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Insights from Study Abroad for Language Programs

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Chapter 3

Study Abroad and the Second Language Acquisition of Tense and Aspect in French: Is Longer Better?

Lucile Duperron

Abstract

Recent research in the study abroad context (SA) has focused on the sociocognitive factors affecting second language (L2) development compared to the foreign language classroom environment (FLC). However, the effect of SA on the acquisition of complex linguistic features that resist instruction requires further examination. Furthermore, research on the impact of SA duration remains scarce. In response, this study examines the L2 French acquisition of tense and aspect in order to shed light on the interaction between learning contexts and the development of interlanguage. Twenty-two college students who enrolled in a one-year French SA program received a pretest on the contrastive use and interpretation of the imparfait and passé composé. Participants assigned to the Semester group received a posttest five months later (n = 10). Those assigned to the Year group received it 10 months later (n = 12). The test design operationalized the Aspect Hypothesis, which predicts the leading role of lexical aspect in tense assignment. All participants received the opportunity to use the passé composé and the imparfait with each of the four Vendler lexical categories of verbs, state, activity, accomplishment, and achievement in a cloze test (n = 48). Their interpretation of the imparfait versus the passé composé was also measured by an aspectual judgment test (n = 16). It was hypothesized that the Year group, because it received more input and output opportunities, would be more advanced than its Semester counterpart with regard to the overall use and interpretation of passé composé and imparfait across lexical categories of verbs. This hypothesis was not fully supported because participants were found to make statistically significant progress between Month 0 and Month 5 rather than later. Implications for SA and language program articulation as well as pedagogical treatments of tense and aspect are discussed.

The curricular decision by Drake University in 2001¹ to outsource its foreign language requirement to study abroad programs reflects the widely held perception that linguistic immersion is superior to any formal second language (L2) instruction environment when it comes to L2 attainment. However, research about the effect of learning contexts on second language acquisition (SLA) points to a more complex interaction of factors (e.g., Collentine & Freed, 2004; DeKeyser, 1991; DuFon & Churchill, 2006; Freed, 1995). By investigating linguistic, cognitive, social, and psychological variables in various learning contexts, studies show that motivation, aptitude, learning style, proficiency level, and typological distance

between languages weigh in differentially on learner linguistic outcomes in the study abroad (SA), immersion (IM), and foreign language classroom (FLC) environments (Collentine & Freed, 2004; Freed, 1998).

In researching the exact nature of the linguistic benefits associated with SA, Freed (1998) focused on fluency, which she defines as the ability “to speak with greater ease and confidence, expressed in part by a greater abundance of speech, spoken at a faster rate and characterized by fewer dysfluency-sounding pauses” (p. 50). She also noted the gain of a linguistic repertoire and communicative strategies that promote learners’ ability to develop their L2 identity. More recent studies have revisited this broad notion of fluency through systematic cognitive measures such as speed and efficiency of lexical access and attention, and pause and hesitation rates in the speech flow (Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). They confirm that the SA environment promotes oral fluency and more complex uses of narrative and discursive functions.

However, fewer studies are devoted to the acquisition of specific grammatical features in the SA context. According to Isabelli (2000), this dearth is due to the fact that “investigations of linguistic accuracy in the study abroad context are a somewhat new area of research in second language acquisition” (p. 14). This trend may also reflect the renewed interest in focus on form in SLA since long-term research in the Canadian IM environment has pointed to persistent accuracy issues (Swain, 2000). Results of SA effects on learners’ grammatical development are conflicting and do not necessarily substantiate the perceived efficacy of the SA context on broad linguistic outcomes. This disconnect could be due to differences in elicitation methodologies, participants’ language experience, and their pre-SA proficiency level. Furthermore, results do not necessarily compare gains in the SA versus the FLC contexts, which makes them harder to generalize. Evaluating previous work by DeKeyser (1991), Guntermann (1992), Ryan and Lafford (1992), and Freed (1995) set the tone by emphasizing the limited effects of SA on the acquisition of grammatical features, even with advanced learners. In a more recent attempt to investigate SA linguistic outcomes compared to FLC, Collentine (2004) found that discrete grammatical features such as prepositions, inflectional morphology, and morphological markers of number and gender are more likely to be used accurately in the FLC context, whereas SA builds L2 learners’ discursive capacity for semantic density and narration. Some studies have reexamined the claim for limited grammatical gains in the SA context. Isabelli and Nishida (2005) investigated the effect of SA naturalistic input compared to FLC on the L2 acquisition of the Spanish subjunctive and found that SA participants significantly improved their use of the subjunctive between Month 0 and Month 4, with only a moderate increase between Month 4 and Month 9. In contrast, FLC participants examined at Months 0, 4, and 9 displayed a significantly lower percentage rate of subjunctive-related structures. Howard (2001, 2002) found that the SA context impacted positively the L2 use of the *passé composé* and *imparfait* by advanced English-speaking learners of French compared to the FLC context. These results point to the benefit of SA on complex grammatical features. However, research on grammatical development in the SA environment has not settled the debate over the comparative efficacy of learning contexts. Rather, results emphasize the variation of linguistic outcomes because they arise from a variety of theoretical and pedagogical perspectives.

Although they could shed light on the interaction between the SA learning context and grammatical development, empirical studies that focus on the impact of SA duration (e.g., one semester vs. two semesters, or summer vs. semester) remain scarce. Given the proliferation of SA program options in the United States and the assumption of an organic connection with the foreign language and culture curriculum, this question begs further investigation. Several recent studies have compared the impact of one versus two semesters on grammatical development. Result comparisons point to the difficulty of predicting that impact. Isabelli (2004a, 2004b) found that the syntactic properties related to the acquisition of the null subject parameter were acquired by L2 Spanish learners only by the second semester of their SA program, which contrasts with Isabelli and Nishida's (2005) observation that the most notable gains in subjunctive use occurred between Months 0 and 4. It remains tentative at best to evaluate the impact of SA duration across studies because (1) participants are tested at different acquisitional stages, and (2) the grammatical features under investigation do not rate equally on the acquisitional difficulty scale.

In sum, results about grammar development during SA are difficult to compare and generalize because they encompass a wide range of research methodologies, grammatical features, and participants' language experiences. Learner interlanguage is often measured through incidental data collected in the context of Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPI) or sociolinguistic interviews instead of experimental research instruments that are designed to probe participants' grammatical competence and performance on specific features. Furthermore, the role of SA duration needs to be addressed more consistently in order to analyze the interaction between SA input exposure and grammatical development. In particular, more studies are needed that investigate complex grammatical features that resist acquisition in the FLC context in order to establish the relative effects of SA. Because many language programs rely on the SA experience to accelerate learners' language development in the four-year collegiate context, coordinators and instructors need more nuanced evidence to this effect.

