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The Acquisition of French Past Tenses by Tutored Anglophone Advanced Learners: Is Aspect Enough?

(Volume 1)

EMMANUELLE LABEAU

Doctor of Philosophy

THE UNIVERSITY OF ASTON IN BIRMINGHAM
September 2002

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SUMMARY

Following Andersen's (1986, 1991) study of untutored anglophone learners of Spanish, aspectual features have been at the centre of hypotheses on the development of past verbal morphology in language acquisition. The Primacy of Aspect Hypothesis claims that the association of any verb category (*Aktionsart*) with any aspect (perfective or imperfective) constitutes the endpoint of acquisition. However, its predictions rely on the observation of a limited number of untutored learners at the early stages of their acquisition, and have yet to be confirmed in other settings.

The aim of the present thesis is to evaluate the explanatory power of the PAH in respect of the acquisition of French past tenses, an aspect of the language which constitutes a serious stumbling block for foreign learners, even those at the highest levels of proficiency (Coppieters 1987). The present research applies the PAH to the production of 61 anglophone 'advanced learners' (as defined in Bartning 1997) in a tutored environment. In so doing, it tests concurrent explanations, including the influence of the input, the influence of chunking, and the hypothesis of cyclic development. Finally, it discusses the cotextual and contextual factors that still provoke what Anderson (1991) terms "non-native glitches" at the final stage, as predicted by the PAH.

The first part of the thesis provides the theoretical background to the corpus analysis. It opens with a diachronic presentation of the French past tense system focusing on present areas of competition and developments that emphasize the complexity of the system to be acquired. The concepts of time, grammatical aspect and lexical aspect (*Aktionsart)* are introduced and discussed in the second chapter, and a distinctive formal representation of the French past tenses is offered in the third chapter.

The second part of the thesis is devoted to a corpus analysis. The data gathering procedures and the choice of tasks (oral and written film narratives based on *Modern Times*, cloze tests and acceptability judgement tests) are described and justified in the research methodology chapter. The research design was shaped by previous studies and consequently allows comparison with these. The second chapter is devoted to the narratives analysis and the third to the grammatical tasks. This section closes with a summary of discoveries and a comparison with previous results.

The conclusion addresses the initial research questions in the light of both theory and practice. It shows that the PAH fails to account for the complex phenomenon of past tense development in the acquisitional settings under study, as it adopts a local (the verb phrase) and linear (steady progression towards native usage) approach. It is thus suggested that past tense acquisition rather follows a pendular development as learners reformulate their learning hypotheses and become increasingly able to shift from local to global cues and so to integrate the influence of cotext and context in their tense choice.

Key Words:
French language – Aspect – *Aktionsart* - French as a foreign language - Corpus analysis

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Quand vous s'rez à l'université, vous vous rendrez compte que vous n'êtes qu'un imbécile. Si vous n'vous en rendez pas compte, c'est que vous en êtes vraiment un !

Michel Penninck,
My physics teacher at the Athénée royal de Lessines.

Une femme en sait toujours assez quand son esprit se hausse,
A connaître un pourpoint d'avec un haut-de-chausses.

Molière, Les Femmes savantes.

Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body.
Now all has been heard;
here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the whole duty of man.
For God will bring every deed into judgement,
including every hidden thing;
whether it is good or evil.

The Bible, Ecclesiastes 12: 12b-14.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The French past tenses: an acquisitional stumbling block

It is commonly acknowledged that French past tenses constitute a stumbling block both for foreign learners who are trying to master them and for teachers who struggle to act as effective facilitators in the process. Indeed, even at the highest levels of proficiency, foreign learners toil to master the use of the French past tenses, as shown by the hesitations between *passé composé* (PC) and *imparfait* (IMP) of near-native speakers in Coppieters (1987). Sten (1952: 95), in his book describing the French tenses, confessed the helplessness of even the best-trained linguist when faced with the choice of a French past form:

> On peut croire avoir saisi la différence théorique entre passé simple et imparfait, on peut même avoir écrit de savantes dissertations sur le sujet - et quand il faut traduire le prétérit d'une simple phrase germanique il arrive qu'avec toute sa science on ne sait pas comment faire.

In parallel to the problems encountered by learners, teachers experience difficulties in presenting the distinctions in a clear and meaningful way. Frustrations are often expressed in the literature and any teacher of French as a foreign language could testify to the existence of genuine difficulties. Virtually every single pedagogical study devoted to the past tenses emphasizes this:

> From the teacher's point of view, teaching the uses of passé composé and imperfect tenses has been a frustrating experience. (Terry 1981: 105)

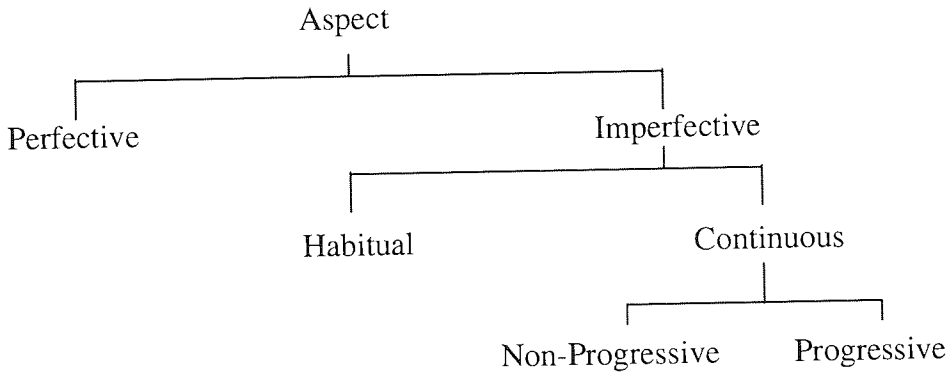
> The proper use [of the past tenses in French] has been a problem for teachers and students that has never been satisfactorily solved. (Abrate 1983: 546)

> Results of an informal poll taken recently of teachers of high school French show that one of the most difficult points of French grammar to teach to native speakers of English is the distinction between the passé composé and the imparfait. (Dansereau 1987: 33)

All the quotations above agree on the existence of a problem but its causes are not identified. The difficulty evoked above derives from the fact that there is no one-to-one correspondence between forms in the two languages, as shown in the following table. Although morphologically parallel, the *passé simple* (PS) and the simple past, the *passé composé* and the present perfect do not assume the same functions. Also inflectional morphology appears to be more prominent in French than it is in English where periphrases and progressive are used.

FRENCH		ENGLISH	
PASSÉ COMPOSÉ	J'ai déjà vu ce film	I have already seen that film	PRESENT PERFECT
	J'ai vu ce film l'an passé	I saw that film last year	SIMPLE PAST
PASSÉ SIMPLE	La révolution française éclata en 1789	The French Revolution broke out in 1789	SIMPLE PAST
IMPARFAIT	Des membres rédigeaient le rapport lorsque...	Members were writing the report when...	PAST CONTINUOUS
	Hélène était la fille du roi de Pologne	Hélène was the daughter of the Polish king	SIMPLE PAST
	La France s'appelait la Gaule	France used to be called Gaul	USED TO + INF
	Tous les matins, il achetait des petits pains au chocolat.	Every morning he would buy pains au chocolat	WOULD + INF

The main contrast between the two languages is not a matter of tense, which locates an event in time (Comrie 1985), as all morphological forms in the table have the ability to express the past. It is rather a question of aspect[1], the « ways of viewing the temporal consistency of a situation » (Comrie 1976: 3). Comrie (1976: 25) proposes this general classification of aspectual distinctions:

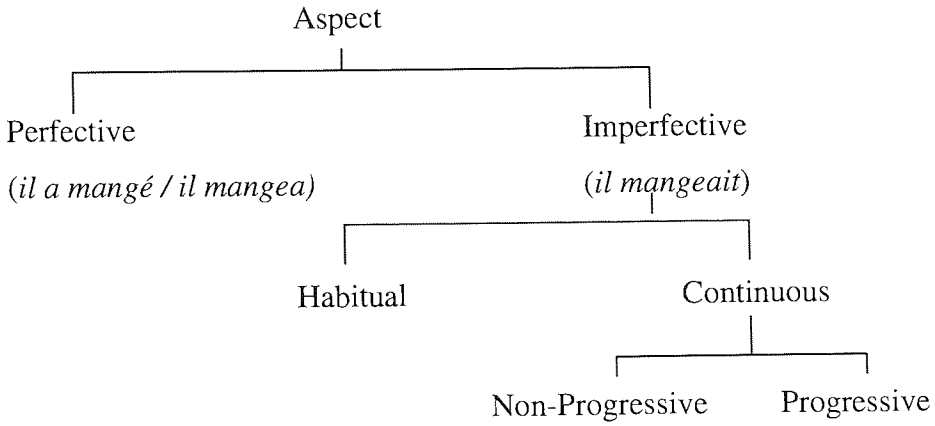


Perfectivity indicates that a situation is viewed in its entirety, globally, without paying attention to its internal development whilst imperfectivity focuses on the internal structure of the

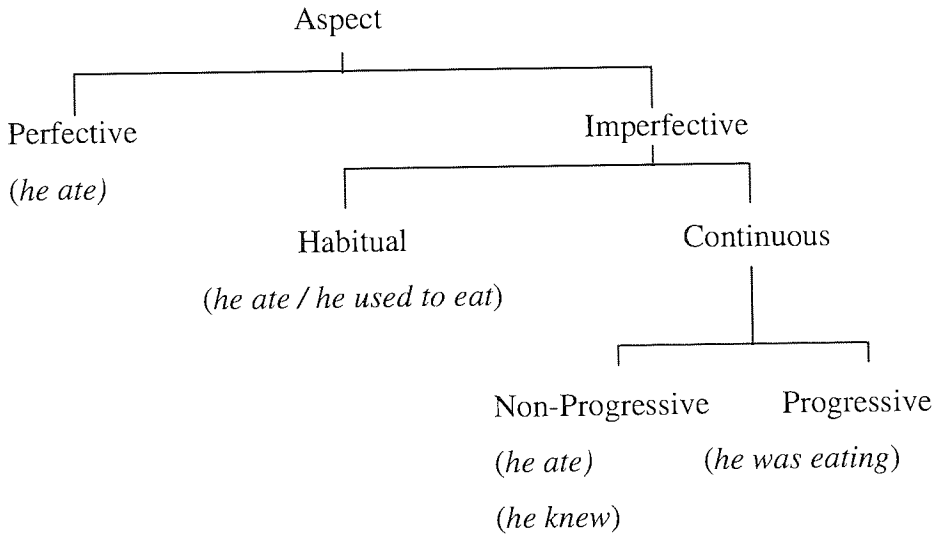
[1] These concepts of time, tense, grammatical aspect and lexical aspect are presented in more details in the first part of the thesis.

situation. Andrews (1992) uses that distribution and compares the ways both French and English express aspect through morphological means:

(a) for French:



(b) for English:



In French, the perfective / imperfective distinction is realized in the forms of the preterite (covering the PC and the PS) and the IMP. In English there is no direct correspondence between aspect and inflectional morphology, verbal morphology distinguishes progressive from non-progressive, and aspect is conveyed by periphrases or the progressive. Given the difference in forms/ functions mappings between the two languages, anglophone learners of French are likely, according to Andrews (1992) to (a) overextend the use of one form, the preterite, that is used for the same functions as the simple past in English or (b) to assimilate preterite and

simple past on the one hand and IMP and progressive on the other hand, thus overgeneralizing the use of the progressive.

It is therefore necessary to understand how foreign learners of French acquire the past tenses and to detect what « the speaker of a language with aspectual oppositions know that a nonspeaker does not know » (Binnick 1991: 209) or what prevents them from reaching ultimate attainment. This might also indirectly shed light on the nature of language acquisition and of language in general. Before providing an overview of the research to date on past tense acquisition, we will present some elementary concepts and trends of second language acquisition (SLA) that constitute the background to this study.

2. The phenomenon of language acquisition

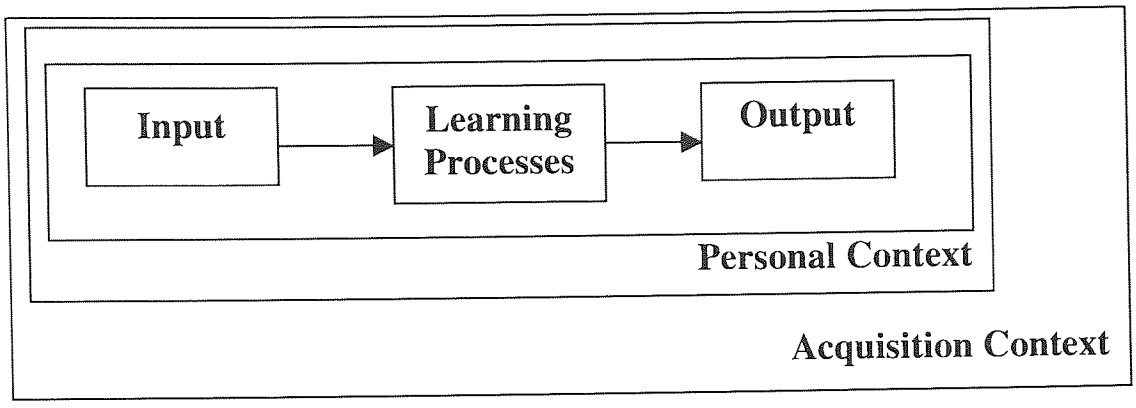
Language is recognized as a fundamental faculty of human nature. Except in case of severe mental impairment or social deprivation[2], all human beings succeed in acquiring at least one language, and often more. Three basic kinds of language acquisition can be distinguished: first language (L1) acquisition, reacquisition and SLA. First language acquisition describes the way in which children learn their mother tongue. A mother tongue can intuitively be defined as any language that is acquired while growing up and that is, in due course, fully mastered by a user. The acquisition is based upon naturalistic input, that is the examples of uses of the language by parents, siblings and other members of the community in everyday life. It may be however that a first or second language is lost by a speaker. The loss can be caused either by lack of practice or by pathology. The lack of practice can be found in the case of people who spend a long time in a foreign country and therefore forget their mother tongue or in the more common situation of people forgetting the foreign languages they studied at school because they have no opportunity to practise them. The pathologies can be due to diseases or accidents. Reacquisition will therefore be the process of recovering a lost (first or second) language, through either

[2]There are two well documented cases of such children: Itard, J.M.G. (1962) *The Wild Boy of Aveyron* (*L'Enfant sauvage*), Curtiss, S. (1977) *Genie: a Psycholinguistic Study of a Modern-day 'Wild Child'* and Rymer, R. (1993), *Genie: An Abused Child's Flight from Silence.*

tutored or untutored input. As for SLA, it is defined simply by Cook (1991) as a language acquired by a person in addition to his or her mother tongue. The mastery of the language can be and often is partial, and its acquisition relies on either tutored or untutored input (Klein 1986). Untutored or spontaneous input leads to the natural acquisition of an L2 without any formal guidance, on much the same basis as first language acquisition. Tutored input is provided for acquisition in a variety of educational settings. Krashen echoed this distinction in his use of the terms 'acquisition' and 'learning'. In his perspective, acquisition refers to the *'subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their first language'* (Krashen 1985: 1), while learning is *'a conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them'* (Krashen 1982: 10). However, most researchers do not use the distinction systematically (Ellis 1985b: 6, 14; Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991: 6; Cook 1993: 5) and in this study, the two terms are used interchangeably.

The various contexts in which acquisition can occur are known to have a significant impact on the acquisition process itself and its potential level of attainment. Different layers of influence are clearly expressed by Towell and Hawkins' (1994) classification of SLA theories, which is organized into three categories. The first of these, linguistic explanations, considers the relations between meaning and form that are involved in the learning of a target language (TL). The second, sociolinguistic studies, is concerned with the effect of the social context and learner's attitudes towards the L2, its speakers and its culture, as it influences the acquisition process. The last group of theories has a psychological or cognitive focus, and explore such issues as the mental apparatus, which comprehend, store and produce language. This three-fold classification provides us with a general typology of acquisitional factors that could of course be organized otherwise. Indeed, Krashen's (1985) Model for example integrates linguistic (natural order hypothesis), psychological (the affective filter) and environmental (the Input Hypothesis) aspects.

The different dimensions of language acquisition may therefore be represented in the following multi-layered fashion:



The social context involves the status of the TL in the society where the learning takes place. The political and economical standing of a language in a country is likely to influence the number and level of interest of learners. French is a prestigious foreign language in Britain, its acquisition has long been encouraged by the national educational system because of the historical role of French in this country and the privileged contemporary economic and political relations between France and Great-Britain. The context of acquisition of French in this country is therefore generally tutored and students are often foreign language learners[3] with access to classroom instruction only. It is well documented that instructed learners tend to use morphology more than untutored learners who tend, at least at the beginning of their learning, to rely more on pragmatic means such as lexical temporal indication (adverbs, temporal references, contextual clues...) rather than morphological tenses (see for example Dietrich, Klein & Noyau 1995, Meisel 1987, Perdue & Klein 1992, Schumann 1987, Trévise 1987, Véronique 1987). This type of learners is likely to focus on the communicative purposes of the message rather than on its form, which may in some cases lead to 'fossilization' (Dietrich et al. 1995, Klein & Perdue 1992, Meisel 1987, Perdue & Klein 1992). Fossilization refers to the phenomenon whereby linguistic features which differ from those found in the TL become permanently established in a learner's performance regardless of exposure to the target forms. In the tutored context on the other hand, the nature of the teaching programmes as well as the

[3] They are sometimes distinguished from second language learners who have access to both classroom and natural setting (Salaberry 2000: 3). English students with one francophone parent for instance might thus benefit both from tutored and untutored input.

learning environment in the curriculum can be expected to shape his or her mastery of the foreign language. Apart from their social situation, learners can also be characterized by a variety of personal factors depending upon their sociocultural background (Skehan 1989), cognitive styles (Heilemann & McDonald 1993, O'Malley & Chamot 1990, Oxford 1990) or affective characteristics (Bailey 1995).

While language is acquired by individuals with particular profiles in a given environment, language as a variable in itself is qualitatively distinct enough from other variables to allow each to be considered relatively independently for research purposes. In the next section, some language-based approaches to SLA that have led to the notion of interlanguage or the conception of learner's production as a coherent system on its own will be considered.

3. The notion of interlanguage

The relative autonomy of the language variable and its central position in the process of second language learning have led to a number of language-based theories. The emergence of the notion of interlanguage (IL) has been of particular importance, for the issue of (ultimate) attainment for instance. We therefore review below some of the successive frameworks that have made the formulation of this notion possible, namely contrastive analysis, error analysis and performance analysis.

As its name indicates, contrastive analysis (CA) is a framework that aims at comparing the second language to be acquired with the mother tongue of the learner. It does so in order to anticipate divergences between the languages, which are believed to cause difficulty, and predict the convergences that would bring about effortless mastery of the forms[4]. Researchers from the 1940s to the 1960s (e.g. Weinreich 1963) compared two languages in order to establish their similarities and differences that, if taken into consideration, were believed to result in more effective pedagogy. A theory supporting this position was elaborated by Lado; CA is thus concerned with « transfer, that is the process of using knowledge of the first language in learning a second language » (Ellis 1985b: 304-5). This transfer can yield positive results (in that case it is also called 'facilitation'), or negative ones (also known as

'interference') depending upon whether the first language patterns are comparable or not to those of the TL. CA therefore rests on the assumption that errors which L2 learners make are related to mismatches of the TL structure with their mother tongue. The first case involves the split of an L1 form into two or more in the L2; for example the English verb 'to know' is equivalent to either *'connaître'* or *'savoir'* in French. The opposite, 'coalescence', happens when several forms in the L1 correspond to one in the L2; for instance English possesses two auxiliaries for the future, 'will' and 'shall'. Problems can also appear when the L1 or the L2 possesses features that are either absent in the other language (for example the use of 'to do' for asking questions in English, or the variety of verb ending in French which contrasts to what is found in English). In its strong version (or 'a-priori' or 'predictive'), the CA hypothesis claims that all L2 errors can be predicted by identifying the differences between the TL and the learner's L1. The weak version (or 'a posteriori' or 'explanatory') attempts to account for learners' recurring errors by the differences between the L1 and the L2.

CA posits that errors predicted to derive from the L1 are to be prevented by teaching in tutored contexts, and positive transfers are to be encouraged by positive reinforcement. CA is indeed based upon a behaviourist view of language, according to which language learning constitutes a set of habits formed as responses to linguistic stimuli, those responses being themselves reinforced or corrected by further environmental evidence. It seems to be founded on a structural understanding of language as a static set of forms and patterns that can be readily compared. Of course, severe criticisms have been addressed to these theoretical assumptions, especially given that they no longer constitute standard hypotheses about the nature of language or language learning. They further raise a number of empirical problems – such as limitations to pairs of languages - that have led to their replacement by concurrent models.

CA predicts that where a language has features similar to the L1, its mastery by second language learners should follow. However, positive transfer does not always happen. Towell and Hawkins (1994: 19) report Odlin's (1989) experiment that shows that although Spanish has a copula verb equivalent to 'to be', hispanophone learners of English usually miss it out in early stages of acquisition producing sentences like 'that very simple'. Research shows that when the two languages are very close, L2 learners are reluctant to impose rules or vocabulary

[4] The comparative table under the first section of this introduction shares in that type of approach.

from their L1 on the language they are acquiring. Conversely, not all errors can be attributed to mismatches between source language and TL (Ellis 1985b: 27; Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991: 55). In fact, errors due to interference seem to constitute only a (tiny) part of all errors: interference errors were found to account for from 3% (Dulay and Burt 1973) to 51% (Tran-Chi-Chau 1975) (figures provided in Ellis 1994: 302) of all errors.

These limitations of CA brought about the elaboration of a new framework of analysis known as Error Analysis (EA). More empirical in focus, less inclined to propose a general hypothesis about a unique source of mistakes in foreign learners productions, EA sought to provide a fuller picture of the type of problematic behaviours in the TL from speakers of different mother tongues. EA was proposed in the late 1960s by researchers such as Corder, in the wake of Chomsky's theories about the existence of a language acquisition device. EA typically sets it out as five steps. Errors are first identified, then described and explained. An evaluation aims at preventing and correcting mistakes. A distinction is made by Corder (1981) between errors of performance - that is to say mistakes in language use manifested as repetitions, false starts or slips of the tongue - and errors of competence. This latter category consists of application of rules, which do not quite correspond to the L2 norm; they can be due to relations between different languages, as with CA, or be internal to a given linguistic system. The use of PC with *depuis* in French, copied on the present perfect + 'since' in English would be an interlingual error. The use of the past participle form 'showed' for 'shown' would be an intralingual error due to overgeneralization.

Because of their empirical focus, the theoretical views put forward are partial. They still take a view external to the learning process itself – they present a static image of L2 learning behaviour at a given stage (Van Els et al. 1984: 66, Ellis 1994: 68). With EA, the view of language remains partly contrastive, as it focuses on the native standards to be attained rather than on the learner's internal grammar in itself; it is restricted by definition to what the learner cannot do (Ellis 1994: 67, Van Els et al. 1984: 66).

While a larger set of empirical data is considered, EA still fails to provide a comprehensive picture of acquisition language problems. It is able to spot overt errors (deviant in form) but fails to spot covert errors (superficially well formed but which do not mean what the learner intended to say), which is why it focuses on production and neglects comprehension (Brown 1994: 206). It cannot capture some aspects of the learning process such as avoidance (Brown 1994: 207). Gass & Selinker (2001: 80) give as an example Schachter's (1974) study of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, where Japanese and Chinese subjects of English

made fewer mistakes in relative clauses than Arabic and Iranian learners, despite the fact that the structure does not exist at all in either of their mother tongue although it does in Arabic and Iranian languages. Further enquiry showed that better performance resulted from avoidance strategies. It seems that the Japanese and Chinese subjects recognized their lack of competence and did not use relative clauses unless they had acquired enough mastery.

The problems of EA led researchers to take a different procedural approach to L2 development, namely Performance Analysis (PA). While like EA, this approach is still committed to analyzing language problems observed in the learner's production, PA provides a more broad-based study. PA emerged in the early 1970s and was mainly illustrated by (a) morphemes studies and analyses of developmental sequences, (b) the study of learners' strategies or (c) the evolution of the mapping of forms and functions. An example of morpheme studies is Burt, Dulay & Hernandez-Chavez (1975)[5]. Using a picture-elicitation device, they proposed the existence of a strict order of acquisition for eleven English morphemes, based on the production of Chinese and Spanish children. Those results led them to believe that the acquisition order was impervious to L1 influence. As far as learners' strategies are concerned, they consist of for example, relexification on the L1 syntactic patterns (Butterworth 1972[6]) and formulaic utterances (Hakuta 1974[7]). As for studies of form-function mapping, they seem to agree on the facts that forms are acquired before functions (Bahns & Wode 1980[8]) and that all the functions of a given form are not learnt at the same time. Andersen (1984) suggests a 'one-to-one principle' by which learners try to maintain a simple relationship between one linguistic form and a function.

As for the order of acquisition of French past tenses, it is less straightforward a matter to establish, if only because their uses for instance do not have the discrete, readily identifiable quality of morphemes. Nonetheless, as far as the forms themselves go, L1 acquisition studies seem to indicate a consistent order by which past time reference is successively expressed morphologically by the *présent* (PRES), then by the *passé composé* (PC) followed by the

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[5] Burt. M., Dulay, H. & Hernandez-Chavez, E. (1975) *Bilingual Syntax Measure.* New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch.

[6] Butterworth, G. (1972) *A Spanish-speaking adolescent's acquisition of English syntax.* MA TESL thesis. University of California in Los Angeles.

[7] Hakuta, K. (1974) 'A preliminary report on the development of grammatical morphemes in a Japanese girl learning English as a second language'. *Working Papers on Bilingualism* 3: 18-43.

[8] Bahns, J & Wode, H. (1980) 'Forms and function in L2 acquisition: the case of do-support in negation'. In Felix, S. (ed.) *Second language development.* Tubingen, Gunther Narr, pp. 81-92.

imparfait (IMP) and finally by the *plus-que-parfait* (PQP) (Labelle 1994 & Schlyter 1998[9]). Let us note that on the more general issue of reference to time, Piagetian studies, relying on the idea that cognitive development is at the basis of language development had earlier proposed a typology of first language acquisition. Another study (Bronckart & Sinclair 1973) concludes that children use the present tense mostly with durative verbs that focus on the internal unfolding of the event, and the past with achievements and accomplishments – what we have called telic[10] verbs - where a clear end result is implied. But the acquisition of an L2 is different from the acquisition of L1. First, one can rely on the knowledge of the L1 as far as the tense and aspect morphological marking is concerned. Adults are able to grasp the contrasts between absolute and relative temporal marking from their L1 experience (Weist 1989). Moreover, some researchers (Schmidt 1990, Newport 1990, Sinclair et al. 1978) have argued that the differences of ultimate achievement between child and adult could be put down to a « shift of conscious awareness » from child to adult. This means that, because of their higher cognitive development, adults might pay less attention to matching forms and meanings and therefore learn less than children who concentrate more on small bits of information because of their limited perceptual abilities. As far as the past tenses are concerned, imperfective tenses seem to appear after perfective ones (Bergström 1995, Brum de Paula 1998[11], Howard 2002, Salaberry 1998 and Schlyter 1986, 1990 & 1998).

These three language-based approaches alone provide an impressive development towards the notion of interlanguage. Introduced by Selinker in 1972, interlanguage can be defined as 'interim grammars' that second language learners constructed on their way to the target language. The notion thus implies both a horizontal or synchronic dimension referring to the IL that a learner possesses at any given time and a vertical or diachronic dimension related to the developmental stages that a learner language goes through (Corder 1981). Apart from some non-systematic aspects attributed to performance, the competence of the speakers at any stage of their interlanguage manifests itself as systematic, rule-governed knowledge. This explains for instance why second language speakers can produce persistently and over quite long periods of time structures that would be considered erroneous in the TL (Long 1995). The importance of the notion of interlanguage thus resides in the perspective it brings of learners' intermediate linguistic systems as being independent, governed by their own rules, which are

[9] Schlyter, S. (1998) 'La saisie de l'imparfait chez les enfants monolingues, les apprenants adultes et les enfants bilingues, in Noyau, C. (ed.) *Acquisition de la temporalité en situation bilingue*, LINX (Linguistique à Paris X) 38 : 145-169.

[10] See Part 1, chapter 2 for a definition.

[11] Brum de Paula, M. (1998) *L'appropriation de la temporalité morphologique en langue étrangère : contextes linguistiques d'émergence et de structuration.* Unpublished thesis, Université de Paris X-Nanterre.

different from those of both the L1 and the L2. This is convergent with the current understanding of language as a *rule-governed behaviour*. Chomsky had argued as early as 1959 that language is not simply - as Skinner, a behaviourist, would have it - a series of habits acquired by imitation through reinforcement. It is put forward that frequency of input, imitation and reinforcement do not ensure correct production. For instance, past tense formation goes through a period of overgeneralization (Ervin 1964[12]), producing forms such as *goed* that do not exist in normal usage. Some very frequently occuring linguistic items, like articles or past endings, are not readily learnt by first and second language learners, who can ignore them entirely through initial learning phases. Finally, as established by Brown[13] (1973), morpheme acquisition order shows no necessary correlation with the frequency of input. Finally, early studies (Brown et al. 1968) showed that parents paid more attention to the truth value of their children's utterances than to the grammatical acceptability. Other studies proved also that native speakers focus on content more than on form when communicating with non-native speakers, sometimes using a particular communication form, called foreigner talk. This contains specificities like copula deletion (eg. you OK?), lack of tense marking (she come yesterday) or the simplification of negation (no want food).

The notion of interlanguage thus offers a powerful framework in which competing hypotheses about the factors driving the second-language acquisition of French past tenses can be evaluated. It was shown above that the selection of a past tense consists of matching tense and aspect; therefore the following section will provide an overview of SLA research in those areas.

4. Second Language acquisition research in tense and aspect

Initial interest in tense-aspect morphology emerged as a part of morpheme studies in the 1970s. Typical research in morpheme accuracy order would study the emergence of regular vs irregular past or of simple past vs progressive. Later studies would integrate a variety of tasks

[12] Ervin, S. (1964) 'Imitation and structural change in children's language', in Lenneberg, E. (ed) *New Directions in the Study of Language*. Cambridge, Ma., MIT Press, pp.163-189.
[13] Brown, R. (1973) *A first Language : the early stages*. Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press.

and syntactic environments to elicit possible variations. For example, Ellis (1987) studied three English past forms (regular and irregular forms and copula) in three tasks (planned written narratives, planned and unplanned oral narratives) and found out that the appropriate use of irregular pasts varied little across the tasks, unlike the regular forms and the copula. Kaplan (1987) investigated the order in which the French *passé composé* (PC) and *imparfait* (IMP) appeared in learners' interlanguage; on the basis of formal complexity, the IMP should be acquired first but this was not the case because of the semantic complexity of that form.

However, a major weakness of morpheme studies has been the failure to distinguish form from meaning; the emergence of morphology does not necessarily imply the mastery of its semantics: significant differences between accuracy of the form and mastery of its meaning are reported in Bardovi-Harlig (1992). As a result, subsequent studies from the 1980s onwards investigated the underlying interlanguage semantics of the morphemes.

A first strand of such studies, favoured in North America, consists of form-oriented analyses: a given morpheme (eg. the IMP) is selected to see how and where it appears in the IL in order to establish its meaning in the system. On the other hand, the European tradition of meaning-based analyses starts from a given concept (eg. pastness) and investigate its linguistic realizations. As a result, the focus of research expands from the sole morphological system to other linguistic and pragmatic means.

The European Science Foundation (ESF) project led by Perdue and Klein has investigated the acquisition of Dutch, English, French, Italian and Swedish in that meaning-based framework and has encouraged a range of studies that are mostly longitudinal, concerned with untutored learners, and based on interviews (Véronique 1987, Trévise 1987, Schlyter 1990) and film recounts (Noyau 1994, Dietrich et al. 1995). The main research questions include the identification of means to express temporality at a given stage of IL, the developmental patterns that emerge and the explanations for the shift from one stage to another. The studies suggest an evolution of past marking that goes through three stages: pragmatic means, lexical means and morphological means. At the earliest levels, tense-aspect morphology is missing and temporality is expressed in four ways: (1) by relying on input from other speakers (for example interviewers), a process that is known as 'scaffolding', (2) by implicit

reference[14]; (3) by contrasting events and (4) by following chronology in narration order (Principle of Natural Order, Klein 1986). A second stage consists in using temporal markers such as adverbial expressions to convey the reference to the past (*hier, puis...)* or connectives (*et, donc...)*. They are usually combined with unmarked verbs that are used as a default form, either an existing form that is generalized (e.g. PRES to express past) or an invented form. As this is an effective communicative system, many untutored learners do not progress beyond that stage (Dietrich et al. 1995) and their language becomes 'fossilized'. Finally, verbal morphology emerges, at first not systematically, and coexists with earlier means. It seems that tutored learners achieved more appropriate use of verbal morphology (Bergström 1995, Hasbún 1995), which may be related to classroom pressure (Kaplan 1987) or to more favourable extra-linguistic settings such as better socio-economic conditions or cognitive maturity (Bardovi-Harlig 1999: 352). Once past verbal morphology is systematically used, learners become able to bypass pragmatic means such as chronological order to express double anteriority, first by adverbials then by verbal morphology (see Bardovi-Harlig 1992b) or by using other syntactical means such as subordinate clauses (Klein & Perdue 1992).

We now turn to the other strand of studies that are form-oriented and as such, focus more on the development of verbal morphology. According to what is known alternatively as the aspect hypothesis (Andersen & Shirai 1994), the Primacy of Aspect hypothesis (PAH)[15](Robison 1990), the Redundant Marking Hypothesis (Shirai & Kurano 1998) or originally the defective tense hypothesis (Andersen 1986, 1991 from Weist et al. 1984[16]), « in the beginning stages of language acquisition only inherent aspectual distinctions are encoded by verbal morphology, not tense or grammatical aspect » (Andersen 1991: 307). This claim is based on L1 acquisition of tense morphology (see Robison 1990: 318-319 for an overview).

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[14] Salaberry (2000 : 55) provides two examples of such implicit reference borrowed to Stutterheim and Klein (1987) :

(1) Turkey vacation come back, my husband ill.

(2) Turkey vacation, my husband ill.

In the first sentence it is the inherent temporal reference provided by the lexical semantics of 'to come' that helps interpret the utterance ; in the second instance, the spatial reference provides a temporal setting.

[15] We will adopt the appellation 'Primacy of Aspect Hypothesis' in this study as it is in our opinion the most transparent.

[16] Weist, R.M., Wysocka, H, Witkowska-Stadnik, K., Buczowska, W. & Konieczna, E. (1984) 'The Defective Tense Hypothesis : On the Emergence of Tense and Aspect in Child Polish', *Journal of Child Language* 11 : 347-374.

Andersen's study (1986) of adolescent anglophone learners of Spanish in Puerto Rico led him to argue that L2 learners follow a similar sequence in developing aspectual markers. Andersen (1986, 1991) uses Vendler's (1967) aspectual distinction[17]: states (no dynamics, continue without energy applied), activities (with a duration but without a necessary endpoint), accomplishments (with some duration and a necessary endpoint) and achievements (reducible to a single point in time). According to Andersen's hypothesis, verbal morphology emerges in complementary distribution: perfective with events (the term provided by Mourelatos, 1981 for accomplishments and achievements), imperfective with states and progressive with activities. At stage one, neither past tense nor aspect is marked and a default form is used. Stage 2 sees preterite appear with punctual verbs only whilst stative verbs emerge in the imperfect at stage 3. Stage 4 sees past marking in all categories with preterite spreading to accomplishments and imperfect to activities. From stage 5 onwards, verbal morphology starts overlapping within each verb category and stage 8 where stative verbs are finally encoded in the preterite is supposed to represent the final development of the aspectual system:

> Stage 8 captures the final development that takes the non-native speakers to the endpoint of their acquisition: states can now be represented as a whole, having a beginning and an end, as punctual and telic events have inherently.
> There are, by stage 8, still some nonnative glitches in the system. But with regard to the ability to manipulate Preterit and Imperfect forms to capture the speaker's perspective on the event, by stage 8, the children [...] have finally arrived at near-native competence of this system. (Andersen 1991: 316)

Aston University

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Table from Andersen 1991: 314

[17] To be presented in more detail in Part I, chapter 2.

However, the proposed sequence is disputable both from an empirical and a theoretical point of view. First, Andersen's data do not support all stages:

> For data from two learners at two time periods, only four stages can be posited from direct evidence. These are stages 2 and 4 for Anthony and Annette, respectively, at Time 1 and stages 6 and 8 for Anthony and Annette, respectively at Time 2. The other stages are posited as intermediate stages through which the learners should have passed, even though we have no samples from these stages. (Andersen 1991: 313-4).

The sequence does not therefore account for all developmental stages found in other studies such as, for example, the absence of verbal morphology (see Dietrich et al. 1995); however, this is not surprising as the focus is on verbal morphology and not on ways to express a past function (Robison 1990: 316). Moreover, the relevance of the sequence has been questioned for advanced learners (for a critical review, see Kihlstedt 1998: 43ff). It seems indeed that after stage 5, the sequence loses its explanatory power. The Relevance Principle based on Bybee's (1995: 447) is not functional any more once any verb can be associated to any morpheme; that principle claims that:

> Aspect has greater relevance to the verb than tense because aspect affects the way the internal temporal contours of the situation are viewed, while tense takes the situation as a whole and places it in relative time without changing the perspective on the nature of the event described by the verb. (quoted in Salaberry 2000: 62)

The same applies to the Congruence Principle (learners use morphemes with the most similar meaning to that of the verb).

On the other hand, it has been argued that this developmental pattern might be restricted to untutored learning and might not apply to other acquisitional contexts. For example Salaberry (1998: 532) questions the value of the sequence in tutored learning where the classroom might not provide the necessary input to identify prototypical markers of lexical aspect. Early case studies of untutored adult learners were carried out (Robison 1990, Andersen 1986 & 1990) but they presented serious disadvantages such as the possibility of idiosyncrasies and the lack of quantification. However few studies (Kaplan 1987, Swain 1992[18]) have investigated the nature of a possible distributional bias in the marking of aspect in the

[18] Swain, M. (1992) 'Manipulating and complementing content teaching to maximize learning', in Kellerman, E. Philipson, R., Selinker, L. & Sharwood-Smith, M. (eds) *Foreign / Second Language Pedagogy Research.* Clevedon, Multilingual Press.

classroom. As a result, later studies have included bigger cohorts and instructed learners: foreign language learners (Bardovi-Harlig & Bergström 1996, Bergström 1995) and learners in the target language environment (Bardovi-Harlig & Reynolds 1995).

The strong version of the hypothesis that suggests strict categorical development of verbal morphology has thus been toned down to state that learners will initially be influenced by the inherent semantic aspect of verbs:

> [...] the prediction supported by this study is that while the exact pattern will vary depending on L1, L2, and individual differences between learners, verbal morphology correlates with lexical aspect at least during some stage in the development of an interlanguage. (Robison 1990: 329-330)

The aspect hypothesis as formulated in Andersen and Shirai (1994, 1996) relies on four tenets:

> 1. Learners use perfective past marking (e.g. Preterite) first on telic [situation with an inherent endpoint[19]] events and they later extend its use to verbs from other lexical aspectual classes
> 2. The imperfective marker (e.g. Imperfect) will appear later than the Preterite in association with atelic events (states and activities), eventually extending to telic events
> 3. The use of periphrastic Progressive will initially appear in association with activity verbs and then extend to telic events
> 4. The use of periphrastic Progressive will not overextend to stative verbs. (Shirai & Kurono 1998: 248-9)

As far as French is concerned, the first statement is confirmed by Bardovi-Harlig and Bergström (1996), a contrastive analysis based on data from L2 English and L2 French. Bardovi-Harlig (1999: 360) suggests that this is linked with the dominance of achievements in narratives. As for the second statement, Harley & Swain (1978) show that the PC emerges before the IMP, a fact that Kaplan (1987) confirms. Bergström (1995), on the basis of narratives produced by 117 learners of French in the first, second and third years of a university degree, finds that the IMP appears in the second year with states before spreading to activities in the third year. Kaplan (1987) also mentions that imperfectivity may be indicated by a default form (PRES) before the morphology of the IMP is acquired. The third and fourth claims are more difficult to evaluate in French given that there is no morphological expression of progressive that can compare with the English –ing forms.

[19] See Part I, chapter 2 for a more detailed definition.

Another category of form-oriented research studies the distribution of aspect-tense morphology according to discourse structure of foreground that relates the backbone of the discourse and the background that consists of secondary material such as explanations, judgements... Véronique (1987) shows that 7 untutored Arabic- and Berber- speaking learners of French varied in their use of verbal morphology across levels although there were also differences across learners and across tasks. Noyau (1990) also mentions the possible bias provoked by the discourse type.

This brief overview of the acquisition of temporality shows a major evolution in the last two decades. However, although the acquisition of most European languages is well documented for the early stages, advanced development is less chartered. Bardovi-Harlig (1999: 369) mentions the need to fill some gaps in our knowledge:

> There is less documentation on later-learned verbal morphology and form-meaning associations. [...] Whereas the field has nearly accomplished the necessary documentation of early to intermediate stages of acquisition (at least in languages that are most frequently investigated), there are still gaps in our knowledge of advanced stages in most languages...

The present study will seek to contribute to the general field of past tense acquisition both in its methodology and its research hypotheses, which are developed in turn in the following section.

5. Overview of the thesis

5.1. Research questions

The Primacy of Aspect Hypothesis has provoked much interest since it was first formulated and we have seen that its claims had to be revised in view of theoretical and empirical evidence. In view of this, the present study will attempt to evaluate the role of lexical aspect (that we will call *Aktionsart*[20]) in the development of verbal morphology at advanced levels in tutored settings. It will assess the possible roles of other acquisition patterns such as

[20] For a justification of this terminology, see Part I, chapter 2.

'chunking' (the use of memorized chunks) and of the input provided to the learners. It will also test the explanatory power of a hypothesis such as the PAH when native speakers share tendencies to combination.

A second research question will explore the nature of language acquisition: is it a linear or a cyclic process? The PAH presents it as a linear progression where forms expand in a determined order from one category to another. Research in the wake of the ESF project has similarly suggested that temporality was expressed by a clear succession of means: first by pragmatics then by lexicon and finally by verbal morphology. However, a neat linear development may not reflect actual development as Bardovi-Harlig (1999: 374) hinted on the basis of her study of pluperfect acquisition:

> Does a learner traverse the pragmatic-lexical-grammatical path only once, arriving at a morphological stage to then solve all or most of the need for additional expression through the acquisition of additional morphology? Or does a learner go through the cycle again and again (if not all the way at least from the lexical stage to the morphological), relying on adverbs to carry the functional load before a new morphological contrast is established? Works by Bardovi-Harlig (1994b) suggest that the second scenario fits the longitudinal data, but additional studies are necessary.

A last question will try to identify the remaining « nonnative glitches » (Andersen 1991: 316) that still mar learners' production once they are able to associate any category of verb with any tense. Indeed, at the highest levels of proficiency, although verbal morphology may be acquired, non-native uses and intuitions still appear (see Coppieters 1987). Vet & Vetters (1994: 1) argue that the meaning of tense and aspect forms « strongly depends on contextual factors and probably on the type of text as well, so that tense and aspect cannot be properly studied if their contribution to text cohesion is not taken into account ». García and van Putte (1988, in Salaberry 2000: 2) go in the same direction when they claim that, for Spanish, the past tense system of which is close to what is found in French, « non-native speakers seem to rely on more local cues for the selection of aspectual markers of past tenses ». So we will also explore the cotextual and contextual elements that may contribute to expressing the function of past in IL.

5.2. Original contribution

The present study constitutes a significant contribution to the field of tense-aspect morphology development for a series of reasons. First, most of the empirical research analyzes the production of beginners or intermediate learners (Kaplan 1987) rather than advanced learners. Then, few empirical studies are devoted to the aspectual development of past tenses in L2 French (Bergström 1995, Kihlstedt 1998, Salaberry 1998, Howard 2002). It has just been mentioned that there was a dearth of data on later stages of verbal morphology acquisition. Therefore we have chosen to work with advanced learners also known as *apprenants qualifiés* (Kihlstedt 1998: 20) or *apprenants d'instruction élevée* (Bartning 1997: 13):

> [L'apprenant d'un niveau d'instruction élevé] est donc un apprenant qui a étudié la L[angue] C[ible] en tant que langue étrangère à l'école, souvent dans un pays autre que celui de la langue cible, et qui continue à l'université. Il s'agit d'un apprenant guidé, ayant des connaissances métalinguistiques de la langue cible. Son apprentissage est parfois « mixte » grâce à des stages et des séjours à l'étranger [...] Pour exercer ultérieurement des activités professionnelles, il aura souvent besoin d'un répertoire spécifique et explicite des structures d'expressions [...] Ajoutons que la langue étrangère n'est pas toujours sa deuxième langue mais souvent la troisième.

Moreover, the number of subjects under study is larger than that which is usually found in L2 acquisition. Usually studies focus on individual or very small groups: 4 in Kihlstedt (1998), 16 in Kaplan (1987), 18 in Howard (2002), 39 in Salaberry (1998), with the noticeable exception of Bergström (1995) who works on data produced by 117 L2 French learners. The limited number of subjects can potentially prevent a credible generalization of results.

Furthermore, our data includes both (1) a cross-sectional analysis of the data (collected across a series of language tasks: written and oral narratives, cloze test and grammaticality judgements), which contributes to reducing the bias linked with a single task, and (2) a pseudo-longitudinal dimension in that it examines three levels of learning, thereby helping refine our understanding of acquisition at various stages of the advanced variety.

In addition to the many aspects that make its contribution substantial, this thesis offers empirical verification for hypotheses little tested outside groups of beginners and provides a description of the phenomena present in French past tense acquisition at advanced levels.

5.3. Plan of the thesis

The thesis comprises two parts, the first offering the theoretical background to the data analysis presented in the second. The first part opens with a discussion of problematic areas of the contemporary French past tense system; it shows from a diachronic perspective the competition and overlaps between forms and functions with which learners are confronted. The second chapter begins with an overview of contemporary research on the subject; then, the concepts necessary for distinguishing between forms are selected and defined. The first section closes on a formal distinctive representation of French past tenses on the basis of the features defined earlier. Equipped with that theoretical knowledge, we then come to the field research. The second part starts with a detailed description of the research methodology we have adopted in order to test our research questions. The second chapter is devoted to the analysis of past tenses in written and oral narratives produced by our subjects whilst the third tackles their use in cloze tests. After offering an overview of the main acquisitional features found in our data and comparing them with previous results, we conclude this research by reassessing our initial research questions in the light of our discoveries.

PART 1:

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

The French language possesses a wealth of verbal forms expressing past time: the *passé simple* (PS) (e.g. *il sut*[21]) and its partial substitute in Modern French, the *passé composé* (PC) (e.g. *il a su*); the *imparfait* (IMP) (e.g. *il savait)*; compound tenses like the *passé antérieur* (PA) (e.g. *il eut su*) and the *plus-que-parfait* (PQP) (e.g. *il avait su*) respectively based on the combination of the auxiliary in the PS or the IMP followed by the past participle (PP). In addition to these classic resources, French has at its disposal the present (PRES) in its uses to refer to past events, the *passé prospectif* (e.g. *il allait savoir*) or the polemical double compound tenses or *temps surcomposés* (e.g. *il a eu fini*[22], *il avait eu fini*, **il eut eu fini*) that are not unanimously recognized in all varieties of French. All these tenses share the ability to express anteriority[23]. Given this wide range of tenses, foreign learners of French will no doubt struggle to master first their forms and then to exploit correctly the semantic values and pragmatic functions that these forms can express.

This first part aims at providing the background necessary to understand the challenges foreign learners meet in the process of acquiring the French past tenses. In the first chapter, we offer an overview of the verbal morphemes expressing past in French, focusing particularly on contemporary problematic areas caused by the evolution of the functions which the forms express, and we attempt to trace back phenomena that have triggered the changes. Given the complexity of the system, we proceed to identify and define in the second chapter the linguistic concepts that permit a distinctive presentation of each tense. In the third chapter, which concludes this first part, we apply these concepts to the French past tense markers, and we provide a formal representation of the forms based on tense and aspect.

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[21] In their monumental grammar, Damourette & Pichon chose *savoir* as their exemplary verb as this verb presents different forms for all tenses, unlike for example *dire* where *dit* can be a PRES, a PS or PP.

[22] It seems that the double compound forms are less acceptable with verbs expressing a state like *savoir* than with dynamic ones like *finir* as they are often introduced in standard French by conjunctions like *quand, dès que...* that generally imply a change in situation, a property that states are not suitable to express. Carruthers (1999) offers interesting field research on the *passé surcomposé.*

[23] Forms of conditional and subjunctive can also express anteriority but they will not be taken into account here.

This will equip us with the means to assess the acquisition of past verbal morphology by our tutored Anglophone advanced learners, the focus of the second part of this thesis.

Chapter 1:
Morphological verbal markers of past in French: origins and evolution

1. Introduction

In the course of the linguistic evolution from Latin to Modern French, an original verbal system emerged. Classical Latin forms disappeared and were replaced by new structures; from Vulgar Latin onwards, a general trend to develop compound forms, like the PC, appeared[24]. Other forms were maintained but acquired new values, as in the case of the IMP that has been extending its functions in Modern French, or the PS that has seen a limitation of its uses. A language is a living organism and French is still evolving today. The perpetual shifts lead to changes in the functions expressed by different forms and overlaps appear in the process. This obviously represents a difficulty for tutored learners of French as a foreign language as the rules provided in grammars - and particularly in school grammars - are occasionally found to contradict developments in use.

In this section, we will focus on four main areas of the verbal system development starting from Classical Latin: (1) the so-called disappearance of PS and its competition with the PC, (2) the expression of double anteriority and the extension of the functions covered by (3) the IMP and (4) the PRES.

2. Diachronic evolutions of the French past tenses

2.1. The PS-PC competition

We begin this overview of the main developments of the French verbal system with a study of the Contemporary French[25] competition between the PS and the PC - in its past meaning - to express the preterite.

[24] It is shown for example by the replacement of the Latin form for the simple future by a form made up of the infinitive followed by the auxiliary: *amabo* was replaced by *amare habeo,* that gave the Modern French *j'aimerai.*

[25] By Contemporary French we refer to up-to-date developments of that language (i.e. Standard French at the dawn of the 21st century).

2.1.1. Diachronic overview

In this section, a brief overview of the ways in which the competition between the PS and the PC appeared is provided. We trace this from Latin and up to the present day through the stages of Old French[26], Middle French[27], Classical French[28] and Modern French[29].

a. Latin

Wilmet (1992, 1998) has provided a diachronic explanation of the overlaps that are currently found between the PC and the PS. He bases it on Varro's[30] description of Latin. The classical grammarian organized the past, present and future tenses according to the two roots of the *infectum* and the *perfectum.*

	INFECTUM	PERFECTUM
praesens	vide-o	vid-i
praeteritum	vide-bam	vid-eram
futurum	vide-bo	vid-ero

So the forms in the *infectum* column had an imperfective aspect[31], they were seen without their final limit, unlike the perfective forms in the *perfectum* column that were seen as having reached their final limit. Wilmet provides these glosses for the forms in the table. For the infectum, *video* is rendered by *je vois, videbam* by *je voyais* and *videbo* by *je verrai.* As for the perfectum, it focuses on the accomplishment of the situation: *vidi* interpreted as *je suis dans l'état d'avoir vu, videram* as *j'étais dans l'état d'avoir vu* and *videro* as *je serai dans l'état d'avoir vu.* So it seems that the Classical Latin value of the etymological ancestor of the PS had

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[26] It is generally acknowledged that Old French stretches over a period from the 9th to the 13th century (Brunot). The well-known *Serments de Strasbourg* (14th February 842) - that record a political alliance between Charles the Bald and Ludwig the German against their brother Lothaire - are usually thought to be the first written document in a language clearly different from Latin. They are therefore taken as the initial landmark for French.

[27] The Middle French period - as its name suggests - is a transition period. It is not unanimously located. Some authors, like Brunot, circumscribe it to the 14th and 15th centuries, but it is often regarded as having a larger span as in Rickard (1989: 67): «*The dates and duration of the Mid(dle) F(rench) period are as arbitrary as the term 'Middle French' itself. A consensus makes it begin in the first half of the fourteenth century and end in the first half of the seventeenth, on the grounds that by the early fourteenth century significant changes were beginning to manifest themselves while others, already complete, were seriously undermining the system as it had operated previously, and on the ground that by the early seventeenth century, we are already beginning French which, in all its essentials, is strikingly modern*».

[28] Classical French is often thought to cover a period going from the seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth, the French Revolution being sometimes given as a sign of a new era.

[29] Modern French is generally seen as starting at the turn of the nineteenth century, in the wake of the major changes caused by the French Revolution that affected every single aspect of life, language included.

[30] Livre 9, LIV, 96.

[31] For a discussion of aspect and imperfectivity, see Part I, chapter 2.

a very different value from the Modern French value of the PS; it was a form that expressed the link with the present, a function that is not available any more.

According to Wilmet's explanation, this neat description by Varro was soon disproved by apparent instability and therefore inconstency in the use of the *perfectum praesens* (*vidi*) that was deemed equivalent to the *infectum praeteritum* (*videbam*). Vulgar Latin cleared the ambiguity by complementing *vidi* by a periphrasis made of the present of the *habere* auxiliary and the supine *visum*. This competition would explain the current partial identity of uses of the PS, derived from *vidi*, and the PC, derived from the compound vulgar form consisting of the present auxiliary followed by the past participle. Wilmet further argues that, because of the overlaps between the two forms, *vidi* was rejected in the *infectum* and competed with the imperfect form *videbam*. This might also explain the contemporary extensions of the IMP where it rivals the uses of the PS or the PC.

Of course, for earlier stages in the evolution from Latin to French, written documents are extremely scarce and several hypotheses exist. Harris (1978: 134ff) proposes a different presentation of the Latin system. He describes the Classical Latin system according to (i) three tenses: past, present and future and (ii) three aspects: imperfective, perfective and - only for the past - punctual:

ASPECT	TENSE		
	Past	Present	Future
Imperfective	faciebam	facio	faciam
Punctual	feci (B)		
Perfective	feceram	feci (A)	fecero

In this presentation, the form *feci* is ambiguous: the punctual form of the past is indeed identical to that of the perfective aspect of the present tense. Harris (1970: 65) argues that *feci* could be found in two different time-planes and he illustrates it by the two following examples:

(1) (hodie) id feci ut veniat - I have done it (today) so that he may come.
(2) (heri) id feci ut veniret - I did it (yesterday) so that he might come.

According to Harris' explanation, the form that expressed both a past tense and a perfective aspect was *feceram* so a new slot appeared in the system: a past punctual *feci*. This ambiguity in the system could be resolved either by the loss of one of the two functions or the creation of a new form. The second option was favoured. In Vulgar Latin, the ambiguity was cleared up by the appearance of a compound tense formed by the present of the auxiliary verb *habere* and a past participle that took over the perfective aspect of the simple past (*feci (A)*). So in the new

form, the temporal information was overtaken by the auxiliary and the aspectual information by the past participle.

The two explanations for the emergence of an analytical form offered above differ in their presentation of facts, but what really matters to our research is that instability around the preterite in the Latin system provoked a multiplication of forms that would lead to further ambiguities.

Although most French specialists and some Latinists agree in seeing the Latin preterite as a present perfect, this conception is not unanimously shared. Mellet (2000: 99ff) sees it as a *praeteritum perfectum*, rather than as a *praesens perfectum.* Her argumentation relies on the uses of the Latin preterite as:

(i) a preterite in historical accounts:

(3) Iam uer adpetebat; itaque Hannibal ex hibernis **movit**. (Tite Live, Histoire Romaine XXII,1,1)
Déjà le printemps approchait; c'est pourquoi Hannibal **leva** ses quartiers d'hiver.

In that use, the preterite is a narrative past that shows the past facts globally and in their order of succession.

(ii) a preterite in conversational accounts:

(4) Ita erae meae **contigit**: nam ubi parturit, deos [sibi] inuocat,
Strepitus, crepitus, sonitus, tonitrus. Ut subito, ut prope, ut ualide **tonuit**! (Plaute, Amphitryon 1061-2)
Voici ce qui **est arrivé** aujourd'hui à ma maîtresse; dès les premières contractions, elle invoque les dieux. Alors sifflements, crépitements, grondements, coups de tonnerre. Et comme le tonnerre **a été** soudain, proche, violent!

In this use, the Latin form expresses an anteriority that the French PS cannot express any more; it is still a past but a very close one.

(iii) the influence of the author's point of view:

(5) Linquitur ut merito nomen adepta
Terra sit, e terra quoniam sunt cuncta creata (Lucrèce, De Natura Rerum V, 796)
Il reste que c'est à juste titre que la terre a reçu le nom de mère, puisque tout a été / est produit par la terre.

Mellet (2000: 103) gives a justification of the choice:

> Le thème et le style du passage dont est extraite cette citation permettent d'envisager deux interprétations complémentaires, sinon concurrentes: Lucrèce peut y tenir le rôle habituel qui est le sien, celui d'un philosophe spéculant sur les forces qu'il voit à

> l'oeuvre dans l'univers; on privilégiera alors la traduction par un présent passif français 'tout est produit par la terre'. Mais on peut aussi, en raison du contexte, considérer que Lucrèce est ici un poète qui propose à son lecteur le récit d'une cosmogonie rationnelle; auquel cas, on adoptera la traduction par un passé composé.

Although Mellet is questioning the analysis of French linguists, she does not provide any explanation of how the evolution from Latin to French took place:

> Dans la perspective diachronique qui a fourni son point de départ à cet article, il resterait d'une part à comprendre par quel phenomène de syncrétisme le latin a remodelé une forme de parfait au signifié original à partir d'un patchwork incroyablement disparate de morphèmes hérités aux signifiés; d'autre part à expliquer l'évolution vers les langues romanes en tenant compte de l'unité de signifié que nous avons tenté de dégager pour le parfait du latin classique... (p.105)

From the three descriptions provided above, we see that it is not easy to establish the actual evolution of the language for distant periods.

b. Old French

We now focus on steps of the system development in Old French, Middle French, Classical French and Modern French. We will introduce a few descriptions of the language provided for the period referred to as Old French. Judge & Healey (1983: 100) present the verbal system in Old French according to the notion of completion:

Unmarked for aspect of completion	Completed action or anteriority	Completed action in relation to a previously completed action
il chante	il a chanté	il a eu chanté
il chantait	il avait chanté	il avait eu chanté
il chanta	il eut chanté	-
il chantera	il aura chanté	il aura eu chanté
il chanterait	il aurait chanté	il aurait eu chanté

One of the discrepancies between the Old and Modern French uses they list is the link between the PS and the PC. They state that, during the Old French period, the compound past (PC) was still only a perfect or the result of a previous situation. Thus *'il l'a mort'* i.e. *'il l'a tué'*, literally meant 'the body of the dead person was before his eyes'[32], and not yet an actual past as in Modern French. So in Old French, *a su* seems to have been a past linked to the present rather

[32] Price (1971: 228) mentions however that: « *Already in late O(ld) Fr(ench) there are occasional examples in which the perfect* [PC] *seems to be used instead of the preterite* [PS], *but on the other hand, preterite has still not completely disappeared in some western patois* ».

than a past cut from the present like *sut*, although some linguists advocate the early equivalence of PC and PS. For Meyer-Lübke[33], for example, the PC was rivaling the PS from the earliest stages of French:

> A travers toutes les périodes de son histoire, le français maintient entre 'chantai' et 'ai chanté' une entière équivalence d'emploi et de sens.

According to Wilmet (1992: 18), this position was shared by several linguists like Brunot[34], Clédat[35] or Foulet[36], but Stefenelli-Fürst[37] showed that they had misinterpreted historical present perfects for PC. It would obviously be easy to find examples where this statement is disproved in Modern French, like * *il sut déjà la réponse / il a déjà su la réponse.* According to historical linguists, it was also disproved in older states of the language as witnessed by Brunot & Bruneau[38] in reference to Old French:

> ... l'opposition est très nette entre le passé simple et le passé composé, qui présente alors une nuance rare aujourd'hui, celle de l'action qui est présentement accomplie.

For those authors, the initial distinctive value of accomplished present conveyed by the PC progressively faded away as the PC was endorsing more and more the values of the PS. In the following excerpt, Brunot (1965: 472) describes the formal evolution of the PC form throughout the Middle Ages:

> Cette forme composée se rencontre de très bonne heure, mais on ne peut pas dire qu'elle soit, dès les premiers textes, identique à ce qu'elle est devenue depuis. Il arrive encore a) que le sujet qui a fait l'action n'est pas le même que celui de l'auxiliaire, b) que le temps est dans l'auxiliaire seul. Toutefois la fusion se fit de bonne heure, et à la fin du Moyen-Age, la composition est faite. Elle tend à s'affirmer extérieurement de deux façons: 1º les éléments composants se rapprochent l'un de l'autre; 2º le participe, comme partie intégrante d'une forme verbale, s'accorde de moins en moins avec l'objet, de plus en plus avec le sujet de l'auxiliaire qui fait corps avec lui.

As for Pfister (1974: 415), he describes the functional evolution of the form. The initial distinctiveness of the PC as a present perfect fades away:

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[33] Meyer-Lübke, *Grammaire des langues romanes.* Tome III, §113, quoted in Damourette, J. & Pichon, E., 1911-36: §1815.
[34] Brunot (1905-1953, I: 240).
[35] Clédat, L. (n.d.) *Grammaire élémentaire de la vieille langue française.* Paris: Garnier, 4e éd. §455.
[36] Foulet, L. (1958) *Petite syntaxe de l'ancien français.* Paris: Champion. §322.
[37] Stefenelli-Fürst, F. (1966) *Die Tempora des Vergangenheit in der Chanson de Geste.* Vienne: Braumüller.
[38] Brunot, F. & Bruneau, Ch., *Précis de grammaire historique de la langue française.* §778, p.500, quoted in Damourette, J & Pichon, E., (1911-36: §1815).

> A partir du XIIIe siècle, comme M. Saettele[39] vient de le montrer dans sa thèse, le passé composé prend une fonction seconde. Il devient concurrent du passé simple et désigne également un temps du passé - et pas seulement le stade de l'accompli comme auparavant. L'avance du passé composé a produit la disparition du passé simple dans le code parlé et l'extension du passé surcomposé à partir du XVe siècle pour exprimer le stade d'action de l'accompli.

According to Pfister, the PC has developed from the end of the Old French period a new past value similar to the one conveyed by the PS. This will later result in a concurrence of both forms and a restriction of the uses of the PS.

The main feature of this period seems therefore to be an establishment of a coherent compound form, the parts of which are losing their autonomy. This formal evolution will open the way to a later functional change.

c. Middle French

Brunot (1905-53, I: 484) mentions that Middle French sees noticeable changes in the use of tenses. First, the compound forms start functioning as a unit, a trend that has started to appear in Old French and secondly, the limits between each tense's values are getting clearer, if not unambiguous:

> Un premier fait est très important à signaler, c'est que, par suite de la soudure de plus en plus complète des formes composées, l'indécision si préjudiciable à la netteté qui existait en ancien français, parce que tantôt c'était la forme composée tout entière, tantôt c'était l'auxiliaire seul qui marquait le temps, tend à disparaître. Cette observation toute négative ne peut être établie par des exemples, elle n'en a pas moins une grande importance et marque un progrès véritable.
> Un autre progrès se marque dans la détermination de la fonction exacte de divers temps, détermination qui, sans être encore rigoureuse, devient cependant plus nette.

The distinction between forms expressing the past is however still evolving as Reid notes. He mentions the growing competition between the PC and the PS at that time:

> By about the beginning of the Middle French period, however, the present completion form 'j'ai fait' had come to be used also to express past actuality attainment (at first, no doubt, only recent past actual attainment); it competed more and more successfully, especially in colloquial usage, with the traditional form 'je fis' until in comparatively modern times (probably in the early ninenteenth century), it completely displaced 'je fis' in conversation, except in certain provinces. (Reid 1955: 37-38)

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[39] Saettele, H. (1971) *Das französische Passé Composé, Funktionsveränderung eines Tempus.* Zürich, p.211.

Wilmet (1970) and Martin (1971) studied 15th century texts and tried to establish which context influenced the choice of the PS or the PC. A summary of their findings follows. To start with, the first and second person seemed to encourage the use of the PC more than the third person. Then, *souvent* and *toujours* appeared to have affinities with the PC whilst the negation was found more with the PS. A final observation reveals that there were more *localisateurs* (temporal complements) with the PS (50%) than with the PC (20%), and that the adverbs with the PS were more '*lorcentriques*'[40]. Some of these statements are readily understandable as, for example, the affinity between the PC - that is morphologically (the auxiliary in the present) and semantically (possibility to indicate a present perfect) closer to the moment of speech - and the first and second person, which are those directly involved in speech. Similarly, the lower frequency of temporal complements might be due to the already existing anchorage of the PC in the moment of speech through its present auxiliary. As for the affinity of negation with PS, it could be morphologically explained by the fact that the bipartite form of the PC makes the negative construction more difficult.

The transitional period of Middle French seems therefore central for the future evolution of the forms expressing past in French. From that time on, there was a fairly well established competition between the PS and the PC that, whilst still existing in modern use, seems to have evolved in favour of the latter form.

d. Classical French

According to Judge & Healey (1983: 100-1), during that period covering roughly the 17th and 18th centuries, the compound past (PC) caused a breakdown in the system in taking on past values that were so far reserved for the PS. It was indeed becoming difficult to draw a line between a completed action, the former value of the PC, and a past action, which would turn out to be the most central value of the tense in Modern French. Given the closer rivalry between PS and PC, grammarians of the time - mainly Maupas and Oudin - attempted to draw borders between the functions of the two forms. Brunot (1905-53, III: 582) gives the whole of Maupas's doctrine:

> Le passé simple infere toujours un temps piéça passé, et si bien accompli » qu'il n'en reste rien à passer. Pour cette raison il « requiert une prefixion et prenotation de temps. Ainsi: *L'an mil cinq cens quatre-vingts et dix le Roy obtint victoire de ses ennemis.* Pour cette cause, le temps simple sert dans les recits d'histoire.

[40] *Orcentrique* means centred on S, *lorcentrique* means centred on S'. For a discussion of the representation of tenses, see Part I, chapter 2.

> Le passé composé vient en usage, lorsque nous signifions bien une chose passée, mais non si éloignée, que nous ne nommons point le temps quand elle est passée ou bien, si nous le nommons, ce temps reste encore 'en flux', il en reste quelque chose à passer. Ainsi: *Le Roy a obtenu victoire de ses ennemis, puis leur a pardonné.* Ou encore: *de notre siécle sont advenuës choses memorables* (nous sommes dans ce siècle).
> « Les mots qui divisent le temps sont *siécle, an, mois, sepmaine, jour,* ou les équivalans. Si on ne se sert pas de ces mots mais de formules indiquant vaguement le passé, il est indifferant d'employer l'un ou l'autre des passés: *au commencement que je m'appliquay* ou *je me suis appliqué à composer cet oeuvre.* » Cependant, avec des expressions telles que *au temps passé, autrefois, quelquefois, piéça,* et aussi quand nous « limitons quelque chose par les parties de notre aage: *en ma jeunesse, durant mon enfance, moy estant aagé de vingt ans* », il est mieux de se servir du composé. Il n'y a que si un homme d'aage vouloit « insinuër par là l'antiquité de ses ans » qu'il diroit: *En ma jeunesse, je fis etc.*

According to this attempt at clearly redefining the functions of each one of the two forms, the mention of a period that is still in progress or a psychological link with the speaker were sufficient to justify the use of a PC. Oudin added to this a few comments about the use of the compound form with *aujourd'hui* and the simple with *hier*.

Gougenheim (1939: 208ff, in Engel 1990: 16) also notes that in Classical French, the PC could express a recent past (24 hour rule) or a past action taken subjectively. This created an ambiguity as the PC could refer to distant events as long as taken subjectively and the PS could be used for fairly recent actions (yesterday).

What was first only a rule on the period (be it century, year, month...) was further developed and enforced by the French Academy. It led to the prescriptive '*loi des 24 heures*' by H. Estienne[41]:

> Quand nous disons: j'ay parlé à luy et luy ay faict response, cela s'entend d'avoir esté faict ce jour là; mais quand on dit: je parlay à luy et luy fei response, cecy ne s'entend point avoir esté faict ce jour mesme auquel on raconte ceci, mais auparavant, sans qu'on puisse juger combien de temps est passé depuis.

In this 24 hour rule, the PC could only refer to a period less than 24 hours anterior to the moment of speech whilst a PS could only express situations that were anterior to that 24-hour span. According to Brunot & Bruneau[42], this '*loi des 24 heures*' was based on an insufficient

[41] Quoted in Wilmet (1992: 21).
[42] Quoted in Damourette, J. & Pichon, E., §1818.

analysis of the rule given by Maupas at the beginning of the XVIIth century, that only took into account the present consequences of a past situation:

> [Le passé simple] infère toujours un temps pieça passé. On devait dire: 'aujourd'hui, j'ai fait' – 'hier, je fis'; 'cette année, nous avons vu' – 'l'année dernière, nous vîmes'; 'durant ce siècle, nous avons constaté' – 'au siècle dernier, nous constatâmes'. Ce n'est qu'après la mort du personnage qu'on pouvait dire: 'il naquit', on ne pouvait dire de soi-même que 'je suis né'. L'emploi des deux temps était donc assez délicat: la conquête de la Gaule par César, dont les conséquences sont encore sensibles, exigeait un passé composé, et tel événement, vieux d'une heure, pouvait être au passé simple, si l'on estimait qu'il n'avait plus aucun lien avec le moment présent.

This rule was reenacted as the *'loi de la période'* - what it initially was - in the XVIIIth century. Brunot (1965: 473-4) summarizes the situation at that time:

> 1º On emploie le passé simple ou le passé accompli [PC], selon que l'action se place dans un temps du passé plus ou moins éloigné du présent. Le passé simple exprime un passé lointain; le passé composé exprime un passé plus proche du présent.
> 2º On emploie le passé composé, si l'action se place dans un temps qui dure encore: *cette semaine*, *cette année*, *depuis l'ère chrétienne*. Au contraire le passé simple 'infère toujours un temps piéça passé, et si bien accompli' qu'il n'en reste rien à passer.

If at the time, the main issue was the rules of use of both PS and PC, it must not be assumed however that the two forms were completely equivalent. As pointed out by Judge & Healey (1983: 101), the classical system was unstable as the compound past (PC) appeared both as a perfect and a definite past.

We are now approaching the last period in the development of French that corresponds to the current situation.

2.1.2. The PS in Modern French

a. The question of the vitality of PS

When studying the PS, the question of its productivity in Modern French arises. There are disagreements among contemporary linguists about whether the PS is disappearing or not. Some view it as redundant (given that its values have been taken over by other tenses), and suggest it will disappear. This is the view of Schogt (1964: 16), who maintains that either the PC or the IMP has taken over the totality of the PS uses:

> Le passé simple n'exprime plus rien que la langue ne puisse exprimer à l'aide du passé composé ou de l'imparfait.

Van Vliet (1983: 92) explains how the other past tenses have taken over the PS domain, starting in spoken language, and shows that this disappearance fits within the general tendency of language to become more analytical:

> First, as we have seen, the *passé simple* has lost its *raison d'être* to the more easily formed past tenses; in the spoken language, its preterit functions have been completely usurped by the *passé composé* (*j'ai chanté*) and its descriptive function by the imperfect (*je chantais*). Secondly, the morphology of the *passé simple* is suffixal in nature (*je chant+ai*), unlike the *passé composé* whose proposed structure is more in line with the phrase structures of the rest of the language (*j'ai+chanté*). Finally, the *passé simple* itself has become isolated and is difficult to form. It must be learned, unlike the *passé composé*, which is regular in its structure and can be heard in everyday speech.

Some of Van Vliet's positions are debatable (see Engel 1985 for a thorough discussion). First, if the PS can largely be replaced by the PC, there are cases where the substitution is not possible. Wilmet (1998: 370) quotes this excerpt from Malraux[43]:

> Je me suis évadé, en 1940, avec le futur aumônier du Vercors. Nous nous retrouvâmes peu de temps après l'évasion, dans le village de la Drôme où il était curé...
> - Qu'est-ce que la confession vous a enseigné des hommes?
> - Vous savez, la confession n'apprend rien, parce que dès que l'on confesse, on est un autre, il y a la Grâce...
> Il leva ses bras de bûcheron dans la nuit pleine d'étoiles:
> « Et puis, le fond de tout, c'est qu'il n'y a pas de grandes personnes... ».

In this example, *leva* could not be replaced by a PC without losing the past narrative value, *a levé* would be seen as a perfect and would not show the movement of lifting one's arms. Secondly, if the PC is easier to form than the PS, it also presents difficulties as shown in Hawkins (1985). These are linked with the choice of the auxiliary, the different endings, the irregular past participles and the agreement rules. Moreover, the difficulty of the PS formation could be a result of its rarefaction and not the cause of it.

In any event, the decline of the PS has been sufficiently agreed upon to favour the suppression of its teaching to foreign learners. La Commission du français fondamental[44]

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[43] This excerpt was first found in Saettele, H. (op cit.)
[44] Gougenheim, G., Rivenc, P., Michéa, R. & Sauvageot, A. (1964) *L'élaboration du français fondamental.* Paris, Didier.

(quoted in Wilmet 1998: 380) « *juge inutile de faire enseigner le passé simple et le passé antérieur* ».

However, although they generally agree on the decline of the PS, most linguists do recognize specificities of this form. The position of Damourette & Pichon (1936, V, § 1819) questions nonetheless the idea of the receding position of the PS:

> ... Henri Estienne nous apprend que, dès son époque, il était ridicule d'employer le priscal [PS] hors saison, mais qu'on pouvait très facilement employer à peu près toujours l'antérieur [PC] là où le priscal aurait semblé recevable, et dans les conversations que nous a transmises le théâtre, le priscal est rare, [...]. Dans ces conditions, il est permis de se demander si la fréquence du priscal a jamais été beaucoup plus grande qu'elle ne l'est aujourd'hui. La question est d'importance, car si la régression est un mythe, le pronostic de la mort prochaine devient injustifié. Il se peut que le priscal ait toujours eu un petit domaine, mais s'y soit toujours maintenu. Comme nos documents sur la conversation courante des siècles passés sont insuffisants, ce que nous disons là est une pure hypothèse. Nous souhaitons pourtant qu'elle empêche les linguistes de parler à la légère de la disparition et de la mort d'un tiroir qui appartient encore pleinement au français d'aujourd'hui.

They call into question the higher frequency of the PS form in earlier periods of the history of French and put forward the idea that the PS might always have had restricted uses and has retained them. However, Damourette & Pichon's position is not common and most linguists would agree that nowadays the PS is mostly confined to certain uses. There are several hypotheses to explain the respective uses of the PS and the PC and we will provide a brief overview of the factors taken into account when trying to establish the specific domains of each form.

b. The criteria for distinguishing between PS and PC in Modern French

Some linguistic approaches see in tense and aspect the features necessary to distinguish between the PS and the PC. This is the case of Sten (1952: 95), who takes aspect as the differentiating factor between the past tenses:

> On est encore heureux si un Français à qui on demande son avis dit qu'on peut mettre [le PS et l'IMP]. Mais ce n'est pas toujours le cas. Il y aussi la différence d'aspect entre passé simple et passé composé. C'est plus subtil encore. C'est si subtil que la plupart des Français ont renoncé à observer la distinction. On peut même dire que sur ce point les Français sont capables de commettre des fautes. Certes, ce n'est pas une faute que d'employer toujours et partout le passé composé au lieu d'un passé simple. C'est avoir opté pour un système des temps qui n'a aucune place pour une distinction faite par la langue littéraire.

It is not quite clear what Sten refers to as aspect in this quote; in our description, we consider that the difference between the PS and the PC comes not so much from aspect but from a difference in the setting of the moment of reference from which the situation is viewed[45].

Engel (1990) introduces key criteria for distinguishing between the two forms, namely: (i) tense and aspect differences, (ii) distance from the moment of speech (distant or recent past), (iii) the written / spoken dichotomy and (iv) style and content. Engel also mentions that Bonnard (1950: 106ff) distinguishes between the PS with only a value of past tense and the PC, which has a value of tense and another of aspect. We however postulate that the PS, as any tense, also had an aspectual value.

We can therefore not endorse this use of aspect as a distinctive feature between the PS and the PC in Modern French.

Another factor in distinguishing between the PC and the PS is based on the distance from the moment of speech; that was the basis of the differentiation in Classical French. Although there are many contradictory examples, scholars still defend this idea under the form of the link with this reference point: the PC allows a bridge with the present contrary to the PS. Likewise, Judge & Healey (1983: 108) argue that the PC brings a different perspective - given its morphological link to the present - in written language, which explains the survival of the PS:

> Although the compound past replaces the past historic in many contexts, its connotations are quite different: actions described in the compound past are felt to be relevant to the present (because of the forms of the compound past are those of the present as far as the auxiliary is concerned), whereas actions in the past historic belong to 'story-telling'. It is this difference of perspective which explains why the past historic has survived in the written language. But in spontaneous French these nuances are lost, and only the compound past is productive.

Like the previous authors, Wagner & Pinchon (1962: 341) note that in written language, the PC implies a link to the present:

> Dans la langue écrite, le passé indéfini [PC] assume ce rôle [situer un procès dans le passé] parallèlement au passé défini [PS], mais dans d'autres conditions que lui. Par opposition au passé défini, il laisse entendre que le procès achevé a créé une situation qui se prolonge et qui se rattache à notre actualité présente. On écrira ainsi que: *César a conquis la Gaule* en suggérant que la structure, l'état actuel de la France

[45] See Part I, chapter 2.

dépendent en partie de cette conquête; que *La Tour Eiffel a été édifiée en 1889*; elle fait encore partie du paysage parisien.

There is therefore a close link with the second area of distinction: the written / oral dichotomy. The PS is indeed often seen as a tense restricted to written use. This is for example the case in De Boer (1947: 201):

> On se sert du passé défini [PS], lorsqu'il s'agit d'un fait de mémoire qu'on ne fait qu'énoncer[46]. Avant l'âge de la lecture, les enfants français, en général, l'ont peu entendu: ils l'ont rencontré dans des chansons et dans des récits, mais peu dans la conversation: le passé défini est presque partout en France exclusivement un temps du style littéraire. Il n'est pas subjectif, comme l'est le passé indéfini [PC], ni n'associe, comme le font les deux autres temps du passé. Il est 'narratif'. C'est un temps d''historiens'; il marque dans un récit 'la suite des événements', mais il ne les peint pas. Le passé qu'il énonce est achevé, ce que le passé décrit au moyen de l'imparfait n'est pas.

He sees the PS as a literary tense that gives an objective report of the facts of which it offers a perfective viewing. Martin (1971: 111) also mentions the importance of the written in the PS:

> L'opposition secondaire du PS et du PC contribue à sauvegarder, dans la langue écrite, le fonctionnement cohérent de ces deux tiroirs grammaticaux. De nombreuses et bonnes études ont montré la vitalité du PS en français moderne. Un comptage portant sur le dépouillement d'un certain nombre de journaux nous a convaincu qu'il était loin d'être moribond. Sa disparition serait un appauvrissement irréparable. Mais **ce tiroir est rejeté de la langue parlée**. [Our emphasis]

In spoken French, however, the distinction between PS and PC is not productive any more and the PC can express both recent and distant pasts:

> En français moderne, dans la langue parlée, le passé indéfini est la forme qui sert normalement à situer un procès dans le passé (passé lointain, passé récent). (p.341)

Martin (1971: 108ff) emphasizes the same fact and even goes further when he says that, in spoken language, the PC replaces the PS in every case:

> Mais jamais la valeur fondamentale du PC n'est rejetée dans l'ombre, jamais son profil de langue n'est remis en doute, même dans la langue parlée où il se substitue au PS dans tous les cas. Il reste au moins à l'esprit la possibilité, exclue sans appel par le PS, de rattacher l'action passée au moment actuel.

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[46] De Boer refers here to the three aspects that distinguish the past tenses according to Buffin: *'Ces aspects, M. Buffin les définit ainsi:*
a) passé défini: 'associe subjectivement un fait de mémoire au présent': J'ai perdu mon mouchoir; la cérémonie a été belle;
b) imparfait: 'associe objectivement un fait de mémoire au passé': Napoléon était de petite taille.
c) passé défini: 'énonce un fait de mémoire dans le passé': son père vint la voir. (p.199)

Pfister (1974: 401) suggests the need for some qualifications to Martin's assertion, confirming that the PS is still used not only in some fields like journalism but even in some varieties of prepared oral discourse:

> Naturellement, dans le code parlé, on ne rencontre plus que l'opposition imparfait-passé composé. Mais d'un autre côté, le code écrit littéraire et soutenu utilise toutes les nuances stylistiques qui résultent d'une différenciation de ces trois temps du passé. **Dans des exposés oraux de toutes sortes, conférences et causeries,** on constate même actuellement une augmentation sensible de l'emploi du passé simple. La vitalité de ce temps dans le code écrit me paraît donc assurée. En tout cas, pour ce qui concerne **le français journalistique**, on ne peut pas encore parler d'un temps moribond. [Our emphasis].

According to Pfister, the PS is still present in prepared oral discourse but not in spontaneous production. As a direct result of this tendency, many pedagogical grammars note that there is a replacement of PS by PC in spoken language:

> ... il concurrence (spécialement dans la langue parlée) le passé simple pour des faits sans rapport avec le moment de la parole... (Grevisse-Goosse 1993: 1255).
> C'est avec la valeur d'accompli passé que le passé composé remplace, dans le discours, le passé simple du récit. (Dubois-Lagane 1973: 127)

This brings us to the last factor. As far as style and content are concerned, hypotheses have linked the use of the PS with certain types of communication, such as journalistic use or history writing. In their study of the PS in newspaper usage, Waugh & Monville-Burston (1986: 849) give a composite picture of the PS functions according to existing studies:

> Restricted for the most part to the written language, and best suited for literary and historical writing, [the PS] has the following functions in contrast with the PC. It first allows the reference to a remote past, or a past cut off in some way from the present and then is confined to narrative context (with the PC used for quoted speech).

They themselves acknowledge three semantic values of the PS: (i) past tense, (ii) dimensionalisation and (iii) detachment. 'Dimensionalisation' refers to the delimitation of a figure with clear-cut contours. This boundedness can be from within; it means that:

> ...when an entity is seen only with regard to itself and to the 'local' context of the sentence in which it is used, it tends to look like an integrated whole: closed on itself, indivisible, and impenetrable (p.851)

'Boundedness from without' applies when the discourse context is taken into account: the PS is used for entities that are in the foreground. As for 'detachment', it refers to dissociation from the context, remote past or separation from the present.

Given that it has been ousted from spoken use, the PS has developed certain stylistic features. It can be used for comic effect in spoken language as Judge & Healey (1983: 118) put it:

> The past historic has acquired connotations which it never had in Classical French; since it is register bound, whenever it is used in different registers it becomes symbolic of another age. As such it may be used as a source of comedy; for example if one said to somebody, 'mon mari et moi allâmes en Corse cet été', the effect would be ridiculous.

Wilmet (1998: 369) mentions the same fact. His explanation is that, given that the forms of the PS are not familiar any more, they acquire a strangeness that explains their comic effect:

> La drôlerie - et sur un autre plan, la 'difficulté de conjugaison' – n'est pas le motif mais le produit de la raréfaction du passé 1 [PS] (évidemment, les premières personnes homophones de la troisième dis, fus, pus, lus, etc y échappent).

On the basis of the elements just mentioned (historical developments, tense and aspect differences, distance from the moment of speech, written, spoken dichotomy and style and content), Engel (1990) provided a list of factors distinguishing the uses of PC and PS in newspapers. It is based on a study of the French press and includes 68 articles from 23 newspapers and magazines. Her aim was to describe the mixing of PC and PS in journalistic contexts. She compared her results with the intuitions of 98 native speakers in higher education. She postulated three levels of factors that could influence the choice of either the PS or the PC. These levels go from the more exact and objective, easier to quantify and possibly the most influential to the least exact, most subjective, hardest to quantify and possibly least influential (Engel 1990: 2).

At level 1, the most objective, she put the following features: (i) existing indications on tense and aspect, (ii) presence of temporal expressions, (iii) compatibility of a tense with a grammatical person (the PS is almost exclusively found in the third person, in accordance with the affinities already noted for Middle French by Wilmet (1970) and Martin (1971)) and (iv) type of text. Her second level includes the following elements: (i) semantics of the verb phrase (our *Aktionsart*), (ii) type of grammatical expression, (iii) elements linked with style, sound and context and finally (iv) subject matter and target audience. The last and most subjective level refers to personal choices of the author.

From her study of newspapers, Engel (1990: 103-4) draws a list of linguistic rules for the use of PS and PC according to three categories: compulsory use of one of the tenses, normal choice and optional choice.

	PC	PS
Obligatory	*when event = (PP-V)*	*when event = (RP-V)*[47]

According to Engel, the use of PC is obligatory when the event expressed by the verbal form is shown as a retrospection from the present time whilst the PS must be used when the event is seen from a retrospective point on the time axis.

	PC	PS
	Variable *i. Normal choice*	
Type of text	*when text = 'discours'*	
	when person = non third	
Temporal expression	*when adverbial = 'here and now'*	*when adverbial = 'there and then'*
Tense sequence	*when sequence = Pr[ES], F[S], PC*	*when sequence = I[MP], PQP, PA, PS.*
Use with 'être'	*when auxiliary = 'être'.*	*'être' = third person singular.*

In other contexts, the use of a tense is influenced by elements ranging from discursive elements (type of text or tense sequence) to the use of *être* and including the type of temporal expression. This last element is close to the first obligatory category, as the type of temporal complements that are compatible with a verbal form depends very much on the perspective (e.g. *hier* and *la veille* are only used with retrospection on the one hand from the present and on the other hand from a retrospective point). As for use with *être,* it clearly shows that the PS forms are often formulaic in modern usage and the same set basic forms are the most common.

	PC	PS
	Variable *ii. Optional choice*	
Clause type	*when clause = main (simple sentence)*	*when clause = principal, subordinate (complex sentence)*
Morphology/ Phonology		*when verb = common, irregular* *when verb = shorter syllabic length than PC equivalent*
Qualities of article (text)	*when article - informal, and subject = news, information*	*when article = formal and subject = sport, 'faits divers', arts*

[47] Engel (1990:72) uses Bull's (1963) formalism and distinguishes between: PP = Present time on time axis, RP = retrospective point on time axis, OV = Neutral viewpoint/observation, -V = retrospective viewpoint/ observation. That system will be presented in more detail in Part 1, chapter 2.

Qualities of context (style)	*when context = generality, familiarity, subjectivity, non-finality, introductory, need for assonance, alliteration, certain word order and emphasis.*	*when context = irony, joke, affectedness, formality, objectivity, finality, literariness, need for assonance, brevity, alliteration, certain word order and emphasis.*

In the last category, where the use of a tense is optional, only tendencies are shown. If the classification relies on some objective features like syllabic length, it is mostly subjective and context-linked. Indeed, it could be argued that the domains of sports and *faits divers* are normally associated with informality, rather than formal register.

2.1.3. Summary of the current competition

So from this brief overview, conflicting positions on the PS-PC competition emerge. According to their position, linguists will play down or else overemphasize the vitality of the PS. We will now attempt to adopt a neutral stance based on facts.

The PC may express a past time, just as the PS, but its perfect original value also allows it to express meanings of present (e.g. *j'ai fini*) and, in relation with the right temporal indication, even *futur antérieur* (e.g. *j'ai bientôt fini*). As far as aspect is concerned, the PC is made up of an imperfective present auxiliary and a perfective past participle. From these characteristics, one can see that the domain of the PC is much larger than that of the PS. Sten (1952: 95) argues that the PC can always replace the PS. Nonetheless, we would like to underline that, with telic verbs that imply their final limit as soon as they start (e.g. *exploser*), the PC takes primarily a perfect value. It cannot therefore be used to replace the PS, as in the excerpt from Malraux quoted before (Wilmet 1998: 370). Wilmet rightly notes that *a enseigné* could not be replaced by *enseigna* that would imply that the character has left the priesthood. Examples like this are nonetheless not common and generally the PC can take on the values of the PS.

2.2. The expression of double anteriority

In this section we study two ways[48] of expressing double anteriority: one, the *plus-que-parfait* (PQP) is commonly used in Modern French, the other, the *passé surcomposé* (PSC) seems to be confined to very specific uses.

[48] The *passé antérieur* (PA) is treated in competition with the PQP.

2.2.1. The extension of the PQP

a. Diachronic overview

Latin possessed a synthetic form, the *praeteritum perfectum*, to express double anteriority. According to Wilmet (1998: 407), that form was still present in Old French and he supports this claim by an excerpt of La Cantilène de Sainte Eulalie (ca. 880AD): *"le bel auret corps"*, where *auret* comes from *habuerat*. For the same period, Wagner (1949, in Wilmet 1998: 407) mentions analytic forms (*habebat laboret* and *habebat penet*) in the Sermon de Jonas. Wilmet sees in the homonymy of the synthetic form with the imperfect of the subjunctive the reason why the compound form prevailed. As the PQP was based on the IMP, it benefited from the spread of that tense (see 2.3.). According to Ayres-Bennett & Carruthers (2001), the earliest French texts contained more PA than PQP to express past in the past (see Brunot 1905-53, I: 241 for a confirmation) but the progression of the PQP made it the most frequent form after the end of the Old French period. Foulet (1925: 206) summarizes the evolution:

> [...] le plus-que-parfait qui, au XIIe siècle, venait sans doute après son concurrent [PA] le rattrape peu à peu, le dépasse dès le cours du XIIIe siècle et occupe toute la place au XIVe.

b. The PQP in Modern French

According to Ayres-Bennet & Carruthers (2001: 186ff), the PQP marks in Modern French a past punctual that is cut off from the moment of speech in addition to its traditional uses of double anteriority. This use indicates a lack of present relevance or psychological distance. Also, given the restricted use of the PS in Modern French, the PA is not frequent anymore; if the PC has taken precedence on the PS, the double compound form has had less success (despite Pfister's claims) because of morphological and sociological reasons (see below). Therefore, it has been argued that the PQP may mark anteriority to the PC, but recent studies seem to show that the PC can also assume those forms (Carruthers 1993[49], see Engel 1996 below). Foulet, as early as 1925 also mentions the indiscriminate use of the PC to mark double anteriority (p.224).

[49] Carruthers, J. (1993) 'Passé composé, passé surcomposé: marqueur de l'antériorité en français parlé', *Actes du XXe congrès international de linguistique et de philologie romane* 1: 111-122.

2.2.2. The double compound past

We now focus on an area of alleged development in contemporary French: the double compound forms. The double compound forms constitute a well-attested but less-known area of the French verbal system, due to prescriptivism (Foulet 1925) or at least a lack of legitimization by the French Academy and grammars (Stéfanini 1954). As a result, native speakers distrust the forms or even do not know them (Stéfanini 1954, Delattre 1950).

It has been argued that the emergence of a double compound past was linked with the decline of the PS and consequently of the other verbal forms based on it, like the PA and the *subjonctif imparfait* and *subjunctif plus-que-parfait* (hence the interest for those forms in the middle of the 20th century when the PS vitality started to be seriously questioned). In this section, we will first see if the existence of the *passé surcomposé* (PSC) is linked with the development of the PC as a preterite and then ask if the form has implications for foreign language learners.

a. Diachronic overview

The first mention of the PSC we have found goes back to Old French. Judge & Healey (1983: 100) present the verbal system in Old French according to the notion of completion:

Unmarked for aspect of completion	Completed action or anteriority	Completed action in relation to a previously completed action
il chante	il a chanté	il a eu chanté
il chantait	il avait chanté	il avait eu chanté
il chanta	il eut chanté	-
il chantera	il aura chanté	il aura eu chanté
il chanterait	il aurait chanté	il aurait eu chanté

However, they mention that all the double compound forms were possible but rare; they may, nonetheless, have been more frequent in the spoken language. Judge & Healey later mention that the double compound forms - that were earlier presented as 'rare' - started to decline at the Middle French period. So it seems that the forms have never been very common. Other sources support a later emergence of the PSC, Sneyders de Vogel (1955) advances that the earliest attestations go back to the fifteenth century on the basis of his own research and of Cornu's[50] thesis. Foulet (1920: 208-9) states that:

[50] Cornu, M. (1954) *Les formes surcomposées en français (Romanica Helvetica*, vol.42). Bern, Francke.

> Nous n'avons trouvé aucun passé surcomposé au XIIIe siècle, ni même au XIVe. [...] Notre premier exemple net du passé surcomposé, ou du moins le premier dont la date est assurée, nous est fourni par un document de 1455.

b. The PSC in Modern French

In Modern French, the question of the vitality of double compound forms arises again. The decline of the PS forms has been followed by the related decrease in the use of the PA, that is built on the PS, and the subsequent need for a replacement form. The development of a double compound past could make for the disappearance of the PA. It must however be underlined that the emergence of double compound forms is not as obvious as Pfister (1974: 415) states:

> L'avance du passé composé a produit la disparition du passé simple dans le code parlé et l'extension du passé surcomposé à partir du XVe siècle pour exprimer le stade d'action de l'accompli.

Carruthers (1999: 2) finds « two major syntactic contexts» for the PSC in contemporary French:

> 1. In a subordinate temporal clause marking anteriority and completion in relation to a main clause which usually contains a *passé composé* (e.g. *quand il a eu quitté l'école, il a fait des études de droit).*
> 2. In an independent main or subordinate clause where the double compound marks a variety of notions including distance in the past, aspectual perfectivity, the exceptional nature of an event, subjective involvement on the part of the speaker (e.g. *je l'ai eu fait mais je le fais plus*)

The first usage is taken as Contemporary Standard French whilst the second is regional and attested mainly in the « *langue d'oc and franco-provençal areas* ».
Nihlsson-Ehle (1953: 158) adds a third context of use « *déterminé par un complément adverbial indiquant l'idée de rapidité: il a eu vite fini son travail; il l'avait eu vite fini*».

To evaluate the actual position of PSC in Standard French, Engel (1996) carried out a study where French speakers where asked to replace the infinitive by the appropriate finite forms in the examples below borrowed from other linguists:

(59) Dès qu'il rentrer, il s'est assis dans son fauteuil. (Hill[51])

[51] Hill, J.K. (1984) 'A la recherche des temps perdus: the double compound forms of the verb in present day French', *Word* 35: 89-112.

(60) La vigne, ça rendre, mais ça ne rend plus. (Stefanini[52])

For the first sentence, two thirds of the answers were PC (65.7%), the PA accounted for 16.2% of the answers whilst PSC only accounted for 2.9%. The remaining 15.2% offered an answer in the PS. For the second example, the PSC was even more marginal with only 1.9% of the answers. The bulk of the answers (61.9%) were in the IMP with a further 27.6% in the PC.

2.2.3. Summary of the current situation

So it clearly appears that Pfister's statement about the spread of the PSC is highly optimistic and does not reflect widespread use. As for the development of the PQP, although it is diachronically impressive, it may be less so in Contemporary French. So it seems that in this function, the PC benefits most from the decline of the forms based on the PS, together with the IMP. The two forms seems to constitute the main axis in the past tense system, as will be further emphasized in the following chapter.

2.3. The spread of the IMP

In this section, we provide a brief historical overview of the way the IMP spread in French before describing in more detail the modern day uses in which it competes with other past tenses. Narrative uses of the IMP have indeed interested researchers in recent years, as shown by issue 32 of Cahiers de praxématique (Bres 1999) and the forthcoming Cahiers Chronos (Labeau & Larrivée) on new developments of the imperfect.

