanations provided by the high proficiency students were more sophisticated and more likely to be
correct than those provided by the low proficiency students, once again showing a
correlation between explicit grammatical knowledge and language proficiency.

4.5.1 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented data showing students' understanding of aspects of
French. Students considered it important to have a good understanding of French grammar.
However, there was a wide range in the sophistication of this understanding between high
and low proficiency students. Students' knowledge of the syntactical relationships between
words showed that they had formed some misconceptions of the relationships between
words. In addition, the form-function links of many words were not understood. Based on
this information, it was decided to concentrate on developing the students' understanding
of form-function links in the treatment stage.
CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE TREATMENT STAGE AND COMPARISON TESTING

This chapter begins by presenting and discussing the results from the treatment stage of this study: the pre-, post-, and delayed-post cloze tests, and the pre- and post-composition task. It addresses, in part, the second of the original research questions: What is the relationship between existing knowledge and the appropriation of new knowledge? It is followed by the presentation and discussion of results from the comparative tests which were given at the beginning and end of the school year. All scoring procedures are also described.

5.1.1 The Treatment Stage: Scoring of the Cloze Tests

As mentioned in Chapter 3, cloze tests were used at the pre-, post-, delayed-post and comparative stages of the study to measure students' ability to use the passé composé and imparfait correctly. In all tests, students were given the infinitive form of the verb and needed to supply the verb in its correct passé composé or imparfait form according to the context. Following Harley (1989), two analyses of the test results were conducted, using two scoring procedures. This approach was used in order to gain a deeper understanding of the students' progress. The scoring procedures are described in Appendix M. Procedure 1 considered all written errors; students were only awarded a point for their answer if it was correct both formally and functionally. Procedure 2 was based on homophonous accuracy. Students were awarded a point if their answer was phonologically correct even if it was orthographically incorrect. For example, elle est allé, was not considered an error if the context called for the passé composé of the verb, even though to be correct in the written form it should have been elle est allée.
5.1.2 Treatment Results: Cloze Test

The students' scores improved from pre- to post-test for both analyses. This improvement was maintained between the post-testing and the delayed post-testing. A summary of the results is presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Summary of the experimental class' means from the cloze pre-post- and delayed-post-testing: Written and homophonous accuracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test: written accuracy</td>
<td>17*</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test: written accuracy</td>
<td>17*</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delayed post-test: written accuracy</td>
<td>17*</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test: homophonous accuracy</td>
<td>17*</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test: homophonous accuracy</td>
<td>17*</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delayed post-test: homophonous accuracy</td>
<td>17*</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One student was absent during the post-testing session. This set of scores has been omitted from the analyses.

Paired t-tests were used to measure the significance of the difference between the means for the students' pre- and post-test scores. The results are presented in Table 5.2.

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27For discussion about not making a distinction between which version of the test was used see Section 3.4.2.
Table 5.2 Paired t-tests results from the experimental class' cloze pre- and post-test mean scores: Written and homophonous accuracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Difference in the Means</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Value of t</th>
<th>Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre- and post-test means: written accuracy</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre- and post-test means: homophonous accuracy</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.3 Discussion of the Cloze Test Results

The results of the paired t-tests for written accuracy from pre- to post-testing show that, on average, students' scores improved by nearly 4 points. The observed significance level for this difference was .006. Similarly, the results of the paired t-tests for homophonous accuracy from pre- to post-testing show that, on average, students' scores improved by nearly 4 points. The observed significance level for this difference was .007. The pre-, post-test gains on both measures were maintained at the delayed post-testing stage. As these results were not compared to a comparison group, it is not possible to say whether it was the treatment or some other factor, for example maturation, that contributed to these results. However, from a teaching perspective, it is satisfying for me to see that the students did make significant improvement during the course of the unit and maintained this improvement once they were no longer formally studying the passé composé and the imparfait.

5.2.1 The Treatment Stage: Scoring of the Composition Test

The compositions were read and the researcher identified all instances requiring the use of the passé composé (or passé simple) or the imparfait regardless of the aspect the
student had used. For each composition, the total number of tokens was counted and the ratio of correct items (based on the criteria for written accuracy) to the total number of tokens was calculated as a percentage. The increase or decrease from pre- to post- treatment was also calculated for each student. A random sample of 24% of the data was also scored by a Franco-Ontarian who was asked to identify all obligatory instances of the passé composé and imparfait and to score each one. There was a discrepancy regarding one token, where it was decided that either the passé composé or the imparfait could have been acceptable depending on the author's intended meaning. There was otherwise complete agreement over the scoring of the tokens.

5.2.2 Results from the Pre- and Post-test Compositions

The pre-test essays showed that the students used the passé composé twice as much as the imparfait. Other studies with L2 learners of French have shown that the passé composé is the first of the past tense aspects to appear in L2 learner's production (Salaberry, forthcoming). The imparfait aspect is often marked by use of the present tense, which was also a feature noticed in the writing of these students. In general, as Tables 5.3 and 5.4 show, the post-test compositions contained more instances of obligatory passé composés and imparfaits than the pre-tests, and students' written accuracy improved, particularly in their use of the imparfait. Two students' accuracy scores decreased (-29%, -7%) but as the qualitative analysis will show, this downturn is not necessarily an indication of a lack of progress.
Table 5.3 Increases in the number of obligatory instances of the passé composé and the imparfait in the pre- and post-test compositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test (N=15)</th>
<th>Post-test (N=15)</th>
<th>Post-test Percentage Gains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of instances of obligatory passé composé</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of instances of obligatory imparfait</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4 Increases in the percentage of correctly used passé composé and imparfait in the pre- and post-test compositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test (N=15)</th>
<th>Post-test (N=15)</th>
<th>Increase (Pre- Post)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of correct passé composés</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of correct imparfaits</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of correctly used verbs (passé composé and imparfait)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.3 Qualitative Results of the Composition Tests

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' development between pre- and post-tests, a subset of eight students' compositions was analyzed in depth. Using the pre-test scores, the compositions of the two highest and two lowest scoring students were analyzed, in addition to two middle-level students (who also happened to be amongst the students making the greatest overall gains) and the two students whose scores decreased from pre- to post-test. The work of one student from each pair is described below. The decision of which student's work to discuss was made randomly in the case of the lowest and highest performing students. In the case of the greatest overall gains and decreases, the work of the student with the largest gain or decrease was chosen.
William: Low pre-test score

William's pre-test composition contained no obligatory uses of the *imparfait*; there was no attempt to use description in the past or to convey the notion of incomplete actions in the past. It is not possible to say whether this was intentional or if William did not know how to express these notions in French and therefore avoided such instances.

There were 16 obligatory instances of the *passé composé*. Two of these were correct, *le directeur a demandé, un garçon a dit*. One instance was correct orally, *tu as donné*, and two instances were functionally correct (i.e. it appeared that the student had made the right choice of aspectual marker but had formed it incorrectly, providing a form which was incorrect both in terms of written grammar and oral grammar). *je n'ai pas volé, les deux autres a répondu*. The remaining 11 instances were all in the present tense, for example *demende l'enfant*.

Although William's pre-test composition provides evidence that he knew how to use the *passé composé* for talking about completed actions in the past, his use of it was inconsistent and the forms he used lacked many features of the TL. He was aware that the *passé composé* was a compound form but there was no evidence that he realized the auxiliary verb needed to agree with its subject. "A" was the form of the auxiliary used in all cases. His "rule" for forming the past participle appeared to be that it needed to end with the sound /el, voler, répondu/. There was no evidence that he was aware of the rules for the formation of the past participle for "ir" and "re" verbs. There was one correct use of an irregular form, *a dit*, but this is a commonly heard verb and it is possible that he was using it as a "chunk" rather than as a consciously formed *passé composé*. 
William's post-test success rate at using the passé composé and the imparfait was 52%, an increase of 39 points over his pre-test score (13%). In the post-test composition there were 14 obligatory instances of the imparfait and 11 obligatory instances of the passé composé. In other words, William's writing on this occasion was not limited to the narration of completed actions in the past.

Of the 14 cases where the imparfait should have been used, the present tense was used 5 times. In one case, a passé composé was used, elles ont passé, and in the remaining 8 instances the correct version was used. These verbs were mainly stative verbs, more likely to be used in the imparfait than the passé composé in the past tense, but William's use of subject verb agreement was consistently correct, elles pensaient, Jean était mort.

Of the 11 instances where the passé composé should have been used, there was only one instance where William used a present tense verb, suggesting that the passé composé was replacing the use of the present tense. There was one occasion where the imparfait was used instead of the passé composé. Three instances were functionally correct, il a tombé, il a monté, il a droit (devoir). The remaining 5 instances were all correct, for example elles ont vu. (Only 1 of these was a 3rd. person singular form il a cassé).

William's passé composé usage, although still containing errors (in particular the absence of être as an auxiliary verb), was more sophisticated than at the pre-test stage. There was now consistent subject-verb agreement, and the appearance of the past participle forms entendu and vu. meant that le/ was no longer the only past participle form used.

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28In Canadian French this form is sometimes heard, although two French Canadians agreed that in written French this form would be considered incorrect unless used in direct speech, which was not the case in this context.
Tim: Mid-range pre-test score

Tim's pre-test composition contained 13 obligatory instances of the passé composé and 7 of the imparfait. The imparfait was not used correctly in any instance. Present tense forms were used instead, l'enfant a dit qu'il ne c'est pas qu'ils vont voler. Although Tim wanted to express ideas which required the use of the imparfait he appeared to be unaware of how to do this in French.

Tim's use of the passé composé seemed to be in a transitionary stage with formal and functional errors being made. The passé composé was used correctly in 7 instances, il a dit (4 tokens), tu as volé, il a donné, il a commencé. There were 3 tokens where the verb was incorrectly formed il à dit, ils ont griper, il est commencé, and there were 3 apparent functional mistakes. The passé composé was replaced on one occasion by the present tense, where it was possible that Tim considered this a case where the imparfait (or at least not a passé composé) needed to be used for it occurred with a stative verb je n'est pas de rôle. There were two further instances where the present was possibly used with verbs of action instead of the passé composé, ils dit, il dit. It is unlikely that either of these forms was used as a past historic form for on other occasions the form il a dit was used. It appeared that Tim was conscious of many of the features which do occur in the passé composé but was unsure of how to use them.

Tim's post-test success rate (94%) was a considerable improvement over his pre-test success rate (35%). The post-test essay contained no functional errors. All instances of the imparfait (3) were correct. There was an example of an action verb as well as statives being used in the imparfait, and it was used not only for incomplete actions in the past, but also for interrupted actions, Anna a couru à la téléphone pendant que Marie assistait Marc.
The passé composé was used correctly 12 out of 13 times, with regular and irregular verbs but always with a third person singular subject. There was one example of a reflexive verb, Marc s'est levé. The one error, elle a reviené suggests that not all of the rules regarding the use of être as auxiliary had been mastered, and that irregular verbs might still cause difficulties as far as the formation of the passé composé was concerned.

Kristin: High pre-test score

Kristin's pre-test composition had 13 obligatory instances of the passé composé and 3 of the imparfait. The imparfait was correctly used in all instances requiring its use. All the verbs were stative, for example ils *expectaient le mauvais, les yeux étaient.

As far as obligatory instances of the passé composé were concerned, it was used correctly in 9 instances, all verbs having avoir as their auxiliary verb, but with a variety of subjects for example vous avez fait, ils ont demandé, a-t-il crié. There were 3 functional errors accounting for 75% of the errors made with the passé composé. An imparfait was wrongly used in the place of a passé composé on one occasion with a stative verb. "C'était un rendez-vous difficile à organisé," a dit tout le monde.29 One present tense was used, le directeur dit, and there was one instance of an infinitive being used instead of the passé composé, le directeur soupir. There was one formal error, vous avez faites, occurring perhaps because Kristin had seen this form before but was not aware that it was only possible if the verb was preceded by a feminine plural preceding direct object. This form was not stable for the correct form vous avez fait was also used.

29It is possible that although this instance was deemed incorrect by the scorer, it may actually convey the student's intended meaning, and therefore not be a mistake.
Kristin's pre-test success rate was 67%, her post-test success rate was 93%. In the post-test composition, 24 instances of the passé composé occurred and 7 of the imparfait. Once again there was clear evidence of improvement towards the TL norm.

All the imparfait examples were correctly formed regardless of the subject used, and there were instances of the imparfait being used not only with stative verbs but also with verbs of action Marie et tout le monde regardaient. It was used not only to talk about incomplete actions in the past for example, a crié Marie en courant vers l'enfant qui tombait dans l'eau but also for description, for example, l'échelle allait très haute and for talking of interrupted events, a-t-il dit pendant qu'il grimpait l'échelle; Marie et Anna sont partis pour l'autre côté de la piscine, pendant qu'elles le regardaient.

The passé composé was used correctly on 22 occasions with various subjects, regular and irregular verbs and with both avoir and être as auxiliaries for example, elles sont arrivées, elle l'a ramassé. The two errors which were made suggest that the rules regarding the use of agreements with past participles were not completely consolidated for example, Marie et Anne sont partis, ont-elles criés.

**Nancy: Percentage loss between pre- and post-tests**

In the pre-test there were 5 obligatory instances of each aspectual form by Nancy. The imparfait was used correctly on 4 occasions but always with the verbs avoir and être in the 3rd. person singular. The one mistake, functional, involved the verb aimer which was used in the present tense with an incorrect ending, ses parents aime.

The passé composé was used correctly on all occasions but always in the 3rd. person singular, tout le monde a donné. On two occasions the form il est allé appeared and there was one occurrence of an irregular verb il a fait.
Although Nancy's use of the TL appears quite sophisticated and close to the TL norm, it should be remembered that the examples with *avoir* and *être* in the *imparfait*, and the verbs having *être* as an auxiliary in the *passé composé* are all commonly occurring verbs and might therefore be known to the student as "chunks" rather than as analyzed forms. Following McLaughlin's theory of restructuring (1990) and Kellerman's "U-shaped curve" (1985), we would expect to see a downturn in student performance as she moves from exemplar based knowledge to analyzed rule-governed knowledge.

Nancy's post-test success rate was lower (61%) than her pre-test success rate (90%). In the post-test, there were 5 obligatory instances of the *passé composé* and 13 of the *imparfait*. There was a greater variety of verbs used in the *imparfait*. Nine were used correctly, the majority in the 3rd. person singular although there was one correct instance of a 3rd. person plural. *ils étaient*. Subject-verb agreement did not appear to be fully mastered at the post-test stage for there were also three incorrect examples, *ils n'était pas*, *les garçons n'avaient pas*, *la dernière punition étaient*. There also appeared to be some interference from the *passé composé* form on one occasion, *les garçons n'allés pas*. Nevertheless, the use of the *imparfait* was more sophisticated than at the pre-test stage.

The *passé composé* was not only used in the 3rd. person singular in the post-test composition, for example *ils ont aussi senti*. On one occasion an auxiliary was omitted, *ils regardé*, but on all others it was included. There were 2 further errors, an incorrect past participle agreement, *ils ont vus*, and an incorrect reflexive verb, *ils ont s'excuser*. There were two correct forms, *ils ont donné* and *il a donné*. Once again, although Nancy's use of the *passé composé* is less accurate than at the pre-test stage, her overall use of it was more sophisticated. The results suggest that the decrease in her overall score on both the *passé*

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30 This could also be interpreted as an imperfect homophonous error.
composé and the imparfait might have been due to a restructuring of her understanding of their use and should not be seen as a lack of progress from the pre- to post-test stage.\footnote{From a teaching perspective, it is important that we understand this phenomenon and not feel that our teaching has been ineffective. It is also important that we share these insights with our students. Nancy was a hard-working student, who worked hard all year at trying to make her writing more idiomatic and applying the grammar issues discussed in class. A student of lower-middle proficiency, reflected in her grades, she was discouraged when she didn't do very well on assignments. It is likely that she would have been discouraged to see that her pre-test score was actually better than her post-test score and highly unlikely that she would have felt that she had actually progressed in her ability to write about events taking place in the past.}

5.2.4 Students' Developmental Progress in the Use of the Passé Composé and the Imparfait (Pre- to Post-testing)

As a result of the above findings, it was decided to reanalyze all the compositions to gain a better understanding of the progress made by the students between pre- and post-testing. All obligatory instances of the passé composé and the imparfait were identified and categorized into one of eight types (see Appendix K) based on whether the correct aspect had been chosen for the context and whether it had been accurately or inaccurately formed. Using the data and information from other studies which have investigated L2 learners' development in the use of the imparfait and the passé composé (see Salaberry, forthcoming for a review) it was possible to identify specific developmental levels (Table 5.5) in the students' use and progress in the formation and application of the passé composé and the imparfait. Students were given a number indicating their level of accuracy in forming the passé composé or the imparfait and a letter describing their level of functional accuracy. Twenty five percent of the data were read by a second coder to establish the reliability of the coding system. Reliability for the formation of tenses was good at 88\%, and acceptable for the functional use of tenses at 81\%.

The levels give a general impression of the starting skills of the students and the progress that they made from pre- to post-test. However, the generalizibility of these levels...
is limited due to the small sample size. Their reliability is also restricted because only one sample of a student's work was analyzed at the pre- and post-test stages. For instance, it is not possible to say that because a particular feature did not occur in a student's composition that the student had not mastered it. Similarly, if an item appeared only once in a composition it is impossible to generalize whether it had been appropriated by a student (in the case of a correct usage) or not appropriated (in the case of an incorrect item). Such instances are indicated in Table 5.6.
Table 5.5 Developmental levels used in assessing the experimental students' use of the passé composé and the imparfait

| Formation of the Passé Composé | 0 | There are no obligatory instances of the passé composé. |
| | 1 | There are obligatory instances of the passé composé, but the form is not used at all. |
| | 2* | "Chunks" are correctly formed, e.g. *il a dit*. |
| | 3* | A simplified auxiliary form is used, e.g. avoir is the only auxiliary used, and/or overgeneralization of past participle rule formation, e.g. *répondé, prit* (probably after *dit*). |
| | 4 | Simplified past participle forms may still be evident, consistent subject verb agreement, *avoir* and *être* both used as auxiliaries when required. |
| | 5 | Subject verb agreement, standard auxiliary forms. Evidence of past participle agreements with *être*, and/or preceding direct objects, although use may be inconsistent or overgeneralized. |
| Functional Use of the Passé Composé | a | There are no obligatory instances of the passé composé. |
| | b | No passé composé forms are used. Other tenses e.g. the present, are used instead. |
| | c* | Passé composé forms are present, but they are primarily frequently occurring "chunks", e.g. *il a dit*. |
| | d* | The passé composé is used with a variety of subjects and verbs, but the verbs are dynamic verbs. |
| | e* | The passé composé is used with a variety of subjects and verbs including stative verbs e.g. *être, avoir, avoir peur*. |

| Formation of the Imparfait | 0* | There are no obligatory instances of the imparfait. |
| | 1* | No imparfait forms are used. Other tenses e.g. the present, are used instead. |
| | 2* | "Chunks" are correctly formed, e.g. *il y avait, il était*. |
| | 3 | Overgeneralization of chunks in homophonous errors such as *ils était*. |
| | 4 | The imparfait is used with a variety of verbs but with inconsistent subject verb agreement, e.g. *ils savait*. |
| | 5 | Consistent subject verb agreement, with a variety of verbs. |
| Functional Use of the Imparfait | a* | There are no obligatory instances of the imparfait. |
| | b* | There are obligatory instances of the imparfait, but the form is not used at all. |
| | c* | Imparfait forms are present, but they are primarily frequently occurring "chunks", e.g. *il était, il y avait*. |
| | d* | The imparfait is used with a variety of subjects and verbs but primarily stative verbs, e.g. *être, penser, avoir peur*. |
| | e* | The imparfait is used with a variety of subjects and verbs including dynamic verbs e.g. *commencer, finir*. |

*Stages that have been identified in other studies of L2 learners (Salaberry, forthcoming).
Table 5.6 Experimental students' use of the passé composé and imparfait in the pre- and post-composition tasks: Arranged in order of growth in functional use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imparfait</th>
<th>Passé composé</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in Functional Performance^32</td>
<td>5e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3e</td>
<td>4d George Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Increase in Functional Performance</td>
<td>4d Nancy Lower Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>1b Andrew Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c</td>
<td>2c Mac Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress in Functional Performance</td>
<td>3d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c</td>
<td>4d Nancy Lower Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c</td>
<td>4d Jane Upper Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c</td>
<td>5d* Chris Lower Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5c</td>
<td>4d Ann Lower Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d</td>
<td>4e Michael Upper Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4d</td>
<td>4e Rachel High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4d</td>
<td>5e Lee Upper Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5d</td>
<td>5e Kristen Upper Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c</td>
<td>5e Sofie High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>4d Tim Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0a</td>
<td>5d William Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Based on a limited number of examples.