The present study furthers the investigation of the effect of SA duration on the development of a complex grammatical feature at the interface of semantics and morphology. Specifically, it tracks how English-speaking learners of French use and understand the aspectual interaction between the *passé composé* and *imparfait*. My goal is to examine more closely the developmental processes at work during SA rather than focusing on accuracy outcomes. Previous SA studies by Howard (2001, 2002) do point to the productive L2 use of the *passé composé* and *imparfait* by advanced English-speaking learners of French. However the impact of SA duration remains to be investigated. Besides amassing experimental data concerning the effect of SA duration on the L2 use and interpretation of tense and aspect in French, this study addresses the articulation of SA in the foreign language grammar curriculum by discussing optimal timing, linguistic expectations for returning students, and pedagogical guidelines toward the L2 French acquisition of tense and aspect. The next section provides theoretical background and a review of recent findings about L2 tense and aspect acquisition in order to facilitate the interpretation of this empirical study.

L2 Acquisition of Tense and Aspect

Lexical Aspect and Grammatical Aspect

Most of the research on the development of inflectional morphology in L1 and L2 environments is organized around two major concepts: lexical aspect and grammatical aspect. The classic definition of aspect is that of Comrie (1976): “Aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation” (p. 3). This broad definition establishes the semantic contrast found between the reference to the internal constituency of a given event (e.g., the imperfective, the French *imparfait*) versus the reference to the totality of that event (e.g., the perfective, the French *passé composé*) (Binnick, 1991). Lexical aspect refers to the inherent semantic properties of verbs and their ability to convey information about the parsing of time. Language philosophers such as Vendler (1967) have proposed a fourfold semantically based classification of lexical aspect to distinguish between verbs: state, activity, accomplishment, and achievement. State verbs do not convey temporal information about the beginning, unfolding, or ending stages of events. For example, *to know* is a state verb. Activity verbs describe the unfolding of situations or events while implying their beginning point. For example, *to walk* is an activity verb. Accomplishment verbs focus on the endpoint of that process, as in *to reach*. Finally, achievement verbs collapse the beginning, unfolding, and the ending stages of a situation into a single event or action. For example, *to hit* is an achievement verb.

Contrary to lexical aspect, grammatical aspect is encapsulated in inflectional morphology (tense) and “refers basically to aspectual distinctions that are *obligatorily* encoded in a specific language. . . [that is]. . . when the particular conditions for that particular aspectual distinction in that particular language are met, an explicit linguistic device (usually an auxiliary or inflection) must be used” (Andersen, 1991, p. 308). In other words, grammatical aspect refers to the encoding of aspect via morphological means. This distinction is illustrated by the difference between *she slept* and *she was sleeping*. The semantic information carried by the preterit tense in *she slept* yields a bounded interpretation of the sentence: We understand that the action of sleeping has reached an end. Conversely, the semantic information carried by the past progressive in *she was sleeping* yields an unbounded interpretation that does not inform us about the ending point of the situation described by the verb: We focus on its internal constituency. If we compare the semantic features of grammatical aspect and lexical aspect, we observe that the preterit tense conveys comparable aspectual information to accomplishment and achievement verbs since they all imply the completion of a process. Similarly, the past progressive tense and state and activity verbs share common aspectual properties because they emphasize the process itself.

The Aspect Hypothesis

Because the semantic features of grammatical aspect overlap with those of lexical aspect, it has been hypothesized that learners are prone to combine them when they map out inflectional morphology (Andersen, 1991, 1994). L1 and L2 research has shown indeed that language learners tend to process for the aspectual dimension of events or situations carried by the meaning of verbs when they assign tense

before they are able to distinguish the aspectual properties of inflectional morphology. In other words, “verbal morphology initially develops to encode aspect but not tense” (Andersen, 1991, p. 306). This phenomenon is referred to as the Aspect Hypothesis. It predicts that learners assign inflectional morphology redundantly with the inherent lexical aspect carried by the meaning of verbs. Thus, the Aspect Hypothesis predicts the following sequences:

At the onset of acquisition, (1) learners are more likely to use perfective tenses with achievement and accomplishment verbs before they can extend their use to activity and state verbs. (2a) In languages that morphologically separate imperfective tenses from perfective tenses such as French, the use of the imperfective appears later than the perfective. (2b) The use of the imperfective appears first with state and activity verbs, and extends to accomplishment and achievement verbs. (3) In languages that mark progressive aspect morphologically, the use of progressive forms appears with activity verbs and extends to accomplishments and achievements. (4) The use of the progressive is rarely overgeneralized: very few usages of the progressive are reported with state verbs, at least in L1 acquisition. Table 1 (Li & Shirai, 2000) illustrates the directionality of these developmental patterns and the order in which they appear. The next section summarizes the L2 research substantiating the Aspect Hypothesis.

Table 1
Predicted order of development of tense—aspect morphology (Li & Shirai, 2000)

	State	Activity	Accomplishment	Achievement
Perfective past	4←	3←	2←	1
Imperfective	1→	2→	3→	4
Progressive	?<==	1→	2→	3

Learning Contexts

Second language research on the acquisition of tense and aspect covers the IM, SA, and FLC contexts. Many studies point to the prevalence of the Aspect Hypothesis. This section focuses on the research most relevant to the learning context and the language under study (French) because several comprehensive reports on L2 tense and aspect acquisition already exist (e.g., Ayoun & Salaberry, 2005; Bardovi-Harlig, 2000; Li & Shirai, 2000; Salaberry & Shirai, 2002).

The analysis of instructed learners' narrations in the past indicates that inflectional morphology appears early and productively in the FLC context because of the steady provision of pedagogical input (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). However, it does not follow that learners assign tenses correctly. In other words, inflectional morphology is more transparent and therefore less difficult to acquire than the aspectual information that it encodes. Studies of L2 French show that the *imparfait* is underrepresented in learners' output, compared to the robust use of the *passé composé* (e.g., Bergström, 1995). These findings have led to the hypothesis that the *passé composé* is acquired before the *imparfait* in the learners' developing system: Even though it is morphologically more complex, the relationship between its form and its aspectual meaning is more transparent and, therefore, more learnable. Research with advanced

L2 learners of French indicates that the appropriate use of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* continues to be difficult to acquire (e.g., Coppeters, 1987) and that “despite productive morphological marking, the grammaticalization of past time reference is not yet fully attained” (Kihlstedt, 2002, p. 353). Research thus shows that instructed learners display much variation in their L2 use of tense and aspect. Needless to say, the acquisition of the French *passé composé* and *imparfait* by L2 learners remains one of the persisting pedagogical challenges in the FLC context.