2.3.1. Diachronic overview

The IMP made a modest debut on the French verb stage. Brunot (1905-53, I: 241) mentions that before the 12th century, this tense was « *assez rare* », and that at the time, the PS fulfilled most of the current roles of the IMP. The PS was indeed used in descriptions:

(6) Un algeir tint ki d'or fut empenez (Roland, v.837)

and rarely (3 times in the first 500 verses of the Chanson de Roland) to express the contemporaneity with a past moment as in the present use (as in for example *je lisais au moment où il arriva).* Brunot mentions that the advance of the IMP was one of the big linguistic changes that occurred between the 11th and the 13th centuries.

[52] Stefanini, J. (1970) 'Notes sur les formes surcomposées', *Travaux de linguistique et de littérature* 8: 287-296.

Foulet (1925: 206) claims that by the 16th century, the IMP was used in literary French to express states – its prototypical use in Contemporary French - and the preterite had been ousted from those uses. However, the IMP has progressed not only in the expression of description but also of narration.

The '*style artiste*' illustrated by the Goncourts and others during the 19th century is often seen as the origin of the narrative function of the IMP but more ancient uses are given in Wilmet's *Grammaire critique* (1998: 394):

(7) Il m'est souvenu de la fable / du corbiau qui estoit assis / sur une croix de cinq à six / toises de hault, le quel tenoit / ung fromage au bec; la venoit / ung renard, qui vit ce froumaige… (Farce de Maître Pathelin [circa 1470], vers 438-443)

(8) Puis il se remettait à chanter l'ouverture des Indes galantes et l'air Profonds Abîmes, et il ajoutait… (Le Neveu de Rameau [1762])

Vetters (1996: 127) also provides examples from Le Neveu de Rameau by Diderot gathered by Larthomas[53], as well as from the Contes by Marguerite de Navarre [1st half of the 16th century], first quoted in Buffin[54]. If the form did not appear with the '*style artiste*', it has nonetheless developed especially from the 19th century onwards. Engel (1990: 112) mentions this role of IMP:

> … since the naturalist movement in the nineteenth century French novels, the use of I[MP] as a past punctual ('imparfait pittoresque') has been a fairly common stylistic device.

Linguists have provided a range of explanations for this development, either linked with the PS or not. On the one hand, some link it with the regression of the PS. In his Grammaire historique, Nyrop (t.VI: 289) writes that « *il faut probablement regarder cet emploi curieux de l'imparfait comme le résultat du recul du passé défini* ». Saunders (1969: 161) shares this opinion whilst combining the regression of the PS with the PC's inability to take over all the functions of the former tense. Saunders refers to stylistic characteristics of the PC as well as to aspectual ones:

> And here we reach the kernel of the problem of narration in modern French. The new composite preterite has failed to dominate and co-ordinate narrative. Its repetitive, broken and extensive character makes it an alien to aesthetic arrangement on the one

[53] Larthomas, P. (1980) 'Note sur l'emploi des temps dans Le neveu de Rameau', *Travaux de Linguistique et de Littérature* 18: 390.

[54] Buffin, J.M. (1925) *Remarques sur les moyens d'expression de la durée et du temps en français*. Paris: PUF: 110.

> hand and on the other its combination of Perfective and Imperfective aspect (since the present tense of the auxiliary is always achevé) - unmodifiable by other elements in the sentence - is a peculiar contradiction in logic.
> The expansion of the Imperfect is a direct result, for this tense, like the English past, can assume according to its context and following established precedent, a Perfective or Imperfective value. The simplest explanation of the new prototypes which grammarians have laboured to define is this, that the Imperfect Indicative in Modern French is increasingly adopting a preterite role, loose but none the less real, accepted and appreciated by the reader. Distinctions drawn between it and the Past Definite become in innumerable cases academic and artificial.

According to Saunders, the inability of the PC to hold all the PS values has led to the IMP developing a preterit role. Likewise, Schogt (1964: 15) states that the emergence of «*l'imparfait dit narratif ou pittoresque des verbes terminatifs*[55]» comes from the disappearance in spoken language of the PS, a form that could express both progression and accomplishment. It is worth mentioning here that this function of the IMP seems to be limited to certain types of verbs, mainly telic verbs[56].

On the other hand, Müller (1966: 254) rejects the role of the PS in the development of '*IMP narratif*' for three reasons. First, this turn of phrase appears in written language at a time when the PS is still current. Then, the '*IMP narratif*' coexists with the PS and takes its stylistic values from the contrast with it. Finally, the '*IMP narratif*' does not replace less frequent forms of the PS as could have been expected. According to Müller, the novelty probably comes more from psychological reasons than from syntactic ones as it underlines the importance of the temporal indication, which was not as important in past periods as it is today:

> Très généralement, dans la prose littéraire du XVIIIe siècle, l'indication du moment de l'action était omise, ou donnée avec quelque négligence. Les historiens eux-mêmes la rejetaient volontiers en marge ou entre parenthèses. Surtout quand elle se pare d'une certaine précision chronologique, on a l'impression qu'elle choque le bon goût... (p.257)

Müller then goes on to describe what he considers the main steps of development of the form. First, the IMP only appeared with states and continuous actions so it did not modify the tenses system. In a further stage, facts were situated more precisely and Müller gives this hypothetic development:

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[55] The *verbes terminatifs* are equivalent of telic verbs in our terminology.
[56] For a presentation of telic verbs, see Part I, chapter 2.

C'est peut-être cette tendance à réduire le moment de l'action à une durée minimale, à un point de la durée, qui a favorisé une vision de l'action elle-même comme déjà commencée et non accomplie à ce moment précis. Schématiquement, on peut concevoir les types que voici:
1. Il sortit de la ville le lendemain.
2. Le lendemain, il sortit de la ville.
3. Le lendemain, à midi, il sortit de la ville.
4. Le lendemain, comme midi sonnait, il sortait de la ville.
Dans le système classique, un imparfait dans les types 1,2 ou 3 serait interprété comme préparant une suite, comme servant de 'tremplin' à un énoncé essentiel au récit (« lorsque soudain...» ou « Soudain + passé simple »); il rejetterait l'action de « sortir de la ville » dans les éléments secondaires du récit, qui servent de décor ou de localisation temporelle aux événements qui vont être énoncés. Le type 4, s'il se suffit à lui-même et ne prépare pas un passé simple subséquent, représente l'innovation syntaxique: l'indication temporelle, devenue plus précise et plus expressive, devient à son tour un « tremplin » et le verbe à l'imparfait reçoit la charge de l'énoncé proprement dit, du fait principal considéré dans son déroulement, et pour ainsi dire immobilisé dans un instant de ce déroulement. (p.258-9)

Müller lists further developments of the form: (i) use with a perfective active verb:

Je passai par Londres où je m'arrêtai fort inutilement trois semaines et j'arrivais à Paris dans le mois de mars 1785.

(ii) use with a verb that expresses the start of a state:

Un moment après, la voiture, descendue par la rampe de l'abreuvoir, était sur la berge, Marius était déposé sur la banquette du fond, et Javert s'asseyait près de Jean Valjean sur la banquette de devant.

(iii) loss of precision in the temporal indication:

Il sortait alors de la ville.

After this short diachronic presentation of the *IMP narratif*, we will offer some descriptions of its use that are found in the literature.

2.3.2. Narrative IMP in Modern French

This IMP is currently common in the written press as mentioned in Bate & Broady (n.d.) or in Müller (1966: 265):

Mais c'est la presse surtout qui a utilisé ce tour [imparfait narratif] et étendu ses emplois. Il y a un imparfait des anniversaires, devenu à peu près inévitable dans les titres: 'Il y a cent ans mourait X' – 'Il y a cinquante ans, les hostilités commençaient entre la France et l'Allemagne', etc. Il y a un imparfait du style 'film des événements de la journée'; on pourrait presque distinguer, dans la presse parlée surtout, un imparfait des voyages officiels. Le reportage sportif s'installe volontiers dans cet

> imparfait, d'où tout élément pittoresque et toute 'rupture' sont ainsi éliminés: « Hier, le F.C. accueillait sur son terrain le S.C.; X donnait le coup d'envoi; le S.C.attaquait [...] Le match se terminait à 16h par 3 à 0 pour le S.C.».

Müller gets somewhat carried away in his discovery of numerous variations for the new function of the IMP, but it is nonetheless obvious that there exists a new trend in the use of French verbal forms. Tasmowski-De Ryck (1985: 65-7) is more systematic and describes four contexts of use of what she calls '*IMP de rupture*':

(i) It is used regularly in newspapers - as was just mentioned in Müller - where PS would have been expected. (e.g. *Il y a exactement 50 ans, un jeune homme décidait d'éditer trois livres*). This has a peculiar effect:

> Un titre au PS aurait donné l'impression d'être le début du texte même et de cataloguer le sujet à traiter d'une façon arbitraire. L'IMP au contraire laisse entendre que la phrase est révélatrice: (...) (p.65)

(ii) It is used at the end of a text as a kind of recapitulative connection with what precedes (for e.g. it expresses the consequence as below):

> (9) Le commandant sentit la moutarde lui monter au nez. En proie à une colère capable de faire chavirer le Queen, il se jeta sur l'interphone: « Prévenez Mr. Chisnutt que j'ai à lui parler! Im-mé-dia-te-ment! » Trois minutes plus tard, on frappait à la porte. Toc-toc-toc toc-toc-toc toc (St.A. Steeman, Poker d'Enfer: 101)

(iii) It is sometimes used to open a story and gives a temporal space in which the anecdote can be developed:

> (10) Jeudi dernier, les époux H... se rendaient au Théâtre Montmartre pour assister à la représentation du vieux Caporal. (A.Allais, Blagues, Un fait divers: 117)

(iv) This kind of IMP is sometimes found '*en cascade*', a group of verbal forms depending on an initial IMP:

> (11) Royal Flush (...) n'en avait pas moins repéré la jeune femme dès le premier jour (...). Après le déjeuner, il la revoyait sur le pont-promenade (...) Une heure après, il lui arrachait un petit cri (...) En fin d'après-midi, l'ayant suivie, il savait qu'elle était la fleuriste du bord et pénétrait dans son coquet magasin (...) (St.A. Steeman, Poker d'Enfer: 86)

There is however a lack of agreement on what those narratives uses of the IMP are. In the examples above, they are mostly isolated occurrences but Labeau (2002e) notes that clusters are found in certain genres such as sports reports[57].

Given the confusion surrounding the topic, Labeau (forthcoming) has endeavoured to offer an overview of the narrative uses of the IMP in Contemporary French. She points to the problems inherent in this type of study, given the taxonomic confusions and the lack of objective criteria adopted to define such uses. From her study of the literature devoted to narrative uses of the IMP, she gathers five criteria that have been used to identify that token: (1) the equivalence with the PS, (2) perfectivity, (3) the influence of *Aktionsart,* (4) the presence of temporal complements and their anteposition and (5) semelfactivity. She concludes that the new narrative functions of the IMP are a result of the malleability provided by its imperfective aspect that does not show the limits of the situation. The narrative interpretation of the IMP comes from the contradiction of the presentation of the situation with open limits and of cotextual information that work on those limits. The effect will be even more perceptible with telic VPs that indicate the final limit of the situation.

2.3.3. Summary of the current situation

Modern French has seen the development of new narrative functions of the IMP, which allows that form to compete with the PS and the PC in their preterite value whilst keeping some of its own aspectual characteristics. It seems that this narrative use appears mainly with telic verbs and verb phrases that are shown from within; this is a viewpoint that their telic nature would normally prevent. Moreover, the use is restricted to definite contexts (e.g. press) and cotexts (e.g. introduction, in a list...) and does not challenge the other past tenses outside of these settings.

2.4. The emergence of the PRES as the central tense for *récit*

2.4.1. Diachronic overview

The use of the PRES to express past events is a well-rooted stylistic resource in French. Judge (1998: 217) defines it as:

[57] There may be a need for a distinction parallel to the one made by Judge (2002) between *présent narratif* and *présent dramatique* (see below).

> [...] un présent fictif en ce sens qu'il s'agit de décrire les événements comme s'ils se déroulaient devant les yeux de l'écrivain. On revit donc l'histoire, pas à pas, comme si on y était.

She notes that La Cantilène de Sainte Eulalie (ca.880AD) already contained occurrences of this so it is the systematicity of that use that is new, not the use itself. Brunot (I: 239) supports this when he writes that:

> En ancien français, le présent [...] s'emploie au lieu du passé dans les récits et cela avec une grande liberté.

2.4.2. Narrative PRES in Contemporary French

Judge (2002) distinguishes between such isolated uses - that she called « présent dramatique » (e.g. Je traversais la place et qui est-ce que je vois? Jean-Paul!) or « présent de présentation de faits historiques » (e.g. C'est en 1789 qu'éclate la révolution française) – and sequences of PRES in writings refering to the past – that she calls « présent narratif». Wilmet (1998: 348) indicates that the tendency of « localiser les péripéties de leur récit en connivence avec le lecteur » was popular with 19th century novelists and it seems that the writing of full novels in that PRES emerged at the turn of the 20th century. Judge (1998) gives Colline (1929) by Jean Giono as the first example of this technique but she mentions Diamant noir (1896) by Jean Aicart in Judge (2002). She also mentions another favourable environment: journalistic writing (see Facques 2002).

Judge (1998) concludes that the *présent narratif* permits a story several temporal – and even spatial - levels with a combination of other past tenses and that even if it blurs chronology, this can be re-established by the context. Because of the simplicity of the system, Judge (2002: 153) concludes that it would be a good linguistic tool for foreign learners.

2.4.3. Summary of the present situation

The PRES is a « *temps passe-partout*» (Judge 2002) that is able to convey pastness in Contemporary French. It can replace any of the forms expressing anteriority to the moment of speech but this substitution provokes a loss of temporal and aspectual oppositions that a variety of tenses brings.

3. Conclusion on the diachronic evolution of the French past tenses

In this chapter, facets of the evolution of French past tenses have been discussed. It has been shown that the present limitations of the PS have had an influence on the development of other forms. First the PC has developed its preterite functions to the detriment of its perfect meaning. Then, forms based on the PS (such as the PA) have regressed, opening the doors to other tenses as conveyors of double anteriority. Finally, as the PS was less used in *récit,* the PRES and the IMP are now used in this function. The complex past tense system is therefore an evolving challenge for foreign learners as they endeavour to distinguish between the wealth of forms at their disposal. The following chapter will therefore provide linguistic concepts to help discriminate between the forms.

Chapter 2:

Theoretical representation of French past verbal morphology

0. Introduction

As we have just seen, the contemporary French past tense system is complex because of the multiplicity of its forms but also because of the diversity of functions they express. In this chapter, the concepts needed to discriminate between them are examined. Time, aspect and *Aktionsart* are considered in turn: we first outline the concepts, then discuss various ways in which they have been defined in contemporary research before proposing our own understanding of them. Finally, we explore cotextual elements that influence these concepts and modify their value. This chapter concludes with a section that analyzes the combination of these concepts and underlines compatibilities and divergences.

1. Definition of concepts

When studying the verbal forms used in French to refer to past events, we need to take into account several features. If we think about the names of the main past tenses, the *passé composé*, *passé simple*, *imparfait*, *passé antérieur* or *plus-que-parfait,* we see that they rely on three domains. The first of these is time, as expressed in *passé* or *antérieur*, which means anteriority to the moment of reference. The second element to consider is the notion of aspect that is found in *imparfait,* that refers to unaccomplished: the situation has not reached its final limit that would make it over, or in *plus-que-parfait* that evokes the perfective sequel of this unaccomplishment. As for morphology (*simple* or *composé*), it can either refer to time (e.g. *avait su* is anterior to *savait*) or aspect (e.g. *il a terminé* expresses the fact that the subject is in the resulting state of having finished). We will therefore need to use these characteristics when attempting to distinguish between the French past tenses. We therefore present in this chapter the elements that influence the choice of a past tense: time, aspect and *Aktionsart.*

1.1. Time

In this first section we start by giving a description of the concept and presenting the different categories of times that can be found. This leads on to a discussion of the elements that can modify verbal time.

LIBRARY

1.1.1. The concept of time

In the eyes of the uninitiated, the choice of a tense is simply a question of time. Time however is a multifaceted notion, present in numerous linguistic and non-linguistic disciplines. The word itself is ambiguous and covers a wide range of meanings. This is even more true in French where the word *temps* refers not only to time but also to climate or verbal forms, where English respectively distinguishes between time, weather and tense. We therefore need to present briefly that notion.

1.1.2. The types of time

Time covers the categories of cosmic, physical, human, linguistic and verbal time. We present them in turn and then expand the latter category, which is of primary interest to the present study.

a. Cosmic time

Cosmic time derives from the spatial idea of movement flowing from a before to an after. It was first felt through natural phenomena like tides, the cycle of day and night or the succession of seasons. Whitrow (1972: 13ff) underlines the importance of religion in the establishment of calendars[58] in order to allow worshippers to celebrate the religious festivals, supposed to correspond with celestial rituals, at the right time. This cyclic conception of time - where a perpetual renewal was expected - was progressively replaced with a linear one. Christianity influenced our modern progressive idea of time in that the doctrine of crucifixion was shown as a unique event in time and not to be repeated, similarly Islam professes a linear conception of time, unlike Hinduism for example. This linear conception found an expression in everyday life but even to this day, it is present in science (for example in thermodynamics, where the universe is seen in expansion since the initial Big Bang).

[58] Vetters (1996: 3) further develops this concept; he refers to the need to measure time as « *temps chronique ou temps des événements* ». He states three features that each calendar should present, it should be *statif*; in other words, it needs to start from a meaningful zero like the birth of Christ, the Hegira or the French Revolution; a second characteristic of a calendar is to be *directif* in order to allow the location of events before or after the landmark; finally, a calendar should be *mensuratif*, this refers to the fact that it must allow a measurement of time in intervals that could be natural (day), arbitrary (week) or based on a division (hour, minute...).

b. Physical time

Whether it is conceived as a cycle or not, time can be viewed as a measurable reality: this is what is referred to as physical time. The circadian alternation of night and day thus played a fundamental role in the way humans have measured time, but changes appeared throughout the history of humanity. Until the fourteenth century, in daily life, the periods of light and darkness were divided into hours of variable length called '*horae temporales*'. The day hours of the summer were longer than the day hours of the winter as there was a longer period of daylight to divide into the 12 day-hours. As for astronomers, they developed a system using '*horae equinoctales*', of the same standard duration, based on the length of the *horae temporales* at the spring equinox, when both periods of daylight and obscurity were of the same length. This has led to our present way of measuring time.

Physical time can be measured as a flow, as with waterclocks. Vetters (1996: 3) takes up this idea of flow in his definition:

> Le TEMPS PHYSIQUE est « un continu uniforme, infini, linéaire, segmentable à volonté » (Benveniste 1974[59]: 70). C'est le temps objectif, unidirectionnel qui **s'écoule** sans retour. [Our emphasis]

Physical time can also be measured as periods, as in the case of watches or sundials.

c. Human time

While physical time is objective, it is perceived differently by people. Human time evokes the personal relationship of an individual with time, as shown in this quotation from Vetters (1996: 3) who calls that time '*vécu*' or '*intérieur*[60]':

> Le TEMPS VÉCU ou TEMPS INTÉRIEUR est le corrélat psychique du temps physique. Il s'agit d'une durée variable selon la subjectivité de l'individu qui le subit. La même période de temps physique peut être intériorisée différemment par l'observateur: cinq minutes d'un film passionnant au cinéma semblent s'écouler plus vite que cinq minutes passées dans la salle d'attente chez le médecin.

The personal internalization of time can take two opposite aspects: time can be seen as a flow that carries people away or as a flow that goes through the observer. Wilmet (1998: 299) gives literary illustrations of these two perspectives. The first excerpt from Elsa Triolet's works shows time as a flow that carries humans away:

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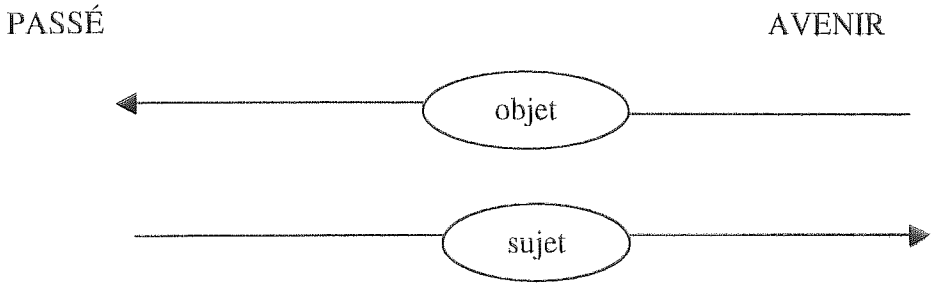
[59] Benveniste, E. (1974) *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, vol.2. Paris: Gallimard.
[60] Wilmet (1998) calls it « *temps humain* ».

> Le temps n'est pas une voiture qui passe, nous ne la regardons pas des bas-côtés de la route, elle nous emmène avec elle, on vit à l'intérieur de la voiture.

The well-known line by Apollinaire illustrates the conception of time flowing through an unchanging individual:

> Les jours s'en vont, je demeure.

Gosselin (1996: 78ff) for his part seems to integrate both approaches by postulating a double representation:



He sees tense representation as a double dynamics, based on language metaphors. For example, *ma montre avance* or *j'avance* indicates a move towards the future of the subject while *le rendez-vous est avancé* is moved forward on the object axis, which means towards the past.

d. Linguistic time

The human perception of time can be communicated through language, so linguistic time is « *intrinsèquement lié à l'exercice de la parole* » (Vetters 1996: 5). It is based on the moment of reference (either the moment of speech or another reference point) and, although it is individual, needs to be accepted by the interlocutor(s) for the communication to make sense. Vetters (1996: 6) illustrates this need for intersubjectivity:

> La phrase *Venez me chercher à la gare demain* devient ininterprétable si elle se trouve dans une lettre qui n'est pas datée; c'est-à-dire dans un contexte où l'interlocuteur n'a pas la possibilité d'accepter la temporalité de l'énonciateur.

Languages express the idea of time through several means: morphological, syntactic or lexical. Comrie (1985: 8) proposes three such classes. He first mentions lexically composite expressions « which simply involve slotting more accurate time specifications into the positions of a syntactic expression », like in « Five minutes after John left ». He then gives the class of lexical items (now, today, yesterday...), that express location in time. Among those, Wilmet (1998: 299) lists nouns (*durée, reprise...*), adjectives (*contemporain, bref...*), adverbs (*hier,*

demain, dates...), prepositions (*depuis* X, *il y a* X...)... The last class in Comrie's subdivisions is composed of grammatical categories among which he puts tenses. The verb (German: *Zeitwort* = 'word of time') is indeed the temporal word *par excellence* given that it combines - as other word categories - an internal time (the duration of the situation or *temps impliqué* in Guillaumean terms) but also an external time (the *temps expliqué,* its location in the anteriority, simultaneity or posteriority in relation to a given reference point). The noun *marche* does indeed imply internal duration of the situation of walking, but the verb *marchera* adds to this an external temporal information, that is to say that the situation is posterior to the moment of speech. Given its special place in the indication of temporality, we devote the next section to verbal time.

e. Verbal time

(i) Definition

Verbal time or tense is defined as « the grammaticalisation of location in time » (Comrie 1985:vii) or « the mechanism that assigns time to events » (Frawley 1992: 336). A verbal form links an event, a state or a process - which Comrie (1985: 5) subsumes under the tag « situation » that will be adopted in this study - with a reference point of cosmic time. Comrie (1985) distinguishes several kinds of tenses. First, he presents absolute tenses « which take the present moment as their deictic centre » (p.36). There are three possible cases. If the process coincides with the deictic centre, the verbal form will be seen as present. If it is anterior or posterior, there will be a past or a future form. Another category is relative tense « where the reference point for location of a situation is some point in time given by the context, not necessarily the present moment » (p.56). This conception is along the lines of Damourette & Pichon's '*point allocentrique*' (not centered on the *moi-ici-maintenant*), that was renamed '*lorcentrique*' by Wilmet (1998: 366).

This distinction between absolute and relative times is widely accepted, as for example in Gosselin (1996: 9):

> Le temps (la localisation temporelle) peut être absolu ou relatif. Il est absolu lorsque le procès (état, activité...) est situé par rapport au moment de l'énonciation (comme présent, passé ou futur); il est relatif quand le procès est situé par rapport à un autre procès (comme antérieur, simultané ou ultérieur); soit par exemple: Pierre était heureux (temps absolu: passé). Il croyait (passé) que Marie viendrait (temps relatif: ultérieur; non situé par rapport au moment de l'énonciation).

Finally, Comrie (1985: 65) proposes a last possible category:

> [...] the possible absolute-relative tenses are determined by a reference point being located before or after the present moment, and by the situation being located before or after the reference point. A reference point coinciding with the present simply gives absolute time reference, not absolute-relative time reference; a situation being located at a reference point in the past or future is likewise not distinguishable in terms of time location from absolute time reference.

Forms expressing double anteriority belong to this third category.

(ii) Representations of verbal time

Having defined what we mean by verbal time, we will now move to representations that have been given of it.

Bull's (1963) tense system relies on the relationships between time, the observer and events; it uses formulas relating 'axis of orientation' to 'direction of observation' for each 'event'. Axis of orientation refers to the perception of events that may be present (point present = PP), past (retrospective to PP = RP), future (anticipated at PP = AP) or recalled at PP as having been anticipated at RP (retrospective anticipated at PP = RAP). Direction of observation is represented by V (vector):

> Any observer may focus upon a simultaneous event (zero direction), upon an event anterior to P (minus direction), or upon an event posterior to P (plus direction). Any fixed direction of observation shall be called hereafter a vector (symbol:V) and all possible directions of observation from P may then be expressed by the formulas POV, P-V, or P+V. These shall be called Vector formulas. (Bull 1963: 4, quoted in Engel 1990: 75)

Event, the equivalent of 'situation' for Comrie, is represented by an E. According to this representation, the PS can be represented either as RPOV in its value of preterite or RP-V, in his rarer meaning of anterior to the PC, such as in *'il* but *(PS) son vin; après il* est parti *(PC) avec des amis'* (Engel 1990: 4). The formula for the PC is either RPOV, in its preterite form, or PP-V, in its value of present perfect. The IMP is also represented as RPOV but is differentiated from the PS and the PC by aspectual information. Engel (1990: 113) provides a clear illustration of the system[61]:

[61] We do not mention here the rules for distinguishing between PS and PC that appear in the original as this is not the focus of our discussion here.

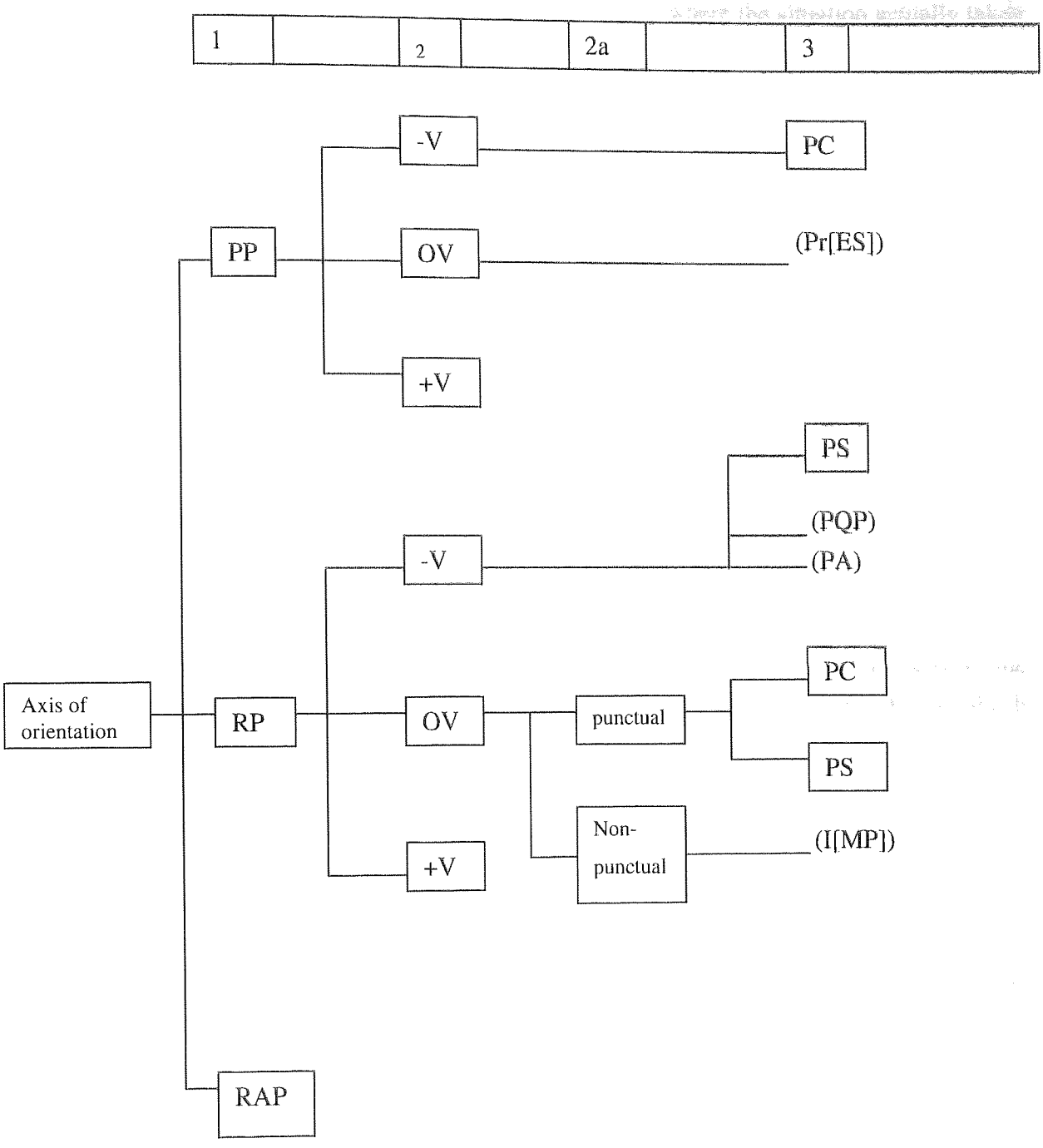
Key:

1. Determine axis

2. Determine relation to reference point

2a. If necessary, determine aspect

3. Use rules for PS/ PC choice



A major drawback comes from the existence of a facultative feature, aspect, that is only is only used to distinguish between the IMP and the PS / PC, which affects the systemacity of the presentation.

Although less elaborate, the formalisation introduced by Reichenbach (1947) has been more widely adopted and seminal in representing tenses (see Comrie 1985). It starts from the fact

that the use of a moment of speech (S) - the moment where the situation was communicated through language - and a moment of event (E) - the moment where the situation actually takes place - can only represent three types of relations[62]:

(1) E-S: past, the event being anterior to the moment of speech;

(2) E, S: present, the moments of speech and event are merged and

(3) S-E: future, the event is posterior to the moment of speech.

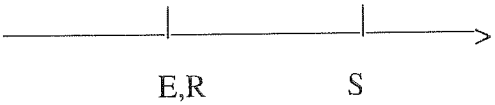
However, languages like English or French have at their disposal a variety of tenses to express each one of these relations and a system that would only refer to E and S would be unable to distinguish between the tenses.

> From a sentence like « Peter had gone » we see that the time order expressed in the tense does not concern one event, but two events, whose positions are determined with respect to the point of speech. We shall call these time points the *point of event* and the *point of reference*. In the example, the point of event is the time Peter went; the point of reference is a time between this point and the point of speech. (p.288)

Reichenbach's logical representation described thus any tense by relating three points[63] on the time line: S (point of Speech), E (point of Event) and R (point of Reference). Any past tense implies an E anterior to S (any past situation is located before the moment of speech), so the use of R allows one to distinguish between the various forms. For example, Reichenbach represents the preterit as follows:

(1) I saw John

fig 1



where the points of event and reference are concomitant but anterior to the moment of speech. As for the pluperfect as in:

(2) I had seen John

fig.2

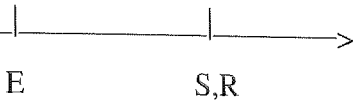


[62] '-' indicates concomitance; ',' ordering.

[63] Vetters (1996: 15) mentions that similar systems with three points had been previously devised by Beauzée and by Jespersen (1924).

the event (E) is shown as anterior to a reference point (R) located in the past in relation to the point of speech (S). The present perfect in:

(3) I have seen John

fig.3 

shows an event (E) that is anterior to the point of speech (S), which is merged itself with the moment of reference (R). The situation is viewed from its current fallout.

If Reichenbach's representation permits discrimination between these English tenses, it is insufficient for the French past tenses. The PC could indeed be represented by fig.1 in its preterite use, that is to say when it is used as an equivalent of the PS as for example in *La Belgique s'est déclarée indépendante en 1830*, that could be replaced by *La Belgique se déclara indépendante en 1830.* In fig.3, the PC appears in its perfective use, in other words, in its present perfect value as for example in *Il n'arrête pas de voyager depuis qu'il a reçu le Prix Nobel.* In this case, the PS would not be acceptable as the focus is on the present relevance of the situation. Moreover, it is not clear if fig.1 would represent the PS or the IMP. Even in English however, this temporal presentation is insufficient if it is to render progressive tenses[64], so Reichenbach had to introduce an aspectual dimension[65] in his system by representing E either by a point or a period. This is further explained in the section dedicated to aspect (see 1.2.).

1.1.3. Our conception of time

In our study of past tenses, time is a useful device in various respects. It is used for the establishment of moment of reference but it also permits ordering situations along the time line and in relation to one another. However, it is not sufficient to differentiate between the past tenses and another concept, aspect, needs to be introduced.

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[64] Vetters (1996: 20) also mentions that the fact that Reichenbach uses the same description for the PS / IMP opposition in French and the simple and progressive tenses in English is problematic as the distribution of functions between the two tenses differs from one language to the other.

[65] Vetters (1996: 20) is not convinced that there is a compelling need to introduce aspect in a model the aim of which is to present temporal distinctions.

1.1.4. Elements that influence time

The temporal organisation of situations in time can be influenced by the addition of temporal complements or by the cotext (see Comrie 1985), be it inside the sentence or outside it. So far, we have relied on three concepts: the moment of speech, the moment of reference and the moment of event. While S is fixed, temporal modifications can be exerted on these last two elements.

Several classifications of temporal complements have been proposed. Klum's work (1961: 91ss) provides a classification of cotextual temporal indications. He categorizes these 'adverbs' in three systems according to their axial orientation[66]:

- the first system - or « *série primaire ou nynégocentrique*[67] » - is centred on the present point [PP] axis represented by « *en ce moment, maintenant, aujourd'hui* ». In relation to PP, the complements are divided up into four groups:

  (i) those that express anteriority (-V): *hier, la semaine (année) passée, l'autre jour*;

  (ii) those that express posteriority (+V): *demain, la semaine (année) prochaine*;

  (iii) those that, while presupposing PP, are structurally neutral, from the point of view of anteriority, posteriority or simultaneity relations (oV, -V, +V): *ce matin* (most of the time oV and -V), *ce soir* (most of the time oV and +V), *tout à l'heure* (-V and +V) and

  (iv) those that represent and actualize the PP centre (oV): *en ce moment, maintenant, aujourd'hui*;

- the second system implies the « *point allocentrique* » [PA] - in other words, the point identified with another reference point - different from PP in relation to which complements are grouped together in the following categories:

  (i) those expressing anteriority (-V): *la veille, la semaine (année) suivante* [sic], *quelques heures plus tôt*;

  (ii) those that express posteriority (+V): *le lendemain, la semaine (année) suivante, quelques heures plus tard (après)* and

  (iii) those expressing simultaneity in relation to PA or that can systematically, directly express PA, that is: *alors, à ce moment* and the dates;

- the third system, called the neutral or biaxial series, covers complements that are not linked to the landmark and that, as a result, can either be centred on PP or PA.

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[66] Klum relies on Bull's formalisation.

[67] *Nyn-égo-centrique* clearly indicates that the landmark is the 'now-me-here'.

If Klum's system is differential as far as the link to the landmarks is concerned, it seems to present a number of weaknesses. First, an exact parallelism between the series based on PP and PA is missing: one would have expected the same number of categories. The system is also fairly undetermined for the biaxial series. Moreover, the usefulness of these categories could be questioned in relation to the choice of a past tense: some complements of the first group (e.g. *hier*) would accept PC as well as IMP:

(4) Hier encore, j'avais vingt ans... (title of a song by Ch. Aznavour)
(5) Hier, il a gagné une course.

whilst others would not accept any of these tenses (e.g. *la veille*)

(6) ?La veille, il avait vingt ans.
(7) * La veille, il a gagné une course.

In the first case, a PQP would be expected; in the second, there is a discrepancy between the temporal anchorage at S of the PC and the temporal anchorage of *la veille* at another reference point. It seems therefore that extra factors will need to be introduced to make the distinctions useful.

Therefore, some 'adverbials' - we understand the term etymologically as the elements of the sentence that are added to the verb - specify the point of reference: they can either indicate a link with the moment of speech (e.g. *aujourd'hui, cette semaine*...) or activate a link with another reference point (e.g. *ce jour-là, en 1824*...). We will consider that the adverbial information that does modify time includes the following:
- complements that set a new reference point (R) (e.g. *en 1984*);
- complements based on the moment of speech (S) (e.g. *aujourd'hui*);
- complements based on another *actualité* (S') (e.g. *la veille*)

If the category of time already allows certain differentiations between the tenses - for example the distinction between the PS and the PC as regards the link with the moment of speech (for a discussion, see Part I, Chapter 3), it still is insufficient to explain for example that the following sentences are both possible:

(8) A la fin du 19e siècle, Ferry **essaya** d'instaurer un système éducatif libre, gratuit et obligatoire.
(9) A la fin du 19e siècle, Ferry **essayait** d'instaurer un système éducatif libre, gratuit et obligatoire[68].

[68] This example comes from our pilot study (see Part II, chapter 1).

To distinguish between those two possible French sentences, we will need a new category, that is aspect. We will attempt below to define this concept.

1.1.5. Conclusion on time

In this study, we assume that all past tenses share an ability to express past time but that they do so in different ways. There is no direct correspondence between time and tense, as forms that are not morphological past tenses (like *présent historique*) can express past time. Moreover, what is generally acknowledged as a past tense is able to express non past time as in PS expressing general truth (*Un bienfait reproché tint toujours lieu d'offense*[69]), in 'modal' uses of the IMP (*Qu'est-ce que Maman a dit qu'on mangeait demain?*[70]) or the uses of PC with future temporal indications (*Dans un an, j'ai fini mon PhD*). To allow further distinctions between the forms we move on to the notion of 'aspect'.

1.2. Aspect

1.2.1. The concept of aspect

The interest in verbal aspect comes from Slavic studies of the last century. In the Slavonic languages, the notion of aspect is obvious as it appears as part of the lexical structures: according to the aspect, the verb will present morphological particularities. A quotation from Guillaume (1964: 54) illustrates this point:

> Ainsi procède le slave et à sa suite le russe. En vue de mieux exprimer les idées de répétition, de fréquence, d'habitude, ou même simplement de persistance à ne pas s'achever, ces langues soumettent le verbe à un allongement qui lui confère un aspect particulier dénommé généralement, eu égard à sa valeur expressive, aspect itératif ou fréquentatif, et que nous nommerons, jugeant que sa propriété essentielle est de s'opposer à la détermination, l'aspect anti-déterminatif. Ex. slave: *ubivati* 'être en train de tuer' en regard de *ubiti* 'tuer'; russe: *vypivat'* 'boire avec excès, souvent' en regard de *vypit'* 'boire entièrement' et de *pit'* 'boire'.

These distinctions caused by aspect in the Slavonic languages are not lexicalized in the same way in Romance languages. However, there have been investigations into the role of aspect in French and it has been widely explored within the study of past tenses.

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[69] Grevisse 1995: 191.
[70] Wilmet 1997: 384.

We have indeed mentioned earlier, first that the name *imparfait* refers to aspect and then that Reichenbach's system proved insufficient to offer a distinctive presentation of all the past verbal forms, like the progressive in English and IMP in French. This led him to introduce a distinction between a temporal point - that would account for punctual[71] forms - and a temporal period to express progressive forms. As far as French is concerned, this development of Reichenbach's representation might permit distinction between the IMP that implies that the situation is valid during a period, and the other punctual tenses.

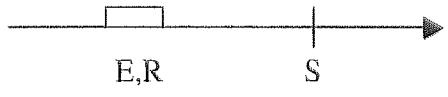
(10) Je vis John

fig 4



(11) Je voyais John

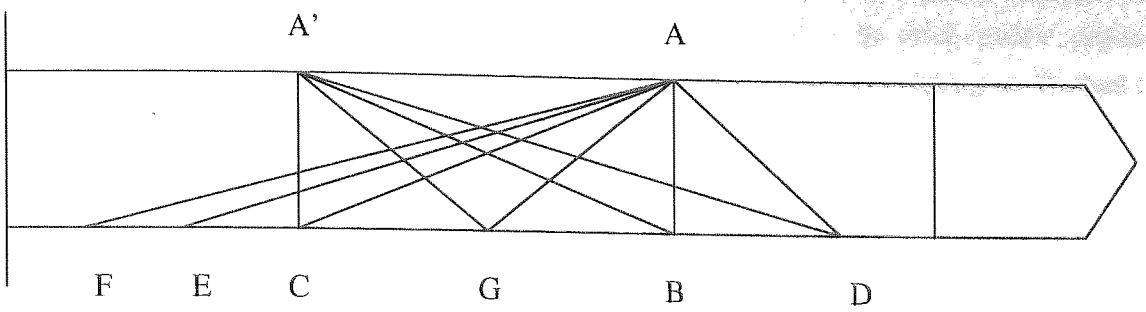
fig 5



However, this feature has been criticized as being over-simplistic; even for simple forms, the temporal reference can imply an interval as in this sentence, *He stayed for five days* (Hamann[72], quoted in Vetters 1996: 19). So there would be no distinction between the representation of verbal forms and non-verbal temporal information. To remedy this, Hamann (1987: 32) suggests that the three points E, R and S should be treated as intervals, a feature that will be found in Gosselin's (1996) system, which will be presented later.

Wilmet's (1998, developed in Rosier & Wilmet 2002) formalisation allows the representation of both tense and aspect. The figure below illustrates the French indicative;

[71] Punctual form is used here to present a situation without insisting on any duration.
[72] Hamann, C. (1987) 'The awesome seed of reference time', in Schopf, A. (ed) *Time, Text and Modality*, vol.1, Tübingen: Niemeyer.



The time line is double: the top one indicates *énonciation* and the bottom one *énoncé*. Time indicates a situation's orientation with respect to A (*actualité)* that cuts cosmic time in three epochs: past, present and future. The existence of a second point A' (*actualité dépassée*) allows to represent absolute-relative tenses, such as the PQP. Aspect is marked by the lines joining the levels of *énonciation* and *énoncé*: a vertical line indicates what he calls *aspect sécant*[73] and an oblique line *aspect global*[74].

In this diagram, the PS, the PC and the IMP are distinct, unlike in Bull's and Reichenbach's representations:

- AG (or AC, AE, AF) represents the PS;
- ABG (or ABC, ABE, ABF) represents the PC: AB indicates the grounding in the *actualité* while BG shows anteriority;
- AA'C describes the IMP and parallels the description of the PRES (AB) with which the IMP shares many similarities (see Wilmet 1998 for a discussion)

1.2.2. Types of aspect

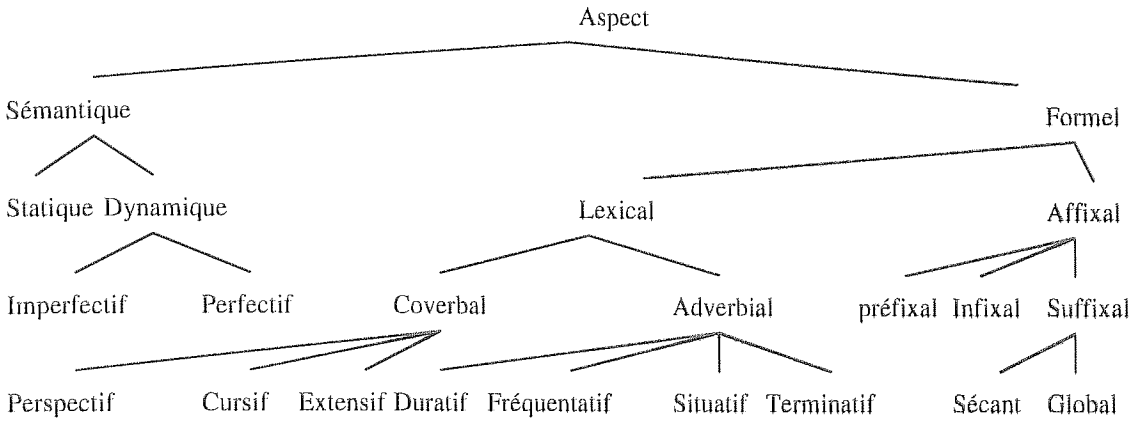
Let us now concentrate on the concept of aspect. In the same way as the concept of time has been attributed several values, aspect is also polysemic. However, this range of interpretations is even more problematic as they all refer to linguistic features. There is no agreement among linguists on the nature of aspect. First, several interpretations of the concept exist: aspect can be found as a grammatical, a lexical or a semantic notion. In this section, we first present the kinds of aspects present in linguistic descriptions and underline the problems in terminology.

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[73] [L'aspect sécant] saisit le procès de l'intérieur, le scinde entre le *terminus a quo* α et le *terminus ad quem* ω, ouvrant aux extrémités l'intervalle α-ω [indicating the limits of the situation] (Wilmet 1998: 326)

[74] [L'aspect global] saisit le procès de l'extérieur, appréhende en bloc le *terminus a quo* α et le *terminus ad quem* ω, fermant aux extrémités l'intervalle α-ω. (Wilmet, *ibid.*).

The number of aspects found in French varies according to the studies (for an overview of major approaches, see Ayres-Bennett & Carruthers 2001). In most works, aspect is a syntactic category, but some linguists postulate a wider range of aspectual types. Wilmet (1998: 327) offers an extensive description of what aspect refers to in his system:



Wilmet's *aspect sémantique* corresponds to what is commonly referred to as lexical aspect. His *aspect formel* is a wide encompassing category that includes lexical ways of expressing aspectual information: periphrases (such as *aller* + INF, *être en train de...* in *aspect coverbal*); adverbs indicating the limits of a situation in *aspect adverbial*; *aspect affixal* refers to modifications to the verb itself. Most systems however are not as exhaustive as this one and we now review the most common categories found in the literature.

a. Morphological aspect[75]

For French, Guillaume's (1929) aspect covered only the opposition between simple, compound and double compound forms. He saw this aspect as one of the relationships that organize the French verbal system. Whilst *temps chronogénétique* describes the development from non temporal/personal forms of the verb (infinitive/participle = *temps in posse*) to temporal/personal forms (indicative = *temps in esse*) through non temporal/personal forms (subjunctive = t*emps in fieri)*[76], aspect refers to the relationship between single verbal forms and their (double) compound correspondent forms within these three categories of tenses. He places single forms in the « *aspect tensif* », compound in the « *aspect extensif* » and double compound in the « *aspect bi-extensif* ». In this system, the PC is thus the extensive aspect of the

[75] This corresponds to Wilmet's *aspect formel lexical coverbal extensif.*

present and the PS and the IMP are two tensive past forms. The latter represents an event already started and going towards its completion. The former is inceptive or shown as starting.

This conception of aspect, along the lines of the specific aspectual forms found in Slavonic verbs, is however not really satisfactory for French. It can only express the retrospective perfect view of compound tenses and would struggle to represent the preterite value of the PC, that is to say, when the PC possesses the same function as a PS.

b. Semantic aspect[77]

Rather than being based on morphological features, aspect is more often described as the way a situation is viewed. It will then influence the way the event (E) is presented in the language.

For Pfister (1974: 403ff), *aspect* describes the perspective of the 'utterer' on a situation. This perspective can only take into account the situation without its limits (this is what he calls the '*perspective cursive*') or focus on the situation as a whole; in the latter case, the perspective is described as '*globale*'. The first perspective is expressed by the IMP that shows the situation unfolding whilst the second is rendered by the PS.

> L'aspect dépend donc de la perspective sous laquelle un locuteur envisage une action. Cette perspective peut être cursive: elle peut suivre l'action sans fixer le commencement ni la fin et n'embrasser qu'une de ses parties. Elle peut être globale, comprenant le commencement et la fin. L'aspect cursif exige en français l'imparfait, l'aspect global le passé simple.

In Reid (1955: 27), we find still different names, it seems that his 'aspect of attainment' is equivalent to Wilmet's '*aspect sécant*' and Pfister's '*aspect cursif*' and that his 'aspect of continuance' corresponds to the '*aspect global*':

> The category of aspect is to be taken as comprising two members, which may be called respectively continuance and attainment. In the aspect of continuance the process, or rather the stage at which the process is envisaged, is conceived as static and relatively permanent (the verb in this aspect has psychologically much in common with the noun and adjective); in the aspect of attainment it is conceived of as dynamic and relatively transitory.

However, the appellations of imperfective and perfective are the most common in this context although Wilmet's (1998: 315-6)[78] use of '*perfectif*' and '*imperfectif*' refers to the meaning of

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[76] *In posse*, *in esse* and *in fieri* are Latin phrases: *posse*, 'to be able to', expresses potentiality; *esse*, 'to be', refers to actual existence and *fieri*, 'to become', means that the situation is developing.

[77] This is equivalent to Wilmet's *aspect formel affixal*.

the verb phrase - what we will later take as the *Aktionsart* - and not to the viewing of the situation.

Let us examine some examples of the perfective / imperfective distinction in the viewing of a situation to be found in several linguists' descriptions. This is for example the case for Frawley (1992: 298):

> Perfective aspect induces a view of an event as a totality, so the event's internal complexity - its beginning, middle and end - is much less relevant to the interpretation than its unitization. In contrast imperfective aspect induces the view of an event as internally complex. Imperfective events are viewed from within or as in progress, and their internal properties are much more relevant to their expression than their unitization [...]

In the same way, Molendijk (1990: 12) distinguishes two values for aspect, which are also called 'perfective' and 'imperfective':

> L'aspect perfectif implique une vision de l'extérieur du fait raconté, qui constitue donc un tout inanalysable, impénétrable au regard. L'aspect imperfectif, par contre, implique une vision de l'intérieur: le fait est vu à partir de sa phase médiane, ce qui implique qu'on se désintéresse de ses limites.

Vet (1980: 78) adopts a similar point of view: a perfective approach implies that the speaker takes the situation as a whole, from its beginning to its end:

> le locuteur assume la responsabilité pour la vérité de la situation entière; c'est-à-dire qu'il parle d'une situation complète, y compris le début et la fin de la situation.

In an imperfective presentation however, only a part of the situation is taken into account and there is no consideration of the inceptive and terminative limits:

> le locuteur ne prend pas en considération [...] l'intervalle entier pendant lequel la situation est valable; il fait notamment abstraction du début et de la fin de l'intervalle [...] (p.76)

So in these three presentations, the choice of the term 'imperfective' to refer to the type of aspect that shows the situation unfolding parallels the name of imperfect given to the past verbal form that presents such a situation.

According to Martin (1971), a situation involves three different points: an initial and a final point and any point in between. A 'perfective' presentation implies that a process is considered

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[78] Les verbes 'imperfectifs' tels 'marcher' engendrent irrévocablement le procès α–ω dès le terminus a quo α[78], [...] Les verbes 'perfectifs' tels 'sortir' n'engendrent irrévocablement le procès α–ω qu'au terminus ad quem ω.

from its beginning (or any intermediate point) to its end. An 'imperfective' vision only takes into account an intermediary point.

If aspect is generally seen as a binary category presenting a perfective and an imperfective side, it can have more values in some linguistic descriptions. In the case of De Boer (1947), he distinguishes five aspects (i) entrance into action, (ii) duration, (iii) the accomplished state, (iv) the recently accomplished state and (v) the finishing action. As far as French is concerned, the only aspectual differences that he finds describe the past tenses. According to De Boer:

> [les aspects] peuvent être exprimés[79] dans la forme verbale (notamment dans les trois temps du passé) soit par des formes dissociées: Je suis sur le point de; je commence à; je viens de; je vais finir de, etc; des adverbes comme: sans cesse..., souvent,..., vite..., etc.. De cette façon-là, nos langues occidentales 'réintègrent' la notion d'aspect que nos formes verbales n'expriment plus depuis qu'elles expriment essentiellement les temps. (quoted in Garey 1957: 93)

In De Boer's conception of aspect, there seems to be a mixture of morphological features for example in the verbal periphrases, as well as lexical influences, for example in the adverbs. It is therefore a mixed notion in his conceptualisation.

c. Lexical aspect[80]

Aspect has not only been used to refer to the type of process or to its morphology. Gosselin (1996: 10) mentions the distinction between a grammatical and a lexical aspect provided by the type of verb:

> La catégorie de l'aspect se décompose en aspect lexical et aspect grammatical. L'aspect lexical correspond au type de procès (activité, état, accomplissement...) exprimé par le lexème verbal et son environnement actanciel (par exemple, on établit, au moyen de tests syntaxiques que *manger du poulet* constitue une 'activité'). L'aspect grammatical définit le mode de présentation du procès (accompli, inaccompli, itératif,...) tel qu'il est indiqué essentiellement par les marques grammaticales (temps morphologiques, semi-auxiliaires, adverbes d'aspect...)

The so-called lexical aspect is not linked to the presentation of the situation but describes the semantic characteristics of the verb phrase. We have therefore chosen to study it under a different category that will be presented under the heading *Aktionsart* below.

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[79] *Exprimer* is used to refer to an essential function.
[80] Wilmet's *aspect sémantique*.

1.2.3. Our conception of aspect

Unlike the different descriptions of time in the previous section, all the conceptions of aspect presented above refer to linguistics. It is thus necessary to define what is referred to as aspect in this study. Aspect here will be understood as describing the way a situation is seen. We will call this aspect 'perfective' if it gives a global presentation of the situation with its limits, and 'imperfective' if it gives a partial presentation of (one) intermediate point(s) of the situation without focusing on the initial or final limits. For example, *Hier, Pierre a lu Guerre et Paix* gives a global[81] presentation of the situation: it is understood as 'Yesterday, Pierre read War and Peace from beginning to end'. On the other hand, *Hier, Pierre lisait Guerre et Paix* only focuses on the situation at a given moment - for example when I called - and the situation exceeds the limits of this reference point. To represent the distinction between perfective and imperfective, Reichenbach's presentation would be insufficient as it only allows a difference between punctual and durative situations. Rosier & Wilmet (2002) indicate perfective aspect (their *aspect global*) by oblique lines and imperfective aspect (their *aspect sécant*) by vertical lines but we will show in chapter three that this representation is ambiguous. We will therefore illustrate the aspects by an interval expressing the event E, the limits of which can either be closed - represented as [ ] - or open - illustrated as][-, whether the emphasis is put on the boundaries or not.

1.2.4. Elements that influence aspect

The aspect of a verbal form can undergo influences from different factors: tense, morphology and adverbials. These will be presented below.

a. Correlation between tense and aspect

Affinities are to be found between aspects and tenses: the perfective perspective where the situation is taken as a whole corresponds to the PS in French as this tense offers a global presentation of a situation. For the imperfective perspective that focuses on an intermediary point, it is best translated in French by the IMP, since that tense shows the situation as unfolding. These different perspectives would be evident from a translation into English:

[81] Equivalent to 'perfective' in Wilmet (1998).

(12) Il lut quand il rentra - He read when he came back.
(13) Il lisait quand elle rentra - He was reading when she came back.

In the first example, the focus is put on the successive nature of the situations, in other words the fact that the reading follows the return, whilst the second example insists on the insertion of the return within another situation of reading and does not show its limits.

b. Correlation between aspect and morphology

The use of verbal periphrases allows a change in the aspectual presentation of a situation inasmuch as they modify the aspectual view on the situation by emphasizing its initial (e.g. *commencer à*) or final limits (e.g. *finir par*) or its internal running (e.g. *être en train de*).

Wilmet (1998: 318ff) offers an extensive description of these morphological influences. He distinguishes between adverbial aspect - that will be addressed below - and coverbal aspect, that covers (i) '*aspect perspectif*' describing the anterior phase to the process (e.g. *Pierre va marcher / sortir*), (ii) '*aspect extensif*' that refers to the posterior phase (e.g. *Pierre est sorti* or *Pierre vient de marcher*) and (iii) '*aspect cursif*' further split up into '*inscrit*' and '*circonscrit*'. The '*aspect inscrit*' describes a phase of the process that can be inchoative (*Pierre commence à marcher*), transitive (*Pierre est en train de marcher*) or egressive (*Pierre finit de marcher*). As for the '*aspect circonscrit*', it places the process within a succession of processes showing its beginning (*Pierre commence par marcher*), its progression (*Pierre continue à marcher*) or its end (*Pierre finit par marcher*). Although interesting, such a detailed morphological description would exceed the scope of the present study.

c. Correlation between aspect and adverbials

Adverbials may modify the perfective or imperfective aspect of the verb. In our presentation of time, we have already mentioned adverbials that would modify the reference points S and R. Now that we are studying the viewing of the situation, we will also include the elements that have an influence on the presentation of E.

Vet's (1980: 105) subdivisions separate adverbs into four main categories:
(i) the « *adverbes de temps proprement dits* » indicate the place of the reference, the interval or the location in the interval in relation to a known period[82];
(ii) the adverbs of duration or of limits;

[82] This category obviously works on time.

(iii) the frequentative adverbs, that are analyzed through the notion of group and
(iv) the adverbs that need to be analyzed through the notion of presupposition (e.g. *déjà, encore*).

This classification is limited in that it fails to differentiate the compatibility between the different types of adverbs and given past tenses. For instance, the durative adverbs and those expressing limits are under the same heading in Vet's system but they combine differently with the IMP, as the examples below demonstrate:

(14) Il gagnait des courses pendant ses études
(15) * Il gagnait des courses en deux heures.

A better classification of aspectual adverbials should probably start with the indication of limits, which were seen to be a crucial factor in differentiating a perfective from an imperfective presentation. We have already mentioned that Wilmet (1991) refers to a lexical aspect that has as one of its categories what he calls '*adverbiaux*' in other words, adverbs or complements indicating a place or a time. The temporal '*adverbiaux*' on which we focus here correspond, according to Wilmet (1991: 215), to expressions indicating:

(i) origin *(depuis hier);*
(ii) destination *(jusqu'à demain)*;
(iii) both initial and final limits;
(iv) the time span necessary to go from the *terminus a quo a* to the *terminus ad quem b (longtemps, pendant x temps, en x temps...)*;
(v) frequency of the AB process or the number of times the passage from A to B happens *(souvent, jamais, toujours...)* and
(vi) ordering of AB in a sequence of events *(encore, tôt, premièrement...)*.

In his Grammaire critique, Wilmet (1998: 324) reorganizes these six classes in four categories, comparable to Vet's, of what he calls '*aspect adverbial*':

(i) durative aspect expressing the interval between α (initial limit) and ω (final limit) *(pendant X, vite, longtemps...)*;
(ii) frequentative aspect that indicates the number of times the passage from α to ω takes place *(souvent, toujours, x fois...)*;
(iii) situative aspect that puts the situation within a series of events *(ne plus, déjà, de plus en plus, presque...)* and
(iv) terminative aspect that shows the limits of the situation *(depuis, jusqu'à...)* (this 'aspect' seems to cover the first three categories of 1991's description).

For the purpose of the present study, the limits are essential here, leaving aside Vet and Wilmet's latest classification, we will split our aspectual adverbials according to the different relations to limits. The following categories will then be distinguished, based on the absence (e.g. duration) of limits or the special type of limits (e.g. initial or final):

- initial limit (e.g. *à partir de cinq heures*);
- final limit (e.g. *jusqu'à l'été*);
- duration (e.g. *longtemps*) of which interval is a special type (e.g. *de janvier à mars*);
- repetition (e.g. *tous les jours, souvent*);
- presuppositive (e.g. *déjà)*

These categories will allow us to evaluate the relation of the adverbial with the various past tenses.

1.2.5. Conclusion on aspect

Aspect has been defined as the internal viewing of a situation. It corresponds to the use of certain tenses: for example, the IMP gives an imperfective viewing of a situation - in other words, it does not focus on its limits - whilst the PS gives a perfective viewing in showing the situation with its limits. Yet another factor that can be determinant in the choice of a past verbal form is the type of verb and it is indeed the most important feature in the PAH (see introduction). This concept is now studied.

1.3. Aktionsart[83]

In this section, we first consider the concept of *Aktionsart*[84] that can be found in linguistic descriptions. We then present the two main traditions in the description of *Aktionsart* before elaborating our own understanding of this concept and finally considering elements that can bring variations to the *Aktionsart*.

[83] This corresponds to *aspect sémantique* in Wilmet (1998).
[84] Vetters (1996:77) provides a list of the numerous appellations that have been given to that concept.

1.3.1. The concept of *Aktionsart*

The existence of what some linguists have called a 'lexical aspect'[85] (*mode d'action* is also widely used in French linguistics) - or what we have chosen to designate as *Aktionsart* to avoid confusions between grammatical and lexical aspects - is widely acknowledged. Vetters (1996: 79) clearly distinguishes between aspect and *Aktionsart*. He develops the idea that the *Aktionsart* of a verb must be determined without reference to the context:

> La différence entre mode d'action [= *Aktionsart*] et aspect relève de la distinction entre RÉFÉRENCE VIRTUELLE et RÉFÉRENCE ACTUELLE de Milner[86] (1982: 10): « le segment de réalité associé à une séquence est sa *référence actuelle*; l'ensemble de conditions caractérisant une unité lexicale est sa *référence virtuelle* ». Autrement dit: le mode d'action concerne les caractéristiques *virtuelles*, hors contexte, d'une situation, l'aspect une occurrence *actuelle*, dans un contexte particulier de cette situation. Illustrons cela par un exemple. Hors contexte, le prédicat virtuel « courir un marathon » est télique parce qu'il a un point d'accomplissement inhérent. Dans un contexte particulier, la phrase *Jean a couru un marathon*, qui concerne une occurrence précise du prédicat 'courir un marathon', est perfective parce que l'action en question est présentée comme étant achevée à un certain moment sur l'axe du temps [...]. Par contre, la phrase, *Luc courait un marathon*, qui concerne une autre occurrence du même prédicat virtuel, est imperfective parce qu'elle n'inclut pas l'achèvement de l'action, ou en d'autres termes parce qu'elle présente l'action dans son déroulement.

The *Aktionsart* is thus the semantic characteristic of the verb phrase: it is conveyed by lexical items and, unlike aspect, not by grammatical categories, for example tenses. Vetters seems to talk about verb phrases rather than about verbs. It is unclear whether *Aktionsart* should be attributed to one or the other. In any case, we will now present the two main systems of verb types that are referred to in the literature. A critical analysis of both will help us refine our own understanding of the concept.

1.3.2. The types of *Aktionsart*

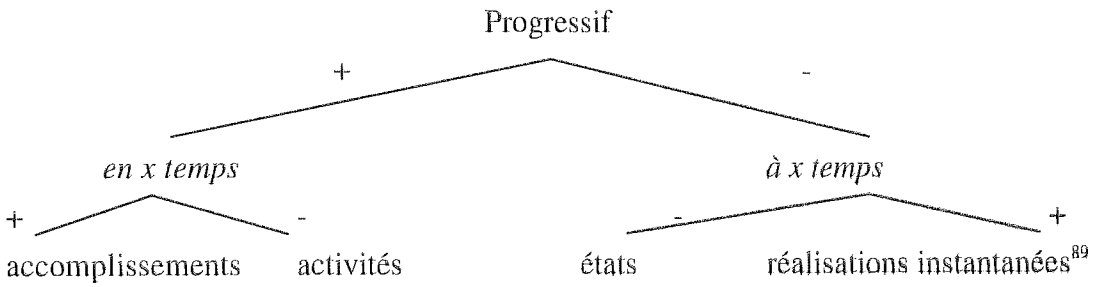
a. Vendler (1967)

Two main traditions exist in defining *Aktionsart*: Vendler's and Garey's. Vendler's (1967) 'time schemata' are often referred to[87]. He distinguishes between four categories of verbs: (i) states (e.g. 'to like'), (ii) activities (e.g. 'to read a book'), (iii) accomplishments (e.g.

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[85] This concept corresponds thus to what was called 'aspect' in Andersen (1991) or in the primacy of aspect hypothesis (Robison 1990).
[86] Milner, J.C. (1982) *Ordres et raisons de langue*. Paris: Seuil.
[87] As a reminder, Andersen (1991) uses Vendler's classification.

'to run a mile') and (iv) achievements (e.g. 'to win a race'). His main distinction comes from the ability of verb phrases to be used in the progressive form. Accomplishments and activities can both be used in such a way but they can respectively combine with a temporal complement of the type 'in + duration' (e.g. 'run a mile in five minutes') or 'within + duration' (e.g. 'eat within 2 minutes'). States and achievements are believed not to accept the progressive, but states have a duration whilst the second are instantaneous[88]. Vetters (1996: 101) rightly shows that this criterion is not sufficient for examples like *He is winning the race* which is an achievement but accepts the progressive. Vetters (1996: 90) provides a schematic representation of Vendler's system:



The main distinction appears between verb phrases that accept the progressive forms like states and achievements and those that do not. The second level of distinction relies on the type of temporal complements that are compatible with each type.

Although Vendler's subdivisions are widely adopted, they are deficient for several reasons. First, they were initially created for English and the distinction between simple and progressive forms is important whilst there are no progressive tense as such in French. Moreover, those categories are not economical. For example, in the table above, *manger une pomme* is an accomplishment, but *manger* would be an activity, so it seems to postulate the existence of two different verbs *manger*. Another feature of the classification is that it mixes criteria; in some cases, the focus is on the verb only (e.g. *courir*), in other cases, it is on the verb phrase (e.g. *courir un kilomètre*). It is worth noting that 'accomplishments' (see Salaberry 2000: 18) and 'achievements' (see Vetters 1996: 90) refer to VPs where there is a need for a direct object so it may not be worth establishing four different categories. We find here again the problem that was raised by Vetters (see 1.3.1.).

[88] Salaberry (2000: 128ff) and Vetters (1996:87ff) mention other operational tests.
[89] Translates Vendler's 'achievements'.

Gosselin (1996: 41) proposes a presentation that expands Vendler's. It follows Martin's (1988)[90] and François' (1989)[91] works and distinguishes between the four categories by the use of three features: (i) dynamicity, (ii) limits and (iii) punctuality.

> a) les états sont [- dynamique], [- borné], [- ponctuel]; ex. *être fatigué, savoir quelque chose, aimer le chocolat, etc.*
> b) les activités sont [+ dynamique], [- borné], [- ponctuel]; ex. *marcher, courir, regarder un tableau, etc.*
> c) les accomplissements sont [+ dynamique], [+ borné], [- ponctuel]; ex. *manger une pomme, rentrer chez soi, courir un 100 mètres, etc.*
> d) les achèvements sont [+ dynamique], [+ borné], [+ ponctuel]; ex. *apercevoir un avion, sursauter, atteindre un sommet, etc.*

Some comments need to be made on Gosselin's description with the three features of dynamicity, limits and punctuality. This tripartite analysis allows eight different combinations (2^3 = 2 values [+ / -] and 3 variables) and only four are used.

+ dynamique	+ borné	+ ponctuel	achievements
+ dynamique	+ borné	- ponctuel	accomplishments
+ dynamique	- borné	+ ponctuel	
+ dynamique	- borné	- ponctuel	activities
- dynamique	+ borné	+ ponctuel	
- dynamique	+ borné	- ponctuel	
- dynamique	- borné	+ ponctuel	
- dynamique	- borné	- ponctuel	states

It is true that there are logical incompatibilities between for example a lack of change (-*dynamique*) and the existence of limits (+ *borné*) or the lack of limits (-*borné*) combined with punctuality (+ *ponctuel)*. Indeed, it is not possible to set limits to a process that does not evolve (states). Similarly, a situation that has no limits cannot be punctual.

As this classification is overproductive and gives categories that do not exist, its relevance might rightly be questioned. For states, the only necessary feature is the absence of dynamism that immediately disqualifies the existence of limits and of punctuality. For dynamic verb phrases, limits are relevant but the difference between accomplishments and achievements is not necessarily worth making. Verb phrases can be very ambiguous and, for example, *rentrer chez soi,* that is given as an accomplishment could also well be an achievement as in *Il rentrait chez lui quand une rafale de mitraillette l'a projeté sur le seuil.* The distinction here is subtle and not dependent on the meaning of the verb only but on cotextual hints.

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[90] Martin, R. (1988) 'Temporalité et "classes de verbes"', *L'information grammaticale,* 39: 3-8.
[91] François, J. (1989) *Changement, Causation, Action. Trois catégories sémantiques fondamentales du lexique verbal français et allemand.* Genève, Droz.

So we can spot problems in this tradition: there is no homogeneity in the classification as verb phrases are mixed with verbs and there is a heavy reliance on context, which seems to imply a polysemy of verbs, that belong to different categories according to the cotext.

b. Garey (1957)

Let us now consider the second tradition. Garey's (1957) binary taxinomy distinguishes between 'telic' (that corresponds to *transitoire, perfectif* in other descriptions) and 'atelic' (also *non-transitoire, imperfectif*). As has already been said, the first category expresses an action towards a goal (e.g. *arriver*) and the second refers to « *those [verbs] which do not have to wait for a goal for their realisation, but are realized as soon as they begin* » (e.g. *jouer*) (p.106). Garey's description (based on French) seems to be more economical than Vendler's in that it relies on verbs and not on verb phrases, but it is not clear how states and activities are distributed in his classification, as they are both atelic. This seems an important weakness in the classification as far as second language acquisition is concerned as learners seem to treat states and activities very differently (see part 2). A classification that would solve this difficulty is required.

c. Wilmet (1998)

Wilmet (1998) offers an intermediary division that distinguishes between three types of verbs. They are split into two main groups: (i) stative verbs and (ii) dynamic verbs. On the one hand, stative verbs merge the inceptive limit (*terminus a quo*: α) and the terminative limit (*terminus ad quem*: ω) like *avoir*, *savoir* and the copulative verbs. On the other hand, dynamic verbs are further split into:

(a) perfective (our telic) that imply the process α–ω only when the ω limit is reached. An example would be *sortir*: if the situation is stopped in the middle:

(16) Pierre commence à sortir.

it is not done and the subject is still not outside.

(b) imperfective (our atelic) that imply the process α–ω from the inceptive limit. An example would be *parler*. Even if interrupted:

(17) Pierre commence à parler.

Pierre has still spoken a few words.

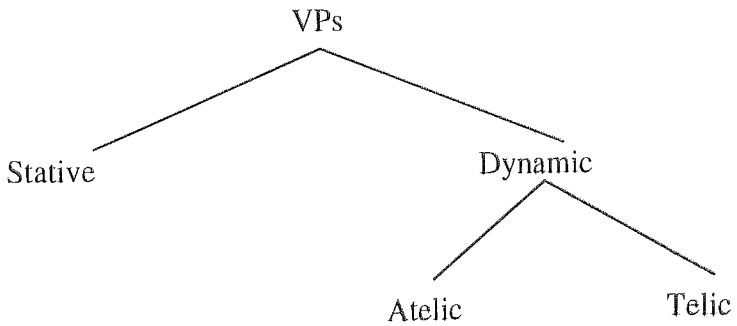
So we have seen that the *Aktionsart* is a virtual characteristic of the verb (Milner) and outside the context (Vetters) but that it could take other values when contextualized. We will now refine our conception in the coming section, and then move to studying elements that can modify the *Aktionsart* of a verb.

1.3.3. Our conception of *Aktionsart*

We have already shown that the separation between 'accomplishments' and 'achievements' was unsatisfactory. It has indeed been questioned for several reasons. First, « Both are actions that involve a product, upshot or outcome » (Mourelatos 1981: 193). Then no situation is instantaneous (no duration) (Klein 1994, Verkuyl 1989) and punctuality is part of the world knowledge and not a matter of lexical content (Klein 1994: 88). Moreover, some of the discriminating tests (e.g. 'almost' in Dowty 1979) are proven ineffective (Salaberry 2000: 34). Therefore, an increasing number of studies in both theoretical and applied have adopted a tripartite distribution:

> ... I will distinguish events with NATURAL endpoints (achievements and accomplishments) from those with ARBITRARY endpoints (activities) (Smith 1983: 481).
> The classes of achievement and accomplishement verbs can be grounded together as telic verbs, known as *events*. (Mourelatos, 1981) (Bardovi-Harlig & Reynolds 1995: 109).

So we will distinguish between, on the one hand, states that undergo no change at all from their initial to their final limit and, on the other hand, dynamic verbs that go through some changes. Dynamic verbs will be further split into telic (perfective in Wilmet's description) and atelic (imperfective for Wilmet).



Various reasons justify this choice of terminology: first, we have already used the terms perfective and imperfective to indicate aspect; secondly, the terms 'telic' and 'atelic' do etymologically translate the fact that the verb does or does not reach its final limit.

We also postulate that a verbal item has one basic *Aktionsart*. For example, we will assume that *courir* is basically an atelic verb: it is dynamic and the situation is implied as soon as it starts; however, this atelic verb can be associated with cotextual factors that will make the verb phrase telic, as in *courir un kilomètre*, for example. By doing so, we want to acknowledge the fact that there is only one verb *courir* - which Vendler's categories fail to do by having *run* as an activity and *run a mile* as an accomplishment - but recognize that this verb can, in combination with cotextual elements, give a telic verb phrase.

1.3.4. Elements that influence *Aktionsart*

We will now consider these cotextual elements that are likely to modify the *Aktionsart* of a verb. The *Aktionsart* of a verb can be influenced by several factors like the adjunction of a direct object, number or negation.

a. The direct object

(i) The adjunction of an object

Garey (1957: 109) notes that the adjunction of a complement - that can be either an object or an adverb in his system - can induce a change in classification: the verb phrase created by this addition belongs to a different category from the one to which the verbal word belongs:

> To sum up: in a construction with an atelic verb, the complement has priority over the verb in determining the aspect of the construction; in a construction with a telic verb, the verb has priority over the complement in determining the aspect of the construction.

If the afore-mentioned quotation is correctly understood, for an atelic verb (e.g. *courir*), the adjunction of a complement defines the *Aktionsart* of the whole verb phrase. If this is valid in the case of a direct object (*courir un kilomètre* is telic), it is not the case for an adverbial complement (*courir un peu* remains atelic), which Garey subsumes under the same general tag of 'complement' as the object. On the other hand, telic verbs also seem to be adversely influenced by the adjunction of a complement: in *sortir un peu,* the telic verb *sortir* is changed into an atelic verb phrase, but in *sortir les poubelles,* it remains telic.

What we can conclude from this is that the role of the object in indicating the definitive value of the verb phrase will be determinant with atelic verbs, that are in the middle of the spectrum limited by states at one end and telic verbs at the other end.

(ii) The type of direct object

If we explore further the features of the direct objects, it seems that their type - definite or not - will influence the *Aktionsart* of the whole verb phrase and therefore play a role in the compatibility with given past tenses.

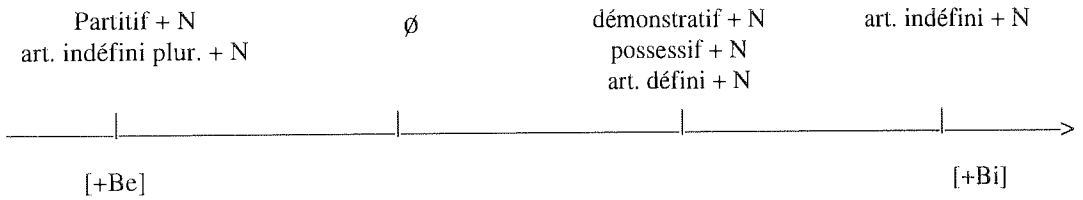
Gosselin (1996) proposes a classification of object noun phrases going from those less limited by their determinants, which are qualified as [+Be], and those that are most limited, tagged as [+Bi]. [+Be] refers to the extrinsic character of the limits:

> Le caractère extrinsèque des bornes ([+Be]) est révélé par la compatibilité du prédicat au passé composé avec [pendant + durée]. (p.190)

[+Bi] refers to the intrinsic character of the limits:

> Le caractère intrinsèque des bornes ([+Bi]) est indiqué par la compatibilité du prédicat au passé composé avec [en + durée]. (p.190)

This compatibility of the verb phrase with certain types of temporal complements recalls Vendler's classification where the compatibility with *in* + time or *within* + time was used to distinguish between accomplishments and activities, that we have merged in the atelic category.



To illustrate this figure from Gosselin (1996: 191), we can find, for example, at one end: *manger du gâteau* or *manger des gâteaux* that will be compatible with a temporal indication of the *pendant 1 heure*, and at the other end, *manger un gâteau en 10 minutes*. Gosselin, although still relying on a change of type according to the object, offers a treatment of the verb phrase that is much more satisfactory. By attributing definite characteristics to each type of direct object, he avoids the implicit polysemy of verbs that was underlined in Vendler's classification. When he classifies the different types of verbs, Gosselin distinguishes between the categories according to the following factors:

- the feature indicating a change [+ / - C] (in our description, it seems to correspond to the difference of *Aktionsart* between stative and dynamic verbs);
- the extrinsic limit [+Be];
- the intrinsic limit [+Bi] (those limits seem to be equivalent to our perfective or imperfective aspects);

- the relation between the initial and final limits of the predicate marking anteriority (B1 < B2), infinite closeness (B1 ∞ B2) = punctual process or disjunction (B1 | B2) = non punctual process. These distinctions apparently correspond to our time category.

On the basis of these factors, he describes nine different categories of verbs (Gosselin 1996: 191-2)[92]. Some categories of verbs are not influenced by the type of direct object - it this the case for a), b), c) or i) as they are valid for all types of noun phrases [SN stands for *syntagme nominal*]. On the other hand, other categories change according to the noun phrase; for example, in g) the type of limits set on the verb by the direct object allows the verb phrase to belong to several categories.

Gosselin then provides a table illustrating the possible combinations between verbs and their object; we have highlighted the contexts in which the addition of a direct object is supposed to modify the *Aktionsart*.

	Partitif + N	ø	art. déf. + N	art. indéf. sg + N
V = a	état nécessaire	état nécessaire	état nécessaire	état nécessaire
V = b	état contingent	état contingent	état contingent	état contingent
V = c	activité	activité	activité	activité
V = d	**activité**	**activité**	**activité ou accomplissement**	**activité ou accomplissement**
V -= e	**activité**	**activité**	**activité ou accomplissement**	**accomplissement**
V = f	**activité**	**activité**	**accomplissement**	**accomplissement**
V = g	**activité**	**activité ou accomplissement**	**accomplissement**	**accomplissement**

[92] a) V → [- C, - Be, - Bi], V SN; ex: *être le fils de X.*
b) V → [- C, + Be, - Bi, B1 | B2], V SN; ex: *être malade, aimer une femme, habiter une maison.*
c) V → [+ C, + Be, -Bi, B1 | B2] V SN; ex: *chercher une solution, conduire une voiture, regarder un tableau.*
d) V → [+ C, + Be, - Bi, B1 | B2] si SN < art. défini sg. + N;
V → [+ C, + Be ou + Bi, B1 | B2] si SN ≥ art. défini = N; ex: *lire un livre, apprendre une chanson.*
e) V → [+ C, + Be, - Bi, B1 | B2] si SN < art. défini sg. + N
V → [+ C, + Be ou + Bi, B1 | B2] si SN = art. défini sg. + N; et
V → [+C, - Be, + Bi, B1 | B2] si SN = art. indéfini sg. + N; ex. *peindre la cuisine.*
f) V → [+ C, + Be, - Bi, B1 | B2] si SN < art. défini sg + N; et
V → [+ C, - Be, + Bi, B1 | B2] si SN ≥ art. défini + N; ex. *écrire une lettre.*
g) V → [+ C, + Be, - Bi, B1 | B2] si SN = partitif + N;
V → [+ C, + Be ou + Bi, B1 | B2] si SN = ø, et
V → [+ C, - Be, + Bi, B1 | B2] si SN ≥ art. indéfini sg + N; ex. *manger.*
h) V → [+ C, - Be, + Bi, B1 | B2] si SN ≤ ø; ex. *revenir, terminer un travail, apporter un dossier.*
i) V → [- C, - Be, + Bi, Bi1∞ Bi2] V SN; ex. *sursauter, apercevoir un avion.*
A few remarks can be made on this classification. First, there is a parallelism between the categories a, b and i that imply no change; the lack of change postulated in b and i must probably refer to internal changes as the existence of limits +Be or +Bi indicates that there is a change (*sursauter* implies a different state before and after, for example immobility).

- the relation between the initial and final limits of the predicate marking anteriority (B1 < B2), infinite closeness (B1 ∞ B2) = punctual process or disjunction (B1 | B2) = non punctual process. These distinctions apparently correspond to our time category.

On the basis of these factors, he describes nine different categories of verbs (Gosselin 1996: 191-2)[92]. Some categories of verbs are not influenced by the type of direct object - it this the case for a), b), c) or i) as they are valid for all types of noun phrases [SN stands for *syntagme nominal*]. On the other hand, other categories change according to the noun phrase; for example, in g) the type of limits set on the verb by the direct object allows the verb phrase to belong to several categories.

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V = c	activité	activité	activité	activité
V = d	**activité**	**activité**	**activité ou accomplissement**	**activité ou accomplissement**
V -= e	**activité**	**activité**	**activité ou accomplissement**	**accomplissement**
V = f	**activité**	**activité**	**accomplissement**	**accomplissement**
V = g	**activité**	**activité ou accomplissement**	**accomplissement**	**accomplissement**

[92] a) V → [- C, - Be, - Bi], V SN; ex: *être le fils de X.*
b) V → [- C, + Be, - Bi, B1 | B2], V SN; ex: *être malade, aimer une femme, habiter une maison.*
c) V → [+ C, + Be, -Bi, B1 | B2] V SN; ex: *chercher une solution, conduire une voiture, regarder un tableau.*
d) V → [+ C, + Be, - Bi, B1 | B2] si SN < art. défini sg. + N;
V → [+ C, + Be ou + Bi, B1 | B2] si SN ≥ art. défini = N; ex: *lire un livre, apprendre une chanson.*
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V → [+ C, + Be ou + Bi, B1 | B2] si SN = ø, et
V → [+ C, - Be, + Bi, B1 | B2] si SN ≥ art. indéfini sg + N; ex. *manger.*
h) V → [+ C, - Be, + Bi, B1 | B2] si SN ≤ ø; ex. *revenir, terminer un travail, apporter un dossier.*
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V= h	**activité**	**accomplissement**	**accomplissement**	**accomplissement**
V = i	achèvement	achèvement	achèvement	achèvement

This somewhat complicated description shows what we had already noted with Garey: the fact that the direct object only has an influence on atelic verbs - in other words, those that indicate a change from their initial to their final limit. The states, whether necessary (e.g. *être le fils de X* in other words, a state that does not allow any initial or final limits) or contingent (*être malade* that has an initial limit from which the situation is true), do not vary according to the object. The telic verbs - or achievements - do not change either. So this closeness between activities and accomplishments seems to further justify our decision to subsume them in the atelic category.

There seem however to be problems if we try to put the verbs given as examples for the categories a) to i) in the contexts provided in the table. The category g) is supposed to be an accomplishment when followed by a definite noun phrase. However this is not true for each tense: it works for the PC - *j'ai mangé le gâteau* is an accomplishment - but not for the present - *Je mange le gâteau* - or the IMP - *je mangeais le gâteau* - where it shows it as an activity. As for category g), it is not obvious that *j'ai apporté le gâteau* is more of an accomplishment than *j'ai apporté du gâteau.* Secondly, it does not take into account the influence that different past tenses can have on the *Aktionsart*: *Je lisais un livre* is atelic but *j'ai lu un livre* is telic. So this proves once more that a close interaction exists between several layers of influence: tense, aspect and *Aktionsart.* Finally, it does not take into account number that can indeed modify the *Aktionsart* and this feature will be examined in the next section.

b. Number

Gosselin unites plural indefinite noun phrases with partitive ones in his classification, but he offers no systematic treatment of the influence of plural on the verb phrase. This section will be dedicated to this point.

Wilmet (1998: 317ff) underlines that the number of the direct object is able to modify a telic verb into an atelic one, as shown in the two examples below.

(18) Pierre commence à endormir un invité.

This example does not imply that the guest is sleeping; to reach this point, it would be necessary to go the whole way. The following:

(19) Pierre commence à endormir ses invités.

suggests that, at least, some guests might well be asleep. So basically in (18), we have a telic verb phrase as it needs to reach its final limit to have happened, but in (19) the plural direct object makes the verb phrase atelic. Wilmet notes that a plural subject can have the same effect on the *Aktionsart* (see Andrews 1992 for similar examples):

(20) *Un invité commence à arriver.

would not make sense as the situation of arriving is telic but

(21) Des invités commencent à arriver.

does not encounter the same problems as it implies that some guests are already there whilst some might be on their way or might have decided not to come at all. In the examples above, Wilmet relies on a practical test to distinguish between his perfective and imperfective verbs (our telic and atelic ones), the use of *commencer à*.

To put it in a simpler way, the use of the plural allows an imperfective vision of the situation. The first example is telic:

(22) J'ai regardé un film.

To be true, it needs the film to be watched from beginning to end. But, if the object is plural, the verb phrase becomes atelic:

(23) J'ai regardé des films

The preceding example does not imply that I have seen each one of the films from beginning to end. The discontinuous view that the plural gives to the verb phrase explains why the plural allows the use of IMP in sentences like:

(24) A l'école primaire, j'apprenais des chansons.

where the singular object would not be possible:

(25) ?A l'école primaire, j'apprenais une chanson.

unless the repetition of the process is expressed by an adverbial like *par semaine* that allows a repetitive interpretation.

So by allowing a discontinuous interpretation of the verb phrase and therefore making it atelic, the plural object allows the use of the IMP, that would not been acceptable with a singular object.

c. Negation

It seems that the combination of direct objects and number with tenses are not the only factors to take into account in the definition of *Aktionsart:* negation also has a role to play, as suggested by Wilmet (1998: 317ff). If *sortir* implies being inside, the negation of this, *ne pas sortir,* does not imply not being inside, as for example *Pierre n'est pas sorti, il n'est jamais entré.*

In a study of negation in temporal clauses, Chétrit (1976, quoted in Le Draoulec 1998: 259) has shown that the negation has a different influence on a durative and on a punctual process. Chétrit has suggested that the negation has a durative property, which would allow the use of the IMP but not of the PC with telic verbs. He compares the following pairs of sentences:

(26) Quand il sortait, il emportait ses affaires.
(27) Quand il ne sortait pas, il n'emportait pas ses affaires.
(28) Quand il est sorti, il a emporté ses affaires.
(29) *Quand il n'est pas sorti, il n'a pas emporté ses affaires.

Chétrit explains the difficulty of using the negation in the last sentence in these words:

> Avec la négation, le verbe "sortir" prend une coloration durative, car une des conséquences sémantiques de la négation descriptive avec *ne...pas* est de rendre automatiquement duratifs les prédicats ponctuels de la forme assertive, puisque l'énoncé négatif devient à présent valide pendant tout le temps qu'il ne se produit pas. (p.58)

In our classification, negation thus transforms a telic verb into an atelic one.

1.3.5. Conclusion on *Aktionsart*

Aktionsart is a semantic characteristic of the verb that is expressed through lexical means. It was chosen not to adopt the two most common classifications by Vendler and Garey because the first one mixed verbs and verb phrases whilst not drawing a clear line between activities and accomplishments, and the second did not offer a clear explanation of the treatment of states. The solution adopted was to attribute a basic *Aktionsart* value (state, atelic - covering Vendler's activities and accomplishments - or telic) to every single verb. This value can however change under the influence of elements of the verb phrase: the existence of a direct object and its characteristics, number and the presence of negation.

2. The selection of a past tense: a matter of combination

2.1. Factors

We have seen that several factors contribute to the choice of a past verbal form. We have first emphasized the role of the reference point from which the situation is presented. This has allowed us to distinguish between tenses that were centred on the moment of speech (absolute tenses) or on a different moment of reference (relative tenses) on the one hand, and tenses that are located according to this other point (absolute-relative tenses). This different moment of reference could be indicated by temporal complements setting a new moment of reference, indicating a link with (S) or by contextual information like verbal forms found in previous clauses or sentences. If this permits differentiation between simple and compound tenses that are anterior to their correspondent simple form, it does not provide for example a satisfactory distinction between PS and IMP. Indeed they are both dependent on a past moment of reference as in *(En mars,) il plut beaucoup* and *(En mars,) il pleuvait beaucoup.*

We have also seen that the viewing of the internal constituency of the situation - what was called aspect - influenced the acceptability of a past tense. A choice was given between a perfective aspect that shows the situation as a whole with its initial and final limits, and an imperfective aspect that only focuses on an intermediary part of the situation.

A third factor that was taken into account was the *Aktionsart* or the semantic value of the verb. A first division was drawn between stative verbs that show no change from the initial to the final limit and dynamic verbs that underwent some kind of change. This modification may be of two types: a telic verb implies the situation only when its final limit was reached whilst an atelic verb implies the situation from its initial limit.

2.2. Convergence

The interest of these factors of time reference, aspect and *Aktionsart* would obviously be enhanced, especially for foreign learners, if certain categories combined all the time or at least showed clear affinities with a given tense, as suggested by the PAH. For example, IMP is

highly compatible with information that does not emphasize the limits of the situation; PS only admits adverbials that have no contact with S. Affinities also bring together certain tenses and *Aktionsart* that share aspectual features. IMP and stative verbs are often combined as they both avoid focusing on limits. Finally, certain types of *Aktionsart* have affinities with adverbials that respect their semantics; for example, stative verbs do not favour intervals, telic verbs do not readily combine with durative information.

Vetters (1996: 113ff) has suggested two lists of indications of perfectivity and imperfectivity that are closely linked with the presence of a temporal indication. The indications of perfectivity are supposed to prevent the use of the '*aspectif*' (tense) expressing imperfectivity, that is to say IMP; the indications of imperfectivity are supposed to prevent the use of PS. In the indications of perfectivity, he puts:

(i) indication of the end of the situation:

(30) Le cinq juin 1989, Jules *attendait / attendit *jusqu'à cinq heures* (p.115)

(ii) indication of an interval:

(31) Le 5 juin 1989, Jules *étudiait / étudia *du matin jusqu'au soir* (p.115)

(iii) indication of the total duration:

(32) Le 5 juin 1989, Jules *rentrait / rentra chez lui *en 50 minutes* (p.115)

(iv) definite repetition:

(33) Le 5 juin 1989, Paul *téléphonait / téléphona *cinq fois* à Marie (p.115)

(v) indication of the achievement:

(34) *Tout à coup*, Jean tomba (p.116)

(vi) change of state or position.

(35) Quelques secondes plus tard, Luc fut sous le chapiteau (p.116)

In the first four examples, the IMP is only 'starred' because of the presence of a punctual element *le 5 juin 1989*; in a repetitive context, it would be perfectly acceptable as in *Chaque jour, Jules attendait jusqu'à cinq heures*. It must however be noted that such combinations could be found in a narrative use of the IMP (see infra). In (34), the indication of an achievement does not exclude the use of an IMP that would need to be interpreted as a

narrative use[93]. In (35), although the PS should indeed be compatible with an indication of change of state or position, the example seems somewhat unnatural as the verb possesses a passive *Aktionsart*, that is not supposed to enclose any variation.

As for Vetters's indications of imperfectivity, they cover:

(i) the background:

(36) ... *pendant que* je l'embrassais, elle dit... (p.117)

(ii) the interrupted event:

(37) Il se noyait *quand l'agent le sauva* en le retirant de l'eau (p.118)

(iii) the discrepancy between a short situation and an extended time span:

(38) *A cette époque*, Jean prenait / *prit son café avec moi (p.118)

(iv) the unspecified repetition.

(39) A cette époque, Paul *tombait / tombait *souvent* (p.118)

Here again, the affinities and incompatibilities are not straightforward. Vetters (1996: 119-126) is aware of those limitations and goes on to provide counter-examples of those tendencies, before concluding:

> La conclusion de ce paragraphe est donc claire: comme prévu dans le cadre théorique de Nølke (1993)[94] et comme le signale Berthonneau (1989)[95] pour la compatibilité entre tiroirs et compléments de temps, les tests ou indices de perfectivité et d'imperfectivité ne peuvent pas être appliqués de façon mécanique; **il faut toujours tenir compte de l'ensemble du contexte**. [Our emphasis]

It is therefore necessary to take into account the wider context, not just temporal information.

2.3. Conflicts and conflict resolution

Of course, the features described above are tendencies and divergent information can be joined, which results in conflicts. To solve them, resolution strategies need to be carried out as Gosselin (1996: 40) puts it:

> La présomption de cohérence de la représentation temporelle conduit le lecteur /auditeur à élaborer des stratégies de résolution de conflit lorsqu'il se trouve confronté à des instructions qui ne sont pas immédiatement compatibles entre elles.

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[93] See Part I, chapter 1.

[94] Nølke, H. (1993) *Le regard du locuteur. Pour une linguistique des traces énonciatives*. Paris: Kimé.

[95] Berthonneau, A.M. (1989) *Composantes linguistiques de la référence temporelle. Les compléments de temps, du lexique à l'énoncé*. Thèse d'état, Paris VII.

> En d'autres termes, la logique qui guide les processus interprétatifs s'apparente à la logique hégélienne dans la mesure où la contradiction (entre instructions), loin de constituer un obstacle incontournable, conduit le plus souvent à la construction de significations nouvelles, qui ne sont pas directement prédictibles à partir des marqueurs linguistiques pris isolément; [...]

In the descriptions of the past tenses suggested here, the scope of the resolution strategies can apply to the three points of reference we have postulated in our descriptions: S, R and E. According to Gosselin (1996: 171), there are four distortions that can be used for conflict resolution:

(a) moving (*déplacement*);

(b) contraction (*contraction*);

(c) expansion (*dilatation*);

(d) iteration[96] (*duplication*).

Let us now see how these distortions might explain utterances that do not respect the instructions given by each point of reference. As far as the moment of reference is concerned, it can be:

(i) moved forward in the case of an IMP or a PC that either do not show the limits of the situation or allow the situation to go on until S:

(40) J'ai terminé dans un instant.
(41) Dans deux ans, j'étais riche.

Our representation of the PS (see Part I, chapter 3) shows that the limits of the situation are closed, which hinders the distortion:

(42) * Il termina dans un instant.
(43) * Dans deux ans, il fut riche.

(ii) moved backwards in the case of imperfective tenses that do not emphasize an initial limit such as the PRES or the IMP (see Part 1, chapter 3):

(44) En 1492, Colomb découvre l'Amérique.
(45) La veille, il chantait à Las Vegas.

[96] We are aware that iteration does not exactly translate *duplication* but the etymology of the word (based on double) seems too restrictive.

(iii) contracted when the distance between S and R is blurred; again this is only possible with imperfective tenses, where the open limits permit potential expansion:

(46) Il était maintenant riche.

(iv) iterated, when the scope of the situation is not proportional to the adverbial. In the following example, the situation of *boire du café* cannot cover the period of ten years provided by the adverbial. The situation must be understood as iterative:

(47) Marie a bu du café pendant dix ans.

However, most of the adjustments are carried out on the event (E) itself. Conflicts can appear at different levels. Firstly, conflicts can arise between *Aktionsart* and tense. The conflict resolution implies:

(i) a move backwards, as in:

(48) Il fut malade.