5.2.5 Discussion of Students' Performance on the Composition Task:

Pre- and Post-Test

At both the pre- and post-test stages there was a wide range in the students' ability to use the passé composé and the imparfait. Using the median scores, as illustrated in Figure 5.1, the class as a whole at the pre-test stage was better at forming the passé

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^32The apparent decrease is not necessarily due to a downturn in student performance, rather it is likely that specific features required for level e performance were present in the pre-test but did not feature in the post-test composition, e.g. the context did not call for a dynamic verb to be used in the imparfait.
composé (median score = 3) than the imparfait (median score = 2). This pattern was repeated in their functional use of each aspect (median score = d for the passé composé and median score = c for the imparfait). Whereas the majority of the students scored 'd' or higher in using the passé composé, their scores for forming it and for forming and using the imparfait show much wider variance, suggesting that at the pre-treatment stage, the students had a good understanding of when to use the passé composé but its formation and the formation and use of the imparfait were less well understood by the whole class.

**Figure 5.1 Pre- and post-test scores of the experimental group's use of the passé composé and imparfait on the composition task**

On the post-test compositions, the median scores all improved except for the students' use of the passé composé. The greatest growth occurred in their ability to form the imparfait, which rose from '2' to '4'. For both the passé composé and the imparfait.
there was less variance in the students' achievement, with the majority of students achieving one of the top two levels for applying and forming each. There is no clear pattern from the results to suggest that students from any particular ability range profited the most from the activities. However, for two of the low proficiency students, Mac and Andrew, who began with low achievement and made very little growth during the course of the unit, the activities planned for the treatment stage had been mostly ineffectual. These students may have benefitted more from tutorial sessions with me rather than the peer work and large group approaches used through the unit. The issue of how best to offer remedial help to weak students is one which warrants further investigation.\footnote{The issue of the effectiveness of homogeneous groupings and peer-coaching is more complex than this example at first appears to be. The two students who made little progress during the unit often worked together, and often worked as a group of three with Tim, another low proficiency student. However, Tim's composition registered the largest gain from pre- to post-test. The transcripts from the fill-in-the-gap activity show Tim assuming the role of teacher to explain rules regarding the formation of the passé compose to his peers. It is possible that, following Biemiller and Meichenbaum (1992), Tim benefitted from being put in the role of teacher. Clearly, the homogeneous groupings and pair-work activities did not have a negative effect on Tim's progress.}

5.3.1 Comparison Testing Results General L2 Performance (Cloze and Written Tests)

This section discusses the results of the battery of tests used at the beginning (pre-test) and end of the year (post-test) to measure students' general L2 performance (see Chapter 3 for a description of the tests). The tests were scored by the researcher using the scoring procedures used by the Modern Language Centre (MLC) testing service. A sample of 20% of the data was then rescored by a member of the MLC staff familiar with scoring these tests. Interrater reliability was 90% or higher for all measures apart from the "good writing" score. As a result, all the data for this measure were rescored by the researcher and a further sample of 10% was rescored by the MLC staff member. This time reliability was very good at 91%. The mean scores for the three classes at the beginning and end of the year are presented in Table 5.7 and Figures 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4.
Table 5.7 Experimental and comparison groups' general L2 performance results: Pre-and post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pre- and Post-test Means</th>
<th>Pre- and Post-test Standard Deviations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Experimental Group</td>
<td>Cloze test: L2 proficiency (Max.=25)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.53†</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Comparison Group</td>
<td>Cloze test: L2 proficiency</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.10</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Comparison Group</td>
<td>Cloze test: L2 proficiency</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.05</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Experimental Group</td>
<td>Written activity: Global Rating</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of Good Writing (Range 0-3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Comparison Group</td>
<td>Written activity: Global Rating</td>
<td>19*</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of Good Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Comparison Group</td>
<td>Written activity: Global Rating</td>
<td>18*</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of Good Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Experimental Group</td>
<td>Written activity: Opinion (Max.=3)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Comparison Group</td>
<td>Written activity: Opinion</td>
<td>19*</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Comparison Group</td>
<td>Written activity: Opinion</td>
<td>18*</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One student from Class 2 and two students from Class 3 did not complete the paragraph activity on one of the testing occasions. Their data were incomplete and omitted from the statistical analysis.
† The first figure in each cell refers to the pre-test score and the second figure refers to the post-test score.

A one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the pre-test means of three classes to see if they could be considered similar for the purpose of comparison. This analysis was needed because the three groups would be compared with one another after the treatment stage. Class 1, the experimental class, did not differ significantly on any of the measures from the other two classes, meaning that the groups could be considered similar for the purpose of comparing results after the treatment stage.
The ANOVA conducted on the cloze tests showed that no two groups were significantly different at the $p < 0.05$ level. However, on the opinion score and the global rating of good writing, the results from Class 2 and Class 3 did differ significantly from one another. $F(2,55)=5.86$ and $F(2,55)=3.65$. For this reason, it was decided to use Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), with the pre-test scores for each class as covariates to compare the post-test scores of the three classes. This analysis measured and compared the growth made by each of the three classes during the year, in relation to the original pre-test scores for each class.

**Cloze pre- and post-tests: L2 proficiency**

As seen in Figure 5.2, on the cloze pre-test Class 1, the experimental group, had the lowest mean score of all three classes, with Class 2 having the highest. The cloze post-test scores show that the mean scores for all three classes improved over the course of the year. Class 1 made the largest gains, but still did not score higher than Class 2. The ANCOVA of the results for Class 1 with Classes 2 and 3 on the cloze test was not significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

**Figure 5.2 Experimental and comparison class' mean scores on the cloze pre- and post-tests: L2 proficiency**
**Written pre- and post-tests: "Good Writing" scores**

As seen in Figure 5.3, on the pre-test, Class 2 scored highest of the three groups followed by Class 1, the experimental group, and Class 3 respectively. At the end of the year, Class 2 still scored highest of the three groups even though the class mean decreased. The class means for Classes 1 and 3 both increased, with Class 1 still scoring higher than Class 3 and making the largest overall gain of the three groups. The result of the ANCOVA comparing the scores for Class 1 with Classes 2 and 3 was not significant at the p<0.05 level.

**Figure 5.3 Experimental and comparison class' mean scores on the written pre- and post-tests: "Good Writing"**

![Graph showing mean scores for Classes 1, 2, and 3 on written pre- and post-tests: Good Writing]

**Written pre- and post-tests: Opinion scores**

As seen in Figure 5.4, at the beginning of the year, Class 2 had the highest mean score for this test followed by Classes 1 and 3 respectively. The post-test class means show that the students in Class 1, the experimental group, improved in their ability to state an opinion over the course of the year as measured by this test and registered the highest score of the three classes on this activity. The scores for Classes 2 and 3 were lower. The
results of the ANCOVA comparing the results for Class 1 with Classes 2 and 3 was significant at the $p<0.05$ level, $F(1,50)=5.23$.

Figure 5.4 Experimental and comparison class' mean scores on the written pre- and post-tests: Opinion

5.3.2 Comparison of the General L2 Proficiency Results with a Larger Sample of Early French Immersion Students

In order to situate the results from these groups in a wider context (i.e. to see if the school's results were typical for immersion students at this stage in their studies), students' post-test performance was compared to the performance of other grade 8 classes of similar educational and socio-economic background on the same test. This comparison was possible because of the availability of a database of results which had been collected for the Metropolitan Toronto Study of Early and Middle French Immersion Programs (Hart, Lapkin and Swain, 1988). In the Metropolitan Toronto Study, the testing was conducted during the spring term, that is, towards the end of the school year. For this reason, the post-test scores of the experimental and comparison groups were used. Table 5.8 reports the mean class ranges of results for students in the Metropolitan Toronto Study (Hart, Lapkin and Swain, 1988) and compares them with the experimental and comparison
groups from this study. On all tests, the experimental group mean scores were higher than the range of class mean scores recorded in the Metropolitan Toronto Study, suggesting that the experimental group's performance was particularly good in comparison with other students of similar educational background and experience. Post hoc ANOVA tests were run to see if the differences between the class means for the experimental class and the classes in the Metro Toronto studies were statistically significant. The differences were not significant on any of the measures (p< 0.05).

Table 5.8 Range of class mean scores on the cloze test and writing test (Global Rating of Good Writing and Opinion Score) for classes in the Metropolitan Toronto Study and the experimental class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Number of classes in the Metro Study</th>
<th>Lowest Mean Class Score in the Metro Study</th>
<th>Median Mean Class Score in the Metro Study</th>
<th>Highest Mean Class Score in the Metro Study</th>
<th>Experimental Class Mean Scores</th>
<th>Comparison Class 1</th>
<th>Comparison Class 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cloze Test (Max = 25)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.63</td>
<td>15.56</td>
<td>16.43</td>
<td>17.12</td>
<td>18.05</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Test: Global Rating of Good Writing (Scale 0-3)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Test: Opinion Score (Max =3)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.1 Comparison and Experimental Groups' Accuracy in Using the Passé Composé and Imparfait

This section presents and discusses the results of the cloze test given in June and used to measure all three classes' skill at using the passé composé and the imparfait. The tests were scored using the written and homophonous accuracy procedures used during the
treatment testing (Appendix H). Results for each class are presented in Table 5.10. The mean score for Class 1, the experimental group, was higher than for the other two classes on both written and homophonous accuracy measures. A one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to see if the differences between the students' mean scores for the experimental group were statistically significantly different from the other classes. The results showed that for both measures there were no significant differences between any of the groups at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Table 5.9 Experimental and comparison class' mean scores: *Passé composé* and *imparfait* cloze test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Experimental</td>
<td>Written accuracy</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21.67</td>
<td>7.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Max.=39)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Comparison</td>
<td>Written accuracy</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19.86</td>
<td>5.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Comparison</td>
<td>Written accuracy</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.73</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Experimental</td>
<td>Homophonous accuracy</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24.56</td>
<td>6.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Max.=39)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Comparison</td>
<td>Homophonous accuracy</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>4.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Comparison</td>
<td>Homophonous Accuracy</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22.13</td>
<td>5.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.2 Discussion of the Cloze Test Results

As discussed in Section 5.3.1, the scores of the three classes on the battery of tests designed to measure general L2 ability suggest that there were no significant differences between Class 1, the experimental group, and the other two classes combined at the beginning of the school year (October). Although the experimental group had made the largest gains on these tests as measured at the end of the year, the differences were only significant on the opinion measure. Similarly, although the experimental group
outperformed the other two classes on a cloze test designed to measure students' accuracy in using the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. The differences were not statistically significant. However, during the course of the year, the comparison classes had also received instruction in the use of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. Cloze activities were used with the comparison classes as part of their grammar activities but there was no emphasis on group work.

### 5.5.1 Summary

Using the treatment materials with the students resulted in a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-tests in their accuracy in using the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*, but because there was no comparison group used in this stage of the study, it is not possible to say that it was the treatment alone which was responsible for this improvement. Although in June the experimental group scored higher than the other two classes in the school (who had also spent time learning about the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*) on a *passé composé/imparfait* cloze test, these differences were not significant.

The analysis of the composition data uncovered the range in the students' abilities. The variance in the scores decreased from pre- to post-test, with the class registering gains in its median scores in all areas except for its functional use of the *passé composé*, which had been its strongest area at the pre-test stage. Most students made progress in using the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* from pre- to post-testing, but the amount of progress varied from student to student. For two of the students, the unit appeared to have been quite ineffectual. More information about learner problems and progress may be gained from analyzing the student interactions which occurred during the Fill-in-the Gaps activity (Chapter 6).
In terms of general L2 performance as measured by the *Homme des neiges* cloze tests and the written activity, Class 1 did not perform significantly differently from the other two classes at the beginning of the year. Of the three measures used, the only significant difference in post-test scores taking into account initial differences at the beginning of the year between the experimental and the comparison groups was on the opinion measure.

When these three classes’ mean scores were compared with similar classes from the Metropolitan Toronto Study, the experimental group’s mean performance on all measures was higher than the range of class mean scores reported in the study. These differences were not statistically significant.
CHAPTER SIX: USING COLLABORATIVE TASKS TO PROMOTE GRAMMATICAL AWARENESS

This chapter discusses qualitatively the data of students' interactions during the three collaborative activities completed during the course of the year: a language production task, a metalinguistic task and a proof-reading task. Each of the activities had an emphasis on form which, it was hypothesized, would provide students with opportunities to externalize some of their ideas about how language "works" and thereby help them to consolidate and develop this knowledge. The chapter describes the rationale for conducting a micro-analysis of the student-student interactions, before going on to discuss the following original research questions: Can collaborative tasks be designed which encourage students to investigate links between the forms of words and their communicative function? Are certain types of student grouping more effective than others? Are there particular features which appear to contribute to the efficacy of a task? Can immersion students provide the same quality of feedback as a teacher when completing assigned tasks or will they reinforce each other's misconceptions about the French language?

6.1.1 Introduction

Group work is an important feature of many L2 classrooms, all the more so, considering the current interest in task based language teaching (TBLT) (e.g. Crookes and Gass, 1993a, 1993b; Long and Crookes, 1992; Nunan, 1989; Skehan, 1994), an approach which makes extensive use of communicative group work activities. It is well documented that group work can be an effective instructional strategy in many classrooms (e.g. Cohen, 1994 for a review). Many studies using group work have been conducted in first language (L1) English classes (e.g. Di Pardo and Freedman, 1988 for a review) and there is also
evidence from English as a Foreign Language classes to suggest that providing group work activities can promote students' communicative skills and enhance their application of grammatical structures (Bejarano, 1987). Based on her review of the cooperative learning literature, Cohen (1994) indicates that one area for future research in group work studies is to study closely the relationship between task and student interaction if educators are to understand fully how to use group work effectively. Similarly, as there are still relatively few qualitative accounts in the L2 research literature of participants' interactions as they carry out an assigned task, our understanding of L2 learning during group work is limited. For instance, we know little about 1) what participants do as they complete a specific task in small groups; 2) whether or what the students are learning (fluency perhaps, rather than accuracy as some of the FI research data suggest); 3) whether grouping patterns affect the nature of the interactions.

6.2.1 Some Limitations Of Using Quantitative Analyses For Understanding Group Work and LL2

One important benefit of group work, particularly for advocates of TBLT, is the potential for increasing opportunities for extended student output. Long and Crookes (1993) claim that "(pedagogic) tasks provide a vehicle for the presentation of appropriate target language samples to learners ... and for the delivery of comprehension and production opportunities of negotiable difficulty. New form-function relationships are perceived by the learner as a result" (p.39). Yet, in order to capitalize on the potential for LL2 from increased student output, curriculum planners need to pay attention to the quality of the interactions that occur as a task is completed.

It is not enough to make sequencing and planning decisions based on the results of the type of quantitative studies referred to in Chapter 2 even though this approach has been
suggested by some researchers (e.g. Nunan, 1993; Pica, Kanagy and Falodun, 1993). Quantitative analyses of interactions can provide a misleading impression of the quality of the talk produced as an activity is completed and the goal of providing opportunities for extended student output which promotes the perception of new form-function relationships might appear to be realized even though it is not. A study by Fotos and Ellis (1991) illustrates this point well.

In their study, groups and pairs of students worked together to complete a grammar task. One purpose of the study was to "integrate grammar instruction with opportunities for meaningful communication" (p.605) and one way to evaluate the task was to count the number of negotiations occurring during the discussions, a strategy used in many studies adopting a quantitative approach to the analysis of group interactions. The task appeared to be particularly successful in eliciting negotiations of meaning in the dyads, that is, the grammar task appeared to be a successful means of encouraging meaningful communication. The transcripts were examined more closely. This qualitative analysis revealed that the negotiations consisted primarily of one student reading the question and the other responding with the word "correct" or "incorrect". Fotos and Ellis conclude that although these brief exchanges are meaningful, the quantitative analysis provided a misleading description of the quality of the interaction. They go on to say that:

"...a more detailed investigation of the qualitative nature of the negotiated interactions promoted by different types of grammar tasks in different settings is an important future research question. This point is equally true with regard to the quality of interactions analyzed in other published studies. Further research in the area of negotiated interactions must deal with qualitative aspects of the data, particularly in situations where both interlocutors are nonnative speakers (pp. 621-622)."

There is further evidence of possibly misleading results from quantitative studies provided in the work of Clennell (1994). Through video data, he has shown that the frequently used "Spot the Difference" task may elicit a high number of negotiated episodes
but may once again not require much more than minimal responses on the part of the learners, this time because of the important role played by non-verbal communication strategies in face to face communication. Thus, there is little reflection on the links between form and function.

Even when a task does provide students with opportunities for talking and writing in French, opportunities for extended output alone might not be sufficient for promoting interlanguage growth, as the previously cited FL research suggests. Intermediate and advanced students have developed high levels of strategic competence (Canale and Swain, 1980; Tarone, 1981) and as a result, their interlanguage growth slows down unless deliberate attempts are made to draw students' attention to how they are expressing their intended meaning (Swain, 1988, 1993; Lyster, 1994). It is through qualitative analyses of interactional data that L2 researchers will gain insights into whether a particular group work task appears to promote interlanguage growth by providing students with opportunities for extended output and the chance to perceive new form-function relationships. The results from the three activities described in this chapter provide rich insights into the L2 learning process for researchers and teachers and suggest that providing students with appropriate opportunities to produce language can enhance learning as predicted by the output hypothesis (Swain, 1985, 1993, 1995; Swain and Lapkin, 1995).

6.3.1 Collaborative Learning And The Output Hypothesis

Within the context of collaborative learning, three functions of output are important in enhancing L2 acquisition. First, Swain hypothesizes that as learners interact with one another in the TL, they learn from the feedback they receive from one another. The feedback may be explicit, as in specific error correction or implicit, i.e., confirming or
disconfirming through one's participation in a conversation one's understanding of how a particular linguistic structure is used.

Second, when producing the TL, learners will sometimes come to know what they do not know. That is to say, in attempting to produce what they want to say, they may "notice the gap" (Schmidt and Frota, 1986) between what they want to say and what they are able to say. This gap may not be noticed when learners attempt to comprehend one another, because, as Krashen (1982) and Gary and Gary (1981) have pointed out, speaking is linguistically more complicated than comprehension. In understanding speech for instance we can rely on extra-linguistic as well as linguistic information and many grammatical features such as concord, definite/indefinite distinctions and singular plural distinctions may become relatively redundant and be unnoticed by the listener.

The "gap" noticed while producing the TL may be an unknown lexical item, or a particular grammatical feature that is needed to convey precisely the learners' intended meaning. One part of the output hypothesis proposes therefore, that, as a result of attempting to produce language which sometimes results in "noticing a gap", learners will turn to others, or to their own linguistic resources and work out a solution: or they will be primed to notice it in future input (Swain and Lapkin, 1995). This is discussed further in reference to the data presented below.

Third, and of particular importance for the tasks discussed in this chapter, it is hypothesized that through talk in collaborative tasks, consciousness is raised. Vygotsky (1979) claims that it is through the mediation of another that consciousness is created and raised. That is, if a task can be devised to have learners talk about the language they are producing, their talk may well serve the function of raising their awareness of forms, rules and their relationship to the meaning they are trying to express. It may also give the learners
control over their learning by providing content to be reflected on, understood and controlled (Swain, 1994).