Naturalistic input-intensive contexts such as IM and SA yield mixed results about the L2 acquisition of tense and aspect. IM research involving L2 French emphasizes the tendency of this grammatical feature to resist long-term instructional treatments (e.g., Harley, 1989, 1992; Kaplan, 1987). SA studies that examine tense and aspect development in the Romance languages point to some productive gains, yet to the same L2 use variation found in the FLC context (e.g., Howard, 2001, 2002). It must also be pointed out that some SA results are drawn from larger questions about linguistic outcomes instead of originating from theoretical investigations of tense and aspect development. Among other linguistic features, L2 Spanish learners are shown to improve on past tense selection (Isabelli, 2000) and tense accuracy (Guntermann, 1995; Collentine, 2004). Schell (2000) provides a Universal Grammar-based longitudinal analysis of tense and aspect development by nine L1 English learners of Spanish over nine months. Her observations point to the benefit of SA exposure on interlanguage development. Results suggest that participants experimented with L2 lexical and grammatical combinations of aspect as they gradually shed the formal features governing their L1 tense and aspect morphology. With regard to L2 Italian, Giacalone-Ramat (2002) reported on the progress made by a one-year German exchange student and four English L1 one-year exchange students by using guided narratives and recall tasks. Focusing on the acquisition of imperfective forms, she found it to be influenced by verbs’ semantic class (cf. the Aspect Hypothesis) and observed that learners backslid to unmarked base forms of tense.

Only two studies by Howard (2001, 2002) target the relative impact of the SA versus FLC learning contexts on the variation characterizing the L2 use of tense and aspect. They compared oral interviews by 18 advanced English-speaking learners of French. They were distributed among (1) six participants about to go abroad, (2) six participants returning from a one-year SA program, and (3) six participants who completed the next level of instruction instead of going abroad. Results point to the superiority of the SA experience over FLC. Despite their struggle to use unrestricted and underrepresented combinations of tense and aspect such as state verbs in the *passé composé* or achievement verbs in the *imparfait*, SA participants were able to produce narratives in the past with a higher level of morphological accuracy. They also demonstrated an increased range of aspectual contexts, especially in the *imparfait*. Finally, Howard noted that learners’ contextual use of past time morphology was similar for both the SA and FLC learners.

In sum, the combined FLC, IM, and SA contexts suggest that L2 French tense and aspect is acquired only gradually, resists instruction, and displays a large amount of variation. Results by Howard (2001, 2002) provide evidence substantiating the beneficial effect of SA over FLC, thus attesting to the role of SA in developing complex narrative functions (cf. Collentine, 2004). However, they do not report on the

interaction between SA duration and L2 tense and aspect development. This question needs further investigation if we want to evaluate the role and timing of SA in the foreign language curriculum. Finally, SA research devoted to grammar acquisition remains hard pressed to develop elicitation methodologies that attend to the specific grammatical feature under study in order to draw more reliable data.

The Present Study

Measuring L2 Tense and Aspect Development

The rich data provided by the studies reviewed above raise some methodological issues because most rely primarily on learners' free productions. First, the findings deriving from interviews and free or recall narrative tasks are limited to what learners do at the particular moment when they are requested to perform the task. For example, they may not exhibit some combinations of tense and aspect in the data if the narrative context does not lend itself to it, and the possibility that participants may or may not already know these combinations cannot be verified. Furthermore, some tasks may not have been specifically designed to elicit the use of tense and aspect because they derive from holistic OPI interviews, which may obscure results further.

To remedy these performance and design issues, the testing instrumentation developed for production in this study operationalized grammatical aspect via a cloze test that provided participants with repeated obligatory contexts for the contrastive use of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* with each and four of the verb semantic classes associated with lexical aspect: state, activity, accomplishment, and achievement ($n = 48$). The cloze test was designed as a letter exchange between two friends to ensure that all items were embedded at the discourse level. Participants were instructed to select the *imparfait* or the *passé composé* form that was most amenable to the context of the items they received. Because the participants were tested on their ability to differentiate between the semantic properties of inflectional morphology instead of their ability to produce target forms, verb forms were provided for each item. This decision was made for two reasons: (1) to ensure that participants would not carry out two competing tasks, and (2) because previous results (Bergström, 1995; Giacalone-Ramat, 2002) indicate that intermediate learners tend to substitute nonpast forms in contexts that call for the use of imperfective morphology, a behavior that can obscure the scoring procedure. As for mental representations of tense and aspect, they were elicited by an aspectual judgment task that operationalized the participants' ability to rate on a scale from 1 to 5 the acceptability of 16 sentences. Their logic depended on the contrastive use of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*, as shown in Example 1 (for a full description of aspectual judgment tasks, see Slabakova & Montrul, 2002).

(1)

La cérémonie a été à 5 heures, mais elle a commencé à 7 heures.
(illogical)

(The ceremony took place at 5 pm, but it started at 7 pm.)

Le spectacle était à 3 heures, mais il a commencé à 4 heures. (logical)

(The show was scheduled for 3 pm, but it started at 4 pm.)

For reliability purposes, a control group of 10 native speakers of French performed on both these tests as a final stage of their development and reached a 90% reliability agreement on each item. Contrary to the instrumentation reviewed in previous studies, these tests control systematically within a balanced design how learners use and interpret the interaction of grammatical aspect (i.e., how inflectional morphology carries information about the parsing of time) with lexical aspect (i.e., how the inherent meaning of verbs carries information about the parsing of time). Thanks to the testing instrument's ability to track this interaction systematically, the study offers a more detailed vista into the developmental stages of L2 French tense and aspect acquisition. Because previous research on the effect of learning contexts (Howard, 2001, 2002) suggests that L2 learners of French benefit from the SA context compared to the FLC environment, this study seeks to establish if and how the amount of exposure to extensive naturalistic input, as it distinguishes the SA context from FLC, affects L2 learners' acquisition of the *imparfait* and the *passé composé*. In other words, is longer better? SA was defined in this study as participation in the L2 speech community both in the untutored and the formal L2 classroom environment (Freed, 1995). In this case, all participants were hosted by a French family and were enrolled in academic courses at the university as well as at their home institution's study abroad center. However, they did not take formal grammar courses in French as a second language during their stay abroad.

Research Questions

1. How do English-speaking intermediate learners of French at the onset of SA (a) use and (b) interpret the distinction between the semantic features of the *imparfait* in contrast to the *passé composé* across lexical categories of verbs, as measured by two aspectual elicitation tasks on a pretest?
2. How does SA length of stay impact English-speaking learners' ability to (a) use and (b) interpret the distinction between the semantic features of the French *imparfait* and the *passé composé*, as measured by the difference in scores on the pretest and posttest elicitation tasks?