This utterance needs to be interpreted as *il tomba malade*, focusing on the initial limit, while the final limit is emphasized below:

(ii) a move forwards:

(49) Il sut la réponse

This example needs to be interpreted as 'he discovered the answer'.

(iii) a contraction. In the example below, the telic *Aktionsart* conflicts with the imperfective presentation of the IMP.

(50) Tout à coup, il tombait.

(iv) an expansion. In the following examples, the situations are expanded but the representation of the PS does not allow this as it does not focus on internal development:

(51) Au moment où la guerre éclatait, il recevait son diplôme.
(52) * Ils furent en train de manger.

(v) an iteration. Here, the telic verb provides contradictory information to the imperfective tense; it has to be solved by repetition.

(53) Il toussait.

Secondly, the representations provided by the *Aktionsart* and the adverbial can conflict, which implies distortions such as

(i) a move:

(54) Il mangea à 8 heures.

In this example, a contradiction appears between the *Aktionsart* of an atelic verb implying duration and punctual temporal information. The conflict is solved by emphasizing the initial limit: the sentence must be understood as 'he started to eat at 8 o'clock'.

(ii) a contraction:

(55) En un instant, il a su.

Here the stative verb conflicts with the punctual temporal information; it can be accepted in the meaning of *il comprit*.

(iii) an expansion;

(56) L'année dernière, je déménageais.

Here there is an opposition between the interval offered by the adverbial and the telic verb. Ducrot (1979) explained this type of example by saying that the IMP expands the process to make it the prime focus of the period under consideration. Moving is shown as last year's main event.

(iv) an iteration: here there is a conflict between the punctual situation and the durative temporal complement.

(57) Il a toussé toute la nuit

After this review of the influence of time, aspect, *Aktionsart* linked with adverbials on the choice of a past form, it becomes obvious that these factors are not straightforward autonomous indications of which verbal forms are needed. They all combine together to point towards the use of a given past form. So far, it appears from the principles drawn above that distortion can be used to interpret utterances where conflicts between R, S and E appear. However, these conflict resolution strategies are only possible inasmuch as they do not contradict the representation offered by the tense. To know what these representations are, we now need to move on to a distinctive linguistic description of French past tenses based on the features we have identified in the foregoing section.

Chapter 3:
Formal representation of the French past tenses

0. Introduction

We have just presented the concepts needed to discriminate between the French past tenses. The following sections are therefore dedicated to a description of the PRES, the PS, the PC, the IMP and the PQP according to the categories of time, aspect and *Aktionsart*. The description is restricted to those five tenses because they are the only verbal morphological markers of past found in our corpora. More attention will be devoted to the PC and the IMP as they are the French equivalents of the preterite and the imperfect on which Andersen's hypothesis (see introduction) that we will test in Part 2 is based.

1. The PRES

1.1. Time

The PRES shows a situation (E: event) as concomitant to the moment of speech (S)

S
|
E

A situation in the PRES will therefore be understood as contemporary to S, the *moi-ici-maintenant* of the utterer. However, it is possible for non-verbal temporal information to modify that immediate analysis and to locate the situation in the past (1) or in the future (2) as in the following examples from Wilmet (1998: 344):

(1) En 49 avant Jésus-Christ, César décide de franchir le Rubicon.
(2) Nous sommes en l'an 2040, une guerre atomique a dévasté le monde.

This type of use relies on a conventional agreement to forget the present reference moment to be transported into another one. That was a common stylistic device among 19th century novelists: the incipit would often invite the reader to let themselves be led to another epoch (for some convincing examples of this, see Wilmet 1998: 348).

1.2. Aspect

From an aspectual point of view, a situation in the PRES is shown as developing at the elected moment of speech; hence the paradox of the pleasant example below:

(3) Je ne parle pas quand je travaille – Tu es en train de parler et tu travailles. – Je parle pour te dire que je ne parle pas. – Oui, mais tu es en train de parler. – C'est pas vrai. – Réfléchis, Bodo. Tu parles quand tu parles de ne pas parler. – Je me tais. – et tu parles encore pour dire que tu ne parles plus. (P.L. Sulitzer, Berlin, quoted in Wilmet 1998: 347)

where, strictly speaking, it is absurd to say *'je me tais'*.

The presentation offered could be either perfective or imperfective and the PRES combines with all the markers of perfectivity and imperfectivity provided in the list by Vetters (1996, discussed in the previous chapter). So it seems that aspectually, the PRES is unmarked, offering either a perfective (4) or an imperfective (5) viewpoint on a situation.

(4) (Le 5 juin 1989), Jules **rentre** chez lui ***en 50 minutes***.
(5) ***Pendant que*** je l'**embrasse**, elle dit...

The PRES is therefore very flexible but it blurs contrasts. If we take the following example (Berthonneau & Kleiber 1993: 57):

(6) Pierre entra. Marie faisait la vaisselle.

The situation *faire la vaisselle* is shown as imperfective whilst *entrer* is perfective. If we put that sequence in the narrative PRES we obtain:

(7) Pierre entre. Marie fait la vaisselle.

In this instance, it is impossible to establish the temporal between the two situations (simultaneity, consecutivity?). There is therefore a loss of information with that use of the PRES.

1.3. Aktionsart

Thanks to its aspectual multivalence, the PRES can combine indiscriminately with all categories of verbs although special interpretations are obtained with telic verbs [see (3) above], such as performative speech acts (Austin) like *je le jure*.

1.4. Summary of the PRES

The PRES shows a situation as concomitant to S that can by convention be displaced on the time line. The aspect of the situation is marked by cotextual information. This has led Judge (2002: 153) to describe it as a *temps passe-partout*:

> Le fait que le Pr[ES] soit un temps passe-partout est dû au fait qu'il n'est pas, selon certains, temporellement marqué, ce qui fait que c'est au contexte à établir le moment où l'action se déroule. D'où justement des possibilités de vague et de flou.

So the PRES could be represented as follows: the temporal anchorage is the moment of reference, identified to the actual moment of speech or any conventional location of that moment. As the PRES is unmarked regarding aspect, there is no indication of open or closed brackets[97].

R = S
|
E

The PRES is therefore a wide encompassing form with many functions, which makes Judge (2002: 153) say that it is a good system to teach to foreign learners as it is easy but that it needs to be contrasted with other tenses to make sense. We could thus expect to meet occurrences of the PRES in our corpora (see Part II, chapter 2).

2. The PS

With the PS, we start describing past tenses as such.

2.1. Time

As far as time is concerned, the PS is clearly a past. The PS refers to an Event (E) anterior to the point of Speech (S). It could be represented as follows:

[97] Note here that Wilmet & Rosier's (2002) representation is here overproductive; it fails to capture this ambivalence of the PRES as their vertical lines are markers of imperfectivity.



This unambiguous past location is the main feature found in the grammatical descriptions, and most school grammars will insist on the fact the PS does not allow contact with the present (the emphasis is ours in the following excerpts):

> Fait considéré depuis son début et dont le déroulement a pris fin**; [le PS] ne marque aucunement le contact** que ce fait, en lui-même ou par ses conséquences, peut avoir **avec le présent**. (Grevisse 1995: 191,§ 353)
> Fait généralement ancien et **sans contact avec le présent**. (Eyre 1982: 170)
> Le passé simple présente un fait accompli à un moment donné du passé. Il a les mêmes valeurs que le PC (fait accompli, succession d'événements, répétition, durée limitée), mais le fait est envisagé comme lointain**, sans contact avec le présent.** C'est pourquoi il est employé à l'écrit dans un récit (roman, conte, biographie), surtout à la 3ème personne. (Delatour 1991: 49)

This location at a past moment of reference favours the combination of the PS with punctual temporal indications cut off from the present:

(8) La conférence de Vienne eut lieu ***en 1815***.
(9) Le style artiste vit le jour ***au dix-neuvième siècle***.
(10) ***Ce jour-là***, Marie ne vint pas.

but is incompatible with temporal information based on the moment of speech[98]:

(11) * ***Maintenant***, il chanta.
(12) * ***Cette semaine***, il fit des efforts.

This incompatibility explains the rule of the period enacted in the 16th century and further developed in the 24 hour-rule, which excludes the use of PS for situations occurring within the 24 hours prior to the moment of speech (see Part I, chapter 1).

Likewise, adverbials that express a retrospective view from the moment of speech are not possible with the PS as this tense shows the situation as being over; this is the case of *depuis* (equivalent to the English 'for'):

(13) *Il écrivit depuis quelque temps.

[98] The PC, however, is possible in such instances.

Similarly, *depuis* (meaning 'since') introduces a temporal interval that has no shown final limit and is supposed to go on until the moment of speech in the case of simple tenses or until the moment of reference for compound tenses. It is therefore not compatible with the PS either:

(14) * Il écrivit depuis 1945.

It is interesting to note that the use of the PS is possible in the preceding example with *à partir de:*

(15) Il écrivit à partir de 1945.

The difference between the last two examples is that *à partir de* only focuses on the initial limit but without specifying a duration, and it is precisely the mention of internal duration that makes *depuis* inadequate with the PS. This difference that various adverbials impose on the viewing of the verb in the PS leads us naturally to the aspectual features of the form.

2.2. Aspect

Aspectually, the PS is perfective and it shows a situation wholly over, taking into account the inceptive and terminative limits but not focusing on the internal constituency. We could therefore represent it as [E], where the event (E) is shown surrounded by its initial ([) and final (]) limits. Sten's (1952: 97) description illustrated a similar position when he said that the PS neglected the development of an event to focus on its beginning and its completion:

> On peut illustrer la valeur du passé simple par cette figure: |___|. Il s'agit d'une action passée qui a commencé, qui s'est sans doute déroulée (mais cette phase n'intéresse pas) et qui a pris fin.

The PS will thus not be compatible with temporal information that splits the situation into different parts. It is illustrated by the impossibility of using the PS with *être en train de,* that precisely shows the internal development:

(16) *Il fut en train d'écrire.

Similarly, as mentioned in Guillaume (1929: 61-5), the PS cannot be combined with *déjà*, which implies that a part of the situation has already happened but not the totality:

(17) *Il écrivit déjà.

This cut within the situation provided by *déjà* is incompatible with the PS that gives a global view of the situation.

In school grammars, the PS is often presented as a showing no duration, contrary to the durative IMP. This is an incorrect extension of its perfective aspect: the PS indicates that the situation has reached its final limit; it gives no indication as to the duration of the process, it just ignores it. It is thus not true to say that the PS cannot combine with a durative temporal complement as the example below shows:

(18) Il écrivit pendant 20 ans.

In this example, the adjunction of a durative temporal complement modifies the meaning of the verb, as *écrire* takes the repetitive meaning of 'being a writer' or of 'sending letters'. Gosselin (1996: 198) mentions this as a derived effect of the PS for a sentence like *Marie but du café pendant dix ans*:

> Une valeur itérative (éventuellement dérivée en un effet de sens statique: habitude, propriété) peut être associée au passé simple lorsqu'un circonstanciel exprime une durée qui apparaît incompatible (du point de vue référentiel) avec le type de durée normalement associée au procès exprimé.

In our example, the discrepancy between the durative temporal complement (*pendant 20 ans)* and the situation (*écrire*) obviously allows this repetitive interpretation.

The PS also accepts frequentative adverbs even if the iterative value is generally linked with the IMP in school grammars:

(19) Il écrivit 20 fois.

The acceptability of the combination comes from the fact that the repetition does not necessarily go against the aspectual value of the PS: each occurrence can be seen as a whole.

2.3. Aktionsart

Given its perfective aspect, the PS will be especially compatible with telic verbs that must imply the final limit from the beginning to happen (e.g. *sortir:* if one stops the action of going out of the room, one is not out of the room). But it is not limited to this specific *Aktionsart*, as shown in the example below:

(20) Une leçon de choses

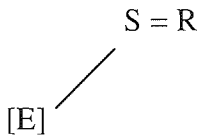
> Ainsi appelions-nous l'heure de science et d'observation de la nature lorsque j'étais écolier. Esaïe **fut** un bon élève. Il en a retiré une riche sagesse[99]. [Our emphasis]

Here, the stative verb *être* is used in the PS, which emphasizes the fact that the situation of being a good pupil has now passed. On the contrary, the verb in the PC *a retiré* insists on the aftermath of the situation and can potentially be seen as having current relevance: Isaiah's wisdom is still worth considering for the reader today. It must then be underlined that there is no restriction to any category of verbs – the PS can indeed be used with every *Aktionsart*: we only speak here of affinities and not exclusivity.

2.4. Summary of the PS

Lets us now develop a description of the PS based on the elements we have developed under the previous headings. Current positions on the PS tend to see it as a tense whose domain has been restricted throughout the history of French and one which could in almost all cases be replaced by other past tenses. There are however specificities. The PS is a verbal form that expresses anteriority to the moment of speech. It has a perfective aspect that takes a situation as a whole while emphasizing its limits and overlooking its internal constituency. The PS accepts adverbs of duration and iteration as they do not affect its borders.

This is illustrated in the following representation:



However, it is not compatible with adverbs that would exceed the boundaries of the situation, for example by indicating continuity until the moment of speech.

3. The PC

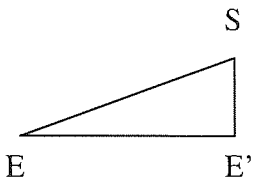
We now proceed to a description of the PC, which has often been presented as a substitute form of the PS (see Part 1, chapter 1). We will therefore discuss to what extent both

[99] Ligue pour la lecture de la Bible (1999 /3) *Épi: commentaire quotidien pour la méditation et l'action* [9 septembre].

forms are equivalent. We examine this tense according to the subdivisions of time, aspect and *Aktionsart,* as for the PS.

3.1. Time

The temporal description of the PC is more complex than that of the PS. As far as functions are concerned, the PC not only expresses a present perfect (its original value) but also a simple past. With this value, the PC is able to replace the PS. The main difference between the two tenses comes from the fact that the compound form of the tense permits emphasis of either the auxiliary (E') or the past participle (E) according to cotextual or contextual information. The focus can be on concomitance with the moment of speech, if the tense is taken as a present perfect, or it can be on anteriority to S, if the preterite function is favoured.



The possibility of emphasizing the present auxiliary, positioned in S, explains that sentences like the following are acceptable in French:

(21) J'ai bientôt fini
(22) J'ai fini à l'instant.

where *bientôt* and *à l'instant* refer to a near future. This combination is permitted by the tense of the auxiliary in the PRES that is aspectually unmarked and thus does not focus on the limits of the situation, which can be specified by temporal information. This ambivalence has led to attributing several values to the PC: present perfect (SE'E) or aoristic (SE), which our representation can illustrate.

3.2. Aspect

Let us focus on aspectual factors defining the PC. It is commonly agreed that the PC presents - like the PS - a perfective aspect[100], as its value of present perfect would suggest.

[100] Wilmet (1998) attributes to the PC an « *aspect sécant extensif* », *sécant* corresponds to our imperfective aspect; *extensif* is used to refer a compound form (this is a Guillaumean conception of aspect, see Part I, chapter 2). It seems to us that this *aspect extensif* do not convey aspectual information in Contemporary French but temporality (anteriority). This seems confirmed by Wilmet's own representation (see Part I, chapter 2) where the information '*extensif*' is indicated on the time line.

Damourette & Pichon (in Garey 1957: 98) describe as follows the differences between the French past tenses:

> Au point de vue du procès dans son déroulement, on pourrait dire que le priscal [PS] le fait surgir, le toncal [IMP] se dérouler et l'antérieur [PC] finir; mais en y apportant ce correctif que le priscal et l'antérieur ayant, contrairement au toncal, une valeur non pas actuelle, mais ponctuelle, ils sont capables d'exprimer la totalité du procès, l'aspect respectivement surgissant ou accompli dans lequel ils se présentent, ayant une valeur psychologique bien plus que réellement chronologique. On peut dire 'à sept heures précises, il a poussé un cri' ou 'à sept heures précises, il poussa un cri'. L'instant du cri considéré comme sans durée est, dans les deux cas, représenté dans son entier; mais, dans la première phrase, cet instant s'inscrit comme accompli à côté des instants qui lui succèdent, tandis que dans la seconde il se présente comme surgissant brusquement à côté des instants qui le précèdent.

In this excerpt, Damourette & Pichon contrast the IMP, that shows the situation happening, and the PS and PC that only give a punctual picture either of the beginning or the end. However, given this punctuality, the initial and final limits are likely not to be distinguished, whence the interchangeable use of the PS and PC in most circumstances, although the PS makes the situation emerge from the context whilst the PC just shows it as accomplished. However, it seems that here again, the PC is ambiguous; it is indeed made up of a past participle, a form expressing perfectivity, and a present, which possesses an unmarked aspect.

The combination of the PC with a given type of temporal complement allows the distinction between the preterite or perfect values of the PC. Gosselin (1996: 206) emphasizes this linking of certain complements to each of the two values of the form:

> C'est généralement la présence d'un circonstant temporel ou aspectuel qui permet d'identifier l'effet de sens du passé composé: [*depuis* + durée] indique que l'on a affaire au présent accompli. Les circonstanciels de localisation temporelle à valeur de passé (*hier*, etc.) et les circonstanciels de durée impliquant l'aspect aoristique (comme [en + durée] et [pendant + durée]) signalent, en revanche, la valeur du passé aoristique.

The PC will therefore accept the same aspectual adverbials as the PS but it will combine with others that express a link with the moment of speech, sharing in this some of the versatility of the PRES that could combine with adverbials expressing both perfectivity and imperfectivity. This larger scope of use shown by the PC seems however to be directly linked with the type of verb under study, an issue which we consider in the following section.

3.3. Aktionsart

There are clear incompatibilities between certain types of *Aktionsart* and temporal complements. Certain types of verbs are more compatible with the perfect value of the PC, as shown in Gosselin (1996: 205):

> Sous l'aspect accompli, le procès ([B1,B2]) ne peut plus être perçu comme inchoatif, puisque c'est, au contraire, sa borne finale qui acquiert le plus haut degré de saillance (dans la mesure où elle correspond à la borne initiale de l'état résultant: B2 = B'1). Il suit que l'aspect accompli est difficilement compatible avec les procès dont la borne initiale est intrinsèquement plus saillante que la borne finale; ce qui revient à dire que cet aspect exige que le procès appartiennent à la classe des accomplissements (et, de préférence, que le verbe soit de type h[101]) ou à celle des achèvements (puisque, dans ce cas, les deux bornes sont équivalentes)...

According to this definition, the perfective aspect of the PC does not allow the combinations with a verb phrase emphasizing the initial limit of the situation; it thus favours telic verbal expressions. This seems too strong a restriction as French usage shows other combinations, as in the famous line by André Chénier:

(21) Elle a vécu Myrto, la jeune Tarentine.

There is however no restriction to this category of verbs - we only speak here of affinities and not exclusivity - *vivre* is clearly not an achievement or an accomplishment although, in (21), the focus is on the final limit and the meaning of *a vécu* is in fact *est morte.*

Given the importance allocated to the limits of the situation, we will now focus on two specific cases: adverbials introduced by *depuis* and adverbials with a future meaning. We have chosen to study the specific behaviour of the combinations of tense and *Aktionsart* with adverbs focusing on both initial and final limits of the situation.

3.3.1. PC with depuis + X

With telic verbs, PC with *depuis* + X expresses a completed situation. In the following example, he finished whatever he was doing a while ago:

(23) Il a terminé depuis quelque temps.

With atelic verbs, the verbal form seems to take an inchoative value:

(24) Il a écrit depuis quelque temps.

[101] Verbs of this type are characterized by a change within the limits of the process and the presence of intrinsic limits; e.g. *revenir, terminer un travail, apporter un dossier.*

meaning that 'he has started writing' in the case for example of a writer that had run out of inspiration and has resumed writing. Moreover, it seems that the sentence must be taken as iterative: he has not been writing continuously since a particular moment but has done so repeatedly over the period starting at the moment referred to. The necessity of iteration is made clearer in the following sentence, where precise temporal information follows *depuis*:

(25) ? Il a écrit depuis 14h30.

This example fails to express the continuous action that will be expressed by the PRES:

(26) Il écrit depuis 14h30.

The first example of the pair could only be acceptable under given circumstances where *il a écrit* would mean 'he has done some writing'. This assumption is confirmed by the fact that adding a direct object makes the sentence acceptable again.

(27) Il a écrit deux lettres depuis 14h30.

Here the presence of the direct object makes the atelic verb telic, which eases the combination with a perfective tense as the PC.

As for stative verbs, the combination is not allowed, as they do not show the initial limit of the situation, on which *depuis* insists:

(28) *Il a été roi depuis quelque temps.

In this case one would expect the present. Here again, the incompatibility would be stronger for what Gosselin calls '*états nécessaires*' (*être fils de...*), that are not likely to undergo any change, than with '*états contingents*' (*être le président de...*) where the state is only valid for a period of time.

3.3.2. PC with adverbs meaning future

Some combinations of types of verbs and adverbs are impossible. The future use of the PC is only possible with telic verbs that imply their final limit from their inception:

(29) Il a terminé dans un instant.
(30) J'ai bientôt fini.

Atelic verbs do not allow this kind of adverbs in the PC as they do not emphasize the final limit but the situation as it is developing:

(31) ? Il a écrit dans un instant.
(32) ? J'ai bientôt travaillé.

In combination with adverbs expressing future, these verbs would require the *futur antérieur* (FA) as this compound tense has a perfective meaning and locates the situation in the sequel of the action of writing or working:

(33) Il aura écrit dans un instant.
(34) J'aurai bientôt travaillé.

Stative verbs do not accept this kind of adverb either, as they are not supposed to undergo any change:

(35) *Il a été roi dans un instant.
(36) *J'ai bientôt su.

In this case, the FA is not common, as there is no stress on any limits with stative verbs, especially with *états nécessaires*, that are not supposed to start or to finish, whence the strangeness of a form that shows them as completed:

(37) ? Il aura été roi dans un instant.
(38) ? J'aurai bientôt su.

This incompatibility is due to the fact that the states imply no change at all and no limits, so it is difficult to accept sentences that are situated in the sequel of the situation and presented as accomplished. In the case of these verbs, one would only use the future tense to express a future meaning:

(39) Il sera roi dans un instant.
(40) Je saurai bientôt.

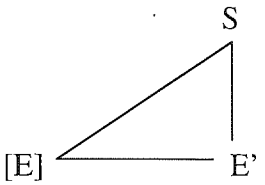
In the last two examples, both *être* and *savoir* could be replaced by a dynamic verb:

(41) Il deviendra roi dans un instant.
(42) J'apprendrai bientôt.

So the differences in acceptability of the combination of PC and certain types of verbs and adverbials could be explained by the fact that, for telic verbs, the interval between the beginning and the completion of the situation is negligible. Therefore an adverb with a future meaning is sufficient to give a general future sense.

3.4. Summary of the PC

Vet (1980: 84) mentions a discrepancy between the morphology of the PC, which is a perfect, and its possible meaning of a simple tense, a fact already noticed by Comrie (1976: 176). This discrepancy comes from the evolution of the verbal form. Originally a perfect, it has come to compete with the PS. Nowadays, the PC seems to be primarily a past tense but still possesses an ability to express a present perfect. Its aspect could be a mixture of perfectivity that allows it to stand for the PS in most cases and of unmarked aspect if the focus is on the auxiliary in the PRES. We would represent the PC as follows:



So in the figure above, E stands for the event expressed by the past participle, it is situated in the past. As the past participle of compound tense, it has a perfective aspect, which explains the closed limits that surround it. The point of reference, according to which E is located, presents the same kinds of properties as the reference point for a PS. As for E', it stands for the auxiliary in the present. The present being an imperfective tense, its limits are open, which explains that it can be combined with adverbials related to S (e.g *hier*), present (e.g. *maintenant*) and future meaning (e.g. *bientôt*).

4. The IMP

Berthonneau & Kleiber (1993: 55) mention that there are nowadays two explicative paradigms of the IMP, that they call « *l'option en termes de renvoi (global) à une entité temporelle du passé* » and the « *option aspectuelle* ». In fact, those two main paradigms can further be subdivided, Labeau (forthcoming) distinguishes between descriptions based on (1) time; (2) anaphora; (3) non-actuality; (4) background and (5) aspect.

4.1. Time

The IMP is probably the most complicated of the three verbal forms at the temporal level. Some researchers have even suggested that it is not a past tense[102] but a non-actual one. Le Goffic (1986: 56) mentions three areas of use of the IMP: (i) temporal uses to express past; (ii) use in indirect speech and (iii) modal uses. He adds to these subdivisions « *quelques emplois remarquables que nous dénommerons faute de mieux 'stylistiques'* » in which he puts the '*IMP de politesse*' (e.g. *Je me demandais si vous auriez le temps de corriger cette lettre*) and the '*IMP hypocoristique*' (e.g. *Il faisait bon près du feu, mon chien?*). In this study of past tenses, the temporal uses will obviously be our focus but we would argue that a description based on tense and aspect such as ours could describe all the functions of the IMP.

We begin with representations based on the notion of time and then on the basis of a different reference point. As a representative of the first category, Ducrot (1979: 6) offers a general description of the IMP that contains two propositions:

> P1. Lorsqu'un énoncé est à l'IMP, son thème[103] est nécessairement temporel: c'est, soit une période du passé, soit, plus fréquemment, un objet ou un événement considéré à l'intérieur d'une certaine période du passé (les indications temporelles relatives au thème peuvent d'ailleurs être seulement implicites, et fournies par la situation d'énonciation).
> P2. Lorsqu'un énoncé est à l'imparfait, l'état ou l'événement constituant son propos[104] sont présentés, comme des propriétés, comme des caractéristiques du thème, et qualifient celui-ci dans sa totalité. Autrement dit, je vois la même différence dans les deux couples d'énoncés:
> (a1) Pierre a volé - (a2) Pierre est un voleur.
> (b1) L'année dernière à Paris, il a fait chaud - (b2) L'année dernière à Paris, il faisait chaud.

Ducrot's first proposition clearly shows the IMP as a past and this could naturally lead to an approach where the IMP is taken as an anaphoric time, that is to say that depends on a preceding reference point given either by adverbials or implicit information from the context:

> La situation passée décrite à l'aide d'une phrase à l'IMP doit se présenter comme un état qui s'étend sur un P(oint) de Réf(érence) livré par le cotexte. Une phrase qui se

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[102] Le Goffic (1986) *Que l'imparfait n'est pas un temps du passé.* Wilmet (1995: 202) also mentions previous similar interrogations: *L'imparfait de l'indicatif est-il un temps?* (Brun-Laloire 1929) and *L'imparfait est-il un temps?* (Henry 1954).
[103] *Thème* is what is spoken about.
[104] *Propos* refers to the information that is given about the *thème*.

> trouve à l'IMP dans un texte ne permet pas d'établir un nouveau temps de référence (Kamp et Rohrer 1983). D'une manière générale, en ou hors texte, l'imparfait peut être assimilé à une anaphore qui dépend de son antécédent pour son interprétation (Houweling 1982, quoted in Tasmowski-De Ryck 1985: 59-60)

This is also Kamp & Rohrer's (1983, in Molendijk 1990: 56) position when they describe the IMP as not introducing a new reference point but coinciding with the latest reference point:

> Une phrase à l'IMP n'introduit pas de R [point of reference] nouveau. Le fait E [event] qu'elle rapporte coïncide temporellement avec le fait (moment) qui fonctionnait déjà comme R avant l'apparition de la phrase en question (R et E antérieurs à S [moment of speech]).

Berthonneau & Kleiber (1993: 57ff) confirm this statement. According to them, the IMP does not locate the situation and has therefore to rely on previous temporal information:

> ... **l'imparfait** ne localise pas lui-même la situation qu'il introduit: (i) il **ne peut être utilisé s'il ne renvoie pas à une entité temporelle du passé, déjà disponible dans le contexte antérieur ou accessible dans la situation immédiate**, (ii) en l'absence d'un tel élément, l'imparfait est jugé ininterprétable. [Our emphasis].

They distinguish between two types of anaphoras: direct and indirect. The anaphora can be direct when the referent is given by a past temporal expression found in the preceding text. The temporal information can be given by (i) a preceding sentence as in:

(43) Pierre entra. Marie faisait la vaisselle.

where the past temporal referent of *faisait* is provided by the tense of the first sentence in the PS; (ii) a temporal subordinate as in:

(44) Quand Paul entra, Marie faisait la vaisselle.

or (iii) preceding adverbial information:

(45) L'année dernière à Paris, il faisait chaud.

The second type of anaphora, that they call '*indirecte*', does not rely on explicit temporal information but appears with historical names, as in:

(46) Napoléon était un intellectuel de gauche.

or in contextual elements that do not necessarily need to be linguistic, as in:

(47) Oh rien, il fermait la porte. (from Tasmowski- De Ryck 1985: 70)

that would follow a gestural reaction to a loud noise.

After this brief overview of temporal explanations, we will now focus on another type of description that adopts a slightly different angle: the inactual approach sees the IMP as simultaneous to a centre distinct from the '*moi-ici-maintenant*'. This is Damourette & Pichon's approach. The new reference point different from the moment of speech is positioned in a new '*actualité toncale*' - based on the 'then' (from the Latin *tunc*: then) rather than the 'now' (Latin: *nunc*), so it certainly would not exclude the reference being in the past. This is the interpretation of the IMP provided by the two linguists:

> Le caractère commun à tous les emplois du toncal pur [IMP] [...] c'est que ce tiroir marque... le placement du fait verbal dans une autre sphère d'action, une autre 'actualité', que celle où se trouve le locuteur au moment de la parole. La position naturelle et fondamentale à l'esprit, c'est de centrer le monde des phénomènes sur le locuteur se concevant lui-même dans l'instant présent: le moi-ici-maintenant. Ce mode d'apercevance des phénomènes constitue l'actualité noncale. Toutes les fois, au contraire, que l'esprit fait l'effort de se reporter dans le monde phénoménal autrement centré, on est dans une actualité toncale, et il apparaît dans la phrase soit le saviez [IMP] soit, selon les nuances nécessaires, le tiroir complexe approprié. (§1709)

For Damourette & Pichon, the IMP thus belongs to a different actuality than the other past tenses. Klum (1961) adopts a similar position. He sees the action in the IMP as « *simultanée à l'axe dépassé du moi-ici-maintenant* » (Tasmowski-De Ryck 1985: 59), adding the idea of parallelism with the present.

The presentations focusing on the past and the establishment of a new reference point are both compatible with our representation that postulates the existence of a moment of reference. We would therefore represent the IMP as below:

R = S'.....S...
|
E

The event (E) in the IMP is presented simultaneously to the reference point (R) given by external information (temporal adverbials or context). The dotted line between the actual moment of speech (S) and that to which one refers (S') expresses the possibility of this last point moving along the time line, according to the contextual information provided. It does not necessarily imply that the new centre is in the past, which can explain sentences where the IMP

is used with a present value (e.g. *je voulais vous demander un service*) or even a future in the IMP which children use to state the rules prior to their games (e.g. *Toi, tu étais l'Indien*[105]). The representation of the IMP is thus parallel to that of the present and potentially based on a past moment of speech to which one goes back thanks to adverbials or other past forms.

From what we have discussed so far, the IMP can be seen as a form parallel to the present and, according to Le Goffic (1986: 62), the two forms only differ by their reference point. He goes on to list parallel uses of IMP and present: (i) the ability to express recent past and '*futur proche*' in relation to their reference (e.g. *Il rentrait tout juste et il repartait le lendemain*), (ii) the use with periphrases like *être en train de, venir de, aller...*; (iii) the use with *depuis* and *jusqu'à* (e.g. *il habitait là depuis longtemps; comme il restait là jusqu'au lendemain*); (iv) the use in indirect speech and (v) in modal sentences (e.g. after *si*). The only two differences Le Goffic mentions are the ability of the present to express atemporality (e.g. *deux et deux font quatre)* and punctuality (e.g. *je jure de dire la vérité*). The difference is attributed to the fact that the present is able to expand and to repeat infinitely, whilst the IMP still possesses limits, however blurred, and a reference point. This obvious parallelism between the IMP and the present explains examples like the following (Wilmet 1998: 389):

(48) Je voulais /venais vous demander un petit service.
(49) On m'a dit que vous étiez bon médecin: guérissez-moi.

where the IMP clearly stands for a present but rejects the situation in the past for psychological reasons, for example politeness. The similarity of uses found between the two tenses comes from a similar aspect in the two tenses, which forms the basis of discussion in the following section.

4.2. Aspect

As with the present, so the situation described in the IMP is taken without its initial and final boundaries. This corresponds to Sten's (1952: 125) description:

> [La figure] de l'imparfait est (|_)__(_|). La phase médiane qui pour ainsi dire n'existe pas si on regarde l'action sous l'aspect du passé simple, est la seule qui compte pour celui qui se sert de l'imparfait: on voit l'action en train de se dérouler.

[105] For a discussion of that use that coexists with the COND, see Warnant, L. (1966), «Moi, j'étais le papa...» L'imparfait préludique et quelques remarques relatives à la recherche grammaticale', in *Mélanges Maurice Grevisse*. Gembloux, Duculot, pp.343-366.

Vet's approach adopts the same aspectual position, as it understands the IMP as only showing a part of the situation, that can expand outside the limits imposed by the viewing that the IMP imposes on the situation:

> Pour Vet (1980), l'extension de la proposition complexe à laquelle une phrase à l'IMP donne lieu, relativement à son modèle d'interprétation, n'est déterminée que pour un moment rx. Celui-ci est un moment de l'intervalle de temps I pendant lequel la situation décrite est censée se réaliser dans un monde w2, et il est antérieur à un autre moment coïncidant, lui, avec le moment s de la parole dans le monde actuel w1. La vérité de la proposition complexe n'est ainsi assertée que pour une partie de la durée de la situation décrite. (Tasmowski-De Ryck 1985)

This corresponds to Gosselin's (1996: 16) representation of the IMP where the interval of reference [I,II] is placed within the interval [B1,B2] of the process.

The fact that the IMP is not compatible with adverbials showing definite limits reinforces the idea that the IMP has an imperfective aspect as in the following examples. (50) is not problematic as the limits of the situation *régner* are not influenced by the punctual complement:

(50) Le 21 juillet 1831, Léopold Ier régnait.

On the other hand, the interval indicated by *de 1831 à 1865* sets precise limits, which makes the sentence less acceptable. It would be more acceptable to answer a question of the type *Qui régnait de 1831 à 1865?;* if the question were to hinge on the date, it could be *quand Léopold Ier a-t-il régné?*

(51) ? Léopold Ier régnait de 1831 à 1865.

The anteposition of the temporal complement would make the sentence less problematic as the scope of *de 1831 à 1865* would be on the sentence rather than on the verb:

(52) ? De 1831 à 1865, Léopold Ier régnait[106].
(53) * Léopold Ier régnait à partir de 1831.
(54) * Léopold Ier régnait jusqu'en 1865.

The adjunction of a durative complement is only possible in an iterative interpretation:

(55) Il écrivait pendant deux heures.

[106] The IMP would be more acceptable if the subject is emphasized by *c'est... que* but one must remember that the sequence of tenses would here explain that tense (see Rosier & Wilmet 2002).

As for iterative complements, they are not problematic if they indicate frequency (*souvent, parfois...)* but in the case of a precise repetition, the sentence is only acceptable with a complement that implies a possible iteration (here *par mois*):

(56) Il écrivait trois fois par mois.

We will therefore represent the aspect of a situation in the IMP as follows:

R = S'.....S...
|
]E[

where the open limits][show that the IMP only gives a partial viewing of the situation. This viewing of the aspect explains that, in textual presentations, the IMP has been seen as the tense of the background, within which other situations can be inserted.

> L'IMP est un temps de récit par opposition au commentaire. Il marque la non-antériorité et la non-postériorité des situations décrites par rapport à un centre quelconque. Sa spécificité n'est pas temporelle: il s'agit avant tout **d'une attitude de locution par laquelle les faits sont présentés en arrière-plan**, contrairement à ce qui se passe avec le Passé Simple. (Weinrich 1963, in Tasmowski-De Ryck 1985: 59-60) [Our emphasis]

This kind of approach, that makes the IMP the tense of «*description*» (Genette 1969: 56) or the tense of « *arrière-plan du récit* » are typical of textual analyses but the expression of background is only a side effect of the IMP aspect.

4.3. Aktionsart

The IMP tends to be very compatible with stative verbs that, likewise, avoid indicating precise limits. The IMP indeed expresses an indefinite duration:

(57) Il savait.

whilst the PS expresses the entrance in a new state of knowledge:

(58) Il sut = il comprit, il devina.

and the PC seems to indicate a perfect:

(59) Il a su = il a appris mais a oublié.

Despite its particular compatibility with stative verbs, the IMP is also used with dynamic verbs, which sometimes results in conflicts that need resolution. Gosselin (1996: 199ff) has provided a very detailed description of possible oppositions between *Aktionsart* and the use of IMP. It will be summarized here. According to him, the IMP « *indique la valeur temporelle absolue du passé: [I,II] ANT [01, 02]*[107]. *Il exprime l'aspect inaccompli: [B1,B2] RE [I,II]*[108] ». Gosselin further distinguishes derived meanings coming from five types of conflicts:

(i) When the process is intrinsically punctual, the opposition with the description of the IMP can be solved by:

- expansion of the process (with possible interruption): *Luc ouvrait la porte, quand il reçut une balle en plein front.* In this case, the IMP could be replaced by a progressive form: *Luc était en train d'ouvrir la porte...*;
- iteration: *Paul toussait (depuis cinq minutes)* implies that the cough has been repeated in the last five minutes;
- focus on the preparatory state: *Je partais pour l'Islande. Luc me prêta ses moufles.* In this case, the IMP stands for *J'étais sur le point de partir pour l'Islande;*
- focus on the resulting state: *J'arrivais de Marseille* where the IMP could be replaced by the periphrasis: *Je venais d'arriver de Marseille*; in our view, the distinction between the last two conflict resolutions and the expansion of the process is not obvious; in all cases, the punctual situation seems to be stretched;
- use of the *'imparfait de rupture'* that consists in applying the unaccomplished aspect - not to the process itself but - to the whole series of changes.

(ii) When the reference interval is too broad to be covered by the process, the conflict is solved by:

- iteration: *Cette saison-là, Pierre jouait une pièce de Labiche*; this is comparable to the iteration in the first category as *jouer une pièce* could be seen as a punctual situation;
- expansion: *Cette année-là, Luc emménageait à Saïgon*; Ducrot (1979) has explained the use of such IMP by the fact that, in similar sentences, the situation in the IMP is seen as the big event of the year and, as a consequence, is stretched over the whole period;

(iii) When combined with a durative complement, the IMP is understood as iterative: *Marie nageait pendant deux heures (chaque jour)*

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[107] As a reminder, the formula *[I, II] ANT [01, 02]* indicates that the interval of reference [I,II] is anterior (ANT) to the interval of speech ([01,02]).

[108] [B1,B2] RE [I,II] indicates that the initial (B1) and final (B2) limits of the process exceeds (RE) the interval of reference [I,II].

(iv) When a series of predicates cannot be taken as simultaneous but in a sequence, two solutions are possible:

- repetition of the whole series: *(Chaque matin,) Luc se levait, ouvrait la fenêtre et respirait profondément. Les oiseaux chantaient depuis des heures.*
- interpretation as an '*imparfait de narration*': *Juve quittait son jeune collègue sans se préoccuper des salutations d'usage, il le lâchait au milieu du corridor et, avec une agilité extraordinaire de la part d'un homme de son âge, Juve bondissait en bas de l'escalier, sautait dans un taxi, arrivait rue Blanche quelques minutes après.*

(v) When a situation in the IMP cannot be assumed to be simultaneous to another situation that gives a reference interval to the first process, the conflict is solved by:

- iteration to express a habit or a intrinsic characteristic: *Pierre demanda à Marie comment elle gagnait sa vie. Elle répondit qu'elle jouait du saxophone dans un orchestre.*
- expression of an intermediate situation between two constitutive changes of the process itself: *Pierre demanda à Marie quelle était sa principale occupation en ce moment. Elle répondit qu'elle composait un opéra.*
- shift towards the preliminary situation: *Marie se leva à 5 heures du matin. Elle dormait seulement depuis une heure.*
- shift towards the resulting situation: *Marie ouvrit la fenêtre. La lumière de l'aube inondait la pièce.*

We have listed below similar contexts where the use of the IMP results in a conflict. With *encore* that means duration or iteration, telic verbs in the IMP express only duration:

(60) Il terminait encore = he was still finishing.

whilst atelic verbs allow both values:

(61) Il écrivait encore = he was still writing or he was writing again.

So we see that, for the IMP even more than for the PS and the PC, there is a whole combination of factors and contexts to take into account when using a verbal form.

In the section above, we studied a series of sentences including *régnait*. In the next set of examples, we have simply replaced *régnait* by the verb phrase *devenait roi* and the sentences are immediately unacceptable except for the first:

(62) Le 21 juillet 1831, Léopold Ier devenait roi.
(63) * Léopold Ier devenait roi à partir de 1831.
(64) * Léopold Ier devenait roi de 1831 à 1865.

(65) * Léopold Ier devenait roi jusqu'en 1865.

The difference comes from the *Aktionsart, devenir roi* being a telic process unable to combine with temporal complements that indicate duration.

The introduction of a direct object also influences the *Aktionsart:*

(66) *Il écrivait en 20 ans.

The adjunction of a direct object prompts an iterative interpretation:

(67) Il écrivait un roman en 20 ans = He used to write a novel in twenty years.

whilst the other past tenses retain a semelfactive interpretation:

(68) Il a écrit un roman en 20 ans = He wrote a novel in twenty years.

4.4. Summary of the IMP

So the dichotomy of Berthonneau & Kleiber (1993: 55) seems to us not as clear cut as these authors imply and the temporal and aspectual views might be complementary. Our position is firstly aspectual: the IMP is - as indicated in its name - an imperfective tense, that is, it shows a situation as happening but without focusing on its initial and final limits. Because of its aspect with undetermined limits, the IMP tends to need extra temporal elements to be situated in the time flow; this information is provided by the textual cotext (e.g. adverbials) or the situational context (e.g. other past tenses).

We support the idea that the IMP expresses simultaneity in relation to a secondary moment of speech or actuality. This is based on the many parallelisms between the IMP and the present of the indicative. School grammars often refer to the IMP as « *présent du passé* ». Although this appellation appears at first contradictory, it relies on linguistic evidence. We see the IMP as a form simultaneous to a second speech point or actuality set by an adverbial:

(69) Le 4 septembre 1768, naissait, à Saint-Malo... (Wilmet 1997: 384)

by another past tense:

(70) Galilée soutint que la terre tournait autour du soleil. (Wilmet 1997: 384)

or by a non actual setting:

(71) Toi, tu étais le gendarme et moi le voleur. (Wilmet 1997: 384)

In the cases of indirect speech and '*imparfait préludique*', the parallel with the present is obvious.

As the IMP possesses an imperfective aspect, it does not set definite limits (][) to the situations, which allows iterative and repetitive interpretations of the situation within the period referred to:

S'= R.....S...
|
]E[

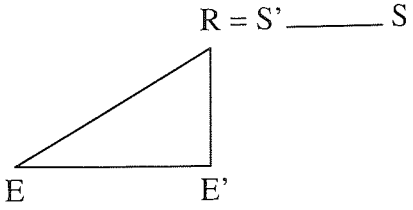
The dotted line between the moment of speech (S) and the reference point (R), corresponding to the translated moment of speech (S'), makes it possible to account for past uses of the IMP when S' is before S. It would also be able to represent cases where the reference point is actually present, as in *IMP de politesse* for example. So the characteristic feature of the IMP is that E is simultaneous to R, that is generally located in past time but not necessarily, as shown by (72) where the reference point, given by *maintenant*, is present:

(72) La maison, si longtemps déserte, **abritait *maintenant*** tant d'hôtes que presque toutes les chambres étaient occupées; [...] (L. Tolstoï (1972) Anna Karénine, Paris: Le livre de Poche, tome II:p.150)

5. The PQP

5.1. Time

Unlike the other tenses described above, the PQP is an absolute-relative tense which implies two levels of temporal distanciation: it is anterior to the moment of reference R that is itself anterior to S. The PQP would therefore be represented as follows:



The PQP indicates on the one hand an anterior to the past (SRE) and on the other hand a past perfect (SS'E'E). As in the case of the PC, cotextual elements allow to select an interpretation:

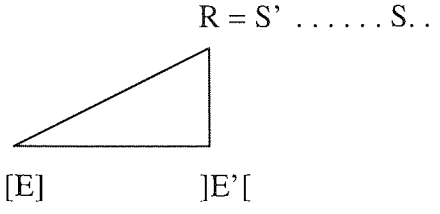
(73) Cécile avait visité un an auparavant toutes les nations de la terre.
(74) Cécile avait enfin visité toutes les nations de la terre. (Wilmet 1998: 407)

(73) indicates double anteriority and the secondary moment of reference is provided by the adverbial *un an auparavant*. In (74), it is the result at S' that is emphasized by the use of *enfin*.

According to Wilmet (1998: 407), the PQP is able to take on all the uses of the IMP (with of course a double temporal level).

5.2. Aspect

Like the PC, the PQP is complex from an aspectual point of view. Although it is perfective as shown if we apply the tests of perfectivity (Vetters) and it cannot express a situation shown as unfolding, the PQP nonetheless contains an auxiliary in the IMP and shares some of the characteristics of that tense. This may explain why the PQP is becoming a way of indicating anteriority to S as shown by Ayres-Bennett & Carruthers (2001)[109].



As such the PQP is a very versatile tense that can be associated with both perfective and imperfective tenses and all the examples below are possible:

(75) Il faisait ce qu'il avait dit.
(76) Il a fait ce qu'il avait dit.
(77) Il fit ce qu'il avait dit.

[109] See Part I, chapter 1.

5.3. Aktionsart

Thanks to its two components, the PQP possesses perfective and imperfective characteristics. This feature allows that tense to combine with any type of verbs.

5.4. Summary of the PQP

As an absolute-relative tense, the PQP presents a complex temporal anchorage. It is mainly used to transmit temporal information (double anteriority) and seems to be in the process of neutralizing as far as aspect is concerned [see e.g. (75) to (77)].

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have applied to the morphological verbal markers of past the representation based on temporal and aspectual features that was introduced in chapter 2 of Part I. We have tested the compatibilities between the viewing offered by a form and its *Aktionsart* as those concepts are the link between grammatical aspect and lexical aspect, which is the basis of the PAH that we will test in Part II. Although obvious affinities between imperfectivity and states and between perfectivity and events exist, there are not categorical. Morever, we have seen that adverbials play an important role in the combinations. As the PAH focuses on the VP level, we anticipate that it may not account for every aspect of the IL production found in our corpora. We now need to confirm this assumption by our corpus analysis

Conclusion of Part I

In this first part, we have offered the background on which the corpus analysis can be based. First an overview of the contemporary French past tense system has been provided: this has emphasized the complexity of an evolving system where there is no one-to-one relationship between forms and functions. Then, we have identified the relevant factors that characterize the French past tenses and allow to discriminate between them. We have adhered to consistent criteria of time and aspect to represent each tense under study and the role of *Aktionsart* and cotextual information has been demonstrated throughout our analysis.

We now move on to an analysis of past tense use in the data produced by our student subjects, keeping in mind the hypotheses we have postulated in the introduction and the theoretical description exposed in this part of the thesis. This will enable us to specify features of advanced acquisition of tense-aspect verbal morphology and to compare our results with previous studies in order to assess the value of our initial hypotheses.

PART 2:
CORPUS ANALYSIS

Introduction

This second part will be devoted to a description of tutored anglophone advanced learners of French's use of past tenses. An initial chapter details the research methodology and tasks for data gathering. Chapter 2 presents a descriptive analysis of the use of the PRES, the PS, the PC, the IMP and the PQP in written and oral film narratives. Chapter 3 focuses on the use of past tenses in grammatical tasks.

This part concludes a summary of our findings and these are compared with the results of previous studies on the French past tenses thereby contributing to a better overview of the field.

Chapter 1:
Research methodology

0. Introduction

In this chapter, the selection of tasks by means of which the data for this study were collected, as well as the research procedures used to analyze the material gathered, are explained and justified. Some pilot tests preceded the collection of the actual data; since these shaped the design of the present research, they are outlined prior to the main study, the subjects, testing materials and testing procedures of which are then presented in detail.

1. Pilot study

A pilot study was based on essays written in examination conditions by a group of students in the School of Languages and European Studies (LES) of Aston University (Birmingham, Great Britain) at the end of their first (June 1997) and second (June 1998) years[110]. The number of essays studied in year 1 and year 2 varied slightly: 131 in year 1 and 128 in year 2. The year 1 examination consisted of a 500-word essay (*dissertation*) on a single topic: *Le système éducatif français se veut méritocratique: réussit-il ?* It had been prepared by a mass lecture on the subject prior to the examination period. The examination at the end of year 2 offered a range of topics. Students could choose from an analysis of an opinion poll on meat consumption in France, a report on the introduction of a British mineral water in France, or an analysis of an advertisement for Libertel hotels. Those corpora were discarded for several reasons. First, the text production did not specifically encourage the use of past tenses, especially in year 2. Furthermore, the data produced in both years were not readily comparable. Finally, the context of use was restricted to written production. However, the analysis of the verbal forms found in those corpora has highlighted trends in past tenses use by anglophone university learners (see Labeau 2002a) and helped formulate the hypotheses discussed in this thesis. It has also provided material for some of the cloze tests in the main study that is now described.

[110] For a detailed presentation, see Labeau 2001.

2. Main study

Under this heading, we first present the subjects who provided the data before describing the range of tests used and the procedures for data collection.

2.1. Subjects

The present study involves full-time university students who qualify as *apprenants qualifiés* (Kihlstedt 1998: 20) or *apprenants d'instruction élevée* (Bartning 1997: 13):

> [L'apprenant d'un niveau d'instruction élevé] est donc un apprenant qui a étudié la L[angue] C[ible] en tant que langue étrangère à l'école, souvent dans un pays autre que celui de la langue cible, et qui continue à l'université. Il s'agit d'un apprenant guidé, ayant des connaissances métalinguistiques de la langue cible. Son apprentissage est parfois « mixte » grâce à des stages et des séjours à l'étranger [...] Pour exercer ultérieurement des activités professionnelles, il aura souvent besoin d'un répertoire spécifique et explicite des structures d'expressions [...] Ajoutons que la langue étrangère n'est pas toujours sa deuxième langue mais souvent la troisième.

Howard (forthcoming) describes as advanced learners those in whose production the TL morphological past tenses are found.

Four different categories of students participated in the project: (1) 21 first year students, (2) 17 second year students, (3) 23 fourth year students giving a total of 61 learners of French as a foreign language (FFL) and (4) 6 French exchange students who acted as a control group. Data were collected in two language groups at each of the three learning levels during the weekly 2-hour contact time devoted to 'French Language Skills' (written French classes). Although there is some disparity in numbers, we have chosen to work on all the data available as we do not follow individual profiles and there was no satisfactory basis on which to eliminate some subjects rather than others. Our learners are identified by an S (for Student) followed by 3 numbers; the first indicates the academic level (1 for first year, 2 for second year and 4 for fourth year[111]) and the last two identify the students (in alphabetical order). The six native speakers were volunteers who answered the researcher's email invitation to all French

[111] The third year is spent abroad.

exchange students to take part in the project in exchange of a small financial reward. They are identified by an F (for French) followed by a single number.

An academic background questionnaire (see appendix 1) completed after the actual data collection gives insight into the linguistic experience of our subjects. The control group is made up of self-proclaimed monolingual native speakers of French (although F5 has a Polonophone father). All students in year 2 are native speakers of English only, as are the year 1 subjects - except S121 who is bilingual English-German. The year 4 group is more varied with three bilingual students: one English-German (S406) and two English-French (S402 and S415). In addition to these, three students come from ethnic minorities (Gujurati: S409; Kashmiri: S423 and Hakka: S421) and do not have English as a mother tongue although all their schooling was in English. This variety of background may lead to differences in achievement and this will be tested in the analysis.

Let us now consider the subjects' academic experience in French. The year 1 and year 2 groups are separated by a year of guided instruction; most of the 4th year students benefit from having spent an extended period of time in a French speaking country during their 3rd academic year (the 'year abroad'). In year 1, most students had been learning French for 7-8 years with 3 exceptions: one student (unidentified) studied it for 10 years, one for 5 years (S120) and S108, a mature student who studied French for only 2 years through self-learning and a 7-month stay in France. All the other students learnt French at school with short stays of 3 to 4 weeks in France for S105, S106 and S112. In year 2, learning experience ranged betweeen 8 and 11 years with the noticeable exception of S208 who only studied French in an academic setting for 5 years but spent 15 years in Belgium in the largely francophone Brussels area and S216, a mature student who took a French A-level in a sixth-form college and had short professional experiences of 3 months in both France and Switzerland. Most students in year 4 had spent their third year in France or Belgium (S401). Two students (S403 and S405) had divided their year equally between France and Germany, one (S412) spent 9 months in Austria and three months in France and two (S408, S422) had spent their year abroad in a German-speaking country.

Most subjects studied French as a foreign language at school in the UK (except S108). S208 studied it in an English school in Belgium and S402 took part of his schooling in the *lycée français* before joining the British system. All are university students and have some metalinguistic knowledge as a result of their academic curriculum. The learning is thus mixed (instruction + period of residence abroad) only for the vast majority in year 4. Most students[112] also study or studied one other foreign language - mainly German (except S116, S118, S211, S212 and S411 who studied some Spanish) - or more with a maximum of 5 foreign languages (S409).

L2 learners form three groups at different levels, which constitute a pseudolongitudinal study. Gass & Selinker (2001: 32) give this definition of such a study:

> In [a pseudolongitudinal] study, the emphasis, like that of a longitudinal study, is on language change (i.e. acquisition), with data being collected at a single point of time, but with different levels of proficiency represented.

So although we do not follow the same group of learners throughout time, we work on comparable sets of subjects as they are placed in the same learning conditions, which allows to draw some developmental conclusions for such type of learners.

Having presented the participants in our study, we proceed to describe the testing materials which they were required to use.

2.2. Testing materials

The general design of our research is based on that of Salaberry (2000), as it was - as far as research methodology is concerned - the most sophisticated study in terms of research methodology available on the development of past tense-aspect acquisition at the time this research project was launched. Nonetheless, our study differs from Salaberry's in several respects. It includes (1) movie narratives (oral and written), (2) an individual grammar cloze-test (aspectual choices) based on (a) two literary texts, (b) a narrative text made up of problematic segments found in the pilot study at level 1, (c) a student's description of a series of cartoons depicting a story located in prehistoric times, and finally (3) a written editing task.

[112] Except S117, S203, S204, S206, S207, S208, S401, S407, S410, S414, S416, S418.

These tasks differ to some extent from those found in Salaberry (2000), whose study only involves oral narratives, a fact that, according to him, is « likely to generate less monitoring[113] of language form » (p.119). His written tasks, like ours, included (a) three literary excerpts « from two famous Spanish speaking novelists » (p.120) that had been identified earlier as containing examples of non-prototypical marking of aspect and (b) a made-up passage « to incorporate examples of the non-prototypical uses of non-stative verbs » (p.120) and (c) a fill-in-the blanks test based on a series of cartoons depicting the main events of the movie *Psycho* by Hitchcock. The editing task in Salaberry (2000) is a paired oral exercise. Although very interesting, this feature could not be replicated for practical reasons in the present study. The data were collected during classes and there was neither enough time nor technical facilities to record every dyad in a satisfactory way.

The variety of tests we have devised is intended to investigate possible discrepancies in the use of past tenses according to the task. For example would tasks where the focus is on form (such as a grammatical test) beget a better mastery of the use ? Or would there be differences between oral and written narratives due to the possibility of editing in the latter case ? One of the two hypotheses of Salaberry (1998: 519) was that classroom learners of French would:

> perform better in the use of *passé composé* and *imparfait* in a cloze test than in a free narration task (more attention to form determined by fewer demands on cognitive processing). Native speakers [would] not differ in their use of *passé composé* and *imparfait* from task to task.

He concludes that his subjects show a « stable and systematic use of aspectual morphology across [the cloze test and the free written narration]" (p.533) but admits that his results need to be confirmed by empirical studies including other modes of data collection. It was our aim therefore to expand on the types of tasks devised by Salaberry. The following section undertakes an in-depth examination of each aspect of the research design adopted.

[113] In Krashen's (1982) theory, the Monitor is a somewhat vague device that refers to use of 'learned' knowledge to edit utterances produced by 'acquired' knowledge. Acquisition refers to the *'subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their first language'* (1985 : 1) while learning is *'a conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them'* (1982 : 10).

2.2.1. Film narratives[114]

Bardovi-Harlig (1999: 346) mentions film retelling as a way of eliciting impersonal narratives (see also Dietrich et al. 1995). For the purposes of this research, the decision was taken to use the same film as Salaberry, namely *Modern Times* by Charlie Chaplin. From this film, the same extracts were selected: « Alone and Hungry » (5 minutes and 10 seconds) and « An Accident Occurred at the Store». (8 minutes and 50 seconds)[115]. The selection of that film presented several advantages, some of which had already guided Salaberry's choice. First, the extracts show sequenced actions that constitute the foreground of the story whilst also containing simultaneous actions that act as a background; it was anticipated that this would allow for an alternance of past tenses. Secondly, a silent film would allow participants to focus on the plot and avoid confusion arising from the difficulty of the dialogues. Moreover, clips from *Modern Times* have been used in previous studies, which allows for replication and comparison of results. Salaberry (2000: 117-8) mentions their use in a selection of studies into different languages: Spanish (Hasbún 1995), English (Klein & Perdue 1992 & Bardovi-Harlig 1995) and French (Bergström 1995[116], 1997; Véronique 2002). We are also aware of *Modern Times* being used in Paprocka's thesis[117] with Polish beginners learning French, by Lambert (1997) with francophone learners of English and by Noyau & alii (1995: 159) with their learners in naturalistic settings. Finally, the fact that the content of the story is known to the researcher as well as to the subjects reduces the problem of interpreting learners's production and the ambiguity caused by interlanguage (IL) phenomena. For instance, in (1), a problem arose from the fact that the English verb *to watch* can be translated as *regarder* or *surveiller*[118] in French and the wrong option was chosen. In (2), there is a phonological similarity between the verb used *hurler* and the intended verb *heurter*. In (3), although the sentence is linguistically acceptable, it is proven false by the extra-linguistic context as the two men do not work together any more:

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[114] Appendices 6 and 7 contain the transcripts of all the narratives.

[115] Salaberry (2000 : 117) gives a slightly different length for *Alone and Hungry* (5 minutes and 20 seconds) and *An Accident Occurred at the Store* lasts only 6 minutes as the skating sequence has been edited (personal communication – 28 November 2001).

[116] Despite our efforts (inter-library requests and email to the author), it was not possible to get hold of that unpublished thesis so our knowledge of that study mainly comes from Bergström (1997).

[117] Personal communication at the Fifth Chronos Colloquium, Groningen, 19th-21st June 2002.

[118] This is an occurrence of split, where one form in the mother tongue corresponds to 2 or more in the target language (Ellis 1985).

(1) Il commençait le travail avec l'aide de sa femme ou de sa petite amie, et **regardait** le magasin pendant la soirée. (S111)
(2) Elle courait dehors et par accident elle a **hurlé** un homme, qui était Charlie Chaplin. (S115)
(3) En effet, après un peu de temps, un des tirants l'a reconnu. Il **travaillait** avec L'homme. (S103)

So the use of the visual support permits identification not only of discrepancies compared with native speaker selection of forms but also in the functions that those forms are supposed to express. Such data will obviously be useful when we try to evaluate actual mastery of forms and meanings.

Following Salaberry (2000) but adopting a different approach from Bardovi-Harlig (1995) and Bergström (1997), the film excerpts were only shown once to reduce the possibility of advance planning of the narration (cf. Ellis 1987[119]). Students at levels 1 and 2 were briefed in English (French was used at level 4) at the beginning of the testing session. To secure a narration in the past tense, students were instructed to narrate the story as a witness who had seen the previous day the events shown in the excerpt. They were supposed to report the offence they had witnessed to a police officer (their partner) who would in turn have to write an official report, hence the need for maximum accuracy (Salaberry 2000: 118 also used the detective story in his instructions) and the possibility that accounts would include descriptions of characters and places and not simply narration. Students were allowed to take notes in order to help them remember the facts so the communicative purpose of the task was highlighted. Students were then separated in 2 groups that were each shown one of the two excerpts. They were later reunited and briefed again, this time in French, on what to do. The instructions, that read as follows, were left on a overhead transparency for the whole duration of the exercise:

> Vous avez assisté **hier** aux événements décrits dans le film que vous venez de visionner. On vous demande maintenant de raconter cette histoire passée à un officier de police (votre partenaire), qui devra faire un rapport détaillé de l'incident.

[119] Ellis, R. (1987) 'Interlanguage variability in narrative discourse : style shifting in the use of the past tense', *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 9 : 1-20.

The subjects were given 10 minutes (5 minutes for each story) to exchange their stories. They were then immediately asked to record[120] the two stories with a maximum of details: first the story they were told, then the one they had watched that was supposed to be more vivid in their mind and therefore less likely to be forgotten if subject to a short delay. At the end of the testing session, subjects were given thirty minutes to complete a written account of the excerpt they had viewed. The decision to have recourse to both oral and written narratives is based on contradictory claims about the influence of planning time on monitoring[121].

2.2.2. Cloze tests[122]

The research includes a series of written tasks: (1) a cloze test based on two literary texts, (2) a made-up text and (3) a cloze test supported by cartoons.

The first gap-filling exercise includes two excerpts from novels that have been analyzed in the literature devoted to the French past tenses as presenting marked uses. The first excerpt comes from a novel by Malraux.

> Je (1) _____ (s'évader) en 1940, avec le futur aumônier du Vercors. Nous (2)_____ (se retrouver) peu de temps après l'évasion, dans le village de la Drôme où il (3) _____ (être) curé...
> - Qu'est-ce que la confession vous (4) _____ (enseigner) des hommes?
> - Vous savez, la confession n'apprend rien, parce que dès que l'on confesse, on est un autre, il y a la Grâce...
> Il (5) _____ (lever) ses bras de bûcheron dans la nuit pleine d'étoiles:
> « Et puis, le fond de tout, c'est qu'il n'y a pas de grandes personnes... ».

This passage was first mentioned by Saettele[123] (1971) and quoted in Wilmet (1998: 370) to support the point that the PC cannot exactly replace the PS in all contexts. The second text is taken from *Exercices de Style* by Queneau, a text that has repeatedly been used in theoretical descriptions of the French past tenses (among others Le Goffic 1986, Delbart 1995, Wilmet 1998). The '*Imparfait*' version was used:

> Il (6) _____ (être) midi. Les voyageurs (7) _____ (monter) dans l'autobus. On (8) _____ (être) serré. Un jeune monsieur (9) _____

[120] The narratives were then transcribed, using conventions based on those used in Kihlstedt (1998 : 264) that are found in appendix 5.
[121] Salaberry (2000 : 119) discusses Ellis' (1987) and Bardovi-Harlig's (1995) contradictory results.
[122] See appendix 2.
[123] Saettele, H. (1971) *Das Französische Passé Composé. Funktionsveränderung eines Tempus*. Zürich, Juris Druck.

(porter) sur la tête un chapeau qui (10) _____ (être entouré) d'une tresse et non d'un ruban. Il (11) _____ (avoir) un long cou. Il (12) _____ (se plaindre) auprès de son voisin des heurts que ce dernier lui (13) _____ (infliger). Dès qu'il (14) _____ (apercevoir) une place libre, il (15) _____ (se précipiter) vers elle et (16) _____ (s'y asseoir). Je l'(17) _____ (apercevoir) plus tard, devant la gare Saint-Lazare. Il (18) _____ (se vêtir) d'un pardessus et un camarade qui (19) _____ (se trouver) là lui (20) _____ (faire) cette remarque: il (21) _____ (falloir) mettre un bouton supplémentaire.

The made-up text is adapted from the pilot study, more specifically from essays written by year 1 students in June 1997 as their end of year exam; it combines sentences where a non-native use of past tenses was identified.

L'enseignement supérieur (22) _____ (être toujours) un sujet épineux en France. Dès la Révolution, il (23) _____ (y avoir) une conviction que tout le monde devrait avoir le même niveau d'éducation. Pourtant, les ressources (24) _____ (pas être) disponibles jusqu'à la fin du dix-neuvième siècle. Le système éducatif français (25) _____ (être créé) pendant la troisième république sous la direction de Jules Ferry. Pendant le dix-neuvième siècle, on (26) _____ (avoir) les moyens de créer un tel système qui (27)_____ (être) gratuit et égal. Ce système républicain et démocratique (28) _____ (être beaucoup critiqué), malgré ses avantages. Le système éducatif (29) _____ (changer beaucoup) à cause de cette quête de méritocratie. Pendant les années soixante, la population des étudiants en France (30) _____ (doubler). Cette augmentation (31) _____ (provoquer) un grand problème: celui du surpeuplement. Les étudiants (32) _____ (réagir) de manière sérieuse. Pendant les années soixante, il (33) _____ (y avoir) de nombreuses manifestations, émeutes et quelques arrestations surtout à la Sorbonne en 1968. A cause de ces incidents, le gouvernement (34) _____ (être choqué) et il (35) _____ (être forcé) de se rendre compte que quelque chose (36) _____ (devoir) être fait. En 1950, environ 32.000 Français de 18 ans (37) _____ (posséder) le bac mais en 1990, leur nombre (38) _____ (atteindre) presque 348.000 unités. Il paraît que l'idée sur laquelle le système éducatif français est fondé est méritocratique, mais les circonstances qui (39) _____ (arriver), le /l' (40) _____ (faire) changer en pratique.

The cloze test based on cartoons[124] comes from a grammar exercise submitted as coursework to level one students during the academic year 1996-1997. They were given the cartoon and instructed to narrate the story starting by *Il était une fois*, a feature that was used to

[124] The cartoons used in the study come from a personal communication by A.R. Delbart.

guarantee the use of past tenses[125]. The text used here is slightly adapted from a narrative written by a bilingual student (French mother) that reads as follows (original spelling and punctuation):

> Il était une fois, au temps des hommes des cavernes, une tribu qui vivait en paix, les hommes chassaient les animaux et les femmes, les femmes gardaient le feu et élevaient les enfants.
> L'un des jeunes hommes, lui preferait dessiner sur les murs, les exploits des chasseurs et les animaux qu'ils tuait.
> La jeune fille qui l'admirait eut une idée. Elle demanda à l'artiste de la dessiner sur le mur. Le jeune homme accepta et en fit son portrait qui ressemblait étrangement à celui de la Joconde. La jeune fille n'etait pas contente du résultat et elle était aussi très jalouse. Tres en colère, elle sortit l'artiste de la caverne par les cheveux sous les rires de la tribu.

Cartoons present much interest for the use of past tenses as they alternate drawings depicting foreground and background actions and they should therefore entice the use of a variety of past forms. The story used in the cloze test includes an extra final sentence that contains prototypical uses of the IMP as well as an addition, *'quand il (finir)'*. This type of subordinate clauses is problematic as far as sequence of tenses is concerned and can potentially lead to the use of *passé surcomposé* (see Engel 1996, Carruthers 1999):

> Il était une fois, au temps des hommes des cavernes, un tribu qui _____ (vivre) en paix. Les hommes _____ (chasser) les animaux et les femmes; les femmes _____ (garder) le feu et _____ (élever) les enfants.
> L'un des jeunes hommes, lui, _____ (préférer) dessiner sur les murs les exploits des chasseurs et les animaux qu'ils _____ (tuer).
> Une jeune fille, Mona, qui l' _____ (admirer), _____ (avoir) une idée. Elle _____ (demander) à l'artiste de la dessiner sur le mur. Le jeune homme _____ (accepter) et _____ (faire) un portrait qui _____ (ressembler) étrangement à la Joconde. Quand il _____ (finir), Mona n'_____ (être) pas contente du résultat. Très en colère, elle _____ (s'approcher) de l'homme et lui _____ (saisir) les cheveux. Elle _____(sortir) l'artiste de la caverne en le tirant par la chevelure. Les autres hommes des cavernes _____ (penser) que cela _____ (être) très amusant parce qu'il _____ (être) inhabituel qu'une femme ait le contrôle sur un homme.

[125] Hasbún (1995, in Salaberry 2000 : 119) asked his subjects to start their movie narratives by the Spanish equivalent *Había una vez...* , which is claimed to be a successful technique in order to avoid shifting to the historical present.

2.2.3. Editing task[126]

After completing the cloze tests, students were given the literary texts as originally written by Malraux and Queneau:

> Je me (1) suis évadé, en 1940, avec le futur aumônier du Vercors. Nous (2) nous retrouvâmes peu de temps après l'évasion, dans le village de la Drôme où il (3) était curé...
> - Qu'est-ce que la confession vous (4) a enseigné des hommes?
> - Vous savez, la confession n'apprend rien, parce que dès que l'on confesse, on est un autre, il y a la Grâce...
> Il (5) leva ses bras de bûcheron dans la nuit pleine d'étoiles:
> « Et puis, le fond de tout, c'est qu'il n'y a pas de grandes personnes... ».
>
> C'(6) était midi. Les voyageurs (7) montaient dans l'autobus. On (8) était serré. Un jeune monsieur (9) portait sur la tête un chapeau qui (10) était entouré d'une tresse et non d'un ruban. Il (11) avait un long cou. Il (12) se plaignait auprès de son voisin des heurts que ce dernier lui (13) infligeait. Dès qu'il (14) apercevait une place libre, il (15) se précipitait vers elle et (16) s'y asseyait.
> Je (17) l'apercevais plus tard, devant la gare Saint-Lazare. Il (18) se vêtait d'un pardessus et un camarade qui (19) se trouvait là lui (20) faisait cette remarque: il (21) fallait mettre un bouton supplémentaire.

They were asked to evaluate the forms provided as acceptable (A), marked (M) or unacceptable (U). The last two options needed to be justified in writing.

2.2.4. Classification of verbs[127]

The control group, made up of native speakers of French, was submitted to a supplementary test. They were asked to classify the 40 verbs found in the first two parts of the cloze test in the 3 categories identified in our theoretical description: stative, atelic and telic. Those were described as follows:

> 1. Un verbe est statif s'il n'implique aucun changement dans la durée (ex. *exister*)
> 2. S'il n'est pas statif, un verbe est:
> - télique, s'il doit atteindre sa limite finale pour avoir pris place (ex. *sortir* si vous arrêtez au milieu de l'action de *sortir*, vous n'êtes pas sorti(e)).
> - atélique, s'il ne doit pas atteindre finale pour avoir pris place (ex. *écrire* si vous arrêtez au milieu de l'action d'*écrire*, vous avez déjà écrit quelque chose).

[126] See appendix 3.
[127] See appendix 4.

The recourse to several native speakers was meant to avoid a classification based on the researcher's idiosyncratic choices. In the data analysis, only the forms on which all native speakers agreed are compared with L2 learners' choices.

2.3. Procedures for data collection

The data analyzed in the main study were collected during the 10th week of the academic year 2001-2002 that comprised 24 weeks of teaching. The test was carried out in six French Language Skills groups (weekly 2-hour written language and grammar courses) by the tutor[128]. There were two groups at each level (year 1, year 2 and year 4). The control group was tested the week before. The succession of tasks was the same for all the groups. First, the class was separated in two groups, each one viewing a different excerpt of *Modern Times*. The following brief in English[129] was given before watching the clips:

> You witnessed **yesterday** the events depicted in the movie. You are requested to narrate that past story to a police officer who will have to report the events. You need therefore to be as accurate as possible. You are allowed to take notes. (emphasis on the overhead transparency)

After watching the film, students were reunited and paired up. The pairing was random. The original brief was repeated in French this time and left on an overhead projector. Subjects were given 10 minutes to exchange their narratives and they were instructed to swap after five minutes. Both narratives were then recorded within ten minutes. The students were allowed to ask vocabulary but nothing about grammar. The cloze tests were then undertaken individually: cartoons, literary texts, made-up text. They had 15 minutes to do so and were warned 5 and 2 minutes before the end of the allocated time. Students were given another 15 minutes to assess the acceptability of the verbal forms found in the two literary excerpts and they were warned 5 and 2 minutes before the end of the allocated time. The next step consisted of writing an account of the excerpt they watched. The texts were word-processed and sent to the researcher as an email attachment. Native speakers had a last supplementary task to complete: they were requested to classify a list of 40 verbs used in the cloze tests. Finally, L2 learners and native

[128] The researcher in the case of years 1 and 4 and another tutor for year 2 ; this person was briefed by the researcher and attended a year 1 data collection beforehand.
[129] It was in French for the year 4 and the control groups.

speakers had to fill an adapted questionnaire about their academic and personal background. (see appendix 1)

2.4. Conclusions on the research design

This description of our research design shows that it presents several advantages over other studies devoted to past tense-aspect acquisition by advanced learners both in the selection of subjects and in the range of testing tasks.

First, the samples are large compared to the 4 subjects in Kihlstedt (1998), 18 in Howard (2002) or 39 in Salaberry (1998); only Bergström (1997) has a larger group with 75 learners (and 117 in her thesis of 1995). Moreover, although all these studies are set in a university setting, subjects' experience of French varies widely from one of these studies to the other. For example, Salaberry's (1998: 530) subjects only have an average experience of 1.74 years in high school and 1.66 semesters in college; Bergström's (1997) were at three different levels: second, fourth and sixth semesters of a degree but it seems that they started French at university as Bergström (1997: 64) mentions that some members of the first group were false beginners. Another sign that Bergström's advanced students are at a lower level than ours is the fact that they had not started to use the PQP (note 19, p.63). Therefore, we may assume that our subjects belong to a more advanced variety of IL French than in previous studies. Then, we have a control group of native French speakers (unlike Howard 2002), that provide narratives mostly in the past whilst control groups in Salaberry (2000) and Bergström (1997) mainly recounted their stories in the PRES, which makes comparisons difficult. Furthermore, most studies work only on one type of data: oral interviews (Kihlstedt 1998, Howard 2002) or written film narratives (Bergström 1997). Salaberry (2000) works on a wider range of tasks with oral film narratives, cloze tests and acceptability judgements. Although our acceptability judgements are more basic than Salaberry's speak-aloud tasks, our study benefits from information from four sources: written film narratives, oral film narratives, cloze tests and acceptability judgements. Finally, the information we have gathered extended over a period of three years, which is longer than in many other studies. Howard presents an overview of 2 years for the students who spent a year abroad and 1 year for those who did not. Kihlstedt's (1998: 63) interviews and Bergström's (1997) written narratives were spread over 2 academic years. As for Salaberry's

(2000: 114) data, it covers four different levels of instruction - second semester (beginners), third semester (intermediates), advanced third semester (intermediate-high) and an introductory literature course at the level of fifth/ sixth semester (advanced) – but the time span those levels cover is not clear.

3. Presentation of results

The analysis of data is presented in two main sections: the first is devoted to film narratives - in which lexical choices were free, therefore there was no control on *Aktionsart* and cotext - and the second to cloze tests where both *Aktionsart* and cotext were imposed by the researcher. The analysis of the film narratives is divided in sections devoted to each past tense (PRES, PS, PC, IMP and PQP). Past tenses are examined in turn for written then oral narratives. For each task, the results at the 3 learning levels (year 1, year 2 and year 4) and in the control group are provided. Partial conclusions for each year and then for each task allow to evaluate the evolution of past tense uses from one level to another or from one task to another. On the other hand, the analysis of the cloze tests starts with the control group production, which stands as a landmark to evaluate the data found at each learning level. Partial conclusions are presented at the end of the analysis devoted to each one of the groups in advance to a comparison between groups. A general conclusion on the use of past tenses in all the environments tested concludes the pratical part of the thesis.

4. Conclusion on the research methodology

The diversity in research design and data collection in studies focusing on L2 learners' acquisition of the French past tenses makes comparisons difficult. This is why we have chosen to base this research on results obtained in previous studies, especially Salaberry's (2000) who also felt it important to take into account the methodology of previous studies. A similar general research design was adopted as far as the tasks are concerned although elements of previous personal studies were integrated in the cloze tests and written narratives were

incorporated to allow the analysis the use of French past tenses by L2 learners in different contexts: oral, written, focus on grammar. This research also includes cross-sectional (comparison between subjects at the same level), and pseudolongitudinal (different students at different levels) dimensions.

As such, our research design provides scope for us to test our hypotheses. If the PAH hypothesis were to be valid at advanced levels, the most prototypical combinations (IMP + stative and PC + telic) should be found in year 1 and decrease from there to year 4 whilst non-prototypical choices should increase. As the prototypical uses are supposed to be acquired first, they should be the most readily available, therefore they should appear more frequently in spontaneous oral use where there is no time for planning or revision than in written narratives and even more so than in fill-in-the-blanks exercises where the focus is on tense choice rather than on communication. The range of verb phrases imposed in the cloze tests should also allow to evaluate *Aktionsart* – tense combinations as the tests include both prototypical and non-prototypical uses. If, as we expect, the PAH is insufficient to account for past tense acquisition at advanced levels, then our cloze-tests will provide cotextual information including features we suggest as influential on the basis of the pilot study. Finally, the presence of a control group of native speakers of French will offer a reference from which our data can be evaluated.

Chapter 2:
Analysis of the film narratives

0. Introduction

The corpora on which this chapter is based include all the written and oral film narratives at the three learning levels (year 1, year 2 and year 4) and in the control group. They will first be presented before we sketch the plan for their analysis.

0.1. Presentation of corpora

The written film narratives consist of:

- 21 essays in year 1 for a total of 4,332 words (average length: 206.29 words) and 636 verb tokens (average of 30.29 / essay);
- 17 essays in year 2 for a total of 2,691 words (average length: 158.29 words) and 353 verb tokens (average of 20.76 forms / essay);
- 22 essays[130] in year 4 for a total of 5,563 words (average length: 252.86 words) and 732 verb tokens (average of 33.27 forms / essay);
- 6 essays for the control group for a total of 1,467 words (average length: 244.5 words) and 200 verb tokens (average of 33.33 forms / essay).

There is a quantitative progression from the lowest to the highest level of IL with a drop for the middle group. Proportionally, the data for year 4 are close to the results in the control group.

The table below summarizes the use of finite tenses in this corpus. For each group, the first column shows the raw number of occurrences for a given tense and the second column gives the percentage it represents compared to the total of verb tokens at that level.

[130] S423 did not save her essay properly and it was lost.

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 4		Control group	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	636	100	353	100	732	100	200	100
PRES	34	5.35	23	6.52	25	3.42	16	8
PS	1	0.16	-	0	11	1.5	21	10.5
PC	372	58.49	242	68.56	484	66.12	119	59.5
IMP	203	31.92	72	20.4	188	25.68	28	14
PQP	11	1.73	9	2.55	12	1.64	13	6.5
FS	-	0	1	0.28	1	0.14	-	0
FP	-	0	1	0.28	2	0.27	-	0
COND	4	0.63	3[131]	0.85	1	0.14	-	0
SUBJ	2[132]	0.31	-	0	2	0.27	2	1
SUBJ P	-	0	-	0	2	0.27	1	0.5
?	9[133]	1.42	2[134]	0.57	4[135]	0.55	-	0

We can make a few remarks based on the figures above. First, the percentage of PC in year 1 is the closest to what is found in the control group; it peaks in year 2 and then goes down again in year 4. It would seem at first sight that year 1 subjects might be closer to native use than more qualified learners. As for the PS, it is used in the narratives by one bilingual student (S415) in year 4 instead of a PC. If the PC and the PS were added, there would be a progression from year 1 (58.65%) to native usage (71%) with a slight peak in year 2 (68.56% compared to 67.62% in year 4). The profile of the IMP use is more difficult to establish: native use is far lower than learners' use. There seems to be an overuse of the form especially in year 1. This is surprising in the light of acquisitional studies that support the claim that the use of the IMP is less frequent and acquired later than that of the PC; it is supposed to be underused by learners with dynamic verbs (Harley 1992, Bergström 1995, Kihlstedt 1998) and even to be exclusively combined with *avoir* and *être* (Bardovi-Harlig & Bergström 1996). As far as the PQP is concerned, there is a general underuse of that form by foreign learners (which confirms findings in Bergström 1997 and Kihlstedt 1998, for eg.), which might indicate a difficulty in establishing a clear sequence of events. The use of the PRES is much higher in the control group than in the other groups, which seems to contradict Kihlstedt's quote (1998: 89) based on Harley (1978: 73) that:

[131] Although the three occurrences have the morphology of COND, they seem to be used as tentative IMP by S201 and S217.
[132] One is homonymous to a PRES [*commence* (S111)].
[133] *A était en collision* (S104), *emmener* (S107), *habité, vu* (S108), *ouvert* (S110), *sont arrêtés, ont met* (S113), *est reconnaît* (S115), *ont était* (S119).
[134] *Est descendait* (S206), *a reveillait* (S212).
[135] *Suivi* (S411), *ouvert* (S413, S422), *pu* (S418)

... un apprenant avancé se distingue d'un apprenant moins avancé, entre autres, par le fait que celui-là utilise proportionnellement plus de formes du passé et moins de formes du présent, tout comme les locuteurs natifs examinés par Harley. De même, dans une tâche dialogique effectuée par des locuteurs natifs et des apprenants d'anglais, Long (1981)[136] signale qu'une des différences significatives est que les L[ocuteurs] N[atifs] parlent plus au passé que les L[ocuteurs] A[pprenants], qui s'en tiennent plus au présent.

Let us now present the oral film narratives that are made of:

- 21 recordings in year 1 for a total of 859 verb tokens (average of 40.9 forms / recording);
- 16 recordings[137] in year 2 for a total of 686 verb tokens (average of 42.875 forms / recording);
- 22 recordings[138] in year 4 for a total of 1,254 verb tokens (average of 57 forms / recording);
- 6 recordings for the control group for a total of 545 verb tokens (average of 90.83 forms / recording);

Unlike the written narratives, the oral narratives display a steady quantitative progression from year 1 to native usage. As in the previous section, the first column for each group shows absolute numbers and the second percentages.

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 4		Control group	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
	859	100	686	100	1254	100	545	100
PRES	225	26.19	64	9.33	295	23.52	181	33.21
PS	5	0.58	-	0	-	0	-	0
PC	484	56.34	436	63.56	675	53.83	260	47.71
IMP	131	15.25	159	23.18	255	20.33	65	11.93
PQP	3	0.35	15	2.19	7	0.56	30	5.05
FS	-	0	-	0	2	0.16	1	0.18
FP	2	0.23	5	0.73	5	0.4	-	0
COND	1	0.12	-	0	5	0.4	5	0.92
CP	-	0	1	0.15	-	0	1	0.18
SUBJ	1	0.12	2[139]	0.29	6	0.48	2	0.92
IMPER	1	0.12	-	0	2	0.16	-	0
?	6[140]	0.7	4[141]	0.58	2[142]	0.16	-	0

[136] Long, M. (1981) 'Input, interaction and second language acquisition', in Winitz, H. (ed.) *Native Language and Foreign Language Acquisition*. New York : Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 379 : 259-278.
[137] S203's recording had to be discarded as it was barely audible.
[138] S404's tape proved faulty.
[139] Both homophoneous to PRES.
[140] *Est fermE* (S102), *se patins, trouvE* (S108), *est travaille* (S110), *ouvert* (S111), *mettre* (S112).
[141] *Est arrêtE* (S205), *ascendre, ouvert* (S212), *se joindre*(S217).

A striking feature of the oral narratives is that native speakers seem to use past tenses less than foreign learners and to narrate stories in the PRES as was mentioned earlier. This tendency is also found in the narratives provided by the two English-French bilingual 4th year students: S402 used 94 PRES out of 128 verb tokens (73.44%) and S415 used 62 PRES out of 81 verb tokens (76.54%). This too seems to contradict Kihlstedt but the tendency we have noted is also found in Salaberry's (2000: 135ff) film narratives, where both native and near native speakers used present instead of past tenses. It should be attributed according to him to « normal tendencies found in narratives » (p.137). Hasbún (1995, in Salaberry 2000: 119) also mentions that fact and makes the subjects start their narratives with *Había una vez...* (Once upon a time...) to prevent « advanced learners and native speakers of Spanish from shifting to the historical present ».

Let us now try to compare our data with other acquisitional studies. In Kihlstedt (1998: 91), the respective percentages of the three morphological past forms found in foreign learners' and native speakers' oral productions (PC, IMP, PQP) are the following:

	Total L[ocuteurs] N[atifs]	%	Total L[ocuteurs] A[pprenants]	%
IMP	198	46%	406	53%
PC	219	51%	361	46%
PQP	16	4%	10	1%
Total	433	100%	777	100%

If we convert our results in the same format, we have:

	Year 1	%	Year 2	%	Year 4	%	Control group	%
IMP	131	21.23	159	26.07	255	27.21	65	18.31
PC	483	78.28	436	71.48	675	72.04	260	73.24
PQP	3	0.49	15	2.46	7	0.75	30	8.45
Total	617	100	610	100	937	100	355	100

Our results differ widely from Kihlstedt's for several reasons: there are only four informants in her LN and LA groups and she admits that there are *« des variations individuelles considérables »* (p.92). Moreover, she mentions that her results do not correspond to previous studies (Bergström 1995, Harley 1978, Kaplan 1987, Schlyter 1990, 1996) that conclude that

[142] *Ont X* (S401), *réouvert* (S410).

there is a later appearance and a lower frequency of the IMP. Finally, Kihlstedt's data come from a different type of discourse: interviews that require less of a linear progression than film retell task; moreover, there might have been some scaffolding of utterances on the interviewer's speech.

0.2. Organization of the chapter

This first part of our data analysis is organized in five sections corresponding to five tenses: PRES, PS, PC, IMP and PQP: our general approach will therefore be form-based, although a concept-based approach will be used within that general framework to evaluate the temporal functions filled by verbal morphology and other means within our corpora.

Although studies based on the PAH tend to focus on the opposition between imperfect and preterite, illustrated in French by the IMP on the one hand and the PC on the other hand, it was decided to extend the study to the PS, PRES and PQP for various reasons. First and generally speaking, there has been a diversification of tenses use for narration in French that has been discussed in Judge (1998). She focuses on written narration and notes that besides the traditional approach of Benveniste (1959) for whom written narration is articulated around the PS and oral narration around the PC, two more systems seem to exist at the moment: one based on the so-called narrative PRES and another without any « *temps-pivot* » that she calls *système multifocal.* It would therefore be interesting to see what tenses are used in learners' production. Then, there are more specific reasons to include the PS, PRES and PQP. We have already mentioned in the first part of this thesis the discussion on the vitality of the PS in Contemporary French that has had repercussions on second language teaching (see Gougenheim et al. 1964). From an acquisitional point of view, the PRES has been branded either as a default form before the acquisition of actual past tenses (eg. Andersen 1991) or a sign of native mastery of narration (Bergström 1997 and Salaberry 2000 both mention that the native speakers of their control group generally recount a story in the PRES). It is therefore worth to evaluate the use of PRES (base form or native form ?) in our corpora. As for the PQP, it is considered as a very late acquisitional feature (Bergström's advanced learners do not use it) so its presence or absence may help rate the degree of advancement of our subjects and test late acquisitional hypotheses such as Bardovi-Harlig's (1994) that will be presented in the relevant section.

We begin our presentation of results with the PRES, which is not morphologically a past tense before proceding to the PS and the PC that have often been presented to foreign learners as equivalents. Discussion of the IMP follows that of the PC for both theoretical and practical reasons: we showed in the first part that the IMP was a semantically more complex tense and it is also supposed to appear after the PC in learners' IL (see Kaplan 1987). We conclude with the PQP, which combines features of the PC (perfect form) and of the IMP (imperfective aspect) and which is deemed rare in other studies. For each of the tenses selected, we analyze their use first in the written and then in the oral narratives. For each task, the results are examined group by group to obtain intermediary conclusions. The chapter closes with a comparison of tenses use in the written and the oral media.

1. Présent

1.1. Written narratives

Although subjects had been repeatedly instructed - before and after the viewing of the film clips (see research methodology) - to tell their film narratives in the past, a number of verbs in the PRES are found at each level. We will need to assess what those forms are. They may be signs of IL: default forms for past tenses that have not yet emerged, a feature that Andersen's (1991) first level of acquisition takes into account and that was shown to be an unmarked form to refer to past in various studies (see Bartning 1997: 24 for a list). They may also be signs of native-like mastery and examples of narrative PRES that Judge (1998: 217) defines as:

> ...un présent fictif en ce sens qu'il s'agit de décrire les événements comme s'ils se déroulaient sous les yeux de l'écrivain.

An aim of this chapter will thus be to evaluate if an evolution in use from default form to stylistic device appears between the lowest and the highest levels of acquisition. Also, a strand of form-based approaches to tense-aspect development (that was briefly presented in the introduction) works on discourse structure and claims that foreign learners tend to acquire past tenses first in the foreground whilst base forms (such as the PRES) remain in the background (Véronique 1987; Bardovi-Harlig 1999 also mentions studies of Russian and Japanese learners of English that support that claim). It would therefore be interesting to check if our data corroborate the findings of those studies.

1.1.1. Year 1

We first provide a description of the PRES found in this corpus before commenting on those uses and proposing intermediary conclusions.

a. Description

The year 1 corpus contains 34 verb tokens in the PRES (5.35% of all conjugated verbs) that appear in the table below.

avoir	1	pouvoir	1	Etre arrêté	1
Avoir envie de	1	reconnaître	1	Etre fini	1
Avoir faim	1	réveiller	1	Etre mis	1
Avoir l'impression	1	savoir	1		
Y avoir	4	Se passer	1		
*[143]Commencer de	1	Se trouver	1		
conduire	1	servir	1		
connaître	1	surveiller	1		
C'est	1	tirer	1		
être	5	travailler	1		
Etre en train de	1	vendre	1		
penser	1	vouloir	1		

From a morphological point of view, only two forms present a problem as the subject-verb agreement is lacking: *ils ne le **tire** !* (S110) and *où **se trouve** tous les jeux pour les enfants.* (S111). This tendency to coupling a plural subject with a base form in the 3rd person singular is found in a series of studies (See Bartning 1997: 23).

It seems that the instances of passive PRES may be assimilated to a PC because of their compound morphology:

(1) L'homme avec qui la femme a était en collision a décidé de faire semblant que c'était lui qui avait volé le pain. Il **est** donc **arrêté**[144]. (S104) [See also **est mis** (S112), **est finit** (S120)] [145]

b. Uses

First, it clearly appears that the PRES is not used as a narrative tense in this set of data. PRES forms are isolated with the only exception of (1) and (2) that can hardly qualify as a narrative sequence:

(2) Il y a eu trois hommes qui ont suivu le premier homme avec les pistoles mais donc ils l'ont connu et ils ne le **tire** ! Ils **ont l'envie de** manger !! (S110)

(3) Je ne **sais** pas comment, mais l'homme **est** maintenant libre. (S105)

Isolated instances of the PRES nonetheless seem to express the present result of the recounted past situation or a intermediate conclusion:

[143] The * indicates a verb phrase that does not exist in French or an existing French verb used in a idiosyncratic way, in which case the intended meaning – as supported by the extralinguistic visual support – is indicated after an =.

[144] In the examples (kept as written), the form(s) under discussion is in bold, influencial elements of the cotext are indicated in bold italics.

[145] Our corpora contain numerous examples of most points we raise. To avoid lengthening the analysis, we give significant examples for each phenomenon and refer in square brackets to similar examples that can be retrieved in the appendices thanks to the reference.

(4) Chaplin et la femme ont couru et échappe le policier et l'histoire **est finit**. (S120)
(5) Je ne sais pas comment, mais l'homme **est** maintenant libre. (S105)

Despite the general past context, the PRES appears however in two relevant positions: it is used to express general truths or situations that are true irrespectively of the moment of reference:

(6) Il a continué de se roullé près de la signe ou **c'est** très dangerous. (S108) [**vendent** (S102), **il y a** (S108, S111), **se trouve** (S111), **surveille** (S116), **sont** (S121)]

Also, the PRES is logically used in a past sequence to insert personal comments expressed in the first person that describe the state of mind of the narrator at the moment of telling the story:

(7) Elle regardait les choses dans le magasin et je **pense** qu'elle n'avait pas beaucoup d'argent. (S105) [**sais** (S105), **ai l'impression** (S108)]

However, in the majority, the instances of the PRES act as a default form for past tenses, especially in complex sentences. This is first the case with subordination; the PRES stands for an IMP (8), a PQP (9) or a COND in its value of « future of the past » (10):

(8) ***Il y avait*** un homme qui **conduit** un camion du pain. (S105) [**sont** (S110, **peut** (S111)]
(9) Un policier ***trouvait*** les deux personnes et il ne connaît pas qu'est qui **se passe**. (S105) [**travaillent** (S116)]
(10) L'homme ***a dit*** que il la **reveille** avant la magasin ouvert. (S110)

Then, the PRES occurs in coordinated sentences instead of an IMP:

(11) La femme a pris un pain et **est en train d'échapper** quand elle s'est tombée. (S105) [**est, ont l'envie, il y a** (S110), **il y a** (twice in S119)]
(12) La femme s'est levée et elle a trouve que le magasin était ouvert parce qu'**il y a** des personnes au rez-de-chaussée. (S119)

The PRES is less frequent instead of a PC:

(13) Au début d'histoire, l'agent de sécurité **a** un accident et le magasin ont du trouve un autre agent de sécurité. (S106) [**sert, tire** (S110), **commence, reconnaît** (S111), **veut** (S114), **échappe** (S120)]

This predilection for the PRES instead of an IMP may be used to support acquisitional claims such as the fact that IMP is acquired after the PC (Kaplan 1987) and that a default form, such as the PRES, appears in the IL where the native use would require an IMP. Bartning's (1997: 27) overview of FFL research confirms that « *l'emploi du présent et du passé composé précède*

l'emploi de l'imparfait ». It may also support the claim that verbal aspect is marked before time as the imperfectivity found in both the IMP and the PRES is indicated rather than the past reference. The IMP in (8) is an instance of *avoir* that has been shown as prototypical of the IMP (Kihlstedt 1998, Howard 2002), which may indicate it is used as a chunk. However, an example like (9) contradicts those hypotheses as the IMP and the PRES are used simultaneously: this example also goes against the Primacy of Aspect Hypothesis (PAH) as the verb in the IMP is telic, the category that is supposed the least compatible with that tense.

c. Conclusion on the use of the PRES in the year 1 written narratives

From the year 1 written narratives, the following tendencies appear. First, narrative PRES is not a device used to recount past events in this corpus. Isolated instances of the PRES express personal comments or general truths but as a whole, this tense seems to be widely used in conjunction with past tenses as a base form, as expected in the PAH but not in the way planned by that hypothesis (i.e. before the emergence of any past form). Indeed, whilst IMP is already emergent at that level, it is sometimes replaced by a PRES for forms such as the auxiliaries that are the first acquired if the PAH is to be believed. It would seem therefore that there is some variation in the IL, some « transitional period, often very lengthy, of variability, competition among structures and divergence within the speech community » (Regan 1996: 177). Our results so far are not conclusive in that respect and we need to explore further the research questions in the other corpora.