This approach to using group work in the L2 classroom attempts to go beyond the dichotomous (and misleading) relationship between message and form often described in the literature on communicative language learning. Nobuyoshi and Ellis (1993) for instance claim that for a task to be communicative, "there must be a focus on message rather than linguistic code". This prerequisite ignores the fundamental communicative function of many grammatical features, for example verb tenses, and is contrary to the findings of the dictogloss data where, for the majority of the students, orthographic, grammatical and meaning based episodes were of equal importance to them in producing text (See Chapter 4). For intermediate and advanced learners, there is no reason why a communicative task cannot be one in which learners communicate about grammar, in the context of trying to produce something they want to say in the TL.

This point appears to have been recognized by Ellis and Fotos in other studies (Fotos and Ellis, 1991; Fotos, 1993) in which mention is made of designing tasks which will promote communication about grammar. This research also suggests that talking about grammar raises the learners' consciousness, such that they "notice the gap". Indeed it is shown that "a number of learners who developed knowledge about grammar structures went on to notice those structures in communicative input after their consciousness had been raised" (Fotos, 1993:385).

In short, according to the output hypothesis, three things may happen if a task is appropriately structured.

1) The learner may learn something through feedback -- implicit or explicit -- which s/he receives while interacting in the group.
2) While attempting to produce an utterance, learners may come to know what they don't know as reflected in their (in)ability to express the meaning they wish to convey. This may lead them to search in input to find ways to express it, or they may turn to external sources such as people and dictionaries, or they may search their own linguistic resources to fill their knowledge gap.

3) If the task involves producing language accurately, talk about how to do so should help the learners to reflect on the grammar of their TL as a way of expressing their meanings. Doing so may help them to gain control of their own language production abilities (Kowal and Swain, in press).

The data described in the following sections illustrate these processes in action. They also provide additional information about how students collaborate during group work, providing numerous illustrations of collaboration and learning at all levels in the ZPD, as students progress from other to self regulation.

6.4.1 A Language Production Task: Dictogloss

The first task to be discussed in this chapter is the dictogloss activity used during the first term. The CLREs from the first analysis were reused in this analysis. While providing a rich source of information about the sophistication of students' knowledge of French (Chapter 4), the transcripts also show how providing students with opportunities to produce language may enhance LL2 as predicted by the output hypothesis.

6.4.2 Focus of Student Talk: "Filling the Gap"

As they worked on reconstructing the sentences, students did become aware of apparent gaps in their knowledge and points of uncertainty as predicted by the output hypothesis. Some of these (but less than 20%) were concerned with present tense verb endings as I had intended. Sentence one was particularly successful in this respect (En ce qui concerne l'environnement, il y a beaucoup de problèmes qui nous tracassent). Upon
realizing that *tracassent* was preceded by *nous*. many students wrongly assumed that *nous* was the subject of the verb. If this were the case, the verb ending on the stem *tracass* would have to be "*ons*". When they reread their notes taken during the dictogloss, students realized that this was not what I had said. Faced with an apparent discrepancy, they were forced to look at the sentence more closely. It appeared that in many instances, the subsequent discussion resulted in students deepening their understanding of certain form/function relationships as shown in examples 6.1. 6.2. Such moments may represent the beginnings of the restructuring process which McLaughlin (1990) believes to be an important part of LL2.

**Example 6.1**

058: Keith: Attends une minute! Non, j'ai besoin du Bescherelle (verb reference book). S'il vous plaît, ouvrir le Bescherelle à la page qui, OK, à la dernière page (i.e. the index). OK, cherche tracasse, un page, deux pages.

059: George: Tra, tra, tracer.

060: Keith: Tracasser page six. Cherche le s'il vous plaît.

061: George: Pas de problème.

062: Keith: C'est sur page.

063: George: Verbe, <à la page> six. OK, c'est le même que aimer, (i.e. it is conjugated in the same way and aimer is given as the standard example for all verbs with this pattern of conjugation). Um,

064: Keith: Laissez-moi le voir s'il vous plaît (reading from the page). Le passé simple, nous tracasse; nous aime (Keith is trying to find a second person plural version of the verb which sounds like "tracasse" the word he has written in his notes, but is unable to find one)

065: George: Peut-être c'est ici.

066: Keith: Non, c'est juste nous aime (pause) ah, le présent. Tracasse, aimons, n'est-ce pas que tracasse (to teacher who has just arrived), ce n'est pas nous tracasse (what he has written down in his notes), c'est nous tracassons?

067: Teacher: Ce sont des *problèmes* qui nous tracassent (deliberately not directly giving the answer).

068: Keith: *Nous tracassons.*
069: George: Oh (beginning to realize what is happening).

070: Keith: Oui? (so what?).

071: George: Les problèmes qui nous tracassent. Like the (pause) c'est les problèmes (pause) like, that concerns us.

072: Keith: Oui, mais tracasse n'est-ce pas que c'est <o-n-s> (F)?

073: George: Tracasse c'est pas un, c'est pas un. (pause), oui I dunno (unable to articulate what he has discovered).

074: Keith: OK, ça dit, les problèmes qui nous tracassent. Donc, est-ce que tracasse est un verbe? Qu'on, qu'on doit conjuger?

075: Teacher: Uh huh.

076: Keith: Donc est-ce que c'est tracassons?

077: Teacher: Ce sont les problèmes qui nous tracassent.

078: George: Nous, c'est, c'est pas, c'est pas, oui, c'est les problèmes, c'est pas, c'est pas nous.

079: Keith: Ah! E-n-t (F), OK, OK.

It becomes clear to Keith at turn 66 that something is wrong and he is perhaps aware of the fact that he cannot work the problem out on his own for he immediately asks me for help. I (turn 67) deliberately do not provide the correct answer but provide hints which I hope will be sufficient to help the students work out the correct answer for themselves. This type of teaching practice has been described as "proleptic" (Donato and Adair-Hauck, 1992; Stone, 1993) and is often associated with practice which attempts to encourage students to construct and understand the "expert's" position. George, at turn 69 seems to be beginning to understand how the words are related to one another. As the conversation continues, we can see that he lacks the necessary metalanguage to articulate his thoughts, and at the end of the example, although Keith is able to provide the correct verb ending, George is still unable to express what he has realized in words. I felt that it was unfortunate that I did not pick up on this difficulty and explain the problem in metalinguistic terms for this might have completed the learning experience for the students.
by, for example, providing George with the language necessary to articulate his thoughts. Instead of following Keith's lead, I might have asked George to continue his line of reasoning, and have provided him, when necessary, with the metalinguistic terms needed to describe the linguistic functions he was trying to articulate.

In example 6.2, a similar problem arises but this time Kristin assumes the role of teacher and helps Anne to understand what is happening. In doing so, Kristin also corrects her original answer because the response from Anne, (turn 70), appears to make her aware of her false reasoning. This is an example of how feedback can result in further reflection about the appropriate form for one's message. Kristin's teaching style is much more transmissive than mine in the previous example. She tells Anne what the answer should be (turns 71, 74). In both exchanges - between me and Keith and George; and between Anne and Kristin, it is clear that learning opportunities were provided.

Example 6.2

59: Kristin: OK, dans. OK dans. (reformulates). On a beaucoup de problèmes dans l'environnement qui nous tracassent.
60: Ann: L'environnement qui nous tracassent.
61: Kristin: OK.
62: Ann: OK.
63: Kristin: On a beau-coup, des prob-lèmes (pause) dans
64: Ann: On a
65: Kristin: Dans
67: Kristin: D'accord.
68: Ann: OK.
69: Kristin: Tracassons parce que c'est pluriel.
Ah oui, c'est, <vrai> et c'est nous.

OK? Non, tracassent coz c'est les problèmes qui nous tracassent. Alors c'est pluriel.

Ils, pluriel? (Ann is making a distinction here between the 3rd. person singular 'il' and the 3rd. person plural 'ils' which both sound the same)

OK, alors tracasse, avec un e-s à la fin (Possible influence from English where the plural is marked by 's'. She may be thinking the appropriate ending must be 'es' which is actually a second person singular ending in French).

(decidedly) e-n-t (F).

Ah oui, e-n-t (F).

Parce que c'est pluriel. OK, um phrase deux.

Sofie and Rachel, see example 6.3, made rephrasing the dictogloss a main feature of their work. For them, two comparatively proficient students, this was a self-chosen means of making the activity more challenging. As this example shows, one result of this approach was to increase the scope of grammatical features discussed by the students. The students realize that they lack specific knowledge necessary to complete their sentence correctly and work together to find the answer to their problem with neither of the students assuming the role of teacher.

Example 6.3

04: Sofie: Numéro deux OK.
05: Rachel: You had a phrase.
06: Sofie: OK.

(Students look back over Sofie's notes)
07: Rachel: Même les, les
08: Sofie: OK, oui, même les so-lu-tions é-col-logiques (pause) um (pause) um, posent quelquefois ...des, there's an 's' on écologiques I remember that.
Oooh look at that! (congratulating her friend on her knowledge).

Stud-ley, (i.e. Great!) OK, causent, e-n-t (spelling out the silent ending in French).

Caus-ah -ent (she pronounces the normally unheard ending).

Studs (Great!) again! Quelquefois des

Causent des nouvelles problèmes, pour nos

Des nouveaux

Cher <chez> nou<veaux>, des nouveaux menaces.

Good one! (congratulating her friend on finding a synonym)

Yeah nouveaux, des nouveaux, de nouveaux. Is it des nouveaux or de nouveaux?

(Saying the phrases over to herself) De nouveaux or des nouvelles?

Nou<veaux>, des nous<veaux>, de <nouveaux>.

It's menace, un menace, une menace, menace ay ay ay! (exasperated)

Je vais le pauser (tape-recorder).

(Having looked it up in the dictionary) C'est des nouvelles! (triumphantly)

C'est féminin; des nouvelles menaces.

Menaces.

This example also reveals how in order to complete the task, the students need to discuss many more linguistic features than present tense verb endings. Later on into the session their challenge leads them to discover how the present participle is formed in French and how the past participle of a verb can also be used as an adjective in a phrase such as "bottled water" (The students eventually settle on l'eau qui est embouteillée). They play with language as they rewrite the sentences, for instance, taking a relatively new word "tracasser" (a verb) and creating the noun "tracasseur" which they then decide is not suitable in their context, described in example 6.4.
Example 6.4

160: Sofie: OK say that again?
161: Rachel: C'est pas, um, c'est pas l'environnement qui nous tracasse. C'est les humains qui tracassent l'environnement.
162: Sofie: Woooah!
163: Rachel: Aaaaah! (Laughs) Je ne sais pas.
164: Sofie: OK l'homme ne...
165: Rachel: ... n'est pas, n'est pas la tracass. No, Notre planète... fragile... n'est pas la tracasseur. Um Madame, (calling to teacher who then arrives). Um est-ce qu'il y a un mot comme tracasseur?

The dictogloss was a successful vehicle for encouraging students to create meaning and process language grammatically, in this case using prior knowledge to generate new words. Thus, in general, this task encourages the students to hypothesize about language, to apply prior knowledge, to use the tools at their disposal (for example, dictionaries, verb reference books) and to ask the teacher for help as needed to encode their messages. Moreover, it has also prompted students to go beyond the assigned grammatical feature and to follow their own agenda.

6.4.3 Misunderstandings: Dictogloss Activity

There are of course mistakes which go unnoticed or which are avoided by the students. At turn 17 Rachel is concerned with whether they should write des or de. Sofie however, is more concerned over whether the adjective should be written in its feminine or masculine form and it is on this point that the students end up concentrating. In other instances students' final decisions were incorrect. This happened frequently in the case of the phrase de nouveaux problèmes, where students often debated whether they should use de or des, and usually decided on the latter incorrect version. However, all mistakes in the
students' final versions would either be taken up by me and the rest of the class in the follow-up whole-group discussion or when I corrected the students' work. The _del/des_ example was encountered several times in the subsequent whole-group discussion and on one occasion it was Rachel who provided the correct form.

6.4.4 Dictogloss Grouping Issues

Prior to beginning the study I had been very interested in grouping issues. Heterogeneous groupings are often recommended for peer work. Much of this influence stems from Vygotsky's metaphor of the zone of proximal development where an adult, the "expert" provides assistance to the learner to enable the latter to appropriate new knowledge. By extension, it is perhaps assumed that the more able peer will provide the same sort of assistance to the less able peer. Yet, as Hatano (1993) has pointed out, the expert-novice pairing does not automatically give rise to co-constructive learning environments in which the novice appropriates new knowledge, it can also lead to transmissive teaching practices. From my own experiences, I knew that I needed to work consciously at providing proleptic feedback, rather than just telling my students the answers and I wondered if in highly heterogeneous groupings the "expert" students would be able to provide this sort of proleptic assistance or whether they would simply "tell" their friends the answer.

In highly heterogeneous groupings (e.g. upper middle - low), there was a tendency for the abler student to do most of the hypothesizing either because the weaker student was quite willing for the more advanced student to do the work, too intimidated perhaps to say anything, or, as example 6.5 shows, not allowed to do any of the work even if he had a valid point to put across. Keith, the more proficient student, is unwilling to discuss George's suggestion that they try to express the sentence in their own words.
Example 6.5

001: Keith: En ce qui concerne l'environnement (writing).
002: George: Peut-être on peut mettre en ce qui nous concerne?
003: Keith: Non c'est déjà, c'est que, uh elle a dit (i.e I've written down just what the teacher said).
004: George: Mais peut-être on peut le changer.
005: Keith: Non parce que on a copié ce qu'elle a dit, donc c'est bien.
006: George: OK fine. (Begins writing the sentence as dictated by Keith).

It is possible that with the highly heterogeneous groups there was too much of a discrepancy in the students' French competence for them to be able to work successfully with one another for neither student's needs were within the zone of proximal development of the other's (Vygotsky, 1987). Personality traits may also be an issue here, as might the fact that the class received no specific tuition on how to provide help to one another in these activities.34

In the more homogeneous pairs, the contributions of members were more balanced. Both members would contribute to the discussion. The role of "teacher" would alternate between students, both would highlight points for discussion and both would assume the responsibility for finding the answer to their questions. Students would alternately build on each other's comments to refine the intended message and to improve the accuracy of how they were going to say it. The following grouping was composed of two high proficiency students and one upper-middle proficiency student.

34Although much has been written in the field of cooperative learning about teaching students skills for working together in groups (e.g. Cohen, 1994 for a review) it was my deliberate intention to see how these activities would work without specific instruction in this area. Whilst I do not want to downplay the importance of such skills, I believe that many L2 teachers might be deterred from trying collaborative activities in their classrooms if they felt they first had to take time out of their program to teach cooperative learning skills.
Example 6.6

107: Sarah: Ça produise de problèmes imprévus.
109: Sarah: De nouveaux problèmes imprévus.
110: Gaby: Mais, comment est-ce qu'on écrit 'ça'? S-a? (F)
111: Sarah: S-a, (F) No. Hold on! Attendez!
112: Ruth: Non avec un c (F)
113: Sarah: C-a, (F) elle a, c'est vrai.
114: Ruth: N'oublie pas la cédille.

The same phenomenon was also observed in low proficiency groups. In example 6.7 neither student has complete notes, but by pooling their resources they are able to complete the meaning and to construct a complete sentence.

Example 6.7

051: Mac: Par exemple
052: Tim: OK . . . j'ai écrit, par exemple, plastiques . . .
053: Mac: bio-dégréables (mispronounced)
054: Tim: en se décompos
055: Mac: se décomposent
056: Tim: se décomposent mais ils fait des <perquilats> (mispronounced) toxiques, où quelque chose comme ça.
057: Mac: J'ai eu, par exemple, le plastique biodégradable (mispronounced) se décompose mais quand il fait ça, il produit des percolats toxiques . . .
058: Tim: xxx OK, OK.
Stone (1993) believes that for the collaborative learning process to succeed, the participants "must share some minimal set of presuppositions of the situation at hand, and the two participants must respect each others' perspectives" (p.178). For this respect to occur, participants need to trust one another's opinions and all participants need to be considered as playing a legitimate role in the learning process. In example 6.5, George was clearly not considered as a legitimate participant by Keith. However, there were heterogeneous groups in which the collaboration was successful. Example 6.2, between Ann (lower-middle) and Kristin (upper-middle) illustrates this point. Perhaps what needs to be avoided are extreme degrees of heterogeneity, where the learning needs of the participants differ so greatly that there is no overlap in the participants' ZPDs. It would also seem, judging from the data from the low proficiency groups, that some degree of heterogeneity might have been more beneficial for these students.

The nature of the task varied according to the abilities of the students and their differing degrees of metalinguistic sophistication and interlanguage development. In the group consisting of two low proficiency students, the focus was primarily on conveying meaning as shown in Table 4.3 and example 6.7. There was comparatively little linguistic analysis and the students exhibited little control over the language. In contrast to this, the two groups consisting predominantly of high proficiency students had a much stronger analytical emphasis in their discussion. Group 1:10 focussed predominantly on linguistic analysis (see Table 4.3 and example 6.6), whereas group 1:1 controlled the language in two ways, both in terms of checking for grammatical and orthographical features and semantically by rephrasing the sentences and playing with the language (see Table 4.3 and examples 6.3 and 6.4). It is possible that the better developed metalinguistic knowledge of the high proficiency students enabled them to have more control in using the L2 than the low proficiency students, resulting in a better final product. It is also possible that the low proficiency students encountered semantic difficulties in completing the task. A weak L2
vocabulary and an insufficient understanding of the meaning of certain syntactic structures might have meant that they did not fully understand the original dictogloss, did not therefore understand the message they were trying to convey, took poor notes and had to try to piece together a meaning from their own and someone else's incomplete notes as example 6.7 suggests.

As a teacher, my first reaction was one of disappointment when I realized that in some pairs there was little analysis of language occurring. However, another way to view this finding is that these students were still being provided with the opportunity to develop self-regulatory skills, that is monitoring and analyzing the message to be conveyed, but the self-regulation was occurring at a different level from students in other groups, at a level which was appropriate to their needs (Biemiller and Meichenbaum, 1992). The variance in the nature of the task should not therefore be seen as a weakness, but rather a strength, for it provides students of all abilities with the opportunity to reflect on the language they are using at a level that is developmentally appropriate.

6.4.5 The Large Group Discussion

In spite of the learning which appeared to be going on during the completion of this task, there were still errors resulting from student misconceptions or which were undetected by the students. One of the main functions of the teacher-fronted discussion during which students' final products were shared and corrected, was to provide important additional feedback to the students.

As shown in Chapter 4, it was strengths and weaknesses in the students' work which determined the focus of the discussion. It can be assumed therefore that the additional feedback provided at this stage was directly related to the needs of the students.
Although I had selected the use of the present tense as a major goal of the task, the task was reinterpreted by the students as they completed it and this in turn influenced the direction of my feedback.35 The issue of teacher versus learner control over the goals of an activity is referred to by Brooks and Donato (1994).

tasks can not be externally defined or classified on the basis of specific external task features...Rather tasks are in fact internally constructed through the moment to moment verbal interactions of the learners during actual task performance (p. 12).

The data illustrate clearly how when using collaborative tasks, particularly where the students are producing language, it is impossible to predict what features of the language will be discussed by the learners. However, the data also show how this lack of teacher control need not be considered to be a negative outcome of collaborative language production tasks. Rather, by concentrating on those items which were problematic for the learners, the goal of the activity can be renegotiated by the teacher working with the students to provide instruction which is of direct relevance to the students.

Upon examination of the transcripts it became clear that this was an opportunity for me to model certain strategies which I felt it would be useful for the students to adopt and to encourage them to do so. One of the features referred to earlier was the explicit stating of a rule to support a reason for making a change, see example 6.8.

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35 At the time, I found this lack of control very disconcerting. In terms of curriculum planning, I was using this activity to provide practice in a specific grammatical area and yet the students were discussing much more than the present tense. The task was not helping me to provide the practice I believed the students needed. In fact, it was this discovery which in part prompted me to look at other types of activity with a grammatical focus. After analysis of the data, I came to understand how the activity provided the students with an excellent opportunity to discuss form, and apply/refine grammatical knowledge whilst communicating in the target language, another important skills area. Thus, although I still believe that the activity was not the best for fulfilling my original intentions, I now believe that it is an appropriate task to use with students at this stage in their studies.
Example 6.8

012: Teacher: Oui, on a déjà discuté ça. Après, après beaucoup, qu'est-ce que c'est la règle avec de, de la, du? Nancy? Après beaucoup?