Participants

Participants were 22 college students who were enrolled in a one-year study abroad program in Toulouse, France, upon completion of a fifth-semester college course.² Forty-five one-year students who had started their SA program originally were invited to participate, and only those who had completed all parts of the tests and whose pretest scores did not deviate significantly from the average were retained. The results of an ANOVA (type 3 test of fixed effects) confirmed that there was no statistically significant score variance at the pretest level among participants ($f = 2.19$; $p = .25$). The average age of the students was 20.8 years. Some had previous language experience in Bulgarian, Chinese, or German. Of 22 students, 17 had spent an average of three weeks in France at some point before their study abroad program. They had learned French for an average of 3.6 semesters in high school and 3.8 semesters in college. Participants were all highly motivated students, with a collective grade point average

of 3.67. Seven were French majors, ten were double-majors in French and another discipline such as international studies, history, physics, and international business and management, and five were pursuing a major other than French such as mathematics, theater, and international business and management.

Procedure and Scoring

Data were collected between September 2002 and January 2004.³ All participants received a pretest on the contrastive use and interpretation of the *imparfait* and *passé composé* during the first week of their SA orientation program. The participants assigned to the Semester group ($n = 12$) received a posttest five months later, while participants assigned to the Year group ($n = 10$) received the same posttest 10 months later. Pre- and posttest group score differences between Semester and Year participants and within each group were used to investigate the impact of SA duration on the L2 development of tense and aspect in French. Data were submitted to a series of ANOVAs of fixed effects with Subject as random effect, and with a p value set at .05.

Forty-eight items were scored on the cloze test. Each correct answer received one point. No point was awarded if the item was not circled as instructed. Points were evenly distributed across lexical categories of verbs (state, activity, accomplishment, and achievement) and grammatical aspect (the selection of the *imparfait* vs. the *passé composé* for each lexical class). They were interpreted as group mean percentages of appropriate use of tense per lexical class. Acquisition was operationalized as the participants' ability to choose as many appropriate verb forms in the obligatory contexts provided by the cloze test. Because it has been observed that L2 learners display a wide range of use of tense and aspect morphology despite their placement level (Bardovi-Harlig, 1994, 1998) the participants' actual performance rates at the onset of the SA program were used to determine their acquisitional level across lexical classes of verbs.

Sixteen items were scored on the aspectual judgment task. Items were embedded in a series of sentences, albeit not at the discourse level, and were distributed across three lexical categories of verbs (state, accomplishment, achievement, minus activity verbs)⁴ and grammatical aspect (*passé composé* vs. *imparfait*). Participants were instructed to rate the logic of each sentence in the aspectual judgment test by means of a scale because the purpose was to measure the extent to which their scores converged toward or diverged from the correct interpretation. Scores were established as the participants' mean accuracy scores, with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 5 for each answer they provided. Contrary to the control group of native speakers tested before the study and whose answers converged to either a score of 1 (when they rated a sentence to be completely illogical), or a score of 5 (when they rated a sentence to be completely logical), it was assumed that the participants would exhibit the tendency to spread their responses across the whole scale, because they would have more difficulty interpreting how the interaction between the semantic features of the *imparfait* and the *passé composé* affected the target sentences' logical content (cf. Slabakova & Montrul, 2002).

Findings

A description of the participants' developmental stage of tense and aspect acquisition at the onset of SA is provided first. Results are discussed in light of the Aspect Hypothesis, whose predictions posit the interaction between lexical aspect and grammatical aspect in learners' development of inflectional morphology.

A two-sample *t* test was conducted to investigate whether the mean score variance on the cloze pretest between the designated Year and the Semester groups differed significantly or not. Results indicated no statistically significant difference ($t = -0.60, p = .55$). The same calculation was performed with the aspectual judgment test and yielded a similar pattern ($t = 0.03, p = .86$). These findings thus established that both groups performed similarly on the pretest and, by extension, that they had achieved at the time of the study a similar acquisitional stage of tense and aspect, as measured against the predictions of the Aspect Hypothesis. It was crucial to establish from the start that the potential differences in scores found at the posttest level between both groups could not be attributed to the participants' differences in acquisitional level at the onset of the study.

An overview of the means for the cloze pretest suggests that participants exhibited overall a higher rate of appropriate use of the *passé composé* over the use of the *imparfait* (Table 2).

Table 2

Cloze pretest overall mean rates of appropriate use of imperfective versus perfective by lexical class ($n = 22$)

	<i>n</i> items	Mean Score (%)	<i>SD</i>
State			
<i>Imparfait</i>	6	74.2	0.42
<i>Passé Composé</i>	6	56.8	0.49
Activity			
<i>Imparfait</i>	6	63.63	0.47
<i>Passé Composé</i>	6	74.2	0.43
Accomplishment			
<i>Imparfait</i>	6	56.5	0.48
<i>Passé Composé</i>	6	81.8	0.38
Achievement			
<i>Imparfait</i>	6	72.3	0.44
<i>Passé Composé</i>	6	77.3	0.42

The *passé composé* rates were higher with accomplishment and achievement verbs, with the combination of accomplishment verbs in the *passé composé* reaching a strong acquisitional rate over 80%. This trend confirms the prediction of the Aspect Hypothesis that learners are more likely to use perfective tenses with achievement and accomplishment verbs before they can extend their use to activity and state verbs. Rates of appropriate use of the *imparfait* were higher with state

verbs, but they were also unexpectedly high with achievement verbs considering that this unprototypical combination is hypothesized to develop at a later stage. Rates of appropriate use dropped considerably with state verbs requiring the *passé composé* and with accomplishment verbs requiring the *imparfait*. These results are consistent with the prediction of the Aspect Hypothesis that the appropriate use of the *imparfait* extends gradually to telic verbs (accomplishment and achievement), and the *passé composé* extends gradually to atelic verbs (state and activity).

The aspectual judgment test investigated how participants interpreted the semantic properties of the *imparfait* versus *passé composé* across three lexical categories of verbs: state, accomplishment, and achievement (Table 3). Pretest results indicated that participants scored the highest on distractor items, which was expected because the rating of the propositional content in the distractor items (logical vs. illogical) did not rely on the contrastive use of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. For example, learners were asked to evaluate the logic of the following sentence: "I got sick and I went to the doctor's office." The second highest score was reported with state verbs in the *imparfait*. In other words, participants tended to accept the sentences that contained this combination as logical. Therefore, they were able to interpret correctly the semantic property of the *imparfait* tense when it was combined with state verbs. However, this result was mitigated by the fact that they scored the lowest on sentences with state verbs in the perfective. In other words, participants tended to reject the fact that sentences with state verbs in the *passé composé* were illogical. Instead, they tended to accept them as logical sentences. Therefore, participants were not able to interpret the semantic property of the *passé composé* with state verbs. All other results remain in the range of three, which suggests that participants were unable to decide, based on their knowledge of the semantic properties of imperfective versus perfective morphology in French across lexical categories of verbs, whether the target items yielded a logical or an illogical meaning.