1.1.2. Year 2

a. Description

There are 23 occurrences of the PRES (6.52% of all conjugated verbs) in the year 2 corpus.

aider	1	être	4	Etre autorisé	1
avoir	2	finir	1	Etre considéré	1
Avoir la faim	1	penser	1	Etre impliqué	1
commencer	2	reconnaître	1		
démontrer	1	sauter	1		
dire	2	S'ouvrir	1		
C'est	1	voir	1		

Let us start here with some morphological remarks: problems occurs in S206's narrative with a lack of past participle agreement in a passive form: *sont autorisé* (S206) and in an hybrid form mixing the root of the plural with the ending of the singular: *reconnaisse.* As in year 1, a couple of passive PRES that present a compound morphology may be tentative PC:

(14) Cependant, la femme était trouvée par la police et l'homme **est considéré** innocent. (S203) [**sont autorisé** (S206), **est impliqué** (S216)]

b. Uses

In the year 1 corpus, there was no extensive use of narrative present throughout a story. The narrative written by S206 who produces almost a third of the PRES in year 2 (7 out of 23) seems to be mainly in the narrative PRES, although it is interspersed with two sentences in the PC, which shows an imperfect mastery of this stylistic device:

(15) L'histoire **commence** avec Charlie Chaplin et une femme dans un département avec plusieurs étages. Ils **commencent** à jouaient avec les jouets, et puis Charlie Chaplin ***a fait*** patiner à roulettes, il ***a fait*** les cercles et les tournes. Il **aide** la femme en lit, et il **dit** qu'il va se lever quand le département **s'ouvre** dans le matin. Il est descendait et les patrons l'ont vu. L'un des patrons lui **reconnaisse** du travail, donc lui et la femme **sont autorisé** à s'enfuir. (S206)

In this narrative, the PRES replaces the PC, except in the case of *s'ouvre* that would be in the FS in French; this is clearly an interference of the mother tongue as English has '*when* + PRES'. One may thus argue that this use of the PRES to narrate a past event show a partial understanding of the stylistic use of historic present.

Semantically speaking, as in year 1, the PRES expresses general truths or situations that are true irrespectively of the moment of reference:

(16) Il ***a expliqué*** qu'ils n'**ont** pas des vrai voleurs. (S209)
(17) Tout **est** bien qui **finit** bien ! (S209)

The PRES is used less frequently to insert personal comments than it was the case in year 1; indeed, there is only one occurrence:

(18) Vers la fin de l'histoire, nous **voyons** Charlie et la jeune femme avec quelques autres personnes à l'interieur d'un fourgan de police. (S216)

The PRES also appears in the metadiscourse that comments on the genre rather than on the story as in the following two examples:

(19) L'histoire **est** une filme de Laurel et Hardy. (S201) [Les subtitres **disent** .... (S201)]

Syntactically speaking, the PRES is found as a default form in complex sentences; for the IMP, this substitution appears only with stative verbs such as *avoir, être, avoir (la) faim*:

(20) L'homme **a** une certaine attraction à la femme et il avait commis un crime à joindre la femme en prison. Les deux gens **sont** coupable des crimes différents. (S203) [**est, ont** (S209), **a la faim** (S214)]

This combination seems to contradict the PAH that suggests that the IMP emerges first with that type of verbs. On the other hand, the PRES is also used to replace a PC for these auxiliaries, which may support the PAH as the combination PC + auxiliary is supposed to belong to an advanced variety of IL:

(21) Cependant, la femme ***était trouvée*** par la police et l'homme **est considéré** innocent. (S203)
(22) Elle ***a vu*** le pain dans la fenetre et elle **a la faim**. (S214)

c. Conclusion on the use of the PRES in the year 2 film narratives

There are many similarities between the IL use of PRES in years 1 and 2. Some examples may support the PAH by avoiding the association of the PC with the auxiliaries[146]. The main difference seems to be the apparent emergence of narrative present in year 2, a tendency that needs to be confirmed in year 4, if we want to argue that (15) is not just an idiosyncratic use.

1.1.3. Year 4

a. Description

The year 4 corpus contains 25 occurrences of the PRES, which corresponds to 3.42% of all conjugated verbs.

aller	1	partir	2	Etre arrêté	2
décider	1	promettre	1	Etre découvert	1
dire	1	réclamer	1	Etre enlevé	1
essayer	1	Se retrouver	1	Etre mis	2
être	1	Se souvenir	1	Etre ouvert	1
garder	1	travailler	1		
laisser	1	trouver	1		
offrir	1	vouloir	2		

[146] In year 1, there was already such an example : La femme l'a vu et elle **est** tres effraye pour lui. (S110) but one occurrence did not seem convincing enough.

At this most advanced level of acquisition, morphology is not a problem except for *cours* (S402) that presents a first or second person ending when the subject is a third person. As at lower levels, there are occurrences of passive PRES (*est arrêté, est mis, est mise*, all produced by S402 and *est arrêté*, by S411) but they now seem to be genuine PRES and not tentative PC.

b. Uses

The main difference with the two lower levels is that a lengthy narration in coherent and sustained narrative PRES is offered by S402, a bilingual student[147], that provides 14 of all the PRES (58.33%):

(23) Les deux **partent** à la recherche du policier, pour lui expliquer ce qui ***c'est*** vraiment ***passé***. Le policier **laisse** Charlie partir et va arrêter la fille. Charlie Chaplin qui **veut** se retrouver avec la fille, **décide** d'aller manger dans un restaurant sans payer. Il **est** donc **arrêté** de nouveau par un policier et **mis** dans le camion avec les autres malfaiteurs de la ville. La fille **est** aussi **mise** dans le même camion que Charlie, où il lui **offre** sa place. La fille **se souvient de** lui. Elle **essaie** ensuite de s'enfuire et elle et Charlie et le policier **se retrouve** dans la rue. La fille **part** en courrant suivit de Charlie Chaplin. (S402)

It seems therefore that narrating in the PRES, contrarily to Kihlstedt's claim (1998: 148ff) but in agreement with Salaberry's (2000: 119) suggestion, is the natural tendency of an advanced learner. This will need to be confirmed by native speakers' production.

Semantically speaking, as in earlier sections, the PRES is used to express general truths:

(24) Finalement, il a vu qu'ils ne **sont** pas des cambrioleurs, mais plutôt d'anciens collègues qui avaient faim. (S403) [**garde** (S422)]

Another acceptable isolated instance of the PRES is direct speech as in (22):

(25) L'homme ***a dit*** à la femme « vous **voulez** asseoir ? » Elle **disait** oui. (S407)

(26) is puzzling because the PRES is used after the PC whilst our knowledge of the world tells us that that situation in the PRES should be anterior to the one in the PC: the promise needs to be made to the woman before she falls asleep. In this context, a PQP would have been more

[147] S415, the other bilingual student, offers a narrative that is mainly in the PS.

relevant but that form is deemed lately acquired (see for eg. Kihlstedt 1998). So in instances like this, there is a reliance of implicit chronology (Bardovi-Harlig 1999):

(26) Ils sont allés au cinquième étage et la femme ***s'est endormie*** dans un des lits sur un manteau blanc. Charlie lui **promet** de lui réveiller le matin avant que le magasin n'ouvert. (S413)

Although not target-like, (26) shows signs of advanced IL as the events are not recounted in the chronological order that characterizes early narratives (Bardovi-Harlig 1994); however the morphological means to express reverse order are not yet available.

The syntax of (27) places a PRES between two verbs in the PC. While the first PC *a réouvert* could be taken as a resultative, i.e. a PC with a present perfect meaning, that would make the PRES possible, returning to the past in the next sentence makes the sequence non-native:

(27) Trois heures plus tard et le magasin ***a réouvert***. Une femme **trouve** Chaplin dans une pile de vêtements. Il ***a essayé*** de fuir, mais les policiers l'arrêtaient. (S422)

c. Conclusion on the use of the PRES in the year 4 written narratives

Isolated sentences in the PRES are less common than at the lower levels. There is more consistency in tense use: seven subjects[148] only use the PC and the IMP and one[149] also uses the PQP. This may indicate a greater mastery of past tenses that allows the subject to adhere to the brief of using past tenses. On the other hand, the two bilingual subjects show different tendencies, maybe close to native use: one using the traditional PS (S415) whilst the other relies on narrative PRES (S402). As near-native[150] speakers, S402 and S415 may be better aware of native stylistic conventions for storytelling that Judge (1998: 217-8) mentions:

> ... c'est ce présent narratif qui semble prendre la relève du passé simple, et non le passé composé, temps-pivot du système du discours [...]

Unlike at previous levels, the use of tenses in complex sentences does not appear problematic. We need to check now if those tendencies are reflected in native usage.

[148] S406, S408, S409, S410, S414, S417, S419.
[149] S412.
[150] For a definition of near-native speakers, see Coppieters (1987) and Bartning (1997).

1.1.4. Control group

a. Description

The proportion of PRES in the control group is higher than in any learners' group (8 %) with 16 occurrences detailed below.

arriver	1	partir	1	Etre emmené	2
boire	2	redonner	1	Etre fermé	1
découvrir	1	Se réveiller	2	Etre surpris	1
devenir	1	Se rendre compte	1		
embarquer	1	Se souvenir	1		
C'est	1				

As was the case in learners's corpora, there is a proportion of passive PRES forms. It is not likely that they have been mistakenly used instead of PC and it seems that they are used to indicate a present consequence of the past events that are recounted. Indeed, three of those passives (2 in F3, 1 in F6) appear as a paragraph conclusion.

(28) La femme **est emmenée** au poste. (F3) [Charlot **est emmené** (F3)]

b. Uses

As was the case in S402's narrative, some native speakers tend to slip back into the PRES in the current of storytelling, when the influence of the initial instructions has faded away. Both F2 and F3 end their story in the PRES:

(29) Ils **boivent** un coup ensemble et Charlot **boit** beaucoup de rhum, il **devient** ivre...Le lendemain matin, la fille **se réveille** et **se rend compte** qu'il est 9h30 et **part** du magasin. Un client **découvre** Charlot endormi dans du linge, la police **arrive** et **embarque** Charlot. (F2)

The last section of F3's story mixes the IMP with the PRES whilst the PC would have been expected:

(30) Ils **se réveillent** petit a petit, Charlot en premier. Le policier ***commençait*** a se réveiller alors Charlot lui **redonne** un coup sur la tête avec la matraque du policier. (F3)

It may be that the IMP is reintroduced as the uniform use of the PRES would blur the aspectual oppositions (see Judge 2002 for the necessity of contrast).

In the following sentences, *être* is in the PRES and followed by an attribute, which results in stative situations without any limits, compatible with the IMP. However in the case of (29), the

situation in the PRES is put in a succession, after having left the woman, as indicated by *l'ayant quitté*. This temporal succession would appear strange with the imperfective aspect of the IMP; the PRES being aspectually unmarked avoids the strangeness:

(31) Cependant, Charlot, qui avait du remarquer sa présence dans la rue dans la journée, a invité, le soir venu, une jeune mandiante affamée a venir manger la nourriture du grand magasin en cachette, alors que celui-ci **est fermé** (F6)

(32) L'ayant quittée, Charlot **est** ensuite **surpris** de voir a quelques rayons plus bas, que l'un de ses collegues accompagne de deux amis, est également venu faire la meme chose que lui. (F6)

Finally, another stylistic feature found in native speakers' production is the PRES used in reported speech as a variant of the IMP:

(33) Charlot lui ***a donne*** sa place et lui ***a demande*** si elle **se souvient** de lui. (F5)

c. Conclusion on the use of the PRES in the control group written narratives

The use of the PRES is still limited in the control group (unlike in Salaberry 2000) with only one subject (F2) finishing his story in that tense. It seems therefore that the brief that asked the subjects to tell the story in the past has been well followed, in contrast to Bergström's (1997: 63, note 21) study where *« Six des douze locuteurs natifs ont employé le présent pour raconter l'histoire du film »*. This recourse to the PRES may be a natural tendency and it is likely that this will be more marked in the oral narratives where there is less scope for revision of spontaneous production.

1.1.5. Conclusion on the PRES in the written narratives

From the data above, it seems that the role of the PRES evolves throughout the different levels of acquisition and in native use. If the PRES is used as a default form for past forms that are not yet fully acquired at lower levels, it is a natural means of storytelling in (near) native French. Moreover, it is used as a stylistic device at higher levels of acquisition. The use of non-past forms for the background to the story as postulated by Bardovi-Harlig (1999), is only partially confirmed; it is confirmed in our corpus if we take background as elements of the narrative that do not belong to the story line, such as for example, personal comments.

The next section studies the use of PRES in oral narratives and tries to identify similarities and discrepancies with the analysis above.

1.2. Oral narratives

On the basis of the results found in other studies focusing on oral narratives (Hasbún 1995, Salaberry 2000), we expect to find a higher proportion of PRES in our oral corpora than in the written narratives.

1.2.1. Year 1

a. Description

This corpus contains 225 verb tokens in the PRES, which represents 26.19% of all verbs. This percentage is much higher than in the written narratives where the PRES only accounted for 5.35%.

aider	1	mettre	1	Etre amené	1
aller	4	penser	3	Etre arrêté	1
amener	1	porter	9	Etre fermé	3
arrêter	1	pouvoir	6	Etre laissé	1
Il y a	27	prendre	1	Etre ouvert	3
avoir	7	reconnaître	2	Etre trouvé	1
Avoir besoin de	1	regarder	2		
Avoir envie de	2	rentrer	2		
Avoir faim	3	retourner	1		
boire	5	savoir	3		
commander	1	S'agir	1		
commencer	2	S'enfuir	1		
connaître	3	Se casser	1		
croire	4	Se coucher	2		
devoir	4	*[151] se départer = partir	1		
dire	9	Se passer	1		
donner	1	* (se) prendre place	1		
dormir	6	Se réveiller	3		
entrer	1	Se rêver	1		
essayer	6	servir	1		
C'est	22	suivre	2		
être	25	* tirer	2		
expliquer	1	tomber	1		
faire	2	travailler	6		
garder	4	trouver	2		
habiter	1	vendre	1		
jouer	2	venir	2		
laisser	1	voir	5		
manger	3				

[151] * indicates a nonnative form.

Morphology is generally not problematic with a couple of invented forms: ***se prend place*** (S104) and ***se départ*** (S111). The largest source of non-native forms comes from the subject-verb agreement, especially a singular verb with a plural subject [***des hommes... qui suit*** (S107), ***l'homme et la femme est*** *près du lit* (S110), ***les trois hommes reconnait*** (S110)], which is a tendency Bartning (1997) notes even for advanced learners. This corpus contains a couple of other IL agreements such as ***Ils avons faim*** (S107) where the confusion may be attributed to the phonetically similar endings of the first and the third persons plural and ***le magasin est ouverte*** (S108), that may be taken as a phonetic mistake as English learners of French tend to pronounce final consonants. As was the case in the written corpora, the PRES is used as a default form for other more complex tenses. In the examples below, the passive PRES is probably meant as a PC, as shown by the cotext:

(34) Il a # quand le grande surface **est fermE** il ***a rencontré*** sa femme euh devant le porte du grande surface. (S102)[152]

(35) Il - il a trouvé un homme dans le magasin euh et ils ont – ils ont euh # boivent de l'alcool euh et puis le: matin prochain+ euh la femme euh - la femme elle ***s'est réveillE*** et puis le magasin **est ouvert** st euh et c'est tout que j'ai noté. (S114)

b. Uses

If we focus now on the larger discourse level, we notice that, in this corpus, some extensive chunks of the narratives are in the PRES. S121 tells most of her first narrative in the PRES until some problems with the tape occur, she then resumes her story in the past. S107's first narrative is almost exclusively in the PRES with the PC in a perfect meaning (*a réouvert*), an IMP to express a past habit (*travaillaient*) and a PC instead of a passive PRES (*a réouvert)*:

(36) **Il y a** deux hommes dans un grand magasin de: départements et on **voit** un homme qui **travaille** dans un café qui **sert** un morceau de gâteau à un autre homme. Et après on **voit** un homme et une femme dans le: département des chaussures et l'homme **essaie** des pa... / patins à roulettes et il **essaie** de marcher partout mais **il y a** beaucoup de dangeRs dans le département et la femme **est** vraiment / effrayée et elle **pense** qu'il **va** se faire du mal. Et: après l'homme et la femme **rentrent** dans le département des lits et: la femme **essaie** un lit et: elle le **trouve** vraiment confortable et: elle **dort**. Et: l'homme **dit** qu'il **va** la réveiller avant le magasin ***a réouvert*** le lendemain. Pendant qu'elle **dort il y a** des hommes avec des revolvers qui **rentrent** et qui **suit** le premier homme et **essaie(nt)** de le tirer mais en fait ils le **tirent** pas et: / il euh **il y a** des boîtes d'alcool qui **se cassent**. Mais en fait **il y a** un

[152] The oral narratives were transcribed according to the conventions laid down in appendix 5.

autre homme qui - qui ***est entré*** qui **dit** qu'il **reconnaît** le premier homme parce qu'ils ***travaillaient*** ensemble dans une usine et il **explique** aux deux autres+ hommes qu'ils ne **sont** pas des cambrioleurs mais qu'ils - qu'ils **avons faim** - faim . Et après la femme **se réveille** le magasin ***a réouvert***. Ca, **c'est** aujourd'hui et: on **découvert** le premier homme dans les linges près de la caisse.

Some narratives start in the PRES (S104, S121) and then, the narrator seems to remember that they are supposed to tell the story in the past and they switch back to past tenses. The switch to the PRES is sometimes apparently random (S110) but it seems that, at times, the narrator becomes aware of their lack of attention to tense use and goes back to the past, as in this example where the verb is repeated in the past:

(37) [...] ils boivent le vin et ils mangent les gâteaux. Et après avoir mangé les gâteaux # tous les gâteaux ils viennent au quatrième étage où il y a les jeux pour les enfants. Et ils **portent** les # ils **portaient** les patins à roulettes et il a / l'homme disait qu'il peut le faire sans - sans voyant. (S111)

On the other hand, some stories end in the PRES (S106, S108, S111), which may suggest that the narrators are absorbed by their story-telling and forget the initial instructions, so it is, as expected, a good communication task.

Other narratives contain chunks in the PRES inserted within a sequence in the past. The switch may occur after a PRES of general truth, as in the following extract:

(38) Ils ont allé / # ils sont allés au quatrième étage et **c'est** l'étage des jeux de - d'enfants. Ils: **jouent** avec les patins à roulettes et l'homme **essaie** // d'*impresser la femme par le faire aveugle mais: la femme **dort** dans le cinquième étage et: Chap... # l'homme fait – **fait** un tour de magasin mais il **trouve** des voleurs mais: un # l'un des voleurs reconnU l'homme et ils but l'alcool ensemble.

The first PRES, *c'est*, refers to an information that is always true and that may be found in a past sequence but it induces the use of PRES for situations that describe the rest of the story. Finally, conclusive sentences such as *et c'est tout* (S104) or *c'est le fin de l'histoire* (S121) are also found in the PRES.

As was already mentioned for the written corpora, some isolated PRES in the first person singular convey comments from the narrator and, as such, do not belong to the narrative sequence:

(39) Et il porte je **pense** un chapeau noir / sur la tête. (S103) [**sais** (S103, S104, S113), **crois** (twice in S104, S114), **suis sûre** (S110)]

Similarly external comments that do not belong to the story line are expressed in the PRES; they can relate to the exercise itself as in (40) and (41) or mention the subject's linguistic hesitations as in (42):

(40) Euh je **commence** avec / l'histoire que j'ai entendU (S105)
(41) c'est à cause # **c'est** un film de Charlie Chaplin donc ils ont choisi / Charlie Chaplin (S106)
(42) les *rollerskates je ne **sais** pas (LAUGH) comment **dit**-on en anglais (S103)

As found before, general truths are also conveyed in the PRES:

(43) # il a dit qu'ils ne **sont** pas des voleurs / mais / qu'ils ont faim. (S121)
(44) ils allaient au quatrième étage où **il y a** des choses pour les enfants comme les peluches (S108)
(45) elle a allé à le/ part+ du magasin qui **vend** des # les *patins de roulettes (S117)

The recounting of direct speech is a last use of isolated PRES:

(46) cet homme ***a dit***: « Oh non nous ne **sommes** pas des voleurs nous - nous **avons** seulement **faim** ».(S104)
(47) l'homme avec le chapeau noir euh ***a dit*** euh « Non je # elle n'a pas st # elle ne **volait** pas le pain c'est - **c'est** moi ». (S113)
(48) Chaplin euh **dit** que « **c'est** moi qui ***a volé*** le pain » (S120) [***a dit*** ... **c'est** (S120)]

It must be noted that the feature only emerged in year 4 as far as the written narratives were concerned and a hybrid form of direct (use of PRES) and indirect (use of *que*) speech characteristics prevailed at the lower levels.

As in the written narratives, the sequence of tenses is not well mastered: the PRES replaces frequently IMP tokens. This shows in descriptions where the stative verbs are put in the PRES:

(49) Alors // hier il y a une femme # il y avait une femme dans la rue et: elle **porte** un # une robe noire et: elle **regarde** dans la fenêtre d'une pâtisserie st avec beaucoup de pains de gâteaux par exemple. (S103) [**sont fermées** (S102), **porte** (S103, S113), regardent, jouent (S104), **peut** (S105, S111, S117), **porte** (S108), **habite** (S108), **a** (S108, S113), **il y a** (S110), **connaît** (S111, S120), **laisse** (S111), **garde** (S116), **ont besoin** (S116), **c'est** (S120)]

To a lesser extent, the PRES also replaces the PC, especially in the case of passive forms that may be morphologically too complex to process:

(50) quand le grande surface **est fermE** il a rencontré sa femme euh devant le porte du grande surface. (S102) [quand le magasin / **est fermé** (S118)]
(51) il a été dans unE grand magasin (SNIFF) mais_il **a** un accident avec l'agent de sécurité. (S112) [**se réveille** (S110)]

In the following example, the use of the second PRES shows either an inability to order a temporal sequence or the misunderstanding of the extralinguistic context as Chaplin and one of the robbers used to be colleagues but are not anymore:

(52) Les trois hommes euh **reconnaît** le premier homme parce que euh ils **travaillent** ensemble dans une usine. (S107)

c. Conclusion on the use of the PRES in the year 1 oral narratives

To summarize our findings for this corpus, the proportion of PRES is high: some appear in narrative sequences, others in isolation and still others as default forms. Subjects tend to respect the original brief and to resume their narrations in the past when they become aware that they are neglecting it. This neglect may be attributed to several factors: (1) less attention to form (or less monitoring in Krashen's words) in oral use and therefore use of the most basic forms or on the other hand, (2) less inhibition (because the subjects recorded themselves) that leads to more native-like practice.

1.2.2. Year 2

a. Description

The proportion of PRES in this corpus is restricted to 64 verb tokens and corresponds to only 9.33% of all conjugated verbs, which is much lower than in year 1.

Apparaître	1	essayer	3	Etre appelé	1
arrêter	3	C'est	6	Etre arrêté	3
Il y a	5	être	2	Etre envoyé	1
avoir	4	Faire	2	Etre ouvert	2
Avoir faim	2	imaginer	1	Etre trouvé	1
commencer	1	jouer	1		
connaître	2	penser	2		
crier	1	réveiller	1		
croire	1	savoir	3		
demander	1	S'en aller	1		
descendre	1	Se retrouver	1		

devoir	1	suivre	1		
dire	3	travailler	3		
dormir	2	vouloir	1		

A single morphological problem appears in the subject-verb agreement [*les voleurs* ***connaît*** (S205)]. A series of forms is in the passive: ***est ouvert, est trouvé, est appelE*** (S204), ***est arrêté*** (twice in S205).

b. Uses

This low level of use comes from the fact that there are no extensive chunks in the PRES: no more than 4 in a sequence and in (53), three of the PRES are passive and may be taken as PC.

(53) Le – le magasin **est ouvert+** et: à la fin du film # à la fin de l'histoire euh Chaplin **est trouvé** euh sous quelques vêtements par un des femmes – une des femmes qui **travaillent** dans le magasin. Euh après ça les – la police **est appelE** / et: Chaplin+ a été arrêté. Et voilà la fin de l'histoire.(S204)

The PRES is found at the end of the narratives:

(54) Puis euh dans - dans la camionnette de police euh la la femme essayait euh de - de s'échapper et euh Charlie le **suit** euh/ y' **s'retrouve** par terre euh / et il **s'en va**. Tada... (S208)

(55) Et je crois que **c'est** tout. (S215) [et **c'est** tout (S215)]

More specifically, the PRES seems to be used to express the consequences of an event, that may be seen as still relevant at the moment of speech:

(56) L'homme réponde / # a réponde # a répondu que c'est lui qui a volé la baguette euh cons... ***# par conséquent # en conséquence*** euh la police lui **arrête**. (S209)

(57) il a refusé euh de payer ***donc*** euh le *dirigeur de magasin euh / euh **demande** à la policier euh et le policier lui **arrête** (S209)

(58) ***Donc*** euh # puis il y avait trois hommes qui: - qui **ont** les *pistoles (S213)

As in the first example above, a sequence of situations in the PRES is introduced by a passive PRES, that may be mistaken for a PC because of its compound morphology:

(59) et il **est arrêté** par la / police et: / le- le femme **courir**. Mais l'autre femme appar... - **apparaît** et elle **dit** c'était la fille pas l'homme qui a volé la baguette (S205)

The switch to the PRES may be introduced by an incorrect form; here *ouvert* has the morphology of a past participle but it stands for a SUBJ:

(60) euh il la réveillE dans le matin avant le: magasin **ouvert** mais: il **descend** encore les escaliers (S212)

However, most of the times, the PRES is used in isolation. The use of the PRES to convey the narrator's comments in the first person appears in this corpus as in the previous ones:

(61) # l'homme est disparu je ne **sais** pas pourquoi. (S202) [(209), **pense** (twice in S204), **imagine** (S208), **crois** (S215)]

It is also found to convey a general truth as in (62) or an extra-diegetic comment as in the following example:

(62) l'homme de sécurité qui: **travaille** pendant la *huit – pendant le nuit ***a cassé*** son jambe (S215) [il **a** un dangereux précipice (S217)]

(63) Euh: la première histoire que j'ai vU **est** euh une film euf de Laurel et Hardy. (S201)

However, there are cotexts where the PRES could not be found in native production. The PRES is used instead of an IMP in subordinate clauses, for instance in reported speech:

(64) # le chef du grand+ magasin ***a dit*** que Charlie Chaplin **doit** garder le grand magasin (S215)

(65) un homme qui est – qui est entré euh le grand magasin euh a ré – a réalisé qu'il / sait Charlie Chaplin. Et les trois hommes ***ont dit*** qu'ils ne veulent pas euh prendre # ils ne **veulent** pas prendre quelque chose mais qu'ils **ont** seulement euh **faim**. (S215)

but not only, as in (66) where the past would have been required by *il y avait* that is often used in the corpora as a formula (see Bartning 1997 for other studies where that feature appears):

(66) puis il y avait trois hommes qui: - qui **ont** les * pistoles (S213)

The PRES may replace a PC as in the following examples; in the first instance, the use of PC may be attributed to *sont montés*, but in the second case, the PRES is combined to an IMP:

(67) Et puis ils s... - ils sont montés au cinquième étage où euh euh euh **dort** la femme. Elle **dort** / dans une – une lit euh et euh l'homme - l'homme – l'homme lui était euh // *left to go (S209)

(68) Charlie était avec une femme dans un département / avec plusieurs étapes. Puis il **joue** avec les jouets / dans une étape. Euh il **fait** le patin à roulettes. Il **fait** le *tourne etc euh: et puis / il a mis la femme au lit (S206)

c. Conclusion on the use of the PRES in the year 2 oral narratives

In this corpus, tendencies that have already been noted, such as the use of the PRES as a base form or the expression of personal comments in the PRES, also appear. However, there is less use of the PRES as a narrative device than it was the case in year 1; the fact that, on average, the narratives in this corpus are shorter may have hindered the appearance of the PRES by allowing less chance to switch as time went by. The sequence of tenses also remains problematic.

1.2.3. Year 4

a. Description

Unlike what is found at level 2, the use of PRES is more widespread in this corpus and accounts for 295 forms or 23.52% of all conjugated forms at that level:

aimer	1	passer	2	Etre *amené	1
aller	4	payer	2	Ere arrêté	3
arrêter	2	penser	3	Etre assis	1
arriver	6	perdre	1	Etre couché	1
attendre	1	porter	1	Etre embarqué	2
avoir	8	poursuivre	1	Etre emmené	1
Avoir faim	2	pouvoir	1	Etre fermé	1
Avoir l'air	2	prendre	1	Etre fini	1
Avoir lieu	1	présumer	1	Etre interpellé	1
Il y a	18	profiter	1	Etre mis	2
boire	2	quitter	1	*Etre montré	1
Chercher à	1	raconter	2	Etre obligé	1
commander	1	rattraper	1	Etre projeté	1
commencer	7	recevoir	1	Etre traumatisé	1
connaître	1	regarder	2		
consister	1	remplir	1		
continuer	3	rentrer	1		
courir	1	rester	3		
croire	11	revenir	2		
décider	8	S'agir	1		
demander	2	S'amuser	1		
devenir	1	S'appeler	1		
devoir	2	S'apercevoir	2		
dire	6	S'échapper	1		
dormir	3	S'effondrer	1		
*échapper	2	S'enfuir	3		
embarquer	1	savoir	8		
emmener	1	Se connaître	1		
empêcher	1	Se passer	3		
enfiler	1	*se rencontrer	1		
enlever	3	Se rendre compte de	2		
essayer	10	Se retourner	2		

C'est	22	Se retrouver	3		
être	16	Se souvenir	2		
Etre en train de	2	Se trouver	3		
faire	3	Se voir	1		
falloir	2	supposer	2		
frapper	1	sortir	1		
garder	1	tenir	1		
inviter	4	tirer	2		
jouer	1	travailler	3		
laisser	1	traverser	1		
manger	5	tourner	1		
mettre	5	trouver	5		
offrir	1	venir	1		
ouvrir	1	voir	5		
parler	1	voler	2		
partir	6	vouloir	3		

b. Uses

The important increase of PRES tokens stems from the fact that several subjects narrate their stories in that tense. This is the case for the two bilingual students (S402 and S415) and for S403 in her second story[153]. It would seem that this recourse to the PRES shows a greater ease with the language and a sign of near-native competence (compare with the control group). At the wider discourse level, as at lower levels, PRES is still used in the introduction and the conclusion of the narrative:

(69) Donc la deuxième has... # histoire euh: **a lieu** dans un grand magasin et Charlie Chaplin est chef de sécurité euh c'est: après: le magasin **est fermé** donc il n'y a # il n'y avait personne dans le magasin (S417) [(S419), (S421)]

(70) # le mec ***a frappé*** euh le pauvre # le gendarme avec sa matraque puis ensemble la fille et le mec euh **décident** d'échapper # de courir. Et **c'est** fini. (S407) [(S421), (S422)]

There are passages within the story that are in the PRES. This can be triggered by the use of a passive PRES instead of a PC:

(71) Donc euh la fille **est interpellE** par la police et un peu plus tard on **voit** que: Charlie Chaplin **est:** dans un café et il **mange** beaucoup il ***a volé*** des: - des choses à manger dans le café et puis: la police ***est venU*** pour lui interpeller et: il **est: mis** dans un camion de police. (S413)

As already mentioned for other corpora, there are isolated occurrences of the PRES that convey atemporal situations:

(72) Euh (COUGH) et il a décide # alors qu'il **aime** la fille (S412)

[153] S403 later apologized for forgetting the brief and not telling the story in the past.

(73) il est allé euh un peu euh dans le département et puis comme il est – il **est** si facile il l'a fait avec euh # il l'a fait euh sans regarder (S412)

They may also express the narrator's personal comments that do not belong to the past episode: ***je vous rappelle*** (S402), ***je crois*** (S407, twice in S414, S421, S423), ***je passe*** (S414), ***je suppose*** (S414, S419), ***je ne suis pas sûre*** (S119), ***je pense*** (4 times in S421), ***j'sais pas*** (twice in both S421 and S423).

PRES is also used when conversations are reported in direct speech:

(74) il ***a dit:*** « Tu **te souviens** de moi et le pain et tout ça ? » (S419)
(75) Et la fille elle était vraiment vraiment fatiguée alors Charlie Chaplin il ***a dit*** euh: « Bon toi tu **restes** ici tu - tu **dors** ici. Et moi # pendant toute la nuit tu **dors** ici dans le lit dans le magasin et moi je **reviens** demain matin et euh afin - afin de te chercher avant qu'on **va ouvrir** le magasin (S423)
(76) Eux ils ***ont*** expli… - ***expliqué*** « Non on **est** pas des voleurs. On **est** simplement ici afin de manger. On **a** vraiment vraiment **faim** » (S423)

It also occurs in the verbs introducing the direct speech:

(77) euh elle demande au fille euh si c'était elle qui a volé la baguette euh // et puis on # elle **dit:** « Non, ce n'était pas moi ».(S407)

As in the other corpora, the PRES is used as a default form instead of other tenses; it is mainly past tenses such as PC, IMP and PQP:

(78) la fille elle / s'est: / - elle s'est dorm # elle s'est euh elle s'est endormI sur un lit. En attendant un policier un policier arrive au magasin euh /// euh / pour arrêter Charlie et la fille. Mais en fait+ le policier il **commence** à boire avec Charlie (S416) [**dort** (S406), **connaît** (S406), **travaille** (S413), **veut** (S422)]

It is also used instead of a SUBJ but this only emerges where both forms are not homophoneous as below:

(79) elle a dit au boulanger qu'il y avait une femme qui a volé la baguette qu'elle voulait euh / - qu'elle voulait qu'il la **poursuit** (S409)

In other cases, the PRES is used instead of a morphologically more complex form and launches a series of PRES as below where the subject fails to provide the PC as shown by the aborted verb phrase *s'est f…:*

(80) La fille ***s'est f…*** # euh **s'enfuit** et euh st lorsqu'elle **traverse** la rue st elle: euh – elle ***se rencontre** en courant avec un homme euh st et: - et **c'est** Charlie Chaplin. (S412)

c. Conclusion on the use of the PRES in the year 4 oral narratives

In this year 4 corpus, the proportion of stylistic uses of the PRES (narrative present) and of spontaneous uses (personal opinion) has increased, which may be taken as a more spontaneous use of language and therefore linguistic development. However, we first need to compare this with native usage before drawing conclusions.

1.2.4. Control group

a. Description

The PRES represents 181 occurrences or 33.21% of all conjugated verbs in the control group, which is the highest proportion of all.

accepter	1	provoquer	1	Etre arrêté	1
accuser	1	quitter	1	Etre désigné	1
aimer	1	rattraper	1	Etre emmené	1
aller	7	reconnaître	1	Est fermé	1
appeler	3	redescendre	1	Etre ouvert	1
arriver	6	regarder	1	Etre projeté	1
avoir	2	remplacer	1	Etre rattrapé	1
Il y a	9	reconnaître	1		
Avoir faim	1	regarder	1		
commander	1	rencontrer	1		
croire	1	rentrer	2		
décider	1	réussir	2		
découvrir	1	S'allonger	1		
demander	1	S'amuser	1		
descendre	1	S'apercevoir	1		
devenir	1	S'arrêter	2		
dire	7	S'avérer	1		
donner	5	S'énerver	2		
embarquer	3	S'évader	1		
emmener	7	savoir	2		
essayer	3	Se bander	1		
C'est	20	Se faire	3		
être	8	Se passer	3		
faire	5	Se réveiller	7		
falloir	1	Se retrouver	1		
fumer	1	Se servir	2		
imaginer		Se souvenir	1		
laisser	1	sortir	2		
mettre	1	trouver	2		
montrer	2	utiliser	1		
nourrir	1	vaciller	1		
ouvrir	2	vendre	1		
passer	1	venir	1		
payer	1	voir	4		

penser	2	Voler	2		
pouvoir	4	vouloir	7		
prendre	5				

b. Uses

At the larger discourse level, the PRES is widely used to tell the stories: it is almost the exclusive tense for F3, and there are large chunks in the PRES in F2's narrative, interpersed with past forms. These past forms seem to be introduced when the narrator remembers the initial brief, as shown by the repetition of *mange* in *a mangé:*

(81) Ensuite euh Charlot va au restaurant et y se sert / apparemment y ***mange*** beaucoup # il **a** beaucoup **mangé** et il a – il a # y s'est assis à une table euh / et quand il a pris la note il a- il a vu que: – qu'elle était assez chère et qu'y pouvait pas la payer. / Donc il a tapé # il a vu un policier passer à côté du restaurant et il a dit au policier qu'il pouvait pas payer euh / la note /. Bon pendant c' temps-là le policier avait rattrapé la fille et embarquer # et l'avait embarquée. / Alors euh donc Charlot y voit un policier passer euh devant le restaurant. (F2) [**donne / *a donné*** (F2), **voyons / *avons vu*** (F1)]

The PRES appears to be used in the conclusion of the story to indicate the present relevance of the situation at the moment of speech:

(82) Il a été accusé de – d'avoir profité, d'avoir mangé, d'avoir joué dans le magasin et ***donc*** il **est emmené** par la police. (F5)

(83) ***Donc*** la police **arrive** / et: / et ***donc*** emmène- **emmène** la femme # la jeune femme du début. (F5)

So as a whole, the PRES seems to be the natural tense for oral narration among native speakers although some past forms emerge, such as *a failli* in the example below:

(84) Donc euh, lui y réussit à en faire même les yeux fermés mais il ***a failli*** tomber plusieurs fois. (F4)

The recourse to *a failli* may be attributed to its defective and rare conjugation in the PRES.

Some of the stylistic tendencies identified in the learners' corpora also appear in the native speakers'. The PRES is used to express atemporal situations:

(85) Ils ***sont allés*** là où on **vend** des lits, (F1)

(86) Ensuite ils ***sont montés*** au cinquième étage: # **c'est** l'étage où **il y a** les: -les lits donc tout- tout pour les chambres. / (F5)

The PRES also appears to convey personal comments from the narrator:

(87) Une cliente a / peu après trouvé Charlot dans le magasin complètement / # pas complètement mais déshabillé on **va** dire (F1)
(88) Voyant des enfants qui passaient dans la rue il leur a offert ce qu'je **pense** était des bonbons (F1)

Similarly, the PRES is common in reporting direct speech:

(89) Tous les deux, ils sont alors partis à la recherche du policier qu'ils ont retrouvé / un p'tit peu plus loin / et ils lui ***ont dit:*** «**C'est** bien la fille qui a volé le pain ». (F1)
(90) Le policier / ***a dit:*** « Charlot n'**a** pas d'argent et il ne paiera pas » (F1)
(91) Charlot lui a laissé sa place st Charlot lui ***a dit*****:** « Tu **te souviens c'est** moi qui: qui avait qui avait le pain » (F1)

c. Conclusion on the use of the PRES in the control group narratives

The PRES seems to be a natural way of recounting an oral story for native speakers, as was already shown in other studies (Salaberry 2000, Hasbún 1995 for Spanish). However the corpus shows a deliberate effort to use past tenses as required by the brief (see for example the shift from PRES to past in F4).

1.2.5. Conclusion on the PRES in the oral narratives

From the data presented in this section, it is clear that the PRES is the most obvious tense for narration among native speakers and near-native learners. This trend is well attested in previous studies (for a brief overview, see Salaberry 2000: 175) and may be explained by several factors. First, there may be an influence of the genre as « empirical evidence [...] substantiated the claim that movie narratives are recounted in present and not past tense » (Salaberry 2000: 175). The use of past tenses among native and near-native speakers may also come from their attitude towards the task of oral storytelling: learners may see it as a language practice activity while native speakers may see it as a communication task, hence the frequent slips in applying the initial instructions to use past tenses. The PRES is also present in stylistic uses such as the insertion of personal comments or of vivid reported speech. As in written narratives, the PRES is used both at the lowest and the highest levels; in the first instance, it corresponds to a default form replacing other tenses that are not yet acquired; in the second instance, it is a sign a natural storytelling in French.

1.3. General conclusion on the PRES

Three main points emerge from this analysis. First, the recourse to the PRES differs widely between the written and oral narratives, where it is far more frequent. This tendency may be attributed to a series of factors: there is no opportunity for revision in the oral and thus no chance to modify a spontaneous PRES; then, it is more likely to lose sight of the linguistic task in favour of the communicative task when speaking. Specific features of our research methodology may have enhanced the trend as students were recording themselves so there may have been less monitoring of production than in interviews, for example, where the researcher is a constant reminder to keep to the brief. Native tendency to use narrative PRES for narration (Judge 1998) may also have influenced the learners, especially those in year 4, who had been immersed in a French speaking environment during their year abroad.

The second striking element that emerges from this study is the evolution in status that the PRES undergoes. It is mainly a default form for unmastered past tenses at the lowest levels but it then develops into an increasingly used native stylistic tool.

Finally, the claim that past tenses would appear first in the foreground of the discourse structure whilst base forms would still be found in the background is not convincingly supported by our corpora. It seems indeed that the PRES is used (and rightly so) for extra-diegetic comments but there is no need for past tenses in those contexts. Moreover in complex sentences that do not necessarily correspond to the background of the story, the non-native PRES may be due more to sentence structure than to discourse structure.

It was mentioned at the beginning of this section that the narrative PRES was overtaking the role of the PS in written narratives and we will check this claim against our corpora by proceeding with the analysis of that tense.

2. Passé Simple

We are not aware of the PS being mentioned in any previous study of tense / aspect development in French. Two explanations can be put forward for this state of affairs. First, there has been much discussion on the status of that tense in contemporary French (see Part I, chapter 1, section 2.1.2) that has led to the tense being relegated from the FFL classroom until the highest levels of proficiency. Equally, studies of tense / aspect development have tended to focus on lower learning levels. Even Bergström's (1995) so-called *apprenants avancés* do not yet use the PQP so it seems that we are dealing with learners at a more advanced level than in previous studies, which explains the occasional emergence of the PS in our data.

2.1. Written narratives

As was shown in the first part of this thesis, the PS is supposed to be dominant in written use although this is currently debated (See Judge 1998 and 2002). The validity of this claim is now considered in the light of data from the learners' and native speakers' corpora.

2.1.1. Year 1

Only one occurrence of the PS is found in year 1 in the production of S114. This form is indeed a morphological PS; however, it does not fit either syntactically nor semantically with the temporal context. It is inserted in the following paragraph:

(1) Apres tout cela il prendrait l'autobus. Il **s'assit** dans une chaise. Apres quelques minutes la fille prendrait le même autobus. Il n'avait pas eu des places donc l'homme a donné sa place a la fille.

The use of tenses in this excerpt is highly idiosyncratic: morphological COND are used to express succession, as shown by the temporal information *après tout cela* and *après quelques minutes*. One may say that these forms are intended IMP, as the two forms are often confused in learners' IL (See Labeau 2001 for a discussion of such occurrences), which would at least give temporal cohesion to the forms in the past. Nonetheless, there is insufficient evidence to support such a claim and it seems that this isolated occurrence is a chance production that does not attest in any way to knowledge of the PS.

2.1.2 Year 2

There is no occurrence of PS in the year 2 corpus.

2.1.3. Year 4

The year 4 corpus contains 11 PS that are all concentrated in the narrative of S415, one of the bilingual students. The excerpt where the forms appear is reproduced below:

(2-12)La fille cours a sa rescousse et **enleva** son bandeaux, une fois que l'homme devient conscient du danger qu'il vient d'encourir il perd toute sa grâce! Il était ensuite l'heure pour la fille de se coucher alors, ensemble, il **trouvèrent** un grand manteau de fourrure blanche et un lit double ou la jeune fille **s'installa** pour la nuit. Le gardien de nuit lui **promit** de la réveiller avant l'ouverture du magasin le lendemain et **partit** faire son travail. Pendant sa tourné, il **fut surpris** par trois hommes armés de pistolets. Il **essaya** de s'échapper, mais sans succès. Quelques coups de feu **créèrent** des trous dans la baril de rhum contre lequel le gardien de nuit se trouvait et il **bu** une bonne rasade. C'est alors que l'un des hommes **reconnut** le gardien de nuit comme l'un de ces camarades de l'usine d'acier, et les trois cambrioleurs **expliquèrent** qu'ils n'étaient pas la pour voler, mais tout simplement parce qu'ils avaient faim. (S415)

From a morphological point of view, only (10) *bu* is incorrectly spelled and lacks its third person singular ending. This idiosyncratic spelling may be caused by the homophony of the PS with the past participle. Syntactically speaking, (2) is problematic as it is inserted within a series of narrative PRES. A possible explanation would be a typing mistake where –a has replaced the –e of the PRES. As for the rest of the occurrences, they are used in a native-like way: the PS is combined with telic verb phrases to express the foreground actions while the background is sketched by verbs in the IMP.

2.1.4. Control group

As in the year 4 corpus, only one subject (F3) has recourse to the PS throughout her essay, that is reproduced below:

(13-33) Une pauvre jeune femme regardait la vitrine d'une boulangerie. Elle avait faim alors elle **entra** dans la boutique pour prendre un bout de pain. Seulement le boulanger la **surprit**: lorsqu'il **rentra** dans la boutique, elle sortait en courant. Dans la rue un policier l'**attrapa** et l'**arrêta**. Charlot **dit** que c'était lui qui avait volé le pain, mais le boulanger a été témoin de la scène. La femme est emmenée au poste. Charlot **se rendit** au restaurant et **mangea** sans payer dans le but de se faire arrêter, il **appela** un policier dans la rue pour constater le délit. Le policier lui **passa** les

menottes. Ils **sortirent** du restaurant pour que le policier **appela** le centre. A cote du téléphone se trouvait une boutique et la Charlot **demanda** un cigare et **donna** des bonbons a des enfants qui passaient dans la rue. Délit de plus, Charlot est emmené dans un camion de Police déjà charge de délinquants.
Dedans il **retrouva** la jeune femme. Il lui **tendit** un mouchoir car elle **se mit** a pleurer. Ensuite elle **commença** à s'énerver et **provoqua** un accident.
Elle , Charlot et le policier ont été projetés hors du véhicule. Ils se réveillent petit a petit, Charlot en premier. Le policier commençait a se réveiller alors Charlot lui redonne un coup sur la tête avec la matraque du policier.
Ensuite ils **s'enfuirent** tous les deux et le Policier n'**eut** pas le temps de les rattraper. (F3)

This narrative contains 21 morphological PS although *appela* in (24) most probably stands for the homophonic *subjonctif imparfait, 'appelât'. Se mit* is morphologically and syntactically correct but it is problematic from a semantic point of view because of *car* that implies that *se mettre à pleurer* is the cause of *tendre un mouchoir* and should therefore be conjugated in the PQP[154]. Whilst the PS is used to narrate the foreground of the story, each semantic group (the girl's offence, Charlie's offence and the accident) concludes on PC that may well make the link with the storyteller's moment of reference. So from a syntactic and semantic point of view, the use of PS seems to be imperfectly mastered.

2.1.5. Conclusion on the PS in written narratives

Our study of PS in written narratives shows that this use is very limited as only two of the learners in the cohort use it. Moreover, the isolated use in year 1 does not seem to show a semantic mastery of the PS. As for the 11 forms in year 4, they all belong to a bilingual subject whose experience may widely differ from the normal learner's profile.

2.2. Oral narratives

Occurrences of the PS in the oral narratives are not expected, as we have shown in the theoretical part that it was widely restricted to written uses or highly specific instances of prepared oral discourse. However, the year 1 corpus contains 5 verb tokens that correspond phonetically to a PS; they are listed below:

(34) Puis la femme a dormi sur un des lits et euh l'homme a vu trois hommes qu'il croy # qu'il **crU** d'être des voleurs. (S104)

[154] F3's reluctance to use the PQP is further commented upon in the relevant section.

(35) Et: l'agent de police **prit** # l'homme euh dans la station de la police euh. (S113)
(36) Un+ avait un *flic et il a essayé de lui # de le tuer et puis un de les voleurs lui **reconnU** parce qu'ils travaillent euh à le même / euh *factoire euh et ils dit qu'ils ne sont pas les voleurs mais ils *étaient faim. (S116)
(37) # l'homme fait – fait un tour de magasin mais il trouve des voleurs mais: un # l'un des voleurs **reconnU** l'homme et ils **bU** l'alcool ensemble. (S118)

If the forms of all but one (*but*) could be acceptable PS, none is syntactically acceptable as, even if they are in a past context, they are linked with a PC. In our native written narratives, there was a tendency in native usage to use either one or the other. Moreover, all the forms here are homophoneous to the past participle (and here *bu* does make sense) and could be aborted PC. So it seems that the phonetic PS in this corpus must be taken as indefinite forms. Moreover, there are no instances of the PS in the other three corpora, which supports the conclusion that the tokens in year 1 are not actual PS.

2.3. Conclusion on the PS

The use of PS is in fact limited to two subjects in our corpora, S415 and F3, who both belong to a mixed family (French / English or French / Polish) although F3 presents herself as solely francophone. This marginal position may provoke linguistic insecurity and have encouraged them to adopt a more traditional stance towards the use of tenses in storytelling. One may wonder why the other bilingual student, S402, does not follow this tendency; it may be that his partial schooling in a French-speaking environment has helped him to adopt more natural native patterns in tenses use. The fact that the rest of the control group did not use the PS may be explained on the one hand by the communication type (a police report is hardly a literary piece) and on the other hand by the brief: it presented the events as having occurred the day before and still relevant, as a testimony was required, which may have triggered the use of PC. So it seems that the PS carries stylistic connotations rather than temporal-aspectual information in our corpora and the PC is the default morphological marker of the preterite in Contemporary French. The use of this form will now be analyzed.

3. Passé composé

Following Benveniste (1959), it has generally been admitted that French possessed two parallel tense systems: one for the *récit* revolving around the PS and one for the *discours* based on the PC. We have just seen that PS was indeed restricted to written use in our corpora but given the scarcity of its occurrences, there cannot be such a neat association of tense and functions in our corpora and the PC is well used in both written and oral narratives to express the preterite, as will appear from this section. According to the prediction of the PAH, it should therefore be the first morphological marker of the past to emerge in learners' production: Andersen (1991) suggests the preterite appears at stage 2 with punctual events.The PC has indeed been shown as the first past tense to emerge (Kaplan 1987) so we expect a high proportion of this tense at all levels. Moreover, some studies (Harley 1992, Bergström 1995) claim that the PC is overused with dynamic verbs where an IMP would be expected in native usage. We will see in this section if those findings are echoed in our corpora.

3.1. Written narratives

3.1.1. Year 1

a. Description

The 372 PC represent 58.49% of all conjugated verbs in this corpus. There are altogether 126 different verbs used in PC in this corpus, so that each verb appears on average 2.95 times.

acheter	1	essayer	10	retourner	1	être amené	1
accompagner	1	* eucouter	1	retrouver	1	être arrêté	3
aider	1	expliquer	2	revenir	1	être blessé	1
aller	23	faire	5	rouler	1	être pris	1
annoncer	2	*faire fuit(e)	2	s'arrêter	1		
annoncer = dénoncer	1	fermer	1	s'enfuir	1		
appeler	4	frapper	2	*s'ouvrer	1		
apporter	1	fumer	1	sauter	3		
apprendre	1	hurler = heurter	2	sauver	2		
arrêter	12	insister	2	*savoir = connaître	1		
arriver	8	interroger	1	se battre	1		
avoir lieu	1	interrompre	1	se capturer	1		
y avoir	4	inviter	2	se casser	1		
*batter	1	jouer	4	se coucher	1		
boire	7	laisser	1	se dérouler	1		
casser	3	libérer	1	*se disparaître	1		
chasser = pouchasser	1	manger	8	se finir	1		
chercher	1	* metter	2	* se fuir	1		

choisir	1	mettre	1	se lever	2		
commencer	8	monter	1	* se monter	1		
connaître = reconnaître	1	montrer = monter	1	se passer	5		
continuer	2	offrir	2	se réveiller	2		
convaincre	1	ouvrir	1	* se rouler	1		
* courer	1	partir	2	* se tomber	1		
courir	7	passer	3	se trouver	1		
couvrir	1	passer = se passer	3	servir	1		
décider	4	payer	1	sortir	1		
découvrir	4	permettre	1	suivre	4		
demander	2	porter	3	téléphoner	1		
* déparer = partir	1	poursuivre	1	* témoigner = être témoin de	1		
descendre	2	prendre	13	tirer	1		
devenir	2	promettre	1	tomber	12		
devoir	2	rattraper	1	travailler	2		
dire	21	reconnaître	4	trouver	13		
donner	5	* recontrer	1	utiliser	1		
dormir	5	regarder = garder	1	venir	4		
échapper	4	regarder	1	visiter	2		
emmener	1	rencontrer = se rencontrer	1	voir	21		
enlever	1	rencontrer	3	voler	11		
entendre	1	rentrer	2	vouloir	1		
entrer	8	rester	1				

Before classifying the verb tokens on the basis of their *Aktionsart*, let us recall here that, in our theoretical chapter to which we refer for a justification of the choice, we have postulated two main types of verbs: stative and dynamic, the latter further splitting into telic and atelic forms. Stative verbs do not imply any change from the initial limit to the final limit of the situation. Dynamic verbs imply a change. The difference between telic and atelic is that telic verbs imply their final limit as soon as they start. For example in the sentence *Pierre sort,* Pierre actually needs to be out for the situation *sortir* to happen. The verb phrase (VP) in the PC found in this corpus are distributed as follows:

	Year 1	
	n	%
Stative verbs	9[155]	2.42
Atelic verbs	61[156]	16.4

[155] *Porter, savoir* (S102), *devoir* (S106), *porter* (S108), *y avoir (3)* (S110), *devoir, porter* (S118).
[156] *Dormir, travailler* (S101), *chercher, commencer à / de, dormir (2), passer [du temps], travailler* (S102), *essayer de (2)* (S103), *accompagner, courir, rester, suivre* (S104), *commencer, commencer à / de (2), [le public] entrer, jouer* (S106), *courir, suivre* (S107), *dormir, regarder [le magasin], se rouler* (S108), *suivre* (S109), *suivre* (S110), *essayer de (3), regarder* (S113), *chasser, courir (2), expliquer, insister* (S114), *aider à* (S115), *essayer, jouer, rouler* (S116), *commencer de, continuer de, essayer (2), poursuivre* (S117), *boire, commencer [qqch],*

Telic verbs	302[157]	81.18
	372	100

In this inventory of *Aktionsart,* the VP has been taken as a whole[158], which can explain that *boire* is taken as atelic in (1) *boire (de) la bière*, but as telic in (2) because of the direct object *un coup de rhum.* Similarly, *y avoir* changes category in (3) and (4), given the differences in the definitess of the object:

(1) Ils ont décide d'arrêter et ils **ont bu *le bier*** ensemble avec l'homme et ils ont continue de bavarder. (S119)

(2) Les hommes ont promis qu'ils n'etaient pas les voleurs mais, qu'ils avaient faim et donc ils ont **tous bu *un coup de rhum*** ensemble. (S101)

(3) Puis ***il y a eu*** un homme et une Femme dans une departement de chaussures qui etait sous la construction et ***il y a eu*** beaucoup de danger pour l'homme qui patinait a roulettes. [***Il y a eu*** trois hommes] (S110)

(4) **Il y a eu un accident** entre deux véhicules et l'homme et la femme échappaient. (S105)

In (5), the fact that the subject is a collective makes the telic verb *entrer* atelic (see Andrews 1992 for a similar example):

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dormir, essayer de (2) (S118), *boire, continuer de, essayer de, faire [le patin à roulettes], jouer, vouloir* (S119), *courir (3), insister, interroger, voir [des choses]* (S120).

[157] *Boire [un coup], descendre [les escaliers], enlever, entrer, faire fuite, mettre, passer [une heure], promettre, sauver, se coucher, tomber, voir (3)* (S101), *aller (4), arrêter, boire [des boissons], courer, couvrir, découvrir (3), échapper, faire [une boum], rencontrer, manger [qqch]* (3), *montrer [à l'étage], se capturer, se lever, voir, voler* (S102), *aller, arrêter, boire [+ quantity] (2), décider, découvrir, échapper, entrer, jouer [pendant quelques heures], reconnaître, téléphoner, tirer, tomber, voir* (S103), *aller, appeler, apporter, arriver (2), décider (2), dire, faire fuite, revenir, frapper, sauter [dans la rue], témoigner, tomber, voir (2), voler, être amené* (S104), *acheter, arrêter, y avoir [un accident], dire (3), entrer (2), fumer [un cigare], prendre (2), rencontrer, retourner, retrouver, se dérouler, se tomber* (S105), *boire [qqch], choisir, convaincre, descendre, devenir, donner, monter [à l'étage], se finir, se passer (2), trouver (3), visiter* (S106), *aller, annoncer, appeler, apprendre, arrêter, dire, emmener, manger [beaucoup], monter, sauter, s'enfuir, se disparaître, tomber, venir, voir (2), voler* (S107), *casser [la jambe], demander, donner [le travail], eucouter [cette nouvelle], metter (3), passer, rentrer, sortir, trouver* (S108), *appeler, arriver, dire (3), entrer, inviter, prendre (3), rencontrer, s'arrêter, sauter de, se battre, se trouver* (S108), *appeler, arriver, dire (3), entrer, inviter, prendre (3), rencontrer, s'arrêter, sauter de, se battre, se* (S109), *connaître, dire, se réveiller, se trouver, voir (2)* (S110), *se casser fuir, se passer, voir (2), être arrêté (2)* (S109), *connaître, dire, se réveiller, se trouver, voir (2)* (S110), *se casser fuir, se passer, voir (2), être arrêté (2)* (S109), *connaître, dire, se réveiller, se trouver, voir (2)* (S110), *se casser [la jambe], venir, être arrêté, être blessé* (S111), *dire (2), se passer, visiter, voir, voler* (S112), *arrêter, arriver, dire (2), libérer, prendre (2), rattraper, rencontrer, tomber, voir, voler (2)* (S113), *aller, arriver (2), aller, batter, dire (4), donner (2), échapper, faire [le crime], laisser, partir, passer (2), prendre (2), tomber (2), utiliser [un téléphone], voir, voler (2)* (S114), *aller (3), arrêter (3), dire, hurler (2), manger [beaucoup], offrir, payer, tomber, voir* (S115), *aller, appeler, casser [sa jambe], entendre, entrer, manger [qqch], prendre, reconnaître, rentrer, sauver [la vie], servir [qqu'un], trouver (2), voir* (S116), *annoncer (2), arrêter (3), déparler, dire, entrer, frapper, inviter, manger [un grand repas], prendre, rencontrer, tomber, trouver (2), voir (2), voler, être pris* (S117), *aller (3), arriver, casser, devenir [ivre], faire [un tour de magasin], ouvrir, partir, permettre, reconnaître (2), se réveiller, tomber, trouver (2)* (S118), *aller (4), décider, fermer, manger [qqch], se lever, trouver (2)* (S119), *aller, arriver, avoir lieu, demander, dire (2), échapper, expliquer, faire, interrompre, passer, prendre (2), tomber (2), voir, voler (2)* (S120), *aller (2), arrêter, donner, offrir, s'ouvrir, se passer, trouver, venir (2)* (S121).

[158] See theoretical chapter for a detailed account of influential factors.

(5) ***La publique*** **est entrée** dans le magasin comme normale pour acheter les choses. (S106)

There is a overwhelming majority of telic verbs conjugated in the PC, which seems to corroborate the predictions of the PAH on prototypical associations between the preterite and telicity.

b. Uses

Given that we focus especially on the PC and the IMP to test our initial hypotheses[159], we present their uses in more detail than in the previous sections. We start by concentrating on the actual uses of the tense before proceding to the study of cotexts where it would be expected in target-like production but where it does not appear.

Bardovi-Harlig (1992a: 256) mentions that « even learners with much higher formal accuracy [...] often do not demonstrate appropriate use of form in context » and she suggests that « formal accuracy precedes appropriate use in interlanguage development » (p.253). In our corpora, there is some discrepancy between the forms and the functions they express in the IL, and in native usage. Therefore, we have classified all the PC found in this corpus in 4 categories according to the (non) respect of form and function: 'correct form' indicated morphological accuracy whilst 'correct function' refers to semantic appropriateness.

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
280	75.27	64	17.2	26	6.99	2	0.54

(i) Actual uses

From this table, it appears that the functions of the PC are generally well mastered with 92.47% of all tokens used in the right context whilst the accuracy of forms is lower at 82.26%. The morphology of the PC is indeed complex as it implies correct formation and agreement of the past participle as well as choice of an auxiliary (Hawkins 1985).

[159] They are indeed the main tenses considered in acquisitional study of pastness and they illustrate the aspectual dyad on which the PAH is based.

As far as past participle formation is concerned, there is a tendency to simplification. This shows in an alignment on the most common group in –é with *couru, sorti, mis* and *ouvert* coming across as *couré* (S102), *sortié* (S108), *metté* (S108) and *ouvré* (S121). This confirms results found in Harley (1992) and Harley and Swain (1978).

The PRES form of the verb is also found as a simplified form in *prend* (S115) and *poursuit* (S117) instead of *pris* and *poursuivi*. Finally, the past participle can be replaced by forms that are close to the target language PP, either by their phonetics (6-7) or their spelling (8-9):

(6) Il y a eu trois hommes qui **ont suivu** le premier homme avec les pistoles mais donc ils l'ont connu et ils ne le tire ! (S110)
(7) Dès que l'homme est allé dans la boulangerie, la femme a volé un pain du camion, et puis elle **a fais fuite. (S104)**
(8) Un autre voleur **a reconnû** Charlie parce-qu'ils travaillent a le même usine. (S116)
(9) Il **a appellé** la police et Charlie etait arrêté. (S116)

If these morphological IL forms are the exceptions rather than the rule, the endings of the PP are often overseen. It appears first with PP used with *être* where the needed agreement is not found when the subject is feminine and / or plural:

(10) La Femme portait une grande robe blanche et, quand l'homme est allé au rez de chaussez pour vérifier que les portes **étaient fermés**, elle a dormi. (S102)
(11) Apres quelque secondes ils **sont tombé** de l'autobus et l'homme a dit a la fille que c'était sa chance pour échapper. Les deux sont couru. (S114) [**sont allé** (S120)]

The same happens with reflexive verbs:

(12) Le matin prochaine la Femme **s'est reveille** et il y a beacoup de clients dans la magasin (S110) [**s'est couche** (S101)]
(13) C'est histoire **s'est passé** dans un grand magasin. (S106) [**s'est fini** (S106), **s'est déroulé** (S105), **s'est passé** (S121)]
(14) L'action **s'est passé** dans la nuit quand personne n'était dans le magasin. (S106)

The difficult agreement with the preceding direct object (in bold italics) that is required for PP used with *avoir* is an obvious stumbling block for foreign learners (as it is for native speakers, see supra), as shown in the examples below:

(15) En réalité ils ont volé ***tous les articles qu'***ils **ont mangé.** (S102)
(16) Premièrement, Charlie a servi la femme avec des gâteaux et elle ***les*** **a mangé.** (S116)
(17) Immédiatement le boulanger ***l'*****a rattrapé**. (S113) [***l'*****a arrêté** (S107, S115), **a rencontré** (S105)]

(18) Pendant leur voyage il y avait ***beaucoup de choses assez amusant qui*** on **a vu**. (S120)

Finally, there is the odd case of hypercorrection when agreement takes place where not needed:

(19) La fille a départe et elle **a invitée** l'homme aussi. (S117) [**a permise** (S118)].

Idiosyncrasies also appear in the use of the auxiliary, either by the wrong person agreement [*La Femme et l'homme* ***s'est trouve*** (S110), *La femme lui* ***ai sauvé*** (S116), *un policier* ***suis arrivé*** (S120)] or in the choice of the inappropriate auxiliary [***est couru*** (S104, S114), ***est dormi*** (S101), ***est sautée*** *du véhicule* (S109), ***est battée*** *contre un homme* (S114), ***sont couru*** (S114), ***a entré*** (S117), ***ont allés*** (S119), ***a se roullé*** (S108)].
Moreover, although there is a tendency to simplify them (***a arrêté*** (S115, S117), ***a échappé*** (S103), ***a passé*** (S108), ***ont rencontré*** (S110)], reflexive verbs are overused in this corpus: elle **s'est tombée** (S105), il **se sont disparus** (S107). They seem to be a form equivalent to the passive as in the examples below:

(20) L'homme de securité **s'est capturé**- et était impossible d'échapper. (S102)
(21) Chaplin **s'est arrêté** la gendarmerie et a pris la responsabilité pour le délit. (S109)

A last characteristic of PC formation in this IL corpus is that the ordering of the verb phrase elements is made difficult when pronouns or negation are present:

(22) Il **a** ***ce*** **dit** au gendarme qui **a** ***le*** **pris** encore une fois. (S114) [**a** ***se*** **roullé** (S108), ***l'a lui*** **appris** (S107), **a** ***lui*** **donné** (S108), **a** ***l'annoncée*** (S117), **a** ***lui*** **pris** (S117)]
(23) Elle **a** ***ne*** **porté** ***pas*** des chaussures et j'ai l'impression qu'elle habité dans les rues. (S108)

In addition to its own functions, the PC is used to carry concepts that it does not convey in native usage. It is found as a replacement form for the PQP (see Bartning 1997: 25) and the IMP in the year 1 narratives. In the section devoted to the PQP (section 5 of this chapter), it will be shown that the PC is used where a PQP would be expected in contexts such as emphasis, reported speech, sequence of tenses, temporal organization and causal subordinates so we focus here on uses of the PC instead of an IMP. That substitution is rare in this corpus; there are only seven occurrences of this, 4 being provided by S102. So it seems that it is more of an idiosyncratic feature, unlike the numerous uses of the IMP found in this corpus where native speakers would have a PC. Two of the examples involve the verb *porter,* that is ambiguous as it may mean either 'to carry', in which case it is a dynamic verb compatible with

a perfective tense, or 'to wear' that, as a stative verb, is highly compatible with the IMP. In (24), *porter* clearly means 'to wear' so the stative interpretation would have been required:

(24) Elle **a** ne **porté** pas des chaussures et j'ai l'impression qu'elle habité dans les rues. (S108)

(25) Au rez-de chaussez l'homme a decouvert qu'il y avait trois hommes- et les trois hommes **ont porté** des fusillés! (S102)

(25) is more difficult to analyze as the direct object *des fusillés* (meaning *des fusils* in S102's IL) would suggest the interpretation as 'to carry' which is contradicted by the broader context. In (26), the problem arises as a result of interference from the mother tongue. In English, 'to know' is equivalent to both *savoir* and *connaître* in French – a phenomenon referred to as 'split' in contrastive analysis. Here *savoir,* implying intellectual knowledge is confused with *connaître*, hence the strangeness of the sentence. Moreover, as a stative verb, *savoir* combines more readily with the IMP:

(26) Mais un voleur a vu l'homme et il a decouvert qu'il **a** déjà **su** l'homme. (S102)

In the following examples, the VPs in bold refer to unlimited situations presented while they are unfolding - which is underlined by the use of *comme* in (27) or *quand* (used for *pendant que*) in (28). Therefore, in agreement with the presentation of the IMP we gave in part 1, the use of this tense would be expected:

(27) En réalite l'homme dormait sous un tas de vètements et il était decouvert ***comme*** un femme **a cherché** le tas pour trouver peut etre un nouvelle robe, ou jupe. (S102)

(28) A la fin, l'homme est allé au commisariat avec la police - les trois voleurs ont echappé ***quand*** l'homme de securité **a dormi** (S102)

S102 seems to have problems integrating the semantic information provided by a temporal complement; this is again the case in (29) where the limits of the situation should exceed those of the temporal complements and where an imperfective aspect would be needed:

(29) Dans le passé ils ***ont travaillé*** dans les mines. (S102)

It may be that lexical means such as the time adverbial *dans le passé* make for the lack of a morphological means indicating double anteriority; Bartning (1994) suggests that learners may first rely on time adverbials when in the process of acquiring a new form and this hypothesis will need to be examined when we study the PQP.

In (30) and (31), the use of a PC is possible although the linguistic characteristics (it is an atelic verb) and the extralinguistic context would support an imperfective presentation of the situations, especially in (31) as the young lady is clearly lingering at the window whilst other events happen:

(30) Un camion est arrivé et j'ai vu que c'était un fournisseur de la boulangerie, qui **a apporté** des choses nouvelles. (S104)
(31) Une jeune femme qui portait une robe noire **a regardé** dans la fenêtre d'une boulangerie. (S113)

The choice of the PC may be explained by the fact that *apporter* and *regarder* are dynamic verbs that combine in a preferential way with this tense. It may be a categoric use of the tense because the uses « aux confins » (Kihlstedt's term for uses of a tense that favour the point of view rather than the aspectual affinities) are not yet mastered at that level of IL.

(ii) Required uses

Now, there are instances where the PC is not used when expected in TL standards as the analysis of forms and functions has helped us establish. At this level of IL, the IMP is the most common replacement form for the PC. In our corpora, the IMP is used to express succession either systematically (S111 and S112 recount their story almost exclusively in the IMP) or occasionally; it also conveys the idea of consequence. At the clause level, there is an overuse of the IMP with dynamic verbs [such as ***échappaient*** (S105)], which seems to contradict Harley's (1992) and Bergström's (1995) findings on the overuse of the PC with such verbs. However, in our data, this overuse occurs especially when the VP is made of *y avoir* + direct object:

(32) Puis **il y avait *une grande chasse***. (S105)
(33) Hier **il y avait *un accident*** dans un grand magasin et le gardian de la nuit a été blessé (S111)

It seems here that the formulaic use of *il y avait* is prevalent and the change in verbal category brought about by the direct object is neglected.

Passive forms are also common in the IMP[160], more than in the PC with only six occurrences [***a été amenée*** (S104), ***a été arrêté, ont été arrêtés*** (S109), ***a été blessé, a été arrêté*** (S111), ***a été***

[160] *était decouvert* (S102), *était attrapé* (S105), *étaient appelé, était arrête et mis* (S106), *était arrêté* (S115), *etait interompé!* (S116), *etait arrêté* (S116), *était arrêté ... et mis* (S118).

prise (S117)]. One may suggest that the morphology of the passive PC is difficult because of the two auxiliaries so the indication of voice is preferred to that of aspect or that there is a formulaic use of the auxiliary in the passive IMP.

S108 offers puzzling uses of the PQP instead of the PC but given that her narrative contain no IMP; the PQP may in fact stand for IMP in her IL:

(34) Le deux a renteré dans le magasin, est ils **avaient allé** ou 4éme étage ou il y a des peluches et des joues pour les enfants. Les deux **avait trouvé** des patins a roulettes et metté sur leurs pieds. Les deux **avait se roullé**, est Chaplin a se roullé près d'un signe marké 'danger'. Il a metté quelque chose sur ses yeux, dis donc il vu rien. Il a continué de se roullé près de la signe ou c'est très dangerous. Apres ça ils **avaient allé** (S108)

This substitution seems to go against the norm as the PC generally stands for the PQP (See Kihlstedt 1998) that is taken as a token of more advanced learners, which S108 is clearly not as far as verbal morphology is concerned. Her atypical development may be attributed to her extra-curricular context of acquisition (see research methodology for more details).

The present corpus also offers a few examples of PRES used instead of the PC; they occur in a series of verbs in the past to express a situation in which the final limit is underlined: the fact that the men are served (35), the recognition (36) or the refusal (37):

(35) On a vu deux hommes dans un grand magasin avec beaucoup de departements. Donc un des deux hommes **sert** un morceau de gâteau a l'autre. (S110)
(36) Ils mettaient les armes au Chaplin mais après plusieurs secondes un des cambrioleurs lui **reconnaît** et ils buvaient beaucoup d'alcool. (S111)
(37) L'homme est allé dans un café et il achetait beaucoup de nourriture et mangeait tous. Mais il ne **veut** pas le payer. (S114)

Such examples seem to contradict claims that the PC appears first in the foreground whilst base forms are still used for the background (Véronique 1987, Bardovi-Harlig 1999); in the sentences above the PRES marks situations that clearly belong to the main storyline, especially in (36) and (37) where the acknowledgement or the refusal are decisive events for the rest of the story.

c. Conclusion on the use of the PC in the year 1 written narratives

So from this corpus, we can draw the following conclusions. The main problem with the PC is morphological as one needs to attend to both the past participle (formation and agreement) and the choice of auxiliary. Semantically speaking, it seems that the PC is used as a default form to express anteriority, not only to S but other moments of reference when the PQP is not readily available in the IL. On an aspectual level, there are few misunderstandings of the presentation offered by the PC.

3.1.2. Year 2

This corpus contains 242 PC (68.56% of all conjugated forms) distributed among 112 different verbs so each one is used on average 2.16 times.

accepter	1	être	1	ressembler	1	être arrêté	1
accuser	1	expliquer	3	rester	2	être blessé	1
acheter	1	explorer	1	retourner	2	être informé	1
aller	7	faire	3	s'accrocher	1	être trouvé	1
apercevoir	1	faire semblant	1	s'arrêter	1		
apparaître	1	fermer	2	s'échapper	2		
appeler	1	*former = se former	1	s'endormir	1		
arrêter	7	fuir	1	* (s')entrer	2		
arriver	7	gagner	1	sauver	1		
*avérer = avouer	1	heurter	1	se bander (les yeux)	1		
avoir	1	informer	2	se casser	5		
boire	2	insister		se faire + INF	3		
* butter	1	inviter	2	* (se) foncer	1		
cambrioler	1	jouer	5	se lever	1		
casser	1	laisser	3	se mettre à	1		
changer	1	manger	2	se passer	1		
commencer	6	menacer		se plaindre	1		
connaître = reconnaître	1	mettre	2	se rendre	1		
connaître	2	monter	2	se renverser	1		
consterner	1	*montrer = monter	2	se retrouver	2		
continuer	1	*ordrer = commander	1	se réveiller	2		
convenir = accepter	1	ouvrir	2	* (se) tomber	1		
courir	3	*passer = se passer	1	*signaler = faire signe	1		
croire	2	payer	2	sortir	1		
décider	7	porter	1	suivre	1		
décrire	1	prendre	5	* témoigner	2		
demander	3	*prendre l'occasion	1	tenter	1		

descendre	2	raconter	1	tirer	4		
devenir	1	rassembler	1	tomber	5		
devoir	1	rattraper	1	trouver	4		
dire	13	réaliser	1	utiliser	1		
donner	5	reconnaître	1	venir	1		
dormir	2	remplacer	1	visiter	3		
*échapper = s'échapper	2	rencontrer	2	voir	13		
entrer	5	rendre	1	voler	11		
essayer	3	rendre visite	1	vouloir	1		

The following table presents the classification according to the *Aktionsart*. Here again, the whole VP is taken into account, which makes *courir* telic in (38), thanks to the direct object *quelques mètres* and *rester* in (39), because of *toute la nuit*:

(38) La femme **est courue *quelques mètres*** et puis a appelé à l'homme en lui demandant de venir avec elle. (S202)

(39) Il **est resté** dans le magasin ***pour toute la nuit*** avec une femme. (S207)

	Year 2	
	n	%
Stative VPs	7[161]	2.89
Atelic VPs	37[162]	15.29
Telic VPs	198[163]	81.82
	242	100

[161] *Devoir* (S204), *vouloir* (S205), *connaître, porter, ressembler* (S209), *avoir, connaître* (S215).

[162] *Commencer, essayer de, insister, tenter de* (S202), *commencer, explorer, jouer, menacer* (S204), *y avoir [beaucoup de désordre], commencer, faire [le patin à roulettes], continuer, manger [de la nourriture]* (S205), *faire [patiner], faire [les cercles et les tournes]* (S206), *boire [l'alcool], jouer* (S207), *faire semblant, raconter, se mettre à [pleurer]* (S208), *commencer, utiliser* (S209), *commencer de* (S210), *dormir, être [fatigué], jouer, visiter (2)* (S211), *commencer* (S212), *décrire* (S213), *dormir, jouer (2), visiter [le quatrième étage]* (S215), *courir, se plaindre* (S216), *essayer de* (S217).

[163] *Aller, cambrioler, dire, se casser, trouver* (S201), *appeler, arrêter (3), courir [quelques mètres], dire (2), échapper, laisser, manger [beaucoup de nourriture], mettre, payer (2), rattraper, rendre [inconscient], s'accrocher, se rendre, tomber, voir, voler (2)* (S202), *aller (2), dire, entrer, former, gagner, inviter, mettre, se bander les yeux, se casser [la jambe], sauver, tomber, être blessé* (S204), *aller, casser, décider, entrer, expliquer, fermer [la porte], reconnaître, retourner, sortir, tirer* (S205), *descendre, voir* (S206), *arrêter, dire, rester [toute la nuit], rester [pour un temps], retourner, s'endormir, voir, être arrêté, être trouvé* (S207), *expliquer, s'échapper, se faire [arrêter] (2), se faire [prendre], se foncer, se retrouver, suivre, voir, voler (3)* (S208), *décider (2), descendre, dire (2), expliquer, fermer [les portes], laisser, montrer (2), ouvrir [la porte], se casser, tirer, venir, voir* (S209), *accepter, accuser, acheter [un cigare] apercevoir, avérer, butter, dire, donner [sa place / son mouchoir], heurter, laisser [ouvert], monter, ordrer, prendre, prendre l'occasion de, s'arrêter, s'entrer (2), se tomber, signaler, témoigner, voir, voler* (S210), *aller, arrêter, arriver, devenir, donner [un gâteau], entrer (2), remplacer, rencontrer, se lever, tirer, tomber* (S211), *convenir, décider, demander (2), dire, donner, entrer, monter, passer* (S212), *arriver, demander, échapper, tomber (2), voir (2), voler (2)* (S213), *aller, connaître, dire, informer, s'échapper, voir (4), voler (2)* (S214), *aller, arriver (3), boire [trop d'alcool], dire (2), donner [le gâteau], ouvrir, prendre (2), réaliser, rencontrer, rendre visite [le rayon des jouets], se casser, se réveiller, tirer, trouver* (S215), *arrêter (2), arriver (2), changer [d'avis], consterner, croire (2), décider, dire, fuir, informer, prendre (2), se passer, se renverser, se retrouver, se réveiller, témoigner, voir, voler, être informé* (S216), *décider (2), dire, inviter, se casser [la jambe], trouver (2)* (S217).

As in year 1, the associations between the PC and telic VPs constitute more than 4/5 of all the tokens in the PC.

b. Uses

Differences from and similarities with the TL in the use of past participles and auxiliaries are studied in turn in this section.

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
190	78.51	33	13.64	19	7.85	-	0

(i) Actual uses

First, if we adopt a form-based approach, we note that there can be a regularization of the PP, as below:

(40) Après avoir payé, il **a apercevu** le gendarme hors la fenêtre; il lui a signalé (S210)

where the PP of *apercevoir* is formed on the model of *voir*. Then, the past participle can be replaced by another existing verbal form, such as the more basic PRES [***a suit*** (S208)], a feature that was already noted in year 1. In the following example, the PP is replaced by what morphologically looks like an IMP, although it is possible to see it as a misspelling of a PP in –é:

(41) Il **est descendait** et les patrons l'ont vu. (S206)

There are also forms that are misspelled [***ont fuit*** (S216), ***s'est mit*** (S208), ***a courru*** (S216), ***a du*** (S204), ***s'est endormir*** (S207), ***a courit*** (S210)]. *Fuit* and *mit* are homophonous to PS; in *courru* there is a redoubling of the root ending. For *du* and *endormir*, typing mistakes are likely as an English keyboard was used, which has accents only through keys and as –r and –e are next to each other. In the last example, the phonetic proximity of [y] and [i], as well as the fact that it is a possible verbal ending may explain *courit*. It seems therefore that Harley's (1992) and Harley & Swain's (1978) claim that the PP follows the first group in –er may be too restrictive and the tendency seems to rely on better known verbal tokens, even if they do not belong to the PP category.

As far as agreements are concerned, the main difference from native usage is hypercorrection with an overuse of agreements [**ont trouvés** (S217), ***ont décidés*** (S217)], even where there are no grounds for this [***a trouvés*** (S217)], although agreement is rarely forgotten as below:

(42) Charly et la femme **se sont retrouvé** alors dans la camionnette de police ensemble. (S208)

Note that all the examples of unnecessary agreement are produced by the same subject (S217), which may suggest that in his IL, the rule has been reformulated.

In this corpus, there is a general awareness of the rule of agreement with *avoir,* as the two examples below clearly show that it is nonetheless still problematic to identify a direct object. The hesitation is obvious in the second example where a choice of endings is offered:

(43) Puis, ils sont montrés au 5eme étage ou la fille a décidé de dormir au lit et l'homme lui **a laissée**. (S209)

(44) Ce policier a mis l'homme dans un camion avec d'autres criminels où se trouvait la femme que l'homme **a essayé(e)** de sauver. (S202)

After having spent time on the PP, we now focus on the auxiliary. There is still the occasional subject-verb agreement as in the example below:

(45) Le fille et l'homme **s'est echappé** de la voiture et la police (S214)

Avoir and *être* are used interchangeably: ***a tombé*** (S204), ***a entré*** (S212), ***est courue*** (S202), ***est dormie*** (S211).

Reflexive verbs are either overused or neglected. Overuse seems to be highly idiosyncratic as three of the four occurrences are produced by S210 [twice ***s'est entré, se sont tombés*** and ***s'est foncé*** (S208)] and two of these are with the verb *s'entrer.* Again, the problem seems to be mainly lexical in the omission of the reflexive pronoun in the following examples: ***ont échappé*** (S202), ***a échappé***[164] (S213), ***a formé*** (S204), ce qu'***a passé*** dans le magasin (S212), ***a cassé*** la jambe (S205).

Most of the semantic problems found with the PC are linked with the moment of reference. The PC is used instead of a PQP (see Kihlstedt 1998) to express anteriority to a past

[164] Here, there may be interference from 'to escape' in L1.

R. This is studied in the section devoted to the PQP so it is not evoked here. The other group of non-native productions concerns aspect. Stative verbs such as modal auxiliaries are used in the PC:

(46) Parmi la foule il y avait une jeune fille qui a dit à Charlie qu'il **a du** appliquer pour le travail. (S204)
(47) Cependant, une des voleurs a reconnu l'homme de sécurité, et il a expliqué qu'ils n'étaient des 'vrai' voleurs et simplement ils **ont voulu** de nourriture (S205)

Both examples occur in reported speech that has already been shown to be problematic in our analysis of the PRES. However in (47), *ont voulu* is coordinated with an IMP, an instance of *être*, a prototypical use of this tense; so it may be that the use of modal auxiliaries is also formulaic and appears first with the PC. However this is not borne out either by theoretical claims (modals are stative and should combine first with the IMP) or empirical evidence (*vouloir* in the IMP appears in year 1 [2 instances] and in year 4 [4 instances]). One may therefore suggest that this is an example of overgeneralization of the combination or a IL rule for sequence of tenses:

(48) Le gardien de nuit s'est cassé la jambe et les directeurs ont décidé de donner l'emploi à l'autre homme qui **a ressemblé** à Charlie Chaplin. (S209)

Some problems may be attributed to the likeness of verbs belonging to different types of *Aktionsart* such as *reconnaître* that is telic and *connaître* that is stative. Confusions occur as shown in the following examples:

(49) Mais un des trois voleurs, Big Bill **a** lui **connu** de son emploi précédent. (S209)
(50) Un des hommes a réalisé qu'il **a connu** Charlie Chaplin. (S215)

The first example is ambiguous as it could be understood as 'he recognized him as a former colleague', in which case *reconnaître* in the PC should be used, or 'he knew him from another workplace', that would require *connaître* in the IMP.

In the example below, *ont eu* stands for *avaient* and the use of the PC may be caused by the cotext that presents a series of PC:

(51) Trois hommes ***sont arrivés*** dans le grand surface. Ces hommes ***ont eu*** les pistoles et ils ***ont tiré*** à Charlie Chaplin et au un grand baril d'alcool. (S215)
[**a du** (S203), **a ressemblé, est, ont** (S209), **a été** (S211), **ont eu** (S215)]

In passing, it is striking that (46), (47) and (51) show an overuse of the PC with stative verbs whilst other studies claim that it is overused with dynamic verbs (Harley 1992, Bergström 1995). In our data, the improper overgeneralization happens mainly with the IMP.

(ii) Required uses

In this corpus, the IMP is the most frequent tense used instead of the native PC [***se rendait compte*** (S202), ***tombait, trouvait*** (S214), ***décidait*** (S208)] (see section on the IMP for more details). However, passive VPs are the most problematic feature with 5 IMP used instead of a PC [***etait involvé*** (S214), ***était pris*** (S213), ***était chassé*** (S201), ***étaient couronné*** (S217), ***était trouvée*** (S203)] whilst there are only 4 passive PC in this corpus.

The PRES is also occasionally used instead of a PC, but again there is no distinction of foreground or background that explains the variation:

(52) Le fourgan **est implique** dans un accident de la route et ***s'est renverse***. (S216)
(53) Elle ***a vu*** le pain dans la fenetre et elle **a la faim**. (S214)
(54) La femme ***s'est mit*** a pleurer et puis **saute** par l'arrière du camionnette.(S208)

In the first instance, the passive PRES is morphologically close to a PC and is coordinated with a PC conjugated with *être*, which may explain the confusion. In (53), according to the syntax of the sentence, hunger seems to be provoked by seeing the bread so *a eu faim* would be expected in native usage; however, given that *avoir* is prototypically used with the IMP, the PC may have felt inadequate. The fact that *avoir* is marginal in the PC at all levels may support this claim. (54) is less straightforward but it was shown earlier that the PRES is sometimes used to indicate the end of an episode or an event.

c. Conclusion on the use of the PC in the year 2 written narratives

As in year 1, the use of the PC creates mainly morphological problems of choice of auxiliary, formation and agreement of the past participle and the complex passive tends to be avoided. In cotexts where a PC would be required in the TL, both IMP and PRES are found at this level; the PQP found in year 1 was therefore – as expected – an idiosyncratic usage.

3.1.3. Year 4

a. Description

A quantitative description of the verb tokens found in the year 4 written narratives opens this section. The 484 PC in this corpus amount to 66.12% of all conjugated verbs at that level and are distributed among 162 different verbs, so each one appears on average 2.99 times.

accuser	1	éviter	1	rester	1	être accompagné	1
admettre	1	expliquer	3	réveiller	1	être arrêté	3
aider	1	faire	5	révéler	1	être coincé	1
alerter	1	falloir	2	revoir	1	être découvert	3
aller	19	forcer	1	* (s')aller	1	être demandé	1
annoncer	1	fracturer	1	s'amuser	1	être employé	1
apparaître	1	frapper	5	s'arrêter	2	être interpellé	1
appeler	6	fuir	2	s'échapper	5	être laissé	1
arrêter	11	fumer	1	s'écraser	1	être libéré	1
arriver	14	glisser	1	s'endormir	2	être obligé	1
attraper	1	imaginer	1	s'enfuir	3	être réveillé	1
avertir	1	informer	1	* (s')entrer	2		
avoir	2	insister	2	s'éveiller	1		
y avoir	2	interpeller	3	s'occuper	1		
avouer	1	inviter	3	se casser	3		
boire	10	jouer	2	se coucher	3		
bouleverser	1	lâcher	1	se faire + INF	1		
*chasser	1	laisser	2	se fermer	1		
casser	3	manger	13	* (se) fuir	2		
causer	1	marquer	1	se lever	4		
commander	4	* marquer = remarquer	1	se mettre	5		
commencer	6	mener	2	*se monter au lit	1		
confirmer	1	mettre	7	se passer	4		
continuer	1	monter	3	se rencontrer	1		
chercher	1	offrir	3	se rendre	1		
*chopper	1	oublier	1	se rendre compte	2		
corriger	1	ouvrir	2	se retrouver	1		
coucher	1	parler	1	se réveiller	2		
courir	3	partir	7	se souvenir	1		
crier	3	passer	2	* (se) tomber	3		
danser	1	payer	2	se tourner	1		
décider	6	perforer	1	se trouver	1		
déclarer	1	piquer	3	sortir	3		
découvrir	1	poursuivre	1	suivre	2		
demander	5	pousser	1	supporter	1		
descendre	7	pouvoir	4	taper	1		
détruire	1	prendre	5	téléphoner	1		
devenir	6	* prendre charge	1	* témoigner	3		
devoir	2	profiter	1	tenir	1		
dire	17	promettre	1	tirer	6		
donner	5	raconter	1	tomber	10		
échapper	1	ramener	1	travailler	3		
emmener	1	réaliser	1	trouver	9		
employer	1	réclamer	1	venir	2		

encourager	1	reconnaître	7	venir de	1		
enfiler	2	regarder	1	visiter	1		
entendre	1	rencontrer	3	voir	25		
entrer	10	rentrer	1	voler	23		
entrer en collision	6	renverser	1	vouloir			
essayer	10	réouvrir	1				
être en train de	1	répondre	1				

As regards *Aktionsart*, the VPs in this corpus are classified as shown below:

	Year 4	
	n	%
Stative VPs	9[165]	1.86
Atelic VPs	59[166]	12.19
Telic VPs	416[167]	85.5

[165] *Pouvoir* (S403), *pouvoir* (S406), *venir de* (S407), *falloir, pouvoir* (S409), *pouvoir* (S410), *falloir* (S415), *devoir* (S416), *devoir* (S420).

[166] *Essayer de (2)* (S401), *manger [ø / des sandwiches et des gâteaux]* (S403), *essayer de* (S404), *boire (2), manger, s'amuser* (S405), *insister* (S406), *insister, rester* (S407), *faire du patinage, manger [du gâteau]* (S408), *commencer à, commander, s'occuper* (S409), *essayer (2), suivre* (S410), *boire [ø / du rhum], courir, être en train de, manger [ø / des gâteaux]* (S411), *boire, être en train de, jouer, passer* (S412), *boire, danser* (S413), *commencer à (2)* (S414), *commencer (2), boire, manger (2)* (S415), *essayer, suivre* (S416), *essayer (2), vouloir* (S417), *boire (2), commencer, continuer à, imaginer, parler, travailler* (S418), *courir* (S419), *aider, boire, chasser, essayer, glisser* (S420), *courir, poursuivre* (S421), *essayer, jouer, manger [du gâteau], travailler* (S422).

[167] *Aller, appeler (2), arrêter (2), causer, commander [beaucoup de plats / des cigares], crier (2), décider, dire (3), donner, mettre, passer, s'échapper (2), se rendre, se souvenir, voir, voler (3)* (S401), *avertir, dire, rentrer, se passer, témoigner, voir, voler (2)* (S402), *aller (2), arriver (2), devenir, se casser, se coucher, se lever, se mettre, trouver (2), venir, voir, être employé* (S403), *arrêter (2), arriver (2), y avoir, dire (3), entrer, entrer en collision, frapper, fuir, laisser, manger, mettre, payer, tomber, voir (2), voler (2)* (S404), *aller, arriver, descendre, devenir (2), inviter, monter, partir, perforer, se coucher, se rendre compte, se réveiller, tirer, être arrêté, être réveillé* (S405), *arrêter, arriver (2), y avoir, avouer, demander (2), dire, donner, entrer, expliquer, lâcher, manger [deux plats], monter, partir, prendre (2), renverser, se passer, voir (4), voler (4), être obligé* (S406), *décider (2), demander, dire (3), entrer [en collision], frapper, interpeller (2), répondre, s'écraser, tomber (2), voler, être interpellé, être libéré* (S407), *aller (2), appeler, arrêter, descendre, mener, reconnaître, s'endormir, s'enfuir, tirer, être découvert* (S408), *avoir [une collision], corriger, chopper, demander, dire (3), entrer (3), expliquer, donner [des cadeaux], frapper (2), fumer [un cigare], mettre, piquer, prendre, reconnaître, rencontrer, s'échapper, s'enfuir, se passer, témoigner, tomber, trouver, voir (3), voler, être coincé* (S409), *arrêter, arriver (2), commander, décider, entrer, entrer en collision, mettre, offrir, pousser, prendre charge, révéler, s'arrêter, s'enfuir, se faire, se retrouver, se tomber (2), voir, voler (3), être laissé* (S410), *aller, appeler, casser (2), coucher, descendre, devenir, dire, monter, reconnaître, rencontrer, se lever, se mettre, se trouver, sortir, tirer, trouver* (S411), *aller, appeler, décider, détruire, encourager, entendre, marquer, reconnaître, s'aller, s'entrer, se fuir, se mettre, se réveiller, être arrêté, être découvert (2)* (S412), *aller, découvrir, demander, descendre, forcer, inviter, interpeller, mettre, offrir, reconnaître, réveiller, s'échapper, s'endormir, se casser, tirer (2) , tomber (2), venir* (S413), *alerter, arrêter (2), arriver (3), bouleverser, confirmer, déclarer, entrer, expliquer, faire [chasser] (2), partir, piquer (2), prendre, se fuir, se passer, voir (3)* (S414), *aller, arriver, descendre, emmener, employer, enfiler (2), éviter, fracturer, inviter, s'échapper, s'éveiller, trouver* (S415) *admettre, apparaître, arrêter (2), arriver (3), entrer (2), entrer [en collision], frapper, mettre, partir (2), prendre, raconter, revoir, se rendre compte, sortir, tomber, voir, voler (2)* (S416), *accuser, aller (2), annoncer, arriver (3), devenir, entrer [en collision](2), informer, manger [un repas], payer, rencontrer, sortir, supporter, témoigner, tomber, voler (2), être accompagné, être arrêté* (S417), *arriver, chercher, descendre, faire [un tour], laisser, marquer, ouvrir, partir, reconnaître, téléphoner, tirer, tomber (2), travailler, trouver, visiter, voir (3)* (S418) *aller, arriver, avoir [un accident], demander, dire, profiter [de l'occasion], s'arrêter, s'entrer [en collision], se mettre à, se rencontrer, se tomber, se*

	472	100

The results of the classification according to the *Aktionsart* are somewhat surprising as the prototypical associations of the PC with telicity are more frequent in this corpus than at lower levels. According to the PAH, we would have expected a decrease of prototypical uses and a widening of combinations. It will be necessary to assess this tendency in the light of native production.

b. Uses

The distribution of the PC according forms and functions gives the following results:

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
410	84.71	41	8.47	31	6.4	2	0.41

(i) Actual uses

Morphologically speaking, one verb, *s'enfuir,* is obviously problematic: this VP seemed to be avoided in year 2 where it is replaced by *fuir* (S216) and in year 1 by *faire fuite* (S101, S104) although there are two tentative PC: *s'en sont fuit* (S107) and *se sont fuit* (S109). Several tentative forms are present in this corpus: *fuir* [***ont fuit*** (S404)], **se fuir [**s'est fuite*** (S412), ***s'est fui*** (S414)], **s'en fuir* [***s'en est fui*** (S409), ***s'est en fuite*** (S410), ***s'est enfuit*** (S408). Although they fall short of native usage, these forms may indicate an acquisitional advance as the year 4 subjects experiment with more complicated VPs.

As far as the ending of the past participle is concerned, some of the examples above align on more basic morphological form, such as the PRES: ***a met*** (S409), ***a suit*** (S416), ***a poursuit*** (S421). The PP can be reconstructed to look closer to the infinitive [***a ouvrit*** (S418)].

Past participle agreement still differs from the target. This is the case for the agreement with the subject for PP with *être:*

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tourner, voir, voler (3) (S419), *aller (3), appeler, arriver (3), casser, décider, devenir, dire, donner, échapper, mener [jusqu'à la cafétaria], mettre, ouvrir, réaliser, se lever, se monter, trouver (2), voir* (S420), *aller (3), attraper, crier, entrer, faire, manger, ramener, réclamer, regarder [dans le fond], taper, tenir [vite], voir (3), voler* (S421), *descendre, donner [une chance], offrir, oublier, partir, promettre, reconnaître, réouvrir, se casser, se coucher, se fermer, se lever, trouver* (S422).