013: Nancy: Oh, beaucoup...

014: Teacher: Beaucoup est toujours suivi

015 Nancy: Par de.

016: Teacher: Oui, beaucoup est toujours suivi, oui, beaucoup est toujours suivi par de. Beaucoup de.

Although this was a teacher-fronted session, I encouraged the students to assume responsibility for identifying and explaining the errors. I encouraged them where appropriate to be more precise, and more analytical in their approach to language, as in example 6.9. In this way, I hoped to encourage the students to externalize their knowledge about how the pieces of language fitted together, and to encourage them to realize that knowing a rule can help us to correct incorrect items, but also prevent us from making changes to items which are already correct, but might "sound" wrong.

Example 6.9

020: Teacher: En ce qui concerne l'environnement il y a beaucoup de problèmes, très bien, qui nous tracassent OK.

021: Keith: Problèmes est pluriel.

022: Teacher: Est au pluriel OK. Sofie?

023: Sofie: Tracasse.

024: Teacher: Oui, qu'est-ce qu'il faut mettre à la fin là?

025: Sofie: S-e-n-t (in French).

026: Teacher: S-e-n-t parce que c'est, pourquoi?

027: Sofie (?): xxx

028: Teacher: Oui, qu'est-ce que c'est qui est le sujet de tracasser?
6.4.6 Discussion: Dictogloss Data

The data show evidence of learners "noticing the gap" between what they want to say and what they are able to say. As predicted by the output hypothesis, this happens as the students try to produce the target language. Secondly, and equally as important, this prompted a search for a solution. Students worked together to solve their linguistic difficulties, making form, as well as meaning, the focus of their discussions. The students formed hypotheses and tested them out against the dictionary, the Bescherelle, the teacher and each other. Vocabulary, morphology and complex syntactic structures each became the focus of their attention, and in turn their attention became focused by talking about the problem. Verbalization of the problem allowed them the opportunity to reflect on it and better understand it. In the data there are examples of students creating new knowledge, playing with language and experimenting with new forms as well as refining and consolidating existing knowledge of the French grammatical system and its vocabulary. Student motivation was good throughout. They became very involved in the activity and there was very little talk which was not related to the completion of the task.

The dictogloss as used, is a deeply contextualized activity. The relationship between meaning, form and function is closely intertwined. In this respect, it possesses many of the features which have been identified by L2 researchers as useful for promoting students' interlanguage development (e.g. Lightbown and Spada 1990; Long 1991). It is possible that continued practice with this type of activity might make students more aware of how specific grammatical problems continually arise in the process of producing text. It may
result in a much more context sensitive knowledge of rules and ability to apply them than other less deeply contextualized tasks.

Finally, for this task and in this class at least, groupings which were not highly heterogeneous appeared to lead to more productive discussion for all students, not just those who were already confident about their French language skills. Low-low pairings were not particularly successful. In terms of the quality of the student interaction, the data show clearly that students can provide useful feedback to one another, and that this task does encourage students to move from the semantic processing dominant in comprehension to the grammatical processing needed for production, an important aspect of the output hypothesis. Researchers and teachers interested in TBLT might, therefore, reconsider the importance of including opportunities for students to produce extended output in collaborative circumstances, even if this does entail the teacher giving up a degree of control over the language used and discussed in the L2 classroom.

6.5.1 A Metalinguistic Task

One of the collaborative activities completed by the students during the treatment stage was a fill-in-the-gap activity designed to help students appropriate an understanding of the different functions of the two past tenses being studied (Appendix D: Activity D:5). Students were provided with a short narrative passage in which all instances of the passé composé and the imparfait had been replaced with the infinitive of the verb. The students were required to provide the correct finite form of the verb in the appropriate past tense. It was the second activity designed for this purpose. A preceding activity (Appendix D, Activity D:2) required the students to identify each occasion that the passé composé or the imparfait was used in a passage and to explain its function.
Like the dictogloss, this activity provided opportunities for extended output but, whereas the dictogloss activity primarily involved students in the application of their interlanguage grammar, the fill-in-the gap activity had a strong metalinguistic focus. Designed to help students consolidate and in cases, develop their interlanguage grammar with respect to the functions of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. This type of activity is regularly used in many immersion classrooms, but is not necessarily assigned as a collaborative activity. A possible objection to using the task collaboratively could be that students would simply tell each other the answers rather than enter into discussion about form-function links. Based on the dictogloss results, I assigned students to groups. I avoided extremely heterogeneous groupings, but tried where possible to allow students who regularly worked together to continue working with one another.

### 6.5.2 Analysis of the Metalinguistic Task Data

The critical language related episode (CLRE) was again the basic unit of analysis adopted. In all, 122 examples were identified. An example began as students started to discuss the possible alternatives for filling one of the gaps and finished when discussion of the point was completed, see example 6.10. Twenty percent of the data were checked by a second coder who was a Franco-Ontarian. As the students were completing a structured activity with a specific number of items to complete, identification of CLREs was straightforward and the reliability was extremely high at 97%.

**Example 6.10**

001: Tim: OK "Pendant les années, Luc vivre dans une cabane dans la forêt", Je pense qu'il est un description dans le passé.

002: Andrew: OK
6.5.3 The Focus of Student Talk: "Does that Sound Right?"

Due to the nature of the task, the student talk this time was more focussed on the nature of the function of the verb within the sentence, and many of the students were confronted with discrepancies which made them reflect on their understanding of when to use the passé composé and the imparfait. The general approach adopted by the students was to read the sentence, decide on a verb form and then to find a function which supported their choice; i.e. students decided what sounded right and then looked for justification. Sometimes this approach entailed consulting their notes for a suitable function, sometimes students were able to recall the function from memory. Thinking about the verb's function within the sentence proved to be a useful strategy for the students as long as they were prepared to subject their first intuitive reaction to serious scrutiny. One pair of students (see example 6.11.) decided upon a verb form, and looked for a suitable function to support their choice without analyzing whether this was in fact the function of the verb within the sentence.

Example 6.11

059: Martin: "Plus tard le forgeron, faisait un rateau bien pointu. (pause) Un événement dans une histoire.

060: Keith: Non, ça c'est seulement pour le passé composé. (pause)

061: Martin: Alors, qu'est-ce que <c'est>?

062: Keith: Description dans le passé.
Where students did undertake a careful analysis of their reasoning they identified cases where what had sounded right to them was not actually the correct answer. This occurred for two items in particular: *Soudain elle (prendre) peur* and *Marie-Rose et Luc (être) heureux ensemble*. Students were more familiar with the expression *avoir peur* "to be frightened" than *prendre peur* "to become frightened". The former expression usually refers to a state and therefore in the past tense would probably be encountered more in the *imparfait* than the *passé composé*. In this context however, *prendre peur* is a completed action in the past and therefore requires the *passé composé*. Similarly, in the second example, *être* is normally used to describe a state but in this context is being used to express a state which began at a particular point in time in the past and therefore requires the *passé composé*. The following example illustrates how one group came to find the correct solution.

**Example 6.12**


120: Sarah: A-i-e-n-t (in French). Étaient heureux ensemble. Mais qu'est-ce, qu'est-ce que c'est la raison pour le, le... Comme pour le...? (i.e. is it the same as for)

121: Ruth: Avant dernier?

122: Sarah: Oui.

123: Ann: Principaux événements?


125: Sarah: "Depuis ce temps-là, Marie-Rose et Luc étaient heureux ensemble. Ont été, it's un moment précis ok? (By the phrase "un moment précis" the student is referring to an example in her notes: "Un événement qui a commencé à un moment précis du passé").

126: Ann: Oui.

127: Sarah: Alors, c'est ont été.
Examples such as this suggest that the activity did help to refine students' understanding of the use of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. Students did more than simply tell one another the answer. We do not know if such instances are enough for transfer of this knowledge to regular writing activities to occur, but they are perhaps once again part of McLaughlin's process of restructuring. Students' consciousness had been raised and they were able to avoid mistakes. It is clear that their discussion has helped the students to begin to refine and restructure their understanding of when and how to use the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. 36

6.5.4 The Role of Grammar Notes in Mediating Student Learning

During the introductory activities of this unit we used a narrative text written in the past tense to discover together the various functions associated with the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. Once this stage was complete, I provided my students with prepared notes which described functions they had discovered. I did this for two reasons, (1) to save time rather than have students write out extensive notes (2) to ensure that all students had accurate notes to refer to.

In completing the activity, all groups made use of their grammar notes. In many instances the notes were very useful, acting as a source of "expert information" which helped the students to refine their understanding of the various functions associated with the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. However, in the case of two groups, the notes appeared to confuse some of the distinctions for the students. In example 6.13, the students realise they need to use the *passé composé*. They have been given several categories to

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36Learners of French often have difficulty determining when stative verbs such as *être* are used in the *passé composé* and when dynamic verbs are used in the *imparfait* (Salaberry, forthcoming). Having seen that this type of activity promotes apparently helpful discussion around these issues, it might be beneficial for students if more examples of this sort were provided in similar fill-in-the gap activities.
describe various kinds of completed events in the past and have difficulty deciding upon one in particular, probably because more than one answer could have been possible. This was a problem they experienced in completing many of the examples involving the passé composé and it caused tension within the group on several occasions.

**Example 6.13**

021: Jane: It's les événements d'une narration.

022: Chris: It is?

023: Nancy: Description (F).

024: Jane: Description's un imparfait.

025: Nancy: Well then what is it?

026: Jane: It's les événements dans une histoire.

027: Nancy: (Writing) Les événements- ok "Plus tard, le forgeron (blank) un rateau bien pointu.

028: Chris: Le forgeron.

029: Jane: You can't write just un événement because there's un événement du passé. un événement qui commence à un moment, un événement . . .

030: Chris: OK.

031: Jane: Am I right un moment précis?

032: Chris: It doesn't matter.

033: Jane: I wrote . . .

034: Chris: (Interrupting) Calm down!

035: Nancy: OK "Plus tard le forgeron" . . .

036: Jane: That's (still talking about the last episode) un moment précis.

The problem of students' ability to understand grammar notes has also been discussed by Tomlinson (1994). He suggests that students should be encouraged to write their own grammar notes based on their understanding of the concept and that they review
and rewrite their notes as their understanding of the concepts increases. It is clear that grammar notes can be as useful a tool in LL2 as the dictionary. They might even be an important semiotic tool for mediating the grammaticalization process; for developing students' syntactic processing skills\(^\text{37}\). A more practical approach than the inductive one suggested by Tomlinson might be to use the whole-group discussion as an opportunity for the teacher and students to co-construct notes which would be both comprehensive and accessible to the students\(^\text{38}\).

### 6.5.5 Metalinguistic Task Grouping Issues

I was pleased with the results from the more homogeneous grouping used for this activity. In general, the weaker students in the class were well engaged in this activity and played a more dominant role in determining the direction of the discussion than in the dictogloss activity. Although their scores were slightly lower than those of the high proficiency students (88% average for the low proficiency students compared with 97% for the high proficiency students) they were nevertheless able to complete the activity successfully. The difference in the nature of the task could have influenced this high success rate, for the task itself provided a source of "expert" input for the students. Unlike the first activity, this activity identified the points of discussion for the students, focussed their attention on a particular issue, and their notes gave them possible answers to choose from.

In one group of weak students, a student stopped the continuation of the exercise because he needed clarification about the formation of the *passé composé*. His peers

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\(^{37}\)As opposed to the dictionary which was frequently consulted by the students during the composing process but which tends to emphasize the semantic properties of lexemes and consider them in isolation from the other elements of discourse.

\(^{38}\)See Adair-Hauck, Donato and Cumo (1994) for a more complete description of the co-construction process in a whole-language approach to the teaching of grammar.
patiently assumed the role of teacher to help him out. Elsewhere, weaker students were confident enough to participate fully in choosing the answers as shown in example 6.14. Roman wrongly identifies the function of the verb. William appears to be aware of this error and through his hesitation prompts Roman to reconsider his initial response. William is able to locate the key phrase for identifying the correct function and finally Roman is able to review his initial response and to provide the correct answer.

Example 6.14

068: Roman: "Le lendemain matin, alors que Marie-Rose et Luc déjeunaient ensemble". Le lendemain matin, moment précis?

069: William: Mmmmmm, oui et non.

070: Roman: Non, non, non, non.

071: William: Alors que,

072: Roman: Non, non, non, c'est un action: qui est interrompu par un autre événement dans; en train de s'accomplir.


074: Roman: Yeh.

The high proficiency groups were less dependent on the grammar notes and some had more difficulty engaging with the task. As example 6.11 shows, rightly or wrongly this group reflected very little beyond what sounded right to them. Nevertheless, as example 6.12 shows, the notes were useful for clarifying some items. One group, the same students who attempted to rewrite the dictogloss in their own words as a means of making the activity more challenging, found the activity quite frustrating. They appeared to have a well developed understanding of aspect with relation to the passé composé and the

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39 The student who assumed the major role in providing the explanation was Tim, who was also the student with the largest pre-, post-test composition gains. As discussed in chapter 5, and footnote 29, it is possible that experiences such as this during the pair work activities might have helped him develop his understanding of the passé composé and the imparfait.
imparfait and became confused and frustrated when required to articulate a reason for their choice of verb. For these groups of students, a more appropriate approach to use might have been one which highlighted in advance those functions of the passé composé and the imparfait which tend to be the most problematic for English speaking learners of French. Such an approach might have helped the students to identify those areas in which "what sounds right" is not usually right thereby helping them too to refine their understanding of past tense aspectual markers in French.

6.5.6 Misunderstandings: Metalinguistic Task

This activity was designed to provide the students with practice in applying one particular grammatical feature. I hoped that because the activity forced students to externalize their reasons for choosing one form over another and to receive feedback from their peers about the correctness of their choice, students would continue to increase their understanding of the uses of the passé composé and the imparfait. Student reactions to the activity as recorded in the end of year interviews suggest that this was indeed the case.

However, the students were still learning about the functions associated with the passé composé and the imparfait (i.e. in coming to a full understanding of the semantic-syntactic relationship) and were, of course, not always successful in their final choice. Some groups appeared to have grasped the form/function link early on in the activity and then began to make mistakes at a later stage. Sometimes a misunderstanding of an item of vocabulary would result in a false analysis of the function of the verb as the following example shows.
Example 6.15

153: Tim: OK "Soudain" er,
154: Andrew: "Elle prendre peur", un action habituelle.
155: Tim: Je pense que tu es correct. Oui, parce que soudain est 'usually'

Corrective feedback, guided by the teacher, was the final stage of this activity and took the form of a whole group discussion in a subsequent lesson. Once again, this reassured me that students were given an opportunity to discover which of their hypotheses had been correct and to begin to clarify areas of misunderstanding.

6.5.7 Discussion: Metalinguistic Task

The students did more than just "tell one another the answer" in completing this activity. There is evidence to suggest that by discussing which form they were going to use and by explaining the reason for their choice the students did come to increase their understanding of when and why to use the passé composé and the imparfait. During interviews conducted at the end of the year to find out about student reactions to the activities used during the research, many students referred to this activity and said that discussing the activity with their peers had helped them to increase their understanding of when to use which form.

However, as shown, students did make mistakes and were unclear about some of the functions the verbs were performing. Once again this activity was followed, in a subsequent lesson, by a whole group discussion of the correct answers which I considered to be an important feature of the activity.
6.6.1 A Proof-reading Task

Editing and proof-reading are important stages in the writing process. In classes where process approaches to writing are used, students often discuss their work with peers at various stages of the writing process to get feedback on their ideas and for help in correcting errors. However, the immersion research literature has provided little information about the interactions that occur during such conferences. Do students discuss possible corrections or wait for a peer to tell them the right answer? Do students identify pseudo-errors and end up making changes to items which were originally correct? It was in order to get a clearer idea of what happens during such activities that this task was used.

It should be pointed out however that the proof-reading task used with this class differed in some respects from the conferences described above. I wanted to be able to make comparisons between groups, so I considered it important that each group be given the same task to complete. Students were given a passage taken from the final version of one student's history project describing the life and accomplishments of Sir Sanford Fleming (Appendix L). As a result, there was only one group where any of the students had ownership in the creation of the passage being studied. This factor may have made the task more difficult for the students.

Students were told that the passage contained 22 errors. They had not been highlighted in any way. The students were given approximately 20 minutes to find and correct as many errors as they could and were also asked to explain what was wrong with the original form. Answer sheets were provided for this purpose (Appendix L). After approximately twenty minutes, the students were given a second version of the task in which the student's mistakes had been identified (Appendix L). They were given a second
answer sheet and asked to correct any mistakes they had missed before, providing an explanation where possible\textsuperscript{40}.

For this task, I assigned students to groups. Based on the success of the relatively homogeneous groupings used in the metalinguistic task, homogeneous groupings were once again the favoured groupings. As far as possible, students who normally worked together were allowed to do so.

6.6.2 Analysis of the Proof-reading Task Data

All the groups were audio-taped and their conversations were transcribed and analyzed. CLREs were once again the main unit of analysis. A CLRE was defined as those interactions where students highlighted or discussed possible errors, see example 6.16. In all, 159 episodes were identified. Once again 20\% of the data were checked by a second coder. Reliability for this activity was 97\%.

Example 6.16

020: Nancy: À Kir, Kirk-caldy a Écosse, en Écosse
021: Ann: En Écosse?
022: Teacher: Mais pourquoi?
023: Nancy: Parce que ce n’est pas un cité.

On average, the high groups were able to identify almost twice as many possible errors as the low proficiency groups. The average for the two high groups was 34 episodes, for the middle proficiency groups 25, and 18 for the low proficiency groups.

\textsuperscript{40}The results from this stage of the activity were incomplete (the tape ran out for some groups) and are consequently not discussed.
Students wrongly identified something as being a mistake or wrongly corrected an item in 14% of the cases. Of these, over half were made by the weak groups, with the high and middle groups making the same percentage of mistakes. Due to the marked differences between the high and low proficiency students the data are discussed with reference to these two groups of students.

6.6.3 Focus of Student Talk: High Proficiency Groups - "The rich get richer...

The homogeneous grouping worked well for the high proficiency students. They enjoyed the activity, and collaborated well together. Even where they were stating or telling each other the answer, students often phrased it in the form of a question, inviting feedback from the other person, seeking confirmation of a mistake, or inviting the other person to disagree. In example 6.17, a high proficiency pair is discussing the phrase *Il était le fils* *de* Andrew Greig Fleming et d'Elizabeth Arnot. Rachel is questioning the use of the *imparfait*. Here the students are using knowledge they had discussed during the fill-in-the gaps activity, i.e. applying their knowledge to a new situation.

**Example 6.17**

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066: Rachel: Mmm est-ce que c'est, il est, il . . . a été, il, il . . . parce que, parce que parce que...
067: Sofie: Je pense pas, parce que, s'il ...
068: Rachel: OK
069: Sofie: OK, c'est comme, 'he was the son of Andrew Gregory and Elizabeth Arnot', mais...
070: Rachel: Isn't it 'ed' that . (referring to verb forms like lived, walked etc.)
071: Sofie: Mais si c'est, 'il a été le fils de' . . .
          (Interruption from the teacher)
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Sofie: Parce que si c'est 'il a été le fils d'Andrew Greig' est-ce que, est-ce que ça dirait comme he had been? Parce que c'est, ça c'est passé composé. Comme une fois. Et c'est ...

Rachel: Oui (not convinced). Mais, OK il était le fils comme longtemps...(perhaps beginning to understand the reason for the imparfait being used)

Sofie: Et cela c'est quelque chose d'habituel. Parce que il était le fils de Andrew et Elizabeth pour des années, des années.

Rachel: OK.

In the following example, Ruth checks with Sarah that there is a missing accent grave.

Example 6.18

Ruth: "Fleming voyageait à Petersb à Peterborough" et il y a un accent grave?

Sarah: Oui.

The students seemed to be good "mistake spotters" for two possible reasons. (1) They seemed to know what questions to ask, or what features might be erroneous, as illustrated in examples 6.19.-6.22; (2) they spotted inconsistencies in the text and tried to resolve them, as illustrated in example 6.22.

Example 6.19

Ruth: "L'institute canadien" Est-ce que c'est l'institute ou l'institut?