Table 3
Aspectual judgment pretest overall mean interpretation rate of imperfective versus perfective by lexical class ($n = 22$)

	<i>f</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>
State			
<i>Imparfait (L)</i>	44	4.02	1.24
<i>Passé Composé (I)</i>	44	2.87	1.42
Accomplishment			
<i>Imparfait (L)</i>	44	3.65	1.29
<i>Passé Composé (I)</i>	44	3.06	1.28
Achievement			
<i>Imparfait (L)</i>	44	3.06	1.43
<i>Passé Composé (I)</i>	44	3.65	1.34
Distractor	88	4.21	1.09

Note: L = Logical, I = Illogical.

To answer how SA duration affected participants' development of tense and aspect, an ANOVA was used to determine which variables caused variation in the participants' score differences between the cloze pre- and posttest. Results yielded no significant effect for the Semester variable alone and thus suggested that the length of stay in and of itself did not have a statistically significant impact on participants' change of scores between the time of the pretest and the time of the posttest. However, there was a high level of interaction between the Grammatical Aspect variable, the Lexical Aspect variable, and the Semester variable (Table 4). In other words, the semantic properties of verbs (lexical aspect) and inflectional morphology (grammatical aspect) were likely to influence participants' decisions and affect score variation on their performance.

Table 4

ANOVA for sources of variation on estimate of change of scores between cloze pre- and posttest

Source of Variation	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Between</i>			
Semester	1	0.72	.40
<i>Within</i>			
Lexical Aspect	3	2.11	.09
Grammatical Aspect	2	0.03	.9
Lexical Aspect × Grammatical Aspect	6	2.41	.02*
Semester × Grammatical Aspect	2	6.47	.001*
Semester × Lexical Aspect × Grammatical Aspect	9	3.58	.0004*

Note: Type 3 test of fixed effects.

*Indicates a statistically significant result.

An analysis of differences of least squares means was conducted on the results for the changes of scores for the Semester versus Year participants in order to probe further the three-way interaction noted below (Table 5). Results show that Semester participants' change of score was statistically significant compared to Year participants on the use of the *passé composé* with activity, accomplishment, and achievement verbs. However, the Year participants' change of score was statistically significant compared to the Semester participants on the use of the *passé composé* with state verbs and the *imparfait* with achievement verbs. These results confirm the developmental Aspect Hypothesis that L2 learners need time to use verbs appropriately whose inherent semantic features are not congruent with the semantic features of inflectional morphology in the past. Whereas SA learners assigned to the Semester group were able to consolidate their use of the *passé composé* with activity, accomplishment, and achievement verbs, only those SA learners assigned to the Year group extended their use to both ends of the developmental spectrum of tense and aspect acquisition.

Table 5

ANOVA for the interaction between the variables Semester \times Lexical Aspect \times Grammatical Aspect for the change of scores on cloze pre- and posttest: between factors

Effect	Estimate	SE	df	t	p
<i>Semester vs. Year</i>					
State \times <i>Passé Composé</i>	-0.27	0.12	220	-2.24	.026*
Activity \times <i>Passé Composé</i>	0.26	0.12	220	2.2	.029*
Accomplishment \times <i>Passé Composé</i>	0.25	0.12	220	2.04	.04*
Achievement \times <i>Imparfait</i>	-0.5	0.15	220	-3.16	.001*
Achievement \times <i>Passé Composé</i>	0.30	0.12	220	2.81	.005*

Note: Analysis of differences of least squares means. Only statistically significant results are reported.

ANOVA measures on the aspectual judgment posttest indicate no overall statistically significant change of scores when comparing the results of the Semester and the Year participants ($t = 0.07, p = .79$). However, four estimates of change of scores were statistically significant when assessing the Year participants' results separately, while those same four estimates did not fluctuate for the Semester participants (Table 6). These changes obtain for the combinations of state, accomplishment, and achievement verbs in the *passé composé* and for accomplishment verbs in the *imparfait*. In other words, Year participants improved their ability to rate sentences with state, accomplishment, and achievement verbs in the *passé composé* as being illogical and accomplishment verbs in the *imparfait* as being logical. These findings noticeably correlate with the Year participants' score gains compared to the Semester group on uncommon combinations of tense and aspect in the cloze test. They suggest that the Year participants had further developed their acquisition of the semantic features of French tense and aspect.

Table 6

ANOVA for the effect of the variables Semester \times Lexical Aspect \times Grammatical Aspect on change of scores between aspectual judgment pre- and posttest

Source of Variation	Estimate	t	p
<i>Year Participants</i>			
State \times <i>Passé Composé</i>	0.85	2.30	.02*
Accomplishment \times <i>Passé Composé</i>	1.15	3.11	.002*
Achievement \times <i>Passé Composé</i>	0.8	2.17	.03*

Note: Analysis of differences of least squares means. Only statistically significant results are reported.

Discussion

Because the ANOVA results measuring the pre- to posttest score differences established that the Semester variable alone (i.e., SA duration) was not the causal variable in the L2 developmental pattern of tense and aspect, it follows that the sheer amount of intensive naturalistic input opportunities provided in the SA context is not sufficient to explain participants' score gains. However, this result should not be interpreted as a limitation of the SA context but rather as a reminder that learners acquire complex grammar features in a meandering and recursive way. As predicted by the Aspect Hypothesis, we know that the semantic features encapsulated in verbs and inflectional morphology are highly correlated with learners' developmental stages of tense and aspect. Furthermore, the Distributional Bias Hypothesis (Andersen, 1990; Li & Shirai, 2000; Shirai, 1991) portrays the role of input in the acquisition of tense and aspect as a delaying factor because caregiver speech and naturalistic input tend to provide mostly restricted examples of tense and aspect combinations that do not challenge learners' hypotheses. Studies in the FLC context also point to the role of pedagogical input in classroom acquisition patterns of tense and aspect (Ayoun, 2004; Bardovi-Harlig, 1995; Duperron, 2003). In the case of SA, learners are just as likely to encounter naturalistic input that will not challenge their predictions. Furthermore, when investigating the question "Is longer better?", it would be false to assume that the results of this study mean that Semester participants were at a distinct disadvantage compared to Year participants. In fact, a comparison of their overall score difference between the pre- and posttest cloze results shows that they improved their performance significantly ($p = .02$). In contrast, Year participants' overall scores did not improve as dramatically, even though they started with a slight advantage ($p = .33$). Table 7 indicates how the Semester participants' cloze test mean raw scores were quite similar to the Year participants' with a 76% rate of appropriate use compared to 77% at the end of their respective SA program.