(55) La boulangère **est arrivé** et a commencé a insulté la jeune fille qui a commencé à pleurer. (S414)
(56) La jeune dame en essayant de s'enfuire, **est rentré** dans Charlie Chaplin, qui se promenait. (S402)
(57) A ce moment là elle est entrée en collision avec un homme et ensemble les deux **sont tombé** sur terre. (S407)
(58) A ce moment là, le camion s'est écrasé et l'un des gendarmes, la femme et l'homme **sont tombé** du camion. (S407)

The rule of agreement of the PP with *avoir* with the preceding direct object is not systematically taken into account as the examples below prove:

(59) Il y avait aussi une femme. Un des hommes ***l'*a mené** à la section de nourriture où les deux ont mangé du gâteau. (S408) (115)[***l'*a mené** (S420)]
(60) Une fois arrivée dans le magasin il ***l'*a emmené** au café ou ils ont mangé des crêpes et des gâteaux. (S415)
(61) Un policier est arrivé, en demandant ce qui s'est passé, et quand la boulangère a expliqué que la jeune fille a piqué une baguette de son camion de livraison, le policier ***l'*a arrêté**. (S414)

If we now focus on the use of auxiliaries, there is still the occasional confusion between *être* and *avoir* [***a resté*** (S407), ***sont mis** des rollers* (S411)], but it seems less widespread than in previous years. However a more interesting feature concerns reflexive, sometimes misspelled as in [*ce qui* ***c'est passé*** (S406)] but overused in the production of three students: S406, S412 and S419 [***s'est allé*** (S412), ***se sont tombés*** (S410, S419), ***se sont entrés*** (S412), ***s'est entrée en collision*** (S419). The reflexive is sometimes used as a passive as in the examples below:

(62) La fille **s'est arrêtée** au lieu de l'homme. (S410)
(63) Quand le magasin **s'est fermé**, Chaplin et une amie ont oublié qu'ils avaient du travail à faire. (S422)

On the other hand, an impossible passive structure in native French is found in S413's narrative:

(64) Charlie Chaplin **a été demandé** à travailler dans le magasin. (S413)

As in the case at lower levels of IL, the use of the PC instead of the PQP is still widespread and is studied in the relevant section. However, it is worthwhile mentioning that the

PQP is emerging and the PC and the PQP are used as variants in the same essays as shown below:

(65) Chaplin, afin de ne pas voir la fille arrêtée par la police pour vol, a dit que s'était lui qui **avait volé** la baguette et non la fille. (S402)
(66) Pendant que Charlie est enlevé, la dame qui avait tout vu réclame au boulanger que ce n'était pas Chaplin qui **a volé** le pain mais la fille. (S402)
(67) L'homme a dit au gendarme qu'il **avait volé** la baguette, pas la jeune fille. (S404)
(68) Le boulanger a dit au gendarme que la fille **a volé** le pain. (S404)

This is especially striking in the second pair of examples where the cotext is identical. Note that this feature does not support variationist claims that alternative forms do not occur randomly but in certain environments (Preston 1996).

A limited number of PC would be replaced by an IMP in native use:

(69) Malheureusement, il y avait un autre témoin, une femme qui a dit au boulanger qu'il y avait une femme qui **est venu de** voler une baguette. (S407) [**a travaillé** (S418)]
(70) J'ai vu une femme qui **a cherché** pour de la lingerie, mais elle a trouvé l'homme dessous toute la lingerie. (S418)

In the first instance, the use of the PC may be due to the fact that the verb phrase *venir de* is close to *venir* that, as a telic verb, is highly compatible with the PC. In the second example, the PC may be due to the immediate cotext as the occurrence is in a sequence of PC. In (71), the problem comes from the introductory conjunction that presents the situation as developing, which is contradicted by the PC:

(71) ***Tandis que*** le livreur **est allé** dans la boulangerie pour livrer le pain, la petite fille a volé une baguette de son camion (S416)

In the last example, *être* combines with the PC, which is supposed to be an advanced feature. However, *être* is here in the VP *être en train de* that clearly shows the internal development of the situation, which the PC cannot show:

(72) Tout d'un coup, un des hommes qui ***a été en train d'***arrêter Charlie l'***a reconnu*** (S412)

So there would seem to be here a phenomenon the PAH does not account for, namely the overgeneralization of combinations between tense and *Aktionsart* (see Salaberry 2000: 170).

(ii) Required uses

As in the other corpora, the IMP and the PRES are found to be replacement forms for the PC. The specific combinations of the IMP are studied in the relevant section and this phenomenon is examined further. A feature that distinguishes this corpus is the lower frequency of passive IMP [*était mis* (S401), *était placé* (twice in S407)] whilst 12 passive PC occur. This may show either a greater mastery of morphology or a less formulaic use of forms, especially of *être*.

A passive PRES, maybe confused for a PC, is used in the following examples that opens a narration all in the PRES:

(73) Pendant que Charlie **est enlevé**, la dame qui avait tout vu réclame au boulanger que ce n'était pas Chaplin qui a volé le pain mais la fille. (S402)

Finally, S420 seems to make an idiosyncratic use of the PQP where a PC would be expected in native usage.

(73) Les deux sont allés au département de jouets, où ils **avaient joué** avant de porter les rollers. (S420)
(74) Puis, il **avait porté** quelque chose sur ses yeux pour montrer qu'il peut glisser sans voir. (S420)

c. Conclusion on the use of the PC in the year 4 written narratives

At this level of acquisition, morphology seems to have significantly improved as evidenced by the lower frequency of mistakes when choosing auxiliaries and past participles and by the increase of passive PC. Remaining IL morphology seems to point towards an increased mastery of more complicated VPs (cf. *s'enfuir*).

3.1.4. Control group

a. Description

The control group contains 119 PC tokens (59.5% of all conjugated verbs) for a range of 67 different verbs in the corpus; so, on average, each appears 1.78 times. The PC are distributed as follows:

affirmer	1	manger	1	s'apercevoir	1	être arrêté	1
aller	2	mettre	1	s'enfuir	2	être choisi	1
apercevoir	1	monter	1	s'interposer	1	être confié	1
appeler	2	montrer	1	sauter	2	être emmené	1
arrêter	1	nourrir	2	se casser la jambe	3	être engagé	1

arriver	1	obtenir	1	se dépêcher	1	être projeté	1
assommer	1	ouvrir	1	se diriger	1	être rejoint	1
avoir lieu	1	payer	1	se mettre à	1	être retrouvé	2
commencer	1	pleurer	1	se mettre à la recherche	1		
demander	1	prendre	4	se mettre à table	1		
dénoncer	1	prendre pour	1	se produire	2		
descendre	1	profiter	1	se retourner	1		
dire	6	proposer	2	se retrouver	1		
donner	5	prouver	1	se réveiller	1		
embarquer	2	rapporter	1	se servir	1		
emmener	3	rattraper	3	sortir	2		
enfiler	1	reconnaître	2	tomber	2		
essayer	1	redescendre	1	trinquer	1		
être	2	relâcher	3	utiliser	1		
être = aller	3	remplir	1	venir	1		
faillir	1	rentrer	2	voir	1		
faire	4	renverser	1	voler	2		
falloir	1	réussir	1	vouloir	2		
inviter	1	s'allonger	1				

If we now classify those VPs according to their lexical aspect, we obtain these results:

	Control group	
	n	%
Stative verbs	2[168]	1.68
Atelic verbs	22[169]	18.49
Telic verbs	95[170]	79.83
	119	100

The degree of combinations of telicity with the PC is more in line with the percentages found in year 1 and year 2 than in year 4. There may be a tendency to overgeneralize affinities between aspect and *Aktionsart* at some advanced level of acquisition.

[168] *Avoir lieu* (F2), *falloir* (F4).

[169] *Donner, se diriger, se mettre [à la recherche de], se servir de* (F1), *nourrir, utiliser* (F2), *donner, essayer de, faillir, faire, nourrir, se dépêcher, vouloir* (F4), *commencer à, manger, pleurer, s'interposer, se mettre à, vouloir* (F5) *faire, profiter, trinquer* (F6).

[170] *affirmer, apercevoir, appeler, arrêter, dénoncer, dire (2), embarquer (2), faire + INF, prendre, prouver, rattraper (3), relâcher, remplir, rentrer (2), s'enfuir, se mettre [à table], sortir, tomber, voler, être rejoint* (F1), *descendre, dire, être (2), obtenir, prendre, proposer, reconnaître, se casser [la jambe], tomber* (F2), *être [témoin de], être projeté* (F3), *aller, appeler, donner, emmener, enfiler, être [+INF], mettre, ouvrir, prendre, prendre [pour], reconnaître, redescendre, réussir, s'allonger, s'apercevoir, se casser [la jambe], se produire, se réveiller, sortir, voir, être choisi, être emmené, être retrouvé* (F4), *aller, arriver, assommer, demander, dire (3), donner (2), emmener (2), être témoin, faire [+INF], monter, montrer, payer, prendre, rapporter, relâcher (2), renverser, sauter (2), s'enfuir, se retourner, voler* (F5), *se casser, inviter, proposer, se produire, venir, être arrêté, être confié, être engagé, être retrouvé* (F6).

b. Uses

(i) Actual uses

At a morphological level, native speakers of French fail to produce target-like PC forms. Failures appear in the spelling of the past participles of verbs in –ir, where an extra final –t is added [**s'est enfuit** (F1), **a nourrit** (F2, F4)]; the past participle of *prendre* is remodeled according the same pattern [ont prit (F2)]. A second type of problems is related to PP agreement, either when *avoir* is preceded by a direct object or in the case of reflexive verbs:

(75) Ils l'**ont rattrapé** et il **a relâché** Charlot. (F1)
(76) Pendant ce temps, le policier **a rattrapé** la fille et l'**a embarqué**. (F1)
(77) La femme **s'est réveillé** et **s'est aperçue** qu'il était 9H30. (F4)

(ii) Required uses

Narration sometimes shifts into the PRES: it is particularly clear in F2's narrative that starts in the PC and ends up in a series of PRES. This has already been mentioned as a natural tendency in oral storytelling and it is less influential but not absent in a written corpus where revision is allowed.

c. Conclusion on the use of the PC in the control group written narratives

The PC is the main written narrative tense for native speakers although the PS is favoured by F3 whose use of tenses has already been shown idiosyncratic. This seems to contradict somewhat Judge's (1998: 218) claim about a system based on the narrative PRES replacing the PS in *récit* but it must be said that her corpus derives from newspaper articles, biographies and novels. The morphology of the PC turns out to be problematic even in the mother tongue because of the homophony of different verb forms and the zero phonetic weight of grammatical feature such as the –e of the feminine.

3.1.5. Conclusion on the PC in written narratives

We now recapitulate on the use of the PC in the four different groups. We start from quantitative remarks and then proceed to more qualitative ones. The PC is the most frequent tense throughout the corpora: the proportion is almost equal in year 1 and in the control group whilst it is higher in year 4 and especially in year 2. This high frequency is in no way surprising and may be explained within the framework of the PAH according to which the preterite form

is the first past to be acquired. It may also support the frequency of input hypothesis, given that the PC is the most widespread past tense in the classroom. According to the analysis of a sample of classroom talk, Kaplan (1987) found that « the teacher talk data had an overwhelming proportion (84 percent) of *passé composé* for all past tenses used ». The tendency to go back to the PRES in storytelling is limited here because of the written medium that allows some planning and especially because of the strict instructions (repeated twice) to narrate in the past.

Morphology is the most problematic feature of the PC as attention needs to be paid to the choice of auxiliary, to the past participle root, and to the agreement. While the choice of auxiliary is straightforward among our sample of native speakers (but this is not always the case in popular French for example) in a monitored environment, past participle morphology and syntax are not perfectly mastered by all subjects. Of course, this does not indicate that native speakers fall short of the mastery of their own language but that they fall short of the mastery of spelling and grammatical conventions.

If we now focus on the use of *Aktionsart*, the affinity between the PC and telicity (and more generally dynamicity) and the scarcity of the PC combined with a stative VP are unmissable.

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 4		Control group	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Stative verbs	9	2.42	7	2.89	9	1.86	2	1.68
Atelic verbs	61	16.4	37	15.29	59	12.19	22	18.49
Telic verbs	302	81.18	198	81.82	416	85.5	95	79.83
	372	100	242	100	472	100	119	100

These results support claims of the PAH according to which there are preferential and categorical combinations of tense and *Aktionsart*. However, although theoretically the combination of any tense with any *Aktionsart* is possible, there are prototypical combinations in native usage (see Klum 1961, Binnick 1991, among others). Therefore, the explanatory power of the hypothesis for language development may rightly be questioned when native speakers show similar tendencies to learners' (and even at times stronger associations between aspect

and *Aktionsart*). This point is already made in Kihlstedt (1998: 47) and she mentions Andersen & Shirai's (1994) answer to these criticisms:

> [...] chez les apprenants, il y a une allégeance absolue, sans exception, au principe de compatibilité, alors que les locuteurs natifs ont la liberté de s'en écarter.

The possibility of the formulaic learning of forms needs to be tested with the most frequent verbs. Müller (1974, in Howard 2002) provided a list of the 22 most frequent French verbs:

> *être* > *avoir* > *faire* > *dire* > *aller* > *voir* > *savoir* > *pouvoir* > *falloir* > *vouloir* > *venir* > *prendre* > *arriver* > *croire* > *mettre* > *passer* > *devoir* > *parler* > *trouver* > *donner* > *tenir* > *aimer*.

If past forms are indeed acquired as chunks, the most common verbs of French should be the first in learners' IL and should be most prominent at the lower levels. The distribution of the most frequent verbs in each corpus appears below:

	Total of different verbs[171]	Number of frequent verbs / 20[172]	Percentage of frequent verbs / total in %	Tokens of frequent verbs	Percentage of frequent verbs / total IMP in %
Year 1	126	13[173]	10.32	126	33.87
Year 2	112	12[174]	10.71	64	26.45
Year 4	162	14[175]	8.64	114	23.55
Control group	67	11[176]	16.42	27	22.69

In this corpus, the control group shows less variety in the range of verbs they used, with the highest percentage of frequent verbs of all groups. However, the most frequent verbs are repeated more in the ILs: although the most frequent verbs constitute only a tenth (10.32%) of the range of verbs in year 1, they account for a third (33.87%) of all occurrences in the PC. The proportion of frequent verbs is equivalent in year 2, but all their instances only account for a quarter (26.45%) of all PC. So it seems that use becomes less formulaic as level improves. The

[171] Verbs in the passive are not counted here as what is conjugated in passives is in fact *être*.
[172] *Etre* and *avoir* are not taken into account here and treated separately in order to allow comparisons with studies such as Kihlstedt's and Howard's.
[173] *Aller* (23), *arriver* (8), *devoir* (2), *dire* (20), *donner* (5), *faire* (7), *mettre* (3), *passer* (5), *prendre* (14), *trouver* (14), *venir* (4), *voir* (20), *vouloir* (1).
[174] *Aller* (7), *arriver* (7), *devoir* (1), *dire* (13), *donner* (5), *faire* (4), *mettre* (2), *prendre* (6), *trouver* (4), *venir* (1), *voir* (13), *vouloir* (1).
[175] *Aller* (19), *arriver* (14), *devoir* (2), *dire* (16), *donner* (5), *faire* (5), *falloir* (2), *mettre* (7), *passer* (2) *prendre* (5), *trouver* (9), *venir* (3), *voir* (24), *vouloir* (1).
[176] *Aller* (2), *arriver* (1), *dire* (6), *donner* (5), *faire* (4), *mettre* (1), *prendre* (4), *venir* (1), *voir* (1), *vouloir* (2).

table below recapitulates on the relative percentages of *être, c'était, avoir* and *y avoir*[177], the most frequent verbs and the other verbs not included in the first two categories:

	Etre, avoir, c'était, y avoir	Most frequent verbs	Other verbs
Year 1	1.35	33.87	64.78
Year 2	0.82	26.45	72.73
Year 4	1.03	23.55	75.42
Control group	1.68	22.69	75.63

From these figures, we may conclude that the use of the PC is creative with only between 1/4 (years 2 and 4) and 1/3 (year 1) of all the PC made of formulaic tokens. This may mean that the use of the PC is elaborate and advanced, as it develops earlier in learners' IL. Moreover, it seems that IL use is – at least quantitatively – close to native usage.

A last way to evaluate a potential formulaic use of PC is to proceed to a qualitative analysis of all the VPs used in that tense[178]. If the acquisition as chunks were to be confirmed, one would expect a common core of frequent verbs at each learning level and a set of specific VPs that would expand with the level of IL. The table below classifies all the tokens in the PC according to the corpus in which they appear:

	Verbs
Only in year 1	accompagner, apporter, apprendre, *batter, choisir, convaincre, *courer, couvrir, *départer, enlever, *eucouter, *faire fuit(e), frapper, hurler[179], interroger, interrompre, libérer, *metter, passer[180], permettre, promettre, *recontrer, regarder[181], rencontrer[182], retrouver, revenir, rouler, savoir[183], *s'ouvrer, se battre, *se capturer, se dérouler, *se disparaître, se finir, *se monter, *se rouler[184], servir, téléphoner, être amené, être pris
Only in year 2	accepter, accrocher, avérer[185], *butter, cambrioler, changer, connaître[186], consterner, convenir[187] , croire, décrire, échapper[188], endormir, explorer, faire semblant, former[189], gagner, heurter, menacer, *ordrer, passer[190], *prendre l'occasion, rassembler,

[177] The frequency of the auxiliaries is calculated separately to allow comparisons with the IMP in which they are very frequent.
[178] This detailed classification will also allow us to compare the VPs used in the PC and in the IMP and to test the hypothesis according to which a VP needs to be acquired in the PC before it is used in the IMP (Kihlstedt 1998).
[179] In S115's idiolect *hurler*means *heurter.*
[180] Instead of *se passer.*
[181] Instead of *garder.*
[182] Instead of *se rencontrer.*
[183] Meaning *connaître.*
[184] Meaning *faire du patin à roulettes.*
[185] Meaning *avouer.*
[186] Meaning *reconnaître,*
[187] Meaning *accepter.*
[188] Instead of *s'échapper.*
[189] Instead of *se former.*
[190] Instead if *se passer.*

	remplacer, rendre, rendre visite, *s'entrer, se bander les yeux, *se foncer, se plaindre, se renverser, *se tomber, signaler[191], tenter, être informé, être trouvé
Only in year 4	admettre, alerter, apparaître, attraper, avertir, avouer, bouleverser, causer, commander, confirmer, chopper, corriger, coucher, crier, danser, déclarer, détruire, employer, encourager, entrer en collision, être en train de, éviter, forcer, fracturer, frapper, glisser, imaginer, interpeller, lâcher, marquer, marquer[192], mener, oublier, parler, perforer, piquer, pousser, pouvoir, *prendre charge, ramener, réclamer, réouvrir, répondre, réveiller, révéler, revoir, *s'aller, s'écraser, s'endormir, *s'entrer, s'éveiller, s'occuper, se fermer, *se monter (au lit), se rencontrer, se rendre compte, se souvenir, se tourner, supporter, taper, téléphoner, tenir, être accompagné, être coincé, être découvert, être demandé, être employé, être interpellé, être laissé, être libéré, être obligé, être réveillé
Only in control group	affirmer, assommer, dénoncer, embarquer, être[193], faillir, montrer, nourrir, obtenir, pleurer, prendre [pour], proposer, prouver, rapporter, redescendre, relâcher, remplir, réussir, s'allonger, s'apercevoir, s'interposer, se dépêcher, se diriger, se mettre [à la recherche], se mettre [à table], se produire, se retourner, se servir, trinquer, être choisi, être confié, être emmené, être engagé, être projeté, être rejoint, être retrouvé
Year 1 / year 2	acheter, casser, connaître, dormir, fermer, montrer[194], porter, retourner, sauver, être blessé
Year 1 / year 4	aider, annoncer, y avoir, chasser[195], chercher, découvrir, échapper, entendre, fumer, offrir, partir, passer, poursuivre, regarder, se coucher, *se fuir, *se tomber, se trouver, travailler
Year 2 / year 4	accuser, avoir, fuir, informer, raconter, réaliser, s'échapper, se faire + INF, se rendre
Year 1 / year 2 / year 4	boire, continuer, courir, décider, devenir, devoir, entrer, expliquer, insister, jouer, laisser, rencontrer, rester, s'arrêter, se lever, se passer, suivre, témoigner, tirer, trouver, visiter
Year 1 / control	avoir lieu, être[196], sauter
Year 2 / control	apercevoir
Year 4 / control	enfiler, falloir, profiter, renverser
Year 1/ year 2 / control	rattraper, utiliser
Year 1/ year 4 / control	emmener, faire, rentrer, s'enfuir
Year 2/ year 4 / control	se mettre, se retrouver
All	aller, appeler, arrêter, arriver, commencer, demander, descendre, dire, donner, essayer, inviter, manger, mettre, monter, ouvrir, payer, prendre, reconnaître, se casser, se réveiller, sortir, tomber, venir, voir, voler, vouloir, être arrêté

Out of the 126 VPs in year 1, 40 (31.75%) are only found in that year; 11 are morphologically deficient and a further 5 do not convey a native meaning. In year 2, 36 out of the 112 VPs (32.14%) are specific to that corpus; 6 of them present morphological peculiarities and 7 are not used in their native meaning. As for year 4, 72 of the 162 VPs (44.44%) are not found in any other corpora but only 4 are morphologically incorrect and 1 is used with a wrong

[191] Meaning *faire signe.*
[192] Meaning *remarquer.*
[193] Menaing *aller.*
[194] Instead of *monter.*
[195] Meaning *pourchasser.*

meaning. These figures clearly show an obvious increase in lexical acquisition and the leap from year 2 to year 4 is more dramatic if only the correctly used VPs are taken into account: 24 for year 1 (19.05%), 23 for year 2 (20.54%) and 67 for year 4 (41.36%). Without any doubt, spending a year in the target language community has a dramatic influence on lexical development: the range of verbs is wider and learners have gained access to other registers as illustrated by *chopper* (S109) for *attraper* or *piquer* (S414) for *voler*. This corroborates Howard's findings (2002: 200) on the influence of the year abroad:

> Le séjour à l'étranger a été important pour la morphologisation temporelle aussi bien que pour l'élargissement du lexique verbal marqué aux temps du passé.

This clearly constitutes an additional input to the year 4 learning experience.

Finally at a qualitative level, a clear evolution is noticeable in the nativeness of verb tokens used in the PC. Adequate morphology and semantics improve with the level of study. Non target-like productions appear nonetheless even in the native corpus but they come from spelling conventions and not from actual problems of mastery. The following section considers the use of the PC in oral narratives.

3.2. Oral narratives

3.2.1. Year 1

a. Description

The year 1 oral narratives contain 484 PC (56.34% of all conjugated verbs) distributed between 99 different verbs so, on average, each one appears 4.89 times. They are listed in the table below:

accuser	2	entrer	13	remarquer	1	être arrêté	10
aider	1	essayer	15	rencontrer	8	être blessé	1
aimer	1	être	3	rencontrer = se rencontrer	2	*être couvré	1
alerter	1	être = aller	2	rendre visite à	2	*être montré	1
aller	24	être en train de	1	rentrer	2	être pris	1
appeler	2	*Y être	1	réouvrir	2	être trouvé	1
arrêter	3	expliquer	1	rester	1		
*arrester	4	faire	9	réveiller	1		
arriver	12	*faire fui(te)	2	s'arrêter	1		

[196] There is probably an occurrence of *être* in the year 1 corpus : *Ils ont était ensemble* (S119). However, as the form is ambiguously written, we have classified it as an indefinite form.

attaquer	1	frapper	1	s'arriver	1		
avoir	3	* fuyer	1	s'échapper	2		
avoir la chance de	1	fumer	1	s'écraser	1		
avoir mal	1	garder	2	s'enfuir	1		
y avoir	3	interroger	1	sauter	1		
* batter = buter	1	inviter	1	sauver	1		
boire	5	jouer	8	se battre	1		
cacher = casser	1	laisser	1	se casser	2		
casser	4	manger	12	* se fuir	2		
capturer	2	monter	1	se heurter	1		
choisir	1	montrer	2	se passer	3		
commencer	9	noter	1	se rencontrer	1		
contacter	1	ouvrir	4	se réveiller	1		
coucher	1	partir	2	servir	2		
courir	13	passer (un bon temps)	1	* sorter	1		
crier = pleurer	1	passer = se passer	3	sortir	1		
décider	5	patiner	1	suivre	2		
découvrir	2	payer	1	téléphoner	1		
descendre	2	penser	3	* tendrer = surveiller	1		
devenir		permettre	2	tomber	12		
devoir	2	porter	3	travailler	3		
dire	40	pouvoir	2	trouver	16		
disparaître		prendre	23	venir	5		
donner	10	*prener	1	visiter	3		
dormir	10	quitter	1	voir	34		
*échapper	5	rattraper	2	voler	34		
encourager	1	recevoir	1	vouloir	1		
entendre	1	regarder	1	voyager	1		

The classification of verbs according to the *Aktionsart* confirms the categorical use of the PC that was noted in the written narratives, although the proportion is slightly inferior.

	n	%
Stative verbs	19[197]	3.73
Atelic verbs	98[198]	20.12
Telic verbs	367	76.14
	484	100

[197] *Avoir, y avoir, porter (2)* (S102), *y avoir (2), devoir* (S106), *porter* (S108), *porter* (S109), y avoir, *pouvoir* (S110), *être* (S112), *avoir [de l'argent]* (S115), *y être, être couvert* (S117), *porter, rester* (S119), *porter* (S120), *devoir* (S121).

[198] *Dormir, essayer, faire, manger* (S101), *boire (2), commencer de, faire [du patinage] (2), manger (2), passer* (S102), *commencer, dormir (2), essayer, penser, regarder, voler* (S103), *courir, dormir, encourager, faire, regarder* (S104), *aimer, courir, jouer, tendrer, travailler* (S105), *commencer de, commencer (4), commencer à, être en train de, manger* (S106) *courir, essayer* (S107), *commencer, faire [le patin](2), se battre, suivre* (S109), *patiner, penser, suivre* (S110), *dormir, manger* (S112), *dormir (2), essayer (3), jouer, travailler* (S113), *courir, dormir, faire [le patinage], jouer (2), manger, rester* (S114), *aider, manger* (S115), *dormir, essayer (2), jouer (2), manger* (S116), *essayer (3), garder* (S117), *avoir mal, courir (2)* (S118), *courir (2), crier, essayer, jouer, manger, rester* (S119), *boire, courir (4), essayer (2), interroger, jouer* (S120), *garder, servir, travailler, vouloir* (S121).

b. Uses

Being oral, this corpus only lends itself to the detection of morphological problems that are phonetically perceptible, such as the choice of the wrong auxiliary or incorrect past participles. The agreements are not taken into account here, given that phonetically, modern French never distinguishes between plural and singular, and in most varieties, it has lost the difference of length between the masculine and the feminine.

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
360	74.69	69	14.32	50	10.37	3	0.62

The level of morphological accuracy in this corpus is slighly higher (+ 2.8%) than in the written corpus where problems of grammatical spelling further impeded production.

(i) Actual uses

This corpus shows a tendency towards simplification in the formation of the past participle. This can reveal itself in a alignment on –er verbs [***a fuyé*** (S102), ***a prené*** (S117), ***a sorté*** (S108), ***a été couvré*** (S117)], sometimes using an English root: ***a tendré*** (S105), ***a arresté*** (S108, S117) (see Harley 1992, Harley & Swain 1978). The alignment may follow another group: ***a prenu*** (S112), ***a suivu*** (S110), ***a volu*** (S121). Another type of simplification is the use of the verb root as PP [***a dort*** (S117), ***a peut*** (S117), ***a prend+*** (three times in S115), ***a // voit*** *son amie* (S108)]; this seems to be particularly the case with verbs in -ir [***a couri*** (S115), ***a ouvri*** (S117, S121)]. The conjugation of *s'enfuir* proves problematic in all the corpora [***s'est fui*** (S106), *se* ***sont fuit+*** (S109), ***a s'enfuit*** (S112)]. The occurrence below is more difficult to analyze as two forms appear in free variation for *voler: volé* and *volu*. This may show an unstable system that is evolving towards TL standards; it may also be influenced by the proximity of *vu*. This hypothesis may be supported by the facts that S419 also uses the two forms *volé-volu* - the lattest being used twice in the vicinity of *venu* - and that S121 actually corrects her production in the second instance:

(78) un policier ***a vu*** la fille aussi quand elle **a** ***volu** cette pièce de pain du pain. mais il y a Charlie Chaplin et il a dit qu'il était lui qui a pris et ***volu** euh # **volé** cette pièce de pain. (S121)

Regarding the use of auxiliary, there are some instances where the agreement between the subject and the verb is incorrect: generally, a plural subject corresponds to a singular verb [***Charlie Chaplin et sa - sa femme*** # *sa femme* **a décidé** (S116), ***Tous les deux*** / st ***a porté*** (S109), ***Les gens ont*** # ***est tombé***.(S119), ***le homme, le policier et la femme*** **suis tombé** (S120)] (see Bartning 1997: 23 for similar results). It is rarer the other way round [***elle*** / **ont couru** (S119)]. In (79), the discrepancy may be attributed to the mother tongue where *the police* is a collective and requires a verb in the plural:

(79) Quand / la police euh ***sont arrivés***, il ***a fuyé*** dans la rue et il ***a pris*** un autobus pour échapper la police # pour échapper le: - le propriétaire de pâtisserie et/ euh.

Finally a first person singular is used instead of a third person, which Bartning (1997) sees as a *« forme de base »* - in (80):

(80) ***Chaplin*** a # **suis allé** à l'autre départment de la magasin euh et il a essayé de porter quelque chose (S120)

The most common IL feature is nonetheless the confusion between auxiliaries; one is used instead of the other. First there is an overgeneralization of *avoir* [***a allé*** (S117), ***ont allé*** (twice in S119, S102), ***ont+ st arrivé*** (S109), ***a rentré*** *en bas* (S116), ***a tombé*** (S113, S115, S116, S117), ***a venu*** (S116)]. On the other hand, *être* appears in inappropriate contexts [***est couru(e)*** (S104, S114, S120), ***est crié*** (S119), ***est dormi*** (S114), ***est payé*** (S115), ***est pensé*** (S110), ***sont rencontrés*** (S109), ***est rencontré*** *la femme* (S115), ***est interrogé*** *la femme* (S120)]. Finally, problems occur with reflexive verbs in the choice of the auxiliary [*elle* ***a s'enfuit*** (S112), *il* ***a s'échappé*** (S113)].

There is also a tendency to simplification here as the reflexive pronoun is overlooked [***a cassé son/sa jambe*** (S117, S121), ***a échappé*** [(S103, twice in S117), ***ont réveillé*** (S116)], maybe because of the homophoneous *c'est* in the following examples:

(81) Euh ils ont eu presqu'un accident mais: **c'est** pas **passé**. (S106)
(82) **C'est passé** hier euh dans un+ grand magasin. (S109)

On the other hand, an superfluous reflexive may be added:

(83) Euh une policier euh // se arr # ***s'est arrivé*** sur la rue. (S120)

The PC is used as a default form for the more complex PQP as we have seen for written narratives and this will be studied in more detail in the relevant section. There are a few instances of use of the PC where an IMP would be expected in the target language and this is the focus of the following development. First, in independent clauses, stative verbs need to be combined with the IMP when they express a situation whose limits are not shown. Note that in (84) whilst the first coordinated verb is in the PC, the second is in the PRES; this may come from the low frequency of *a eu* in the input provided to the learners or from the fact that the combination of *avoir* + PC develops at a later stage:

(84) La femme qui a volé était // # elle a - elle **a porté** euh une robe mais elle **a** / les cheveux brunes. (S108)
(85) Charlie Chaplin est allé dans un café euh et il a mangé beaucoup euh mais euh il n'**a** pas/ **eu** / d'argent alors euh il était arrêté par la police encore une fois. (S115)

In complex sentences, the IMP must be used in the subordinate to indicate that the limits of the situation exceed those of the introductory verb; otherwise, both verbs are understood as sharing the same limits. This is difficult in the example below as the introductory verb is telic and the subordinate is atelic:

(86) Il ***a remarqué*** que elle / euh elle **a regardé** dans la fenêtre / euh de son # de sa magasin et: par conséquent il a pris ses pains dans la boulangerie (S102)

If the two situations of *remarquer* and *regarder* were simultaneous, then an IMP would be needed to blur the problems of limits evoked above. If the meaning is that *regarder* happened before it is noticed, a past perfect tense is needed, i.e. a PQP. A PC is possible to express that anteriority with an introductory verb in the PRES.

S121 provides two examples of an emphasis in *y avoir X que* in the PC (such forms may be acquired as chunks to give an impression of fluency, see Bartning 1997):

(87) **Il y a eu** une fille qui a volE une pièce du pain et le vendeur / a vu la fille (S121)
(88) A cause de tout ce qu'il a dit, le policier a voulu arrêter Charlie Chaplin mais **il y a eu** une femme qui a vu comme cette fille a volé cette pièce de pain (S121)

In both examples, it should be in the IMP as the situation emphasized, i.e. the fact that there was a woman, is valid for an interval that exceeds the limits of the recounted story.

The last example is ambiguous as an opening sentence of narrative:

(89) C'est l'histoire sur Charlie Chaplin et il **a été** dans unE grand magasin (SNIFF) (S112)

In the PC, we need to understand *être* as *aller,* a telic verb*: il est allé dans un grand magasin;* in the IMP, *être* remains a stative verb and would mean: *il se trouvait dans un grand magasin.* Neither the cotext nor the context allow for the assessment of the validity of the sentence as both may be supported by the film clip.

(ii) Required uses

Where the TL would use a PC, the ILs sometimes show either the PRES or the IMP. Those uses are described in the relevant section and we only comment here on the overuse of passive IMP that seems to be used as a default form for passive PC that proves morphologically too complex to handle. The following example is very interesting as it seems to support the hypothesis. A passive construction is needed, a passive IMP is tried and aborted, there is a shift to the PC but this implies a change of voice and an active PC is produced:

(90) Et: le matin prochain+ euh l'homme était / décou... # une femme ***a découvert*** le homme # l'homme. (S103)

c. Conclusion on the use of the PC in the year 1 oral narratives

A striking feature of this corpus is the fairly high level of morphological (choice of auxiliary, formation of past participle) and syntactical inaccuracies (faulty subject-verb agreements). This is not surprising as PC has already been shown as morphologically complex (see Hawkins 1985) and the formation happens 'on line' in oral narratives with little opportunity to revise the production. However, it goes against the claim that form is acquired before functions; in the case of the PC, target-like morphology is not a prerequisite to functional accuracy.

3.2.2. Year 2

a. Description

436 PC (63.56% of all conjugated verbs) listed below are found in the year 2 oral narratives. There are 101 different conjugated verbs so each appears on average 4.32 times.

accepter	1	entrer	15	remplacer	1	être arrêté	7
accrocher	4	essayer	3	rencontrer	4	être blessé	2
acheter	2	être	1	renverser	1	être mis	1
aider	1	être = aller	1	répondre	1	être mis à la porte	1
aller	13	expliquer	4	rester	2	être pris	1
arrester	1	explorer	1	réussir	1	être raconté	1
arrêter	11	faire	8	sauver	2		
arriver	7	faire des courses	1	* s'aller	1		
* ascendre	1	fermer	2	s'arrêter	1		
attirer l'attention	1	foncer	2	s'asseoir	1		
avoir	2	fumer	1	s'endormir	1		
avoir l'occasion	1	gagner	1	saisir	1		
* avoir la faim	1	garder	1	savoir	1		
avoir lieu	1	informer	6	se casser	1		
avoir une collision	1	intervenir	2	se coucher	2		
y avoir	1	inviter	2	* se dormir	1		
boire	10	jouer	8	se faire + INF	1		
buter	1	laisser	1	se lever	2		
casser	9	manger	5	se plaindre	1		
circuler		menacer	1	se rendre	1		
commencer	4	mettre	2	se réveiller	6		
connaître = savoir	1	mettre en liberté	1	* se tomber	1		
contacter	1	monter	4	se trouver	2		
continuer	4	ouvrir	1	sortir	3		
coucher	1	parler	1	suivre	3		
* courer	1	partir	1	téléphoner	1		
courir	13	passer	2	* témoigner	2		
croire	2	payer	3	tirer	7		
décider	12	pouvoir	1	tomber	11		
découvrir	1	prendre	7	toucher	1		
demander	5	* procéder	1	travailler	3		
* départer	1	raconter	1	trouver	11		
devenir	2	rapporter	1	utiliser	3		
dire	25	rassembler	1	visiter	5		
disparaître	1	réaliser	2	voir	32		
donner	4	reconnaître	2	voler	33		
dormir	7	refuser	1	*vouler	1		
échapper	4	regarder	3	vouloir	2		

If those VPs are classified according to their *Aktionsart*, the following figures, that confirm the tendencies noted at other levels, are obtained:

	Year 2	
	n	%
Stative verbs	6[199]	1.38
Atelic verbs	85[200]	19.49

[199] *Etre* (S202), *vouloir* (S204), *connaître, ressembler* (S209), *pouvoir* (S214), *avoir* (S215).
[200] *Jouer* (S202), *boire (2), commencer, courir, jouer, manger, menacer, voir* (S204), *commencer, continuer (2), courir, dormir, faire, manger, regarder, suivre, utiliser, vouloir* (S205), *suivre* (S206), *boire, jouer* (S207), *courir, dormir, faire, faire des courses, essayer, faire [du patin]* (S208), *boire, circuler, commencer, continuer (2), courir, dormir, faire, manger (2), regarder, utiliser* (S209), *boire, courer, essayer (2), jouer, regarder, rester* (S210), *courir, dormir,*

Telic verbs	345[201]	79.13
	436	100

b. Uses

The level of morphological accuracy is high (85.09%) and almost identical to the percentage in year 1 (85.06%). However, in contrast to the year 1 findings, it is inferior to the level of accuracy in the written narratives at level 2, which is surprising and questions our hypothesis on the role of grammatical spelling.

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
330	75.69	65	14.91	41	9.4	-	0

(i) Actual uses

The tendency to reduce morphology to better known forms that was noted within the written narratives is still applicable in this corpus. The past participle may be aligned on the most frequent verbs in –er [***a voulé*** (S211), ***a/ ont couré*** (S210, S214)] or aligned on the verb root [***a couri*** (S211), (S213), (S215)]. The root of the verb can be chosen as a IL past participle:

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jouer, vouler (S211), *boire* (S212), *boire, courir, faire [le patin], fumer, garder, travailler* (S213), *acheter [les vêtements] (2), aider, avoir faim, commencer, courir (3), manger, parler, procéder, travailler (2), utiliser* (S214), *boire, courir, dormir (2), jouer (2)* (S215) *courir (3), donner [du gâteau], se plaindre* (S216), *boire, faire [le patin], jouer, suivre* (S217).

[201] *Voir* (S201), *accrocher, aller, devenir, dire (2), disparaître, entrer, raconter, sauver, s'asseoir, se rendre, tomber, voir (2), voler, être arrêté (2), être blessé, être mis à la porte* (S202), *accrocher (3), aller (2), arrêter, casser, découvrir, dire (3), échapper, entrer, expliquer, explorer, inviter, mettre, payer, prendre, rapporter, sauver, se réveiller, sortir, tomber, voir (2), voler (3), être arrêté (2), être blessé, être mis (2), être raconté* (S204), *aller, arrêter (3), (y) avoir [une collision] (2), y avoir [le désordre], casser, décider, dire (3), échapper, entrer (3), expliquer, fermer, intervenir, monter, ouvrir, se réveiller, se tomber, sortir, tirer, trouver, voler (3)* (S205), *dire (2), échapper, faire [qqch pour], foncer, mettre, payer, s'aller, voir, voler (2)* (S06), *entrer, laisser, rester [toute la nuit], s'arrêter, s'endormir, voir (2), voler* (S207), *dire (3), être, foncer, monter (2), payer, prendre, rencontrer, tomber, voler (2), être arrêté (2), être pris* (S208), *aller (2), arrêter, casser, courir [à la rue], décider (2), départer, entrer (2), expliquer, fermer, monter, ouvrir, répondre, refuser, se réveiller, sortir, tomber, trouver, voir (6), voler (4)* (S209), *buter, devenir, dire, entrer (2), passer [toute la nuit], se coucher, témoigner, tirer* (S210), *arrester, arriver (2), casser, dire, donner, prendre, rencontrer, se lever, tirer, tomber (3), visiter (3), voir (2), voler (2)* (S211), *arrêter, casser, coucher, demander, dire (3), échapper, entrer, réaliser, téléphoner, trouver, voir, voler (3)* (S212), *ascendre (2), arriver, casser, décider, demander, dire (4), donner, échapper, expliquer, se coucher, se lever, se trouver (2), tomber (3), toucher, trouver (3), voir (2), voler* (S213), *aller (5), avoir [une collision], casser, contacter, décider (4), demander, entrer, gagner, informer, inviter, prendre, reconnaître, se réveiller, trouver (4), voir (6), voler (2)* (S214), *arrêter (2), arriver, boire, casser, croire, demander, dire (3), donner, entrer (2), informer (3), intervenir, prendre (2) , réaliser, rencontrer, se réveiller, tirer, tomber, trouver, visiter (5), voir (4), voler (6)* (S215), *arrêter (3), arriver (2), avoir [l'occasion de], avoir lieu, croire, faire [qqch], informer, mettre [en liberté], partir, remplacer, rencontrer, réussir, saisir, savoir [comment], se casser, se faire [arrêter], se renverser, tirer, voir, voler (2)* (S216), *accepter, aller (3), arriver, attirer [l'attention de], casser, décider (4), demander, dire, entrer, faire [un trou] informer, passer, prendre, reconnaître, se dormir, se réveiller, témoigner, tirer (2), trouver, voir (2), voler* (S217).

a connaît (S209), ***a dort*** [twice in (S205), S209)], ***a intervient*** (S205), ***ont suit*** (S217). Another possibility is to use the infinitive for verbs of other groups than the group in –er: ***a boire*** (S217), ***a prendre*** (S214), ***ont prendre*** (S217), ***a suivre*** (S205), ***s'est s'asseoir*** (S202), ***a s'endormir*** (S207). This may indicate a formulation of a non-native rule of PC formation with auxiliary followed by infinitive but the hypothesis is weak as it is not clearly represented in other corpora.

As far as auxiliaries are concerned, there is widespread confusion between *être* and *avoir*. In most cases, the more common form, *avoir,* is extended to contexts where *être* is used in the target language: ***ont allé(s)*** (twice in S217), ***ont arrivé*** (S211), ***ont devenus*** (S210), ***a / ont entré*** (S205, S212), ***a intervenu*** (S215), ***a resté*** (S207, S210), ***a sorti*** (S204, S209), ***a tombé*** (S204, twice in S211). More rarely, *être* is overused: ***sont bus*** *beaucoup d'alcool* (S207), ***est disparu*** (S202), ***est dormi*** (S211), ***est ouvert*** (S205), ***est visité*** *le reste du magasin* (S211). Some verbs allow the use of both auxiliaries according to the presence or the absence of a direct object. This is not taken into account for **ascendre,* meaning *monter* and formed on the same pattern as *descendre:*

(91) il a – il **a** euh ***ascendu** l'*escalateur. (S213)
(92) ils ont – ils **ont *ascendu** au - au prochain *étape euh euh du magasin. (S213)

Although there is an awareness of the potential use of both auxiliaries with *monter*, they are inverted by S208, as shown by the following two examples:

(93) Puis il **a monté** à un étage pour mettre une femme dans un lit (S208)
(94) Euh / puis il **est monté** les escaliers (S208)

Reflexive verbs are problematic in this corpus first in the use of the personal pronoun that is dropped: ***est accrochE*** *contre un homme* (S202), ***sont échappés*** (S204, S206). At the same time, it is introduced in non reflexive verbs: ***s'est tombE*** (S205), ***s'est allé*** *en bas* (S206). There are syntactic problems linked with reflexive verbs where on the one hand the reflexive pronoun is left together with the verb in the infinitive and on the other hand the choice of auxiliary is problematic either as a result of the use of *avoir* (95) or the repetition of *se* (96):

(95) Ils ont joué avec les jeux mais puis la femme **a s'endormir** (S207)
(96) Euh la femme euh **s'est s'asseoir** sur le lit (S202)

In a couple of instances, the agreement between the subject and the verb is not correct; in the first case, the verb is left in the singular, in the second example, the similarity between the ending of *avons* and the target form *ont* may be adduced:

(97) les voleurs # trois voleurs qui euh ***est entré*** le bâtiment. (S217)
(98) Euh donc / ils ***avons / bu***. (S212)

Finally, there is an occurrence of active PC used in a cotext, *par les policiers*, that indicates a tentative passive:

(99) Après ça euh la femme ***s'est levE*** et quand # les – les - les policiers ***ont arrivé*** et Charlie Chaplin a euh dans le matin et Charlie Chaplin ***a arresté*** par les policiers. (S211)

As in other corpora, the PC is widely used instead of the PQP, a feature that is described in the relevant section. Here, the focus is on uses of the PC where an IMP would be used in the TL. In the first example, the limits of the subordinate verb need to exceed those of *a décidé;* as a stative verb, *rassembler* (here for *ressembler*) is able to do this but the presentation given by the PC implies that the initial limit of that situation is known, which is contradictory to the meaning of that particular verb:

(100) Le directeur de grande surface a décidé de donner l'emploi à / notre homme qui ressemble # qui **a rassemble** un+ caractère de Charlie Chaplin. (S209)

The following example is syntactically possible. The incapacity to see is a direct result of wearing a blindfold; semantically the use of the PC shows this as as final result or a conclusion. However, this is contradictory at a wider discourse level, as being blindfolded opens up a series of adventures that are further detailed. There is thus a need for a tense with open limits such as the IMP:

(101) L'homme était très bête et il a décidé de porter euh une chose euh donc euh/ il ne peut pas # il n'**a** pas **pu** / euh voir. (S214)

In the last two examples, the problem comes from the lexical choice: here telic verbs (*voir* and *connaître*) are used instead of the non telic (*regarder* and *savoir*) that would combine with an IMP:

(102) quand le boulanger+ euh n'**a** pas **vu** euh elle a volé un morceau du pain. (S204)
(103) Euh ils ont euh # et ils ont utilisé le patin à roulettes euh et c'était apparent que l'homme a fait bien euh il - il **a connaît** comment de faire. (S209)

(ii) Required uses

Instances of the PRES and the IMP stand for native PC in this corpus and the cotexts in which that substitution occurs are described in the relevant sections. In the other corpora so far, we have noticed an overuse of passive IMP for passive PC; this tendency is not well supported in this corpus where passive PC are correctly used. (105) is a native-like sentence if *blessé* is taken as an adjective; the meaning is then that an already injured policeman falls from the bus; in fact, the injury is the result of the fall and a PC is needed to express that. On the other hand, *était blessé* is syntactically and semantically correct in (106) where the injury happens prior to the replacement:

(104) et puis le camion de police qui contenait / les deux personnes **était impliqué** dans un accident de route (S216)
(105) les deux euh euh sont tombés de l'autobus avec un officier qui **était blessé** (S213)
(106) Le gardien du magasin s'est cassé une jambe mais – mais nous n'avons pas su comment. Et puis Charlie Chaplin a remplacé le gardien qui / **était blessé**. (S216)

c. Conclusion on the use of the PC in the year 2 oral narratives

The forms in this corpus differ from what was found elsewhere on a morphological level. It shows for example in the INF used as past participles or in the low frequency of passive IMP. On the other hand, the passive seems better mastered.

3.2.3. Year 4

a. Description

There are 675 PC (53.83% of all conjugated VPs) in this corpus, distributed among 145 different conjugated verbs so each appears on average 4.66 times. They are listed below together with their number of occurrences:

accepter	2	être = aller	2	revoir	1	être armé	1
accourir	1	expliquer	4	rouler	1	être attrapé	2
accuser	1	faire	15	* s'aller	1	être blâmé	1
acheter	2	faire + INF	1	s'amuser	2	être bousculé	1
* admettre à	1	finir de	1	s'arrêter	1	être demandé	1
aller	30	finir par	1	s'arrêter = se faire arrêter	1	être employé	1
amener	1	frapper	4	* s'arriver	1	être engagé	1
apparaître	2	fuir	1	s'échapper	2	être obligé	1
appeler	4	glisser	1	s'écraser	2	être raconté	1
arrêter	5	indiquer	1	S'endormir	7	être résolu	1
arriver	22	informer	1	s'enfuir	4	être réveillé	1
arriver à	1	insister	2	* s'entrer	1		

*asseoir	1	interpeller	5	s'intervenir	1			
* attender	1	inviter	2	saisir	1			
attendre	2	jouer	7	savoir	3			
attraper	5	laisser	7	se cacher	1			
avoir	3	manger	14	se casser	7			
avoir un accident	1	marcher	1	se coucher	8			
y avoir	4	mener	1	* se devenir	1			
avouer	1	mettre	6	* se dormir	1			
balader	1	monter	8	se faire + INF	1			
boire	16	montrer	1	* se fuir	1			
bouleverser = bousculer	3	nier	1	se lever	3			
bousculer	1	noter	1	* se marcher	1			
casser	1	offrir		se mettre	2			
chasser = pouchasser	4	ouvrir	2	se partir				
commander	1	parler	2	se passer	9			
commencer	4	partir	17	se produire	1			
connaître	1	passer	4	se rassembler	1			
continuer	1	passer = se passer	1	se rencontrer	1			
couler	1	passer la nuit	1	se rendre compte de	2			
courir	5	payer	8	se réveiller	4			
crier	2	penser	4	* se rester	2			
croire	1	piquer	8	* se tomber	4			
croiser	2	pleurer	1	se trouver	4			
décider	12	porter	2	Se venir	1			
découvrir	2	poursuivre	1	signaler	1			
demander	6	pouvoir	2	sortir	5			
descendre	5	prendre	7	suivre	1			
détenir	1	profiter	1	taper	1			
devenir	6	provoquer	1	* témoigner	5			
devoir	1	raconter	4	tirer	9			
dire	32	ramener	1	tomber	11			
disparaître	1	reconnaître	4	travailler	1			
donner	1	regarder	4	trouver	16			
échapper	5	remonter	1	utiliser	1			
emmener	1	remplacer	1	venir	14			
entendre	1	rencontrer	6	voir	39			
entrer	9	rentrer	3	voler	48			
entrer en collision	5	réouvrir	2	vouloir	4			
essayer	16	retenir	1					
être	3	réussir	1					

A focus on *Aktionsart* shows that the combination with stative verbs remains very low even at this highest learning level. As in the case of written narratives, the highest percentage of prototypical combinations of the PC with telic verbs is found in year 4, which again seems to contradict the PAH:

	Year 4	
	n	%
Stative verbs	16[202]	2.37
Atelic verbs	118[203]	17.48
Telic verbs	541[204]	80.15

[202] *Pouvoir* (S403), *pouvoir* (S407), *avoir* (S408), *détenir, devoir, porter, être armé* (S414), *retenir* (S418), *connaître* (S419), *y avoir, porter, savoir* (S420), *être* (S421), *être [capable de]* (S422), *avoir [les moyens], y avoir* (S423).

[203] *Commencer à, se rester* (S401), *manger* (S402), *essayer, manger (2)* (S403), *chasser (2), faire, s'amuser (2), tirer [les coups de feu]* (S405), *boire, commencer, couler* (S406), *boire (2), essayer, jouer, manger (2), vouloir* (S407), *essayer, faire [du patinage], manger* (S408), *donner [du gâteau], glisser* (S409), *balader, boire [l'alcool], échapper, essayer (2), jouer, manger* (S410), *commencer à, faire, jouer, passer, savoir* (S412), *boire, courir, essayer (2), insister, manger, rouler* (S413) *attendre [un moment], boire (2), commencer, continuer, courir, devenir [de plus en plus], essayer (5), faire [du progrès / les courses] (2), faire [+chasser] (2), raconter, utiliser* (S414), *essayer* (S415), *aller [+INF], boire, se rester, suivre* (S416), *chasser, essayer, insister, jouer, parler, penser (2), vouloir, être blâmé* (S417) *chasser, courir* (S418) *boire, courir, faire son travail, marcher, pleurer, profiter, regarder* (S419) *acheter [beaucoup de nourriture] (2), attendre, vouloir* (S420), *courir, essayer, regarder (2), vouloir* (S421), *attendre, boire, faire, jouer, regarder, se marcher, travailler* (S422), *boire (6), entendre, essayer, jouer (2), manger (3), montrer, parler* (S423).

[204] *Mettre [des patins], passer à [+lieu], s'aller, s'arriver, se casser* (S401), *raconter [l'histoire], se casser, se passer (2), se produire, trouver, venir, voir (4), voler, être obligé* (S402), *aller (2), arriver (2), devenir, entrer, se casser, se cacher, se coucher, se lever, se mettre [en patins], se passer, trouver (2), venir, voir, voler, être employé* (S403), *aller (3), arriver (3), descendre, devenir (3), dire (2), échapper, être, inviter (2), monter (2), nier, prendre, se coucher (2), se rendre compte, témoigner, tomber, trouver (2), voir (3), voler (5), être raconté* (S405), *aller (2), appeler, attraper, devenir, entrer (2), faire [+ INF], mettre, partir, reconnaître, se coucher (2), se lever, tirer [deux fois], trouver* (S406), *aller, asseoir, casser, croiser, décider (4), demander, dire (4), entrer (2), entrer [en collision], frapper, interpeller (3), laisser, mettre, payer, remonter, rencontrer (2), savoir, s'écraser, tirer [deux fois], tomber (3), trouver (2), venir (2), voir, voler (3)* (S407), *accepter, aller (3), découvrir, devenir, dire, faire [+ INF], mener, ouvrir (2), s'endormir, s'enfuir (2), s'intervenir, tirer, tomber (2), voler (2)* (S408), *aller, crier, dire (2), mettre, témoigner, voir (2), voler (3)* (S409), *accepter, apparaître, arriver (3), dire (2), entrer [en collision], faire [+ INF], laisser, offrir, prendre, réouvrir, s'arrêter, s'échapper, s'endormir (2), s'enfuir, se faire [+INF], se réveiller, se tomber, se trouver (2), tirer (2), tomber, voir (2), voler (2)* (S410), *aller (2), appeler, décider (3), dire, être, laisser, passer, prendre (3), s'enfuir, tomber, trouver, venir (2), voir (3), voler (2)* (S412), *accuser, aller (3), croiser, découvrir, demander (2), dire (3), échapper, entrer, entrer [en collision], interpeller (2), mettre [qqch] (2), partir, reconnaître, s'écraser, s'endormir, se casser, se dormir, se partir, se réveiller, se tomber, tirer, tomber, trouver, venir (3), voir (4), voler (7), être demandé* (S413), *arrêter, arriver (4), bouleverser, décider (3), demander, dire, expliquer (2), faire [+ INF], faire [le tour] (2), finir, laisser, manger [un grand repas], monter, noter, partir (3), passer (2), payer, piquer (4), prendre, reconnaître, rentrer, saisir, se casser, se coucher, se passer, se rendre compte, se trouver, signaler, tirer, trouver (2), voir (7)* (S414), *arriver, avoir [un accident], bousculer, frapper, se passer, voir, voler, être bousculé* (S415), *admettre, aller (2), apparaître, arrêter (2), arriver (4), dire (3), disparaître, entrer, entrer [en collision], finir, frapper (2), laisser, partir (2), réouvrir, revoir, s'endormir (2), sortir, tomber, voir (4), voler (2)* (S416) *aller (4), arrêter, arriver (2), avouer, décider, échapper (2), entrer [en collision], faire [une livraison], informer, laisser, manger [son repas], monter, payer (2), rencontrer, se coucher, témoigner, tomber, voler, être résolu* (S417), *attraper, bouleverser (2), fuir, indiquer, penser, piquer (4), voir (3)* (S418), *aller (2), dire (3), échapper, fuir, provoquer [un accident], remplacer, rencontrer, s'arrêter, s'entrer, se casser, se mettre, se passer, se rassembler, se rencontrer, se tomber (2), se trouver, se venir, venir (2), voler (5)* (S419), *aller, amener, arriver (2), dire (3), payer (2), s'échapper, trouver, voir, voler (3)* (S420), *aller (4), accourir, arriver, attraper (2), avoir, commander, crier, croire, demander, dire (3), emmener, entrer, manger [tout], se passer, raconter (2) , ramener, sortir, taper, témoigner (2), trouver (2), voir (2), voler (3)* (S421), *arrêter, décider, dire (2), partir, reconnaître, rencontrer (2), se casser, se coucher, se lever, trouver, venir, voler (2)* (S422), *appeler (2), arrêter, attraper, y avoir [un vol / une poursuite] (2), demander, descendre (4), dire (2), entrer, expliquer (2), laisser, monter (4), montrer, partir (9), passer [la nuit], payer (2), penser, prendre, rentrer (2), réussir, s'endormir, se passer (2), se réveiller (2), sortir (3), tirer, venir (2), voir (2), voler (3), être attrapé (2), être engagé, être réveillé* (S423).

	675	100

b. Uses

In contrast to year 2 but in accordance to what was found in year 1, morphological accuracy is higher in oral than in written narratives with an increase of + 2.97%.

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
564	83.56	38	5.63	71	10.52	1	0.15

(ii) Actual uses

As noticed before, the compound morphology of the PC leads to non-native formation of the past participle that can be modelled on the most widespread category in –er: ***ont *buvé*** (S419), ***a *attendé*** (S423). A more common coping technique consists in using the root of the verb as the past participle [***est ouvri, a découvri*** (S408)] or to replace the past participle by the PRES: ***a suit*** (S416), ***a poursuit*** (S423). S119 provides three occurrences of *volu* instead of *volé;* there is no ready explanation for this but the proximity of *venu* in two of the examples may have brought this attraction (NB: *volu* was also produced by S121 in the vicinity of *vu*):

(107) Après un policier est venu euh # *s'est venu euh mais / l'homme euh a dit que c'était lui qui **a *volu** le pain. (S419)
(108) Euh après: euh // quelqu'un est venu pour dire euh au policier que c'était pas lui, que c'était euh la femme qui **a *volu** le pain. (S419)
(109) Les voleurs étaient sur les patins à roulettes dans le magasin euh quand ils **ont** euh ***volu** euh les marchandises. (S419)

As far as the use of auxiliary is concerned, an overgeneralization of *avoir* happens [***a entré en collision*** (S413), ***a remonté*** (S407), ***a / ont tombé*** (twice in S407, S413), ***a venu*** (S407)], even with reflexive verbs [***s'a écrasé*** (S407)]. In the next example, the two auxiliaries coexist so this is an unstable IL system still in the making:

(110) Puis ils **ont allés** au section pour les jeux et ils ont fait du patinage Puis ils **sont allés** au section où / il y avait des lits (S408)

être does not seem to be overused at this level in contrast to its use at lower levels, but there is still a confusion about when to use which auxiliary for verbs that allow both:

(111) Ils **sont montés** encore une étage (S423)

The overuse of reflexive verbs remains nonetheless a major IL feature of this most advanced learners corpus [***s'est allE*** (S401), ***s'est arrivé*** (S401), ***s'est dormi***[205] (S413), ***se sont entrés*** (S419), ***s'est intervenu*** (S408), ***s'est marchée*** (S422), ***s'est parti*** (S413), ***s'est resté*** (S401), ***s'est / se sont tombé(s)*** (S410, S413, twice in S419, S422). Sometimes, the required reflexive pronoun is dropped [***a assis*** (S407), *quelque chose* ***est passé*** (S412)], especially in the case of *s'échapper,* maybe because of the closeness to the English verb 'to escape'[***sont échappés*** (S413), ***ont échappé*** (S417)]. The problem with the reflexives belongs to a larger IL feature: the failure to handle voices. The reflexive seems to be used as an IL form for the passive PC that may be felt too complicated as it is a double compound form:

(112) L'homme euh a essayé de se faire arrêter euh aussi pour: rencontrer la femme encore une fois. Les deux ***se sont arrêtés**. (S410)

(113) Et puis après il **s'est trouvé** par le policier et il est mis+ dans le camion # il **s'est mis+** dans le camion des policiers pour aller / je suppose/ euh vers la gendarmerie euh dans ce camion. (S419)

When a passive PC is used, it tends to be used within the rules prevalent in English. This means that verbs that are not direct transitive verbs are incorrectly put in the passive as in the examples below:

(114) Euh le premier *extract que j'**ai été racontE** c'était au sujet d'une: cambriolage d'une boulangerie. (S405)

(115) Charlie Chaplin **a été demandé** de prendre les: euh / la position de: - de la personne de sécurité (S413)

However there is still an imperfect mastery of the passive PC that is replaced by an active PC despite the cotextual information given by the agentive complement:

(116) Et puis euh il est euh - il est # il ***a interpellé*** euh par la police (S407)

At a syntactical level, the required subject-verb agreement does not occur in a couple of instances [***cambrioleurs qui*** **s'est arrivé** (S401), ***les voleurs*** **a reconnu** (S406), ***un des personnes de sécurité*** qui **se sont** euh **cassé** la jambe (S413)].

However, the main IL feature consists of using the PC as a default form for other tenses, such as the PQP, as is shown in the section devoted to the latter tense. The PC is used instead of

[205] Here the influence of *s'endormir* is obvious.

an IMP in the following examples below where the neighbouring PC may have influenced the use of a PC for the stative verbs *avoir* and *connaître*:

(117) Euh l'homme ***est allé*** au rez-de-chaussée et: euh et puis il y avait d'autres + hommes et ils **ont eu** des armes et ils ***ont tiré*** sur lui. (S408)
(118) Euh: après: quelque chose ***s'est passé*** euh mais: en fin de l'histoire # à la fin de l'histoire, les voleurs **ont connu** déjà le l'homme euh qui travaillait dans le magasin (S419)

This corpus shows a number of non-prototypical PC in combination with stative verbs [eg. **a détenu** (S114), **il y a eu** (S423)]. The confusion between *porter* meaning *to wear* and *porter* meaning *to carry* has already been discussed earlier (see 1.1.2.):

(119) De toute façon il a – il ***a porté*** une petite barbe et euh euh un+ chapeau noir. (S414)

At this level of IL, the use of past tenses "*aux confins*" (Kihlstedt 1998) is still unstable as shown by the following examples:

(120) il n'***a*** pas ***payé*** parce qu'il n'***a*** pas ***eu*** les moyens (S423)
(121) Et ensuite, le: responsable a cru et a trouvé le policier qui a - qui ***a: eu*** Charlie Chaplin et euh et le boulan... # non le: responsable a raconté la vérité. (S420)
(122) Euh Charlie ***a su*** déjà euh comment le faire (S413)
(123) Et: elle s'est # elle ***a su*** que: ce n'était pas Charlie Chaplin mais: c'était une femme qui a vol... - volé le # la baguette (S420)
(124) ils ont essayé de euh: /// de: XXX mais: // ils+ ***ont su*** qu'il était un ami euh puis ils ont *laissé. (S407)

While (120), (122) and (123) contain stative VP, (121) and (124) are dynamic, which allows the combination with the PC. *Avoir* means *attraper* and *savoir* must be interpreted as *se rendre compte*. However, this does not explain the following occurrence that is preceded by an IMP:

(125) Il y avait une femme qui portait / # elle ***portait*** euh un robe noire et: euh elle / elle **a marché** dans la rue. (S419)

In the next example, *faisait* would be expected: *faire* stands here for *aller dans la boulangerie,* which is a telic verb phrase but *pendant que* requires a verb of some duration, so the use of the IMP would blur the limits and allow the combination:

(126) euh le conducteur euh est allé dans la boulangerie pour faire les livraisons euh et pendant qu'il **a fait** ça la petite fille est:# elle a volé cette baguette de: - de la camion (S405)

There is an reinterpretation of the sequence of tenses in conditional sentences: the first PC replaces the required IMP after *si* and the second may be influenced by the first:

(127) le: mec a dit euh: « Tu # Si: / - si t'**as voulu**, euh t'**as pu** prendre ma place ». (S407)

Finally, in the last example, the PC replaces the SUBJ required by the subordinating conjunction:

(128) **Il y avait** une femme qui ***a attendu*** euh près d'un camion jusqu'à ce qu'***il y a eu*** personne. (S420)

(ii) Required uses

As in the other corpora, when a PC would be expected in the TL, it is sometimes replaced by a PRES or an IMP although this becomes less frequent. Passive IMP are still used instead of passive PC (***était placé*** (S407), ***était arrêté*** (3 times in S408)] but the passive PC is more integrated in the IL and there is even overgeneralization:

(129) Euh donc il était en train d'aller euh au bureau quand à l'entrée du magasin il a vu trois voleurs euh qui ***ont été armés*** avec euh des pistolets st.(S414)

c. Conclusion on the use of the PC in the year 4 written narratives

This corpus still shows a number of morphological problems but they are mainly related to the use of reflexive verbs, that are overgeneralized. Overgeneralization seems to be a stage in language acquisition [see Salaberry's (2000) conclusions]. This would not necessarily support a hypothesis such as the PAH that presents learning as a continuous and linear process.

3.2.4. Control group

a. Description

The oral corpus contains 260 PC (47.71% of all conjugated forms) with 100 different VPs so that each appears 2.6 times on average. The 260 forms are distributed as shown in the table:

acheter	1	intervenir	1	revenir	1	être accusé	1
affirmer	1	inviter	1	s'allonger	1	être arrêté	4
aller	5	jouer	1	s'amuser	1	être embarqué	1
allumer	1	laisser	1	s'apercevoir	1	être emmené	4
appeler	5	lever	1	s'arranger	1	être relâché	1
arrêter	1	manger	2	s'arrêter	1	être retrouvé	1
arriver	5	mettre	1	s'asseoir	1	être vu	1
assommer	3	monter	4	s'échapper	1		
attendre	1	montrer	2	s'endormir	1		
autoriser	2	nourrir	1	s'énerver	1		
avoir	1	obtenir	3	s'enfuir	2		

y avoir	2	offrir	2	sauter	2		
avoir peur	1	ouvrir	2	se casser	1		
avouer	1	partir	7	se casser la jambe	5		
boire	5	passer	1	se dénoncer	1		
commander	1	payer	1	se diriger	1		
commencer	2	pouvoir	1	se donner	1		
confier	1	préciser	3	se faire	2		
continuer	3	prendre	6	se mettre à	3		
crier	1	prendre la fuite	1	se mettre à table	1		
croire	2	prévenir	1	se passer	1		
décider	4	proposer	2	se retourner	1		
déclarer	2	raconter	1	se retrouver	1		
demander	3	rassurer	1	se réveiller	5		
descendre	1	reconnaître	5	se sauver	2		
dire	11	redescendre	2	se servir	1		
donner	8	refuser	1	sortir	2		
embarquer	4	relâcher	3	surprendre	1		
emmener	5	remplir	1	tenter	1		
enfiler	1	rencontrer	1	tomber	1		
être = aller	5	rentrer	2	trouver	2		
être	1	renverser	2	venir	1		
expliquer	1	répéter	1	visionner	1		
faillir	1	rester	1	voir	9		
faire	6	retaper	1	voler	9		
faire signe de	2	retrouver	3	vouloir	2		
finir par	1	réussir	7				

The classification of VPs according to *Aktionsart* gives results that are broadly comparable to the percentages found in learners' corpora. This once again calls into question the explanatory power of an hypothesis such as the PAH.

	Control group	
	n	%
Stative verbs	8[206]	3.08
Atelic verbs	42[207]	16.15

[206] *Aller (2), allumer, appeler (2), arrêter, arriver (4), décider, déclarer (2), descendre, donner [un coup], dire (5), embarquer (4), emmener, faire [monter], laisser [sa place], lever, monter [dans le fourgon], montrer [le pain], offrir (2), partir (2), prendre (4) prendre [la fuite], reconnaître, relâcher, rencontrer, rentrer (2), retrouver (2), s'apercevoir, s'arranger, se casser [la jambe], se donner [un coup], se mettre [à table], se réveiller, se sauver, sortir, tomber, trouver, voler (5)* (F1), *assommer, dire (2), obtenir, prendre, proposer, reconnaître, réussir (3), s'asseoir, se casser, voir (2), voler* (F2), *se casser, voler* (F3), *aller (2), appeler (2), appeler, autoriser, décider, emmener, être, mettre, ouvrir, prendre, reconnaître, redescendre, retaper, retrouver, réussir (4), s'allonger, s'enfuir, se casser, se faire [+ INF], se réveiller, sortir, surprendre, voir [que], voler, être emmené, être arrêté* (F4), *affirmer, aller, assommer, autoriser, avoir [la note], y avoir [un accident], décider (2), demander, dire (3), donner (3), emmener (3), expliquer, faire [monter], finir par, intervenir, monter [au 5ème étage], obtenir, ouvrir, partir (4), payer, reconnaître (2), relâcher (2), renverser, répéter, sauter, s'arrêter, s'enfuir, se casser, se passer, se retourner, se retrouver, se réveiller (3), trouver, venir, voir, voler, être accusé (2), être emmené* (F5), *acheter [des cigares], arriver, assommer, y avoir [un accident], avouer, confier, demander (2), dire, donner, enfiler, être (3), être [+ INF], faire signe de (2), inviter, monter, montrer, obtenir, partir, préciser (2), prévenir, proposer, rassurer, redescendre, refuser, renverser, revenir, réussir, sauter, s'échapper, se casser, se dénoncer, se faire [+ INF], se sauver, voler, être arrêté (3), être embarqué, être emmené (2), être relâché, être retrouvé, être vu* (F6).

Telic verbs	210[208]	80.77
	260	100

b. Uses

(i) Actual uses

Interesting features of this corpus are on the one hand the increase of the use of *être*, although it is used in 5 out of 6 instances as a dynamic verb meaning *aller*, and on the other hand the larger proportion of passive PC that seem to have been avoided in learners' corpora owing to its morphological complexity.

(ii) Required uses

It was mentioned in the section devoted to the PRES, that shifts from the PC to the PRES occur frequently in oral narratives, where the PRES can be used in sequence after a present form to express a personal comment, for example.

c. Conclusion on the use of the PC in the control group oral narratives

The oral corpus does not present the morphological deficiencies identified in the written corpus as these were mainly linked to grammatical spelling. However, there are more incoherencies at the discourse level as sequence of tenses can be lost.

3.2.5. Conclusion on the PC in oral narratives

The PC is still the most common tense at all levels in the oral narratives, although here it is followed by the PRES, and not the IMP (except in year 2). The PRES is most often used as a narrative tense in native usage (F2 and F3's narratives are mainly in the PRES); but it is worth noting that the two bilingual students (S402 and S415) also make an extensive use of the PRES. S402's narrative contains 94 PRES against 14 PC and S415's 62 PRES against 9 PC. This confirms a tendency found in Salaberry (2000: 135) for native and near-native speakers:

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[207] *Attendre, boire [du rhum], crier, faire (2), jouer, nourrir, remplir, s'endormir, se diriger, se mettre à [+ INF] (2), voir (2)* (F1), *boire, donner [des bonbons], manger* (F2), *boire, raconter, visionner* (F3), *donner (2), s'énerver, voir* (F4) , *commencer à (2), faire [du patin], monter [quelques étages], se mettre à, voir* (F5), *boire (2), commander, continuer (2), faire, manger, passer, s'amuser, se servir, tenter, vouloir [+ INF]* (F6).

[208] *Croire, vouloir* (F1), *rester* (F3), *faillir [+ INF]* (F4), *avoir peur* (F5), *croire, être, pouvoir* (F6).

The results from both native and near native speakers are absent from the analysis because both groups of subjects narrated the movies using present instead of past tense.

Morphology was found to be problematic in written narratives but it was often a question of grammatical spelling. Morphology causes problems of a different nature in the oral narratives where planning is limited and where choices are made 'on-line'; there are instances where the subject hesitates and obviously looks for the correct form.

These figures presenting the combination of tenses and *Aktionsart* show a great affinity with telic verbs and the proportion of this combination is fairly stable throughout our 3 learning levels, which may indicate that the PC is well integrated in the IL even at the lower level.

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 4		Control group	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Stative verbs	19	3.925	6	1.38	16	2.37	8	3.08
Atelic verbs	98	20.25	85	19.49	118	17.48	42	16.15
Telic verbs	367	75.825	345	79.13	541	80.15	210	80.77
	484	100	436	100	675	100	260	100

On the basis of the most common verbs list (Muller 1974), we will try to assess if there is some kind of formulaic acquisition of the PC.

	Total of different verbs[209]	Number of frequent verbs / 20	Percentage of frequent verbs / total in %	Tokens of frequent verbs	Percentage of frequent verbs / total PC in %
Year 1	99	13[210]	13.13	200	41.32
Year 2	101	14[211]	13.86	119	27.29
Year 4	145	17[212]	11.72	181	26.81
Control group	100	14[213]	14	63	24.23

From this table, we can note that the control group shows slightly less variety than the learners groups in the range of verbs they used. However, more than in written, learners – especially in year 1 - tend to repeat those frequent verbs more than native speakers. So there seems to be

[209] Verbs in the passive are not taken into account here as what is conjugated in passives is in fact *être*.
[210] *Aller (24), aimer (1), arriver (12), devoir (22), dire (40), donner (11), faire (9), pouvoir (2), prendre (24), trouver (16), venir (5), voir (33), vouloir (1).*
[211] *Aller (13), arriver (7), croire (2), dire (25), donner (4), faire (9), mettre (3), parler (1), pouvoir (1), prendre (7), savoir (1), trouver (11), voir (32), vouloir (3).*
[212] *Aller (30), arriver (23), croire (1), devoir (1), dire (8), donner (1), faire (16), mettre (6), parler (3), passer (6), pouvoir (2), prendre (8), savoir (3), trouver (16), venir (14), voir (39), vouloir (4),*
[213] *Aller (5), arriver (5), croire (2), dire (11), donner (8), faire (8), mettre (1), passer (1), pouvoir (1), prendre (7), trouver (2), venir (1), voir (9), vouloir (2).*

some formulaic use of frequent verbs in the ILs with an oral medium. If we now compare the results above with the frequency of other verbs, we obtain the following results:

	Etre, avoir, c'était, y avoir	Most frequent verbs	Other verbs
Year 1	2.69	41.32	55.99
Year 2	1.84	27.29	70.87
Year 4	1.62	26.81	71.57
Control group	1.53	24.23	74.24

We note a big leap in the range of verbs used in the PC between the first and the second year (+ 14.88) while the period of residence abroad does not seem to play a significant role (+ 0.7%) and it would be worth taking a qualitative approach to this question. If we now examine the range of verbs used with the PC, this can be seen to be fairly extensive, as indicated in the table below.

	Verbs
Only in year 1	Aimer, alerter, attaquer, avoir la chance de, avoir mal, *batter, cacher[214], capturer, choisir, crier[215], encourager, être en train, y être[216], *faire fui(te), *fuyer, interroger, passer (un bon *temps), passer[217], patiner, permettre, *prener, quitter, rattraper, recevoir, remarquer, rendre visite à, réveiller, *s'arriver, se battre, *se fuir[218], se heurter, servir, *sorter, *tendrer[219], voyager, être couvré, être montré
Only in year 2	Accrocher, *ascendre[220], attirer (l'attention), avoir l'occasion, *avoir la faim, avoir lieu, avoir une collision, buter, circuler, connaître[221], *courer, *départer, explorer, faire (des courses), fermer, foncer, gagner, menacer, mettre en liberté, procéder[222], rapporter, rassembler, réaliser, répondre, *s'aller, saisir, se plaindre, se rendre, toucher, *vouler, être mis, être mis à la porte, être raconté
Only in year 4	Accourir, *admettre à, amener, apparaître, arriver à, asseoir[223], *attender[224], attraper, avoir un accident, balader, bouleverser[225], chasser[226], connaître, couler, croiser, détenir, entendre, entrer en collision, faire + INF, finir de, fuir, glisser, indiquer, insister, interpeller, marcher, mener, nier, offrir, passer[227], passer (la nuit), piquer[228], pleurer, poursuivre, profiter, provoquer, ramener, remonter, retenir, revoir, rouler, *s'aller, s'arrêter[229], *s'arriver, *s'entrer, *s'intervenir, saisir, se cacher, *se devenir, *se fuir, *se marcher, * se partir, se produire, se rassembler, *se rester, *se venir, signaler, taper,

[214] Instead of *casser.*
[215] Meaning *pleurer.*
[216] Instead of *y avoir.*
[217] Instead of *se passer.*
[218] Meaning *s'enfuir.*
[219] Meaning *surveiller.*
[220] Meaning *monter.*
[221] Meaning *savoir.*
[222] Meaning *continuer.*
[223] Instead of *s'asseoir.*
[224] Meaning *attendre.*
[225] Meaning *bousculer.*
[226] Instead of *pourchasser.*
[227] Instead of *se passer.*
[228] Meaning *voler.*
[229] Instead of *se faire arrêter.*

	être armé, être attrapé, être blâmé, être bousculé, être demandé, être employé, être engagé, être obligé, être raconté, être résolu, être réveillé
Only in control group	Affirmer, allumer, assommer, autoriser, avoir peur, confier, déclarer, embarquer, enfiler, faillir, faire signe de, lever, nourrir, obtenir, offrir, préciser, prendre la fuite, prévenir, proposer, rassurer, redescendre, relâcher, remplir, répéter, retaper, retrouver, revenir, s'allonger, s'apercevoir, s'arranger, s'asseoir, s'énerver, se dénoncer, se diriger, se donner, se faire, se mettre à table, se retourner, se retrouver, se sauver, se servir, surprendre, tenter, visionner, être accusé, être embarqué, être emmené, être relâché, être retrouvé, être vu
Year 1 / year 2	Aider, *arrester, contacter, coucher, dormir, fumer, garder, sauver, téléphoner, visiter, être blessé, être pris
Year 1 / year 4	Accuser, devoir, frapper, noter, penser, porter, réouvrir, s'écraser, se rencontrer
Year 2 / year 4	Accepter, informer, parler, remplacer, savoir, se coucher, *se dormir, se faire + INF, se lever, *se tomber, se trouver, *témoigner, tirer, utiliser
Year 1 / year 2 / year 4	Casser, courir, découvrir, devenir, disparaître, échapper, entrer, essayer, regarder, suivre, travailler
Year 1 / control	Sauter
Year 2 / control	Intervenir, refuser, renverser
Year 4 / control	Attendre, avouer, commander, crier, emmener, finir par, s'amuser, se mettre
Year 1/ year 2 / control	Rester, être arrêté
Year 1/ year 4 / control	Appeler, descendre, montrer, rentrer, s'échapper, s'enfuir, se passer, venir
Year 2/ year 4 / control	Acheter, continuer, croire, demander, être[230], mettre, raconter, reconnaître, réussir, s'endormir
All	Aller, arrêter, arriver, avoir, y avoir, boire, commencer, décider, dire, donner, être, expliquer, faire, inviter, jouer, laisser, manger, monter, ouvrir, partir, passer, payer, pouvoir, prendre, rencontrer, s'arrêter, se casser, se réveiller, sortir, tomber, trouver, voir, voler, vouloir

Out of the 99 VPs in year 1, 37 (37.37%) are only found at level 1. 8 are morphologically deficient and another 4 do not convey the native meaning of the verb so 25 (25.25%) correct forms are specific to year 1. In year 2, 33 out of the 101 different VPs (32.67%) do not appear in the other corpora; 6 are not well-formed and a further 2 have a different meaning from the native usage so 24.45% of all PC are correct forms specific to year 2. 69 out of the 145 VPs (47.59%) found in year 4 are restricted to that corpus; 12[231] present morphological problems, another 6 are used with a non-native meaning. With 35.17% of correct forms specific to year 4, it appears clearly that the range of vocabulary was widened by the year abroad.

At a qualitative level, there is a similar pattern to that found in written narratives (see 3.1.5.). Levels of accuracy are comparable for year 1 and year 2 and there is a noticeable improvement in year 4 so it can be suggested that the year abroad has had a positive influence

[230] Meaning *aller*.
[231] In 10 out of the 12 instances, the problem comes from the addition of a superfluous reflective *se*.

(for a specific study of the influence of the year abroad on verbal lexicon, see Howard's thesis (2002)).

3.3. General conclusion on the PC

From a morphological point of view, the PC remains a difficult tense to master at the most advanced levels (even for members of the control group). The development of this tense seems to contradict acquisitional claims that mastery of the form must precede the mastery of the function (Bardovi-Harlig 1992a: 253); in this case, IL morphology coexists with a high functional accuracy. Morphological complexity shows first in the formation of the PP. Previous studies (Harley 1992, Harley & Swain 1978) mentioned a tendency to align PP on the first group in –er; although this trend appears in our corpora, we have also detected other tactics such as the alignment on a related verb (e.g. *apercevu* on *vu*) or the use of the root of the verb as a PP (*a dort*), maybe a base form (see Bartning 1997). The choice of auxiliary is another difficult area: *avoir* seems to be used as a default form in most cases although *être* is sometimes overused. This feature is related to the problem of voice, which reveals itself in inaccuracies in the use of reflexives that are generally overlooked at the lower levels and overgeneralized in year 4, and in the limited use of passive PC. This feature may certainly be explained by the morphological complexity of the form as well as by the non prototypical combination of *être* with PC; the fact that a passive PC is often replaced by a passive IMP seems to reinforce the argument of prototypical combinations and even of learned chunks as the active IMP is far less common than the PC as will be shown in the next section.

From a functional point of view now, it is clear that the PC is the main narrative tense in all IL. This is clearly linked with the nature of the task as expressed by Bardovi-Harlig (1999: 368):

> In a narrative, the foreground answers the question: «what happened next?« with unbounded states, habituals and generics excluded. In a contrast, in a description, specific temporal reference is normally excluded, and temporal location on the time axis leads to side structures, exactly the 'reverse picture' from the narrative.

This possible bias of the genre on the choice of past tenses is somewhat balanced in our data as one of our exercises in the cloze test relies on the description of cartoons where the IMP should

be far more frequent (see supra). The PC is mostly used correctly but it serves as a default form for the PQP, as the PRES was a default form for the PC and the IMP at lower levels. There seems thus to be two different ways of developing tense / aspect mastery, namely reliance on a default form as in this case or on chunks as for the passive. So it seems that the predictions of the PAH do not cover the variety of phenomena involved in the acquisition of verbal morphology.

We now proceed to study the use of the IMP in our corpora. This tense is considered to appear later in the IL so we may be able to identify more developmental features than it was the case for the PC.

4. Imparfait

The PAH predicts that the IMP will emerge in the IL (stage 3) later than the preterite (stage 2) and this is documented for French (Kaplan 1987, Kihlstedt 1998). These studies show not only that the IMP is acquired later but that the range of verbs marked by it is more restricted (see Bergström 1995, Coppieters 1987, Dietrich et al. 1995, Schlyter 1986, 1990). Bardovi-Harlig & Bergström (1996) find that 81% of all their IMP are inflections of *être* and *avoir;* it amounts to 71%[232] on average in Kihlstedt (1998) who mentions que « *c'est surtout était qui est utilisé dans une mesure plus importante par les apprenants* » (p.94). Another feature that emerged in previous studies is the underuse - compared with native usage - of the IMP combined with dynamic verbs (Bergström 1995, Harley 1992, Kihlstedt 1998).

In this section we will examine whether those findings are confirmed or not by our corpora.

4.1. Written film narratives

4.1.1. Year 1

a. Description

Below is a table giving the 203 verbal forms (31.92% of all conjugated verbs) in the IMP - among which 16 (or 7.88% of all IMP) are passive - found in the year 1 written narratives. They are distributed between 55 different verbs, so each appears 3.69 times on average.

acheter	1	garder	1	être appelé	1
aller	1	laisser	1	être arrêté	5
appeler	1	livrer	1	être attrapé	1
arrêter	2	manger	3	être blessé	2
arriver	2	mettre	1	être découvert	1
attendre	1	ouvrir	2	être énervé	1
avoir	12	parler	1	être fermé	2
avoir faim	1	passer	1	* être interompé	1
avoir l'intention de	1	patiner	1	être mis	2
avoir peur	1	payer	2		
avoir raison	1	penser	2		
y avoir	19	pleurer	1		
boire	2	porter	7		
*chasser = pourchasser	3	pouvoir	3		
chercher	2	prendre	3		

[232] Between 62% for Marie and 80% for Eva, with 72% for Lena and 70% for Yvonne.

commencer	2	regarder	4		
connaître	1	regarder = garder	1		
courir	2	rester	1		
défendre	1	s'arrêter	1		
descendre	1	*s'attendre = attendre	1		
devoir	1	s'enfuir	1		
dire	3	*se cacher = se casser	1		
dormir	3	se monter	1		
* échapper = s'échapper	1	se trouver	3		
essayer	1	sembler	2		
c'était	18	travailler	1		
être	37	trouver	3		
*être en collision	2	venir	1		
être en train de	2	visiter	1		
expliquer	1	voir	1		
faire	1	voler	3		
falloir	1	vouloir	2		

We first focus on the importance of the auxiliaries in the IMP, then on the range of verbs used in the IMP because some research (eg. Kaplan 1987) suggests that the IMP develops after the PC and that verbs need to be acquired in the PC before spreading to the IMP (Kihlstedt 1998). Finally, the study of *Aktionsart* allows for checking of the compatibility of the IMP with each type of verbs and testing if the IMP spreads to all categories from stative to telic, as claimed by the PAH.

In these year 1 written narratives, there is an obvious predilection for using the IMP with *être*, as in Kihlstedt's (1998: 94) corpus. 41 such forms (20.2%) conjugated in the IMP appear in the corpus out of a total of 203 IMP forms - it must also be added that the corpus contains a fair proportion of passive verbal forms (7.88%) in which the inflected verb is also *être*. In addition to these, there are 18 occurrences (8.87%) of the verb phrase *c'était*. So, altogether, 36.94% of the IMP forms - 75 out of 203 – are inflections of *être* in the year 1 written narratives. Moreover, *avoir* and *y avoir* offer respectively 16 (7.88%) and 19 (9.36%) IMP; more than half of the IMP (54.18%) are thus based on the two auxiliaries.

	être		*avoir*		*C'était*		*Y avoir*		Total of 4	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Year 1	57	28.08	16	7.88	18	8.87	19	9.36	110	54.19

The 97 remaining forms are used with 49 verbs (each appearing 1.98 times on average) so there is a clear bias in the use of the IMP at this level of IL.

The use of the IMP may also be presented with reference to the *Aktionsart*. In our classification, the lexical aspect of the whole verb phrase (VP) has been taken into account

which explains for example that *être* can be taken as an atelic verb in *être sous la construction* (S110) or that *avoir* is assessed as telic in *avoir une rencontre* (S103). From our description of the IMP that postulates that it does not show the limits of the situation, it could be expected that the tense is especially compatible with stative verbs. This is indeed the case in the year 1 written narratives, as the stative VPs account for 92 of the 203 verbal forms in the IMP. The atelic VPs make up 43 occurrences and the 68 telic VPs constitute a third of the total of IMP.

	Year 1	
	n	%
Stative VPs	92[233]	45.32
Atelic VPs	43[234]	21.18
Telic VPs	68[235]	33.50
	203	100

These percentages are slightly surprising: first the proportion of prototypical combinations with stative VPs is well under the prototypical associations for the PC (over 81%) in this corpus; then dynamic verbs and especially telic verbs that should be, according to the PAH, the last to emerge in the IMP are well represented; finally atelic VPs that consist of situations without a final limit and that should be highly compatible with the IMP are the least represented. This quantitative approach needs now to be refined by a more qualitative analysis.

[233] *Être (6), penser, porter* (S101), *y avoir, être (3), porter (2), être fermé* (S102), *avoir (2), porter, sembler* (S103), *avoir peur, c'était (2), être, se trouver* (S104), *avoir, y avoir, c'était (2) , être (2) , vouloir* (S105), *avoir raison, être* (S106), *avoir, c'était (3), être (2), falloir, porter* (S107), *avoir, être (2)* (S109), *y avoir, être (2), porter* (S111), *y avoir, être, sembler* (S112), *être (3), porter* (S113), *c'était (3), être* (S114), *y avoir (2), être (2)* (S115), *avoir, y avoir, être (3)* (S116), *y avoir, c'était (4), être* (S117), *y avoir, se trouver* (S118), *y avoir, c'était, être (3)* (S119), *y avoir (4), c'était (3)* (S120) *y avoir* (2), *avoir, connaître, pouvoir, se trouver* (S121).

[234] *Avoir faim, chercher, passer* (S101), *dormir* (S102), *avoir l'intention de, penser, travailler* (S103), *pleurer, regarder* (S104), *regarder* (S105), *être en train de [voler]* (S106), *attendre, commencer à [emmener], être, être en train de [décharger], faire, regarder* (S107), *être [sous la construction], patiner* (S110), *commencer, regarder, manger [beaucoup de], boire [beaucoup de] (2)* (S111), *chasser (2), défendre, essayer de , manger, prendre [des choses], regarder* (S112), *livrer [des pains], vouloir* (S113), *chasser* (S114), *courir* (S115), *dire, dormir* (S116), *parler* (S117), *chercher, dormir, s'attendre* (S118), *garder, pouvoir [aller]* (S121).

[235] *Être en collision, être arrêté* (S101), *être impossible d'[échapper], être [très étonnée], être découvert (S102), avoir [une rencontre], être blessé* (S103), *être en collision* (S104), *y avoir [une grande chasse], échapper, être [libre], trouver, être attrapé* (S105), *avoir [un accident], être appelé, être arrêté, être mis* (S106), *appeler, payer, voler [un cigare]* (S107), *trouver* (S110), *aller, s'arrêter, y avoir [un accident], devoir [être trouvé], descendre [les escaliers], dire, laisser [jusqu'au matin], mettre les armes à, ouvrir, s'arrêter, se monter, trouver, venir* (S111), *arrêter (2), arriver (2), avoir [un accident], avoir [une idée], être libre, payer, s'enfuir, voler (2)* (S112), *acheter, manger [tous]* (S114), *courir [dehors], prendre [le train], être arrêté* (S115), *être interompé, avoir [une boisson], être arrêté* (S116), *pouvoir [être échappé]* (S117), *être arrêté, être fermé, être mis* (S118), *y avoir [un accident], y avoir [une interruption], être blessé* (S120), *dire (2), expliquer, prendre, rester [jusqu'au matin], se cacher [la jambe], visiter, voir [les 3 voleurs]* (S121).

b. Uses

Following comments on broad trends, this qualitative section is devoted to the actual use of the IMP in the year 1 written film narratives. The table below classifies the IMP tokens according to their form and function:

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
112	55.17	3	1.48	81	39.9	7	3.45

It is obvious that morphologically, the IMP is well mastered with 95.07% of accuracy in formation. However, the appropriate use of the forms is much more problematic with only 56.65% of target like forms.

(i) Actual uses

As far as morphology is concerned, IMP is indeed fairly straightforward, which is not surprising given the high proportion of IMP based on *être* and *avoir*. There are few problems such as identification of the verb root in (1) and (2):

(1) Mais il **etait interompé** par des voleurs! (S116)
(2) Le boulanger prenait des choses dans la boulangerie et elle volait le pain et **s'enfuait**. (S102)

A few more problems are related to reflexive verbs and the omission [***échappaient*** (S105), ***attendait à*** (S107)] or the overuse [***se montait*** (S111)] of the reflexive pronoun.

Subject-verb agreement is faulty in two sentences. In (3), the third person singular verb ending is used with a pronoun in the first person singular; this may just be a spelling mistake as the singular forms are homophonous. In (4), the singular subject *la police* is combined with a verb in the plural; this can be attributed to interference with the mother tongue where 'the police' is a collective that requires a plural verb:

(3) Apres avoir disputé, tous les deux sont entrés dans un gros magasin et je **pensait** que ils avaient l'intention de voler des choses. (S103)
(4) La police **étaient appelé** et Charlie était arrête et mis dans un camionnette de police. (S106)

Finally, there is a further problem of past participle agreement in (4) where the feminine should have been used, as in the following sentence:

(5) La Femme portait une grande robe blanche et, quand l'homme est allé au rez de chaussez pour vérifier que les portes **étaient fermés**, elle a dormi. (S102)

In addition to tense formation, difficulties occur from confusions of the IMP with conditional (COND), due to the similarity of the endings for both tenses, a feature that was striking in the year 2 corpus of our pilot study:

(6) Alors même qu'il **arrêterait**, il volait des cigares. (S112)
(7) Apres tout cela il **prendrait** l'autobus. Il s'assit dans une chaise. Apres quelques minutes la fille **prendrait** le même autobus. Il n'avait pas eu des places donc l'homme a donné sa place a la fille. (S114)

(7) is difficult to analyze, given the heterogeneity of tenses found in the excerpt; the general context is past – although one can wonder if *s'assit* is intended as a PS – which could support the fact that the two occurrences of *prendrait* stand in fact for an IMP.

Let us now proceed to semantic combinations of the IMP with *Aktionsart*. The PAH claims that the IMP combines predominantly with stative verbs. This is tested in the section below. First, the IMP is found with telic verbs that emphasize the final limit of a situation; in the following examples, the verbs in the IMP point towards a resultative stage:

(8) Il a dit qu'il était le voleur et la gendarme **l'arrêtait**. (S112)
(9) Le boulanger prenait des choses dans la boulangerie et elle volait le pain et **s'enfuait.** (S112)
(10) Il y a eu un accident entre deux véhicules et l'homme et la femme **échappaient**. (S105)
(11) Big Bill, un des trios [sic], connaissait l'homme de sécurité et il lui **expliquait** qu'ils ne sont pas des voleurs mais qu'ils ont faim.(S121)
(12) Le gendarme chassait la fille et l'homme **était libre**. (S112)

Était libre in (12) is strictly speaking a stative verb but the extralinguistic context shows that this VP stands for *était libéré*, a passive that indicates the result of a situation as in the excerpts below:

(13) En réalite l'homme dormait sous un tas de vètements et il **était decouvert** comme un femme a cherché le tas pour trouver peut etre un nouvelle robe, ou jupe. (S102)
(14) La police **étaient appelé** et Charlie **était arrête** et **mis** dans un camionnette de police. (S106) [**était arrêté / mis** (S118), **était arrêté** (S101)]
(15) Mais il **etait interompé** par des voleurs! (S116)

Telicity can be achieved by adding cotextual elements to the basic verb. Elements such as objects and aspectual complements are likely to make a verb token change category. For instance, a direct object may make a stative VP telic:

(16) Mais **il y avait** ***une interruption*** quand une autre femme a dit que c'était la femme qui a volé le pain, pas Chaplin. (S120)
(17) Hier **il y avait** ***un accident*** dans un grand magasin et le gardian de la nuit a été blessé: il s'est cassé sa jambe, donc un nouveau devait être trouver. (S111) [**Il y avait** ***un petit incident*** (S120)]
(18) La fille **avait** ***un accident*** avec un homme. (S112) [**avaient** ***un accident***. (S106)]
(19) Mais quand il a essayé de quitter le magasin, Il **avait** ***un rencontre*** avec plusieurs hommes qui ont le tiré. (S103)
(20) Lorsque le boulanger arrivait, elle **avait** ***une idée*** de prendre du pain. (S112)

It is worth noting that all occurrences are inflections of *avoir* and *y avoir* that were shown as prototypical with the IMP and the non-native examples may come from a failure to adapt formulaic uses of *avoir* to cotextual information. Similarly, the direct object enables an atelic verb to become telic:

(21) Il appelait au commissariat, et pendant qu'il le faisait l'homme **volait** ***un cigare***! (S107)
(22) Alors même qu'il arrêterait, il **volait** ***des cigares***.[236] (S112)
(23) L'homme est allé dans un café et il achetait beaucoup de nourriture et **mangeait** ***tous***. (S114)

Direct objects are not the only ones to modify a verb category, indirect objects – in other words objects introduced by a preposition – may also emphasize the final limit of a situation. In the following example, a limit is brought to the verb by the complement:

(24) La femme **se montait** ***dans un lit*** mais Chaplin elle laissait jusqu'au matin. (S111)
(25) Il **descendait** les escaliers ***au premier étage*** où il y avait des cambrioleurs avec des armes. (S111)
(26) Premièrement ils mangeaient et buvaient beaucoup de gâteaux et de vin et après avoir les finis ils **venaient** ***au quatrième étage du magasin*** où se trouve tous les jeux pour les enfants. (S111)
(27) Elle **courait** ***dehors*** et par accident elle a hurlé un homme, qui était Charlie Chaplin. (S115)

Aspectual complements, by indicating the limits of a situation, interfere with the verb category. In (28), the stress is put on the final limit that is closed. In the other examples, both

[236] Note here that, as suggested in the theoretical presentation, the use of a plural object makes (22) more acceptable than (21).

the initial and final limits are shown: *pendant la soirée* and *pendant le voyage* in (29) indicate the interval during which the situation is valid. (30) and (31) indicate a finite repetition with limits:

(28) La femme se montait dans un lit mais Chaplin elle **laissait *jusqu'au matin.*** (S111) [**restait *jusqu'au matin*** (S121)]
(29) ***Pendant leur voyage*** **il y avait** beaucoup de choses assez amusant qui on ***a vu.*** (S120) [**regardait** ... ***pendant la soirée.*** (S111)]
(30) Puis il a fumé un cigare devant un magasin et il **était attrapé *encore*** par un policier. (S105)
(31) L'homme a visite une cafétéria et mangeait beaucoup, mais il ne payait pas et il **arrêtait *encore*** (S112) [**était arrêté *encore une fois*** (S115)]

From this, it is clear that incompatibilities between verbal aspect (tense) and lexical aspect *(Aktionsart)* do not depend only on telicity (final limit) as the HPA claims, it also depends on dynamicity (the change of situation by an action on the initial limit). This point has already been made in Bergström (1995) and Kihlstedt (1998). In our corpus, VPs which show the initial and final limits of the situation – what is commonly called punctual[237] verbs – are combined with the IMP, which is non-native. This overgeneralization goes against the original form of the PAH (see Salaberry 2000 for a discussion):

(32) Elle **était en collision** avec un homme, et tous les deux sont tombés dans la rue. (S104) [S101]
(33) Un policier **trouvait** les deux personnes et il ne connaît pas qu'est qui se passe. (S105) [S110]

Even verbs expressing a change of situation and therefore emphasizing its initial limit, are found in the IMP. It is worth noting that 5 of the 9 occurrences are produced by the same student (S112), which may betray a somewhat idiosyncratic tendency:

(34) Il **commençait** le travail, avec l'aide de sa femme ou sa petite amie, et regardait le magasin pendant la soirée. (S111) [S107]
(35) Il est mis dans une camionnette de gendarme et la fille qui a vole du pain **arrivait.** (S112) [**arrivait** (S112)]
(36) Le gendarme **chassait**, mais l'homme la défendait. (S112) [**chassait** (S112)]
(37) La femme **dormait**[238] dans un grand lit confortable pendant que Charlie est rentré en bas pour trouver une place pour dormir. (S116) [**prenaient, disait** (S121), **essayait de** (S112)]

[237] We have shown the irrelevance of the concept of punctuality to distinguish between verb categories in the theoretical part.