Sarah: L'institute

Ruth: Je pense que c'est l'institute, mais, (looks it up in dictionary)

Sarah: Oh oui, institut.
Example 6.20

078: Sofie: "La création du Parc Algonquin." De le? Non, du, oui, c'est de le, c'est du, de la, non. du.

079: Rachel: Du.

Example 6.21

087: Sarah: Il étudiait le, la topographie, et l'ingénierie.

Example 6.22

152: Ann: OK, I think I've found another one. Here there's l'institut, here there's the institute.

153: Nancy: Which one is it?

Another feature of their approach was to support their point by making reference to an explicit rule. This occurred in 60% of the episodes involving high proficiency students, as shown in examples 6.23-6.24, and 34% for the low proficiency students. Explicit knowledge of rules appeared to be a useful skill for the completion of this task.

Example 6.23

003: Rachel: A Ecosse? Ou en Ecosse? Ou dans Ecosse? En Ecosse, qu'est-ce que c'est, c'est un, qu'est-ce que M. M. (history teacher) nous a dit au déjeuner? A' c'est comme dans un pays?

004: Sofie: Dans un pays c'est, dans un pays est 'en'.

Example 6.24

049: Ruth: Mmhmm. OK. "ont fondé (laughs), ont fondé, um /ilz/ ont fondé." Oh, c'est avec avoir alors

050: Sarah: C'est un groupe a fondé. Une groupe d'arpenteurs et d'ingénieurs a fondé.

051: Ruth: Une groupe,
6.6.4 Focus of Student Talk: Low Proficiency Groups - "... the poor get poorer."

In general the high and middle proficiency groups appeared to enjoy the task and thought of it as a puzzle to be solved. The scenario in the low proficiency groups was considerably different. Students told each other the mistakes they spotted as had been the case with the high proficiency students but there was less of a tendency to invite a response from their partner. Students collaborated but were unable to provide reasons for their answers and "guessed" for much of the time, illustrating once again a general weakness in metalinguistic knowledge as was also found for the metalinguistic task in the second questionnaire. One student commented throughout on the difficulty of being able to articulate a reason to support his thinking. In the following example the students have decided that the word *en* is used instead of *dans* when talking about the year in which an event occurred.

**Example 6.25**

040: George: How the hell exactly do we explain that though?

041: William: Where?

042: George: How exactly could we explain that? Um, like the mistake there? En mille huit cent quarante cinq.

043: William: OK, just er, OK, dans? C'est, c'est, um, 'dans' means like 'in'. I dunno. I can explain it in English but not in French.
Students were not as able to identify possible sources of mistakes. In general, students did not appear to have a clear idea of the best way to approach the task. They seemed to change things indiscriminately. In example 6.26 the students are looking at the passé composé and decide that the auxiliary verb needs an accent on it. They appear to make this decision based on the fact that the form à does exist in French so why not here?

Example 6.26

050: Andrew:  A pris quatre semaines.
051: Mac:      A pris. Il y a un accent grave.
052: Andrew:  OK . . . OK. Le voyage, a pris. . . . . what’s the explanation.
               explication?
053: Mac:      Um. . . je ne sais pas.

6.6.5 Patterns of Interaction

In both high and low proficiency groups there were two major, distinctive ways in which students approached the task. 1) Students would "tell" their partner where there was a mistake, or simply point out in passing that there was a mistake for example, *Il y a un accent sur a, dans "a Toronto"*. This happened in (41%) of the episodes. 2) The students would discuss whether there was a mistake. Discussion accounted for 56% of the episodes. A small number of these episodes consisted of cases where there was some discussion but no final decision appeared to be made, see example 6.27.
Example 6.27

176: Ann: I think I've found another one. OK... you see um. it says "de Andrew Greig Fleming" or whatever it means and then d "d'Elizabeth Arnot". Wouldn't it be de Elizabeth Arnot?

177: Nancy: I dunno. il était le fils de. I would just say, il était le fils de Andrew Greig Fleming et Elizabeth Arnot coz he's already said de.

178: Ann: Yeh. (Not convinced. continues writing/reading) the city of Quebec.

When a decision was made it was sometimes one student who pointed out a mistake and the other who corrected it, and sometimes students entered into more lengthy discussions to come to a solution because neither was sure of the correct answer (see example 6.28). Here the students enter into a lengthy discussion about whether or not to use the imparfait or passé composé form of étudier in the phrase Il *étudiait la topographie et l'ingénierie *a Écosse Their discussion shows how the collaborative nature of this activity encourages both students to take a close look at the meaning they want to convey and the form of the verb required to do this. Moreover, once again, another pair of students is applying knowledge from the metalinguistic task to a new task, with a new partner, approximately three months later.

Example 6.28

034: Nancy: OK, il étudiait.
036 Nancy: There's no "i" in it.
037: Ann: Il étudiait?
038: Nancy: Il étudiait, what's il étudiait?
039: Ann: It's nothing (it doesn't exist?). He studied.
040: Nancy: Il étudiait?
041: Ann: Well, well, could it be il étudiait? . . . Because he did study, he was studying, he used to study (Going through all the translations she can think of for the imparfait).

042: Nancy: It was a study thing.

043: Ann: What?

044: Nancy: It was a study thing.

045: Ann: No, he studied.

046: Nancy: I know.

047: Nancy: No. Because he was studying for the topography and something en Écosse (Spotting another mistake). Why does she keep on writing à Écosse?

048: Ann: Yeh.

049: Nancy: OK. Il étudait. I think it's right.


051: Nancy: Because he studied . . . (Trying to come up with a reason for the answer).

052: Ann: But . . .

053: Nancy: But I wouldn't say I was studying for that test. Yes I would. I studied for that test.

054: Ann: Yeh, I studied for that test last night

055: Nancy: OK I studied for that test.

056: Ann: But doesn't "ed" have passé composé?

057: Nancy: E accent aigu.

058: Ann: Yeh, that's what I mean. But if you say I studied . . .

059: Nancy: It would be étudé.

060: Ann: étudié. e (F) accent aigu.

061: Nancy: Why is there <an é?> oh yeh.yeh. yeh. right.

062: Ann: Right?

063: Nancy: Yeh, because. yeh, OK so é-tu-

064: Ann: dié (laughter).

065: Nancy: OK, étudé. like that . di-é.
066: Ann: Yeh, étudié, and then no, no, like
067: Nancy: Why?
068: Ann: Oh, OK I get it.
069: Nancy: Il a étudié
070: Ann: Oh yeh, yeh, yeh.
071: Nancy: Because look, yeh.yeh, yeh, yeh, yeh, il a étudié.
072: Ann: And then explication, because .."ed" in English equals . .
073: Nancy: No, no it's passé composé. Just write it's passé composé.
074: Ann: OK. . . OK il a étudié.

6.6.6 Discussion: Proof-reading Activity

The activity appeared to be useful as a vehicle for encouraging students to think about the application of their interlanguage knowledge for the high and mid- proficiency groups. There is evidence to suggest that during this post-treatment activity students were also looking at form-function links as well as surface features of language. However, as far as the low proficiency groups were concerned the activity might best be described as an exercise in frustration and certainly not a useful learning experience. In the dictogloss, students had taken notes during the reading to which they could refer. In the metalinguistic task the students had had grammar notes to which they could refer for "expert" help. In this activity they could only call upon their own limited metalinguistic knowledge. They had no access to "expert" help from a more knowledgeable source.

This type of activity is probably one where heterogeneous groupings would help both lower and higher proficiency students. For the higher proficiency students they may be required to explain to their peer why a particular form was incorrect and thereby
consolidate this knowledge for themselves. In the case of the lower proficiency students, they would have access to an expert's assistance.

All groups may have benefitted from having a checklist of points to look for during the editing process. After completing the activity the students were provided with such a list (Appendix N). Comments made by students of all ability levels during the end of year interviews suggest that they found it a useful tool for proof-reading their work. There is also evidence to suggest that highlighting the errors may have been beneficial for the low proficiency groups, as example 6.29 shows. These low proficiency students have now been given the passage with the errors underlined which appears to help them correct the mistakes.

Example 6.29

001: Andrew: OK Sir Sandford était né, est née OK.
002: Mac:   Et née a just un e.
003: Andrew: Et on a oublié un accent, et c'est seulement un e, et était est 'est'.
004: Mac:   xxx xxx
005: Andrew: Est 'est né' (writing down what they have just discovered). Oui, deuxième (very decisively, wants to get on with it). Fifeshire ah, c'est en Écosse, OK en Écosse parce que, um, parce que . . . en dans un xxx um, est pour, est-ce que en est pour un pays?

6.7.1 A Comparison of Interaction Patterns for the Three Activities

One final analysis was conducted on the data from the three tasks investigating patterns of interaction for the three activities. It was designed to see whether the task itself

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41 There was a second part to the proof-reading activity in which students were given a copy of the passage with the errors underlined. These data were incomplete for many groups because the tape ran out while they were completing the task. No formal analysis was undertaken. Example 6.29 is taken from the data which were collected.
had an influence on student talk and consequently the learning experience. The previously identified CLREs were used as the unit of analysis. Two categories were identified: transmissive and negotiated. A transmissive interaction was defined as the direct telling of the answer by one student to another with no discussion, or no discussion beyond a simple acceptance of the suggestion (see example 6.21). A negotiated interaction, could include the following characteristics: students suggested a possible answer but wanted or received feedback from their partner, (the feedback could either confirm the suggestion, or raise an alternative which might either be accepted or not, see example 6.11); co-constructive interactions (see examples 6.2, 6.6) where neither student was sure of the correct answer so they worked together to find a solution, or where the original suggestion was incomplete and needed additional information from the other group member(s) for its completion (in doing so, they might pool knowledge, consult their notes or the dictionary etc.). Such instances are similar to Donato’s notion of collective scaffolding (1994). Instances of proleptic instruction would also have been included in this category but none were identified.

A second coder reanalyzed 20% of the data from each task. Reliability was good. at 90% for the dictogloss task, 84% for the metalinguistic task and 81% for the proof-reading task. The results are reported in Tables 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3. A large proportion of transmissive CLREs would suggest that the task did not encourage students to reflect critically on the language they were using, although this statement should not be taken as meaning that no learning was occurring. It is possible that in being told the answer, one student was learning from another. A large proportion of negotiated episodes would suggest that the task promoted discussion about the language being used, potentially refining or adding to the existing knowledge of all or at least one of the participants.
Table 6.1 Interaction patterns for the dictogloss activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group/Dyad</th>
<th>Percentage of Transmissive Episodes</th>
<th>Percentage of Negotiated Episodes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:1 (H-H)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:2 (HM-LM)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:3 (HM-LM)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:4 (HM-L)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:5 (HM-L)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:7 (LM-L)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:8 (L-L)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:9 (HM-L)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:10 (H-H-HM)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class average percentage for each category of episode</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2 Interaction patterns for the fill-in-the-gaps activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage of Transmissive Episodes</th>
<th>Percentage of Negotiated Episodes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3:1 (L-L-L)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:2 (HM-LM-LM)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:3 (H-H)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:4 (L-L)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:5 (HM-LM)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:6 (HM-HM)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class average percentage for each category of episode</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 6.3 Interaction patterns for the proof-reading activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage of Transmissive Episodes</th>
<th>Percentage of Negotiated Episodes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:1 (H-H)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:2 (L-L)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:3 (H-H)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>44†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:4(LM-LM)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>55†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:5 (L-L)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:6 (L-L)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:7(HM-HM-LM)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>59†</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class average percentage for each category of episode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† Percentages for these groups do not total 100% because they involved episodes where a point was raised, there was minimal or no discussion and no solution was arrived at.

#### 6.7.2 Discussion of the Interaction Patterns of the Three Tasks

The percentages for the class as a whole show that all three tasks resulted in more negotiated than transmissive episodes which suggests once again that providing students with the opportunity to work collaboratively on activities with a focus on form does encourage them, on the whole, to discuss and offer feedback to one another about how language "works" rather than to tell one another the answer. However, percentages for the individual groups show that although most groups' talk consisted of more negotiated than transmissive episodes there were some groups in which the interactions were predominantly transmissive.

The negotiated category of interactions is of particular interest in the light of other L2 research which has examined interaction during collaborative language tasks and which suggests that such interactions can result in interlanguage development for the individuals.
participating in them. Swain refers to similar interactions in her notion of "collaborative dialogue" (in press) which she claims is where "language use and language learning can co-occur". Collaborative dialogue refers to interactions in which two or more individuals pool their linguistic resources to jointly fill a linguistic gap. Two empirical studies by Donato (1994) and LaPierre (1994) present evidence that suggests that linguistic features discussed during collaborative dialogues do reappear in the participants' linguistic output on subsequent occasions.

It would have been interesting to ask students about their opinions of each type of activity. Motivation is an important factor in all learning opportunities and if some students preferred the flexibility provided by the dictogloss activity it may have enriched their learning experience. It is possible, for instance, that some students may have been less interested in the more focussed nature of the second two tasks. It is equally possible that some students may have preferred having a specific focus particularly in the metalinguistic activity. These are issues which it would be interesting to pursue in future research concerning collaborative tasks and their influence on student learning experiences.

6.8.1 Discussion of the Original Research Questions

Can collaborative tasks be designed which encourage students to investigate links between the forms of words and their communicative function in a sentence?

Can immersion students provide the same quality of feedback as a teacher when completing assigned tasks or will they reinforce each other's misconceptions about the French language?

The interactional data show that communicative activities can be designed that will provide students with the opportunity to study form and function links. The students (who had received no specific training for working in groups) did not adopt a proleptic approach
in their discussions. Their goal was to complete the activity as successfully as possible, not to assume the role of teacher. Nevertheless, through transmissive and collaborative practices students do provide appropriate feedback to one another and appear to deepen their understanding of how aspects of the language "work". There is evidence that by working together students collaborate and co-construct knowledge within their ZPD and are able to achieve greater accuracy than by working alone. Results from other studies suggest that such collaboration is one factor in promoting individual language growth.

However, another issue arising from the data is the importance of teacher feedback. It is unlikely of course that all of the feedback will be within the ZPD of all students, nevertheless there are valid reasons for concluding these collaborative sessions with a whole group discussion. A specific goal of these activities was to focus students' attention on form. Misconceptions occurred while the students completed the task. The LaPierre study (1994) provides evidence which suggests that incorrect solutions arrived at during collaborative discussion also reoccur in subsequent language output. It is therefore important that some kind of feedback be provided upon completion of the activity in an attempt to draw students' attention to their misconceptions. Secondly, as Bygate (1994) has indicated, a lack of constructive feedback on the part of the teacher upon completion of a collaborative task can eventually become a demotivating influence. The value of the task can be undermined in the eyes of the learners if the teacher appears uninterested in the linguistic outcome.

As the results from the dictogloss show, feedback does not need to come from the teacher alone. The whole group discussion can be conducted as a gathering of "experts" in which all members are legitimate participants. With experience there is no reason why the session should not be conducted by the students themselves, with the teacher stepping in as
needed when no one was capable of providing the correct response. Such an approach might encourage the students to take a more active role in the discussion.

**Are certain types of student grouping more effective than others?**

In terms of the influence of grouping patterns, it can be said that there was no one "best" rationale which applied across all three groups. In the dictogloss activity, the results suggest that highly heterogeneous groupings and groupings which put two low proficiency students together were not very successful in terms of promoting discussion and encouraging students to reflect on form-function links, although the low proficiency students did reflect upon and discuss the task in semantic terms. The broadly homogeneous groupings used in the metalinguistic activity were successful even where low proficiency groups were concerned, although these students' final scores for this activity were slightly lower than the other groups. Conversely, for the proof-reading task homogenous groupings reduced the activity to a lesson in frustration for the low proficiency students.

**Are there particular features which appear to contribute to the efficacy of a task?**

For Vygotsky, the success of the ZPD depends on one of the participants being more knowledgeable than the other. One way then of trying to predict what type of grouping procedures would be likely to succeed is in the availability or non-availability of "expert" input. In the dictogloss activity it might be said that due to differences amongst the learners' personal interlanguage knowledge, all the participants were experts in different ways. Depending on the point under discussion a different participant might assume the role of expert. The participants pooled their knowledge, made hypotheses based on their pooled knowledge to come up with novel solutions for the particular case in point and were also able to refer to the dictionary and other tools available to them for more "expert" input.
In the metalinguistic activity, "expert" help was provided in the form of the students' notes. Even in groupings of low proficiency students, the participants were still able to achieve relative success by referring to their notes. The proof-reading activity, which contained the least amount of "expert" help from reference tools, was ineffective as a learning opportunity for many of the groups. Although there is evidence that highlighting the errors for the students (providing another source of "expert" help) did help low proficiency students. For groupings to be successful then, there needs to be some source of relevant "expert" help, which may be, but does not always need to be, more able students or the teacher.

This chapter has presented results from three different collaborative tasks each with a focus on form. The qualitative approach to the discussion of the data provides useful insights into how such collaborative tasks can provide a means of encouraging students to talk about and refine their knowledge of how aspects of language "work" and of certain form-meaning links. The data also suggest that teacher guided feedback is an important element to include when using collaborative tasks of this kind. A further important element to be considered with these tasks is the amount of expert help available to the students in completing the activity, whether this be in the form of more capable peers, notes, or reference books.
CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

This chapter begins by summarizing the major research findings in relation to the original research questions. The appropriateness of the action research and socio-cultural approaches to the data collection are next discussed, followed by a discussion of the relevance of the research findings in relation to current theories regarding the teaching of grammar in L2 classrooms and research previously conducted in FI classes. The chapter concludes by considering some of the pedagogical implications of the research for FI programs and suggestions for further research based on the findings of this study.

7.1.1 Students' Understanding of French

In terms of students' interlanguage as investigated at the beginning of the year, it was clear that there was a wide range in the students' understanding of the syntactic relationships between words in French. All students still had some misconceptions about the relationships between words but those students with the highest overall proficiency in French had developed the most sophisticated metalinguistic knowledge. In Batstone's (1994) terms, students who were considered to be highly proficient at communicating in French also appeared to have a well-developed understanding of "product" grammar. These students had more control over their use of French; they were more likely to play with language, i.e. to be inventive and to take risks with new forms and synonyms and they were more concerned about making their writing sound more authentic.

All students believed it was important to have a good knowledge of French grammar and considered explicit grammar instruction to be an important part of their L2 studies. Students mentioned that grammatical instruction which involved practice in the
application of grammatical rules (Batstone's (1994) notion of "process" grammar) was particularly useful. In applying French grammar, the students tended to check for surface features in their work such as verb morphology, and noun gender and were less likely to consider form-function links.

7.1.2 The Effects of Explicit Grammar Instruction on Existing Knowledge

Explicit instruction in the formation and functions of the *imparfait* and *passé composé*, an area in which many students expressed confusion, was used as a means of drawing students' attention to form-function links. The unit used, incorporated many of the features referred to by L2 theorists writing about grammar instruction. For example, the decision about what grammatical feature to use was made based on learner needs and interests; the unit's major goal was to draw students' attention to form-function links with regards to the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*, an area which many students had mentioned was particularly confusing for them. The unit began with a series of activities designed to raise students' awareness of the way in which past tense grammatical aspect is conveyed in French, adding to the students' knowledge of product grammar and then provided the students with activities which focussed on the application of this knowledge, an opportunity for them to build on their process grammar. Following Vygotsky's claims that all learning occurs first on the interpsychological plane before being appropriated by the learner on the intrapsychological plane, group work activities were used throughout the unit for the activities completed in the classroom. Of particular interest here was whether L2 learners can provide feedback to one another which might assist the L2 learning process.

The results of the interactional analysis showed that students could and did discuss form-function links associated with the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* and that these discussions often appeared to clarify these links for the students, although some
misconceptions also occurred. The test results show that the class made and maintained statistically significant progress in using the \textit{passé composé} and the \textit{imparfait} as measured by a series of cloze tests\textsuperscript{12}, and performed better, although not significantly better, than the comparison groups on a cloze test. The data from the composition activity provide detailed information about how the students progressed in their written use of the \textit{passé composé} and the \textit{imparfait}. The data show evidence of restructuring between the pre and post-test stages and also show that this process is highly individualized, although all students received the same enhanced input and instruction. Most students progressed in their use of the \textit{passé composé} and the \textit{imparfait} but the data also show that for some of the weaker students the treatment had had little effect; it appeared to have been beyond their ZPD. One implication of this finding might be that small-group or individualized teacher facilitated instruction may have been a feature which should have been added to the learning experience for these students.