Table 7

Descriptive statistics for the Year vs. Semester group overall scores on the cloze pre- and posttests

	<i>n</i>	Pretest		Posttest		Score Difference	
		Mean Score (%)	<i>SD</i>	Mean Score (%)	<i>SD</i>	Score Difference	<i>SD</i> Score Difference
Year	10	71	0.07	76	0.02	+5	0.17
Semester	12	68	0.11	77	0.13	+9	0.11

It would thus appear that SA learners made progress quickly during the first five months of their immersion experience. Even though the Semester and the Year participants in this study were distributed between two distinct groups, this result is comparable to Isabelli and Nishida's (2005) longitudinal findings on the acquisition of

the subjunctive in Spanish, in that their SA participants made significant progress during Months 0 to 4 and slowed down between Months 4 and 9. However, their results are restricted to the productive use of a grammatical feature and did not investigate the development of underlying grammatical competence. In the present study, overall representation of tense and aspect was measured by an aspectual judgment test. Results suggest that the overall interpretation rate did not fluctuate significantly for the Semester group ($p = .33$). However, it was on the verge of statistical significance for the Year group ($p = .051$). This difference would suggest that Year participants were moving onto the next acquisitional stage of tense and aspect during the second half of their SA program, while Semester participants were still experimenting with the semantic features of the *imparfait* versus the *passé composé*.

Finally, the fact that participants made significant gains during the first five months of their immersion experience points to the beneficial effect of SA. Whereas the present study did not aim to compare the effects of learning contexts on the L2 acquisition of tense and aspect, Howard (2001) showed that the acquisition of L2 French tense and aspect in the SA context is accelerated “in terms of significantly increased usage of the past time forms in their respective contexts. . . and the IMP [imperfect]. . . is used more significantly in a larger range of imperfective contexts” (p. 136). This study suggests that fifth-semester learners can make such gains in the first five months of SA.

Pedagogical Implications and Conclusions

The preliminary results of this study suggest that the advantage of SA lies in accelerating L2 learners' productive use of inflectional morphology (cf. Howard, 2001, 2002). The fifth-semester learners who participated in this study were able to benefit from the input-rich environment that presumably characterized their SA experience. As indicated by their posttest, both Semester and Year participants, although they had not yet fully acquired the L2 French aspectual system, had certainly increased their range of appropriate use.⁵ This finding is important news for instructors at the advanced level because results point to learners' readiness for further instruction. As studies comparing the effects of SA versus FLC contexts show us, FLC tends to be conducive to grammatical accuracy (e.g., Collentine, 2004). Because “instruction can work in a complex way by making salient the less obvious aspects of the input” (Skehan, 1998, p. 49), it is thus crucial to provide learners with rich opportunities for form-meaning connections. This practice should be integrated not only through the basic language sequence, but also at the advanced level to mitigate the articulation issues that plague four-year collegiate language programs (Maxim, 2004). In particular, advanced students enrolled in content classes are assumed to attend to their course material like native speakers when they fundamentally remain L2 learners.

Facilitating form-meaning connections in the instructed context means identifying first what factors are responsible for slowing down L2 grammar acquisition. In establishing what makes L2 grammar difficult to learn, DeKeyser (2005) explains that the “transparency of form-meaning relationships to a learner who is processing language for meaning. . . determines the difficulty of acquisition” (p. 3). The prolific

literature on tense and aspect development can thus inspire instructional practices that maximize acquisition. Language program coordinators and instructors will find there what makes L2 tense and aspect potentially difficult to acquire. Based on these predicted difficulties, they can articulate teaching principles and practices that are amenable to the productive processing of form and meaning connections in the FLC context. Since the L2 acquisition of tense and aspect is documented to resist instruction (e.g., Ayoun, 2004; Harley, 1992; Kaplan, 1987), it is suggested that a recursive framework for promoting form-meaning connections about the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* is necessary from the beginning to the advanced levels of instruction.

Understanding Why Tense and Aspect Is Difficult to Acquire

Why do English learners of French developing their L2 knowledge and use of tense and aspect have a hard time using French past tenses appropriately? Blyth (2005) provides a detailed list of criteria that predict the difficulty of grammatical structures. We focus here on the inherent linguistic complexity of Romance tense and aspect on the one hand and the environmental role of input on the other hand.

One major linguistic difficulty originates in several differences in the codification of tense and aspect between French and English. This asymmetrical relationship makes form-meaning connections more opaque to L2 learners (Blyth, 2005; Salaberry, 2005). In particular, the opposition between perfective and imperfective aspect in the past is obligatorily encoded through morphology in French (and other Romance languages), whereas it is not necessarily the case in English. (For a detailed analysis, see Ayoun, 2005; Labelle, 2002.) To illustrate this point, the preterit tense appearing in Example 2 carries two interpretations that only contextualization, not inflectional morphology, can differentiate in English (Slabakova, 1999). In contrast, Example 3 shows that the French language allows one to differentiate unambiguously between the culmination and the unfolding of an event through morphological means.

(2)

He ate apples.

Telic interpretation: *He ate apples* (on one occasion).

Atelic interpretation: *He ate apples* (habitually).

(3)

Il a mangé des pommes.

Telic interpretation: *He ate apples* (on one occasion).

Il mangeait des pommes

Atelic interpretation: *He ate apples* (habitually).

Furthermore, Montrul and Slabakova (2002) observe that the semantic features of past imperfective morphology in Romance languages such as French and Spanish do not match evenly the morphological realization of the imperfective in English, another L1/L2 contrast that is predicted to delay acquisition.⁶ In particular, the *imparfait* tense encapsulates different aspectual meanings that are discourse-sensitive [i.e., imperfective (emphasis on the process), iterative (emphasis on habit and the repetition of an activity), and durative (emphasis on the state of events or activities in the past)] (Ayoun, 2005). However, the English language distinguishes between

these aspectual meanings with different morphological means, as illustrated in the difference between *she would cross the river early* (emphasis on habit) and *she was crossing the river early* (emphasis on the process).

Finally, we have seen that a major environmental factor compounds the inherent difficulty of acquiring tense and aspect. L1 naturalistic input and L2 instructed input are shown to provide highly redundant information about the interaction between grammatical and lexical aspect. In particular, input reinforces learners' predictions that the aspectual meaning of achievement and accomplishment verbs combines naturally with the aspectual meaning of perfective morphology, and state and activity verbs with imperfective morphology (Shirai, 1991). This phenomenon is compounded by the discourse of pedagogical grammar, in which rules of tense and aspect are presented as entertaining one-to-one relationships. These simple associations are congruent with learners' cognitive strategies to organize their grammatical knowledge. However, rules gradually appear contradictory and confusing to learners as they reach more sophisticated descriptions. Input-based research suggests that when learners are presented with uncommon combinations of tense and aspect, they start experimenting with them (e.g., Duperron, 2003). With this knowledge in mind, the next section discusses pedagogical treatments that promote exposure to and the production of a fuller range of tense and aspect combinations.