Aktionsart or lexical aspect is not the only factor that combines with the IMP. Temporal complements can set a new moment of reference (R), that acts as an indication of an initial limit:

(38) ***Le prochain matin*** le magasin **ouvrait** et la femme était toujours dans le lit. (S111)
(39) ***Un jour***, l'homme qui gardait le magasin chaque nuit **se cachait** sa jambe. (S121) [***Une nuit*** … **visitait** (S121)]

Similarly, temporal complements that establish a link with the moment of speech (S) indicate by default a final limit that contradicts the aspectual presentation offered by the IMP:

(40) ***Hier*** **il y avait** un accident dans un grand magasin et le gardian de la nuit a été blessé: il s'est cassé sa jambe, donc un nouveau devait être trouver. (S111)

Finally, the wider discourse organization may invalidate the use of the IMP. For example, the IMP is used to express succession, which does not correspond with the presentation of that tense that focuses on the internal development of a situation, rather than on its limits.

(41) Après un peu de temps Chaplin disait qu'il peut le faire sans voyant mais la femme il s'arrêtait ***et puis*** ils **allaient** au cinquième étage où **il y a** les lits. (S111) [***puis*** **il y avait une grande chasse** (S105),
(42) Le boulanger **prenait** des choses dans la boulangerie ***et*** elle **volait** le pain ***et*** **s'enfuait.** (S111)
(43) Le gendarme **chassait**, ***mais*** l'homme la **défendait**. Il a dit qu'il était le voleur ***et*** la gendarme l'**arrêtait**. (S112) [**mettaient** … ***et*** … **buvaient** (S111), **chassait** … ***et*** **était** libre. (S112), ***a aidé*** … ***et*** … **courait**. (S115), ***a pris*** … ***et*** … **avaient** (S116), ***a trouvé*** … ***et*** **parlait**. (S117)]

Consequence is akin to succession as a cause is supposed to precede its consequences and therefore combines better with perfective tenses:

(44) Mais quand il a essayé de quitter le magasin, Il avait un rencontre avec plusieurs hommes qui ont le tiré. ***Pourtant*** l'homme n'**était** pas **blessé**. (S103)
(45) L'homme et le gendarme la ont accompagnée, ***donc*** tous les trois **se trouvaient** dans la rue ! (S104) [***donc*** …**pouvait** (S117), ***donc***… **devait** (S111)]

This presentation of actual uses of the IMP in IL clearly shows that the formulation of the PAH fails to account for many of the phenomena encountered and it will be necessary to describe the other significant factors that need to be taken into account in the choice of that tense.

[238] Here, the inchoative *s'endormir* would have been more suited to the extralinguistic context.

(ii) Required uses

Whilst the IMP is overused at this level of IL, there are instances where the expected IMP does not appear and is replaced by a PRES or a PC. The PC has been studied in the section devoted to that tense and we concentrate here on the PRES that is relatively frequent instead of the IMP in learners' IL (Bergström 1997, Dietrich, Klein & Noyau 1995, Howard 1998[239], among others). This tense replaces the IMP in two main contexts. First, the PRES appears in past sentences where the sequence of tenses is not kept, as in the first three examples below that may be assimilated to reported speech:

(46) La Femme et l'homme s'est trouve dans une departement de lits et la femme ***trouvait*** que les lits **sont** confortables ! (S110)
(47) Après un peu de temps Chaplin ***disait*** qu'il **peut** le faire sans voyant mais la femme il s'arrêtait et puis ils allaient au cinquième étage où il y a les lits. (S111)
(48) Big Bill, un des trios [sic], connaissait l'homme de sécurité et il lui ***expliquait*** qu'ils ne **sont** pas des voleurs mais qu'ils **ont faim**. (S121)
(49) ***Il y avait*** un homme qui **conduit** un camion du pain. (S105)

Secondly, the PRES replaces the IMP in complex coordinated sentences in the case of stative verbs and more specifically *il y a* in our examples:

(50) Un policier trouvait les deux personnes et il ne **connaît** pas qu'est qui se passe. (S105)
(51) La femme a pris un pain et **est en train d**'échapper quand elle s'est tombée. (S105)
(52) La femme s'est levée et elle a trouve que le magasin était ouvert parce qu'**il y a** des personnes au rez-de-chaussée. (S119) [***s'est reveille et*** **il y a** (S110)***, est alle***, **il y a** (S119)]

So there seems to be a strategy of replacing IMP by a tense that is more readily available because previously acquired, which corroborates both the claims of the PAH and experimental results such as Kihlstedt's *'forme de base'*.

c. Conclusion on the use of the IMP in the year 1 written narratives

The IL examples presented in this section do not generally support the PAH. Indeed, whilst there are still signs of avoidance of the IMP with stative verbs (that are considered nonetheless as the most prototypical of the IMP), contradictory combinations of imperfective verbal aspect (IMP) and dynamic – mostly telic - lexical aspect (*Aktionsart*) emerge (these are

[239] Howard, M. (1998) 'The acquisition of tense and aspect in the advanced learner : the role of the year abroad, paper at the *EuroSLA 8 : la personne bilingue*. Paris, september 1998.

supposed to indicate advanced mastery of French). However, those combinations are not native and it seems that the PAH leads us to expect a greater number of combinations than would be used by the native speaker, a fact that Andersen & Shirai (1994) have noted. So native mastery does not amount only to propagation of the IMP to all categories of verbs and other influences – such as those identified in the theoretical part - are at stake.

4.1.2. Year 2

a. Description

The 72 occurrences of the IMP (20.4% of all conjugated verbs), found in the year 2 written narratives, are distributed among 21 different verbs, so each appears on average 3.43 times. They are presented below.

aller	1	marcher	1	* être chassé = pourchassé	1
avoir	1	prendre	1	être couronné	1
y avoir	15	regarder	2	être involvé	1
avoir faim	2	se casser	1	être pris	1
chercher	1	se rendre	1	être situé	1
courir	1	se trouver	2	être trouvé	1
décider	1	sembler	1		
devenir	1	tomber	1		
devoir	1	travailler	2		
c'était	9	trouver	1		
être	19	venir	1		

Some comments are now made on the use of auxiliaries in the IMP, the range of verbs in that tense as well as on their *Aktionsart*. *Etre* is obviously the most frequent verb in the IMP with 34 occurrences as *être* (19 occurrences), *c'était* (9 instances) or in 6 passives. *Avoir* provides another 3 IMP and *y avoir* 15. So all together the auxiliaries represent 72.22% of all uses of the IMP.

	être		*avoir*		*C'était*		*Y avoir*		*Total of 4*	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Year 2	25	34.72	3	4.17	9	12.5	15	20.83	52	72.22

The remaining 17 verbs account only for 20 forms; each is used on average 1.18 times so there is a clear overuse of the auxiliaries in this corpus.

As for the *Aktionsart* of the verb in the IMP, the corpus contains 47 stative VPs, 14 atelic VPs and 11 telic VPs, among which four are passive.

	Year 2	
	n	%
Stative VPs	47[240]	65.28
Atelic VPs	14[241]	19.44
Telic VPs	11[242]	15.28
	72	100

This distribution meets the predictions based on previous studies more than in year 1 as prototypical combinations account for almost a third of all forms.

b. Uses

We now classify the tokens in the IMP according to their forms and functions. As in year 1, morphological accuracy is over 95% (95.83%) but functional accuracy still does not match with 76.39% of accurate uses, which constitutes nonetheless a sharp increase from the 56.65% in year 1.

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
55	76.39	-	0	14	19.44	3	4.17

(i) Actual uses

The morphology of the IMP is indeed not problematic in this corpus: there is only one confusion with the COND:

(53) Le fille **courrait** dans le rue mais elle **tombait** avec un homme.(S214)

However, the context is clearly indicated as the past: *courrait* is coordinated with another IMP and the double –r seems to be a spelling mistake, also found in other forms of *courir:*

(54) Le conducteur ***a*** par la suite ***courru*** apres la jeune voleure et l'***a pris*** par le bras. (S216)

So *courrait* is unmistakenly taken here as an IMP.

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[240] *Y avoir (2), être* (S201), *c'était (2), être (2), se trouver (2)* (S202), *y avoir (2)* (S203), *y avoir* (S204), *y avoir, être* (S205), *avoir faim, y avoir, être* (S207), *c'était (2)* (S208), *c'était* (S209), *y avoir (2)* (S211), *être (2)* (S212), *y avoir, c'était, être (3), sembler* (S213), *y avoir, c'était, être* (4) (S214), *y avoir (3), devoir, être, être situé* (S215), *c'était* (S216), *avoir, c'était, être (2)* (S217).

[241] *Être chassé* (S201), *regarder* (S202), *marcher, prendre [des pains], regarder* (S210), *travailler* (S211), *être [fatigué]* (S212), *travailler* (S213), *courir* (S214), *avoir faim* (S215), *aller [de toutes places], chercher, devenir [fatigué], être [stupide]* (S217).

[242] *Se rendre compte* (S202), *être trouvé* (S203), *décider* (S208), *casser [sa jambe]* (S211), *être pris* (S213), *tomber, trouver, être involvé* (S214), *venir de* (S216), *y avoir [un incident], être couronné [de succès]* (S217).

The IMP is mainly used where a PC would be expected in native production; however there are instances where a PQP would be more appropriate:

(55) Hier mon ami m'***a dit*** qu'**il y avait** un incident très amusant dans une grande surface. (S217)

In this example, we need a perfect tense to show that the situation is completed; it could be a PC but here, a PQP would allow keeping the temporal ordering as the communication happened after the event. It is generally acknowledged that the PC replaces the PQP when this form has not yet emerged (Kihlstedt 1998), however here, the fact that the VP includes *y avoir* may have triggered the use of the IMP. Things are less clear in the following sentence that nonetheless follows the same pattern of reported speech; the difference comes from the fact that here, the introductory verb is in the present so the PC could be used. Yet, the events reported belong to a period anterior to the excerpt shown, which would favour the use of the PQP. Ayres-Bennett & Carruthers (2001) mention the contemporary tendency to use a PQP to indicate simple anteriority:

(56) Les subtitres ***disent*** qu'**il y avait** un accident dans le grand magasin et donc quelqu'un s'est cassé la jambe. (S201)

As was the case in the year 1 corpus, there is a series of telic verbs conjugated in the IMP that expresses the final limit of the situation:

(57) Malheureusement, un de ceux gardiens **cassait** sa jambe quand il est tombé (S211)

The VP is made telic by the adjunction of a direct object as in the following examples. Note that the following examples are instances of *avoir* and *y avoir*, which may support that these forms are learnt as chunks in the IMP:

(58) Puis ils ont visité l'étage des jeux et ils ont joué avec les patins a roulettes et **avaient** presque ***un accident***. (S106)
(59) Lorsque le boulanger arrivait, elle **avait** ***une idée*** de prendre du pain.
(60) Soudainement, trois voleurs sont entrés dans la grande surface et **il y avait** ***beaucoup de désordre.*** (S205)
(61) Les subtitres disent qu'**il y avait** ***un accident*** dans le grand magasin et donc quelqu'un s'est cassé la jambe. (S201)

The following example shows the change of an atelic verb, *courir*, in a telic VP because of an indirect object. Syntactically, this is a native French sentence that may be translated in English

by « the girl was running in the street », where *courir* would be an atelic verb. However, the extralinguistic context shows a different picture: the girl rushed out of the shop, which would be expressed in French by a PC:

(62) Le fille **courrait** ***dans le rue*** mais elle tombait avec un homme. (S214)

The examples below are instances of so-called « punctual » verbs, as they show the initial and the initial limits of the situation:

(63) Charly **décidait** alors d'accompagner la femme. (S208)
(64) Le fille courrait dans le rue mais elle **tombait** avec un homme. (S214)
(65) La police **trouvait** la fille mais l'homme a dit que c'était lui qui a volé le pain. (S214)

In the following excerpts, the emphasis bears on the initial limit of the situation:

(66) L'homme **se rendait compte** que c'était l'occasion pour la femme d'échapper et il a rendu le policier inconscient. (S202)

In addition to adjustments to the basic category of the verb, the presence of temporal complements influences the nativeness of the IMP:

(67) ***Lorsqu'elle regardait dans la fenêtre***, un homme **prenait** des pains du derrière d'une camionnette dans le magasin. (S210)

This example is complex: *lorsque* implies simultaneity of the situations it links, however there is a discrepancy between *regarder* that is atelic, and *prendre* that is telic. The plural of *des pains* solves the problem as it allows the situation of taking to be repeated. This sentence is syntactically correct but semantically, it contradicts the extralinguistic information: the situation is semelfactive and the IMP makes it repetitive. In fact here, the IL use comes not so much from the verb tokens but from the choice of the connecting word. With *pendant que* the sentence would be native.

At the discourse level, the IMP is used to express both succession and consequence, a role that its open limits should not allow it to assume:

(68) ***Plus tard***, l'homme était dans la ville quand il **etait involvé** avec la police et il était dans une voiture de police avec des autres personnes.(S214)
(69) ***De plus*** le porteur **cherchait** la grande surface pour la sécurité et il a trouves un groupe des voleurs qui essayeraient de tirer le porteur avec les pistoles. (S217)
(70) ***Donc***, Chaplin **était pris** par le policier pour le crime. (S213)

To recapitulate on the actual uses of the IMP in this corpus, it would seem that this tense is overused and that it appears in non-native production resulting from a failure to combine the intrinsic value of the tense itself and the cotextual information.

(ii) Required uses

If, in the examples cited above, the IMP was being incorrectly used in place of other tenses, there are other instances where the anticipated IMP is in fact not used and another tense, such as the PC or the PRES is selected (this is studied in more detail in the relevant section). In the excerpts below, the stative situations would require an IMP given the past context; however they are actually expressed by a PRES:

(71) L'homme **a** une certaine attraction à la femme et il avait commis un crime à joindre la femme en prison. Les deux gens **sont** coupable des crimes différents. (S203)
(72) J'étais en dehors d'un grand magasin l'hier soir. **Il y a** beaucoup des gens et j'ai demandé ce qu'a passé dans le magasin. (S212)
(73) Elle a vu le pain dans la fenetre et elle **a la faim**. (S214)

This replacement of the IMP by the PRES for stative verbs is due to the fact that both tenses offer an imperfective view of the situation, a view that is compatible with this type of verb. Howard (forthcoming) suggests another explanation for the replacement of an IMP by a PRES:

> ...nous remarquons que l'occurrence de l'IMP est la moins fréquente dans des contextes où la durée du procès dépasse les bornes de l'intervalle repéré pour que le procès soit valable au présent. En fait, les apprenants ont tendance à employer le présent dans ce contexte, bien qu'ils parlent du passé.

Although this hypothesis could explain (71), it is less convincing in the case of both (72) and (73).

c. Conclusion

The use of the IMP appears quantitatively more restricted in this corpus where it only represents a fifth of all finite verbs; on a qualitative level, the range of VPs used in the IMP is also very limited. As in year 1, the combinations between aspect and *Aktionsart* are overproductive and the IMP is underused in complex sentences. On the other hand, that tense is less frequently used to express succession or consequence, which may be attributed to the shorter narratives produced by the year 2 cohort (average length: 158.29 words compared with

206.29 in year 1 and 252.86 in year 4). We now concentrate on the use of the IMP at the highest level of IL at our disposal, the one written by final year students.

4.1.3. Year 4

a. Description

A list of the 188 occurrences of the IMP (25.68% of all conjugated verbs) found in the year 4 narratives is provided below. 50 different verbs are used so on average each appears 3.76 times.

acheter	1	faire les courses	1	être assis	1
aller	2	falloir	1	être coincé	1
aller + INF	1	manger	2	être endormi	1
apporter	1	marcher	3	être fermé	1
arrêter	1	partir	1	être installé	1
assumer	1	passer	3	être mis	1
attendre	3	payer	1	être obligé	1
avoir	12	penser	1	être ouvert	1
avoir besoin de	1	plaire	1	être placé	2
avoir faim	5	porter	7	être stationné	1
avoir peur	1	pouvoir	3		
y avoir	17	regarder	3		
bloquer	1	s'amuser	2		
boire	1	*S'habiller	2		
chercher	1	savoir	3		
commencer	1	se cacher	1		
courir	1	se lever	1		
croiser	1	se promener	1		
devenir	2	* se rouler	1		
dire	1	se retrouver	1		
* échapper = s'échapper	1	se souvenir	1		
encercler	1	se trouver	2		
essayer	3	sembler	1		
c'était	18	suivre	1		
être	35	surveiller	1		
être en détresse	1	téléphoner	1		
être en train de	7	travailler	5		
faire	1	vouloir	4		

We will first focus on the proportion of auxiliaries in the list, then on the range of verbs used and finally on the categories in which they are found. *Être* is found 43 times, *c'était* 18 times

and there are 10 passives; *avoir* and related forms provide another 19 occurrences and *y avoir* 17.

	être		*avoir*		*c'était*		*y avoir*		Total of 4	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Year 4	53	28.19	19	10.11	18	9.57	17	9.04	107	56.91

The 81 remaining occurrences of the IMP are distributed among the 50 other verbs that each appears 1.62 times on average.

As for *Aktionsart,* we find here 118 stative VP, 47 atelic ones and 23 telic ones.

	Year 4	
	n	%
Stative VPs	118[243]	62.77
Atelic VPs	47[244]	25.00
Telic VPs	23[245]	12.23
	188	100

b. Uses

The morphology becomes increasingly accurate with 98.93% of well-formed IMP and the functions of the tense are better mastered than at the lower levels (81.91% against 76.39% in year 2 and 56.65% in year 1).

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
153	81.38	1	0.53	33	17.55	1	0.53

[243] *C'était (2), pouvoir, vouloir* (S401), *c'était (2)* (S402), *avoir besoin de, avoir faim, être (2), se cacher* (S403), *y avoir, être, encercler, porter, être installé* (S404), *être* (S405), *avoir (4), être (3), porter (2)* (S406), *avoir faim, y avoir (3), c'était (3), être* (S407), *y avoir (4), avoir, être, être fermé, être ouvert* (S408), *avoir, c'était (2), être (2), pouvoir, sembler, être assis, être stationné* (S409), *avoir, était (3), porter (2), vouloir* (S410), *y avoir, être* (S411), *c'était, être (3), pouvoir, savoir (2)* (S412), *avoir, avoir faim, y avoir* (S413), *avoir, y avoir (2), c'était (2), être, porter (2)* (S414), *avoir, avoir faim, être (2)* (S415), *c'était, falloir* (S416), *être (3)* (S417), *y avoir (3), penser, être (6)* (S418), *s'habiller (2), se trouver, c'était (3), être* (S419), *y avoir, être (3), être endormi* (S420), *y avoir, c'était (2), être, être en détresse, savoir* (S421), *avoir, avoir faim, avoir peur* (S422).

[244] *Être en train de* (S401), *se promener* (S402), *essayer de, surveiller* (S403), *faire[mes courses]* (S404), *travailler (2)* (S405), *être en train de (2), passer (2), regarder* (S406), *courir, être en train de, manger, marcher* (S407), *attendre (2), commencer à, marcher* (S409), *attendre, bloquer, passer* (S410), *travailler* (S411), *aller (2),* (S415), *être en train de* (S418), *être en train de, se souvenir* (S419), *avoir des problèmes, travailler* (S420), *regarder, s'amuser (2), se rouler* (S412), *manger, travailler* (S413), *être en train de, regarder* (S414), *chercher essayer (2), marcher, vouloir* (S421), *boire, plaire, vouloir* (S422).

[245] *Être mis* (S401), *faire [une livraison]* (S402), *se retrouver* (S405), *suivre, téléphoner, etre obligé* (S406), *croiser, dire, échapper, payer, être placé (2)* (S407) *devenir, se lever* (S408), *aller [quitter], devenir* (S409), *assumer [la responsabilité], partir* (S410), *être coincé* (S411), *acheter* (S412), *apporter, se trouver [arrêtés]* (S419), *arrêter* (S422).

(i) Actual uses

At this level of IL, the morphology of the IMP is largely mastered with only two minor inaccuracies, which could in fact be simply spelling mistakes:

(74) La jeune dame en essayant de s'enfuire, est rentré dans Charlie Chaplin, qui se promenait. Chaplin, afin de ne pas voir la fille arrêtée par la police pour vol, a dit que **s'était** lui qui avait volé la baguette et non la fille. (S402)
(75) Une assistante l'a aidée, et les femmes ont trouvé Charlie qui **était endormit**. (S420)

Both forms are existing verbal forms with *s'était* being a reflexive in the first example and *endormit* being a form of the PS. This morphological general accuracy is still not quite matched in the areas of syntax and semantics.

There are some isolated occurrences where the *Aktionsart* of a verb, that emphasizes the final limit, is not readily compatible with the presentation offered by the IMP:

(76) Le chef de sécurité est descendu en bas où il **se retrouvait** face à 3 cambrioleurs, armés du fusil. (S405)
(77) Il a essayé de fuir, mais les policiers l'**arrêtaient** (S422)
(78) Il y a eu un accident de route et le M. et la fille ont pu s'échapper dans la confusion qui **suivait** cet accident. (S406)

In the example above, *suivre* evokes a succession, and the lack of initial limit in the presentation offered by the IMP invalidates the use of that tense. Similarly, the IMP cannot express the result focusing on a final limit that the IMP does not show either, as in the following passive IMP:

(79) Il **était mis** au camion avec les autres malfaisants. (S401)
(80) Il **était placé** dans un camion de police avec les autres criminels (S407)

The next two examples are not passive but they stand for *était habillé*, which is stative, unlike *s'habillait,* which shows the situation in the making. This is obviously incompatible with the extralinguistic context of a film of the 1930s !

(81) Une femme qui **s'habillait** d'une robe noire était en train de se promener dans la rue. (S419)
(82) Mais en courant, elle s'est entrée en collision avec un homme qui **s'habillait** d'un chapeau melon (S419)

The presence of a direct object has an influence on the VP category. It makes the VPs telic in the first two examples; for instance, *attendre* is atelic but *attendre l'homme* shows the final limit: when the man arrives. In the third example, the VP remains atelic, unlike the instance of

manger found in year 1 and repeated here, where *tout* indicates that the situation has reached its final limit:

(83) Un policier est arrivé avec le boulanger pour arrêter la fille, mais l'homme **assumait la responsabilité** (S410)
(84) Elle partait, mais elle **attendait *l'homme*** qui a décidé de partir avec elle (S410)
(85) L'homme a décidé d'entrer dans une cafétéria et il **mangeait *beaucoup***. (S407)
(23) L'homme est allé dans un café et il achetait beaucoup de nourriture et **mangeait *tous***. (S114)

The IMP is not naturally used in combination with a situation that has no internal duration and emphasizes both the initial and the final limits:

(86) Elle **croisait** une boulangerie où il y avait un camion qui était en train de livrer des baguettes à la boulangerie. (S407)

Temporal complements that indicate a new moment of reference and therefore an initial limit are used in native usage for the stylistic use of so-called « *imparfait narratif* » (for a detailed overview of this use, see Labeau (forthcoming)):

(87) ***Le matin prochain***, la femme **se levait** et il était 9.30 et le grand magasin était déjà ouvert. (S408)

A tendency consists of associating indications ordering events with the IMP; because it does not emphasize the limits of the situation, this tense is not a natural choice in that context.

(88) L'homme ***a décidé*** d'entrer dans une cafétéria ***et*** il **mangeait** beaucoup. (S407) [***a tenu*** … ***et*** **essayait** (S421), ***a reconnu*** … ***et*** **devenaient ivres** (S408)]
(89) L'homme a frappé le gendarme avec sa matraque ***et puis*** la femme et l'homme **échappaient** ensemble. (S407)
(90) Puis, elle a décidé de voler une baguette et ***après avoir fait ça*** elle **courait**. (S407)
(91) ***Quelques instants plus tard*** la femme, la voleuse de la baguette, **était placée** dans le camion. (S407) [***Plus tard***… **se trouvaient arrêtés** (S419)]
(92) Elle **mangeait** des sandwiches ***avant qu'***ils ne soient montés au quatrième étage (S413)

The same is true for the expression of consequence:

(93) A la caisse il a expliqué qu'il n'avait pas d'argent, ***donc*** le policier **était obligé** de l'arrêter. (S406)

Finally, the sequence of events may not need complements but may be indicated by the context, rather than by the cotext:

(94) L'homme a dit à la femme « vous voulez asseoir ? » Elle **disait** oui.

In this example, the strangeness of the IMP derives from the fact that the context evokes a conversation where the contributors are expected to speak in turn. The answer of the girl is supposed to be posterior to the question asked, so we are back to an ordering of situations that disqualifies the use of the IMP.

(ii) Required uses

As at lower levels, the IMP required in native usage may be replaced either by a PC (see relevant section) or a PRES. The first two examples come under the sequence of tenses with the introductory verb in the past requesting a past imperfective in the subordinated clause:

(95) La fille s'est mise dans le lit et le gardien ***a dit*** qu'il **va la lever** avant que le magasin ouvre au matin (S411) [***a dit qu'il*** **va retourner** (S420)]
(96) Puis, il ***avait porté*** quelque chose sur ses yeux pour montrer qu'il **peut** glisser sans voir (S420)

In (97), the morphological similarity between the PC and the passive PRES may explain the confusion: *est ouverte* may have been felt as a past:

(97) Au matin, la fille ***s'est levée***, et le magasin **est** déjà **ouverte**. (S411)

In (98), *est enlevé* introduces the second part of the narrative that is from then on in the PRES, so the problem relies more in the lack of sequence of tenses between *est enlevé* and *avait vu* than in the PRES itself:

(98) Pendant que Charlie **est enlevé**, la dame qui avait tout vu réclame au boulanger que ce n'était pas Chaplin qui a volé mais la fille (S402) suite au PRES

c. Conclusion on the use of the IMP in the year 4 written narratives

At this level, non-native uses of the IMP are less restricted to the VP itself but are more often found at the discourse level, given that the narratives become more elaborated. However, there are still puzzling uses of the PRES instead of the IMP that the PAH struggles to explain. The main problem seems to come from a reliance on local cues in choosing the morphemes.

4.1.4. Control group

a. Description

The control group corpus contains 28 IMP (14% of all conjugated forms) distributed between 18 different verbs so each one is repeated on average 1.56 times. The IMP are distributed as follows:

avoir faim	1	passer	2	être fermé	1
y avoir	1	pouvoir	2		
c'était	4	regarder	1		
commencer à	1	se trouver	4		
connaître	1	se promener	1		
essayer	1	sortir	1		
être	3	tanguer	1		
être censé	1	travailler	1		
falloir	1				

Etre and *c'était* both provide four tokens out of 28 and there is an extra passive form. There is 1 occurrence of *avoir* and one of *y avoir,* so the two auxiliaries account for 39.29% of the IMP tokens.

	être		*avoir*		*c'était*		*y avoir*		Total of 4	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Cont.gr	5	17.86	1	3.57	4	14.29	1	3.57	11	39.29

If attention is paid to *Aktionsart*, the corpus presents 18 stative VPs, 9 atelic and 1 telic ones.

	Control group	
	n	%
Stative VPs	18[246]	64.29
Atelic VPs	9[247]	32.14
Telic VPs	1[248]	3.57
	28	100

The scarcity of telic verbs in the IMP is surprising according to the PAH that suggested that mastery of a foreign language implied the ability to combine less compatible aspects and *Aktionsarts.* This distribution shows that aspectual affinities are still at work in native usage; one can therefore rightly question the explanatory power of the PAH.

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[246] *C'était (2), être [en colère], pouvoir (2)* (F1), *connaître, être fermé* (F2), *c'était, se trouver* (F3), *être, être censé, se trouver (3)* (F4), *y avoir, c'était* (F5), *être, falloir* (F6).
[247] *Passer, tanguer* (F1), *travailler* (F2), *avoir faim, commencer à, passer, regarder* (F3), *essayer* (F4), *se promener* (F5).
[248] *Sortir* (F3).

b. Uses

(i) Actual uses

The IMP is used in independent or coordinated clauses with stative or atelic verbs to express situations the limits of which are not shown:

(99) A cote du téléphone **se trouvait** une boutique ***et*** la Charlot demanda un cigare et donna des bonbons a des enfants qui passaient dans la rue. (F3) [**était censé** (F4), **connaissaient** (F2)]

(100) Une pauvre jeune femme **regardait** la vitrine d'une boulangerie. (F3) [**avait faim** (F3), **était en colère** (F1), **commençait** (F3)]

The IMP is used in reported speech:

(101) Le policier ***a*** alors ***dit*** au vendeur que Charlot ne **pouvait** pas payer et le marchant était en colère ! (F1)

(102) Ensuite, il est descendu au rez-de-chaussée pour régler l'heure et il est tombé sur d'autres employés qui l'ont prit pour un voleur car ils ne le connaissaient pas, mais ensuite un des employés l'a reconnu et ***a dit*** qu'ils **travaillaient** bien ici. (F2)

The reported speech can be emphasized by *c'était:*

(103) Mais Charlot ***a affirmé*** que **c'était** lui qui avait volé le pain et l'a prouvé en le sortant de derrière son dos. (F1)

(104) Charlot ***dit*** que **c'était** lui qui avait volé le pain, mais le boulanger a été témoin de la scène. (F3) [***a dit que*** **c'était** (F1, F5)]

The IMP is also used in subordinate clauses where the situation expressed by the IMP can exceed the limits of the main verb. The IMP may be found in relative clauses:

(105) Il ***a aperçu*** un policier ***qui*** **passait** dehors et l'a appelé. (F1) [***donna ... qui*** **passaient** (F3)]

(106) Il l'a nourrit avec ***ce qui*** **se trouvait** dans le grand magasin, puis il l'a emmené au quatrième étage du magasin, ***où*** **se trouvaient** les jouets. (F4) [***sont allés où*** **se trouvait** (F4)]

(107) Apres l'avoir vole, elle s'est mise a courir et ***a renverse*** Charlot ***qui*** **se promenait** dans la rue. (F5)

(108) Un policier l'a emmené et ***l'a fait monte*** dans un camion ***dans lequel*** il **y avait** d'autres voleurs. (F5)

It also occurs in conjunctive subordinate clauses:

(109) Ce dernier est rentré et voyant ***que*** Charlot ne **pouvait** pas payer, l'a arrêté. (F1)

(110) La femme s'est réveillé et s'est aperçue ***qu'***il **était** 9H30. (F4)

(111) Rassuré, croyant ***qu'***ils **étaient** des cambrioleurs, ils ont trinqué toute la nuit. (F6)

A special category of subordinate clauses is made of temporal clauses such as the following:

(112) Le soir ***quand*** le magasin **était fermé**, il a nourrit un pauvre personne, ils ont été dans le magasin de jouet et utilisé des patins a roulettes. (F2)
(113) Il les a enfilés et en a fait pendant 5 minutes ***tandis que*** la jeune femme **essayait** désespérement de se lever. (F4)
(114) ***Alors que*** le fourgon **tanguait** dangereusement, la jeune fille, Charlot et un policier sont tombés du fourgon. (F1)

The IMP in the temporal clause refers to a situation whose limits are not clearly defined. It can be a state as in the first instance or an atelic verb phrase that allows iteration of the process: there are repeated attempts to stand up and the very meaning of *tanguer* implies a repeated movement. The IMP in the first example is nonetheless debatable; if we put the sentence into the active voice, we have « *quand on fermait le magasin* ». The use of the IMP implies that that situation occurs simultaneously to the one in the main clause; however, this is not the case as the closure precedes the feeding: a perfect form would have been expected here, not a passive. The problem is that this would lead here to the use of a double compound form *avait eu fermé,* and such forms are still not widely accepted (See Engel 1996 and Carruthers 1999). Another occurrence including a temporal clause is problematic:

(115) Seulement le boulanger la surprit: ***lorsqu'***il ***rentra*** dans la boutique, elle **sortait** en courant. (F3)

Here, *rentrer* and *sortir* are supposed to be simultaneous as hinted by *lorsque;* however, *sortir* is a telic verb, like *rentrer*, but it is presented with an imperfective aspect and the two situations are not presented as concomitant.

Finally, if we take into account the wider context, the IMP is used in one occurrence of a clause expressing consequence, that is to say a situation that follows another that is its cause, which is not readily compatible with the presentation offered by the IMP:

(116) Un des employés s'est cassé la jambe. ***Par conséquent***, il **fallait** trouver un nouvel employé pour le remplacer. (F6)

The fact that *falloir* is a stative verb allows the combination that would have been difficult to accept with a dynamic verb; compare with *par conséquent, il trouvait un nouvel employé.* The use of *fallait*, because of the open limits of the IMP, allows the rest of the story to be introduced whilst *a fallu* would have appeared to conclude the episode.

We now draw some conclusions on the use of IMP in the written narratives and compare IL and native usage.

4.1.5. Conclusion on the IMP in written narratives

This section draws some conclusions on the use of IMP in the different groups from a quantitative and a qualitative point of view. On a purely quantitative level, there is a dramatic decrease of the use of the IMP from the first (31.92% of all verb tokens) to the second year (20.4%); it then goes up again in year 4 (25.68%) and in each case largely exceeds the proportion found in native speakers' written narratives (14%). This high level of use of the IMP in IL seems surprising in the light of acquisitional studies that support the claim that the use of IMP increases with proficiency (See Dietrich et al. 1995, Schlyter 1996, Bergström 1997, Salaberry 1998, Howard forthcoming). Several explanations may be offered here. First, some of those studies rely on lower levels of acquisition where the morphology of IMP is not mastered and therefore avoided and replaced by other imperfective tenses such as PRES; this is supported by Howard (forthcoming) who mentions that this feature is also attested in Italian (Giacolome Ramat 1995[249]) and in Spanish (Andersen 1991, Salaberry 2000):

> Avant que l'IMP n'émerge dans sa production, l'apprenant a tendance à suremployer le présent dans des contextes imperfectifs au passé, alors que l'emploi du passé composé est plus avancé.

Our year 1 corpus also shows some examples of this as described above.

If our advanced students do not experience much difficulty with the morphology of the IMP, they still experiment with the syntactic and semantic values of this form. This supports the claim by Kihlstedt (1998: 260) that, for this tense, mastery of form precedes mastery of meaning. We have noted an evolution in the qualitative use of the IMP with a shift of difficulties; in year 4, the local cues seemed to be mastered in most cases but there were still failures to take into account the larger cotext or the extralinguistic context. The drop in the use of IMP in year 2 is more difficult to explain: narratives were noticeably shorter - with an average of 158.29 words / essay than in other corpora (206.29 in year 1, 252.86 in year 4 and 244.5 in the control group) and verb tokens less numerous with an average of 20.71 / essay -

[249] Giacolome Ramat, A. (1995) 'Tense and aspect in Italian', in Bertinetto, P.M. et al. (eds) *Temporal Reference, Aspect and Actionality. Vol.II Typological Perspectives.* Turin, Rosenberg & Sellier : 238-309.

compared with 30.38 in year 1, 33.36 in year 4 and 33 in the control group. There is no readily made answer for the discrepancies: let us simply note that the year 2 data were not gathered by the researcher unlike the 3 other corpora; moreover, the tests were inserted in the teaching programme in year 1 and year 4 and were remunerated in the control group, which may have increased motivation to do well.

As far as the range of verbs used in the IMP are concerned, the overwhelming presence of specific tokens is striking: this is the case of *être, avoir, c'était* and *y avoir*[250]. The table below summarizes their use in our four groups.

	être		*avoir*		*c'était*		*y avoir*		Total of 4	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Year 1	57	28.08	16	7.88	18	8.87	19	9.36	110	54.19
Year 2	25	34.72	3	4.17	9	12.5	15	20.83	62	72.22
Year 4	53	28.19	19	10.11	18	9.57	17	9.04	107	56.91
Control gr.	5	17.86	1	3.57	4	14.29	1	3.57	11	39.29

No clear evolution in the use of these basic forms emerges. Interestingly, the lowest level resorts less to the auxiliaries than the more advanced levels, which goes against our expectations of a greater use of formulaic tokens. The striking rise in year 2 comes mainly from the overuse of *y avoir*. In the native group, the phrase *c'était* is proportionally more used than in the ILs but this can easily be explained as 3 of the occurrences (F1, F3, F5) are used in reported speech, where we have seen earlier that learners tend to privilege the PRES.

In addition to the auxiliaries, some verbs are more common than others in native French and we follow here Müller's (1974) list of the 22 most frequent French verbs:

> *être* > *avoir* > *faire* > *dire* > *aller* > *voir* > *savoir* > *pouvoir* > *falloir* > *vouloir* > *venir* > *prendre* > *arriver* > *croire* > *mettre* > *passer* > *devoir* > *parler* > *trouver* > *donner* > *tenir* > *aimer*.

	Total of	Number of	Percentage of	Tokens of	Percentage of

[250] Compare with the use of the auxiliairies in the PC :

	être		*avoir*		*c'était*		*y avoir*		Total of 4
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	%
Year 1	-	0	1	0.27	-	0	4	1.08	1.35
Year 2	1	0.41	1	0.41	-	0	-	0	0.82
Year 4	1	0.21	2	0.41	-	0	2	0.41	1.03
Control group	2	1.68	-	0	-	0	-	0	1.68

	different verbs[251]	frequent verbs / 20	frequent verbs / total in %	frequent verbs	frequent verbs / total IMP in %
Year 1	57	15[252]	26.32	25	12.32
Year 2	21	5[253]	23.81	5	6.94
Year 4	48	8[254]	16.67	19	10.11
Control group	16	3[255]	18.75	5	17.86

This table provides interesting results as the third column shows that frequent verbs constitute a higher proportion of the range of verbs in the IMP at the lowest level. Nonetheless, the frequency of use of these most common verbs is greatest in the native group. The following table recapitulates the percentages of *être, avoir, c'était, y avoir* and the most frequent verbs compared to the remaining verbs.

	Etre, avoir, c'était, y avoir	Most frequent verbs	Other verbs
Year 1	54.19	12.32	33.49
Year 2	72.22	6.94	20.84
Year 4	62.23	10.11	27.66
Control group	39.29	17.86	42.85

The percentage of less frequent verbs is the highest for year 1 - it is only one fifth for year 2, which amounts to less than half of what is found in the native group. This seems surprising as it appears to indicate that the less avanced learners possess the greatest lexical variety. To investigate this, we now examine more in detail the range of verbs found in these less frequent verbs. In doing so we reintroduce the passives as distinct verbs[256], hence the difference in the total of verb phrases in the IMP. We can see the following progression. In year 1, out of the 66 verb phrases in the IMP, 36 (or 54.55%) are peculiar to that year and not found in any of the other three corpora. Seven of those VPs (10.61%) are not used in the target language, either because they are coined (*être en collision, se monter, être interompé*) or because they are used in a meaning that is different from native usage (*chasser, regarder, s'attendre, se cacher*). 10 VPs out of 27 (37.04%) appear only in year 2 and only one (3.7%) is not native like (*être*

[251] Verbs in the passive are not taken into account here as what is conjugated in passives is in fact *être*.
[252] *Aller* (1), *arriver* (2), *devoir* (1), *dire* (3), *faire* (1), *falloir* (1), *mettre* (1), *parler* (1), *passer* (1), *pouvoir* (3), *prendre* (3), *trouver* (3), *venir* (1), *voir* (1), *vouloir* (2).
[253] *Aller* (1), *devoir* (1), *prendre* (1), *trouver* (1), *venir* (1).
[254] *Aller* (2), *dire* (1), *faire (2), falloir* (1), *passer* (3), *pouvoir* (3), *savoir* (3), *vouloir* (4).
[255] *Falloir* (1), *passer* (2), *pouvoir (2).*
[256] The reason for this is that passive IMP may have a different status from other forms as they are made of an auxiliary, *avoir* or *être* that is very frequent, and a past participle that may have already been acquired if we accept the claim that the PC is mastered before the IMP (Kaplan 1987).

involvé). As for year 4, 30 of the 58 VPs (51.72 %) are restricted to that year and three (5.17%) are not TL forms (*échapper, s'habiller, se rouler*).

	Verbs
Only in year 1	appeler, arriver, avoir l'intention de, avoir raison, chasser[257], défendre, descendre, dormir, *être en collision, expliquer, garder, laisser, livrer, mettre, ouvrir, parler, patiner, pleurer, regarder[258], rester, s'arrêter, s'attendre[259], s'enfuir, *se cacher[260], *se monter, visiter, voir, voler, être appelé, être arrêté, être attrapé, être blessé, être découvert, être énervé, être *interompé
Only in year 2	décider, se casser, se rendre, tomber, être chassé, être couronné, être *involvé, être pris, être situé, être trouvé
Only in year 4	aller [+INF], apporter, assumer, avoir besoin de, bloquer, croiser, encercler, être en détresse, faire les courses, partir, plaire, s'amuser, s'habiller, savoir, se cacher, se lever, *se rouler, se retrouver, se souvenir, suivre, surveiller, téléphoner, être assis, être coincé, être endormi, être installé, être obligé, être ouvert, être placé, être stationné
Only in control group	être censé, sortir, tanguer
Year 1 / year 2	devoir, prendre, trouver, venir
Year 1 / year 4	acheter, arrêter, attendre, avoir peur, boire, dire, échapper, être en train de, faire, manger, payer, penser, porter, vouloir, être mis
Year 2 / year 4	devenir, marcher
Year 1 / year 2 / year 4	aller, avoir, chercher, courir, sembler
Year 1 / control	connaître
Year 2 / control	-
Year 4 / control	se promener
Year 1/ year 2 / control	-
Year 1/ year 4 / control	commencer, essayer, falloir, passer, pouvoir, être fermé
Year 2/ year 4 / control	-
All	avoir faim, y avoir, c'était, être, regarder, se trouver, travailler

If we now take the percentage of all IMP tokens (a given verb can appear several times) that these verbs specific to a year represent, we obtain the following results. 50 out of the 203 IMP verb tokens (24.63%) are peculiar to year 1; 10 out of 72 IMP (13.89%) are used only in year 2 and 35 out of 188 IMP (18.62%) are forms restricted to year 4. From these percentages, it would seem that the range of verbs in the IMP is wider in year 1 than at the other levels. However, if we do not take into account non-native forms, we have 19.7% for year 1, 12.5% for year 2 and 17.02% for year 4.

[257] Meaning *pourchasser.*
[258] Instead of *garder.*
[259] Instead of *attendre.*
[260] Instead of *se casser.*

These percentages also need to be considered in the light of the types of non-native verbs found at each level.

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 4		Control group	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Stative VPs	92	45.32	47	65.28	118	62.77	18	64.29
Atelic VPs	43	21.18	14	19.44	47	25.00	9	32.14
Telic VPs	68	33.50	11	15.28	23	12.23	1	3.57
	203	100	72	100	188	100	28	100

As far as *Aktionsart* is concerned, there seems to be a major change between the usage in year 1 and in the other groups. There is a clear overuse of the IMP with telic verbs (33.5% almost ten times more than in the control group where they account for 3.57%). It is worth noting that these figures contradict the findings of other studies where IMP is underused with dynamic verbs compared to native usage (Harley 1992, Bergström 1995). Stative verbs account for about two thirds of all IMP in all corpora except in year 1, and dynamic verbs for one third although the proportion of telic and atelic verbs widely varies and the ratio in year 4 is closer to native usage. The frequency of passive IMP has an influence on percentages.

On a qualitative level, an evolution is also noticeable. There is a clear decrease of problems linked with morphology after year 1. The drop in year 2 could be attributed to a restricted range of verbs and a preferential use of the most basic IMP forms. As for the syntactic problems, they seem to be restricted to the larger cotext and the extra-linguistic contest at the highest level of learning. If there was a good proportion of IL forms within the verb phrases in year 1 (incompatibility of verb and object or adverbial), this was very marginal in year 4 where the problems laid at the wider discourse level.

After this overview of the IMP in the written narratives, we now proceed to study the oral narratives.

4.2. Oral narratives

In this section, we try to identify specific features of the use of the IMP in oral production.

4.2.1. Year 1

a. Description

The oral film narratives contain 131 verbs in the IMP (15.25% of all conjugated verbs) distributed between 27 different verb tokens, each appearing 4.85 times. The list below recapitulates all the forms found in this corpus.

aller	3	interroger	1	être accusé	1
avoir	8	jouer	1	être arrêté	7
y avoir	22	mettre	1	être concerné	1
continuer	1	porter	2	être impliqué	1
dire	3	regarder	4	être mis	3
entrer	1	rentrer	1	être pris	1
essayer	2	réveiller	1	être trouvé	1
c'était	21	* s'arriver	1		
* il était = c'était	1	s'échapper	2		
être	23	sauver	1		
être en collision avec	1	se monter	1		
être en train de	1	se passer	1		
être faim	1	se trouver	1		
* y être = y avoir	4	travailler	1		
garder	1	voler	1		
manger	1	vouloir	2		

Etre – either on its own or in verb phrases - constitutes a large proportion of the IMP with 30 forms; *c'était* accounts for another 22 tokens. There are 15 passive where the conjugated form is also *être*. *Avoir* and *y avoir* make another 30 occurrences.

	être		*avoir*		*c'était*		*y avoir*		Total of 4	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Year 1	45	34.26	8	6.22	22	16.79	22	16.79	97	74.06

If we take into account *Aktionsart*, we list 77 stative verbs, 20 atelic verbs and 34 telic verbs. Among the telic verbs, 12 occurrences – more than a third - are passive and all together, there are only 15 passive IMP. This very high proportion may be attributed to the fact that either the passive PC may be morphologically too complex at that level or *être* triggers the use of the IMP (chunking).

	Year 1	
	n	%
Stative VPs	77[261]	58.78
Atelic VPs	20[262]	15.27
Telic VPs	34[263]	25.95

b. Uses

The following table classifies the tokens in the IMP according to their form and their function.

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
75	57.25	6	4.58	47	35.88	3	2.29

As the forms of the IMP used in those narratives, mainly third person singular and third person plural with some first person singular, are homophonous, there is little opportunity to fully assess IL morphology for oral production.

(i) Actual uses

However, morphology is overwhelmingly correct (93.13%) although slightly less than in written narratives (95.07%), which is understandable given that oral narratives are more immediate with no opportunity for monitoring. The detectable mistakes come of confusions of *avoir* with *être: y être* for *y avoir* (5 occurrences from S118), *être faim* (S116); introduction of reflexive pronoun: *se montaient* (S111), *s'arrivait* (S120) and confusion of *il était* for *c'était* (S121). As far as functions are concerned, the use of IMP is target-like in 61.83% of cases.

[261] *Y avoir, c'était, être (3)* (S101), *avoir (2), y avoir, être* (S102), *y avoir (3), avoir, c'était, être, vouloir* (S103), *être* (S104), *y avoir (2), c'était (3), être (2), se trouver* (S104), *y avoir (3)* (S105), *c'était* (2) (S106), *avoir, y avoir, c'était (3), être (2)* (S107), *y avoir, être (4)* (S108), *avoir, c'était, être* (S109), *y avoir, être, porter* (S111), *y avoir (2)* (S113), *y avoir, être (2)* (S115), *avoir, être (4), être faim* (S116), *c'était (5), être, y être (2)* (S117), *avoir, y avoir (3), c'était (4), porter* (S118), *c'était* (S119).

[262] *Regarder* (S101), *vouloir, être impliqué, être pris* (S103), *regarder* (S104), *dire, être en train de, travailler* (S107), *continuer* (S108), *essayer* (S110), *essayer* (S111), *jouer* (S112), *y avoir [un danger], manger, regarder* (S113), *être [bien aux patins], regarder* (S116) *être concerné* (S117), *garder, interroger* (S120).

[263] *Être en collision, être arrêté* (S101), *être arrêté, être mis* (S106), *aller, mettre, rentrer* (S108), *aller, y avoir [un accident], dire (2), se monter, être accusé* (S111), *y avoir [une dispute], entrer, voler* (S113), *aller, être arrêté* (2) (S115), *avoir [une boisson], réveiller, sauver, être arrêté* (S116), *y être [un accident / un nouveau garde]* (S117), *être arrêté* (2), *être mis* (2), *être trouvé* (S118), *s'arriver, s'échapper* (2), *se passer* (S120).

The IMP is sometimes used to express the meaning of a PQP and this is described in the section devoted to that tense so it is not revisited here. The focus is on occurrences where a PC would have been expected in the TL. First of all, telicity does not readily combine with the IMP. This is the case with verbs that emphasize the final limit such as *voler:*

(117) puis l'homme avec le chapeau noir euh ***a dit*** euh « Non je # elle n'a pas st # elle ne **volait** pas le pain c'est - **c'est** moi ». (S113)

Similarly, the passive shows the result of a situation and so stresses the final limit of the situation. Therefore, most of the passives (of telic verbs) found in this corpus are not native-like because they indicate a resultative state. See the difference of acceptability between the last example that contains a stative VP and the others:

(118) Les gendarmes est arrivé # sont arrivés et c'était l'homme qui: - qui **était arrêté** et pas la femme. (S101) [S106, S115, S16, **était trouvé / était arrêté** (S118)]
(119) Après euh il **était mis** dans le: euh le voiture de police. (S106) [S118)]
(120) L'homme # Il était # il a dormi dans le magasin st et: comme la femme mais la femme a échappé et: l'homme **était/ pris** par les policier+s et / oui, c'est la fin. (S103)
(121) Hier un fille qui porte un robe noire euh **était accusE** de voler un pain dans le rue (COUGH) d'une boulangère. (S111)
(122) Et euh les deux personnes **étaient impliquEs** dans une - une dispute dans la rue et puis euh je l'ai vu # je les ai vus rentrer euh illégalement dans un magasin (S103)

Constituents of the VP can make it telic and thus less compatible with the IMP. It is the case of the direct object for *mettre* or of the complements that indicates the final destination in the other examples:

(123) Il porte # il met+ # il **mettait *quelque chose*** sur ses yeux /// et puis c'est impossible de - de voir euh maintenant il voit rien et il continuait de # sur roulettes près de: la # scene qui est dangereux (S108)
(124) Et le gardien de nuit euh / **allait *au / premier étage*** encore mais maintenant il y avait des cambrioleurs dans le grand magasin. (S111) [**allaient *au quatrième étage*** (S108)]

In the following sentences, the telic VPs show both the final and the initial limits of the situation, which contradicts the aspectual presentation provided by the IMP:

(125) Et: elle a fait fui euh dans la rue et puis elle **était en collision avec** un homme. (S101)

(126) Les deux / ren - rentraient – **rentraient** dans le grand magasin et ils allaient au quatrième étage où **il y a** des choses pour les enfants comme les peluches, des jeux etc (S108)

(127) Mais euh Puis l'agent de police a rattrapé la femme aussi mais l'homme avec le chapeau noir il a s'échappé et il **entrait** dans un café et: mangeait. (S113)

At the level of discourse organization, the presence of elements indicating succession, such as *d'abord,* simultaneity as *quand* or simple coordination, disqualifies the IMP because there is a need to present situations as limited entities to allow ordering:

(128) ***D'abord*** il a v... / euh il a v... # il **voulait** leur / rattraper mais: une des hommes a r... # l'a rencontré et donc euh st ils ont décidé de euh boire ensemble et: manger ensemble dans le magasin. (S103)

(129) Et: quand une femme **essayait** de: - de- d'acheter euh euh XXX euh / euh / Le homme **se réveille** sous tous les vêtements. (S110)

(130) Mais euh Puis l'agent de police a rattrapé la femme aussi mais l'homme avec le chapeau noir il a s'échappé ***et*** il **entrait** dans un café ***et:*** **mangeait**. (S113) [***mettait*** ... ***et*** ... **continuait** (S108), **portaient** ... ***et*** ...**disait** (S111)]

The IMP fails to establish a new reference point hence the strangeness of the following sentences that start a narrative:

(131) **Il y avait** un petit+ dispute hier dans la rue mais je ne sais pas les raisons pourquoi. euh Il y avait une femme qui porte une robe noire et euh elle a les cheveux noirs aussi. (S113)

(132) La deuxième histoire. Euh **il y était** un accident dans un+ magasin et le garde a cassé son - /// a cassé son / jambe. (S117)

(133) L'histoire **se passait** dans un magasin. (S120)

Finally, a similar problem occurs with indications of causal link as this also needs to be expressed as a succession (cause before result) and the consequence shows a final limit. All these values contradict the description offered by the IMP:

(134) ***Donc*** **/ il y était** un nouveau garde euh/ qui a gardé le magasin en nuit. (S117) [***Donc*** ... **interroGeait** (S120), ***donc*** ... **s'échappait** (S120)]

(ii) Required uses

The cases where the IMP is replaced in the IL by a PC are studied in the section devoted to the latter tense. The focus here is on sentences where the PRES replaces the IMP. This occurs with stative verbs in coordination with other VPs in the past:

(135) Et donc euh l'homme et: - l'homme et la femme / **est** près du lit dans un+ département de lits ***et*** la femme / ***a trouvé*** que euh // le: - le lit est très / confortable

pour: - pour elle et euh la femme: euh elle a envie de dormir. (S110) [***a: / patiné*** ... ***mais*** ... **est** ... ***parce qu'*** ... ***a pensé*** (S110)]

(136) Elle ***était*** une jeune fille. Elle ne **porte** pas / des chaussures ***et*** elle / **habite** dans la rue. (S108)

(137) ***Il y avait*** une femme qui **porte** une robe noire ***et*** euh elle **a** les cheveux noirs aussi. (S113) [***a porté*** ... ***mais*** ... **a** (S108), ***il y avait*** ... ***et*** ... **porte** (S103)]

The PRES also replaces the IMP in complex sentences where the sequence of tenses would be expected:

(138) ***Il y avait*** une femme qui **porte** une robe noire elle a les cheveux noirs. (S103)

(139) mais après un peu de temps un des cambrioleurs euh / ***a dit*** que - qu'il **connaît** le gardien de nuit (S111)

(140) Il ***a trouvé*** que il / **connaît** les deux voleurs donc les trois a boit # bu beaucoup d'alcool euh donc ils **sont** ivres. (S120)

(141) Quand l'homme ***est allé*** au rez-de-chaussée pour vérifier que les portes **sont fermées** pour faire quelque chose avec euh les montres et: / il a découvert qu'il y avait trois hommes dans # il y avait trois hommes au rez-de-chaussée (S102)

(142) la femme ***est dormi*** dans le: département des lits euh et le # mais l'homme de sécurité il ne dort pas parce qu'il **doit** travailler euh (S114)

This replacement of the IMP by a PRES may support the claims of the PAH, since the aspectual dimension (imperfective) is preferred to the temporal information (past) but the use of the PC instead of the IMP may be used to contradict that hypothesis.

c. Conclusion on the use of the IMP in the year 1 oral narratives

Although students had been asked to tell the narratives in the past, the PRES is the most frequent tense in this corpus (26.19%) after the PC (56.34%). Whilst the IMP is underused in complex sentences, it is at the same time overused in the passive. This feature may be caused by interference from English, where the passive is more widespread. One may also argue that the IMP is used as a replacement form for a passive PC that would prove morphologically too complex because of the combination of the two auxiliaries but this would need to be confirmed at higher levels of proficiency. One may finally suggest that those passive IMP come from a formulaic combination of *être* and PP.

4.2.2. Year 2

a. Description

The 159 tokens in the IMP (23.18% of all conjugated verbs) are distributed between 25 different verbs so each is used on average 6.36 times. The 159 tokens are listed in the table below:

* acter	1	garder	1	être blessé	2
aller	2	marcher	1	être escorté	1
avoir	6	parler	1	être ouvert	3
avoir faim	2	pouvoir	4	être vu	1
y avoir	39	prendre	2		
connaître	1	reconnaître	1		
contenir	1	réveiller	1		
entrer	1	s'agir	1		
essayer	1	s'arrêter	1		
c'était	35	se coucher	1		
être	40	tirer	1		
être en train de	1	tomber	1		
* y être	2	travailler	1		
faire	1	venir de	1		

First, let us focus on the use of auxiliaries: *être* amounts to 27.04% of all forms and the passives account for another 4.4%. *C'était* accounts for 22.01% of all IMP. *Avoir* represents 5.03% of the IMP and *y avoir* 24.53%.

	être		*avoir*		*c'était*		*y avoir*		Total of 4	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Year 2	43	31.44	8	5.03	35	22.01	39	24.53	127	83.01

If the *Aktionsart* is taken into account, we have 126 stative verb phrases, 15 atelic and18 telic ones.

	Year 2	
	n	%
Stative VPss	126[264]	79.25
Atelic VPs	15[265]	9.43
Telic VPs	18[266]	11.32

[264] *Y avoir (2), c'était, être* (3), *s'agir* (S202), *avoir, y avoir (2), c'était (3), être (2)* (S203), *avoir faim, c'était (3), être, y être, pouvoir* (S205), *y avoir, c'était, être* (S206), *y avoir* (S207), *c'était (2), être (2), y avoir* (S208), *c'était (5), être (3), y être* (S209), *y avoir (2)* (S210), *y avoir (4), c'était* (S211), *avoir, y avoir, c'était, être (8), être ouvert* (S213), *y avoir (4), c'était (5), être (4)* (S213), *y avoir (8), c'était (5), être (3)* (S214), *y avoir (7), c'était (2), être (2)* (S215), *y avoir, contenir, c'était (3), être (2), être blessé* (S216), *avoir (3), y avoir (2), c'était (4), être (9), pouvoir (2)* (S217).

[265] *être escorté* (S206), *aller, jouer, prendre [des gâteaux]*(S207), *connaître*, être *en train de, essayer, pouvoir* (S208), *avoir faim* (S209), *marcher, prendre, travailler* (S210), *garder* (S212), *acter, faire [le patin à roulettes]* (S217).

b. Uses

The following table summarizes the link between the emergence of a form and its actual fulfillement of a native meaning:

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
134	84.28	3	1.89	22	13.84	-	0

A striking feature of this set of narrations is the very high level of accuracy in the use of the IMP. However, this is mainly due to the very high proportion of *être* and *avoir*, that may be used as chunks.

(i) Actual uses

IL features related to morphology are difficult to identify in oral data and it is only obvious when the wrong VP is provided such as *il y était* instead of *il y avait* (S205, S209) or *actait* for *agissait* (S217). However, in the following example, the IMP replaces a COND (a use that is mentioned in Elo's (1993) study in Bartning 1997) that is morphologically close:

(143) la fille était euh très fatig... # fatigant donc elle a décidé de trouver un – un euh lit euh de les euh d'où euh # st Elle **pouvait** se dormir (S217)

The IMP may be used instead of other tenses: it is mainly the PC but it is found to replace a COND, expressing posteriority to a moment of reference (R) different from the moment of speech (S), in the following example:

(144) Puis il a monté à un étage pour mettre une femme dans un lit # dans un magasin de lit j'imagine et puis il - il lui a dit qu'il allait le réveiller quand - quand c'est # quand le magasin **était ouvert**. (S208)

In this case, the influence of the mother tongue emerges as future – or future in the past as it is here the case – may not be used after the English equivalent of *quand:* 'when'.

Below a SUBJ would have been expected in the TL (another way to make the sentence target-like would be to replace *que* by *si*):

[266] *avoir [un accident]* (S201), *y avoir [le désordre], tomber* (S205), *reconnaître* (S206), *aller [+ infinitive], être ouvert* (S208), *entrer, tirer* (S209), *s'arrêter* (S210), *réveiller, était arrivé* (S212), *se coucher, être blessé* (S213),

(145) Chaplin euh / a dit # l'a dit que euh / # lui a dit que – que c'était # que c'était pas: un problème / qu'elle -qu'elle **se couchait** là-bas. (S213)

So it seems that the IMP is used as a default form to express modal uses at this level of IL.

IL uses of the IMP appear when there is a contradiction between the presentation given by this tense and the *Aktionsart* of a verb. Telicity can be expressed by emphasizing the final limit of a situation as in:

(146) Et puis il s'est allé en bas et puis le patron(s) l'a vu et // ils essaient l'arrêter mais: un patron le **reconnaissait** Charlie du travail. (S206)

(147) Il y a une collision avec une autre # il y a eu une collision avec une autre / véhicule et // le fille et: l'homme **tombait** sur le – le transport de police (S205) [**s'arrêtait** ***et ...a regardé*** (S210)

The passive below also stresses the final limit, which contradicts the value of the IMP:

(148) Cet événement // **était / vu** par une autre femme / qui ensuite a informé le: conducteur du camion. (S216)

In the following example, although the VP *tirer les pistoles* is not native, the presence of a plural object allows to give a frequentative interpretation to the situation, which makes the combination acceptable. Semantically however, a PC would be preferable to indicate the succession of events:

(149) Il **tirait** les *pistoles euh mais - mais la fille a continué de dort au cinquième étage st. (S209)

The same explanation would apply to the next example where *encore* favours a frequentative reading; however here, the IMP is coordinated with a PC in a sequence of events, which requires a semelfactive interpretation:

(150) st puis il a sorti le bâtiment là derrière et il *réentrait encore # il **entrait** encore avec euh une femme son amie (S209)

At a wider discourse level, there may be contradictions between the IMP and discourse connectors of succession (151-3) or consequence (154):

(151) Trois hommes ***ont entré*** le grand+ surface ***et*** / il - il existe # **il y avait** le désordre. (S205)

être ouvert (S214), *avoir une idée, venir de [+Infinitive], être impliqué , être vu* (S216).

(152) ***Premièrement*** il **était en train de** faire du patin à roulettes dans le magasin de jouets. (S208)
(153) ***Puis*** euh dans - dans la camionnette de police euh la la femme **essayait** euh de - de s'échapper et euh Charlie le suit euh/ y' s'retrouve par terre euh / et il s'en va. Tada... (S208) [***Et puis*** / ... **avait** (S216), ***et puis*** ... **était impliqué** (S216)]
(154) ***Comme ça*** il **pouvait** aller euh a...- avec - avec la femme dans la camionnette de police. (S208)

Finally, the extralinguistic context betrays a failure to express the intended meaning with a given form. In the following examples, although the IMP is acceptable in native usage to refer to situations whose limits exceed those of the linked situations, it fails to express the narrative or causal succession:

(155) Euh la police **parlait** avec la propriétaire de: l'épicerie et il avait confirmé qu'il était # qu'elle était la femme. (S212)
(156) les deux euh euh sont tombés de l'autobus avec un officier qui **était blessé** (S213)

In the first example, *parlait* indicates a foreground action that makes the whole story progress and should therefore be in the PC. In the second example, the policeman is hurt as a result of his fall so *blesser* requires a PC. With an IMP, the relative clause seems to give descriptive information to qualify the officer.

(ii) Required uses

First, there are occurrences where the stative verbs would require the use of an IMP as in *ressembler* and *connaître* below, that imply no change at all. In the first example, there seems to be an hesitation between the choice of an imperfective aspect as in the PRES and the past temporal information indicated by the PC. In the second example, the tense is indeed imperfective but the problem is temporal and the general past context is not taken into account:

(157)Le directeur de grande surface a décidé de donner l'emploi à / notre homme qui ressemble # qui ***a rassemble*** un+ caractère de Charlie Chaplin. (S209)
(158) Puis euh un des trois voleurs Big Bill euh **connaît** l'homme de sécurité euh dans son travail précédent et il a expliqué que les hommes n'étaient pas les vrais voleurs ils avaient faim (S209)

In the example below, there is no notice of the imperfective reading required by the durative information carried by *quand;* here again the hesitation between a PRES and a PC shows an hesitation between the indication of aspect (imperfective) or of tense (past):

(159) Euh il y avait une femme sur la rue euh qui a: - qui a # qui était dans une boulangerie qui ***quand*** le boulanger+ ne la voit plus # ne l'a vU pas euh ne ***l'a*** pas ***vU*** euh elle a volé une: – une baguette. (S202)

Finally, the use of the IMP in past reported speech is neglected in the following examples. There seems to be a mixture of features of direct and reported speech, which has already been mentioned for the written narratives. It is either the past time (PC) or the aspect (imperfective PRES) that is used but there is a failure to produce an imperfective past form:

(160) mais un+ homme réponde / # a réponde # ***a répondu*** que **c'est** lui qui a volé la baguette. (S209)
(161) Et les trois hommes ***ont dit*** qu'ils ne veulent pas euh prendre # ils ne **veulent** pas prendre quelque chose mais qu'ils **ont** seulement euh **faim**. (S215)
(162) les hommes l'ont menacé avec leurs pistolet+s euh mais euh ils ***ont dit*** que: qu'ils **ont** pas **voulu** euh voler le magasin ils **ont** juste **faim**. (S204)

c. Conclusion on the use of the IMP in the year 2 oral narratives

In contrast to the findings for year 1, the IMP is the second most frequent tense (23.18%) in this corpus after PC (63.56%) so there is an obvious quantitative development of the use of IMP in oral narratives at that level, even if the IL features noted in year 1 are still relevant. However, the high proportion of auxiliaries in this corpus (83.01% of all IMP) may somewhat skew the results.

4.2.3. Year 4

a. Description

The year 4 oral narratives contain 255 IMP tokens (20.33% of all finite verbs at that level) that are distributed between 22 different verbs, each repeated on average 11.59 times. This proportion is far superior to what was found at lower levels and it is surprising as one would expect an increase of variety together with expertise. The 255 IMP are listed in the table below:

aller	1	manger	1	être arrêté	1
aller + INF	2	menacer	1	être couché	1
avoir	13	partir	1	être fermé	2
avoir besoin de	1	passer	3	être habillé	1
avoir envie de	1	porter	4	être ouvert	3
avoir faim	5	pouvoir	2	être placé	1
avoir l'air	2	réaliser	1	être prévu	1
avoir peur	2	* s'apprécier	1		
y avoir	53	savoir	4		

dire	1	se passer	1		
c'était	67	se rouler	1		
être	53	surveiller	1		
être en train de	15	travailler	4		
être en route	1	voler	1		
jouer	1	vouloir	1		

There are 57 inflections of *être* (27.06%) and 67 of *c'était* (26.27%); in addition to those, there are 10 passive forms (3.92%) that also conjugate *être* in the IMP. *Avoir* accounts for 24 forms (9.41%) and *y avoir* for 53 (20.78%). So this group, although the most advanced, produces the highest proportion of auxiliaries.

	être		*avoir*		*c'était*		*y avoir*		Total of 4	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Year 4	57	31.11	24	9.45	67	26.38	53	20.87		87.81

If we now classify all the VPs according to their *Aktionsart*, we obtain the following results: 204 stative VP, 38 atelic and 13 telic ones.

	Year 4	
	n	%
Stative VPs	204[267]	80.31
Atelic VPs	37[268]	14.57
Telic VPs	13[269]	5.12

b. Uses

A classification of tokens according to forms and functions show a very high level of morphological accuracy with 99.61%:

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
232	90.98	-	0	22	8.63	1	0.39

[267] *Avoir, c'était (2), être* (S401), *y avoir, être (2)* (S402), *y avoir, être (3)* (S403), *y avoir (6), c'était (7)* (S405), *avoir (3), y avoir, c'était (2), être, porter (2), savoir (2), être ouvert, être prévu* (S406) *avoir (2), c'était (5), être (4)* (S407), *y avoir (8), c était, être, être fermé* (S408), *avoir (2), y avoir (2), être (2), pouvoir (2), savoir (2), vouloir* (S409), *c'était (2), être (2), être ouvert* (S410), *y avoir, c'était , être* (S412), *avoir (2) y avoir (2), c'était (3), être (2)* (S413), *avoir, y avoir (8), c'était (7), être (11)* (S414), *avoir l'air de, y avoir, être ouvert* (S415), *y avoir, c'était (2), être (2), être couché* (S416), *y avoir (3), être (7), c'était (7)*(S417), *c'était (2)* (S418), *avoir, y avoir (4), c'était (3), être (5), porter (2)* (S419), *avoir, y avoir (2), c'était (7), être* (S420), *avoir, c'était (7), être (2)* (S421), *avoir, avoir l'air, y avoir (7), c'était (7), être (7), être en route, être fermé, être habillée* (S423).

[268] *Manger, menacer* (S401), *aller [+ INF], passer (2)* (S402), *avoir besoin de, avoir faim, être en train de, surveiller* (S403), *aller [+INF], jouer* (S406), *avoir faim, être en train de* (S407), *aller, avoir peur (2), se rouler* (S409), *avoir faim (3), travailler* (S413), *être en train de (7)* (S414), *passer, travailler* (S415), *être en train de* (S417), *être en train de* (S418), *travailler (2)* (S419), *être en train de (3), avoir envie de* (S423).

(i) Actual uses

There is indeed just one IL morphological feature in the IMP found in this corpus [***s'appréciait*** for *a apprécié* (S201)] but the IL still shows in both syntax and semantics. The non-native uses of the IMP stand for the PC. The *Aktionsart* does not prove very problematic at this level with only one non-native telic verb phrase:

(163) Il **réalisait** que ce n'était pas des cambrioleurs enfin que c'était des anciens vigiles des amis. (S401)

Passives are still used in the IMP despite the fact that there are semantically referring to the result of a situation, and therefore emphasizing its final limit.

(164) Euh / il – il **était placé** dans une camion de police (S407)

The fact that these passives are situated in a narrative sequence further distances the production from native usage:

(165) mais la femme **était arrêtE** et / puis l'homme / # il a: / # il **était arrêté** euh il l'a fait délibérément pour: rencontrer la femme et euh. (S408)
(166) une femme a découvri l'homme et il été # il **était arrêté**. (S408)

The direct objet makes the following verb telic but *avoir un accident* is based on a prototypical form of *avoir*, used in the IMP when the singular direct object would have required the use of the PC. It is worth noting that it occurs in the production of only one subject, which suggests this is not a representative feature of the IL at the year 4 level of learning:

(167) Mais: **il y avait *un accident*** avec le camion et: / tous les deux ***ont / été*** capables de fuir. (S422)
(168) Euh **il y avait *un accident*** dans: un magasin # un grand magasin. (S422)

The IMP fails to provide the initial moment of reference. The sentence below opens a narrative and a present perfect form would have been expected to build a bridge between the moment of speech and the past moment of reference where the story is supposed to have happened.

(169) L'autre histoire ça **se passait** dans un grand – dans un grand magasin hier et euh st encore une fois il y avait Charlie Chaplin euh avec une fille euh (LAUGH). (S423)

In the next example, the theft is supposed to happen within the temporal limits set by another situation, the time spent inside the confectioner's shop. This existence of precise temporal

[269] *Réaliser, s'apprécier* (S401), *dire* (S402), *y avoir [une collision]* (S405), *être placé* (S407), *être arrêté (3)*

limits within which a single theft (*une baguette*) is carried out makes the use of the IMP non-native:

(170) ***Pendant que**: l'homme qui a fait la *déliverie était en train de prendre le pain dedans* la boulangerie euh la petite fille **volait** une baguette euh de son camion. (S417)

Indicators of order (e.g. *puis*) or of coordination (e.g. *et*) disqualify the use of the IMP as they imply a succession of situations with clear-cut limits to allow the narrative to progress. The use of IMP occurs with VPs based on typical stative verbs such as *y avoir:*

(171) Mais la petite fille a: échappé euh il y avait # ***puis* il y avait** une collision entre la deuxième femme euh et+ un homme sur le trottoir. (S405)
(172) Et euh les deux sont tombés par terre ***et: puis* il y avait** des policiers. (S408)

The first example is further distinct from native usage because of the characteristics of the direct object that is both singular and semantically instantaneous (*une collision*), which contradicts the presentation given by the IMP.

In the following examples, dynamic verbs in the IMP are used in a succession. In the case of telic verbs such as *s'apprécier* (probably meaning *se rendre compte de*) or *partir*, we come close to the value of narrative IMP:

(173) Ils ont **X** un rayon ils **mangeaient** des choses euh les gâteaux ***et puis*** ils ont passé / au rayon des jouets pour les enfants. (S401)
(174) ***Puis*** il ***s'appréciait** qu'ils étaient # avaient des cam... - cambrioleurs qui s'est arrivé au magasin ils **menaçaient** de les / capturer mais ils étaient encore / euh sur les patins. Il réalisait que ce n'était pas des cambrioleurs enfin que c'était des anciens vigiles des amis. (S401)
(175) Euh La femme / et M. Chaplin euh ont arrêté ***et* partaient** dans un / camion. (S422)

In the example below, *avoir peur* is supposed to express the consequence of the preceding action but the IMP fails to convey this meaning, note that here again the prototypical combination of *avoir* with the IMP may have been decisive:

(176) La femme a vu que Charlie y – il *se roulait vers euh la fin du sol et donc elle – elle était # elle **avait peur** et donc elle a dit # elle a crié (S409)

(S408), *voler* (S417), *y avoir [un accident] (2), partir* (S422), *se passer* (S423).

(ii) Required uses

In the following examples, an IMP would have been required to convey reported speech. In the first three examples, the sequence of tense is not applied and the verb in the subordinate stays in the same tense as it was in direct speech; for instance, in direct speech, the first sentence would have given: *«C'est moi qui ai volé le pain »*. The last example is less clear-cut as the PRES could express a general truth: it is not in their nature to be robbers:

(177) Charlie Chaplin ***a dit*** que **c'est** lui qui / ***a volé*** le pain (S422)
(178) Le policier ***est entré*** dans le resto et euh: Charlie Chaplin ***a dit*** qu'il ne **peut** pas payer. (S421)
(179) M. Chaplin ***a dit*** / qu'il **veut** faire l'emploi en place de cet homme. (S422)
(180) Les trois hommes qui étaient là euh # entre les trois un lui a reconnu qui: # qu'il travaille avec lui dans un moulin et lui ***ont dit*** qu'ils ne **sont** pas les cambrioleurs et que ils n'avaient que faim. (S413)

In complex sentences, an emphatic *il y a* remains in the PRES. One could argue that this is a formulaic utterance that is used to maintain an impression of fluency (see Bartning 1997):

(181) elle ***a décidé*** de - de voler une baguette euh parce qu'**il y a** un camion qui: ***était en train de*** livrer / la baguette à la boulangerie (S407)
(182) **Il y a** un autre témoin qui ***était*** une femme ***et*** elle a – elle ***a dit*** à la boulangère – euh elle a dit à la boulangère: « Cette femme-là a volé euh une baguette (S407)
(183) Charlie Chaplin ***est allé*** au # euh à un café, # à un resto - à un resto ***et*** euh il ***a commandé*** beaucoup de choses ***et*** euh il a - il **a** deux plats # non deux plats # *tray ? mmm (S421)

In the last example *dormir* should carry past temporal information, given the past context, and an imperfective aspect because its limits must exceed those of *sont entrés*. By the recourse to the PRES, it seems that aspect is expressed before time:

(184) Mais pendant la nuit ***quand*** la fille **dort** trois monsieurs sont - ***sont entrés*** dans: - dans le magasin, trois – trois voleurs. (S406)

c. Conclusion on the use of the IMP in the year 4 oral narratives

From this analysis of the use of the IMP in the year 4 oral narratives, two main features emerge. First the increasing importance of auxiliaries in this corpus appears surprising while more sophistication in vocabulary range would be expected at this highest level of IL. It may be suggested that the repetition of common tokens may be a way of insuring an impression of fluency and this hypothesis will need to be checked in the control group. The second point is that the specific features of the use of the IMP at this level of acquisition are linked with an

inability to master the combination of factors at the larger discourse level. Let us now compare the use of the IMP in learners' narratives with native usage.

4.2.4. Control group

a. Description

The oral narratives produced by the control group contain 65 IMP (11.93% of all finite verbs) distributed between 20 verbs. On average, each different conjugated form is thus used 3.25 times. The 65 IMP are classified in the table below:

aller +infinitif	1	passer	3	être emmené	1
avoir	3	pouvoir	2	être ouvert	1
avoir du mal à	1	reconnaître	1		
y avoir	1	savoir	1		
cacher	1	se balader	1		
commencer	1	se souvenir	1		
croire	1	se trouver	1		
c'était	13	travailler	1		
être	21	voir	1		
être en train de	3	vouloir	4		
falloir	1				

Etre represents 23 tokens and *c'était* accounts for another 13 tokens; moreover, two passives are also conjugated with *être*. The 4 tokens of *avoir* are equivalent to 6.15% of all IMP and the single occurrence of *y avoir* to 1.54%.

	être		*avoir*		*c'était*		*y avoir*		Total of 4	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Control gr.	25	38.47	4	6.15	13	21.54	1	1.54	43	67.7

Auxiliaries are used less frequently in the control group than in the learners' corpora (74.06% in year 1, 83.01% in year 2 and 87.81% in year 4), which does not seem to confirm our hypothesis of overuse of auxiliaries as a sign of proficiency.

Regarding *Aktionsart*, the following proportions are found: 41 stative VPs, 18 atelic and 6 telic ones.

	Control group	
	n	%
Stative VPs	41[270]	63.08
Atelic VPs	18[271]	27.69
Telic VPs	6[272]	9.23

The most striking feature here is the rise of atelic verbs.

b. Uses

In this section, the environments where the IMP is found in native usage are described. As in the written narratives, the IMP is found in independent or main clauses, but it is with stative verbs that do not show the limits of the situation:

(185) La fille **était:** alors par terre et: / le vendeur a crié: « Elle m'a volé mon pain ! Elle m'a volé mon pain ». (F1) [**étaient** (F1), **était, étaient** (F5), **était** (F4)]
(186) Donc hier y a –une femme qui a volé un pain donc elle était # **c'était** une boulangerie à côté d'un magasin de chaussures. (F5) [**c'était** (F4)]
(187) Y **fait** du patin à roulettes / elle elle a du mal # elle **avait du mal** à y arriver. (F4)
(188) Il a appelé le policier pour se faire arrêter lui-même/ donc euh le policier le- l'a emmené euh / il **voulait** aller en prison pour voir la jeune femme (F4) [**voulait** (F1)]
(189) Alors nous **nous trouvions** dans une grande surface et un employé s'est cassé la jambe. (F1)

It also occurs with atelic verbs that do not emphasize their final limit:

(190) Une femme a été vue dans la rue elle **se baladait**. (F6)
(191) Euh ils étaient à terre Charlot a levé la fille st le policier **commençait** à se réveiller. (F1)
(192) Il redescend / ensuite il la laisse / dormir et là il voit trois hommes / au début il **croyait** qu'c'était des cambrioleurs (F3)
(193) Donc euh un policier **passait** par ici. (F4)

In complex sentences, the IMP is used in a range of cotexts: reported speech, relative and conjunctive subordinate clauses. First, there are instances of assumed speech (as it was a silent film):

[270] *Avoir (2), être (10), pouvoir, se trouver, être assis* (F1), *être, c'était* (F2), *c'était* (F3), *être (4), c'était* (F4), *avoir, c'était (7), être (3)* (F5), *y avoir, être, c'était (3), falloir, être ouvert* (F6).
[271] *Commencer à, passer (2), vouloir* (F1), *être en train de, pouvoir (2), travailler* (F2), *croire* (F3), *avoir du mal, passer, vouloir (2)* (F4), *être en train de (2), savoir, vouloir* (F5), *se balader* (F6).
[272] *Cacher, voir* (F1), *aller [ouvrir]* (F4), *se souvenir* (F5), *reconnaître, être emmené* (F6).

(194) euh une passante # une dame ***dit*** au boulanger que **c'était** bien la fille qui: - qui avait volé le pain (F2) [***a dit*** ...qu'il **pouvait** (F2), ***a dit*** qu'y **travaillait** (F2), ***a dit*** ... que **c'était** (F5)]

(195) et il lui a – il lui ***a demandé*** si elle s' rap... # si elle **se souvenait** de lui. (F5) [***a demandé*** si elle la # si elle le **reconnaissait** (F6)]
[***a déclaré*** qu'il ne **pouvait** (F1), ***a affirmé*** que **c'était** (F5), ***a*** bien ***précisé*** que **ce** n'**était** (F6), ***a expliqué*** qu'ils n'**étaient** (F5)]

The IMP is used in relative clauses when the situation expressed in the subordinate clause exceeds the limits of the introductory verb; that appears clearly in the three examples with *être en train de* where the lexicon reinforces the presentation provided by the IMP:

(196) elle ***a renversé*** Charlot qui- ***qui*** **était en train** de se prom'ner dans la rue. (F5) [***qui*** **était en train** de regarder (F5)]

(197) une- une cliente: ***découvre*** Charlot ***qui*** **était en train de** dormir dans: dans du linge # dans des vêtements euh (F2)

In the second example that comes from a narrative mainly in the PRES, an IMP in the relative is needed to show that the sleep exceeds the limits of the discovery.
Similarly in conjunctive subordinates, the IMP is combined with non telic verbs, the telic verbs being put in the PQP and taken as perfect because their *Aktionsart* does not allow them to refer to an unlimited situation:

(198) Le lendemain matin vers neuf heures trente la fille s'est réveillée st et ***voyant que*** Charlot n'**était** pas là, est partie. (F1)

(199)le vendeur ***s'est aperçu que*** Charlot n'**avait** pas d'argent. (F1)

(200) au début il ***croyait qu'*** **c'était** des cambrioleurs (F3)

At this juncture, it is instructive to consider the use of temporal and causal subordinate clauses. In the case of temporal subordinates introduced by *quand* or a similar conjunction expressing a precise reference point, the main clause needs to be in a perfective tense in order not to be taken as iterative. As for the subordinate clause, its verb is in the IMP in the case of stative verbs and in the PC for dynamic ones:

(201) ***Quand*** plus personne n'**était** là mis à part / la fille et: le boulanger, une femme ***est arrivée***, (F1)

(202) # il a beaucoup mangé et il a – il a # y s'est assis à une table euh / et ***quand il a pris*** la note il a- il ***a vu*** que: – qu'elle était assez chère et qu'y pouvait pas la payer. (F2)

(203) Charlot ***a été retrouvé*** par une des clientes sous une pile de – de linge ***alors que*** le magasin **était ouvert** / il a donc été arrêté par la police et emmené. ***(F6)***

The IMP is used in subordinates introduced by *puisque, parce que* or the likes to express cause:

(204) Là il a rencontré d'autres employés qui, ne le reconnaissant pas ***puisqu'***il **était** nouveau ont cru qu'il était un voleur mais un employé l'a reconnu / et tout s'est arrangé. (F1)

(205) Donc euh ensuite il a été emmené dans la fourgonnette de police et là il a retrouvé la jeune femme qui s'est énervée ***parce qu'***elle **voulait** sortir. (F4)

(206) Quand il a décidé de descendre / les étages il a vu trois – trois hommes en bas et il a eu peur ***parce qu'***y: - ils **avaient** des revolvers. (F5)

(207) Et il y a un de ces:- trois – trois hommes qui a reconnu Charlot ***puisque*** **c'était** un de ses collègues de travail. (F5)

However, the presence of the conjunction is not indispensable and in the following sentence, the stative IMP *était* is understood as the cause of the following event: it is because he was drunk that he fell asleep.

(208) Ils ***ont bu*** du rhum à plein tonneau Charlot **était** saoul: il ***s'est endormi*** / dans du linge # dans le rayon linge. (F1)

c. Conclusion on the IMP in the control group oral narratives

The native speakers seem to make prototypical uses of IMP with a majority of combinations with stative verbs and a high frequence of the most basic forms (such as auxiliaries) that appear to be formulaic.

4.2.5. Conclusion the use of the IMP in the oral narratives

Some conclusions on the use of the IMP in the oral narratives of our four groups can now be drawn. The use of IMP culminates in year 2 where that tense represents 23.18% of all verb tokens. After this sharp increase (+7.93%) from year 1 (15.25%), it slightly decreases in year 4 (20.33%) to fall at 11.93% in the control group. This pattern is very different from what was found in the written narratives where the year 2 corpus had the lowest proportion of IMP; the only common point is that the proportion in native usage is in both cases inferior to the percentage in ILs.

As for the most frequent tokens, there is a very high frequence of *être, avoir, c'était* and *être*[273]:

[273] Compare with the percentages for the PC below :

	être		*avoir*		*c'était*		*y avoir*		Total of 4	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Year 1	45	34.26	8	6.22	22	16.79	22	16.79	107	74.06
Year 2	43	31.44	8	5.03	35	22.01	39	24.53	125	83.01
Year 4	57	31.11	24	9.45	67	26.38	53	20.87	201	87.81
Control gr.	25	38.47	4	6.15	13	21.54	1	1.54	43	67.7

There is a proportional increase of the use of these forms from year 1 to year 4, which would seem to contradict the ideas of the PAH or the assumption that those formulaic tokens are used to maintain fluency at lower levels. The greater frequency of *c'était* in the control group can be attributed to reported speech.

The list of Müller's (1974) most frequent verbs gives the following results when applied to our spoken corpora:

	Total of different verbs	Number of frequent verbs / 20	Percentage of frequent verbs / total in %	Tokens of frequent verbs	Percentage of frequent verbs / total IMP in %
Year 1	27	4	14.81	9	6.87
Year 2	25	6	24	11	6.92
Year 4	22	6	27.27	12	4.72
Control group	19	8	42.11	14	21.54

The use of the most frequent verbs is much higher (from three to four times) in the native group than in the learners'. This could be explained by the fact that oral narratives allow less time for stylistic planning and the most common verbs spring to the mind. In the case of learners, on the other hand, there is an overreliance on the 4 basic forms.

	Etre, avoir, c'était, y avoir	Most frequent verbs	Other verbs
Year 1	74.06	6.87	19.07
Year 2	83.01	6.92	10.07
Year 4	87.81	4.72	7.47
Control group	67.7	21.54	10.76

In all groups but year 1, the total of the four basic forms and the most frequent verbs is almost equivalent, the fact that year 1 seems at first sight to show more diversity may be explained by

	être		*avoir*		**c'était**		**y avoir**		**Total of 4**
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	%
Year 1	4	0.83	5	1.03	-	0	4[273]	0.83	2.69
Year 2	1	0.23	6	1.38	-	0	1	0.23	1.84
Year 4	3	0.44	4	0.59	-	0	4	0.59	1.62
Control group	1	0.38	1	0.38	-	0	2	0.77	1.53

the higher level of invented forms. There are indeed 7 incorrect tokens (5.34%) in year 1, 3 in year 2 (1.89%) and 1 in year 4 (0.39%). These results significantly differ from Howard's (2002: 192) who provides the following distribution:

	Verbes fréquents		Verbes moins fréquents		*Etre, avoir, c'était, il y avait*	
Gr. 1	24%	204	30%	261	46%	392
Gr. 2	29%	615	23%	479	48%	973
Gr. 3	22%	237	24%	262	54%	590

Howard's corpus seems to show a higher degree of sophistication in lexicon but it must be remembered that his data comes from interviews where the phenomenon of 'scaffolding' is at work; in other words, learners can 'recycle' the lexical input provided by the interviewer. Although she also works on interviews, Kihlstedt's (1998: 93) figures seem closer to ours (see columns highlighted) although it is not completely clear if her *était* and *avait* cover *c'était* and *il y avait*:

	Eva	Lena	Marie	Yvo	**Total LA**	Anne	Cath	Jérôme	Mél.	**Total LN**
avait	5	11	31	28	**75**	12	14	3	19	**48**
%	11%	15%	24%	18%	**18%**	23%	22%	12%	34%	**24%**
était	31	43	50	80	**204**	15	25	14	22	**76**
%	69%	57%	38%	52%	**50%**	29%	39%	56%	39%	**38%**
autres	9	21	50	47	**127**	25	25	8	15	**73**
%	20%	28%	38%	30%	**30%**	48%	39%	32%	27%	**37%**
Total	*45*	*75*	*131*	*155*	***406***	*52*	*64*	*25*	*56*	***198***

The level of her students may be less advanced than Howard's, which may explain the greater role of the two basic forms.

If we now examine the forms that are found only at a given level, we see that 12 forms out of 34 (35.29%) are found only in year 1: 2 are incorrect and 6 are passive. In year 2, 16 specific forms out of 29 (55.17%) contain one invented form and 3 passives. As for year 4, there 16 specific forms out of 29 different verb phrases (55.17%), 2 are incorrect and 5 are passives.

	Verbs
Only in year 1	continuer, il était[274], * être faim, mettre, regarder, rentrer, être accusé, être concerné, être impliqué, être mis, être pris, être trouvé
Only in year 2	*acter, connaître, contenir, faire, marcher, parler, prendre, s'agir, s'arrêter, se coucher, tirer, tomber, venir de, être blessé, être escorté, être vu

[274] Instead of *c'était.*

Only in year 4	avoir besoin de, avoir envie de, avoir l'air, avoir peur, être en route, menacer, partir, réaliser, *s'apprécier, *se rouler[275], surveiller, être couché, être fermé, être habillé, être placé, être prévu
Only in control group	Falloir, se balader, être emmené
Year 1 / year 2	entrer, essayer, garder, *y être[276]
Year 1 / year 4	dire, jouer, manger, porter, se passer, voler, être arrêté
Year 2 / year 4	avoir faim
Year 1 / year 2 / year 4	aller
Year 1 / control	se trouver
Year 2 / control	reconnaître, être ouvert
Year 4 / control	aller + INF, passer, savoir
Year 1/ year 2 / control	
Year 1/ year 4 / control	être en train de, travailler, vouloir
Year 2/ year 4 / control	pouvoir
All	avoir, y avoir, c'était, être

If we now take the percentage of all verb tokens: 14 out of 131 tokens (10.69% of the IMP in year 1) are specific to year 1; 18 out of 159 in year 2 (11.32%) and 19 out of 254 in year 4 (7.48%). Here again there seems to be more variety in lower levels but it is due to the existence of invented forms.

Finally, if we consider the type of verbs at each level, we have:

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 4		Control group	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Stative VPs	77	58.78	126	79.25	204	80.31	41	63.08
Atelic VPs	20	15.27	15	9.43	37	14.57	18	27.69
Telic VPs	34	25.95	18	11.32	13	5.12	6	9.23

Some trends appear from these rough figures. First the combination of the IMP with stative verbs increases with the level of learning (+21.53% from year 1 to year 4) although it is supposed to be the most prototypical use and thus the first acquired. There is no significant change with atelic verbs but there is a sharp decrease of telic verbs (- 20.87% between the first and the fourth years). These findings do not support the PAH as our less advanced learners seem to have the most varied distribution of VP types, the combination of the IMP with telic verbs decreases steadily. Our results do not support Bergström's (1995) claim that it is not

[275] Meaning *patiner*.
[276] Instead of *y avoir*.

telicity, as in Andersen (1991), that guides learners' associations but dynamicity. There is also a diminution of dynamic verbs in the IMP from year 1 to year 4.

It seems therefore that the PAH does not provide a satisfactory explanation of acquisitional processes at the highest levels of proficiency, once all combinations of aspect and *Aktionsart* have emerged.

4.3. General conclusion on the IMP

On the basis of our corpora, we now proceed to provide some general conclusions on the use of the IMP in our learners' narratives.

First, from a morphological point of view, the IMP is a straightforward tense that, on the whole, presents no serious problems to learners even at the lowest level considered.

Then, as predicted by other studies (Bardovi-Harlig & Bergström 1996, Kihlstedt 1998), the IMP is used less than the PC: it is the second most frequent tense in the written narratives:

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 4		Control Group	
PC	372	58.49	242	68.56	484	66.12	119	59.5
IMP	203	31.92	72	20.4	188	25.68	28	14

However, the IMP is overtaken by the PRES (except in year 2) in the oral narratives:

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 4		Control Group	
PC	484	56.34	436	63.56	675	53.83	260	47.71
PRES	131	15.25	159	23.18	255	20.33	65	11.93

It must be noted that the predominance of the PC is stronger in the control group than in the learners' group, which may question some acquisitional claims based on quantitative results. The task may however have hindered the use of the IMP. Bardovi-Harlig (1999) mentions that narratives do not favour unbounded states, habituals and generics that are the stronghold of the IMP.

Our data also confirm findings from previous studies on the preferential combination of the IMP with *être* and *avoir* - which is also a prominent feature in native production – and on the limited range of verbs used in that tense. The table below recapitulates on the range of

different verbs found in the narratives (written in first row, oral in third row) as well as the average rate of change of these verbs (range of different verbs / total of tokens for the tense under consideration).

	IMP				PC			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 4	control	Year 1	Year 2	Year 4	control
Different verbs (written)	55	21	50	18	126	112	162	67
Change rate (written)	3.69	3.43	3.76	1.56	2.95	2.16	2.99	1.78
Different verbs (oral)	27	25	22	20	99	101	145	100
Change rate (oral)	4.85	6.36	11.59	3.25	4.89	4.32	4.66	2.6

Three main points can be made from these figures: first there is indeed a much wider range of verbs used in the PC than in the IMP at all levels (except in year 1 oral narratives where they are equivalent), even in the control group. Secondly written narratives show less repetition of the same tokens than oral narratives. Those two remarks apply to both learners and native speakers. A last point differentiates them as the range of verbs in the oral narratives is wider in the control group whilst the reverse occurs in the learners' group.