7.1.3 Using Collaborative Tasks with a Focus on Form

The data show that it is possible to design collaborative tasks which encourage students to investigate links between the form of a word and its communicative function within a sentence although the original task goals as intended by the teacher and those that are realized by the students through the completion of the activity may not always be the same. As predicted by the output hypothesis, the dictogloss which requires students to focus on form as they produce language, promotes useful discussion about using language correctly. The features discussed during the activity will be the result of the text used and the needs and abilities of the students completing the task. The decrease in teacher control of the activity should therefore not be considered a disadvantage. The highly contextualized

\textsuperscript{12}As mentioned earlier, because there was no comparison group for these tests\textsuperscript{156}, it is not possible to say if these gains were due to the treatment or other factors such as maturation.
nature of the form-meaning links of such production tasks may promote the skills needed for successful application of grammatical knowledge in regular writing activities.

Conversely, metalinguistic tasks such as the "Fill in the Gaps" activity are often regarded as being too decontextualized for the skills being practiced to be transferred to spontaneous production activities. The data show however that when such activities are part of a language rich, thematically based unit, a specific focus on one aspect of the grammatical system, in particular an aspect which requires considerable attention to the subtleties of meaning associated with the grammatical feature, helps students to externalize their understanding of the feature, to discuss and refine their knowledge of its application. Moreover, there is evidence from the proof-reading activity that this knowledge is transferred from one activity to another even after an approximately three month period and in settings where students may be working with different partners.

Proof-reading a text turned out to be the most difficult type of activity for the students to complete as illustrated by the collaborative proof-reading task and the proof-reading task in the second questionnaire. There was collaborative and co-constructive discussion about features of the text but identifying the mistakes was a challenge for the students and very difficult for the weaker students. Providing a check-list of features to look for, i.e. an additional source of "expert" information, appears to be one way in which to increase the learning potential of such activities.

Collaborative tasks can promote useful discussion about the use of form in communication and students can learn from one another and contribute to one another's learning. However, the nature of the interactions from different grouping patterns and activities show that careful consideration needs to be given to task requirements, student abilities and personalities when grouping students for collaborative activities.
Misconceptions and mistakes do occur and a strong case can be made (when the one aim of the activities is to promote accuracy) for larger group follow up sessions, teacher or student led, which provide a forum for these issues to be identified.

7.2.1 The Appropriateness of the Research Orientation: Action Research

The action research approach used in this study provides data which are the result of real-life classroom experiences, which show theory in action and practice contributing to theory. The students were not removed from the regular classroom for the data to be collected and the data therefore illustrate authentic learning processes. In terms of the interactional data, whilst it may be argued that the audio-taping had a positive influence on the quality of the interactions, the sharing of student work in the follow-up whole group sessions was also a factor which influenced student motivation. More important perhaps is the fact that the majority of the students appeared to enjoy the collaborative activities and to have seen an intrinsic value in their completion.

Adopting an action research orientation also created an organic structure for the research. The research was originally motivated by an interest on my part to know more about student understandings of aspects of French, their stated needs and preferences for further L2 learning, a belief in the merits of explicit grammar teaching and a hypothesis that collaboration might positively influence the learning process. The ensuing activities and findings were a result of this teacher interest mediated by student needs and feedback. In this way, the research not only contributes to the theoretical knowledge base, by for instance illustrating some of the learning processes which occur in non-native speaker interactions, but also resulted in learning experiences which were directly linked to the students' needs. Many action research studies do not compare results with other groups of students, or make use of formal testing. It is my opinion that in this study the statistical
testing complements the interactional data by situating the results in a wider context. We are able to measure the students' progress in a particular area of their studies and to see how these students' performance compares with other students of similar educational backgrounds. It shows that qualitative and quantitative approaches are not mutually exclusive. Rather, the approaches validate each other and increase our understanding of the growth which occurred.

In terms of personal professional development, I gained important insights into the understanding that my students had developed of certain aspects of French. how to use collaborative form-meaning activities in the L2 classroom and how to set up appropriate learning opportunities for students with different abilities. In particular, I came to understand 1) that collaborative activities can be a useful tool in helping students to develop their understanding of how language works and to be confident about using them regularly in my teaching; 2) that students can provide useful feedback to one another; 3) the role of whole group follow up sessions with this type of activity; 4) how grouping decisions and the nature of the task can affect the learning outcomes, in particular the nature of "expert" knowledge available to the participants; 5) the importance of spending a substantial period of time on providing instruction to students in a linguistically complex area of the French language system; 6) that even though post-test or end of unit test scores might be disappointing in so far as they show some students still have not achieved native-like mastery of a complex area, they may not be showing the full picture, for instance a downturn in a numerical score does not always indicate a poorer understanding of the topic, a low score can obfuscate the progress that was made; 7) the importance of finding out about one's students' current level of understanding to provide appropriate learning opportunities; 8) the likely importance of providing specialized small group or individualized instruction to some students whose understanding of certain aspects of French appears to be particularly weak, an area of possible future action research for me.
7.2.2 The Appropriateness of the Research Orientation: Socio-Cultural Theory

Aspects of socio-cultural theory influenced the research in two main ways. The first, from a research perspective, was in using data collected during student interactions as a means of further understanding the students' conceptions of aspects of French, a means of studying their thought processes in action. Whereas the questionnaire data showed students' understandings and misunderstandings of certain aspects of French and their preferences for learning, the interactions which took place during the collaborative activities provide us with the opportunity of observing students' current understanding of French, how they draw on and apply their linguistic knowledge to solve linguistic problems. All this is achieved within the limitations set on the task by other situational factors such as the goal of the task, the given time to complete the task, the additional resources at the students' disposal. As predicted by activity theory (Wertsch, 1981) while the students complete an assigned task, it is possible to observe aspects of their consciousness in action.

Secondly, from a pedagogical perspective the interactional data allow us to see whether Vygotsky's general genetic law of cultural development (1981) can be applied to learner-learner interactions as well as teacher-learner interactions. The interactional analyses show students working collaboratively to enrich one another's understanding of form-function links and co-constructing solutions to linguistic problems and gaps in their knowledge that arise. This phenomenon occurs spontaneously, as a result of the task, without any specific instruction being provided to the students about how to facilitate one another's learning. As mentioned earlier, other studies with adult learners (Donato, 1994) and with students of this age (LaPierre, 1994) have provided evidence of retention of knowledge acquired through such types of collaboration. The data from this study also
show that students do take this knowledge and use it again in new situations even when working with different partners. Finally, the observations from these tasks help us to understand better how different groupings and task requirements can influence the interactions.

7.3.1 Some Pedagogical Implications of the Research

Many of the activities and approaches used in FI programs are ones which have been successfully used in L1 classes. Very little research has been done to date however at looking at ways in which these approaches might be modified and used with L2 learners to develop a pedagogy for French immersion teaching. Students need to have rich language learning environments: exposure to quality literature, audio and video materials suitable to their needs, learner-centred activities such as role-playing, process-writing programs, independent research and presentations. It should be remembered however that providing students with good quality L2 input and opportunities for extensive output may not be enough. While such activities promote fluency, students need to be motivated to continue working at making their L2 production more like the target language; to be more aware of the language they are using to communicate their meaning.

This research has shown that activities can be designed and used to encourage students to use the target language, whilst simultaneously reflecting upon the form of the language they are using. In completing these activities collaboratively, students discuss issues of form and contribute to one another's learning which may enhance interlanguage development. In terms of L2 learning it appears that collaborative tasks such as these can be a useful addition to the teacher's repertoire of means of raising learners' awareness of how aspects of the language system work and are used in communicating meaning.
The heterogeneity of FL students' language skills cannot be ignored. Expecting all FL students to be at the same level in their interlanguage development is unrealistic and can be demotivating for some students. Mini-lessons to small groups of students and individual conferences with students may at times be more appropriate than large group sessions for students' individual needs and learning styles and a necessary support to other classroom activities. Particular attention should be paid when considering grouping procedures for peer mediated work involving students who are experiencing difficulties in French.

7.4.1 Suggestions for Further Research

This research has uncovered many aspects of the LL2 process in a FL class and raises issues which are not fully addressed within the scope of this research. The first of these to be discussed in this section is the correlation between metalinguistic knowledge and French proficiency. This finding is substantiated in Swain and Lapkin's recent research (1995) and other studies (e.g. Bialystok and Ryan, 1985; Green and Hecht, 1992; Hawkins and Towell, 1992). A cautious stance has been taken in discussing this correlation throughout this thesis in an effort to avoid making simplistic pedagogical conclusions, for instance, that if more time were spent teaching grammar then all students' French proficiency would improve. After all, these students had had very similar learning experiences throughout their nine years in the FL program, having attended the same schools and being taught by the same teachers. Yet, some students had developed a more sophisticated metalinguistic understanding of French than others. Reasons for this might be memory-based, cognitive, psychological, motivational. Further research would be needed to uncover possible explanations for this phenomenon. A second line of research from this finding would be to see if providing extra metalinguistic instruction could improve the French performance of the weaker students. Approaches to consider would be those where teachers investigate students' misconceptions about aspects of French and subsequently
plan and monitor the effects of instruction designed to help students improve and apply their understanding. Socio-cultural theory, in particular the metaphor of the ZPD, provides an obvious framework to use for investigating these teaching and learning relationships. Finally in this respect, similar research could be conducted into students' understanding of French at different age levels (e.g. secondary level) and between program types (e.g. middle, late immersion programs) in order to compare findings.

The interactions that occurred during peer interactions illustrate that talk about form appears to help students develop their understanding of French. This research has also shown how different types of tasks can affect the nature of this talk. There is clearly room for other types of tasks to be developed too. Quasi-experimental research would also now be useful to see if a significant statistical difference in accuracy can be achieved by emphasizing talk about form in FI programs. Such research could be structured around instruction on a particular grammatical point and use collaborative form-focussed tasks at all instructional stages, for instance the initial negotiation of understanding of the concept as the concept is raised with the class, during its practice through structured activities through to production tasks such as collaboratively written short stories requiring the use of the point.

Research which focusses on teaching and learning relationships is an area that has much to gain from research conducted by practitioners or through collaborative long-term studies between university based researchers and practitioners. It contributes to the theoretical knowledge base, the development of FI pedagogy and teachers' own personal pedagogical understanding.
REFERENCES


Dear Parent/Guardian,

As part of my doctoral studies in second language acquisition I am hoping to conduct a study of how grade 8 students understand the French grammatical system, how they apply this knowledge during peer conference sessions, and how programming might be designed to help students’ written growth. Data would be collected through a questionnaire, interviews with the students, audio- (and possibly) videotaping of the students at work, and samples of students’ written work. Data would be collected as an integral part of our language program.

I hope the research will enrich the students’ learning opportunities and help them in their development towards becoming proficient writers in French. I do not feel there will be any negative effects for the students in my class. From their perspective, the data collection would seem like careful note-taking and record keeping on my part and should enhance their studies.

During the course of the year I would like to monitor the progress of twelve students in greater depth. If your child were amongst those chosen, I would contact you first to obtain consent for your child to participate in this part of the study.

All the information collected will be strictly confidential and neither the school nor individual students would be identified by name in any of the subsequent writing or presentations. All of the information will be used for educational purposes only.

Please indicate below whether or not you are willing to let your child participate in this study.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Marla Kowal

I am/ am not willing to allow my student to participate in this study.

Signature_________________ Student’s Name_____________
Appendix B: Request For Permission To Participate In Study

December 7, 1992

Dear Parent/Guardian,

At the beginning of the school year I wrote to you concerning the study I am conducting as part of my doctoral studies in second language acquisition. A copy of the original letter is attached.

At this stage in the year, I would like to begin studying the progress of some of the students in the class in greater depth. This will involve asking them to complete a questionnaire about the French language, participating with me in an informal interview about their answers in the questionnaire and participating in one additional writing task that will be administered during school time by a graduate student from the Ontario Institute of Education. The student, herself a teacher of French, is already familiar to the students as she has been observing some of our regular French lessons. She will be working under my supervision for this activity.

Students who participate in this part of the study will be audio-taped during some of our regular classroom language activities.

I would like to point out that the students' grades will not be affected by participating or not participating in the study. All students will be evaluated according to regular school evaluation procedures. Furthermore, your child may withdraw from the study at any point in the year should you or your child so wish.

As I stated in my last letter, all the information collected will be strictly confidential and neither the school nor individual students will be identified by name in any subsequent writing or presentations. All of the information will be used for educational purposes only.

When we discussed the topic in class, all students expressed an interest in being involved in this part of the study. Please indicate below whether or not you are willing to let your child participate in this part of the study.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Maria Kowal
Appendix C: Test For General L2 Performance: Cloze And Written Tests

DATE: _______________________

NOM: _______________________

ÉCOLE: _______________________

ANNÉE: _______________________

TEST DE MOTS À TROUVER, NIVEAU C
Adapté pour la radio d'une sélection du Reader's Digest

L'Institut d'études pédagogiques de l'Ontario, 1987
Vous avez choisi le mot qui convient pour chaque espace.
Connaissiez-vous la réponse, essayez de la deviner. Quand vous aurez complété le texte, relisez-le pour vous assurer que vous avez bien rempli les cases correspondant à chaque espace.

Lisez attentivement tout le texte aux pages suivantes. Ensuite remplissez chaque espace par un seul mot. Si vous ne savez pas, laissez-le vide.
une sorte d'humain? Personne ne le sait encore.

A-t-il un étre étrange qui court à la hauteur ou les plus hautes montagnes du monde? Est-ce un simple fantôme ou est-ce un singe géant?

L'étrange homme des neiges
Est-ce que c'était un homme singe ? Il ne s'est jamais pu
champ de neige. Est-ce que c'était
eux, un jeune poilu traversait un
loin au-dessous
sommet, quand il regarde en arrière.
pression
des montagnes les plus hautes du monde. Il
imposant le mont Everest
meme experience.
Pionniers explorateurs ont eu
-3-
Que pensez-vous des histoires au sujet de ces créatures étranges ? Vous croyez-vous, oui ou non, Poutrons ?

Répondez à la question suivante. Essayez de remplir toute la page.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

Y et à nous saurons citer si l'étrange homme des neiges existe vraiment ou si c'est simplement un conte imaginaire.

C'est peut-être depuis quelques années que des savants ont commencé à rechercher cet homme des neiges. Ils trouvent un

- 4 -
Appendix D: Activities Used During The Treatment Stage

Synopsis of the legend Le Loup-Garou et Le Châle

A bad-tempered, impatient farmer, Luc, and his good-humoured, tolerant wife, Marie-Rose live close to the forest. It has been at least seven years since Luc last went to church at Easter, making him, according to legend, a prime candidate for werewolf status. Luc takes to going out alone at night. One night, when she is alone, Marie-Rose needs to go out to collect firewood. She puts on her shawl and enters the forest. It gets very late and, as Marie-Rose is returning, a pack of werewolves begins to follow her. She abandons her wood and begins to run. One werewolf breaks away from the pack and chases her home. Marie-Rose manages to get inside her house safely and hangs up her shawl. Luc gets back much later. The next morning at breakfast, Luc complains of something caught between his teeth. It is fibres from Marie-Rose's shawl. Luc realises he was one of the werewolves. He asks his wife to save him. To do so, she needs to make him bleed while he is in his werewolf state. Marie-Rose gets the blacksmith to make her a sharp rake. In spite of the danger, she waits for the pack of werewolves that night in the garden and strikes Luc as he passes her. He is transformed from his werewolf state back to his human one. His wife has saved him. He asks Marie-Rose to take him to the priest so that he can confess his sins. From that day on, Luc has no more contact with the werewolves and he and his wife live happily ever after (Ullman, 1984).

A) Introductory Activities: Le Loup-Garou et Le Châle Short Story*

Discussion of the oral tradition and the conte folklorique. Background to the legend. Individual, silent reading of the legend followed by whole-group discussion of student difficulties and questions. Oral comprehension questions.

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43* indicates the activity is taken from Harley's 1989 study. ** indicates that the activity is an adaptation from the Harley study. *** indicates a new activity designed for use in this study. Original materials can be found in Harley, Ullman and MacKay, (1985).
N.B. The choice of this legend was particularly topical because the unit was carried out during the period of Lent.

B) Formal Study of the Functions of the passé composé and the imparfait**

Students were given an abridged version of the story *La légende en bref* and, working in pairs, identified all of the instances of the passé composé or the imparfait. One member of each pair was responsible for identifying the instances of the passé composé and the other member the instances of the imparfait. Their aim was to be the pair with the highest overall success rate. In a whole group session, students used their findings to discuss and list with the teacher the functions they saw associated with each of the tenses. At the end of the activity the students were given notes summarizing the functions associated with each tense.

C) Formal Study of the Formation of the passé composé and the imparfait***

Students reviewed the rules regarding formation of the passé composé and the imparfait with particular reference to irregular verbs, verbs having *être* as their auxiliary, and rules regarding agreement of the past participle with a preceding direct object. Mini-tests and quizzes were used as introductory activities to language periods throughout this unit to provide practice for the students.

D) Applications

1) *Le passé en perspective**: **
Students were given another shortened version of the short story. *Le passé en perspective*, written in two columns. One column contained clauses using the *imparfait* and the other contained clauses using the *passé composé*. All instances of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* had been underlined. Working with a partner from their notes and from memory, the students discussed why a particular form had been used in each instance. N.B. The fact that it is sometimes difficult to classify a function was also discussed in the follow-up whole group discussion. Two functions may both be appropriate for a given context, the difference being one of perception on the part of the reader.

2) *Vive la Difference***

Students were presented with a series of verbs used in the *imparfait* (to denote an incomplete action) and in the *passé composé* to denote a completed action. They were also shown sketches which illustrated some of the differences. As a homework activity, students were given the list of sentences, *Paires de phrases à illustrer*, and asked to choose three verbs which had not already been illustrated and to illustrate them. If they wished, they could make up their own sentences. Students were told that the following week, they would be required to use these materials to teach the complete/incomplete distinction to groups of grade five students in other classes in the school. Each grade 5 student in the group was asked to evaluate the quality of the grade 8 student's presentation *Feuille de dévaluation*.

3) *Consequences***

Students worked in groups of four to play a game of Consequences, *Il y avait une fois*, adapted to provide practice in the use of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. After sharing their completed stories within their groups, each group selected its best story (as
determined by the students) and edited it looking for mistakes in the use of the passé composé and the imparfait. The corrected versions were then read aloud to the rest of the class and corrected once again in a whole group discussion.

4) Proverbes**

As homework, students were given a list of proverbs, Liste des proverbes, asked to choose one of them and to write a 1st. person narrative in the past tense to illustrate the meaning of the proverb. The proverb selected was not to be mentioned until the final paragraph. Students were told that they would receive a mark for their use of the passé composé and the imparfait and an holistic mark for the content and style of their work. Their work would be presented in class the following week and the class would try to guess the proverb being illustrated in each narrative before the final paragraph was read.

5) Fill-in-the-gap activity**

Students were provided with a short version of the werewolf story in which blanks had been left wherever the passé composé or the imparfait was required. The infinitive of each verb was provided, as was space for an explanation of the function of the verb in the particular context. The students were audio-taped as they completed this activity.

6) Qui pourra arrêter les Red Wings? ***

Unprompted, a student brought in a clipping from a Québécois newspaper talking of his Junior League hockey team's success at a recent tournament in Québec - Qui pourra arrêter les Red Wings? The text, written in the past tense, was read in class and the use of the passé composé and the imparfait was discussed.
7) *Souvenirs de mon enfance.*

Students were assigned one final writing and speaking activity, *Souvenirs de mon enfance.* Each student was presented with a choice of topics to choose from based on a childhood experience. The assignments were corrected by the teacher. The students were then assigned partners who would interview them about their experience in "chat-show" format in front of the class. The interviews were video-taped.
QUI POURRA ARRETER LES RED WINGS DE TORONTO?