Facilitating Tense and Aspect Instruction at Home and Abroad

In the foreign language and culture college curriculum, narrative tasks are typically developed when learners are exposed to the formation and use of past tenses, throughout the first two years of instruction. Although pedagogical grammars and classroom input do not necessarily curb learners' cognitive strategies about tense and aspect, they provide early and productive practice. Indeed, the findings of this study point to the readiness of fifth-semester learners to benefit from SA with regard to tense and aspect development because participants were able to make statistically significant progress within the first five months of their SA program. These figures thus indirectly address the question of optimal SA timing and the intuitive articulation of academic SA programs after the basic language sequence. Specifically, they suggest that fifth-semester learners have reached an acquisitional threshold about tense and aspect that will help them benefit from SA.

However, the results of this study also suggest that advanced learners would continue to benefit from further instruction, especially from focused exposure to the imperfective. In particular, they indicate that SA students would be highly receptive to instruction because they possess the necessary linguistic maturity. As advanced by the Teachability Hypothesis (Pienemann, 1989, 1998), instruction is more likely to be beneficial only when language learners are developmentally ready for the linguistic features being taught.⁷ Although language coordinators typically operate at the basic level of instruction, we are reminded that an inclusive language and culture curriculum must articulate language and content objectives at all levels to be successful.

Given the documented complexity of tense and aspect acquisition and its sensitivity to the semantics of verbs, discursive rules, and the distributional bias in the

input, it is proposed that learners will benefit best from recursive and contextualized focus on form in the communicative language classroom and in the content classroom (Doughty & Williams, 1998). As Pica (2002) reminds us, three conditions must be met in order to maximize L2 acquisition: Learners must receive repeated opportunities for input processing (positive evidence), (2) feedback (negative evidence), and (3) output (hypothesis testing). The next section illustrates how these opportunities can be implemented in the FLC context. It is reasonable to ensure that novice learners focus primarily on the morphology of past tenses (Blyth, 2005). However, language tasks can be designed to help learners identify and shed early on those cognitive strategies responsible for delaying the processing of form and meaning connections. In the case of tense and aspect acquisition, learners need to be exposed to the full range of grammatical and lexical aspect and to various text types. Examples of level-appropriate instructional goals and tasks follow.

Language coordinators at all levels of instruction can develop and share across levels of instruction a database of contextualized uncommon combinations of tense and aspect (e.g., the imperfective with achievement verbs or the perfective with state verbs). One purpose is to counterbalance the natural bias found in the distribution of classroom input. This input manipulation is known as input flooding. The underlying assumption is that it provides positive evidence about tense and aspect combinations. In other words, learners are exposed implicitly to what language allows without receiving explicit rules.

To meet the communicative goals of the foreign language classroom, the database must be organized around a variety of tasks in a format that provides a content and level-adaptive template. In particular, tasks must include (1) sentence- and discourse-level items modified for vocabulary and lexical classes of verbs; (2) opportunities for input, output, and negotiation of meaning; and (3) the four skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing, plus cultural knowledge. Learners at the novice and intermediate levels can engage in referential or affective tasks in which they read and respond to a series of related statements that derive from their course content.⁸ When engaging in discourse, they can read and produce a repertoire of simple stories whose context primes the complex aspectual functions of the *imparfait*, such as the retelling of a dream. Montredon (1987) offers a comprehensive and ingenious pedagogical framework to that effect. Duperron and Kaplan (2006) discuss a recursive teaching framework of tense and aspect based on film analysis in a third- and fourth-semester content-based course about World War II. More advanced learners enrolled in content classes can benefit from an explicit linguistic analysis of literary texts, which, by nature, are more likely to demonstrate uncommon combinations of the *imparfait* and the *passé composé*. For example, in the sentence “à 11 heures, la Marquise se mourait” (“at 11 o’clock, the Marquise was in the throes of death”), the death event announced by *mourir*, an achievement verb, is described in slow motion because of the use of the *imparfait*, which dramatizes it. Maingueneau and Philippe (2000) provide an extensive set of exercises for the linguistic analysis of French literary texts. Literary excerpts have an important role to play in the database not only for explicit instruction in the advanced classroom through content, but also because they expose learners to literacy practices and text genres beyond the sphere of the basic communicative language framework (Maxim, 2004).

In gauging the effect of SA duration on L2 learners' development of a complex feature at the interface of grammar and lexicon, this study posited increased input and output availability as a major causal variable behind language acquisition in the SA context. However, more research is needed to tease out how input and output opportunities come about, not only in terms of their sheer number, but also by analyzing the pedagogical and curricular framework of the SA experience. In the same way that the FLC context should be designed to maximize opportunities for SLA, only SA programs that provide L2 learners with multiple language-learning avenues will fulfill their pedagogical mission. In this respect, Maxim (2004) urges us to recognize that "for study abroad programs to support collegiate advanced language learning, they would need to provide. . . explicit exposure to public genres and secondary discourses" (p. 185) instead of privileging a naturalistic experience to language acquisition. With an increasing number of American students studying abroad, SA is becoming part and parcel of the foreign language and culture curriculum and does require renewed theoretical foundations (Wilkinson, 2005). Although studies investigating the connection between program duration and SA intercultural learning outcomes suggest that longer is better (Dwyer, 2004; Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004; Vande Berg, Balkcum, Scheid, & Whalen, 2004), findings about grammar acquisition in the SA context are more tentative and suggest that further horizontal and vertical articulation is needed in order to hone learners' language skills at home and abroad.

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Notes

1. See *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 9, 2001, <http://chronicle.com/free/v47/i26/26a01401.htm>
2. A control group remaining at the home institution of the participants could not be selected to compare gains because fifth-semester participants from the institution under study usually make the choice to go abroad, leaving the investigator with no truly comparable stay-home group with a similar language experience.
3. The participants in the Year and Semester groups did not take the tests simultaneously. The Year participants were tested between September 2002 and June 2003. The Semester participants were tested between September 2003 and January 2004. Many thanks to my colleagues, Sylvie Davidson and Sylvie Toux, for supervising the procedure, and to Heng Liu for her statistical advice.
4. Slabakova and Montrul (2002), who designed the original aspectual judgment test in Spanish, noted that activity verbs yielded illogical constructions and did not fit the design of the test.

5. Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds (1995) rated that acquisition of tense and aspect morphology could be assessed when learners reached 80% of appropriate use of past tense morphology in context.
6. In English, the imperfective is available both in the past and the present because of progressive verb forms. In addition, the use of the imperfective in English does not correspond exactly to the use of the French *imparfait*, a discrepancy that English learners of French also have a hard time evaluating appropriately.
7. In other words, one cannot teach what learners cannot process. This leads to the conclusion that in any theory of instructed SLA, it is important to explore how and to what extent the complexity of a linguistic feature affects acquisitional stages.
8. See Appendix 1.

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Appendix 1

Referential Task and Input Flooding on the *Imparfait* with Achievement Verbs

Example 1

Directions: *The United States of the 19th century was different in many ways from the United States of today. Below you will find 19 statements about 19th-century America. Based on your knowledge of American social history, decide whether each statement is true (T) or false (F) and circle the appropriate letter. If you do not know, or can't decide, please circle (?). A vocabulary list is provided below. Once you have completed this task, compare your answers with a partner. Then, write together a series of 10 statements based on our readings of Les Misérables and that can apply to the social context of France in the 19th century.*

Au 19ème siècle, aux Etats-Unis...