Our results on the use of *Aktionsart* in written narratives do not seem to support the claims of the PAH that the combination between the IMP and telic verbs is the last acquired as it is inversely proportional to the level. Neither do they support the view expressed in Harley (1992) and Bergström (1995) that there is an underuse – compared with native usage - of the IMP combined with dynamic verbs; they make 54.48% of all uses in year 1, 34.72 in year 2, 37.23% in year 4 and 35.71% in the control group:

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 4		Control group	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Stative VPs	92	45.32	47	65.28	118	62.77	18	64.29
Atelic VPs	43	21.18	14	19.44	47	25.00	9	32.14
Telic VPs	68	33.50	11	15.28	23	12.23	1	3.57
	203	100	72	100	188	100	28	100

Tendencies are less clear in oral narratives where the overuse of the auxiliaries in years 2 and 4 may have skewed the results:

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 4		Control group	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Stative VPs	77	58.78	126	79.25	204	80.31	41	63.08
Atelic VPs	20	15.27	15	9.43	37	14.57	18	27.69
Telic VPs	34	25.95	18	11.32	13	5.12	6	9.23

The high proportion of dynamic verbs in the IMP found in our corpora may be attributed to the overuse of passive IMP, especially at the lower levels, as shown in the table below:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 4	Control Group
Written	7.88	8.33	5.85	3.57
Oral	13.74	4.4	3.92	3.07

This overuse of passive IMP may be due to, on the one hand on the morphological complexity of the passive PC; on the other hand, it may be a sign of categorical combination with *être* + IMP, which would support the PAH. The fact that passive PC appear at all levels undermines the argument of complexity but the much higher frequency in native production supports it:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 4	Control Group
Written	1.61	1.65	3.09	7.56
Oral	3.09	2.98	1.78	5

However, the fact that the PRES is sometimes used instead of a required IMP in year 1 (examples 46-52, 135-142), 2 (examples 58-61, 71-73, 157-162), 4[277] (examples 95-98, 177-183) may support the PAH claim that aspect (imperfectivity) is marked before tense.

Given that the predictions of the PAH do not suffice to explain the uses of the IMP in the learners' IL, Kihlstedt (1998: 118) suggests that:

> La difficulté acquisitionnelle de l'IMP est donc à rechercher ailleurs que dans le lexique verbal.
> Elle concerne plutôt les valeurs contextuelles exprimées par l'IMP, ou, plus précisément, le rapport entre le T[emps] Ré[férentiel] *[our R]* et le T[emps de la] Situation *[our E]* dans l'emploi de l'IMP chez les L[ocuteurs] N[atifs] et les L[ocuteurs] A[pprenants].

She postulates a semantic sequence of acquisition of the IMP in five stages:

> 1. the « *IMP caractérisant* », where there is an exact correspondance between TSit and TRé;
> 2. The « *IMP habituel* », where the situation is perceived as repeated and thus only covers subintervals of Tré;
> 3. The « *IMP habituel / fréquentatif* », where there is an indication of frequency;
> 4. « *IMP progressif* », where the situation is shown as ongoing;
> 5. « *IMP aux confins* », where telic VPs are viewed with the inherent durativity of the IMP.

[277] But only in complex sentences at that level.

The « *IMP caractérisant* » would appear initially with stative verbs, then dynamic verbs would emerge (but only those that are already used in the PC) and this combination would often be equivalent of a habitual reading. The third stage would only emerge in subjects that use the IMP independently of its *Aktionsart*. Kihlstedt assumes that the last two stages are more difficult to access as they are not found in her learners' data based on oral interviews.

Howard (forthcoming) proposes a similar classification in five stages according to the context that can be: (1) *statique*, that implies « *un rapport de simultanéité total entre le point de repère et le procès désigné* »[278], (2) *progressif*, (3) *caractérisant*, that includes both the ideas of duration as in (1) and of repetition, (4) *fréquentatif*, where « *la fréquence du procès est moins dense* » than in (3) and (5) *présent* or relevant at the moment of speech. However, this acquisitional sequence differs from Kihlstedt's first in its categories: it does not include the « *emplois aux confins* »; it splits Kihlstedt's *IMP caractérisant* in *IMP statique* and *IMP caractérisant* (on the basis of the *Aktionsart*); it makes the IMP valid at S a specific category (it was included in *IMP caractérisant* in Kihlstedt's classification). It also differs in its order especially the place of progressive; this is attributed by Howard to the L1:

> La différence entre les apprenants peut s'expliquer en raison de ce que, [...] la progressivité est grammaticalisée en anglais alors qu'elle ne l'est pas en suédois. En conséquence, il semble que la progressivité est une notion plus facile à conceptualiser pour les apprenants anglophones que pour les apprenants suédophones [...]

Although interesting, these two approaches seem to us deficient both in their assumptions and their application. First the classifications rely on the idea that frequency is a sign of acquisition; at different stages of IL, a form may be frequent without being native-like (e.g. the PC used for double anteriority or the IMP with dynamic verbs in our corpora). The fact that frequency and difficulty are inversely proportional is another debatable assumption: native speakers[279] also use certain values of the IMP more than others. Then the corpus is likely to skew the results: Kihlstedt mentions in passing that her oral interviews may not be conducive to the progressive value (unlike narratives, for example, that do not favour iterative uses). On a more

[278] This corresponds to Kihlstedt's *emploi caractérisant*.
[279] Let us note that Howard's assumptions are weakened by the lack of a control group.

experimental level, the following occurrences from our corpora would be problematic for such a classification:

(208) Puis euh dans – dans la camionnette de police euh la femme **essayait** euh de – de s'échapper (S208)
(209) En effet après un peu de temps, un des tirants l'a reconnu. Il **travaillait** avec l'homme. (S103)
(210) Il appelait au commissariat et pendant qu'il le faisait, l'homme **volait** un cigare! (S107)
(211) Le chef de sécurité est descendu en bas où il **se retrouvait** face à trois cambrioleurs, armés du fusil.

The use of the IMP is native-like in both (208) and (209); (208) could be an *IMP fréquentatif* and (209) an *IMP caractérisant.* However extralinguistic elements disqualify those sentences from being considered native: there was only one attempt to escape, the men do not work together anymore. Should they be integrated in the classification or excluded? On the other hand, (210) and (211) are pragmatically acceptable and could be instances of *IMP aux confins.* Both *a volé* and *volait* would be possible in (210): the PC would be the less marked narrative option and the IMP would have stylistic connotations insisting for example on the cheek of Chaplin still stealing while he was already in such a sticky situation. As for (211), this is a use of the IMP that is very frequent in contemporary journalistic writing, especially in *faits divers.* Would such examples be taken as sophisticated uses of the IMP or mistakes?

So it seems that we need to be careful in classifying the functions L2 learners attribute to given morphological means. On the whole, the use of the IMP in L2 narratives seems to be divided in two strands. On the one hand, there is a systematic use of auxiliaries that fits the aspect-*Aktionsart* compatibilities, that is overgeneralized for example in telic VPs including *avoir* and *être*. On the other hand, there are difficulties in integrating the cotextual constraints (presence of other verbs that impose a sequence of tenses, complements...) that may modify the aspectual type of the VP and therefore invalidate the use of IMP. The difficulty results from the great versatility of the tense whose unbounded limits allow for a great variety of functions that learners are unable to circumscribe. The PAH hypothesis works at the lexeme level and therefore fails to account for phenomena at a wider cotextual and discourse level (such as for example the introduction of an object or of an temporal complement), so it would need to be revised to fit the more complex features of advanced IL.

5. Plus-que-parfait

5.1. Written film narratives

The PAH describes the possible development of preterite and imperfect verbal forms but does not explicitly tackle other morphological forms. As an absolute-relative tense (Comrie 1985), the PQP presents the combined difficulty of finding the appropriate anchorage and of expressing anteriority. Bartning (1997: 24-25) mentions that this tense is very rarely used in L2 French corpora such as Towell (1987) or Kihlstedt (1998) and morever that it is not frequent in native speakers' oral production (cf.Wiberg 1997). Moreover, Bardovi-Harlig (1994: 265) attributes the relative scarcity to « its nonessential nature for learners (including instructed learners). She argues that the PQP:

> is but one linguistic device which serves to signal a deviation from chronological order. In spite of the fact that pluperfect seems to be the clearest and most readily accepted marker of R[everse] O[rder] R[eport], it is not strictly necessary from a functional point of view.

She claims that time adverbials are able to express a deviation from chronological order and as they seem to be used in various stages of IL before the emergence of a tense, they should be expected to fill the functions of a PQP. She thus proposes the hypothesis that time adverbials always precede the emergence of a tense:

> Time adverbials seem to be used in various stages of interlanguage before the emergence of a tense. In early stages time adverbials are used before the past tense; in the later stages investigated here, they are used before the pluperfect. (p.275)

In this section, we will test those claims against our corpora and analyze and compare the use of the PQP in our three learners group and in our control group.

5.1.1. Year 1

a. Description

The year 1 written film narratives contains 11 PQP (1.73% of all conjugated verbs); all of which are active. One may suggest that a passive PQP would morphologically be too complex to handle at this level and this claim would need to be checked against the other corpora.

aller	1	* se rouller	1	voir	2
avoir	1	prendre	1	voler	3
* metter	1	trouver	1		

An inventory of the sentences where the 11 PQP appear is found below:

(1) Une fois l'homme a couvert ses yeux et ***si*** le femme n'**avait** pas **vu** - il aurait un accident. (S102)

(2) L'homme avec qui la femme a était en collision a décidé de faire semblant que c'était lui qui **avait volé** le pain. (S104)

(3) Le boulanger n'**avait** pas **vu**, mais une vielle dame l'a lui appris. (S107)

(4) Il était prêt de l'emmener au commissariat, mais un petit homme qui portait un chapeau noir et une moustache a dit que c'était lui qui **avait volé** la baguette !!! (S107)

(5-8) Le deux a renteré dans le magasin, est ils ***avaient allé** ou 4éme étage ou il y a des peluches et des joues pour les enfants. Les deux ***avait trouvé** des patins a roulettes et ***metté** sur leurs pieds. Les deux ***avait se roullé**, est Chaplin a se roullé près d'un signe marké 'danger'. (S108)

(9) Chaplin a dit à la femme qu'il **avait pris** la responsabilité. (S109)

(10) *Il n'**avait** pas **eu** des places donc l'homme a donné sa place a la fille. (S114)

(11) Le policier a interrogé la femme mais il y avait un autre homme sur la rue (Chaplin) qui a interrompu le policier et qui a dit: « C'était moi qu'**avait volé** le pain. » (S120)

From this inventory, we can see that the PQP is used with telic verbs (*aller, mettre, prendre, trouver, voir, voler)* in 9 of the 11 occurrences. The PQP produced by S108 stand for a PC as there is no need here for double anteriority. Her last two uses of the PQP with an atelic verb (**se rouller*) and a stative verb (*avoir*) are incorrect and an IMP would have been expected.

b. Uses

The following table summarizes the link between forms and functions for the 11 occurrences of the PQP:

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
6	54.55	-	0	-	0	5	45.45

Here we seem to be at a level of IL where the form is either well mastered or not at all.

(i) Actual uses

The morphology, the syntax and the semantics of the forms found in the year 1 written corpus are now presented in more detail. Morphology is generally correct except for the examples produced by S108 where a series of problems occurs. First subject-verb agreements are neglected as in *les deux avait trouvé* and *les deux avait se roullé.* Then, there are problems in the choice of the auxiliary and *avoir* is used as a default form, even with *aller* and **se rouller.* As a direct result, these two PQP present problems of past participle agreement. In addition to an inadequate mastery of the forms of the PQP, S108[280] fails to identify its meaning. This is not surprising as there is some consensus in acquisition studies to support the claim that the mastery of forms precedes the mastery of functions (Klein, Dietrich & Noyau 1995: 270). S108's use of the PQP appears somewhat random and it is worth mentioning that her written narrative contains no occurrence of IMP so there might be a confusion between the two tenses (IMP and PQP) in that learner's IL.

On the other hand, almost all the native-like uses of the PQP appear in subordinate clauses: conditional context, emphasis in *c'était...que* or reported speech. In the case of the conditional context (1), the correct use of the PQP as an irreal is not matched by a CP in the apodosis. Emphasis in *c'était...que* appears in (2) and in (4) and (11), where it is coupled with reported speech. (11) is ambiguous as the colons suggest direct speech but at the same time, the sequence of tenses of reported speech has been applied. In (3), the PQP is used in a coordinate clause and expresses anteriority to the other part of the sentence, which seems to show a more sophisticated understanding of temporal ordering.

(ii) Required uses

However, if we now adopt a functional approach, we note the following non-native uses. Required uses of the PQP are replaced by the PC in many of the contexts listed above, such as emphasis:

(12) Mais une autre femme a dit l'agent de police ***qu'il était*** vraiment la jeune femme ***qui*** **a volé** le pain. (S113) [**a vu** (S112), **a volé** (S113, S117)]

[280] It is worth remembering here that S108 did not benefit from much instructed learning but acquired most of her French in naturalistic settings. She learnt French for two years through self-learning and a 7-month stay in France before coming to university.

This emphasis– as above – is sometimes coupled with reported speech:

(13) La femme ***a insisté que c'était*** la fille ***qui*** **a fait** le crime. (S114)
(14) Mais il y avait une interruption quand une autre femme ***a dit que c'était*** la femme ***qui*** **a volé** le pain, pas Chaplin. (S120) [**a volé** (S114)]

Reported speech is a sufficient context to require the PQP in the following examples; the main verb in the past imposes a PQP in the subordinate (Comrie 1985):

(15) Une autre femme ***a dit*** au boucher ***qu'***une femme **a pris** un pain. (S105)
(16) Il **a demandé** aux gens de lui expliquer de la situation et ***ce qui*** **a passé**. (S120)
(17-8)Le boulanger ***a expliqué que*** la femme **a volé** un pain mais la femme ***a insisté qu'***elle n'**a** rien **fait**. (S120) [***a dit* / s'est passe**. (S112), ***a dit* / a volé** (S113), ***a expliqué* / s'est passé** (S114)]

There seems to be a general difficulty in ordering a sequence of situations in the past and absolute-relative past tenses are replaced by simpler ones; it is mainly the PC but there are also isolated instances of the IMP and the PRES. When the PC is used, the perfect side of the PQP is highlighted:

(19) Chaplin a été arrêté par la gendarmerie mais la femme, qui **a vu** ce que la femme **a pris** la baguette, a dit la gendarmerie. (S109)
(20) Une femme **a vu** ce qui **est passé** et elle a dit l'histoire a le pâtissier qui a chassé la fille.(S114) [**a essayé** (S117), **a passé** (S120), **est passé** (S114), **a prend** (S115), **a vu** (S117), **a vole** (S112)]

In the case of the IMP and the PRES, they share the imperfective aspectual presentation of the PQP:

(21) En effet, après un peu de temps, un des tirants l'a reconnu. Il **travaillait** avec L'homme. (S103)
(22) Un policier trouvait les deux personnes et il ne connaît pas qu'est qui **se passe**. (S105)

The PQP is also required in other contexts that do not appear in the actual uses of year 1 learners. The need for a PQP appears in causal sentences that imply anteriority as a cause precedes its effects:

(23) Dans cette action Charlie est devenu ivre à cause du rhum qu'il **a bu** par accident. (S106)
(24) Un autre voleur a reconnû Charlie parce-qu'ils **travaillent** a le même usine. (S116)

In the last few examples, the absence of the PQP is made for by a temporal complement within the clause.

(25) Il etait en collision avec trois hommes, qu'il pensait a etre les voleurs mais en fait un des hommes etait un amis avec lequel il **a travaille** ***avant***. (S101)
(26) ***Dans le passé*** ils **ont travaillé** dans les mines. (S102)
(27) Dans le véhicule il a retrouvé la femme qu'il **a rencontré** ***au début du film***. (S105)

These last two categories seem to support Bardovi-Harlig's (1994) claim about the role of time adverbials but they only explain a few of the IL uses.

c. Conclusion on the use of the PQP in year 1 written narratives

The study of the PQP in year 1 narratives allows us to draw the following conclusions. First, a general underuse of the PQP characterizes this set of stories: only 11 occurences (among which 5 are incorrect or unanalysable) are found in the corpus and a further 24 would be required. So PQP is used in only 20% (6 out of 30) of the needed contexts. 9 out of the 11 (81.82%) occurrences of the PQP are telic verbs, which is not surprising as the PQP shows the sequel of a situation and telic verbs also show them as complete so there are obvious affinities between tense and *Aktionsart*. In sentences where a PQP would be expected, it is generally replaced by a PC, except in (21) where it is an IMP, (22) and (24)[281] where it is a PRES. This substitution is not surprising as the PC is also an absolute-relative tense but is based on the moment of speech rather than on a secondary moment of reference. To compensate for this inability to anchor the situation at the right R, there is a reliance on the contextual info such as *avant, dans le passé* or *au début du film* in examples (34) to (36) to express double anteriority. This is a recognized characteristic of the learner's use where temporality is carried by lexical markers first and then by tenses (See Bardovi-Harlig 1999: 350-1 for a summary of the use of lexical means to express temporality in SLA).

5.1.2. Year 2

a. Description

The year 2 written film narratives contains 9 PQP (2.55% of all conjugated verbs), all of which are active.

[281] In (21) and (24), the same atelic verbal situation, *travailler*, is used.

accepter	1	* échapper	1	tomber	1
casser	1	faire	1	voler	2
commettre	1	S'enfuir	1		

A list of the sentences where the 9 PQP are found appears below:

(28) Il y avait une jolie femme et Laurel l'ont dit d'aller au lit, ce qu'elle **avait fait** (S201)
(29-30)La femme **avait volé** le pain mais l'homme **avait accepté** les conséquences. (S203)
(31) L'homme a une certaine attraction à la femme et il **avait commis** un crime à joindre la femme en prison. (S203)
(32) L'homme et la femme **avaient s'enfuient** avec la police suivant. (S203)
(33-4)Apparemment, le veilleur de nuit **avait tombé** et **avait cassé** sa jambe. (S212)
(35) La fille **avait échappée** mais elle est tombée avec un homme (Chaplin). (S213)
(36) Pour cette raison peut etre, Charlie Chaplin a dit a l'agent de police que c'etait lui qui **avait vole** la bagette et pas la jeune femme. (S216)

From the inventory, we can see that the PQP is used with telic verbs in all the occurrences.

b. Uses

The following table classifies the 9 PQP tokens according to their form and function:

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / right function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
3	33.33	2	22.22	2	22.22	2	22.22

The distribution here is better balanced than in year 1 where the forms where either completely accurate or completely wrong.

(i) Actual uses

As in year 1, there are morphological problems linked with the choice of auxiliary for verbs expressing movement as in (33) or for reflexive verbs that are either ill-formed (32) or avoided (34 and 35). Contrarily to what was found in year 1, most of the PQP in year 2 are found in independent clauses, even if (36) shows both emphasis and reported speech. Two of the examples, (28) and (32), seem to express posteriority, rather than anteriority, to a past moment of reference. This appears clearly in the first example but (32) is more problematic as it is syntactically ambiguous, with *avec la police suivant* probably meaning 'with the police following' that would be rendered in French by *'poursuivi par la police'*.

(ii) Required uses

Here as well, the PC replaces the PQP in many of the required contexts listed in year 1, such as emphasis:

(37) Maintenant il semblait que ***c'était*** lui ***qui*** **a volé** le pain et ça c'est ce qu'ils pensent le policier et le propriétaire. (S213)

This emphasis can be found together with reported speech:

(38) La police trouvait la fille mais l'homme ***a dit que c'était*** lui ***qui*** **a volé** le pain.(S214)

Reported speech on its own requires the PQP in the following examples as the introductory declarative verb is in the past:

(39) Elle s'est accrochée contre un homme dans la rue et le boulanger a rattrapé sur elle et ***a dit*** a un policier que cette femme **a volé** le pain, mais l'homme dans la rue a dit au policier que c'était lui qui était coupable du délit et le policier a arrêté l'homme. (S202)

(40-1)Une autre femme, qui a témoigné de la scène, ***a dit*** ce qu'elle **a vu** à un gendarme. (S210)

(42) Hier mon ami m'***a dit*** qu'il **y avait** un incident très amusant dans une grande surface. (S217)

The general difficulty in ordering a sequence of situations in the past is still prevalent and absolute-relative past tenses are replaced by simpler ones:

(43) Ce policier a mis l'homme dans un camion avec d'autres criminels où se trouvait la femme que l'homme **a essayé(e)** de sauver. (S202)

(44) L'histoire a commencé dans un grand magasin où une foule **a formé** pour regarder un incident où le garde du magasin **a été blessé**. Il **s'est cassé** la jambe (S204)

(45) Une passante, une autre femme plus agee que la derniere a vu ce qui **s'est passe** et elle a informe le conducteur du camion. (S216)

[**a volé, ont vu** (S208), **a vu** (S214), **s'est passé, a témoigné**(S216)]

The need for a PQP also emerges, as in year 1, in causal sentences that imply anteriority of the cause to its effects:

(46-7)Les subtitres disent qu'il ***y avait*** un accident dans le grand magasin et donc quelqu'un **s'est cassé** la jambe. (S201)

(48) Devant ce grand magasin il y avait une voiture noire et il y avait aussi beaucoup de personnes parce que le gardian de nuit du grand magasin **s'est cassé** la jambe. (S215)

(49) L'homme est allé avec la police malgrè le fait que la femme **a vu** la fille. (S214)

No time adverbials are used to express double anteriority in this corpus.

c. Conclusion on the use of the PQP in the year 2 narratives

This year 2 corpus also shows a general underuse of the PQP: only 9 occurences (among which 2 seem to express posteriority) are found in the corpus and a further 13 would be required. Here the PQP is used in 35% (7 out of 20) of the needed contexts. All the actual occurrences of the PQP are telic verbs, an affinity that has already been explained above. In sentences where a PQP would be expected, it is generally replaced by a PC, except in (42) and (46) that are in the IMP; both are occurrences of *y avoir*, that, as a stative verb, might be felt as highly compatible with the IMP. However, the verb phrase is in both cases telic thanks to the similar direct object *un incident* and *un accident.*

5.1.3. Year 4

a. Description

The year 4 written film narratives contains 12 PQP (1.64% of all conjugated verbs), all of which are active.

* échapper	1	partir	1	voir	1
faire	2	pouvoir	1	voler	4
jouer	1	porter	1		

A list of the sentences where the 12 PQP are found appears below:

(50) La jeune dame en essayant de s'enfuire, est rentré dans Charlie Chaplin, qui se promenait. Chaplin, afin de ne pas voir la fille arrêtée par la police pour vol, a dit que s'était lui qui **avait volé** la baguette et non la fille. (S402)

(51) Pendant que Charlie est enlevé, la dame qui **avait** tout **vu** réclame au boulanger que ce n'était pas Chaplin qui a volé le pain mais la fille. (S402)

(52) Quand les autres travailleurs **étaient partis** du magasin, il a trouvé sa femme qui s'y cachait. (S403)

(53) L'homme a dit au gendarme qu'il **avait volé** la baguette, pas la jeune fille. (S404)

(54) Les vrais cambrioleurs **avaient** déjà **échappés**. (S405)

(55) Le boulanger a demandé à la femme(la voleuse) si c'était elle qui **avait volé** la baguette. (S407)

(56) Mais le témoin a insisté que c'était la femme qui **avait volé** la baguette. (S407)

(57) C'était très dangereux, il **avait pu** tomber en bas du magasin. (S412)

(58) Le policier a pris Chaplin avec lui, mais le témoin est arrivé pour dire au policier qu'il **avait fait** une erreur et que c'était la fille qui a volé le pain. (S416)

(59) Il n'**avait** rien **fait** au début, mais, à la fin, il a dû parti en courant avec la fille pour échapper à la police. (S416)

(60) Les deux sont allés au département de jouets, où ils **avaient joué** avant de porter les rollers. (S420)

(61) Puis, il **avait porté** quelque chose sur ses yeux pour montrer qu'il peut glisser sans voir. (S420)

From the inventory, we can see that the PQP is used with telic verbs in 11 of the occurrences, with the only exception of the atelic *jouer* in (60).

b. Uses

The distribution of the 12 forms and the function they express is presented in the table:

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
7	58.33	1	8.33	4	33.33	-	0

(i) Actual uses

In contrast to years 1 and 2, there are no problems of auxiliary with situations expressing movements, which may indicate a better mastery of forms. However, there is still an avoidance tactic for reflexive verbs (54), where on the other hand the expected PP agreement is found. In this corpus, there is a majority of PQP in complex sentences as it was the case in year 1. There are however 4 examples of PQP in independent or main clauses (54, 57, 59 and 61) but two of them fail to convey the right meaning. In (57), the PQP is used instead of a CP to express an irreal situation in the past and in (61), the PQP is used in a succession (introduced by *puis*) after a PC. (52) presents an interesting use of the PQP after *quand* where a PSC – that does not belong to our learners' production at any level or in any type of exercise – should have been used. (for a discussion of the use of PSC in Modern French, see Part I, chapter 1).

(ii) Required uses

In year 4, the PC also replaces the PQP in required contexts, such as emphasis:

(62) Mais, ***il y avait*** une femme ***qui*** **a vu** la jeune fille en dehors de la boulangerie. (S404)

That emphasis is mostly found together with reported speech, mainly introduced by *dire* in the PC although there is a problem of sequence of tense in (66) where the introductory verb is in the PRES:

(63) M Chaplin ***a dit que c'était*** lui ***qui*** **a volé** le pain et le policier l'a arrêté. (S401) [**id.** (S407), **disant / a volé** (S409), **a dit / a fait** (S421)]
(64) A ce moment-là, Monsieur Chaplin ***a déclaré*** qu'en fait, ***c'était*** lui ***qui*** **a pris** la baguette, et donc le policier lui a arrêté au lieu de la jeune fille. (S414)
(65) Pour la sauver, il ***a reclame que c'etait*** lui ***qui*** **a vole** la baguette. (S421)
(66) Pendant que Charlie est enlevé, la dame qui avait tout vu ***réclame*** au boulanger que ***ce n'était pas*** Chaplin qui **a volé** le pain mais la fille. (S402)

Reported speech on its own requires the PQP in the following examples:

(67) Un policier est arrivé et il a arrêté la fille, mais le M. ***a avoué*** au policier qu'il **a volé** le pain. (S406)
(68-9) Néanmoins une deuxième femme, qui était aussi près de la boulangerie, ***a annoncé*** que Charlie Chaplin n'**a** rien **volé** et elle ***a accusé*** la femme qui **a essayé** de suivre la petite fille ! (S417)
(70-1) Un policier est arrivé, en ***demandant*** ce qui **s'est passé**, et quand la boulangère ***a expliqué*** que la jeune fille **a piqué** une baguette de son camion de livraison, le policier l'a arrêté. (S414)
(72) Le boulanger ***a dit*** au gendarme que la fille **a volé** le pain. (S404)
[**id.** (S406), **a dit / a vu** (S409)]

The general difficulty in ordering a sequence of situations in the past is still prevalent and absolute -relative past tenses are replaced by the PC. This reveals difficulty in finding the proper anchorage for the moment of reference:

(73) Mais la passante qui **a vu** le vol a crié mais non c'était la fille et ils ont arrêté la fille. (S401) [(S406), (S414)]
(74) Ils ont mis la fille qui **a volé** le pain au début dans ce même camion. (S401) [(S406)]
(75) Cependant, un voleur a reconnu l'homme comme un ancien ami avec qu'il **a travaillé**. (S418) [**ont travaillé** (S422)]
(76) Le chef du grand magasin ou un responsable a marqué que quelqu'un était présent – il **a** peut être **entendu** quelque chose. (S412)
[**s'est** cassé (S403), c'est **passé** (S406), **a été laissée** (S410)]

The need for a PQP also emerges, as in other years, in causal sentences that imply anteriority of the cause to its effects. In (77), the use of the PC may be caused by the cotext, with *hier* as a typical temporal complement used with the PC as it shows anteriority to the moment of speech. In the case of (78), the PRES results from a neglect of the contextual information that indicates that Big Bill and Charlie do not work together anymore:

(77) Il était là, j'ai imaginé, parce qu'il **a** trop **bu** hier. (S418)
(78) Un autre des cambrioleurs, Big Bill, a reconnu Charlie puisqu'ils **travaillent** ensemble. (S413)

Adverbials carry temporal information:

(79) Ils ont mis la fille qui **a volé** le pain ***au début*** dans ce même camion. (S401)

But they are not necessarily time adverbials and we find here some examples of « constrasting locatives » (Meisel 1987) that Bardovi-Harlig (1992b: 305) includes as time adverbials: *en dehors de la boulangerie* (S404), *de son camion de livraison* (S414), *dans une usine* (S422).

c. Conclusion on the use of the PQP in the year 4 written narratives

As at the lower levels, the year 4 corpus shows a general underuse of the PQP with only 12 occurences, 4 of which are not native-like. A striking feature of this corpus is that another 29 PQP would have been required, which might indicate a sophistication of narratives with more complex sentence organization and temporal levels. Here the PQP is used in 23.68% (9 out of 38) of the required contexts. 10 of the actual occurrences of the PQP are telic verbs, an affinity which has already been explained above. There is another atelic verb (*jouer*) and a stative one (*pouvoir*). In sentences where a PQP would be expected, it is generally replaced by a PC, except in (79) where a PRES is used.

5.1.4. Control group

a. Description

The native speakers produce 13 PQP (6.5% of all conjugated verbs) that are listed below.

déposer	1	partir	1	voler	6
devoir	2	Se réveiller	1		
faire	1	voir	1		

(80) Mais Charlot a affirmé que c'était lui qui **avait volé** le pain et l'a prouvé en le sortant de derrière son dos. Le policier a alors embarqué Charlot. (F1)
(81) Cependant une passante a dit au boulanger que c'était bel et bien la fille qui **avait volé** le pain et ils se sont alors mis à la recherche du policier. (F1)
(82) Charlot dit que c'était lui qui **avait volé** le pain, mais le boulanger a été témoin de la scène. La femme est emmenée au poste. (F3)
(83) Une autre femme qui l'**avait vue** faire a rapporte le fait au boulanger. (F5)

(84) La police est arrivée et a voulu emmener la jeune femme mais Charlot s'est interpose en affirmant que c'est lui qui **avait vole** le pain et non la jeune femme. (F5)

(85-7) Mais ensuite l'autre femme qui **avait** tout **vu** a dit que Charlot n'**avait** rien fait et que c'était la femme qui **avait vole** le pain. (F5)

(88) Peu de temps après, la femme qui **avait vole** le pain est elle aussi montée dans le camion. Charlot lui a donne sa place et lui a demande si elle se souvient de lui. (F5)

(89) Charlot, qui **avait déposé** sa candidature a été engagé et des responsabilités précises lui ont été confiées. (F6)

(90) Cependant, Charlot, qui **avait du** remarquer sa présence dans la rue dans la journée, a invité, le soir venu, une jeune mandiante affamée a venir manger la nourriture du grand magasin en cachette, alors que celui-ci est fermé. (F6)

(91-2) Le lendemain matin, apres que le magasin ait ouvert ses portes, la jeune femme et les trois hommes **étaient** bien **partis**, mais Charlot qui lui ne **s'était** pas **réveillé**, a été retrouvé par une cliente, au milieu d'une pile de linge. (F6)

As in the learners' IL, the PQP is found almost exclusively with telic verbs, with the exception of the stative *devoir*, produced by F6. About half of the occurrences are PQP of *voler*, which is undoubtedly influenced by the clip on which the narrative is based.

(i) Actual uses

The only minor problem of morphology is found in (90) where *du* is not accorded its accent. This may simply be a typing problem as the narratives were written with an English keyboard. All the forms are syntactically and semantically appropriate in this corpus.

(ii) Required uses

One student (F3) fails to provide PQP in all the required context:

(93) Dans la rue un policier l'attrapa et l'arrêta. Charlot dit que c'était lui qui avait volé le pain, mais le boulanger **a été** témoin de la scène. (F3)

(94) Il lui tendit un mouchoir car elle **se mit** a pleurer. (F3)

In (93), the problem results from the failure to order situations in the past. In (94), the logical link between the two verbs cannot be expressed by a PS as the tears need to come before a handkerchief is offered. Two possible explanations could be adduced for the fact that F3 does not show complete mastery of the PQP. First, she is the only native speaker who, whilst

presenting herself as monolingual, comes from a French-Polish family[282]. Moreover, she is the only subject to narrate in the PS, a form that might complicate the use of tenses.

c. Conclusion on the use of the PQP in the control group written narratives

It appears clearly that the frequency of PQP use by native speakers is proportionally much higher than among learners with 6.5% compared to 1.73% in year 1, 2.55% in year 2 and 1.64% in year 4.

5.1.5. Conclusion on the PQP in written narratives.

From this analysis of the use of the PQP in written narratives, we can draw some conclusions.

First, when compared to native usage, a clear underuse of the form appears at all learning levels with an average of about 0.5 PQP per essay at each level: 11 PQP for 21 essays (0.52 PQP / essay) in year 1; 9 PQP for 17 essays (0.53 PQP / essay) in year 2; 11 PQP for 22 essays (0.5 PQP/ essay) in year 4. On the other hand, 13 PQP are found in the 6 essays (2.17 PQP / essay) written by native speakers. This apparent stagnation needs to take into account that the percentage of incorrect uses of the PQP decreases. In year 1, 4 (5-8) of the 11 PQP are morphologically problematic; two more (10, 11) present semantic inaccuracies. In year 2, 4 PQP (32-35) present morphological problems, one is syntactically inadequate (32) whilst another (28) is semantically problematic. In year 4, morphology is less problematic with only a problem with a reflexive verb. Syntactically speaking, (52) is problematic but this type of sentences is still a bone of contention among native speakers as double compound forms are not universally accepted (See sections devoted to the cloze tests). At a semantic level, a PQP is used for a CP in (57) and there are problems of ordering situations in the past in (60) and (61). It is also worth noting that the PQP seems to be used as a replacement form for the IMP by S108 and for the PC by S203.

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[282] On her background questionnaire, F3 indicated that French was her only mother tongue, although her father is a speaker of Polish, a language she says she has forgotten from earlier years. However, one may wonder if her idiosyncratic use of tenses is not influenced by Polish, a fact supported by Urszula Paprocka (University of Lublin, Poland) : «Le PQP n'existe pas en polonais et il est très difficile pour des polonophones : le polonais dispose actuellement d'un seul temps passé donc pour un polonophone moyen "il n'y a pas besoin" de décomposer le passé en passé et passé du passé, d'où, même chez des très avancés, l'emploi du PQP très limité et souvent impropre » (email communication, 03/07/02).

There also seems to be an increase in the complexity of temporal organisation from year 1 to year 4. The PQP appears in 6 of the 30 required occurrences of the form in year 1, in 7 out of 20 in year 2 and in 9 out of 38 in year 4. If the development in year 4 seems minimal, the fact that less common tenses are used in the essays written by the two bilingual students (historic present for S402 and simple past for 415) needs to be taken into account.

Finally, the use of the PQP is at all three levels almost restricted to telic verbs: the 2 atelic verbs (S108 and S403) and the stative verb (S114) are found in IL that differ from native usage. On the other end, the native data contains one occurrence of stative (F6).

Let us now proceed to the study of the PQP in the oral narratives where we may expect an even more restricted use of the form given the higher proportion of narrative PRES found in those narratives that reduces the need to express double anteriority.

5.2. Oral film narratives

5.2.1. Year 1

a. Description

This corpus contains only three occurrences (0.35% of all conjugated verbs) of the PQP that are copied below:

(93) Mais: # et puis euh la police a arresté cet homme /// et: quand ils **avaient** // euh *tra... # **voyagé** euh dans la voiture les euh est échappé. (S108)

(94) Oui ils ont fait le patinage au quatrième étage euh ils ont / passé un bon temps euh / le euh quand tout le temps le euh l'homme de sécurité il n'**avait** pas euh **gardé** l'autre euh la reste de la grande surface. (S102)

(95) Euh // après ça la fille a # avait - la fille **avait trouvé** les lits dans le magasin donc le garde// a / prené la fille au lit et la fille a dort euh jusqu'au matin (COUGH). (S117)

The PQP is used with dynamic verbs: one telic (*trouver*) and two atelic (*garder, voyager*).

b. Uses

Given that the oral data eliminates problems of grammatical spelling, the 3 occurrences are morphologically target-like but they fail to express appropriate functions of the PQP:

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
-	0	-	0	3	100	-	0

(i) Actual uses

As far as morphology is concerned, all three forms are constructed along L2 lines but their syntax and semantics are more problematic. The first two examples share the same syntactic general pattern: the main clause is in the PC and the PQP occurs in a subordinate introduced by *quand*. However, they differ at the semantic level. In the first excerpt, the meaning is that they escaped while they were travelling in which case an imperfective presentation – provided by the IMP – would be expected and *quand* should probably be replaced by *pendant que*. In the second example, what is meant is that they had a good time and during all that time they did not look after the store. In this case the use of tenses is acceptable although syntactically the sentence is not satisfactory. The third example on the other hand is acceptable, the PQP shows the past result of a telic situation that can be the cause of the following actions, even if a PC would probably have been a more obvious choice in such a

narrative sequence. So from the brief analysis of the 3 examples, it appears clearly that the meaning of the PQP has still not been grasped, even if its form does not seem problematic. However, we need to take into account the fact that the PQP is little used here and we now proceed to the study of forms that are used instead of the PQP in this corpus.

(ii) Required uses

The PC is used in many contexts where TL usage would require the PQP. The most widespread context in this corpus is reported speech:

(96) Et: quelqu'un dans la rue ***a dit*** à la boulangère ***que:*** cette femme **a volé** un gâteau (LAUGH) (S101) [**id.** (S106), S120)]
(97) Un homme qui était dans le rue aussi euh / ***a dit qu'***il a - qu'il **a pris** le pain au boulanger et après le fille euh *se départ. (S111)
(98) Et: j'ai vu une femme vieille qui: qui l'a vU en volant la baguette et elle ***a expliqué*** au boulangeR / ***que*** - que la fille **a volé** une baguette. (S107)

Another context that requires the use of the PQP is after an emphasis indicated by a verb in the past such as *il y avait X qui, c'était X qui:*

(99) Il y était - ***il y était*** une fille ***qui*** **a volé** du pain /// Une femme a vu que la fille a volé du pain et /// le vendeur du pain/ a aussi/ vu la fille(S117)
(100) ***Il y a eu*** une fille ***qui*** **a volE** une pièce du pain et le vendeur / a vu la fille // et un policier a vu la fille aussi quand elle a *volu cette pièce de pain du pain. (S121)
(101) A cause de tout ce qu'il a dit, le policier a voulu arrêter Charlie Chaplin mais ***il y a eu*** une femme ***qui*** **a vu** comme cette fille a volé cette pièce de pain et à cause de ça tous les deux ont été arrêtés. (S121)

Those contexts are sometimes both provided as in the following examples:

(102) Puis le - le gendarme est arrivé avec le boulanger+ et l'homme ***a dit*** que ***c'était*** lui et pas la femme ***qui*** **a volé** euh des gâteaux. (S104) [**id.** (S106), (S107), (S119)]
(103) Charlie a été / arrêté par la gendarmerie mais: la femme qui a vu le délit / ***a st dit*** à la gendarmerie ***c'était*** la femme ***qui*** **a pris** la baguette.(S109)
(104) il y a Charlie Chaplin et il ***a dit*** qu'il ***était*** lui ***qui*** **a pris** et *volu euh # **volé** cette pièce de pain. (S121)

The PC is also used in contexts where the logical ordering of situation would have required a PQP:

(105) une femme ***a découvert*** le homme # l'homme. L'homme # Il était # il **a dormi** dans le magasin (S103)
(106) On ***a trouvé*** que cette femme **a volé** une pain+ parce que le boulanger a cou... - couru après la femme. (S120)

A time adverbial makes for the absence of a PQP in this last example:

(107) ... il y a eu une femme qui **a vu** ***comme cette fille a volé cette pièce de pain*** (S121)

c. Conclusion on the use of the PQP in the year 1 oral narratives

So from all this section, we can confidently conclude that the PQP is only an emergent form at this level of IL. Its form does not seem to be problematic but its functions are still carried by the PC, which seems to show that aspectual distinction comes before the grasp of double anteriority. The PQP is clearly a difficult form and some subjects have recourse to avoidance technique and they report the story in direct speech (S113, S117, S120).

5.2.2. Year 2

a. Description

The number of PQP in the year 2 oral narratives is far higher than in year 1 (a similar tendency was found in the written corpus), where there were only 3. The 15 occurrences of PQP also represent a much higher percentage of the total of verb tokens (2.19 % of all conjugated verbs).

arrester	1	confirmer	1	tomber	1
arriver	1	dire	1	voir	2
blesser	1	donner	1	voler	4
casser	1	être	1		

They are listed below:

(108) Les euh les subtitres euh **avaient dit** que euh il y avait une accident euh dans le magasin et: euh un homme **avait cassé** les jambes. (S201)

(109) Le gardien+ - le gardien de nuit euh a vu trois voleurs # on av # mais: il n'**avait** pas **arresté** les voleurs (SNIFF) (S207)

(110) Le propriétaire euh a téléphoné la police – police pour euh arrêter le – le fille mais euh quand la police **était / arrivE** la fille euh a dit que euh - qu'elle n'était pas coupable de euh voler du pain de l'épicerie. (S212)

(111) Euh donc la police a arrêté une # un + autre homme qui n'**avait** pas / **volé** quelque chose. (S212)

(112) Euh la police parlait avec la propriétaire de: l'épicerie et il **avait confirmé** qu'il était # qu'elle était la femme. (S212)

(113) Euh ils **avaient** euh **blessé** un+ officier # un+ des polices et il avait # **était tombé** dans l'autobus. (S212)

(114) Et euh il **avait** / euh **donné** la femme beaucoup de nurri... # beaucoup de nourriture. (S212)

(115) il descend encore les escaliers euh / st et: il y a # il **avait** euh **vu** trois hommes euh qui avaient des *pistoles.(S212)

(116) La jeune femme qui a volé le pain ou # qui **avait volé** le pain euh // a couru / et puis le conducteur / euh // avec # a couru après. (S216)

(117) Le conducteur euh / a / saisi la jeune qui a vol...# qui **avait volé** le p... - pain par le bras et puis / juste au bon moment un policier est arrivé. (S216)

(118) Le policier / après + avoir / été informé euh de l'événement par / la jeune femme qui l'**avait vU** et: le conducteur du camion a arrêté la jeune femme. (S216)

(119) Mais / la jeune femme qui / a vu l'inci... euh # l'événement euh n'était pas contente et / elle / a couru après Charlie Chaplin et le policier pour lui (COUGH) pour le / – pour le convaincre que c'était bien la jeune femme qui avait volé # qui a volé # qui a # qui a**vait volé** le pain et pas / Charlie Chaplin (S216)

(120) Et puis ils ont euh fait le patin+ à roulettes euh à propos euh le rayon et c'était très dangereux parce que l'homme euh euh // ét... # **avait été** euh très stupide euh et il euh *actait euh comme un très # un+ vrai idiot+. (S217)

The more widespread use of PQP must be put in perspective as the forms are produced mainly by two subjects: S212 (46.67% of all PQP) and S216 (26.67%). All verbs but one (*être*) are telic so it seems that there is a compatibility between that *Aktionsart* and PQP.

b. Uses

A classification of the tokens according to their form and function gives the following results:

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
5	33.33	-	0	10	66.67	-	0

(i) Actual uses

All occurrences of the PQP are morphologically correct and formed according to the target language standards. Although they are all correctly formed, the PQP do not all seem justified within the sentence. The PQP is used where an IMP would be needed with a stative verb:

(121) Et puis ils ont euh fait le patin+ à roulettes euh à propos euh le rayon et c'était très dangereux parce que l'homme euh euh // ét... # **avait été** euh très stupide euh et il euh *actait euh comme un très # un+ vrai idiot+. (S217)

The PQP is used instead of a PC with telic verb:

(122) Le gardien+ - le gardien de nuit euh a vu trois voleurs # on av # mais: il n'**avait** pas **arresté** les voleurs (SNIFF) (S207)

(123) Le propriétaire euh a téléphoné la police – police pour euh arrêter le – le fille mais euh quand la police **était / arrivE** la fille euh a dit que euh - qu'elle n'était pas coupable de euh voler du pain de l'épicerie. (S212)

(124) Euh la police parlait avec la propriétaire de: l'épicerie et il **avait confirmé** qu'il était # qu'elle était la femme. (S212)

Sometimes the larger context disqualifies the use of the PQP. In the first example below, an IMP would be needed to offer the background for the following sequence of situations. In the second example, it should be a simple coordination of PC:

(125) Euh: le première histoire que j'ai vU est euh une film euh de Laurel et Hardy. Les euh les subtitres euh **avaient dit** que euh il y avait une accident euh dans le magasin et: euh un homme avait cassé les jambes. (S201)

(126) Et euh donc: quand: – quand le magasin n'était pas ouvert euh sa # / un des amis qui était une femme a entré le magasin. Et euh il **avait** / euh **donné** la femme beaucoup de nurri... # beaucoup de nourriture. (S212)

Few uses of the PQP are such as would be used by native speakers to refer to a situation anterior to a past moment of reference and they are isolated occurrences, except in the case of S216 who seems to have reached native standards, although it does not seem to have yet become automatic, as shown by the many hesitations: *« qui a volé le pain ou # qui **avait volé** le pain', 'qui a vol...# qui **avait volé** le p... - pain', 'qui avait volé # qui a volé # qui a # qui **avait volé** le pain ».*

(ii) Required uses

The PC is still widely used to assume the functions of the PQP as is shown by all the occurrences listed here:

(127) La jeune fille qui **a: volé** le pain a couri avec la pain mais: la conducteur du camion a informé le policier. st / La jeune – la jeune femme qui a vu – qui **a volé** / le pain est tombE à Charlie Chaplin st mais / le - le policier a / arrêté la femme. Charlie Chaplin a intervenu et Charlie Chaplin a dit qu'il **a volé** le pain pas la femme. Et le policier / euh l'a cru # et le policier a cru que / Charlie Chaplin **a volé** le pain pas la femme euh donc les policiers ont arrêté Charlie Chaplin. Mais: / la femme qui a / # mais pardon la - la personne qui **a vu** l'incident euh a informé le policier que ce n'était pas Charlie Chaplin qui **a volé** le pain mais que c'était / la femme. (S215) [**a volé** (S204), S205), (S206), (S208), (S209), (S211), (S212), **a vu** (S211)]

(128) Je pense qu'il **a cassé** le- le jambe et / Charlie Chaplin – Charlie Chaplin a: pris son place comme garde de la: grand magasin. (S204) [**id.** (S209), (S212)]

Implicit reference, such as to the natural sequence of actions, replaces a morphological expression of double anteriority:

(129) une cliente ***a trouvé*** l'homme de sécurité qui **a dort** dans le grande surface. (S205) [**id.** (S209)]

The succession can be expressed by causal constructions as in (130) or by explicit time adverbials as found in (131) and (132):

(130) Charlie Chaplin et la jeune femme étaient tous les deux dans un camion euh de police ***parce que*** Charlie Chaplin **s'est fait** arrêter euh: pour quelque chose d'autre (S216)
(131) Il y avait une femme qui **a volé** le pain euh d'un camion ***mais puis*** euh un homme a vu euh la situation (S211)
(132) l'un des hommes euh a dit à Chaplin+ - Chaplin qu'il **a travaillé** avec lui dans: - ***dans le passé*** (S213)

c. Conclusion on the use of the PQP in the year 2 oral narratives

An almost complementary distribution seems to emerge with a part of the group using exclusively the PQP (S201, S207, S217) or almost (S216) whilst the rest still uses the PC to express double anteriority. S212 presents an individual profile with what seems a random use of forms to express double anteriority: PQP, PC and PRES as below:

(133) Mais un des # un+ des – un+ des hommes ***a réalisé*** qu'il **travaille** avec Chaplin. (S212)

5.2.3. Year 4

a. Description

This corpus contains only 7 PQP (0.56% of all forms) that are listed below:

(134) La fille # la dame qui a vu tout ce qui s'est passé raconte au boulanger que « non non non ce n'était pas Charlie Chaplin qui **avait volé** le pain mais la jeune fille » (S402)
(135) Cependant la jeune fille qui **avait volé** le pain elle, les policiers la rattrapent et la mettent dans la même camionnette que Charlie Chaplin (S402)
(136) Néanmoins euh l'homme avec euh lequel elle **était entrE en collision** a: avoué que non, ce n'était pas le deuxième femme qui **avait volé** la pain mais en fait c'était: lui-même. (S417)
(137) Néanmoins euh l'homme avec euh lequel elle **était entrE en collision** a: avoué que non, ce n'était pas le deuxième femme qui **avait volé** la pain mais en fait c'était: lui-même. (S423)

(138) Quand les autres travailleurs **étaient partis** du magasin il a trouvé sa femme qui s'est cachE. (S403)

The range of verbs used is very limited with 4 instances of *voler* and 2 of *entrer en collision.* The last one had already been produced by the same student in her written narrative so it will not be discussed any more.

b. Uses

Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
4	80	-	0	1	20	-	0

(i) Actual uses

At a morphological level, the instances of the PQP in this corpus are native like; the past participle are phonetically correct and the choice of auxiliary appropriate.

(ii) Required uses

As in other corpora, the PC is used as a default form for the PQP. The token *a volé* is used in almost all the narratives instead of *avait volé.* S401, S406, S408 and S415 do not use it for very good reasons: S401 and S406 did not have enough time to record the story about the stolen bread, S415 narrates his story in the PRES and S408 has recourse to an avoidance strategy[283] and uses direct speech:

(139) Il ***a dit*** « Ah j'***ai volé*** / le pain » (S408)

A PRES is used a default form by S413:

(140) un lui a reconnu qui: # qu'il **travaille** avec lui dans un moulin. (S413)

Implicit reference to the ordering of actions makes for the absence of PQP as in:

(141) les clients ont trouvé le gardien de nuit qui **s'est couché** der...- derrière le comptoir. (S406)

Occasional markers of cause or time adverbials indicates double anteriority:

[283] Avoidance is a coping technique frequently used in oral work by this subject who spent her year abroad in Germany ; she is very self-conscious when speaking French in class and always attempts to switch back to English.

(142) un des voleurs ont reconnu M. Chaplin parce qu'ils **ont travaillé** ensemble dans un: - un usine (S422)

(143) il a commencé à parler avec ses copains qui: qu'il n'a pas vus ***pendant longtemps*** (S414)

(144) la femme qui a vu - qui **a vu** la jeune fille ***en train de voler la baguette*** elle est arrivée (S414)

So the same IL tactics are found at other levels.

c. Conclusion on the use of the PQP in year 4 oral narratives

At this level of IL, the PC either expresses double anteriority in competition with the PQP or is still the only form used to convey this meaning. Even the 4 subjects who used at least one instance of the PQP do not use it systematically (contrary to the claims by variationists, see Bailey & Preston 1996), as the following examples prove:

(145) Euh une fois que la dame qui a vu ce qui **s'est passé** euh a raconté l'histoire non seulement au boulanger mais aussi au policier euh qui passait. Euh Charlie Chaplin et la fille se retrouvent dans une situation un peu *précoce (S402)

(146) Quand les autres travailleurs étaient partis du magasin il a trouvé sa femme qui **s'est cachE.** (S403)

(147) le crime a été résolu mais c'était pas le cas parce que euh troisième femme a insisté que: c'était la deuxième femme qui **a volé** le pain / que ce n'était pas l'homme pas du tout, c'était la deuxième femme. (S417)

(148) Mais en fait c'était la jeune fille qui l'**a volE.** (S423)

So PQP is clearly a form in the process of being acquired even among the most advanced subjects.

5.2.4. Control group

a. Description

The control group corpus contains 30 PQP (5.05% of all verb tokens) but they are not equally shared out among the six subjects as F3 does not produce any PQP and F1 and F4 only use one each. The 30 forms are listed below:

boire	1	partir	3	remarquer	2
déposer	1	payer	2	S'endormir	1
dire	1	pouvoir	1	sauter	1
embarquer	1	rapporter	1	Se réveiller	1
être	1	rattraper	1	voir	3
faire	1	reconnaître		voler	7

The range of verbs used in the PQP is larger than in other corpora: the tokens used with the highest frequency (*voler, voir* and *partir*) were among those used in the ILs.

b. Uses

The PQP is almost absent in F3 and F4's narratives because they both tell their stories in the present tense. Otherwise the PQP is used to express situations that are anterior to the past moment of reference at which the stories happen; this is clearly indicated by *la veille* in the example below:

(149) Les trois hommes qu'il **avait vus** la veille n'étaient plus là non plus et donc là Charlot a été accusé. (F5)

The other use of the PQP is in reported speech, which explains the lack of PQP in F1's narratives as he uses direct speech and thus the PC to express anteriority, except in this example where features of direct and reported speeches are mixed:

(150) une femme est arrivée, une passante et a déclaré; « C'est bien elle qui **avait volé** le pain » (F1)

c. Conclusion on the use of the PQP in the control group oral narratives

From the data we have analyzed, the use of the PQP is much higher in the control group than among the learners (5.05% against 0.35%, 2.19% and 0.56% at the three learning levels). From year 1 to year 4, a clear progression is noticeable in the uses of the PQP. Whilst there is no morphological problems at any level, there is a sharp increase in the accuracy of functions covered by the form (0% in year 1; 33.33% in year 2; 80% in year 4).

The selection of the PQP in native usage depends on two choices: (a) whether the storytelling is in the past or not and (b) whether direct speech or indirect speech is used to express characters' conversations.

5.2.5. Conclusion on the PQP in oral narratives

The proportion of the PQP remains low at all levels, even in native usage. This tendency may be linked with the larger use of the PRES as a narrative tense in this corpus, which makes the use of the PC sufficient to express anteriority to a past moment of reference.

As a whole, the morphology of the PQP is fairly well mastered, even if problems remain with the choice of auxiliary. However problems arise with syntax and semantics and there is a general tendency not to mark double anteriority; subjects in year 4 that use the PQP still use the PC in the same contexts and the two forms seem to be in free variation. This is particularly the case with reported speech and there is an instance where even a native speaker gets (F1) confused.

5.3. General conclusion on the use of the PQP

The use of the PQP is restricted at all levels and the tendency is even stronger within the oral corpus, which might be explained on the one hand by the greater use of narrative PRES and on the other hand by the greater processing constraint on the subjects when producing French narratives 'on-line' (S216's self corrections are revealing in that respect). However, the PQP is less frequently but more accurately used in oral narratives, which may indicate that learners only attempt that form when they master it.

We mentioned at the beginning of this section Bardovi-Harlig (1994)'s hypothesis that the acquisitional sequence of lexical means (time adverbials) before morphological means (tenses) may be repeated for the PQP once the other past tenses were already mastered. Although there are instances of this phenomenon in our corpora, it is restricted and the main IL feature that was identified was the substitution of the PC for the PQP. This replacement seems to support the PAH as the aspectual presentation (perfectivity) seems to precede the temporal information (double anteriority).

6. Conclusion on the film narratives

We now conclude on the use of past tenses in our narratives. First, the narratives showed a distribution of tenses that favoured the PC as the main narrative tense both in the written and the oral tasks. They also showed that the role of the PS as narrative written tense was limited to two subjects: one of the bilingual students (S415) and a native speaker (F3) from a mixed French-Polish family. It was suggested that their traditional choice of the PS might result from a certain linguistic insecurity that made them adhere to the traditional storytelling conventions. The comparison of written and oral narratives did not therefore show a traditional PS-PC distribution but rather a PC-PRES distribution. The PRES (as a narrative device) tended to be more used for oral narratives where the communication aspect of the task was more prominent (and the brief more easily forgottten) as well as for the narratives of the more advanced learners. In contrast to earlier studies (Bergström 1997, Salaberry 2000), no exclusive use of the PRES was found in the native speakers' production although there was a greater tendency to go back to the PRES as fluency improved. The presence of the PQP at all levels leads us to suggest that our subjects are more advanced than other studies of so-called advanced learners where this tense does not appear (Bergström 1997) or remains very marginal (1% in Kihlstedt's interviews). The progression in the use of the PQP from year 1 to year 4 shows it as an emerging form and one in respect of which Bardovi-Harlig's (1994) suggestion that the acquisition of a new form requires first the use of lexical means is not widely supported.

It was shown that whilst the PC presented morphological problems at all levels, its functions were well mastered from the lowest level. The reverse was true for the IMP but the overwhelming proportion of *être* and *avoir* in our data somewhat biased the results so the claim that an adequate form must precede the mastery of functions is not supported at least for the PC.

As far as the PAH was concerned, the data generally support the categorical associations but raise some phenomena that the hypothesis fails to explain. First the PAH is supposed to explain typical tendencies of past verbal acquisition. However, the same tendencies to categorical combinations appear among native speakers as among learners, which may reduce significantly the explanatory power of the hypothesis. The tendency to associate the

imperfect with states and the preterite with telic verbs is indeed well attested (see for e.g. Klum 1961) in native French. Andersen & Shirai (in Kihlstedt 1998: 47) are aware of the problem and claim that learners strictly follow the association principle while native speakers do not. Nonetheless, that claim seems to be disproved by the overuse of IMP with telic verbs at level 1 and the general overuse of that tense in learners' production. It is thus suggested that the general intuition of the hypothesis corresponds to general tendencies that appear in our corpora. However, the advanced level of our subjects may necessitate an adaptation of the hypothesis, which was first based on the observation of untutored learners with lower proficiency. It is also thought that the lexical approach adopted by the PAH fails to account for the complex process of tense choice. Integration of local and discourse cues is necessary to offer a fuller picture of the acquisition of the past tenses at advanced levels.

As we conclude the first part of our empirical research, it is necessary to mention that film retelling tasks have been questioned as an appropriate way of collecting data on tense / aspect development. Bardovi-Harlig (1999: 368) refers to Noyau's doubts:

> Noyau (1990[284]) also discussed the influence of discourse type, arguing that, although a film retell task elicits a narrative that requires the expression of the sequence of events, it does not require reference to anterior or future events and thus will yield texts that lack the rich structure of personal narratives elicited through conversation, in which a speaker may speak of past events, future plans, anterior events, or current states.

Noyau certainly makes a good point here but we would contend that her criticisms do not apply to our corpora for several reasons. First, there is no doubt that a film retell task does not favour reference to future events but as the focus of our study is past reference, this is irrelevant. The second criticism about the focus on sequence of events is more serious as it is true that a retell task may elicit a majority of preterites. This potential weakness has been addressed in the choice of clips as « both films show a series of discrete sequenced actions (foreground) as well as simultaneous actions that constitute the background of the story. » (Salaberry 2000: 117). The initial brief – to give the police a testimony about what had happened – encouraged not

[284] Noyau, C. (1990) 'The development of means for temporality in the unguided acquisition of L2 : Cross-linguistic perspectives', in Dechert, H.W. (ed) *Current trends in European second language acquisition research.* Clevedon, Multilingual Matters. Pp. 211-259.

only the relating of the main events but also the provision of detailed descriptions of the characters, as proved by the quotes below:

> Il **etait** court et il **portait** une moustache et elle **etait** tres elegante avec une longe robe.(S101)
> Elle **était** euh pas bien **habillée** elle **avait l'air** tellement fatiguée et euh elle **était** pieds nus # aux pieds nus (S423)
> J'***ai vu*** une jeune fille d'un air pauvre (elle ne **portait** pas des chaussures et elle **avait** un visage salé), elle **regardait** la vitrine d'un magasin. (S414)

Moreover, the excerpts shown provide opportunities to express anteriority to a past event. The clip *An accident occurs at the store* is triggered by the accident of the night watchman that precedes and the ellipsis of the night that Chaplin spent with the robbers is another invitation to use pluperfect. In *Alone and hungry*, characters reported an event that had happened at the beginning of the clip so there was there a clear instance of double anteriority, the second meeting of Chaplin and the young woman also offered opportunities to use the PQP.

Despite the steps that have been taken to avoid the narrative bias, it is worth studying tense-aspect development in other contexts. Whilst emphasis had been placed on communication in this task, the cloze test required the recourse to consciously learned rules for the selection of past tenses and we now study the results obtained by that further means of data collection.

Chapter 3:

Analysis of the cloze tests

0. Introduction

After having studied the various ways of expressing past in compositions, we now focus on data obtained through a cloze test. That form of data collection presents various advantages that are well summarized in Bardovi-Harlig (1992a: 258):

> [...] the cloze passage facilitates comparison across learners: all learners respond to identical contexts. The present context of the cloze passage creates the potential for a variety of forms. It also eliminates avoidance to a great extent, since the learner must supply a form for each specified context. Perhaps the most important advantage of using a cloze passage is the availability of comparable data for native speakers.

Our cloze test is made of three parts and contains 60 slots distributed between four[285] short texts that were presented in details in the research methodology. The texts were chosen so that they would highlight specificities of the French past tenses such as the possible distinction between PS and PC [eg. (4) in which the PC has a present perfect value and (5) where a PS is needed to express a simple past], the semantic connotations of the IMP [eg. (14) to (16), where the IMP provokes an iterative interpretation], the emergence of double compound forms in standard French after a temporal indication such as *quand* (Engel 1996) as illustrated in (53). The third part of the cloze test is based on a description of cartoons, which should generate imperfective past forms unlike the retell tasks (Bardovi-Harlig 1999). As such, our cloze passage provides thus « a potential for a variety of forms ». The selected passages also illustrate practical problems found in authentic learners' production from the pilot study [Slots (20) to (40)]. The use of actual students production to design the tests was meant to minimize comprehension problems due to vocabulary; for the literary texts, some vocabulary was provided (see appendix 2).

The brief asked subjects to conjugate all tokens in the past and, if there were several possible answers, to provide them all. This would therefore further « eliminate avoidance ».

Subjects were submitted to a further acceptability judgement test bearing on the two literary texts of part 1. The excerpts as written by the authors were presented after completion of the cloze test and subjects were asked to evaluate any slot differing from their own choices

[285285] Texts 1 and 2 belong to the same category of 'literary' texts.

as acceptable, marked or unacceptable and to justify their judgement. References to this task are included in the present analysis to support some of our claims.

In this section, we describe and analyze the forms provided by the subjects level by level. We first present here the « comparable data » provided by the native speakers as it will serve as a landmark in our evaluation of the learners' choices and we then tackle the answers from year 1 to year 4. A summary of our findings compared with results from other acquisition studies concludes this analysis of the cloze tests.

1. Control group

A quantitative description of the results is followed by a discussion of trends and tendencies and by an intermediary conclusion on the characteristics of this set of data.

1.1. Description

The following table presents a quantitative overview of the tenses used for each token. The column untitled 'other forms' gathers forms that differ from the traditional past tenses. As subjects were asked to provide all the possible answers, the table may contain more than 6 choices. Forms marked with a * are provided together with the most common form so for example in (2), F1 accepts both PS and PC.

	PC	IMP	PQP	PS	Other forms
(1) s'évader	5		1 (F6)		
(2) se retrouver	5			2 (F1*,F3)	
(3) être		6	2 (F2*, F6*)		
(4) enseigner	6				
(5) lever				6	
(6) être		6			
(7) monter[286]		1	2	3	
(8) être		6			
(9) porter		6			
(10) être entouré		6			
(11) avoir		6			
(12) se plaindre[287]	2	2		3	

[286] F4 has chosen the IMP, F2 and F6 the PQP and F1, F3 and F5 the PS.
[287] PC is provided by F2, PC/PS by F5, IMP by F3 and F6 and PS by F2 and F4.

(13) infliger		5	2 (F2,F5*)		
(14) apercevoir				6	
(15) se précipiter				6	
(16) s'y asseoir				6	
(17) apercevoir	3			3 (F3,F4,F6)	
(18) se vêtir		4 était vêtu / était vêti (F3)		1 (F4)	
(19) se trouver		6			
(20) faire	2 (F2, F6)	1 (F3)		3	
(21) falloir		1			Aurait fallu 3 / faudrait / aurai fallu
(22) être	6				
(23) y avoir	1[288]	4		3 (F1, F5*,F6)	
(24) être	2 (F2, F4*)	2 (F3,F6)		3	
(25) être créé	5			2 (F1*, F5)	
(26) avoir	2 (F2*, F4)	3		2 (F1, F6)	
(27) être		5		1 (F6)	
(28) être critiqué	5	2 (F2*, F5*)		3 (F1, F4*, F6*)	
(29) changer	6			1 (F4*)	
(30) doubler	5		1 (F2*)	2 (F1*, F4)	
(31) provoquer	5			3 (F1, F4*, F6*)	
(32) réagir	3 (F2, F4*, F6*)			5	
(33) y avoir	3 (F2, F3, F6*)			4	
(34) être choqué	3 (F2, F4*, F6*)			4	
(35) être forcé	2 (F4*, F6*)	1 (F2)		5	
(36) devoir		6			
(37) posséder		6			
(38) atteindre	1 (F2)	1 (F3)	1 (F5)	3	
(39) arriver	4			2 (F3, F6)	
(40) faire	6			2	Changèrent (F4*)
(41) vivre		6			
(42) chasser		6			
(43) garder		6			
(44) élever		6			
(45) préférer		5		1 (F4)	
(46) tuer		4	2 (F3, F5*)	1 (F4)	
(47) admirer		6			
(48) avoir		1 (F3)		5	
(49) demander				6	
(50) accepter				6	
(51) faire				6	
(52) ressembler		5		1 (F4)	
(53) finir			1 (F3)		Eût fini 3/ eut finit 2

[288] F3 proposes both PC and IMP.

(54) être		5		1 (F4)	
(55) s'approcher				6	
(56) saisir				6	
(57) sortir				6	
(58) penser		2 (F2, F3)		4	
(59) être		6			
(60) être		6			

In the literary excerpts[289], 12 out of 21 forms (57.14%) are accepted by all subjects, 4 out of 21 (19.05%) by 5 of the 6 members of the control group and 1 form out of 21 (4.76%) is chosen by 4 of the 6 tested people. There are 3 different choices for (7), (12), (20) and (21). The created text[290] shows the most variable choices with only 5 of the 19 forms accepted by all (26.32%), 7 out of 19 forms (36.84%) appear in 5 tests and 4 out of the 19 slots (21.05) are common to 4 testees. In that second part, 23 multiple answers are given out of 114 slots[291] under consideration. It amounts to 3 out of 126 (21 slots x 6 subjects) for the literary texts and to only 1 out of 120 (20 slots x 6 subjects) in the cartoon. A greater unanimity in choices appears in the cartoons description with 13/20 forms (65%) on which all control subjects agree; 5/20 (25%) on which 5 out of 6 agree and 2/20 (10%) on which 4 agree. How can these discrepancies be explained ? First, the use of tenses is more categoric in the third part, a grammar exercise supported by cartoons originally designed to clearly distinguish between foreground and background. It is no surprise either that the text made of problematic chunks found in the pilot study presents a greater variety of choices: first there is less narrative coherence, secondly some of the segments are ambiguous.

In the next table, we recapitulate the distribution of tenses found in the cloze test[292]; for each one of the three subdivisions (part 1: 2 literary texts, part: made-up text and part 3: narrative), the first column indicates the number of occurrences and the second the percentage it represents compared to the total of VPs used:

	PC		IMP		PQP		PS		Others	
Part 1	25	19.84	57	45.24	7	5.56	37	29.37	5	3.97
Part 2	58	50.88	29	25.44	2	17.54	46	40.35	0	0
Part 3	1	0.83	64	53.33	3	2.5	48	40	5	4.17
Total	84	22.28	150	39.79	12	3.18	131	34.75	10	2.65

[289] From (1) to (21).
[290] From (22) to (40).
[291] 19 slots in each exercise and 6 subjects taking the test : 19 x 6 = 114.
[292] Given that several choices were allowed, the percentages below do not make 100% when added.

The differences in the use of tenses in the three parts is striking but not surprising. Part 1 offers the wider variety of tense use with PC, IMP, PQP, PS, COND and CP[293]. The IMP accounts for a large part of the second literary text, which is not surprising given that that text from Queneau [from (6) to (21)] is entitled « *Imparfait* » ! As for part 2, it only contains the 4 most common morphological past forms; this could have been expected as the chunks put together exemplified areas of difficulty in the use of past tenses. Part 3 is characterized by the absence of the PC and an almost complementary distribution between the IMP and the PS; the other tenses are based on them as they are compound forms based on the IMP (PQP) and the PS (the 'others' are PA). The choice of the PS could be explained by the format of the text, introduced by *il était une fois* and therefore classified by native speakers as a « story ». The following excerpt from the novel *Djinn* by Robbe-Grillet clearly illustrates this connotation attached to the PS among native speakers of French:

> Estimant sans doute qu'elle avait assez dit de bêtises, Marie a déclaré, alors, que c'était mon tour de raconter quelque chose. [...] Je demande quel genre d'histoire elle désire. Elle veut – c'est catégorique – une « histoire d'amour et de science-fiction », ce dernier mot étant prononcé à la française, bien entendu. Je commence donc:
> « Voilà. Un robot rencontre une jeune dame... »
> Mon auditrice ne me laisse pas aller plus loin.
> « Tu ne sais pas raconter, dit-elle. Une vraie histoire, c'est forcément au passé.
> - Si tu veux. Un robot, donc, a rencontré une...
> - Mais non, pas ce passé-là. Une histoire, ça doit être au passé historique. Ou bien personne ne sait que c'est une histoire. »
> Sans doute a-t-elle raison. Je réfléchis quelques instants, peu habitué à employer ce temps grammatical et je recommence: [...] (p.50-51).

1.2. Analysis

To start with, an interesting feature of the cloze tests is that native speakers make mistakes. First, they do not read the brief carefully enough: F3 replaces *(faire) changer* in (40) by *changèrent*. F3 is the only one to conjugate the proper verb *se vêtir* in (18); the five other subjects offer a passive IMP of *vêtir*. It is worth noting that in the acceptability test, 5 out of the 6 control subjects reject the form *se vêtait* found in Queneau. F1 even comments: « *Je n'ai jamais vu 'vêtait'* ». F6 considers it marked but fails to explain her judgement.

[293] The COND and the CP are only used for slot (21) to convey a modal use (advice) of the IMP.

Secondly, native speakers misspell verbal forms. Most of the mistakes are found with the PS that is confused with other existing verbal forms: (1) the *subjonctif imparfait* by the use of circonflex accents[294] for two thirds of the subjects and (2) the past participle in incorrect verb endings[295]. Misspellings also occur with the past participle: *ont réagit* (F2), *eut finit* (F1 and F4) and *y a eût* (F3).

Thirdly, difficulty in forming past tenses emerges. The formation of the PS seems difficult and invented forms emerge; the creations come either from appending other group endings [*réagissèrent* (F1) where the ending of *–er* verbs in the PS is applied to an *–ir* verb or *demandit* (F6) where the reverse occurs] or from using the wrong ending together with a reconstruction of the verb root as in *saisissa* (F2) where the root of the present participle *saisissant* is coupled with the ending of an *–er* verb. In this last case, the difficulty may result from the homonymy of the PRES and the PS forms for *saisir*. Other formation problems are found with the past participle. It shows in endings borrowed from other verbal forms: ***était vêti*** (F3) and in incorrect past participle agreements: ***avait infligé*** (F2), ***sommes retrouvé, étaient monté*** (F6) with F3 and F5 (2 girls) using ***je me suis évadée*** which is logical at first sight but failing to notice later that the *je* refers to a man (*Il leva...*).

Let us now focus on the actual use of tenses in the cloze test. There was an opportunity to give multiple answers if appropriate. In the table below, the first column corresponds to the slot number [from (1) to (60)], the second column shows the alternative choices separated by a / in the order found on the papers[296] and the last column indicates which subject has offered the answers:

	Choice	Subject
(2)	PC / PS	F1
(12)	PS / PC	F5
(13)	IMP / PQP	F5
(23)	IMP / PC IMP / PS	F4 F5
(24)	PS/PC	F4
(25)	PC / PS	F1
(26)	PC / IMP	F2
(28)	PC / IMP PC / PS	F2, F5 F4, F6

[294] Eût (F1, F3, F5, F6), fût (F1, F6).
[295] (14) aperçu (F1,F2) (17) aperçu (F3, F6).
[296] So for instance in (34) and (35), although the choice is only between PS and PC, there are two different entries as F4 and F6 presented their choices in a different order.

	PC / PS	F4
(30)	PC / PS PC / PQP	F1 F2
(31)	PS / PC	F4, F6
(32)	PS / PC	F4, F6
(34)	PS / PC PC / PS	F4 F6
(35)	PS / PC PC / PS	F4 F6
(40)	PC / PS	F4, F5, F6
(46)	IMP / PQP	F5

From this table one can see that 19 out of the 26 pairs (73.08%) give the PS and the PC as equivalent. So it clearly appears that native speakers largely see those forms as interchangeable in this corpus. However, those tenses are never confused in slots (4) and (5) that Wilmet (1998) assumes to be examples of exclusive uses of respectively the PC and the PS.

The PQP is given twice (7.69%) as an alternative for the IMP and once for the PC. In slot (13), *avait infligés* shows the situation as complete when *infligeait* shows it as still relevant, as F2 comments: « *Lui infligeait: il continue à le dérangé [sic]* ».

(1) Il (12) _____ (se plaindre) auprès de son voisin des heurts que ce dernier lui ***(13)*** _____ ***(infliger).***

Slot (46) is more problematic as F5[297] puts slot (45) in the IMP, that provokes an iterative reading.

(2) L'un des jeunes hommes, lui, (45) _____ (préférer) dessiner sur les murs les exploits des chasseurs et les animaux qu'ils ***(46)*** _____ ***(tuer).***

For slot (30), F2 proposes both the PC and the PQP:

(3) Pendant les années soixante, la population des étudiants en France ***(30)*** _____ ***(doubler).***

In the first case, S is the moment of reference, in the second case, the moment of reference is provided by the temporal complement.

The IMP is proposed three times (11.54%) with the PC and is linked once (3.85%) with the PS.

(4) Dès la Révolution, il ***(23)*** _____ ***(y avoir)*** une conviction que tout le monde devrait avoir le même niveau d'éducation.

(5) Pendant le dix-neuvième siècle, on ***(26)*** _____ ***(avoir)*** les moyens de créer un tel système qui (27)_____ (être) gratuit et égal.

[297] And F3 who uses only PQP.

(6) Ce système républicain et démocratique *(28)* _____ ***(être beaucoup critiqué).***

In slot (23), *dès la révolution* indicates the initial limit of the situation, which goes against the unlimited presentation of the IMP. In slot (26), *pendant le 19ème siècle* seems to indicate an unlimited duration, hence the IMP would be expected whilst the VP *avoir les moyens* needs to be understood as dynamic [see *créer* in (25)] and would therefore be put in the PC. For slot (28), the choice of the IMP indicates that the temporal information provided by *pendant le 19ème siècle* still affects the following VP. So it seems that imperfective and perfective tenses are usually well distinguished by native speakers, except in the presence of an ambiguous temporal complements.

If we want to test the PAH, we need to consider the use of tense in comparison with the verb type. In order to avoid personal bias from the researcher, the members of the control group were asked to classify the first 40 verbs of the cloze test according to their category[298]. The following brief appeared at the top of the sheet:

> Les verbes peuvent être divisés en plusieurs catégories: statifs et dynamiques. Les verbes dynamiques sont subdivisés en verbes atéliques et téliques.
> 1. Un verbe est statif s'il n'implique aucun changement dans la durée (ex. *exister*)
> 2. S'il n'est pas statif, un verbe est:
> (a) télique, s'il doit atteindre sa limite finale pour avoir pris place (ex. *sortir* si vous arrêtez au milieu de l'action de *sortir,* vous n'êtes pas sorti(e)).
> (b) atélique, s'il ne doit pas atteindre finale pour avoir pris place (ex. *écrire* si vous arrêtez au milieu de l'action d'*écrire*, vous avez déjà écrit quelque chose).
> Sur cette base, classifiez les 40 verbes de l'exercice à trous.

The answers native speakers provided are summarized in the 'verb types' column of the following table. The verbs on which all native speakers agreed are highlighted in bold:

VPS	VERB TYPES			TENSE CHOICE			
	stative	atelic	telic	PC	IMP	PQP	PS
(1) s'évader			**6**	5		1	
(2) se retrouver	1		5	5			2
(3) être	**6**				**6**	**2**	
(4) enseigner	1	5		6			
(5) lever		2	4				6
(6) être	**6**				**6**		
(7) monter		3	3		1	2	3

[298] This classification of *Aktionsart* has been justified in the first part.

(8) être	5	1			6		
(9) porter	2	3	1		6		
(10) être entouré	**6**				**6**		
(11) avoir	**6**				**6**		
(12) se plaindre	1	4	1	2	2		3
(13) infliger	2	4			5	2	
(14) apercevoir	1	3	2				6
(15) se précipiter			**6**				6
(16) s'y asseoir	1		5				6
(17) apercevoir	1	3	2	3			3
(18) se vêtir	5	1			5		1
(19) se trouver	5		1		6		
(20) faire	1	3	2	2	1		3
(21) falloir	**6**				**1**		
(22) être	5	1		6			
(23) y avoir	**6**			**1**	**4**		**3**
(24) être	**6**			**2**	**2**		**3**
(25) être créé		3	3	5			2
(26) avoir	**6**			**2**	**3**		**2**
(27) être	**6**				**5**		**1**
(28) être critiqué	1	3	2	5	2		3
(29) changer		3	3	6			1
(30) doubler	1	1	3	5		1	2
(31) provoquer	2		4	5			3
(32) réagir	2	2	2	3			5
(33) y avoir	5		1	3			4
(34) être choqué	2	1	3	3			4
(35) être forcé	2		4	2	1		5
(36) devoir	5		1		6		
(37) posséder	3	1	2		6		
(38) atteindre	2		4	1	1	1	3
(39) arriver			**6**	**4**			**2**
(40) faire	1	2	3	6			2

General agreement only emerges for 11 out of the 40 verb tokens. Not surprisingly, these 11 VPs are classified either as stative [(3), (6), (10), (11), (21), (23), (26), (27)] or telic [(1), (15), (39)] that are the most clear-cut categories being at the ends of the spectrum. Stative VPs are almost exclusively[299] based on *être* and *avoir* that have been shown as frequently combined with the IMP in all groups; telic VPs emphasize the final limit of the situation for *s'évader, se précipiter* and *arriver*. If we now devote our attention to the tense choices for these 11 tokens, it appears that the IMP is used by all subjects in (6), (10) and (11)[300] and the PS for (15). For these VPs, there is a clear categorical use of stative + IMP or telic + PS and it appears that these combinations are the most obvious also for native speakers. For the remaining verbs, choices

[299] Except *falloir* in 21.

are a bit more scattered, one could argue that there is aspectual agreement of all subjects for (39) where either PC or PS is used; these tenses seem to be felt as equivalent as was shown above. For (1) and (27), all but one subject agree on the most likely tense: PC for (1) and IMP for (27). Things are more complicated for (23) and (26) where three different tenses are provided. The most frequent answer here is the IMP that would be the basic combination for *avoir* and *y avoir* but it seems that the direct objet that modifies the VP has not been taken into account. (21) is the most peculiar form as only F2 chooses an IMP and the rest go either for a COND or a CP. The IMP (in a « modal » use) is entitled to express an advice but it is obviously not the most straightforward form for that meaning among native speakers. This is supported by the answers to the acceptability judgement: only F2 and F6 find *fallait* acceptable; F1 and F5 judge the IMP marked and F1 equates « *faudrait = ce que dit vraiment l'homme / fallait = discours rapporté* ». F3 and F4 reject the IMP for that slot. F3 refers to an « *action antérieure, passé antérieur* » while F4 rightly understands the function: « *il s'agit d'un conseil* » but does not accept the IMP as a form able to convey it.

The somewhat diverse – even random – classification of verb tokens provided by the control group may well mean that *Aktionsart* is a linguistic concept foreign to the francophone layman; one of the subjects (F5) did actually ask the researcher if she had invented those concepts ! There may be an inability to translate linguistic intuition in linguistic description and therefore, some attention is now devoted to the VPs for which there was unanimous agreement over the tense, regardless of verb classification. We also include here the description supported by cartoons (items 41 to 60).

In addition to the tokens discussed above, the PC is the only choice for (4), (22), (29), (40):

(7) Qu'est-ce que la confession vous (4) **a enseigné** des hommes ?
(8) Il paraît que l'idée sur laquelle le système éducatif français est fondé est méritocratique mais les circonstances [...] l'(40) **ont fait** changer en pratique.
(9) L'enseignement supérieur (22) **a *toujours* été** un sujet épineux en France.
(10) Le système éducatif (29) **a** beaucoup **changé *à cause de cette quête de méritocratie***.

The choice of the PC comes first from a moment of reference based on the PRES; for (4), the question posed related to the present knowledge that confession has brought to the priest; for

[300] In addition, all subjects choose the IMP for (3) although F2 and F6 also choose the PQP.

(40) the present anchorage comes from the coordinated verb in the PRES. In (22), the PC on its own would only refer to a past situation but the addition of *toujours* indicates that it is still relevant at the moment of speech. For (29), a perfective aspect is required by *à cause de cette quête de la méritocratie* so both a PS and a PC would be possible in the sentence but the larger discourse context takes S as its moment of reference so PC is favoured.

The IMP is unanimously selected for (8), (9), (19), (36), (37), (41), (42), (43), (44), (47), (59) and (60):

(11) On (8) **était** très serré.
(12) Un jeune monsieur (9) **portait** sur la tête un chapeau [...]
(13) Il était une fois, au temps des hommes des cavernes, une tribu qui (41) **vivait** en paix. Les hommes (42) **chassaient** les animaux et les femmes; les femmes (43) **gardaient** le feu et (44) **élevaient** les enfants.
(14) ***En 1950***, environ 32.000 Français de 18 ans (37) **possédaient** le bac
(15) A cause de ces incidents, le gouvernement (être choqué) et il (être forcé) de se rendre compte que quelque chose (36) **devait** être fait.
(16) Une jeune fille, Mona, qui l' (47) **admirait**, (avoir) une idée.
(17) Les autres hommes des cavernes (penser) que cela (59) **était** très amusant parce qu'il (60) **était** inhabituel qu'une femme ait le contrôle sur un homme.

In (8) and (9), the use of IMP avoids showing the limits of the situation: people were squashed before the event which is recounted and presumably afterwards too, the young man was wearing his hat before the narrator discovers him and keeps it after his trip on the bus. The IMP is compulsory in (9), *un jeune homme a porté un chapeau* is not acceptable; in (8) however, one could have *on a été serré / on fut serré* if this situation is presented as resulting from the previous one, i.e. the fact that a crowd gets on the bus. The prototypical combination of *avoir* + IMP is nonetheless preferred. In the case of *porter*, the problem comes from the fact (already mentioned in the study of film narratives) that, with an imperfective tense, it will mean 'to wear' and with a perfective one 'to carry'. In (37) and (42) to (44), temporal complements locate the situations in the past and the use of IMP presents them as habits in the past. In the last three examples, the IMP is found in subordinate clause and the situation exceeds the limits set by the introductory verb; for example, the necessity for action in (9) precedes the realization by the government.

Finally, the PS is chosen by all for (5), (14), (16), (49), (50), (51), (55), (56) and (57).

(18) Il (5) **leva** ses bras de bûcheron dans la nuit pleine d'étoiles [...]
(19) Dès qu'il (14) **aperçut** une place libre, il (se précipiter) vers elle et (16) **s'y assit.**
(20) Elle (49) **demanda** à l'artiste de la dessiner sur le mur. Le jeune homme (50) **accepta** et (51) **fit** un portrait qui (ressembler) étrangement à la Joconde.
(21) Très en colère, elle (55) **s'approcha** de l'homme et lui (56) **saisit** les cheveux. Elle (57) **sortit** l'artiste de la caverne en le tirant par la chevelure.

The use of the PS in the last two examples may be attributed to genre conventions as the story is introduced by *il était une fois* a marker of story telling and of past. The first two examples come from literary texts and although this was not explicitly mentioned to the subjects, the theme and general organization of the excerpts point towards literature and therefore favour the recourse to the PS. In (5) however, it would be difficult to replace the PS by a PC that would here be interpreted as a resultative PRES. For (14) to (16), there is a clear understanding that the IMP brings a repetitive interpretation.

1.3. Conclusion

Even though the focus here is on form, native speakers still fail to achieve normative usage of spelling and agreement. There is a tendency to go back to basic forms and it seems to be a somewhat formulaic use of verb tokens and unusual forms are discarded: *se vêtir* is changed into a passive, *falloir* is put in the conditional.

As far as tense choice is concerned, although native speakers should have access to all types of combinations between tense and *Aktionsart*, the most prototypical combinations are favoured; for example, the majority of tokens with *avoir* and *être* in the IMP, even that was not always the most adequate choice:

(22) Dès la Révolution, **il y avait** une conviction que tout le monde devrait avoir le même niveau d'éducation. (F2, F3)
(23) A cause de ces incidents, le gouvernement a été choqué et il **était forcé** de se rendre compte que quelque chose devait être fait. (F2)

It is interesting to note that more stylistic uses of tenses do not seem familiar to native speakers: this is the case with (21) *falloir* that has already been discussed or with (17) *apercevoir* where « *Je l'apercevais plus tard* » is rejected by F1, F3, F4 and F5 and judged as marked by F2 and F6 but none mentions the possible use as « *imparfait de narration* »(See Part I, chapter 1).

The most prototypical combination may also provoke semantic changes: the IMP indicates a situation that exceeds the limits of the temporal reference whilst what was meant here is that the funds became available in the 19th century, which should be expressed by a PC or a PS.

(24) Pendant le dix-neuvième siècle, on **avait** les moyens de créer un tel système qui était gratuit et égal. (F3, F5)

A clear awareness of genre conventions emerges from this corpus: although the PS and the PC are often taken as equivalent, they are stylistically marked and a narrative or literary context triggers the use of the PS, despite the occasional slip, as below, where the present moment of reference provided by previous verbs requires a PC:

(25) Il paraît que l'idée sur laquelle le système éducatif français est fondé est méritocratique, mais les circonstances qui (39) **arrivèrent**, le /l' (40) ont fait changer en pratique.

Tendency to focus on local cotext prevents general temporal coherence being achieved. For instance *s'est plaint* is acceptable on its own in (12) but should be replaced by a PS in the light of general tense use in the excerpt (F2) or *avaient tués* is possible in (46) but not in combination with *préférait* (F3, F5), *tuèrent* is also acceptable but together with *préféra.*

On the basis of the data provided by the control group that will serve as an instrument for comparison, we now proceed to describe and analyze the learners' cloze tests starting with year 1. A preliminary methodological discussion is appropriate at this juncture.

The cloze tests contain a number of non-native forms due to phonetical similarity[301] (*a admirait* for *a admiré),* spelling likeness (*a finit* for *a fini*), morphological idiosyncrasies (*a atteindu* for *a atteint* or *est infligé* for *a infligés)* and we need to clarify our selection criteria. Although they probably are tentative past tokens that we discuss as IL features later on, we have excluded from our counts:

- forms made of the auxiliary followed by a morphologically non native PP ending in –ait that can be confused with the IMP (*a admirait, a était, a était critiqué*)[302];
- compound forms made of *être* + PP that can be confused with a passive PRES (*est infligé);*

[301] See Labeau (1998) for more examples of this.
[302] Salaberry (1998: 523) also eliminates forms that combine the use of an auxiliary signalling *passé composé* and the morphological ending of the *imparfait* in the main verb.

• native PP in –é (*levé, été critiqué*) as there is a possible confusion with both the IMP at a phonetical level and the PC at a morphological level.

Because we explicitly present those forms in the 'other forms' column, it would be easy to calculate percentages including those forms. By being exhaustive, we aim to make our results the most closely comparable as possible with those of other studies.

2. Year 1

2.1. Description

A detailed description of each subject's choice for each verb token is available in the appendices. For clarity, the table below summarizes the results:

	PC	IMP	PQP	PS	Other forms
(1) s'évader	16		1[303]		*Evaderais**[304] (S103), *s'évadé* (S108, S117), *m'évadé* (S114, S119)
(2) se retrouver	18	2[305]			*Nous retrouverions** (S103), *nous retrouvé* (S120), *se retrouvé* (S108),
(3) être	6[306]	13			*Est* (S114, S116, S119)
(4) enseigner	17	1			*Enseignerez** (S103), *enseigneriez* (S112), *enseigné* (S108, S119)
(5) lever	15	6[307]			*Levé* (S109)
(6) être	10	10[308]			*A était* (S114, S119)
(7) monter	14	4[309]			*Monteraient** (S103), *monteront* (S112), *monté* (S108, S119)
(8) être	1[310]	19			Ø (S108)
(9) porter	9[311]	13			
(10) être entouré	4[312]	17			
(11) avoir	3[313]	16			*A* (S108, S119)
(12) se plaindre	14	2[314]			*Se plaindrait* (S103), *se plaindu* (S117), *plaindré* (S108), Ø (S112, S114, S120)

[303] S121.
[304] As before, the * indicates that the form is provided together with the most common form, so here S103 offered both PC and COND as answers.
[305] S118, *S104.
[306] S105, S109, S110, S111, S121, *S117.
[307] S103, S104, S105, S111, S121, * S117.
[308] S101, * S105, S106, S109, S111, S112, S113, S115, S116, S118.
[309] S105, S107, S111, S114.
[310] S110.
[311] S101, *S103, S105, S108, S109, S110, S117, S118, S120.
[312] S102, S108, S110, S117.
[313] S110, S118, S120.
[314] *S104, S115.

(13) infliger	12	6[315]			*Infligerait* (S103), *est infligé* (S116), *infligé* (S108), Ø (S120)
(14) apercevoir	14	5[316]	1[317]		*Apercevu* (S108)
(15) se précipiter	15	2[318]			*Se précipiterait* (S103, S112), *se précipité* (S108, S117)
(16) s'y asseoir	8	2[319]			*S'y asseoi* (S101), *s'y asseoirait* (S112), *s'y est assoyeait* (S121), *s'est y* (S105), *sa assait* (S114), Ø (S105, S108, S111, S115, S117, S120)
(17) apercevoir	15	5			*Apercevu* (S108)
(18) se vêtir	11	1[320]	1[321]	1[322]	*Se vêtirait* (S103, S112), *se vêtu* (S114, S117), Ø (S104, S108, S111)
(19) se trouver	12	8[323]			*Se trouvé* (S108)
(20) faire	17	3[324]			*Fait* (S114, S117)
(21) falloir	8	7[325]			*Faut* (S101, S107, S117), *faudrait* (S103), *fallou* (S108), *fallit* (S114)
(22) être	4[326]	14			*Est* (S101, S105, S116)
(23) y avoir	7[327]	14			*Y avez* (S208)
(24) être	2[328]	16			*Sont* (S105, S116), Ø (S108)
(25) être créé	8[329]	13			*Eté créé* (S107)
(26) avoir	7[330]	14			*A* (S108, S117)
(27) être	1[331]	19			*Eté* (S117)
(28) être critiqué	5[332]	14			*A était critiqué* (S106), *été critiqué* (S117)
(29) changer	18	1[333]	1[334]		*Changeraiet* (S112)
(30) doubler	14	3[335]	2[336]		*Doublent* (S112), *doublerait* (S103)
(31) provoquer	15	5[337]			*Provoquerait* (S112)
(32) réagir	14	4[338]			*Réagit* (S117), *réagirait* (S103), Ø (S108)
(33) y avoir	3[339]	15	1[340]		*A* (S108, S117)
(34) être choqué	6[341]	15			

[315] S101, S105, S113, S114, *S117, S121.
[316] S111, S114, S115, S119, S121.
[317] S113.
[318] S111, S119.
[319] S102, S119.
[320] était vêtu (S120).
[321] S107.
[322] S113.
[323] S101, S103, S104, S111, S114, S117, S119, S121.
[324] S103, S112 (*fallait*), * S115.
[325] S104, S105, S106, S111, S112, S115, S121.
[326] S111, S113, S115, S117.
[327] *S105, S109, S111, S113, S115, S119, S121.
[328] S110, S118.
[329] S101, S102, S104, *S105, S108, S111, S117, S121.
[330] *S105, *S106, S109, S113, S115, S120, S121.
[331] S110.
[332] S102, S104, S108, S109, S111.
[333] S103.
[334] S114.
[335] S104, S110, S111.
[336] S114, S118.
[337] S104, S105, S107, S111, S121.
[338] S104, S111, S113, S121.
[339] S105, S115, S121.
[340] S114.
[341] S102, S104, S110, S112, S117, *a choqué* (S108).

(35) être forcé	6[342]	15			
(36) devoir	3[343]	6			*Doit* (S114, S119), *deviendront* (S112), *devrait* (S102, S103, S110, S121), *est doit* (S105), *dû* (S115), *devû* (S117), Ø (S108, S120)
(37) posséder	14	4[344]			*Posséderont* (S112), *possédé* (S108), Ø (S120)
(38) atteindre	12	1[345]			*Atteind* (S104), *atteint* (S107, S110), *atteindé* (108), *atteindus* (S117), Ø (S112, S115, S120)
(39) arriver	15	2[346]	1[347]		*Arriveraient* (S103, S112), *arrivé* (S108)
(40) faire	18	3[348]			*Fait* (S114)
(41) vivre	6[349]	10			*Vivrait* (S103), *vivré* (S108), Ø (S114, S115, S116, S117)
(42) chasser	5[350]	12			*Chasseraient* (S103, S114, S120), Ø (S116), *chassé* (S108)
(43) garder	5[351]	12			*Garderaient* (S103, S114), *gardé* (S108), Ø (S116)
(44) élever	4[352]	10			*S'élèvent* (S102), *éleveraient* (S103, S120), *élevérait* (S114), *est élevé* (S112), *élevé* (S108), Ø (S116)
(45) préférer	8[353]	10			*Préférerait* (S103), *préféré* (S108), Ø (S116)
(46) tuer	10	3[354]	4[355]		*Tuerait* (S114), *tué* (S108), *sont tué* (S119), Ø (S116)
(47) admirer	7	10			*A admirait* (S119), *admiré* (S108, S117), Ø (S116)
(48) avoir	5[356]	10	1[357]		*A* (S108, S117), Ø (S112, S114, S116)
(49) demander	13	5[358]	1[359]		*Demandé* (S108), Ø (S116)
(50) accepter	14	3[360]	1[361]		*Accepterait* (S114), *accepté* (S108), Ø (S116)
(51) faire	12	5[362]	1[363]		Ø (S108, S115, S116)
(52) ressembler	9	8[364]	1[365]		*Ressemblé* (S108), Ø (S115, S116)
(53) finir	13		4[366]		*Est fini* (S105), Ø (S108, S115, S116)
(54) être	3[367]	14	1[368]		Ø (S108, S115, S116)
(55) s'approcher	13	4[369]			*S'est approchait* (S118), *s'approché* (S108), Ø (S115, S116)
(56) saisir	12	5[370]			Ø (S108, S111, S115, S116)

[342] S102, S110, S115, S117, *a forcé* (S108, S112).
[343] S106, S116, S118.
[344] S104, S107, S111, S113.
[345] S107.
[346] S104, S121.
[347] S106.
[348] S103, *S105, S112.
[349] S102, S106, S112, S113, S119, *S120.
[350] S102, S106, S112, S115, * S117.
[351] S102, S106, S112, S115, S117.
[352] S106, S115, S117, S119.
[353] S102, S105, S106, S109, S112, S115, S117, S120.
[354] S104, S111, S121.
[355] S106, S107, S113, S118.
[356] S103, S109, S110, S115, S121.
[357] S118.
[358] S104, S111, S114, S119.
[359] S118.
[360] S104, S111, S119.
[361] S118.
[362] S104, S105, S111, S114, S121.
[363] S118.
[364] S101, S104, S105, S111, S113, S114, S117, S121.
[365] S118.
[366] S104, S107, S109, S118.
[367] S105, S110, S112.
[368] S118.
[369] S104, S111, S117, S121.