Les Red Wings de Toronto se sont trompés de tournoi. Ils sont un cran au-dessus de tout le monde jusqu'à maintenant. Leur victoire au compte de 15-0 sur Philadelphie, en classe AA, nous confirme qu'il faudra un sacré bon vent de face pour les arrêter d'ici à dimanche prochain.

Les Wings n'ont que 14 joueurs, les deux gardiens inclus. C'est ça, notre équipe, résume l'entraîneur Peter Mayrondis. Les matchs sont courts, les joueurs sont toujours sur la patinoire, et jouer souvent est la seule façon d'apprendre.

La puissance des Wings est même fait peur aux dirigeants du tournoi, qui se sont empressés d'annuler un match hors concours que le char d'assaut'ontarien devait jouer contre les Ukrainiens de Kharkov, mardi, aux Galeries de la Capitale.

Les deux équipes, qui devaient se rencontrer en grande finale et que c'était un tournoi sans problème, nous avons pratiqué à la place.


Dans leur saison régulière, ils re-vendent qu'ont marqué 475 buts et alloué 101. Dans la victoire d'hier, Shane Nast a marqué sept buts.

Gros dimanche.

Aujourd'hui, plusieurs des meilleures équipes entrent dans le décor: la Slovénie, Moscou, Poprad, Bratislava.

Dans cette dernière équipe, on ver-ra Robert Dome. Possiblement la plus belle attraction du 34e... après les Red Wings de Toronto!
VIVE LA DIFFÉRENCE

Paires de phrases à illustrer

A) Le pilote déployait son parachute
   Le pilote a déployé son parachute.

B) Elle a perdu ses pantoufles.
   Elle perdait ses pantoufles.

C) Il est mort de faim.
   Il mourait de faim.

D) L'auto a glissé sur la route verglaçante.
   L'auto glissait sur la route verglaçante.

E) L'enfant pataugeait dans la boue.
   L'enfant a pataugé dans la boue.

F) Simone lavait son chien.
   Simone a lavé son chien.

G) Le garde a fermé la grande porte de la prison
   Le garde fermait la grande porte de la prison.

H) Une tornade s'abattait sur la ville.
   Une tornade s'est abattue sur la ville.

I) Le second cheval a dépassé le premier.
   Le second cheval dépassait le premier.

J) Elle a grimpé à l'échelle.
   Elle grimpait à l'échelle.

K) Marc soufflait les bougies de son gâteau.
   Marc a soufflé les bougies de son gâteau.

L) Mme Laplante cueillait des fraises.
   Mme Laplante a cueilli des fraises.

M) Le couturier a confectionné une robe.
   Le couturier confectionnait une robe.
Les photos de mon cousin

Il dégringolait l'escalier
Il a dégringolé l'escalier

Elle a rempli son verre de lait
Elle remplissait son verre de lait

Le bébé vidait le tiroir
Le bébé a vidé le tiroir
Evaluation forms used by the grade 5 students for the Vive la différence activity

FEUILLE D'ÉVALUATION POUR _________________

La qualité de la présentation

Mal exprimée ------------------------------- Très bien exprimée

1  2  3  4  5

Les dessins

Ne montraient pas bien ----------------- Montraient très bien la différence

1  2  3  4  5

Les réponses à mes questions étaient

Mauvaises ---------------------------------- Excellentes
Mal exprimées                            Bien exprimées

1  2  3  4  5
Consequences Activity

Il y avait une fois

1) Il y avait une fois un homme/une dame etc. qui s'appelait . . .

2) Décrivez son apparence. Par exemple il/elle était . . . (au moins trois choses)

3) Décrivez son caractère. (au moins trois choses)

4) Décrivez un événement important / drôle / tragique etc. qui lui est arrivé un jour.

5) Et la conséquence de cet événement? Dès ce jour-là ...
Liste des Proverbes

La fortune sourit aux braves.
Qui ne risque rien, ne gagne rien.
Les apparences sont trompeuses.
Voir, c'est croire.
Savoir, c'est pouvoir.
Après la pluie, le beau temps.
Il ne faut pas vendre la peau de l'ours avant de l'avoir tué.
Il n'y a pas de fumée sans feu.
Tout est bien qui finit bien.
Avoir les yeux plus grands que la panse.
Trop de cuisiniers gâtent la sauce.
Lentement mais sûrement.
Quand le chat n'est pas là, les souris dansent.
Rira bien qui rira le dernier.
Fill in the Gaps Activity

Pendant des années, Luc ______________ dans une cabane près de la forêt. (vivre)

Chaque jour, Marie-Rose ______________ aux côtés de Luc. (travailler)

Un jour, Marie-Rose ______________ dans la forêt. (pénétrer)

Pendant qu'elle ______________ dans la forêt, elle ______________ le cri des loups-garous. (s'aventurer) (entendre)

Soudain, elle ______________ peur. (prendre)

Peu à peu la bande de loups-garous ______________ du terrain. (gagner)

Après quelques minutes, elle ______________ le seuil de la porte de sa maison. (franchir)

Le lendemain matin, alors que Marie-Rose et Luc ______________ ensemble,
Luc ______________ la bouche. (déjeuner) (ouvrir)
Marie-Rose gaze à deux bouts de laine coincés entre les dents de Luc. (regarder) (retirer)

Plus tard, le forgeron tient un râteau bien pointu. (faire)

Ce soir-là, Marie-Rose se cache derrière le gros buisson. (se cacher)

Quand elle voit le loup-garou, elle frappe la bête de toutes ses forces. (voir) (frapper)

L'animal est et c'est Luc qui est apparu. (se transformer)

Marie-Rose emmène son mari chez le prêtre qui lui pardonne ses péchés. (emmener) (pardonner)

Depuis ce temps-là, Marie-Rose et Luc sont heureux ensemble. (être)
Souvenirs de mon enfance

1. L'événement-clé de mon enfance
Si quelqu'un te demande de lui parler de ton enfance, quel événement arrive en premier lieu dans tes souvenirs?

2. Un rêve incroyable!
Si quelqu'un te demandait de lui raconter un rêve incroyable que tu as fait quand tu étais petit/e qu'est-ce que tu lui dirais?

3. Un tournant dans ma vie
Ta première journée d'école ou un déménagement peut avoir marqué un tournant important dans ta vie. Raconte comment ça s'est passé et ce que tu as ressenti lors de cet événement.

4. Ouf! Je l'ai échappé belle!
Si quelqu'un te demandait de lui raconter une aventure qui t'est arrivée et qui aurait pu être tragique, qu'est-ce que tu répondrais?

5. Quel petit diable!
Si tu avais à raconter un tour malin que tu as joué quand tu étais petit/e, qu'est-ce que tu dirais?

6. Un enfant unique!
Quand tu demandes à tes parents ce qui te rendait "unique" quand tu étais petit/e, qu'est-ce qu'ils répondent?

7. Quel malheur!
Si tu avais à raconter à quelqu'un la perte d'un objet qui t'était précieux, qu'est-ce que tu dirais? Comment est-ce que ça s'est passé? Qu'est-ce que tu a ressenti à ce moment?

8. Des vacances de tonnerre!
Si tu avais à raconter à quelqu'un les plus belles vacances de ta vie, qu'est-ce que tu lui dirais?
1. En ce qui concerne l'environnement, il y a beaucoup de problèmes qui nous tracassent.
   As far as the environment is concerned, we are faced with many worrying problems.
2. On essaie de trouver des solutions écologiques mais elles produisent de nouveaux problèmes imprévus.
   We try to find ecological solutions but these produce new, unforeseen problems.
3. Par exemple, les plastiques biodégradables se décomposent, mais, à la fois, ils produisent des percolats toxiques.
   For example, biodegradable plastics decompose but, in so doing, they produce new toxic waste.
4. L'eau de source n'est quelquefois que de l'eau du robinet.
   Spring water is sometimes just tap water.
5. Bien sûr, on a fait beaucoup de progrès pendant les années quatre-vingt mais il nous reste encore beaucoup à faire et à repenser.
   Of course we made a lot of progress during the nineteen eighties but there still remains much for us to do and rethink.
Appendix F: Student Questionnaires

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE PART 1

Name: _______________________

If you run out of space in answering the following questions, please continue on the reverse side of the paper. Be as detailed as you can in your replies. Make sure to answer all the questions.

1) Do you feel that writing in French is different from writing in English? If so how?

2) How would you rate your ability to write in French?

very poor ----------------------------------------------------------excellent

1 2 3 4 5

3) How would you rate your ability to write in English?

very poor--------------------------------------------------------excellent

1 2 3 4 5

4) You are completing a writing task in French. You have your idea and have planned what it is you are going to say. What do you now find is the most difficult thing about producing a good piece of written French? Remember, you already know what you want to say and have a plan.

5) How would you explain to someone who was not a student of French what French grammar is?

6) How would you rate yourself on your ability to write correctly in French?

very poor --------------------------------------------------excellent

1 2 3 4 5
7) How would you rate yourself on spelling in French?

very poor -------------------------------excellent

1  2  3  4  5

8) What aspects of French grammar or French language do you find the most difficult to deal with? Why?

9) What aspects of French grammar or French language do you find the easiest to deal with? Why?

10) Is there anything that you find particularly confusing or frustrating about French? Why?

11) How do you go about learning new words in French? Check off all the techniques you use that are mentioned below and then circle the two techniques that are the most useful.

   _____ Teacher-made tests
   _____ Through reading, I just pick up new words
   _____ Through dictionary activities that require me to look up and define new words
   _____ By learning lists of words by heart
   _____ Translation (I ask the teacher or a friend the meaning of the word I need)
   _____ Other (please describe)______________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
12) How do you approach the task of editing your work? Check off all the techniques you use that are mentioned below and then circle the two techniques that are the most useful?

_____ I hope I've written it correctly the first time
_____ I don't edit my work for mistakes
_____ I reread my work and look for mistakes
_____ I have a checklist of things I look for
_____ Other (please describe)

13) Do you prefer to edit your work:

_____ alone
_____ with a friend
_____ with the teacher

Why?

14) Do you think it would help if you were given a basic list of things to check all your written work for? Why/why not?

15) Do your teachers teach a lot about French grammar?

16) Would you like to have less or more French grammar instruction?
17) Explain the difference between the following pairs of words and phrases.
mes/mais
ses/ces
cet/cette
mange/mangeait
regarder/regardé
marchait/marchaient
a marché/marchait
dansera/danserait
chantait/chanterait

18) Give an example (in French) of each of the following types of word/tense. Explain what each one does in a sentence.
adjective
adverb
noun
pronoun
imperfect tense
perfect tense
conditional tense
future tense
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE (PART 2)

NAME: __________________________

Section A

In the following sentences there is a mistake that is underlined. Correct the mistake and try to explain what is wrong with the original sentence. Be as detailed as possible in your explanation.

1)  *Je suis fini.*

Correct version: ____________________________________________________________

Explanation of mistake:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2)  *J’étais à peu près six ans quand c’est arrivé.*

Correct version: ____________________________________________________________

Explanation of mistake:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3)  *Savez-vous Sandra?*

Correct version: ____________________________________________________________

Explanation of mistake:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
4) *J'ai des autres choses à faire.*

Correct version: 

Explanation of mistake:

5) *Le bonheur dépend sur bien des choses.*

Correct version: 

Explanation of mistake:

6) *J'ai déjà vu ce film sur la télévision.*

Correct version: 

Explanation of mistake:

7) *Un de les garçons m'a invité à sortir.*

Correct version: 

Explanation of mistake:
8) Marie est allé visiter sa tante.
Correct version:

Explanation of mistake:

9) J'ai venu voir les enfants.
Correct version:

Explanation of mistake:

10) Suzanne a achetée la nouvelle cassette de U2.
Correct version:

Explanation of mistake:

11) Ils se sont réveillé en retard ce matin.
Correct version:

Explanation of mistake:
12) *Cet été il pleuvais presque chaque fin de semaine.*

Correct version:

Explanation of mistake:

13) *Ils étaient en train de partir quand le téléphone a sonné.*

Correct version:

Explanation of mistake:

14) *On ne savais pas que tu allais venir.*

Correct version:

Explanation of mistake:

15) *L'année dernière nous finissons toujours nos devoirs avant les autres.*

Correct version:

Explanation of mistake:
16)  *Il arrivait à l'école à quelle heure?*

Correct version: __________________________________________________________________________

Explanation of mistake: __________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

17)  *Pendant qu'il a regardé la télévision, sa maman est entrée.*

Correct version: __________________________________________________________________________

Explanation of mistake: __________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

18)  *Jeudi dernier, je ne mangeais pas de petit-déjeuner avant de venir à l'école.*

Correct version: __________________________________________________________________________

Explanation of mistake: __________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

19)  *Nous avons joué au tennis quand vous avez téléphoné chez nous.*

Correct version: __________________________________________________________________________

Explanation of mistake: __________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
Section B

Translate the following sentences into English.

1)  Pendant les vacances je rencontrais mes amis tous les jours.

2)  Pendant qu'il regardait la télévision le téléphone a sonné.

3)  Je marchais à l'école quand j'ai vu l'accident.

4)  J'ai marché à l'école et j'y suis arrivé à 8h 30.

Section C

There are five mistakes to do with verbs in the following paragraph. Try to find them by underlining them and then write the correct version below. Explain what the mistake is.

C'est le professeur qui parle:

Quand j'ai arrivé à l'école ce matin tout le monde a parlé, personne ne travaillait. Pourtant je vous avais dit que je serais en retard aujourd'hui et je vous ai demandé de garder le silence et de travailler jusqu'à mon arrivée. J'avais écrit les exercices au tableau; j'avais préparé vos cahiers et j'avais demandais à Diane de les distribuer. Alors, pourquoi n'avez-vous pas fait ce que j'avais demandé?

1)  Correct version: ____________________________________________________________

   Explanation of mistake: ______________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

2)  Correct version: ____________________________________________________________

   Explanation of mistake: ______________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________
3) Correct version: ____________________________________________
Explanation of mistake: _______________________________________

4) Correct version: ____________________________________________
Explanation of mistake: _______________________________________

5) Correct version: ____________________________________________
Explanation of mistake: _______________________________________


STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE PART 2

NAME: _________________________

Section A

In the following sentences there is a mistake that is underlined. Correct the mistake and try to explain what is wrong with the original sentence. Be as detailed as possible in your explanation.

1) **Je suis fini.**
   
   Correct version: ____________________________ 
   
   J'ai fini.

   Explanation of mistake:
   
   The verb *finir* is conjugated with *être* and not *avoir*.
   
   or
   
   J'ai fini means "I have finished" and Je suis fini means "I am dead".

2) **J'étais à peu près six ans quand c'est arrivé.**
   
   Correct version: ____________________________
   
   J'avais à peu près six ans quand c'est arrivé.

   Explanation of mistake:
   
   The expression "to be x years old" is translated as *avoir x ans*.

3) **Savez-vous Sandra?**
   
   Correct version: ____________________________
   
   Connaissiez-vous Sandra?

   Explanation of mistake:
   
   The verb *savoir* means "to know" a fact. The verb
   
   *"connaître"* means "to know a person".

---

*4 Possible explanation is given as an example. All possible explanations were accepted.*
4) J'ai des autres choses à faire.
Correct version: J'ai d'autres choses à faire.
Explanation of mistake: When des precedes an adjective before a noun it reverts to de (d' in front of a vowel).

5) Le bonheur dépend sur bien des choses.
Correct version: Le bonheur dépend de bien des choses.
Explanation of mistake: The verb dépendre is followed by the preposition "de".

6) J'ai déjà vu ce film sur la télévision.
Correct version: J'ai déjà vu ce film à la télévision.
Explanation of mistake: To a francophone, sur used in this instance would imply "on top of". À is the correct French idiom.

7) Un de les garçons m'a invité à sortir.
Correct version: Un des garçons m'a invité à sortir.
Explanation of mistake: De when followed by les is contracted to des.

8) Marie est allé visiter sa tante.

45 J'ai les autres choses à faire (which was given by some students) was also accepted as a correct answer even though it would only occur on rare occasions. No other alternatives were suggested.
Marie est allée visiter sa tante.

With verbs that have être as their auxiliary in the passé composé the past participle agrees in number and gender with the subject of the verb.

9) J'ai venu voir les enfants.

Correct version: Je suis venu voir les enfants.

The verb venir has être as its auxiliary verb.

10) Suzanne a acheté la nouvelle cassette de U2.

Correct version: Suzanne a acheté la nouvelle cassette de U2.

The past participle of verbs which have avoir as their auxiliary verb do not agree in number and gender with the subject of the verb.

11) Ils se sont réveillé en retard ce matin.

Correct version: Ils se sont réveillés en retard ce matin.

The past participle of verbs which have être as their auxiliary verb agree in number and gender with the subject of the verb.

12) Cet été il pleuvais presque chaque fin de semaine.
Correct version:

\[
\text{Cet été il pleuvait presque chaque fin de semaine.}
\]

Explanation of mistake:

The 3rd. person singular imperfect tense ending is *ait* not *ais*.

13) *Ils étaient en train de partir quand le téléphone a sonné.*

Correct version:

\[
\text{Ils étaient en train de partir quand le téléphone a sonné.}
\]

Explanation of mistake:

The 3rd. person plural, imperfect tense ending is *aient*.

14) *On ne savais pas que tu allais venir.*

Correct version:

\[
\text{On ne savait pas que tu allais venir.}
\]

Explanation of mistake:

The 3rd. person singular, imperfect tense ending is *ait*.

15) *L’année dernière nous finissions toujours nos devoirs avant les autres.*

Correct version:

\[
\text{L’année dernière nous finissions toujours nos devoirs avant les autres.}
\]

Explanation of mistake:

The wrong tense has been used. The *imparfait* is used for habitual actions occurring in the past.

16) *Il arrivait à l’école à quelle heure?*
Correct version:  
Il est arrivé à quelle heure?

Explanation of mistake:  
The wrong tense has been used. The passé composé is used for completed actions in the past.

17) Pendant qu'il a regardé la télévision, sa maman est entrée.

Correct version:  
Pendant qu'il regardait la télévision, sa maman est entrée.

Explanation of mistake:  
The wrong tense has been used. The imparfait is used for interrupted actions in the past.

18) Jeudi dernier, je ne mangeais pas de petit-déjeuner avant de venir à l'école.

Correct version:  
Jeudi dernier, je n'ai pas mangé de petit-déjeuner avant de venir à l'école.

Explanation of mistake:  
The wrong tense has been used. The passé composé is used for completed actions in the past.

19) Nous avons joué au tennis quand vous avez téléphoné chez nous.

Correct version:  
Nous jouions au tennis quand vous avez téléphoné chez nous.

Explanation of mistake:  
The wrong tense has been used. The imparfait is used for interrupted actions in the past.
Section B

Translate the following sentences into English.

1) *Pendant les vacances je rencontrais mes amis tous les jours.*

   **During the vacation, I met my friends every day.**

2) *Pendant qu'il regardait la télévision le téléphone a sonné.*

   **While he was watching television, the telephone rang.**

3) *Je marchais à l'école quand j'ai vu l'accident.*

   **I was walking to school when I saw the accident.**

4) *J'ai marché à l'école et j'y suis arrivé à 8h 30.*

   **I walked to school and I got there at 8.30.**

Section C

There are five mistakes to do with verbs in the following paragraph. Try to find them by underlining them and then write the correct version below. Explain what the mistake is.

*C'est le professeur qui parle:*

  Quand j'ai arrivé à l'école ce matin tout le monde a parlé, personne ne travaillait. Pourtant je vous avais dit que je serais en retard aujourd'hui et je vous ai demandé de garder le silence et de travailler jusqu'à mon arrivée. J'avais écrit les exercices au tableau; j'avais préparé vos cahiers et j'avais demandé à Diane de les distribuer. Alors, pourquoi n'avez-vous pas fait ce que j'avais demandé?

1) **Correct version:** *je suis arrivé(e)*

   Explanation of mistake: **Arriver has être as its auxiliary verb**

2) **Correct version:** *tut le monde parlait*

   Explanation of mistake: **The wrong tense has been used. The action is incomplete so it is the imperfect tense which is required.**

3) **Correct version:** *je vous avais demandé*
Explanation of mistake: The *wrong* tense has been used. The *plus-que-parfait* should have been used in accordance with the other verbs in the sentence.

4) Correct version: *j'avais préparé*

Explanation of mistake: The *correct 1st person singular ending is *ais*.

5) Correct version: *j'avais demandé*

Explanation of mistake: *"ais" is an ending used with the imparfait. The correct ending for the past participle here is *é.*
Appendix G: Cloze Tests Treatment Stage

Nom:______________________

Classe:___________________

EXERCICE: LE VOL

Exemple:
Hier, pendant qu'il ______________ dans le parc, l'orage
(courir)

__________
(éclater)
LE VOL

Ce matin-là, en s'approchant des bâtiments de la Sécurité Nationale monsieur Leblanc a remarqué quelque chose d'anormal devant le laboratoire de physique. Il y a des voitures noires rangées côte à côte et tout le monde de l'événement:

"Vers onze heures hier soir, le gardien de nuit a été attaqué par des inconnus. On le pauvre homme inconscient dans le corridor du département de physique. On l' d'urgence à l'hôpital."

Monsieur Leblanc qui avoir plus de détails sur l'affaire.

dans le bâtiment. Au même instant, son ami le professeur Pelletier en courant, suivi de plusieurs personnes. "On mes dossiers secrets, le résultat de 15 ans de recherche!" a crié le professeur, qui pour la Sécurité Nationale. Il venait d'inventer un remède efficace contre les radiations atomiques.

A ce moment, un journaliste assistant à la scène l'interroger:


- Qui au courant?" le reporter.
"Personne. absolument personne." Soudain le visage du professeur de changer couleur et il de brusquement vers son confrère, monsieur Leblanc, qui, lui, sursauter.

Plus tard en parlant avec sa femme, le professeur Pelletier a dit: "Quand la police m'a interrogé, je n'ai pas voulu leur faire part de mes soupçons. Claude, mon jeune assistant, qui avait toute ma confiance, connaître l'importance de mes travaux. Il être la seule personne à savoir où se trouver mes papiers. Le matin du vol, il être dans mon bureau, au moment où André Leblanc et moi, nous entrer consultations mes notes. Nous rendez-vous tous les trois avec le Directeur avoir de la Sécurité Nationale, alors j'arranger mes dossiers, je les mettre dans le tiroir devant lui, et puis nous sortir. Ainsi désigner tout Claude comme le coupable.

Après plusieurs semaines d'enquête, l'inspecteur de police convoquer le professeur Pelletier. "Voilà votre coupable" a annoncé l'inspecteur, en désignant un homme assis au fond du bureau. "On relever ses empreintes à l'intérieur du tiroir dont vous posséder la clé. On retrouver l'outil qu'il utiliser pour forcer la serrure et on découvrir tous vos dossiers dans sa valise, alors qu'il les apporter à ses complices contre une forte somme d'argent."
Le professeur. ___________ la pièce rapidement, accablé par les preuves que (quitter)
l'inspecteur lui donnait. Il ne pouvait toujours pas y croire: André Leblanc, un de ses plus (faire)
anciens collègues et amis. ___________ partie d'un réseau d'espionnage!
(faire)

Le lendemain le professeur ___________ visiter Claude. Il (aller)
___________ comprendre pourquoi Claude avait volé les papiers. À dix heures le (vouloir)
professeur ___________ à l'appartement de Claude. L'inspecteur était déjà là. (arriver)

"Vous êtes arrivé trop tard. Claude vient juste de partir avec mes policiers" a-t-il dit.
Answer Key - Le vol

1. avait
2. parlait
3. a retrouvé
4. a emmené
5. voulait
6. s'est précopité
7. est arrivé
8. a volé
9. travaillait
10. est venu
11. a répondu
12. possédait
13. étaient
14. ont ouvert
15. était
16. a demandé
17. a changé
18. s'est retourné
19. a sursauté
20. connaissait
21. était
22. trouvait
23. est entré
24. avions
25. ai arrangé
26. ai mis
27. sommes sortis
28. désignait
29. a convoqué
30. a relevé
31. possédiez
32. a retrouvé
33. a utilisé
34. a découvert
35. apportait
36. a quitté
37. faisait
38. est allé
39. voulait
40. est arrivé
Nom: ____________________  
Classe: ____________________

**EXERCICE: LE MONSTRE**

Exemple:

Hier, pendant qu'il _______________ dans le parc, l'orage (courir)  
_________________________ (éclater)
LE MONSTRE

Hier soir, Charles nous voir à la maison et il nous a raconté une histoire très bizarre. Veux-tu la connaître? Alors, la voici: Charles chez son oncle à la campagne. Son oncle de nombreux livres et tous les après-midis Charles parce qu'il aimait beaucoup les histoires surnaturelles.

Un jour, alors qu'il assis dans le salon lisant comme d'habitude une histoire surnaturelle, il une expérience extraordinaire.

Charles était encore plongé dans son histoire lorsque, distraitement, il les yeux vers la fenêtre ouverte. Soudain, devant lui, il un monstre qui peu à peu la colline. Tout de suite Charles a pensé qu'il fou. Pourtant il avait vu le monstre, il même le décrire: une tête énorme, une bouche à l'extrémité d'une longue trompe avec de chaque côté des défenses brillantes. Mais le plus étrange la tête de mort dessinée sur sa poitrine. Au moment où Charles les mâchoires s'ouvrir, il de peur. Son oncle à toute vitesse. Tout surpris, il à Charles: "Que se passe-t-il ici?"
Après avoir écouté les explications de Charles, il ajoutera: "Tu lis trop, tu devrais sortir et faire de l'exercice. Toute cette histoire n'est qu'un rêve".

Mais Charles était sûr d'avoir vu le monstre et depuis cette vision, il avait vraiment peur. Pour lui, c'était le signe que quelque chose de terrible arriverait.

Quelques jours plus tard, alors que Charles et son oncle se trouvaient dans le même salon, Charles aperçut le monstre pour la seconde fois. En même temps, il saisit le bras de son oncle et lui montra la fenêtre. Son oncle regarda mais il n'y avait déjà plus rien. Tout de suite son oncle alla à hauteur pour demander sur la forme, la couleur et la grosseur du monstre. Comme Charles, l'oncle a souri. Il répondit prendre un livre dans la bibliothèque et il répondit à haute voix: "Sphinx, famille des Crépusculaires, classe des Insectes, bouche en forme de trompe, mandibules en forme de défense, sur le corps dessin d'une tête de mort".

Cela décrivait exactement le monstre. Après un moment, il ferma le livre et il s'assit à la place de Charles. Pendant qu'il venait par la fenêtre il s'est exclamé: "Ah, le voilà! Il est sur la colline.

Oh, un bel animal, mais pas aussi gros que tu as pensé. Il avance maintenant sur un fil d'araignée le long de la fenêtre. Ton oeil t'a trompé, la bête était trop près de toi, et le livre que tu as lu trop impressionnant.
Il faut se méfier des illusions d'optique Charles !

Charles terminer son histoire avec un sourire mystérieux et il nous (terminer)

si nous avions déjà eu une telle expérience. (demander)

Moi, (je) répondre que même avec son explication (je) (devoir)

son histoire difficile à croire. (Je) lui dire (trouver) (pouvoir)

que quelque chose de pareil ne m'était jamais arrivé. Et toi, t'est-il déjà arrivé quelque chose de pareil ?
Answer Key - *Le monstre*

1. est venu
2. se reposait
3. possédait
4. lisait
5. était
6. a eu
7. a levé
8. a vu
9. descendait
10. devenait
11. pouvait
12. était
13. a vu
14. a crié
15. est arrivé
16. a demandé
17. a ajouté
18. était
19. se trouvaient
20. a vu
21. a saisi
22. a montré
23. a regardé
24. avait
25. a interrogé
26. répondait
27. est allé
28. a lu
29. a refermé
30. est venu
31. regardait
32. pensais
33. lisais
34. a terminé
35. a demandé
36. a dû
37. trouvais
38. ai pu
Appendix H: Marking Scheme For Cloze Tests

Analysis 1: Accuracy

Items were considered correct if they were formally and functionally correct. Students scored one point for each correct answer. No point was given when accents were missing. Mistakes to the stem of the verb were ignored, for example, *il chachait, il descendait*, instead of *il cachait, il descendait*, unless the verb itself was irregular for example, *il était, ils fesaient*.

Analysis 2: Homophonous Errors

In addition to the items scoring a point in analysis one, this analysis awarded a point for all answers which would not be perceived if the text had been read aloud. The following forms were considered correct and awarded a point.

*Passé composé*:
1. use of an infinitive, second person plural (*ez*) form, or *imparfait* form (*ais, ait, aient*) in the past participle for example, *tu as voler tu as volez, tu as volais*; 
2. use of a homophonous form in the auxiliary, for example, *tu a volé*;
3. the following types of error in number or gender *il les a vu; j'ai vue*;
4. the following mistakes concerning reflexive pronouns *il/elle c'est précipité*.

*Imparfait*:
1. use of 'é' instead of the *imparfait* endings, for example, *illils se trouvé, etc.*
2. incorrect pronoun, *il ce trouvait; etc.*
3. errors in number *ils se trouvaient, il se trouvaient* etc.
4. the following type of mistake to the stem of the verb. *il fesait* etc.

The following forms were not considered correct:

---

*46* This form would not be considered homophous in standard French but would be considered to be homophous in some varieties of French. Moreover, the majority of FL students do not distinguish between /e/ and /i/ in this position, i.e. in their view 'ais' is considered homophous with 'é'.
Passé composé:

1. omission of the auxiliary *Il se précipite* etc.

Imparfait:

1. nonhomophonous reflexive pronoun errors *elle s'est trouvait* etc.
2. the following nonhomophonous errors to the stem of the verb *il faissait, laissait*, etc.
3. *ils commençaient, je mangais* etc.
Appendix J: Composition Tasks

Composition A

UN ACCIDENT TERRIBLE

Samedi dernier, Marie et Anna devaient garder le petit frère de Marie. Ils sont allés ensemble au parc. Jean, le frère de Marie, adorait la balançoire. Pendant que les deux filles se parlaient, il a essayé de se mettre debout sur la balançoire. Il est tombé.

- Aïe! a-t-il crié.

Les deux filles se sont précipitées vers la balançoire...

Composition B

UN RENDEZ-VOUS DIFFICILE

Hier, pendant l'heure du déjeuner, Sam, le propriétaire de Sam's Smoke Shop, a surpris trois garçons qui étaient en train de voler des paquets de croustilles et d'autres friandises. Il a téléphoné au directeur de leur école. Quand les garçons sont arrivés à l'école le directeur les attendait.

- Je voudrais vous parler dans mon bureau, leur a-t-il dit.

Gênés, les garçons sont entrés dans le bureau...

Appendix K: Categories Used In Scoring The Composition Tasks

Category 1  *Passé composé* required, *passé composé* used correctly.

Category 2  *Imparfait* required, *imparfait* used correctly.

Category 3  *Passé composé* required, *passé composé* used incorrectly: would not result in an error if read aloud (Homophonous errors criteria applied, Appendix J).

Category 4  *Imparfait* required, *imparfait* used incorrectly: would not result in an error if read aloud (Homophonous errors criteria applied, Appendix J).

Category 5  *Passé composé* required, *passé composé* used incorrectly: would result in an error if read aloud, for example, *il a revenu*. In order to be considered as an incorrect form of the *passé composé* a present tense auxiliary form of *être* or *avoir* and a past participle form were required. Forms such as *regardé* were not accepted.

Category 6  *Imparfait* required, *imparfait* used incorrectly: would result in an error if read aloud, e.g. *il commenciaient, vous aviez*.

Category 7  *Passé composé* required, a different tense used.

Category 8  *Imparfait* required, a different tense used.
Appendix L: Comparative Cloze Test *Passe Composé/Imparfait*

**Nom:** _______________________

**Classe:** _______________________

**EXERCICE:** UN GRAND MAGICIEN

**Exemple:**

Hier, pendant qu'il ______________ dans le parc, l'orage

________

________

________

________

________ (courir)

________ (éclater)
UN GRAND MAGICIEN

Vous avez sans doute entendu parler de Houdini, un des magiciens le plus connu du monde. Ses tours de magie sont aussi très célèbres.

Nous ________________ des tours de magie, mais comment est-ce que (voir)
les magiciens les ________________ ? S'ils ________________ de (faire) (être)
bons magiciens, nous ne (le) ________________ pas! (savoir)

Harry Houdini ________________ un des plus grands magiciens du (être)*47 monde. Il ________________ ouvrir n'importe quelle serrure et s'échapper de (pouvoir)
n'importe où. Houdini ________________ aussi très facilement de menottes. Il (se débarrasser)
(le) ________________ souvent sous l'eau. Une fois il (le) ________________ (faire)
sous la glace d'une rivière.

Une autre fois, Houdini ________________ enfermer dans une prison. (se faire)
Tout d'abord, les organisateurs lui ________________ certains de ses vêtements (enlever)
et les ________________ . On ________________ la porte du (cacher) (verrouiller)
cachot, puis on ________________ la porte de la prison. Comment quelqu'un (fermer)
__________________________ -il s'échapper? Or, quinze minutes plus tard, Houdini était (pouvoir)
sorti et il ________________ tous ses vêtements! (porter)
Comment avait-il fait? On sait qu'il ________________ souvent un petit (cacher)

*47* Indicates this item was not counted in the final scoring.
outil dans sa bouche ou dans son nez. Parfois. il _______________ l'outil sous (coller)

la plante d'un pied. S'était-il servi de ce petit outil pour ouvrir les portes de la prison?

Personne ne le sait.

Houdini n'a jamais raconté comment il _______________ ses tours. Mais il _______________ comment il _______________ (faire)*

(expliquer) (devenir)

habile à les faire.

Tout d'abord, il _______________ sa force. Il _______________ à se déplacer rapidement. Il _______________ ses (développer) (apprendre) (utiliser)

pieds comme si (ça) _______________ des mains. Avec ses orteils il _______________

(être) (pouvoir)

Il _______________ souvent que les magiciens _______________ (dire) (avoir)

un gros problème - la peur. "Pour certains tours, je suis enfermé dans une caisse qui est plongée dans l'eau. Pour m'en sortir, je dois agir rapidement. Si j'ai peur, je suis perdu. (Je) _______________ du temps à apprendre à ne pas avoir peur.

(prendre)

(Je) _______________ d'autres magiciens qui _______________ (voir) (rater)*

beaucoup de tours. Chaque fois (je) _______________ qu'ils _______________ (remarquer) (commencer)

à s'affoler."

Tous les magiciens _______________ de Harry Houdini. Ses tours (parler)*

(sembler)

______________ tenir de la magie même pour eux!

Si vous connaissez déjà des détails sur la vie de Houdini c'est
peut-être parce que vous avez vu le film qui raconte l'histoire de sa vie. Les grands
manitous du cinéma à Hollywood ________ de tourner le
(décider)
le film en 1953. Tony Curtis ________ le rôle du grand magicien. Le
(jouer)*
film ________ tous les événements principaux de la vie de cet homme
(décrire)*
remarquable qui ________ en 1874.
(naître)

Le film nous montre un grand désastre qui lui ________ . Vers
(arriver)
la fin de sa carrière. Houdini ________ mourir sur scène.
(faillir)

Il ________ dans une caisse de verre, remplie d'eau. Suspendu
(monter)
par les pieds, il ________ pour s'échapper pendant (que)
(lutter)
________ de centaines de spectateurs. Il n'a pas réussi à s'échapper et un
(regarder)
machiniste a dû le libérer. Heureusement, Houdini était encore vivant.

Ce grand magicien ________ en 1926.
(mourir)
1. avons vu
2. ont faits
3. étaient
4. savions
5. pouvait
6. se débarassait
7. faisait
8. a fait
9. s'est fait
10. ont enlevé
11. ont cachés
12. a verouillé
13. a fermé
14. pouvait
15. portait
16. cachait
17. collait
18. a expliqué
19. est devenu
20. a développé (was omitted from the analysis)
21. a appris
22. utilisait
23. étaient
24. pouvait
25. disait
26. avaient
27. ai pris
28. ai vu
29. remarquais
30. commençaient
31. semblaient
32. ont décidé
33. est né
34. est arrivé
35. a failli
36. est monté
37. a lutté
38. regardaient
39. est mort
Appendix M: Proof-Reading Task

SIR SANFORD FLEMING

Sir Sandford Fleming était née à Kirkcaldy Fifeshire a Écosse, le 7 Janvier 1827. Il était le fils de Andrew Greig Fleming et d'Elizabeth Arnot.

Il étudiait la topographie et l'ingénierie a Écosse et a l'âge de 18 ans il est devenu arpenteur. Il a parti de Glasgow pour la cité de Québec dans 1845. Le voyage a pris quatre semaines.

De Québec, Fleming voyageait a Peterborough en Ontario et en fin il est arrivé au Toronto. Dans 1847, encore en Toronto. Fleming a publié le livre "Railway Inventions".

Dans 1849 a Montréal, il a obtenu son commission comme un arpenteur provincial.

A son retour à Toronto. Fleming et une groupe d'arpenteurs et des ingénieurs ont fondé l'Institut Canadien, qui, plutar dans 1914 est devenu l'Institute Royal Canadien. Le but de l'institute était de réunir les gens pour discuter les effets des nouvelles découvertes scientifique. Parmi les accomplissements de l'institut était la création du Parc Algonquin et le Conseil National de Recherche.
SIR SANDFORD FLEMING

Sir Sandford Fleming était née à Kirkcaldy Fifeshire à Écosse, le 7 Janvier 1827. Il était le fils de Andrew Greig Fleming et d'Elizabeth Amot.

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TROUVEZ LES FAUTES

NOMS: ______________________
____________________
____________________

1. FAUTE: ______________________
EXPLICATION: ______________________

2. FAUTE: ______________________
EXPLICATION: ______________________

3. FAUTE: ______________________
EXPLICATION: ______________________

4. FAUTE: ______________________
EXPLICATION: ______________________

5. FAUTE: ______________________
EXPLICATION: ______________________

6. FAUTE: ______________________
13. FAUTE:___________________________________________
EXPLICATION:_________________________________________

14. FAUTE:___________________________________________
EXPLICATION:_________________________________________

15. FAUTE:___________________________________________
EXPLICATION:_________________________________________

16. FAUTE:___________________________________________
EXPLICATION:_________________________________________

17. FAUTE:___________________________________________
EXPLICATION:_________________________________________

18. FAUTE:___________________________________________
EXPLICATION:_________________________________________

19. FAUTE:___________________________________________
EXPLICATION:_________________________________________
20. FAUTE: ____________________________________________________________
EXPLICATION: _______________________________________________________

21. FAUTE: __________________________________________________________
EXPLICATION: _______________________________________________________

22. FAUTE: __________________________________________________________
EXPLICATION: _______________________________________________________
Appendix N: Student Checklist For Proof-Reading

1) Les verbes: a) le temps - présant
   - futur
   - passé passé composé
     passé simple
     imparfait
     conditionnel
     subjonctif

   b) la formation - sujet
     - terminaison
     - régulier/irrégulier

2) Les noms: a) le / la / l'
   b) singulier / pluriel (s / x ?)

3) Les adjectifs: a) position (avant / après le nom? - voir dictionnaire)
   b) masculin / féminin?
   c) singulier / pluriel?

4) de:
   du / de la / de l' / des

   MAIS: beaucoup de
   une liste de
   une boîte de
   une paire de
   une dizaine de

5) à
   au / à la / à l' / aux

6) tout
   tout / toute / tous / toutes

7) ce
   ce / cet / cette / ces

8) Pronoms: je
    tu
    il / elle / on
    nous
    vous
    ils / elles
    le
    lui
    leur
    y
    en

9) mon / ma / mes
   ton / ta / tes
   son / sa / ses
   notre / nos
   votre / vos
   leur / leurs

10) Quel: quel quelle quels quelles

11) Homonymes: ces / ses; à / a; on / ont
IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)

1.0
1.1
1.25
1.4
1.6

1.1
1.25
1.4
1.6

1.25
1.4
1.6

150mm

6"

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