(57) sortir	14	3[371]			Ø (S108, S111, S115, S116)
(58) penser	10	7[372]			*Penserait* (S114), *pensé* (S108), Ø (S115, S116)
(59) être	3[373]	16			Ø (S115, S116)
(60) être	2[374]	17			Ø (S115, S116)

The tests are made up of 1260 slots (60 slots x 21 subjects), of which 1033 (81.98%) were filled. A simple quantitative count highlights certain features. First, the use of the PS is limited to a single (0.097% of all forms) morphological form *se vêtit* (S113) so we may conclude that it is not meant as a PS but maybe as a PRES if the model of more frequent verbs such as *finir* is followed. It seems indeed that the PS is not known at this level as shown by comments from the acceptability test. S104 writes about *nous nous précipitâmes*: « *c'est un temps que je ne connais pas* » while S121 thinks of *leva* that « *ce n'est pas un temps de la past* ». The PQP is restricted to 22 forms (1.94%), 9 of which are provided by S118[375]. « Other forms » constitute a much larger proportion of choices than in the control group, they are provided in 193 slots (15.32%). There is a variety of choices for all sections.

The next table recapitulates the distribution of tenses found in the cloze test[376]; two subjects did not manage to finish the test within the time allocated: S116 stopped at (40) and S115 at (50). In the first series of percentages we count the 30 tokens for which they had no time; in the second we do not in order to give percentages of actual tenses use.

	PC		IMP		PQP		PS		Others	
Part 1	229	51.69	142	32.05	3	0.68	1 ?	0.23	68	15.35
Part 2	172	42.57	178	44.06	5	1.24	-	0	49	12.13
Part 3	168	40	164	39.05	14	3.33	-	0	76	18.1
Part 3'	168	42.86	164	41.84	14	3.57	-		46	11.73
Total	569	44.84	484	38.14	22	1.73	1	0.08	193	15.21
Total'	569	45.92	484	39.06	22	1.78	1	0.08	163	13.16

From this table, several tendencies clearly appear. First, the PS does not belong to the learners' grammar at this stage and the PC seems to be the almost exclusive replacement form as shown

[370] S104, S107, S114, S117, S121.
[371] S104, S107, S121.
[372] S101, S103, S104, S107, S111, S119, S121.
[373] S108, S110, S112.
[374] S108, S112.
[375] 9 PQP (S118), 3 PQP (S107, S114), 2 PQP (S106, S113), 1 PQP (S104, S109, S121).

by the results for part 3. In that section, the PS represents 40% in the control group whilst the PC accounts for 40% (or 42.86%) in the year 1 data. Secondly, the PQP is morphologically emergent but from the very divergent distribution from the control group, we may suggest that its meaning is not yet mastered. Thirdly, the IMP presents a different distribution than in the control group: it is underused in parts 1 and 3 and overused in part 2. This overuse may be attributed to the fact that 9 out of the 19 slots in part 2 are inflections of either *être* or *avoir*, which supports the tendency for categorical associations of verbs and *Aktionsart*.

In contrast to the control group where subjects agree on tense use for half of the forms, no unanimous choice appears for any form in year 1. The following table takes the tokens on which all native speakers have agreed (100%) on a given tense and compares them with the answers provided by the year 1 learners. The last column indicates the proportion reperesented by the number of forms [13 in the case of (3)] compared to the 21 possible slots. The penultimate column compares that figure to the number of slots for which an answer was actually provided and discards the empty slots; this is meant to prevent the bias caused by the fact that some subjects did not have enough time to complete their test.

	Control group					**Year 1**		
	PC	**IMP**	**PQP**	**PS**	**Other forms**	Nb	Actual %	% / total
(3) être		6	2			13 IMP	61.9	61.9
(4) enseigner	6					17 PC	80.95	80.95
(5) lever				6		15 PC	71.43	71.43
(6) être		6				10 PC	47.62	47.62
(8) être		6				19 IMP	95	90.48
(9) porter		6				13 IMP	61.9	61.9
(10) être entouré		6				17 IMP	80.95	80.95
(11) avoir		6				16 IMP	76.19	76.19
(14) apercevoir				6		14 PC	66.67	66.67
(15) se précipiter				6		15 PC	71.43	71.43
(16) s'y asseoir				6		8 PC	66.67	38.1
(19) se trouver		6				12 PC	57.14	57.14
(22) être	6					14 IMP	66.67	66.67
(29) changer	6			1		18 PC	85.71	85.71
(36) devoir		6				6 IMP	31.58	28.57
(37) posséder		6				14 PC	70	66.67
(40) faire	6			2	Changèrent (F4*)	18 PC	85.71	85.71
(41) vivre		6				10 IMP	55.56	47.62
(42) chasser		6				12 IMP	57.14	57.14

[376] The total for each part slightly exceeds 100% as two answers were provided in 19 slots so we work on 1279 slots instead of 1260.

(43) garder		6				12 IMP	60	57.14
(44) élever		6				10 IMP	50	47.62
(47) admirer		6				10 IMP	50	47.62
(49) demander				6		13 PC	65	61.9
(50) accepter				6		14 PC	65	66.67
(51) faire				6		12 PC	66.67	57.14
(55) s'approcher				6		13 PC	68.42	61.9
(56) saisir				6		12 PC	66.67	57.14
(57) sortir				6		14 PC	82.35	66.67
(59) être		6				16 IMP	84.21	76.19
(60) être		6				17 IMP	89.47	80.95

A few features are obvious from a cursory examination. First, for all the slots in which the PS is unanimously chosen in the control group, the most frequent tense is the PC in the year 1 tests. This again supports the fact that, at this level of IL, the PC covers both the native uses of the PS and the PC.

Although the majority of the learner group selects a tense in agreement with the native speakers' choice, this does not happen in four instances:

(28) Il (**6**) _____ (**être**) midi. (10PC, 10 IMP, 2 *a était*)
(29) un camarade qui (**19**) _____ (**se trouver**) là lui (20) _____ (faire) cette remarque. (13 PC – 7 IMP – *se trouvé)*
(30) L'enseignement supérieur (**22**) _____ (**être toujours**) un sujet épineux en France. (4 PC – 14 IMP – 3 PRES)
(31) En 1950, environ 32.000 Français de 18 ans (**37**) _____ (**posséder**) le bac. (14 PC – 4 IMP – 1 FS – *possédé* – Ø)

The similarity between *trouver*, a clearly telic verb, and *se trouver* may explain the overuse of the PC for slot (19). It is clear from the majority of IMP provided for slot (22) that the prototypical association of IMP + *être* takes over cotextual information. However, the choice of the PC is less clear in the first and the last examples.

For the 15 remaining slots, there are two instances where the PC is used [slots (4) and (40)] and the rest is in the IMP. 6 of these slots are occurrences of *être* and 1 of *avoir,* which may support a categoric use of those forms, especially given the fact that the frequency of the IMP is the highest for these seven forms (only *porter* equals the lowest frequency with *être*). However, the frequency with which the IMP is used varies between 61.9% (slot 3) and 90.48% (slot 8). It is thus worth examining what may encourage the use of the IMP:

(32) où il (**3**) _____ (**être**) curé... (6 PC - 13 IMP – 3 PRES)
(33) On (**8**) _____ (**être**) serré. (1 PC – 19 IMP – Ø)

(34) un chapeau qui (**10**) _____ **(être entouré)** d'une tresse et non d'un ruban. (4 PC – 17 IMP)

(35) Les autres hommes des cavernes (58) _____ (penser) que cela (**59**) _____ **(être)** très amusant (3 PC- 16 IMP – 2 Ø) parce qu'il (**60**) _____ **(être)** inhabituel qu'une femme ait le contrôle sur un homme. (2 PC – 17 IMP – 2 Ø)

In (3), the imperfective aspect also appears in the 3 PRES but the past moment of reference *en 1940* provided in the previous sentence is not taken into account, which again highlight the failure to integrate all cotextual features in their choices.

The slot where the majority of IMP is the lowest [(36) *devoir*] presents a great variety of answers: 3 PC – 8 IMP – 1 PRES – 1 FS – 3 COND – 3 unidentified forms and 2 Ø. These morphological problems may support the claim that forms are acquired in a formulaic way.

2.2. Analysis

Most of the morphological problems spotted in the control group related to the PS or the PA. This feature does not appear in this corpus for obvious reasons – these forms are not used - but many other IL features occur in this corpus.

First, there seems to be idiosyncratic formation rules. For example, S103 uses a COND instead of an IMP: this is surprising according to Elo[377] (1993) for whom it is the IMP that replaces the COND. This tendency shows in ***arriveraient, chasseraient, devrait, doublerait, éleveraient, faudrait, garderaient, infligerait, monteraient, préférerait, réagiraient, retrouverions, m'évaderais se plaindrait, se précipiterait, se vêtirait, vivrait*** but provides the native form for ***admirait, avait, changait*** [sic], ***était, faisait, faisaient, pensaient, portait, se trouvait***. There is no clear explanation for this distribution but the fact that *avoir* and *être* are in the IMP may suggest that only the most frequent verbs are acquired; the comparison with Muller's table is not conclusive as four frequent verbs (*avoir, être, faire, trouver*) are conjugated in the IMP and three (*arriver, devoir, falloir*) are not, so forms may be learnt in a formulaic way. As for S108, she seems to have a basic form based on the PP[378] to express the

[377] Elo, A. (1993) 'Le français parlé par des étudiants finnophones et suédophones', *Annales universitatis turkensis*, Ser. B. TOM 198.

[378] With a probable confusion of the sounds [e] and [ɛ].

IMP, except for the auxiliaries: *avoir* is put in the PRES but *était* is the only form to reach native standards.

Secondly, the formation of the past participle is problematic. For verbs in –er, spelling is the only difficulty and –é is replaced by other verbal endings: -er [***demander*** (S103), ***posséder*** (S110), ***préférer*** (S117), ***provoquer*** (S114)] or –ait [***admirait*** (S119), ***approchait*** (S119), ***asseoyait*** (S121), ***était*** (S114, S119)]. Formation is more complex for the other verb groups: a first tendency is to align the PP on the –er group, as already mentioned in Harley (1992) and Harley & Swain (1978). This shows in the ending [***assé*** (S106), ***plaigné*** (S106), ***plaindré*** (S107, S109), ***vivé*** (S120)] or in the formation principle [***vêti*** (S101, S105, S107, S109)], another is to adopt the root of the PRES [***doit*** (S105), ***aperçoit*** (S1050, ***plain*** (S104, S11, S119), ***sors*** (S117), ***vê*** (S120), ***vit*** (S102)] or to align on another better known verb such as *voir* for *apercevoir* [***apercevu*** (S102, S103, S110, S117, S118)] and maybe *venir* for *vêtir* [***vêtenu*** (S121)] or *tenir* for *atteindre* [***attenu*** (S116)]. A couple of forms appear more random: ***plaindu*** (S113, S121).

IL features also occur in the choice of auxiliary. For instance, *avoir* replaces *être* with reflexive verbs where the reflexive pronoun is either dropped [***est levé*** (S109), ***a précipité*** (S120), ***avons retrouvé*** (S104), ***a trouvé*** (S120)] or positioned after the auxiliary [***a s'approché*** (S114)] ***avons se retrouvé*** (S117)]. Substitutions also happen with verbs of movement [***ont arrivé*** (S115), ***ont arrivés*** (S116), ***ont monté*** (S120), ***ont montés*** (S117)]; in ***est sorti*** (S101, S103) on the other hand, the presence of a direct object would have required *avoir*. The inverse substitution is less frequent: ***est attenu*** (S116), ***est doit*** (S105), ***est élevé*** (S112), ***est fini*** (S105), ***sont tué*** (S119) and it is difficult to assert if these forms are faulty PC or passive PRES. The difficulty of choosing an auxiliary and the confusion they face is well illustrated by S102 who rejects (4) *a enseigné* in the acceptability test because « *ce n'est pas un passive* ».

Agreement of the PP had already been highlighted as a stumbling block among native speakers and it is even more the case in this corpus. First, S117 seems to have developed an IL rule according to which the PP with *avoir* agrees with the subject: ***ont arrivés, a doublée, ont élevés, a enseignée, ont gardés, ont montés, ont pensés, a provoquée.*** Another less prominent feature is the absence of agreement with *être:* ***sont monté*** (S104, S109, S116), ***sommes retrouvé*** (S105), ***sont tué*** (S119). ***Est arrivés*** (S118) however seems random.

At a syntactical level, subject-verb agreement may be overlooked as it is *a 'zone de fragilité'* (Bartning 1997: 24) at the advanced level. It affects mainly plural subjects combined with a basic form, often modeled on the third person singular of –er verbs: (42) [***a chassé*** (S112), ***chassait*** (S119)], (43) [***a gardé*** (S112), ***garderait*** (S117)], (44) [***est elevé*** (S112), ***eleverait*** (S117) and (58) [***a pensé*** (S106), ***penserait*** (S114), ***pensait*** (S119)]. This has already been noted in other acquisition studies (Bartning 1995[379], Dewaele 1994[380], Elo 1993, Harley 1984[381] & 1992, Harley & Swain 1978). However, we have also noted in this corpus a tendency to replace first persons by third ones: in (2) [***nous retrouvaient*** (S104), ***s'est retrouvé*** (S119)], (14) and (16) [***a aperçu*** (S109), ***a appercevu*** (S110), ***a apercevu*** (S112)].
(4) is a very interesting example as the verb is preceded by an indirect object pronoun *vous* that induces verbs in the second person plural [***avez enseigné*** (S101, S102, S103, S105, S106, S107, S110, S111, S113, S115, S116, S117, S118, S120), ***avez enseignée*** (S109)]. This supports Bartning's (1997: 24) note that non agreement is frequent when subject and verb are not contiguous. More surprisingly however, when faced with the correct agreement in the acceptability test, more than half of the subjects (S103, S105, S108, S109, S110, S111, S113, S115, S116, S117, S120) still maintain that *avez* is the correct form.

We now focus on the actual use of tenses in the cloze test and first the provision of multiple answers. Multiple answers occur in 7.22% (26 out of 360 slots) of the slots in the control group but only in 1.51% (19 out of 1260 slots) in the year 1 group. This is not surprising given that, in the control group, the main couple was PC-PS and we have shown that PS had not emerged in the present corpus.

	Choice	Subject
(1)	**PC**[382] / COND	S103
(2)	**PC** / COND	S103
	PC / IMP	S104
(3)	PC / **IMP**	S117
(4)	**PC** / FS	S103
(5)	PC / IMP	S117
(6)	PC / **IMP**	S105

[379] Bartning, I. (1995) 'Procédés de mise en grammaire dans l'acquisition de la morphologie verbale et l'accord en français'. *Interfra Report,* Stockholm University.
[380] Dewaele, J.M. (1994) 'Variation synchronique des taux d'exactitude. Analyse de la fréquence d'erreurs morpholexicales dans trois styles oraux d'interlangue française', *IRAL* XXXIII/4 : 275-300.
[381] Harley, B. (1984) 'Mais apprennent-ils vraiment le français ?' *Langue et Société* : 57-62.
[382] In this table, the forms in bold are accepted as native-speaker utterances.

(7)	**PC** / COND	S103
(9)	PC / **IMP**	S103
(12)	IMP / PC	S104
(13)	PC / **IMP**	S117
(20)	**PC** / **IMP**	S115
(23)	**PC** / IMP	S105
(25)	IMP / **PC**	S105
(26)	IMP / **PC**	S105
	PC / IMP	S106
(40)	IMP / **PC**	S105
(41)	PC / **IMP**	S120
(42)	PC / **IMP**	S117

Despite the appearances, the alternative concerns only the PC and the IMP. Other tenses emerge in S103's production but it was shown that the COND may stand for an IMP in her exercises. As for the future in (4), it can be attributed to a spelling mistake as *enseignerez* and *enseigneriez* are close. In the native group, the pair PC / IMP only appears for (23), (26) and (27), the latter of which is mainly conjugated as an IMP in year 1. In (23) and (26), a temporal complement indicates limits; it was shown above that contradictory information are given by the temporal complement and the direct object in (26). This may indicate a difficulty in integrating cotextual information in the choice of a past tense. The fact that there is no choice for (27) in this corpus may show that learners fail to see the possible extension of scope of *pendant le dix-neuvième siècle* that we have explained earlier:

(26) Dès la Révolution, il (23) _____ (y avoir) une conviction que tout le monde devrait avoir le même niveau d'éducation.
(27) Pendant le dix-neuvième siècle, on (26) _____ (avoir) les moyens de créer un tel système qui (27)_____ (être) gratuit et égal.

However, the morphological appearance of a tense does not ensure that its semantics is fully mastered. Kihlstedt (1998: 146) draws the following conclusion from her discovery that the emergence of the form of IMP does not happen together with the grasp of its functions:

> Pour cette raison, nous sommes d'avis que l'examen de l'IMP dans des interlangues avancées doit se faire pour l'essentiel *au niveau sémantique*. Les types de verbes utilisés ne sont pas très informatifs, étant donné que ceux-ci peuvent varier, sans être porteurs de valeurs contextuelles de l'IMP en français.

Therefore, we now proceed with the comparison between form and function; it gives the following results:

	Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
PC	260	45.69	114	20.04	143	25.13	52	9.14	569
IMP	274	56.61	14	2.89	179	36.98	17	3.51	484
PQP	10	45.45	3	13.64	9	40.91	-	0	22
PS	-	0	-	0	1	100	-	0	1

From this table, we can conclude that the IMP is hardly problematic from a morphological point of view (93.59% of correct forms); the PQP is correctly formed at 86.36% but the PC is the most complicated with 70.82% of correct forms. The accuracy of the IMP may be attributed to the great number of forms based on *être* and *avoir* taken into account. If we calculate the proportions without including the auxiliaries, we obtain:

	Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
IMP	129	60.56	14	6.57	54	25.35	16	7.51	213

It is very striking that there is no morphological problem with the auxiliaries [there is only one incorrect subject-verb agreement provided by S109 for (25)]. However, there is a greater tendency to express wrong functions with the auxiliaries, which may be attributed to the fact that those forms are used in a categorical way and there is little consideration of the possible changes required by the cotext.

2.3. Conclusion

Regarding morphology, there is a tendency to simplification at this level of acquisition: it shows in the regularization of the PP, or the recourse to better known tenses (such as the PRES, for instance) or forms (use of a more common verb) in problematic cotexts. However, coherence emerges from those IL uses as proven by the idiosyncratic rule of the IMP formation of S108 or by the PP agreement rule by S117.

A striking feature of this corpus is that choice seems to rely first on the verb [majority of *avoir* and *être* in the IMP, except slot (6)] and that there are difficulties in integrating information provided by the cotext such as object [eg. (26)], complements [eg. (23)] or discourse environment [eg. (3), (46)]. So there seems to be a tendency for categorical uses of tenses in this corpus.

Let us now examine the data provided in year 2.

3. Year 2

3.1. Description

A detailed description of each subject's choice for each verb token is available in the appendices. For the sake of clarity, the table below summarizes the results:

	PC	IM P	PQ P	PS	Other forms
(1) s'évader	14	1[383]			2 Ø
(2) se retrouver	11	3[384]	1[385]		*Se retrouvons* (S208), *avait retrouvons* (S203)
(3) être	1[386]	16			
(4) enseigner	12		2[387]		*Etes enseigné* (S203, S206), 1 Ø (S210)
(5) lever	13	1[388]	1[389]	1[390]	*Est levé* (S203, S206)
(6) être	7	6[391]	2[392]		3 Ø (S209, S210, S212)
(7) monter	14	3[393]			
(8) être	5[394]	9			*Est* (S209, S217), 1 Ø (S205)
(9) porter	6[395]	9			*Port* (S217), 1 Ø (S203)
(10) être entouré	3[396]	13			1 Ø (S203)
(11) avoir	4[397]	12			1 Ø (S203)
(12) se plaindre	9	4[398]			4 Ø (S203, S205, S210,S214)
(13) infliger	9	3[399]			5 Ø (S203, S205, S207, S212, S217)
(14) apercevoir	13	3[400]	1[401]		1 Ø (S203)
(15) se précipiter	13	2[402]			2 Ø (S203, S205)
(16) s'y asseoir	9	2[403]	1[404]		5 Ø (S203, S205, S211,S214, S217)
(17) apercevoir	11	1[405]	3[406]		1 Ø (S203)

[383] S208.
[384] S210, S214, S217.
[385] S212.
[386] S202.
[387] S208, S212.
[388] S208.
[389] S201 together with the PS.
[390] S201 together with the PQP.
[391] S201, * S204, S205, S206, S207, S208, S217.
[392] *S204, S216.
[393] S201, S208, S215.
[394] S202, S207, S211, S212, S213.
[395] S205, S207, S212, S213, S214, S215.
[396] S207, S212, S213.
[397] S209, S212, S215, S217.
[398] S202, S206, S207, S208.
[399] S201, S206, S216.
[400] S201, *S206, S211.
[401] S212.
[402] S207, S214.
[403] S201, S206.
[404] S204.
[405] S214.

(18) se vêtir	6	5[407]	2[408]		*Se vêtirait* (S211), 4 Ø (S203, S205, S207, S210)
(19) se trouver	8	6[409]	1[410]		3 Ø (S203, S205, S211)
(20) faire	10	4[411]	1[412]		*Font* (S217), 2 Ø (S203, S207)
(21) falloir	7[413]	8	1[414]		*Faut* (S205), Ø (S203)
(22) être	5[415]	12			
(23) y avoir	2[416]	14			1 Ø (S212)
(24) être	3[417]	13			1 Ø (S207)
(25) être créé	7[418]	8			*Etait créé* (S201, S208)
(26) avoir	3[419]	13	1[420]		
(27) être		16	1[421]		
(28) être critiqué	2[422]	12			*Serait critiqué* (S212)
(29) changer	15		1[423]		*Est changé* (S217)
(30) doubler	12	2[424]	1[425]		*Est doublée* (S202, S217), 1 Ø (S212)
(31) provoquer	15	1[426]			1 Ø (S212)
(32) réagir	11	3[427]			3 Ø (S207, S212, S214)
(33) y avoir	4[428]	12			1 Ø (S212)
(34) être choqué	5[429]	10			2 Ø (S212, S217)
(35) être forcé	6[430]	8			*Est forcé* (S205), 2 Ø (S212, S217)
(36) devoir	1[431]	7			*Devrait* (S201, S214), *dû* (S206), 6 Ø (S203, S205, S207, S209, S212, S217)
(37) posséder	8	4[432]			*Est posséder* (S203), 4 Ø (S204, S209, S212, S217)
(38) atteindre	6	4[433]			7 Ø (S203, S204, S205, S207, S209, S212, S217)
(39) arriver	10	3[434]			5 Ø (S204, S207, S209, S212, S217)
(40) faire	9	1[435]			*Fait* (S201), *faisent* (S203), 6 Ø (S204, S207, S209, S216,

[406] S201, S206, S212.
[407] S202, *S206, S208, S214, S216.
[408] S204, S212.
[409] S201, S202, *S206, S207, S208, S214.
[410] S212.
[411] S201, *S206, S208, S215.
[412] S212.
[413] *S206, S207, S209, S211, S213, S214, S215.
[414] S212.
[415] S203, S211, S212, S215, S216.
[416] S209, S216.
[417] S206, S211, S216.
[418] S202, S204, S206, S207, S210, S211, S212.
[419] S207, S209, S211.
[420] S212.
[421] S212.
[422] S206, S211.
[423] S201.
[424] S211, S213.
[425] S203.
[426] S213.
[427] S204, S213, S215.
[428] S206, S209, S210, S216.
[429] S206, S207, S210, S211, S215.
[430] S202, S206, S207, S210, S211, S215.
[431] S211.
[432] S202, S208, S213, S215.
[433] S201, S202, S208, S213.
[434] S201, S202, *S213.
[435] *S213.

					S217)
(41) vivre	5	4[436]	1[437]		*Etait* ... (S203), 6 Ø (S204, S205, S207, S209, S212, S214, S217)
(42) chasser	6	4[438]			*Sont chassés* (S201), *étaient chasser* (S203), 5 Ø (S204, S207, S209, S216, S217)
(43) garder	7	4[439]			*Etaient gardé* (S203), 5 Ø (S204, S207, S209, S216, S217)
(44) élever	5	4[440]			*Etaient élevés* (S203), 7 Ø (S204, S205, S207, S209, S214, S216, S217)
(45) préférer	7	5[441]			5 Ø (S204, S207, S209, S216, S217)
(46) tuer	10	2[442]	1[443]		5 Ø (S204, S207, S209, S216, S217)
(47) admirer	3[444]	5	1[445]		*Etait admirer* (S203), 7 Ø (S204, S205, S207, S209, S214, S216, S217)
(48) avoir	5[446]	6			7 Ø (S204, S205, S207, S209, S214, S216, S217)
(49) demander	9				*Etait demandé* (S203), 7 Ø (S204, S207, S209, S214, S215, S216, S217)
(50) accepter	8	1[447]			*Sont accepté* (S203), 7 Ø (S204, S205, S207, S209, S214, S216, S217)
(51) faire	8	1[448]			*Fait* (S201), 7 Ø (S204, S207, S209, S214, S215, S216, S217)
(52) ressembler	7	1[449]			9 Ø (S203, S204, S207, S209, S211, S214, S215, S216, S217)
(53) finir	6		2[450]		*Est fini* (S211), 8 Ø (S204, S207, S209, S211, S214, S215, S216, S217)
(54) être	1[451]	8			9 Ø (S203, S204, S207, S209, S211, S214, S215, S216, S217)
(55) s'approcher	7				10 Ø (S203, S204, S205, S207, S209, S211, S214, S215, S216, S217)
(56) saisir	5	1[452]			11 Ø (S203, S204, S205, S207, S208, S209, S211, S214, S215, S216, S217)
(57) sortir	6	1[453]			10 Ø (S203, S204, S207, S208, S209, S211, S214, S215, S216, S217)
(58) penser	5	2[454]			10 Ø (S203, S204, S207, S208, S209, S211, S214, S215, S216, S217)
(59) être	2[455]	4			11 Ø (S203, S204, S205, S207, S208, S209, S211, S214, S215, S216, S217)

[436] S202, S208, S210, S215.
[437] S201.
[438] S202, S208, S210, S211.
[439] S202, S208, S210, S211.
[440] S202, S208, S210, S211.
[441] S202, S208, S210, S211, S214.
[442] S202, *S210.
[443] S201.
[444] S206, S212, S215.
[445] S201.
[446] *S201, S206, S210, S212, S215.
[447] S201.
[448] S205.
[449] S202.
[450] S201, S208.
[451] *S210.
[452] S201.
[453] S201.
[454] S202, S210.

(60) être		7			10 Ø (S203, S204, S207, S208, S209, S211, S214, S215, S216, S217)

The tests include 1020 slots (60 slots x 17 subjects), 793 (77.75%) of which were filled. A superficial analysis shows that the PS is very rare with only 1 occurrence (0.12% of all provided forms): *leva* (S201). It is interesting to note that this single form appears for the slot that was designed to differentiate between the PS and the PC in its present perfect meaning. Nonetheless, it seems that at this level, the PS is still largely unknown as supported by comments in the acceptability test; for (2) *nous retrouvâmes*, « *this isn't past tense* » (S212) and for (5) « *This is future tense* » (S212). The auxiliary and the PP seem to be prototypical of past at that level: « *il n'y a pas l'auxiliary – ce n'est pas dans le passé* » (S214) « *past form of lever is levé not leva* » (S215). The fact that S201 gives both a PS and a PQP for slot (5) may translate an understanding that PC cannot have a past interpretation in the context. 24 tokens in the PQP (2.97%) are provided. 'Other forms' account for 269 answers (36.37%) among which 234 are an empty slot.

The next table recapitulates the distribution of tenses found in the cloze test. The results in this set of tests are slightly flawed by the fact that only seven students (S201, S202, S205, S206, S210, S212, S213) managed to complete the test so we need to calculate both part 2 and part 3 with and without taking the final blank slots into account:

	PC		IMP		PQP		PS		Others	
Part 1	185	50.68	111	30.41	16	4.38	1	0.27	52	14.25
Part 2	123	37.96	143	44.14	4	1.23	-	0	54	16.67
Part 2'	123	41.98	143	48.81	4	1.37	-	0	23	7.85
Part 3	111	32.46	60	17.54	5	1.46	-	0	166	48.54
Part 3'	111	57.22	60	30.93	5	2.58	-	0	18	9.28
Total	419	40.64	314	30.46	25	2.42	1	0.1	272	26.38
Total'	419	49.29	314	36.94	25	2.94	1	0.12	91	10.7

Compared to native usage, the past tenses are generally underused; it is especially the case for IMP in part 3 that contains a string of IMP indicating habit in the past. Kihlstedt (1998) mentions that this function is « *assez rare* » among the learners (p.136) and that even the most advanced learners « *hésitent sur l'imparfait d'habitude* » (p.136). She notes a tendency to resort

[455] S206, S213.

to PC in past habitual contexts (p.138), which is slightly more common in our data for slots (41) to (46).

In agreement with what was found for year 1, the year 2 group shows little homogeneity in the choice of tenses: only 2 forms (3.33%) are selected by all subjects: (55) in the PC and (60) in the IMP. This is more than in year 1 where there was no unanimous choice at all but the low number of answers (7) in consideration may diminish the significance of these results. If we now compare the choices in year 2 to the native choices, we get the following results:

	Control group					Year 2		
	PC	**IMP**	**PQP**	**PS**	**Other forms**	Nb	Actual %[456]	% / total[457]
(3) être		6	2			16 IMP	94.12	94.12
(4) enseigner	6					12 PC	75	70.59
(5) lever				6		13 PC	76.47	76.47
(6) être		6				6 IMP	42.86	35.29
(8) être		6				9 IMP	60	52.94
(9) porter		6				9 IMP	56.25	52.94
(10) être entouré		6				13 IMP	81.25	76.47
(11) avoir		6				12 IMP	75	70.59
(14) apercevoir				6		13 PC	76.47	76.47
(15) se précipiter				6		13 PC	86.67	76.47
(16) s'y asseoir				6		9 PC	75	52.94
(19) se trouver		6				8 PC	53.33	47.06
(22) être	6					12 IMP	70.59	70.59
(29) changer	6			1		15 PC	88.24	88.24
(36) devoir		6				7 IMP	63.64	41.18
(37) posséder		6				8 PC	61.54	47.06
(40) faire	6			2	Changèrent (F4*)	9 PC	75	52.94
(41) vivre		6				5 PC	45.45	29.41
(42) chasser		6				6 PC	50	35.29
(43) garder		6				7 PC	58.33	41.18
(44) élever		6				5 PC	50	29.41
(47) admirer		6				5 IMP	50	29.41
(49) demander				6		9 PC	90	52.94
(50) accepter				6		8 PC	80	47.06
(51) faire				6		8 PC	80	47.06
(55) s'approcher				6		7 PC	100	47.06
(56) saisir				6		5 PC	83.33	29.41
(57) sortir				6		6 PC	85.71	35.29
(59) être		6				4 IMP	66.67	23.53
(60) être		6				7 IMP	100	47.06

[456] Percentage out of the actual number of slots (17 minus number of void slots).
[457] Percentage out of the 17 possible slots.

This table shows that whenever a PS appears in native usage, it is replaced by a PC in this set of tests, as noted in year 1. So here again, data shows that the PC has a wider scope in this IL than in the control group to cover both the PC and the PS; however, the appearance of a PS for (4) in S201's test may hint towards the emergence of a distinction between the two forms. Furthermore, there are 7 slots where the most chosen tense differs from the native option; three of them [***se trouver*** (19), ***être*** (22), and ***posséder*** (37)] are common with year 1; for the fourth, ***être*** (6), the choices are still closely distributed between IMP (7 occurrences) and PC (6 occurrences). The four slots specific to year 2 are somewhat biased given the high proportion of void slots (5 or 6).

2.2. Analysis

At a morphological level, IL rules for PP formation appear in some subjects' production. For instance, S201 seems to have an agreement rule with the subject for PP + *avoir* (***ont arrivées, ont gardées, ont pensés***) whilst S203 seems to be at an intermediary stage where –er and –é are used one for the other (eg. ***était admirer*** but ***était demandé***). Bartning (1997: 19) mentions that some features of flexional morphology are not yet completely « *mis en grammaire* » at the advanced level and there is sometimes a tendency to use more basic forms that come from earlier stages. Indeed the formation of the past participle is developing. In addition to spelling idiosyncrasies [***assiss*** (S215), ***fallut*** (S211), ***finit*** (S206, S210)], there are spelling confusions between the PP and the INF for –er verbs [***admirer, chasser, posséder*** (S203), ***tuer*** (S212)] and phonetical confusions between [e] and [ɛ] occur [***était, étaient*** (S206), ***ressemblait*** (S208)]. For verbs belonging to other groups, formation is even more complex. Several strategies emerge such as:

- alignment on –er verbs [***asseyé*** (S202), ***vivé*** (S206, S214)] (see Harley 1992 and Harley & Swain 1978) or another group (***assu*** (S204), ***plaindu*** (S204, S213, S215), ***vivit*** (S213)] in endings or formation principle [***vêti*** (S209, S212, S215)];
- adoption of the PRES root [***asseoi*** (S212), ***fais*** (S203), ***faut*** (S212), ***plaind*** (S212), ***plain*** (S201, S217), ***réagit*** (S210, S216, S217), ***saisit*** (S210), ***sait*** (S206), ***vit*** (S212)];
- reduction of difficult chunks to known ones occur in ***aperçevu*** (S204, S207, S210, S213, S215) where the model of *voir* is used;

- replacement of forms for other verbs [*monter* gives ***montrés*** (S202, S207, S209), *atteindre* results in ***attendu*** (S206), ***plaindre*** in ***plait*** (S209)].
Occasionally, no attempt to find a PP form is made: ***asseoir*** (S209), ***viv*** (S201).

The choice of auxiliary also betrays IL features. *Avoir* is used instead of *être* with reflexive verbs: ***s'a*** plaint (S212), the reflexive pronoun being mostly dropped: ***ai évadé*** (S214, S217), ***avons retrouvés*** (S206), ***a trouvé*** (S206), ***a vêti*** (S206) although it is added in unnecessary contexts [***s'est entouré*** (S213) or ***se sont montés*** (S204, S210)]. Similarly, substitutions occur with verbs of movement: ***ont monté*** (S203), ***ont arrivé*** (S206), ***ont arrivés*** (S213), ***ont arrivées*** (S210). The replacement of *avoir* by *être* is also frequent in this set of tests: ***sont accepté*** (S203), ***était admirer*** (S203) ***est aperçu*** (S208), ***est changé*** (S217), ***sont chassés*** (S201), ***étaient chasser*** (S203), ***était demandé*** (S203), ***est doublée*** (S202, S217), ***sont fais*** (S203), ***est levé*** (S203, S206), ***est posséder*** (S203), ***est sorti*** (S206, S213). However this frequency depends much on S203's use as this subject produces 7 out of the 15 occurrences and seems to have a rule of PC formation with *être*. (see Bartning 1997: 24 for similar phenomena).

The PP agreement is another cause of IL rules. On the one hand, there seems to be a rule of agreement of the PP + *avoir* with the subject: ***ont arrivées*** (S210), ***ont arrivés*** (S213), ***ont gardées*** (S201), ***a doublée*** (S205), ***ont réagis*** (S203), ***ont pensés*** (S201), ***avons retrouvés*** (S206). On the other hand, PP with ***être*** remains unchanged: ***sont accepté*** (S203). ***sont arrivé*** (S208), ***sont fait*** (S203), ***étaient gardé*** (S203), ***sont monté*** (S205, S216), ***sont montré*** (S207), ***sommes retrouvé*** (S205, S216), ***étions retrouvé*** (S21), ***s'est approché*** (S208, S212). There does not seem to be a systematic inversion of native usage as S203, whose non-native morphology has already been mentioned above, produces examples for both categories.

At a syntactical level, subject-verb agreement differs from native standards. Most of the times, confusion occurs between the forms of the singular and the plural that are in some case homophonous [***chassait, élevait, gardait*** (S208, S211), ***se retrouvait*** (S214)], but not necessarily [***sont accepté*** (S203), ***a fait*** (S208), ***font*** (S217), ***sont fait*** (S203), ***ont préférer*** (S203). There is a tendency to transform a first person into a third person: ***se sont retrouvés*** (S201), ***avait retrouvons*** (S203), ***avait apercevu*** (S201, S212), ***a apercevu*** (S204). Slot (4)

proves very confusing for subject verb agreement as the verb is directly preceded by *vous*, an indirect object, hence frequent choices in the second person plural such as ***avez enseigné*** (S207, S211, S213, S214, S215, S216, S217) or ***êtes enseigné*** (S203, S204). Six subjects (S204, S207, S211, S214, S215) still insist on the use of a second person plural for slot (4) in the acceptability judgement test.

After this description of forms, we now focus on actual uses of tenses within this corpus starting with occurrences where multiple answers are provided. This amounts to 12 slots out of the 1020 (1.18%), which is significantly lower than in year 1. Contrary to the native group but in accordance to the results for year 1, the main pair is PC / IMP:

	Choice	Subject
(5)	PQP / PS	S201
(6)	PC / PQP	S204
(14)	*PC / IMP*	S206
(18)	PC / IMP	S206
(19)	PC / IMP	S206
(20)	*PC / IMP*	S206
(21)	PC / IMP	S206
(39)	IMP / PC	S213
(40)	PC / IMP	S213
(46)	PC / IMP	S210
(48)	IMP / PC	S201
(54)	*PC / IMP*	S210

One subject in particular, S206, offers multiple answers (5 out of 12); she is among those who managed to finish the test and this is also the case for all the others here except S204 who stopped at slot (36). So the provision of alternatives may be related to the speed in answering the questions. Qualitatively speaking, we have already commented on the presence of the PS in (5). S204 provides both *a été* and *avait été* for (6), which corresponds to highly untypical uses of tenses in a formulaic phrase to give the time, so according the PAH, this should be an advanced feature. Although both the PC and the IMP are acceptable in (14) – the IMP attributing an iterative meaning to the sentence – repeated here:

(36) Dès qu'il ***(14) apercevait*** une place libre, il (15) _____ (se précipiter) vers elle et (16) _____ (s'y asseoir).

S206 fails to provide the IMP for the rest of the sentence, which disqualifies the repetitive interpretation that was mentioned above as difficult to grasp (Kihlstedt 1998, see also Harley 1992). In (19), she opposes *a trouvé* and *se trouvait*, which may exemplify typical aspectual

association: telic verb (*trouver*) + PC, stative verb (*se trouver*) + IMP. However, the fact that (18) presents the same alternance: *se vêtait* and *a vêti* may rather suggest a morphological inability to put reflexive verbs in the PC. This tendency was already noted in the morphological comments above which show that most of the suppression of the reflexive pronouns appeared in S206's test. (20) and (21) belong to the same sentence as the two previous examples: if the alternative is possible in (20), only the IMP fits to express reported speech.

(37) Il (18) _____ (se vêtir) d'un pardessus et un camarade qui (19) _____ (se trouver) là lui (20) _____ (faire) cette remarque: il (21) _____ (falloir) mettre un bouton supplémentaire.

A string of alternatives also appear in S213's test with (39) and (40); there the IMP is not possible because of the present moment of reference provided by the verbs in the sentence.

(38) Il paraît que l'idée sur laquelle le système éducatif français est fondé est méritocratique, mais les circonstances qui (39) _____ (arriver), le /l' (40) _____ (faire) changer en pratique.

Finally, for slot (46), an imperfective and a perfective form may be used to express either the habit, or anteriority for a semelfactive situation.

(39) L'un des jeunes hommes, lui, (45) _____ (préférer) dessiner sur les murs les exploits des chasseurs et les animaux qu'ils (46) _____ (tuer).

Native use would require the IMP in the first case and the PQP in the second, where S210 provides a PC; we suggest that the PC is a default form for the PQP in that IL (cf. Kihlstedt 1998: 259) and this is supported by the absence of the PQP in her narratives, as shown by the example below.

(40) Une autre femme, qui ***a témoigné*** de la scène, ***a dit*** ce qu'elle ***a vu*** à un gendarme. (S210)

In the last two slots, we have the two auxiliaries *avoir* and *être*, that are conjugated predominantly (6/10 choices) or unanimously (8/8 choices) in the IMP, which is the prototypical aspectual combination. However, there seems to be an emerging awareness of the semantic change brought by the direct object in slot (48) while the discourse organization that shows (54) as posterior to (53) requires the PC, this is not understood at this level of IL. So it seems to only contiguous cues are taken into account:

(41) Une jeune fille, Mona, qui l' (47) _____ (admirer), (48) _____ (avoir) une idée.

(42) Quand il (53) _____ (finir), Mona n' (54)_____ (être) pas contente du résultat.

Now the comparison between form and function gives the following results:

	Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
PC	205	48.93	95	22.67	82	19.57	37	8.83	419
IMP	173	55.1	13	4.14	117	37.26	11	3.5	314
PQP	5	20.83	3	12.5	11	45.83	5	20.83	24
PS	1	100	-	0	-	0	-	0	1

From this table, we clearly see that at a morphological level, the IMP is the best mastered form with 92.36% of well-formed tokens (93.59% in year 1) against 68.5% for the PC (70.82 in year 1) and 66.66% for the PQP. This may be explained by the fact that more than half (63.38%) of the 314 IMP are provided for the two auxiliaries: 142 occurrences of the IMP are forms of *être,* 31 are occurrences of *avoir* and 26 occurrences of *y avoir.* So these IMP may have been acquired as chunks, which is confirmed by the fact that only five morphological mistakes[458] marred those forms. If we excluded the formulaic utterances, we would have:

	Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
IMP	72	62.61	11	8.7	24	20.87	8	6.96	115

So the percentage of well-formed tokens falls to 83.48% when the two basic forms are excluded but it still largely exceeds the percentage for other tenses.

If we now focus on the right use of forms, the PC is the most accurately used tense with 71.6% (65.74 in year 1) compared to 59.24% for all the IMP (59.5 in year 1) and 33.33% for the PQP (59.09 in year 1). So it is obvious that the mastery of the PC is at that level better developed than that of other tenses. It is interesting to note that when the auxiliaries are discarded, the percentage for the IMP climbs to 71.31%, which is comparable to the figures for the PC. This again confirms a formulaic use of the IMP as there is a widespread failure to take into account cotextual clues that modify the *Aktionsart* of a VP containing one of the auxiliaries.

3.3. Conclusion

This set of tests presents features that are very similar to those which were found in year 1. However, some distinctive features also appear. First, if rarer tenses remain unfrequent (there is just one occurrence of the PS), the PQP seems to emerge and represents a higher percentage of all verbal forms than at the previous level. Nonetheless, this morphological development does not pair with a semantic grasp of the form: out of the 16 PQP, only 3 are provided for slots where members of the control group used that tense [for slots (30), (46) and (43)] so a mismatch between forms and functions seems to exist. Secondly, subjects start distancing themselves from prototypical combinations such as auxiliaries + IMP and taking into account cotextual cues, especially those belonging to the VP [cf. (48) vs (54)].

We now conclude the analysis of the cloze tests by commenting on the results for year 4.

[458] The same mistake is repeated three times in (24) : *les ressources n'était pas disponibles*, by S208, S212 and S214.

4. Year 4

4.1. Description

The table below offers an overview of tense use among year 4 learners:

	PC	IMP	PQP	PS	Other forms
(1) s'évader	22			2[459]	
(2) se retrouver	21	1[460]		1[461]	
(3) être	7[462]	16	1[463]	1[464]	
(4) enseigner	21	1[465]		1[466]	
(5) lever	18	2[467]		5[468]	
(6) être	5[469]	15	1[470]	1[471]	1 Ø (S401)
(7) monter	19	2[472]		1[473]	
(8) être	5[474]	17			
(9) porter	9[475]	15		2[476]	
(10) être entouré	2[477]	19			*Est entouré* (S418)
(11) avoir	3[478]	20			
(12) se plaindre	11	7[479]		1[480]	5 Ø (S401,S410, S412, S422, S423)
(13) infliger	11	7[481]	2[482]	1[483]	*Infligé* (S411), *infligées* (S415)
(14) apercevoir	20	1[484]	1[485]	1[486]	
(15) se précipiter	20	1[487]		2[488]	
(16) s'y asseoir	19			1[489]	2 Ø (S408, S410)

[459] *S421, *S423.
[460] S405.
[461] *S421.
[462] *S409, S412, S416, S419, *S421 (together with the PS), S422, *S423.
[463] S403.
[464] *S421 (together with the PC).
[465] S415.
[466] S421.
[467] S408, S412.
[468] S402, *S403, S415, *S421, *S423.
[469] S409, S411, S412, S420, S421 (together with the PS).
[470] S414.
[471] S421 (together with the PC).
[472] S403, S410.
[473] S415.
[474] S406, S411, S419, S421, S423.
[475] *S404, S405, *S408, S412, S416, S418, S420, S421 (together with the PS), S423 (together with the PS).
[476] S421, S423 (both together with the PC).
[477] S404, S421.
[478] S407, *S408, S421.
[479] S402, S403, S406, S413, S414, S415, *S418.
[480] *S421.
[481] S401, S402, S403, S412, S416, S422, S423.
[482] S404, S413.
[483] S421 (together with the PC).
[484] S410.
[485] *S405.
[486] S415.
[487] S413.
[488] S415, *S421.

(17) apercevoir	19	2[490]			*Apercevrait* (S414), *aperçu* (S411)
(18) se vêtir	11	10[491]	2[492]		1 Ø (S401)
(19) se trouver	13	8[493]		1[494]	
(20) faire	19	3[495]		2[496]	
(21) falloir	10	10[497]			*Faut* (S403, S416), *faudrait* (S415), *aurait fallu* (S405), *a fallait* (S418)
(22) être	9[498]	13			*A était* (S402), *été* (S411)
(23) y avoir	10[499]	14			
(24) être	2[500]	18			*Eté* (S411), *étant*(S402)
(25) être créé	15	4[501]		2[502]	*Est créé* (S413), *été créé* (S411), *crée* (S420)
(26) avoir	6[503]	16	1[504]		
(27) être	1[505]	21			
(28) être critiqué	12	6[506]		2[507]	*Eté* critiqué (S411), 1 Ø (S401)
(29) changer	20			1[508]	1 Ø (S401)
(30) doubler	19	2[509]		1[510]	
(31) provoquer	18	3[511]		2[512]	
(32) réagir	18	2[513]		1[514]	1 Ø (S401)
(33) y avoir	8[515]	15			
(34) être choqué	8[516]	12		2[517]	*Eté choqué* (S411), 1 Ø (S401)
(35) être forcé	11	9[518]		1[519]	*Est forcé* (S401), *été forcé* (S411)
(36) devoir	7[520]	12			*Devrait* (S406, S414, S420)

[489] S415.
[490] S406, *S410.
[491] S402, S403, *S404, S405, S407, *S410, S414, S415, S416, S422.
[492] S409, S419.
[493] S402, S403, S405, S407, S410, S412, S415, S422.
[494] *S421.
[495] S401, *S419, S420.
[496] *S402, S415.
[497] S402, S404, S406, S407, *S409, S410, S413, *S414, S422, *S423.
[498] S406, S407, *S410, S411, S412, *S419, S421, S422, S423.
[499] S402, S403, *S404, *S408, S409, S410, S413, S415, S421, S422.
[500] S413, S421.
[501] S401, *S408, *S410, S418.
[502] S402, S415.
[503] S409, *S410, S414, S415, S421, S422.
[504] S406.
[505] S421
[506] S403, S405, S412, S416, S418, S423.
[507] S402, S415.
[508] S415.
[509] S405, S410.
[510] S415.
[511] S401, S405, *S412.
[512] S402, S415.
[513] S407, S410.
[514] S415.
[515] S402, S403, *S408, S409, S411, S413, S415, S421.
[516] S404, *S405, S406, *S408, S409, S412, S419, S421,
[517] S402, S415.
[518] S407, *S408, S410, S413, S414, S416, S418, S420, S422.
[519] S415.

(37) posséder	9[521]	11		1[522]	1 Ø (S401)
(38) atteindre	17		1[523]		*Atteint* (S415), 3 Ø (S401, S408, S410)
(39) arriver	20	1[524]		1[525]	1 Ø (S401)
(40) faire	18	1[526]	1[527]	1[528]	*Fait* (S411), 1 Ø (S401)
(41) vivre	1[529]	15			*Vivrait* (S420), 5 Ø (S407, S413, S414, S418, S423)
(42) chasser	4[530]	13			6 Ø (S407, S413, S414, S418, S419, S423)
(43) garder	4[531]	13			6 Ø (S407, S413, S414, S418, S419, S423)
(44) élever	4[532]	12			7 Ø (S401, S407, S413, S414, S418, S419, S423)
(45) préférer	3[533]	11			8 Ø (S401, S407, S410, S413, S414, S418, S419, S423)
(46) tuer	8	3[534]	3[535]		*Tuent* (S416) 7 Ø (S407, S410, S413, S414, S418, S419, S423)
(47) admirer	4[536]	11			*A admirait* (S411), 7 Ø (S407, S410, S413, S414, S418, S419, S423)
(48) avoir	11	4[537]		1[538]	7 Ø (S407, S410, S413, S414, S418, S419, S423)
(49) demander	12	1[539]		2[540]	8 Ø (S407, S410, S413, S414, S416, S418, S419, S423)
(50) accepter	9	2[541]		2[542]	9 Ø (S401, S407, S410, S413, S414, S416, S418, S419, S423)
(51) faire	11	1[543]		1[544]	9 Ø (S401, S407, S410, S413, S414, S416, S418, S419, S423)
(52) ressembler	4[545]	8		1[546]	9 Ø (S401, S407, S410, S413, S414, S416, S418, S419, S423)
(53) finir	7		3[547]		*Est fini* (S4122), *eu finit* (S415), 10 Ø (S,401, S407, S410, S413, S414, S416, S418, S419, S421, S423)
(54) être		12			10 Ø (S401, S407, S410, S413, S414, S416, S418, S419, S421, S423)
(55) s'approcher	10	1[548]		1[549]	10 Ø (S401, S407, S410, S413, S414, S416, S418, S419,

[520] S403, S404, S405, S407, S411, S418, S421.
[521] S403, S407, S408, S414, S416, S418, S420, S421, S423.
[522] S415.
[523] S412.
[524] *S408.
[525] S415.
[526] *S404.
[527] S423.
[528] S415.
[529] S421.
[530] S401, * S408, S410, S421.
[531] S401, * S408, S410, S421.
[532] * S408, S410, S416, S421.
[533] S420, S421, S422.
[534] S403, S415, S422.
[535] S402, S404, S405.
[536] S404, *S408, S420, S421.
[537] S405, S406, *S408, S420.
[538] S415.
[539] *S408.
[540] S402, S415.
[541] S406, S408.
[542] S402, S415.
[543] S404.
[544] S415.
[545] S403, S404, S420, S421.
[546] S415.
[547] S402, S403, S404.

					S421, S423)
(56) saisir	10			1[550]	11 Ø (S401, S407, S410, S413, S414, S416, S418, S419, S421, S422, S423)
(57) sortir	10			1[551]	11 Ø (S401, S407, S410, S413, S414, S416, S418, S419, S421, S422, S423)
(58) penser	5[552]	6			12 Ø (S401, S407, S410, S413, S414, S416, S418, S419, S420, S421, S422, S423)
(59) être		10			12 Ø (S401, S407, S410, S413, S414, S416, S418, S419, S420, S421, S422, S423)
(60) être		10			12 Ø (S401, S407, S410, S413, S414, S416, S418, S419, S420, S421, S422, S423)

Out of the 1320 slots[553], 1125 (85.23%) were filled with 1170 answers. One striking feature of this set of tests is that the PS is used much more with 48 occurrences (4.1% of all answers) produced by 5 subjects[554] (22.73% of all subjects). This is a sharp increase in both the number of subjects using that tense and in the frequency of use. However, more than half of the forms (25 PS) are found in S415's test, who had used the PS in his written narrative. It is worth remembering that he is one of the bilingual students, which may be significant as the other bilingual, S402, gives 8 PS. They may have reached a near native status (for a discussion of near native and advanced learners, see Bartning 1997, Coppieters 1987) that makes them more aware of native tense use. One element that may confirm this is that, although S421 produces more PS tokens than S402, they always appear together with a PC in her test whilst all tokens by S415 and all but one by S402 are exclusively in the PS. The choice S421 offers may well come from a systematic application of an IL rule of PC-PS equivalence rather than from a near-native linguistic feeling. We will examine the relationship between form and function below. As for the PQP, it is restricted to 16 forms, which may seem as a regression from year 2, where there were 24 occurrences, and year 1 (22 occurrences). Other forms amount to 226 occurrences among which there are 195 blank slots:

The next table recapitulates the distribution of tenses found in the cloze tests[555]:

[548] S408.
[549] S415.
[550] S415.
[551] S415.
[552] S403, S404, *S405, S406, S411.
[553] 60 slots x 22 students as S417 omitted to hand out her test and lost it.
[554] S402 (8 PS), S403 (1 PS), S415 (25 PS), S421 (11 PS), S423 (3 PS)

	PC		IMP		PQP		PS		Others	
Part 1	285	60.38	157	33.26	7	1.48	23	4.87	19	4.03
Part 2	228	52.78	160	37.04	3	0.69	15	3.47	26	6.02
Part 3	117	26.17	133	29.75	6	1.34	10	2.24	181	40.49
Part 3'	117	43.17	133	49.08	6	2.21	10	3.69	5	1.85
Total	630	46.02	450	32.8	16	1.17	48	3.51	226	16.51
Total'	630	53.71	450	38.28	16	1.36	48	4.09	50	4.26

The figures are distorted by the number of blank slots especially in part 3 so a second calculation does not take into account all the void slots that come from an inability to complete the task. For instance, S401 does not provide answers for (6), (12), (18), (28), (29), (32), (34), (35), (37), (39), (40), (44), (45), (50) and all the slots that follow so we do not take into account the blank slots from (50) onwards as it seems that the test was interrupted at that point. From this table we can see that the PS and the PQP, although emergent, still fall short of native frequencies. As a whole, the PC is overused and the IMP is underused.

Let us now examine the distribution of tenses for the tokens on which all NS had agreed.

	Control group					**Year 4**		
	PC	**IMP**	**PQP**	**PS**	**Other forms**	Nb	Actual %[556]	% / total[557]
(3) être		6	2			16 IMP	72.73	72.73
(4) enseigner	6					21 PC	95.45	95.45
(5) lever				6		18 PC	81.82	81.82
(6) être		6				15 IMP	68.18	68.18
(8) être		6				17 IMP	77.27	77.27
(9) porter		6				15 IMP	68.18	68.18
(10) être entouré		6				19 IMP	95	95
(11) avoir		6				20 IMP	90.91	90.91
(14) apercevoir				6		20 PC	90.91	90.91
(15) se précipiter				6		20 PC	90.91	90.91
(16) s'y asseoir				6		19 PC	95	86.36
(19) se trouver		6				13 PC	59.09	59.09
(22) être	6					13 IMP	59.09	59.09
(29) changer	6			1		20 PC	95.24	90.91
(36) devoir		6				12 IMP	54.54	54.54
(37) posséder		6				11 IMP	52.38	50
(40) faire	6			2	Changèrent (F4*)	18 PC	85.71	81.82
(41) vivre		6				15 IMP	88.24	68.18
(42) chasser		6				13 IMP	76.47	59.09
(43) garder		6				13 IMP	76.47	59.09
(44) élever		6				12 IMP	75	54.54

[555] The total for each part slightly exceeds 100% as two answers were provided in 45 slots.
[556] Percentage out of the actual number of slots (22 minus number of void slots).
[557] Percentage out of the 17 possible slots.

(47) admirer		6				11 IMP	68.75	50
(49) demander				6		12 PC	80	54.54
(50) accepter				6		9 PC	69.23	40.91
(51) faire				6		11 PC	84.62	50
(55) s'approcher				6		10 PC	83.33	45.45
(56) saisir				6		10 PC	90.91	45.45
(57) sortir				6		10 PC	90.91	45.45
(59) être		6				10 IMP	100	45.45
(60) être		6				10 IMP	100	45.45

Like at the other levels, all slots in the PS for the native group are by a majority in the PC in the learners' group but this is less the case here than before because the use of the PS has increased dramatically. The learners also move closer to native usage in that there are only two slots where the form chosen by most subjects differs from that of the control group: ***(19) se trouver*** and ***(22) être***. These forms were problematic at all levels and we have already mentioned the influence of the prototypical combination between *être* and IMP and the closeness of *se trouver* with a prototypical telic verb, *trouver*.

4.2. Analysis

Unlike the findings at the lower levels, this set of data does not seem to contain IL systematic morphological rules, which may indicate that the subjects are closer to native usage.

The variety of endings for –er past participles is now reduced to occasional slips: ***admirait*** (S411), ***était*** (S402), ***provoquer*** (S421), but there are various spellings for –ir verbs endings: ***assi*** (S415), ***finit*** (S415, S420), ***réagit*** (S404, S409, S411, S414, S418, S420, S422), ***saisit*** (S420). Real morphological difficulties mainly occur with ***s'asseoir, se plaindre, se vêtir*** and ***atteindre***. Strategies to form the past participle include an alignment on the –er group (see Harley 1992 and Harley & Swain 1978) with ***plaindré*** (S414), ***plaigné*** (S409), ***plaignait*** (S419) and ***fallait*** (S418); adoption of the root of the PRES [***asseoit*** (S411, S418), ***vit*** (S421)]; copy of a better known verb: for *apercevoir, voir* [***apercevu*** (S407, S412, S413, S414, S418, S420)], for *atteindre, attendre* [***attendu*** (S414), ***atteindu*** (S403, S412,S418)] or *tenir* [***attenu*** (S405), ***atteinu*** (S411)]. These data seem to contradict Dietrich et al.'s (1995: 271) claim that « *la morphologie irrégulière précède la morphologie régulière* » in the acquisition process.

The choice of auxiliary is close to native usage with hesitation for verbs of movement where both *être* and *avoir* are possible, according to the cotext: ***ont monté*** (S405, S418, S423),

est sorti (S404, S408, S409, S411, S420). The use of *être* for reflexive verbs is generalized, except in one occurrence: ***avons retrouvés*** (S418).

Agreement of the PP is still a source of difficulties as evidenced by absence of agreement with the subject for PP + *être:* ***sommes retrouvé*** (S414, S420, S422), ***sont monté*** (S414), ***s'est approché*** (S402, S404, S406, S411, S40) although some female subjects show an awareness of agreement by putting *évadé* in the feminine, given that the subject is *je* (S403, S404, S406, S407, S410, S411, S412, S413, S414, S416, S420, S421) but they fail to notice that the pronoun refers to a masculine character. For *avoir,* there are two tendencies: either unnecessary agreement with the subject [***avons retrouvés*** (S418), ***ont montés*** (S423), ***a provoquée*** (S411)] or omission of the agreement with the preceding direct object: ***infligé*** (S404, S405, S406, S407, S408, S409, S410, S414, S419, S420).

As far as verb-subject agreement is concerned, less confusion is seen between singular and plural although non-native uses still occur [***a réagit*** (S411, S418), ***ont attendu*** (S414), ***vivrait*** (S420), ***a vit*** (S421)] but they are less frequent than at lower levels. Almost half of the subjects (S401, S407, S413, S414, S414, S418, S420, S421, S422 and S423) still use a verb in the second person plural for (4) *enseigner* and a further 7 subjects (S402, S404, S405, S406, S409, S411, S416) had first provided a second person plural before erasing it and providing a third person singular. Four subjects (S407, S418, S420 and S421) still insist on using ***avez enseigné*** in (4), even when confronted with the native agreement in the acceptability judgement test. So it clearly appears that the lack of contiguity between subject and verb causes numerous IL features (See Bartning 1997).

We now turn our attention to the actual use of tenses in these cloze tests, beginning with the analysis of the multiple answers. They occur in 45 out of 1320 slots (3.41%), which is much higher than at the other levels of learning (1.51% in year 1, 1.18% in year 2).

	Choice	Subject
(1)	PC[558] / PS	S421, S423
(2)	*PC / PS*	S421
(3)	PC / IMP	S409, S423
	PC / PS	S421
(4)	PC / PS	S421
(5)	PC / PS	S403, S421, S423

[558] The symbols in bold indicates that the form is used for a native-like function.

(6)	PC / PS	S421
(9)	PC / IMP	S404, S408
	PC / PS	S421, S423
(12)	*PC / IMP*	S418
	PC / PS	S421
(13)	PC / PS	S421
(14)	PQP / PC	S405
(15)	PC / PS	S421
(17)	PC / IMP	S410
(18)	PC / IMP	S404, S410
(19)	PC / PS	S421
(20)	PC / PS	S402
(21)	IMP / PC	S409, S414
	PC/ IMP	S423
(22)	PC / IMP	S410, S419
(23)	PC / IMP	S404, S408
(25)	IMP / PC	S410
(26)	IMP / PC	S410
(31)	IMP / PC	S412
(34)	PC / IMP	S408
(35)	PC / IMP	S408
(39)	IMP / PC	S408
(42)	PC / IMP	S408
(43)	PC / IMP	S408
(44)	PC / IMP	S408
(47)	PC / IMP	S408
(48)	PC / IMP	S408
(49)	PC / IMP	S408
(58)	*PC / IMP*	S405

There is more variety in the alternatives offered by this group than in the other groups. In addition to the PC / IMP alternative (28 occurrences or 62.22%), that was almost the only alternative in year 1 and year 2 there are PC-PS pairs (16 occurrences or 35.56%) as in the control group. All the PC-PS pairs are located in the first part of the cloze test, that is based on literary texts and most (11/16 or 68.75%) are produced by S421. We have already postulated that she may have an IL rule of tenses use. As for the PC-IMP, they also mainly come from one subject (S408) who provides 11 of the 28 pairs (39.29%). An interesting feature of her test is that most of her pairs –repeated below - are littered with question marks so the pairs do not reflect possible uses but the subject's hesitations:

(43) Le système éducatif français (**25**) _____ (**être créé**) pendant la troisième république sous la direction de Jules Ferry.

(44) Pendant les années soixante, il (**33**) _____ (**y avoir**) de nombreuses manifestations, émeutes et quelques arrestations surtout à la Sorbonne en 1968.

(45) A cause de ces incidents, le gouvernement (**34**) _____ (**être choqué**) et il (**35**) _____ (**être forcé**) de se rendre compte que quelque chose (36) _____ (devoir) être fait

(46) Il paraît que l'idée sur laquelle le système éducatif français est fondé est méritocratique, mais les circonstances qui (**39**) _____ (**arriver**), le /l' (40) _____ (faire) changer en pratique.

(47) Les hommes (**42**) _____ (**chasser**) les animaux et les femmes; les femmes (**43**) _____ (**garder**) le feu et (**44**) _____ (**élever**) les enfants.

All these excerpts illustrate cases where elements outside the verb phrase influence the choice of a tense: it may be aspectual complements that delimit a timeframe such as *pendant la troisième république* and *pendant les années soixante*, that may be outside the actual sentence, such as in (39), where the IMP is required by the complement *au temps des hommes des cavernes* that triggers the interpretation of description or habit in the past. Markers of discourse organization are also influential in choosing a tense as shown by the cause-consequence relation expressed by *à cause de ces incidents*. Finally, the influence of other verbal tokens, such as the PRES in (38) requires to select the PC. So from these examples, if both the PC and the IMP are generally acquired for all verb categories – a feature that was seen as ultimate attainment in the PAH -, there is still a failure to use tenses in a native manner.

If we now compare the link between form and function, we find the following results:

	Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
PC	378	60	90	14.29	136	21.59	26	4.13	630
IMP	304	67.56	7	1.56	131	29.11	8	1.78	450
PQP	6	37.5	3	18.75	7	43.75	0	0	16
PS	32	66.67	5	10.42	8	16.67	3	6.25	48

At a morphological level, the IMP is almost perfectly mastered with 96.67% of well-formed tokens against 81.59% for the PC, 81.25% for the PQP and 83.34% for the PS. However, the auxiliaries represent 57.27% of all the IMP (compared to 58.06% in year 1 and 63.38% in year 2): 183 forms of *être*, 40 of *avoir* and 29 of *y avoir*. There are only three morphological mistakes for those forms: a reflexive pronoun is added to *être entouré* in (10) by S412, the –e does not appear in *infligeait* (S423) in (13) and S411 provides a wrong subject-verb agreement

for (60), probably because of the majority of plural verbs in the cotext. If we exclude the auxiliaries from our counts, we obtain the following figures.

	Correct form / correct function		Wrong form / correct function		Correct form / wrong function		Wrong form / wrong function		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
IMP	161	81.31	4	2.02	25	12.63	8	4.04	198

Without including *être* and *avoir,* the percentage of well-formed tokens represents 93.94% (against 85.91% in year 1 and 83.46% in year 2).

Regarding the correct use of forms to express given functions, the most accurately used tense is the PS with 77.09% followed by the PC (74.29%), the IMP (69.12%) and the PQP (56.25%). This can be explained by the fact that on the one hand a high proportion of instances of the PS are formed by the two bilingual subjects (33 tokens) and on the other hand that there is a formulaic use of *être* (8 tokens).

4.3. Conclusion

As a whole the data found in this set of particular test seem closer to the results of the control group and this can be seen at various levels. First, the PS is much more frequent and used by a larger group of subjects, mostly in native-like contexts. There is indeed a growing awareness of the stylistic and contextual connotations of that tense, as illustrated by comments in the acceptability judgement test: « *only used in certain written contexts* » (S413) and « *past historic – story telling* » (S421). Secondly, in most cases, the majority of learners adopt the same verbal form as that provided by the native speakers. Finally, the mastery of morphology and morphosyntax has improved but problems remains in the semantic evaluation of the functions covered by the new forms.

5. General conclusions on the cloze tests

We first comment on the control group production before describing the IL features of the learners' tests.

5.1. Control group production

We noted that native speakers fell short of the norm in morphosyntax, especially past participle agreement and formation. However, in most cases, they master the syntax and semantics of past tenses. The constraints of the exercise and the request for all possible answers may have provoked less natural production than would otherwise have been the case.

5.2. Interlanguage features

Our analysis has emphasized a series of IL features that were already noted in previous studies but it also reveals original tendencies.

First, let us consider morphology. A general trend consists in aligning the PP on the model of –er verbs. This was already mentioned in Harley (1992) and Harley & Swain (1978). Nonetheless, our cloze tests seem to show a wider tendency to reduce unknown forms to common ones (e.g. PP formation). So the claim that irregular morphology is acquired before regular morphology (Dietrich et al. 1995) is not supported by our data. There are indeed irregular forms that are mastered even at the lowest levels of acquisition but they tend to be frequent verbs, such as auxiliaries, and the frequency of input may be called upon here.

As far as subject-verb agreement is concerned, features that are illustrated in other research projects emerge. For example, there is a tendency to use a singular basic form of the verb with a plural subject (Bartning 1995, Dewaele 1994, Elo 1993, Harley 1984 & 1992, Harley & Swain 1978). Moreover our data shows that this simplification also includes the reduction of all forms to the third person. Bartning (1990 & 1995) had suggested that this tendency was exacerbated when the subject and the verb were not contiguous. Conversely our data support the role of contiguity in slot (4) where the contiguity of the indirect object *vous* and the verb leads to numerous verbal forms in the second person plural.

Finally, although there is an increasing mastery of morphological forms as shown by the relative diminution of simplification, the improvement in subject-verb agreement or emergence

of forms such as the PS, this does not necessarily mean semantic mastery. An example of this is provided by the use of the PS by S421; although frequently used, it is always paired with the PC, which fails to transmit the semantic characteristics of this tense. Kihlstedt (1998) has also noted a discrepancy between forms (morphology) and functions (semantics) that were acquired later.

At a syntactical level, Dewaele (1994) noted that the sequence of tenses was not respected in learners' IL. More generally, our results show that there is a general failure to take into account the general cotext in which verbs appear: some tokens are locally acceptable but are contradicted at a wider sentence or discourse level.
Marking the past according to *Aktionsart* is another tendency of IL that Bardovi-Harlig and Bergström (1996) already mentioned. Our data confirm indeed that typical combinations (such as *être* or *avoir* + IMP) tend to be favoured despite contradictory information from the cotext. Contiguous cotextual information is easier to take into account in the choice of tense than less local cues (see Bartning 1997).

It would be interesting here to revisit the claims by Kihlstedt (1998) and Howard (forthcoming) on the acquisition of the IMP on the basis of functions. It was shown in the section devoted to the IMP in the film narratives that the hypotheses of these two linguists were debatable on both theoretical and empirical grounds. One of the empirical problems was the likely bias provided by the corpus: Kihlstedt's corpora of oral interviews were almost devoid of progressive IMP and the same phenomenon emerged in our film narratives for habitual IMP. As a reminder, Kihlstedt assumed that the IMP spread from (1) « *IMP caractérisant,* (2) « *IMP habituel* », (3) « *IMP habituel / fréquentatif* », (4) « *IMP progressif* » and (5) « *IMP aux confins* ». If her hypothesis were true, we would expect higher levels of accuracy for slots of our cloze tests in *IMP caractérisant* than in *IMP progressif.* We would also expect a progression in each category from year 1 to year 4. We base our test here on the 12 slots on which the control group unanimously chose an IMP:

(48) On (8) **était** très serré.
(49) Un jeune monsieur (9) **portait** sur la tête un chapeau [...]

(50) Il était une fois, au temps des hommes des cavernes, une tribu qui (41) **vivait** en paix. Les hommes (42) **chassaient** les animaux et les femmes; les femmes (43) **gardaient** le feu et (44) **élevaient** les enfants.
(51) ***En 1950***, environ 32.000 Français de 18 ans (37) **possédaient** le bac
(52) A cause de ces incidents, le gouvernement (être choqué) et il (être forcé) de se rendre compte que quelque chose (36) **devait** être fait.
(53) Une jeune fille, Mona, qui l' (47) **admirait**, (avoir) une idée.
(54) Les autres hommes des cavernes (penser) que cela (59) **était** très amusant parce qu'il (60) **était** inhabituel qu'une femme ait le contrôle sur un homme.

Slots (8), (9), (36), (37), (59) and (60) are instances of *IMP caractérisant;* slots (41), (42), (43) and (44) are examples of *IMP habituel* and (47) is progressive.

	Control group	Year 1	Year 2	Year 4
(8) être	100	95[559]	60	77.27
(9) porter	100	61.9	56.25	68.18
(36) devoir	100	31.58	63.64	54.54
(37) posséder	100	70	61.54	52.38
(59) être	100	84.21	66.67	100
(60) être	100	89.47	100	100
Average		**72.03**	**68.02**	**75.395**
(41) vivre	100	55.56	45.45	88.24
(42) chasser	100	57.14	50	76.47
(43) garder	100	60	58.33	76.47
(44) élever	100	50	50	75
		55.675	**50.945**	**79.045**
(47) admirer	100	50	50	68.75

The table shows no clear linear progression but a few features can be underlined. First the habitual and progressive uses of the IMP develop from year 2 to year 4: the increase amounts to about + 50%. Data are less obvious for the *emplois caractérisants* for which it seems that the determining factor is the lexical token itself (see the difference between the occurrences of *être* compared to the other verbs) and thus the PAH would seem more supported here.
The results of this small study are therefore not a conclusive support for Kihlstedt's claim but the restricted range of tokens under study does not permit to draw definite conclusions.

[559] The figures in this table are the actual percentage (without taking account of the blank slots).

Conclusion on the data analysis

In this conclusion on our data analysis, we first recall the reasons for selecting our data collection methods. Then, we compare the trends relating to past tense / aspect IL use found in our data analysis with characteristics from previous studies. Finally, we use our results to test a series of previous learning hypotheses on tense / aspect acquisition.

1. Selection of data collection methods

Our research design included (1) a large group of subjects made up of 61 learners[560], (2) a pseudolongitudinal dimension stretching over three years[561] provided by the three levels of acquisition under consideration, (3) a control group[562] that offered comparable data and (4) a range of data collection tasks[563] (written narratives; oral narratives; cloze tests based on literary excerpts, actual learners' production and the description of cartoons; acceptability judgement tests). The variety and scope of this research design went beyond previous studies which were presented at the beginning, and offered a larger bank of data for analysis. It was also noted on the basis of their production (especially of the PQP) that our learners were probably the most advanced studied so far although this is difficult to prove in the absence of commonly-shared principles in classifying learners (Bartning 1997 outlines the characteristics of different levels).

Apart from the general evaluation of the PAH, the tasks were designed to investigate a series of previous acquisitional claims: (1) the influence of the task (see Noyau 1990, Bardovi-Harlig 1999); (2) the oral-written difference (see Salaberry 2000: 119 for a discussion); (3) the gap between explicit and implicit knowledge (see Broady & L'Huillier 2002).

We chose to use film clips as a basis for the narratives because they allow comparable production between subjects, unlike personal narratives or interviews that show more variety; they also allow the researcher to check the pragmatic accuracy of utterances when compared to the storyline. A silent film presented the advantages of preventing linguistic comprehension

[560] Compare with 4 subjects in Kihlstedt (1998), 18 in Howard (2002) with the noticeable exception of 117 in Bergström (1995).
[561] Howard's (2002) data stretch over two years (before and after the year abroad) as do Bergström's (1995) (semester two, four and six)
[562] No native control group in Howard (2002).

problems and of allowing learners to concentrate on the communication task. *Modern Times* was chosen as it is a classic in tense/ aspect acquisition research, which would hopefully make our results more readily comparable with previous studies (Salaberry 2000: 117). Although some concerns about the validity of narratives (sequence of actions with no descriptions or reverse order) to gather a variety of tenses were raised (Noyau 1990), we showed that the chosen film clips make room for both. Moreover, the third part of the cloze test consisted of a description allowed for balancing the results found in the narratives if need be. Both an oral version « to generate less monitoring on language form » (Salaberry 2000: 119) and a written version of the narratives were required to help assessing the debated possible influence of the medium.

The inclusion of a cloze test presented several advantages: (1) preventing avoidance (Bardovi-Harlig 1992a), (2) providing a set of verbs across *Aktionsart* (Salaberry 2000), (3) offering directly comparable native data (Bardovi-Harlig 1992a) and (4) testing the difference between implicit knowledge (spontaneous use of past tenses in a narration) and explicit knowledge (choice of a past tense in a cloze test). The acceptability tests were meant to increase even further the focus on form so there were differences in that respect between our tasks. However, this last task was not always informative as some subjects were better at formulating their judgements than others, and Broady and L'Huillier's (2002) current research should shed additional useful light on that metalinguistic side of past tense choice.

2. Comparison of our results with previous studies

Until the beginning of the 1990s, most of the SLA research focused on untutored learners in the TL environment such as migrant workers (see for e.g. Véronique 1987, Dietrich et al. 1995). Tutored learners were then taken into account, starting with the lowest levels (Kaplan 1987) and as late as in 1998, Kihlstedt could qualify her research with university learners as « *de nature essentiellement exploratoire* » (p.13). Given the range of social, acquisitional and personal contexts (see introduction), the hypotheses formulated by previous studies may not be

[563] Only written narratives in Bergström (1995), only interviews in Howard (2002) and Kihlstedt (1998).

relevant to our subjects who are tutored and advanced. In this section, we intend to compare our analysis with results from previous studies. We take here as a basis the list of IL features (presented as « *zones de fragilité* ») linked to tense / aspect development compiled in Bartning (1997).

Features	Previous attestations	In our data
Coexistence of a plural personal pronoun with a verbal form based on the third person singular of –er verb	Dewaele (1994), Harley & Swain (1978), Harley (1984, 1992), Elo (1993) and Bartning (1995)	Yes, but this phenomenon is not limited to pronoun subjects and to –er verbs. There were also instances of confusions between the first and the third person
Frequent non respect of subject-verb agreement if they are non contiguous	Bartning (1990[564], 1995)	Yes, very striking in slot (4) of the cloze test; some occurrences in the narratives
Use of the PRES as an unmarked form to express the PAST	Towell (1987), Kihlstedt (1998), Harley (1984, 1992), Barzegui et al.[565] (1990)	Yes, especially in subordinated and coordinated sentences with a tendency to use *a* and *est*[566]
Underuse of the IMP with dynamic verbs, in comparison with NS	Harley (1992), Bergström (1995), Kihlstedt (1998)	No, particularly in year 1 where the IMP is overused with telic VPs
Exclusive use of the IMP with *avoir* and *être*	Bardovi-Harlig & Bergström (1996)	Not exclusive but very frequent use at all levels, even in the control group
Use of the IMP instead of the COND	Elo (1993)	No, the reverse happens: COND forms are found instead of IMP
Use of the PC with verbs of action in contexts where the IMP is expected	Harley (1992), Kihlstedt (1998), Bergström (1995)	No, very few PC instead of the IMP
Very rare use of the PQP	Towell (1987), Kihlstedt (1998)	More restricted than the PC and the PS but present at all levels
Use of the PC instead of the PQP	Kihlstedt (1998)	Yes, in the majority but this is combined with use of the IMP, the PRES and actual PQP
The PQP indicates advanced levels and is also rare in native speakers' oral production	Kihlstedt (1998)	Present at all levels and equivalent to 5.05% of all finite verbs in the control group
Difficulty to change tenses in consecutive events	Kihlstedt (1998), Bardovi-Harlig & Bofman[567] (1989)	Yes, instances of chains of PC or IMP
No sequence of tenses	Dewaele (1994)	At least, more base forms in those contexts
Use of temporal adverbials instead of past verbs	Harley & Swain (1978), Kihlstedt (1998)	Attested but not frequent

[564] Bartning, I. (1990) 'L'interlangue française des apprenants universitaires suédois – aspects de l'accord du verbe', in Halmoy, O. et al. (eds) *Actes du onzième congrès des romanistes scandinaves*. Trondheim : Tapir, pp.27-38.

[565] Barzegui, N, Connors, K., Lenoble, M. & Majkrak, B. (1990) *Acquisition du français chez des adultes à Montréal. Etudes morphosyntaxiques et discursives*. Vol.1, 2. Québec, Office de la langue française.

[566] Also note in Kihlstedt (1998 : 261).

[567] Bardovi-Harlig, K. & Bofman, T. (1989), 'Attainment of syntactic and morphological accuracy by advanced language learners', *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 11 : 17-34.

Alignment of the PP on the –er group	Harley (1992), Harley & Swain (1978)	Yes but other simplifications on a base form or better-known PP
Use of *c'est* and *il y a* as formula	Towell (1987)	Probably, as it is overused
Irregular morphology precedes regular morphology in the past	Dietrich et al. (1995)	More likely that frequent irregular verbs (*avoir* and *être*) are used as chunks; for the rest, tendency to simplification

Our data also contain new features that are not mentioned in Bartning's summary of advanced features:

- use of the PS at the highest level in monitored contexts (especially in the cloze tests where the focus is on form and not meaning);
- use of the PQP at all levels but morphology precedes functions;
- overuse of the IMP compared with the control group and especially at the lowest level with dynamic verbs;
- frequency of the passive IMP instead of the passive PC.

Lack of universally accepted criteria to classify learners according to their level makes comparison between studies difficult. However, we think that these new features may be indicative of higher levels of attainment than in previous studies. We base this assumption on the fact that some advanced features (such as the PQP) are more frequent in our data than elsewhere. Therefore, we need to check if earlier hypotheses are verified in our data, which relate to linguistically « very advanced » students. In our final conclusion, we will endeavour to do so before pointing to further avenues of research.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

In this conclusion, we will endeavour to answer the research questions set out in the introduction before considering further questions raised by our results and suggesting avenues for future research.

1. Testing of research questions

We had set ourselves three main research questions in the introduction. As a reminder, the first question aimed to test the explanatory power of the PAH for tutored learners at advanced levels of past tense acquisition and to explore alternative hypotheses such as chunking or the frequency of input. Our second question was designed to assess whether the development of past tense / aspect morphology in L2 French was linear (as suggested by the PAH) or cyclic (Bardovi-Harlig 1994,1999). Our last research question aimed to learn more about patterns of « nonnative glitches » (Andersen 1991: 316) which remained in learners' production even when they could manage to associate any aspect with any *Aktionsart.* We will now attempt to test these research hypotheses on the basis of our theoretical description and of our corpora analysis.

1.1. The PAH is not enough...

The preferential combinations of aspect and *Aktionsart* are widely attested by data, from beginners to native speakers (Binnick 1991, Klum 1961 among others) and it is likely that these convergent associations that are also the most frequent in native usage should be the first acquired.

However, our data from both advanced levels learners and native speakers of French reveal weaknesses inherent in the PAH. First, that hypothesis represents the acquisition of past tenses as a complementary linear development of the preterite and the imperfect which culminates in the ability to combine all types of aspects with all types of *Aktionsart.* In so doing, it struggles to explain why preferential combinations are still found in native usage; Andersen and Shirai (1994), aware of this flaw, postulate that learners follow the combination principle strictly, whilst native speakers do not. Furthermore, this hypothesis does not explain the overuse of the IMP with telic verbs that we noticed at level 1. Moreover, Andersen's hypothesis is limited to

the acquisition of preterite and imperfect and offers no insight into other morphological expressions of pastness such as the PQP. It would also seem that the explanatory power of the PAH is reduced to the acquisition of morphology: it does not shed any light on stylistic variables such as the use of the PS or the marking of viewpoint aspect against normal compatibilities. Finally, it adopts a local approach, in which the choice of a past tense depends only on aspect and *Aktionsart*. Thus the PAH does not account for semantics, the link between forms and functions that Kihlstedt (1998) and Howard (2002) have tried to circumscribe, and it fails to account for possible other influential factors.

The PAH also makes predictions about an order of acquisition for morphological verbal markers of the past. In its stage 1, it postulates the existence of a base form (equivalent to the PRES) before the emergence of past tense. It is followed by preterite in stage 2 and imperfect in stage 3. We will now test whether these claims are verified in our data. The concept of base form is summarized by Kihlstedt (1998: 148) as relying on three characteristics: unmarkedness, high frequency and morphological simplicity. In the area of tense-aspect, the base form is the 3rd person singular of the PRES (Bartning 1997). The PAH postulates the existence of such a form at stage 1 where the function of past is expressed by a morphological PRES (Andersen 1991) and Kihsltedt (1998: 155) attests the use of the PRES in past contexts, especially in the production of her less advanced subject. She mentions two characteristics of her « *forme de base* »:

> [...] elle affecte presque exclusivement des verbes d'état et coexiste dans une large mesure avec l'IMP.

Some isolated instances of the PRES found in our corpora seem to correspond to this description [see in the *'présent'* section the examples under (11) or (49) in year 1, under (20) in year 2 or under (80) in year 4] and this has been used to support the idea that aspect (imperfectivity) was marked before tense (past) as predicted by the PAH. However such a PRES also appears instead of a PC [see for instance, (13) and (50-51) in year 1, (21-22) and (67-68) in year 2 and (27) in year 4)] which undermines the aspectual explanation; moreover it seems more frequent in subordinated sentences that may prove difficult to handle even at advanced levels. The PRES is the most common base form but Kihlstedt (1998: 151) also postulates the existence of another base form, which may somewhat support claims that

acquisition development follows cyclic patterns in the progressive tuning of form-function mapping:

> [...] le passé composé assume ici le rôle d'une forme de base à référence « passée dans le passé », ce qui est le propre du plus-que-parfait.

This functional use of the PC is clearly attested in our data and maybe more evident because the PQP is in the process of being acquired at the advanced levels under consideration in this study. This discussion of the existence of a base form is linked to two acquisitional claims: does learning occur by chunks and does an acquisitional order exist ?

The PAH predicts that the preterite emerges before the imperfect (see also Kaplan 1987). The primacy of the PC on the IMP cannot be proved by our data as both forms have already emerged among all our subjects (despite the fact that S108 does not use the IMP in her written narrative). There is no doubt however that the PQP emerges later than the other two tenses as suggested by its scarcity or even absence from advanced acquisitional data (see also the description of the INTERFRA corpus in Bartning 1997). Bardovi-Harlig (1994) even argues that the PQP may be superfluous as double anteriority could be expressed in different ways. Our analysis confirms the later acquisition of the PQP, but reveals that that tense is more frequent in our data than in any other study, which may support the fact that our subjects are the most advanced considered to date. This conclusion is supported by the appearance of the PS in year 4 and its prominent position in the production of the two bilingual students (S402 and above all S415).

There are claims related with this order of emergence that verbs would need to be acquired in the PC before spreading to the IMP which are not supported in our data:

> Au prochain stade, l'IMP avec des verbes dynamiques émerge, mais l'apprenant semble se limiter aux verbes qui sont déjà utilisés au PC (Kihlstedt 1998: 145)

Even in year 1, a number of verbs used in the IMP are not found in the PC[568]. This also goes against the predictions of the PAH that shows a complementary progression of the verbs used in the PC and in the IMP.

However, it seems that explanations other than the PAH could be used to explain the categorical associations of aspect and *Aktionsart*. It has been shown that the input provided to learners influences acquisition (see the role of teacher talk in Kaplan 1987) so it may be that frequent forms are learned as chunks and later reinterpreted. This is supported by studies like that of Wode et al. (1978) into irregular past forms: initial appearance of correct irregular forms such as 'went, came...' are later regularized in 'goed' and 'comed' before the reapparition of correct forms. These initial formulaic uses contribute to an impression of fluency (see Bartning 1997 for *il y a* and *c'est*). Although our narratives contain frequent occurrences of some tokens (particularly the auxiliaries in the IMP), it is difficult to evaluate whether they are rote-learned chunks or conscious uses of the IMP as our research was not designed to assess input. The existence of other tokens in the IMP and the high frequency of the auxiliaries in the control group do not offer strong support to that hypothesis. It may be that our subjects have mostly mastered the morphological means to express the past and do not depend systematically on chunks so our data is not conclusive here.

1.2. Line or circle ?

Another associated claim of the PAH is the progressive linear development of tense / aspect morphology. This has been questioned by Bardovi-Harlig (1994) in her study of the expression of reverse order. She puts forward the hypothesis that the process of marking a function by pragmatic then lexical and finally morphological means (a sequence attested for past tenses in untutored acquisition in Dietrich et al. 1995 for example) may be reproduced each time a new form is to be acquired. She takes the example of the PQP where lexical means such as temporal adverbials may make for the absence of the form. Although our data contain some examples of PC + temporal adverbials to express the PQP (and so do Kihlstedt's, see for example example (129) on page 154), this is marginal and in no way a systematic IL device in our data.

However, if our data do not support convincingly Bardovi-Harlig's cyclic hypothesis, neither do they prove a linear development, which has already been suggested by Lightbown (1985: 177):

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[568] For example : *défendre, expliquer, garder, livrr, patiner, pleurer...* in the year 1 written narratives.

> Even though there are acquisition sequences, acquisition is not simply linear or cumulative, and having practised a particular form or pattern does not mean that the form or pattern is permanently established. Learners appear to forget forms and structures which they had seemed previously to master and which they had extensively practised.

First, the progressive order of acquisition from prototypical associations to the expression of viewpoint aspect is not verified, for example, our lowest level shows an overuse of non-prototypical combinations of the IMP with telic VPs that are not native-like. Moreover, different forms coexist to express the same functions at a given level and even in a given production (e.g. the PC and the PQP coexist to express double anteriority in year 4), which may support a variationist approach if there was systematicity of use. However, our analysis could not identify patterns and free variants were used in similar environments. Ellis (1985a) suggests that parallel forms in free variation come from learning hypotheses on the form-function mappings; those forms are then assigned specific functions before redundant alternative forms are eliminated. Finally, the medium of data gathering significantly influenced the morphology as shown by the greater use of the PRES in the oral narratives or the emergence of the PS at the highest level in the cloze tests.

It seems therefore that the acquisition of past tenses at advanced level is not acquired in a strictly linear or a cyclic way; it rather seems to adopt a pendular movement. Form-function mappings are tested, which results in overgeneralization and the development of IL rules which are more and more finely tuned until they approach native usage. There is however a linear dimension in the development of mastery from local (verb tokens) to global (clause, sentence and text) cues and there may be a cyclic aspect in the reliance on base forms (PRES used for PC, then PC for PQP...) before a new form is mastered.

1.3. Non-native glitches

Although stage 8 of the PAH was given as the final development of acquisition, Andersen (1991: 316) admits that some « nonnative glitches » remain in the system; however, he does not explicit what those are. Our subjects have on the whole mastered the combination of any aspect with any *Aktionsart*, although preferential combinations are found as is also the case in native usage. Yet, their use of the past tenses is not native. In this section, we will try now to circumscribe features that still distinguish learners from native speakers at that level.

First the PAH accounts for the linking of a verbal marker of past with a lexical category; it therefore plays on the combination of aspect and *Aktionsart;* the focus is on the aspectual presentation of a situation. In our distinctive representation of past tenses, this association is located in E (the moment of event). However, we have seen that cotextual elements (linguistic environment) such as the presence of an object and its type, number and negation could modify the *Aktionsart* and that aspectual complements could alter the limits of a situation. The PAH does not account for such information as it works at the word level: Andersen (1991) presents his hypothesis with *tener, juegar, enseñar* and *se partir* as examples. Moreover, given that his presentation relies on Vendler's classification where *courir* is classified as an activity and *courir un kilomètre* as an accomplishment, it is likely that it would fail to account for the influence of the cotext on the situation (E) and treat each VP as independent tokens. The PAH fails therefore to explain why the following examples are semantically non-native:

(1) Elle **courait** dehors et par accident elle a hurlé un homme qui était Charlie Chaplin. (S115)
(2) La fille **courrait** dans le rue mais elle tombait avec un homme. (S214)

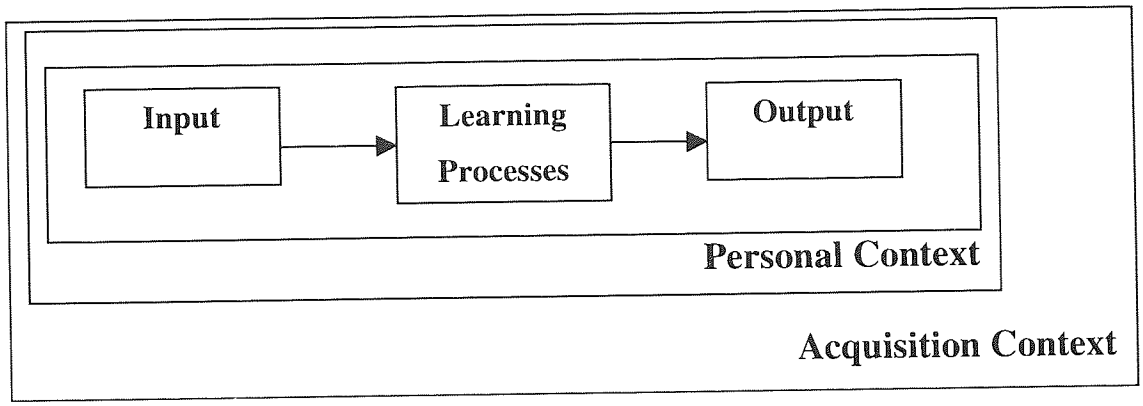
Moreover, we have shown that the distinctive representation of the French past tenses relies on three concepts: E, R (the moment of reference) and S (the moment of speech). Modifications can also be applied to the temporal information carried by R and S by the means of temporal complements and even non linguistic pragmatic information (such as double anteriority) for which the PAH does not account:

(3) ***Le prochain matin*** le magasin **ouvrait** et la femme était toujours dans le lit. (S111)
(4) En effet, après un peu de temps, un des tirants l'a reconnu. Il **travaillait** avec L'homme. (S103)

So the aspectual / temporal representation of the past tenses we have provided may facilitate the refinement of past tense acquisition in focusing learners' attention on problematic articulations of form-functions mappings conveyed by the French past tenses. Our study also drops hints about the influence of task types (e.g.: on the use of the PS) and of text genres on tense / aspect representation (e.g. narrative PRES in written vs oral narratives).

2. Limitations of the present study

In the introduction, we offered the following model of the language acquisition process.



We decided to focus on the linguistic production of advanced learners (their output) and this was elicited through a selection of linguistic tasks ranging from oral narratives to metalinguistic judgements that presented different levels of focus on forms (in the cloze tests and acceptability judgement tasks), and on functions (in the communicative tasks of narration). It has been suggested that the production exercise based on narratives may have skewed the distribution of morphological markers in favour of perfective forms, whilst descriptions may have elicited more imperfective markers. Further studies would therefore be needed to evaluate potential influences of text types on tense use such as the link between narration and preterite, description and imperfect; the role of scaffolding in interviews compared to individual production and even the topic of the text (see Klein 1994).

Our written acceptability judgements tasks did not give rise to systematic explanations of the reasons that lead to the IL choice of a form and there were wide discrepancies in quantity and in quality in the information provided by the learners. It is likely that speak-aloud procedures would help access learners' processing of a form and the development of their IL rules; the current research by Broady & L'Huillier (2002) should provide useful further information.

Finally, our research design did not permit to evaluate in depth the influence of input on acquisition. Input is undoubtedly a more difficult variable to circumscribe, with advanced

learners who come from various social and educational backgrounds than with beginners placed in the same settings. However, it would be possible to evaluate the role of input by for example testing the output of learners before giving them any explicit teaching on the past tenses, as it was the case in this research and after explicit teaching based on the representation we propose.

Despite these limitations, it is suggested that the present study has nonetheless contributed significantly to a better understanding of the use of past tenses among advanced anglophone learners. First, our data have shown that the combination of aspect and *Aktionsart* is an important factor in French past tense acquisition but that its mastery is insufficient to account for a native use of tenses. It has also appeared that acquisition does not follow a linear path as postulated by the PAH but that there are overgeneralization, random free variables and IL rules that contradict its claims. Differences in use have emerged across the variety of tasks (for example the presence of the PS in the cloze tests at the highest level or the prominent role of the PRES in oral narratives, so there seem to be parallel systems at work), and according to textual organization (past tenses were more difficult to process in complex sentences). So our study establishes the necessity of incorporating both the cotext (the linguistic context) and the non-linguistic context for the production of native-like past forms.

Our study has thus contributed to the general field by offering a research design that relies on previous studies and thus allows for comparison with them. It has shed complementary light on the domain by eliciting diverse output on a quantitative (number of subjects, four different levels) and qualitative (diversity of tasks) level and by exploring the less travelled roads of advanced levels of acquisition after the emergence of verbal morphology. In so doing, this research suggests some acquisitional hypotheses applicable to language learning at the higher levels of competence, where studies have hitherto been sparse. Finally, the present study builds a bridge between theoretical and applied linguistics by integrating the advances of theoretical research on tense and aspect and field research in SLA as well as between the Anglo-Saxon and French traditions.

On the basis of our results, we see that SLA research is faced with a complex phenomenon that is oversimplified in language learning hypotheses such as the PAH. They

provide an idealized vision of the language acquisition phenomenon and, indeed, such a mechanical approach fails to account for actual SLA processes. They only provide a partial explanation for the process as any linguistic item is influenced in its choice by the cotext and the context. So hypotheses must be proposed with care and grounded in reasoned empirical research if we want to improve our understanding of language acquisition.

ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Contrastive Analysis
COND	Conditionnel Présent (e.g. *saurait*)
CP	Conditionnel Passé (e.g. *aurait su*)
EA	Error Analysis
ESF	European Science Foundation project
FFL	French as a Foreign Language
FS	Futur Simple (e.g. *saura*)
FP	Futur Proche (e.g. *va savoir*)
IL	Interlanguage
IMP	Indicatif Imparfait (e.g. *savait*)
IMPER	Impératif Présent (e.g. *Sachez*)
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LES	Languages and European Studies
NS	Native Speaker
PAH	Primacy of Aspect Hypothesis
PA	Performance Analysis
PC	Indicatif Passé Composé (e.g. *a su*)
PP	Participe Passé (e.g. *su*)
PPRES	Participe Présent (e.g. *sachant*)
PQP	Indicatif Plus-que-Parfait (eg. *avait su*)
PRES	Indicatif Présent (e.g. *sait*)
PS	Indicatif Passé Simple (e.g. *sut*)
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SUBJ	Subjonctif présent (e.g. *qu'il sache*)
SUBJP	Subjonctif passé (e.g. *qu'il ait su*)

TL	Target Language
VP	Verb Phrase
?	Disputable
*	Incorrect

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