1. Les enfants **naissaient** en plus grand nombre qu'aujourd'hui.
T F?
2. Les gens **mouraient** plus jeunes que maintenant.
T F?
3. Les femmes **gagnaient** le même salaire que les hommes.
T F?
4. Les magasins **fermaient** le dimanche.
T F?
5. Les locomotives à vapeur* **explosaient** facilement, et ces explosions **tuaient** beaucoup de passagers.*
T F?
6. Les ouvriers* **perdaient** facilement leur travail.
T F?
7. Les professeurs **frappaient** les étudiants.
T F?
8. Les jeunes filles **sortaient** seules le soir.
T F?
9. Les immigrants **entraient** aux Etats-Unis par Ellis Island.
T F?
10. Les gens **achetaient** peu de vêtements.
T F?
11. Les gens **jetaient** leurs ordures* dans la rue.
T F?
12. Le gouvernement **donnait** de l'argent aux pionniers* pour s'installer dans l'Ouest des Etats-Unis.
T F?
13. Les enfants **partaient** de leur famille très jeunes pour apprendre un métier*.
T F?
14. La plupart des immigrants **venaient** en masse à New York.
T F?
15. Les femmes **votaient**.
T F?

16. Les gens **prenaient** des congés payés*.
T F?
17. Les chasseurs* **massacraient** les buffles* d'Amérique.
T F?
18. Les Américains ne **payaient** pas d'impôts.*
T F?
19. L'esclavage* **frappait*** la communauté noire-américaine.
T F?

Vocabulary List (in alphabetical order):

Buffle (M)	buffalo
Chasseur (M)	hunter
Congés payés (M pl.)	paid vacation
Esclavage (M)	slavery
Frapper	(in this context) to burden
Impôts (M)	taxes
Locomotive (F)	steam engine
Métier (M)	trade/profession
Naître (V)	to be born
Ordure (F)	trash
Passager (M)	passenger
Pionnier (M)	pioneer

Affective Task and Input Flooding on the *Imparfait* with Achievement Verbs

Example 2

Directions: Please read the text below. Then read the statements below and circle your answers whether you agree or disagree with the statements.

“C'est la révolution culturelle des années 60 qui affaiblit * les valeurs* morales des Etats-Unis d'aujourd'hui. Avant cette révolution, les gens ne **divorçaient** pas. La cellule familiale* n'**exploitait** pas! Les jeunes gens ne **se rebellaient** pas contre la guerre et ils n'**abandonnaient** pas leurs valeurs morales pour aller à des festivals décadents comme Woodstock! Ils ne **tombaient** pas dans le piège* de la drogue*! Ah oui! Je regrette le temps des années 50!”

- | | | |
|--|----------|--------------|
| 1. L'Amérique d'aujourd'hui a moins de valeurs morales que l'Amérique des années 50. | D'accord | Pas d'accord |
| 2. La drogue frappait moins les jeunes dans les années 50 | D'accord | Pas d'accord |
| 3. Les jeunes trouvaient plus un sens de patriotisme dans leur vie dans les années 50 que maintenant. | D'accord | Pas d'accord |
| 4. Le divorce frappait moins les familles dans les années 50. | D'accord | Pas d'accord |
| 5. J'ai la nostalgie des années 50. | D'accord | Pas d'accord |

Vocabulary List (in alphabetical order):

Affaiblir	to weaken
Cellule familiale(F)	family unit
Drogue (F)	drugs
Piège (M)	trap
Valeurs (F pl)	values

Listening Task and Input Flooding

Example 3

Directions: (1) *You will hear three times a passage inspired by the book *Une Soupe aux herbes sauvages* by French author Emilie Carles, who lived a long life spanning almost a century (1900–1983) in a remote village in the French Alps as a schoolteacher. She tells us about how she got herself an education at a time when people who lived in rural areas could barely read and write and started working in the fields as early as 6 years old. BEFORE listening to the passage, please read the sentences listed below. When you have completed your reading, listen to the text and for each sentence fill in the blanks, using only one word for each blank space.*

1. Les parents d'Emilie ne **gagnaient** rien à la faire travailler à la _____ .
2. Emilie se **blessait** souvent pendant la _____ .
3. Les paysans n'**achetaient** pas de médicaments par _____ .
4. Le père d'Emilie **trouvait** sa fille trop petite, trop _____, trop rêveuse.
5. La famille d'Emilie **partait** au travail au _____ du jour.
6. La solitude **forçait** Emilie à imaginer comment _____ ses journées.
7. Les parents d'Emilie **cachaient** leur unique livre derrière le _____.
8. Emilie **mourait** de savoir les _____ lettres de l'alphabet.
9. Le professeur du village **achetait** son _____ à la ferme des parents d'Emilie.
10. Le père d'Emilie ne **perdait** jamais son _____ - _____ .

2. *You may now read the text transcript below and check your answers. You will also find a vocabulary list below the text transcript.*

Transcript

... Pour un paysan,* la famille c'est sa richesse, son patrimoine*. Et plus la famille est grande, plus il faut la nourrir, alors plus les enfants doivent participer au travail. On oublie aussi qu'à mon époque, les enfants **mouraient** si souvent par chez nous. Un jour ils **tombaient** malades et la maladie les **emportait** rapidement. Les paysans n'**achetaient** pas de médicaments par ignorance, pas nécessairement par manque d'argent. Mais le travail, lui, il ne s'**arrêtait** pas, même si la tristesse **brisait** le coeur des mères.

Le problème de mes parents, c'est qu'ils ne **gagnaient** rien à me faire travailler à la ferme. Mon père me **trouvait** trop petite, trop maigre, trop rêveuse. Pour la moisson* par exemple, je me **blessais** souvent à cause de la fatigue. Alors quand il **partait** dans les champs au point* du jour, il m'**ordonnait** de rester à la maison et de m'occuper de ma petite soeur. Ma mère et les 5 autres enfants **venaient** avec lui et **rentraient** au coucher du soleil.

Mais mon destin commence justement par cette interdiction de mon père, parce que ma solitude me forçait à imaginer comment remplir mes journées. J'inventais des jeux pour ma petite soeur. Je volais l'unique livre illustré de mes parents qu'ils cachaient derrière le bureau et je nommais pour elle les images. Mais je mourais de savoir les mystérieuses lettres de l'alphabet. Alors, quand le professeur du village s'arrêtait pour acheter son lait à notre ferme, je lui demandais toutes sortes de choses. Un jour, très fière de moi, j'écris mon nom devant mon père, et puis le nom de mes parents et de mes frères et soeurs. Lui qui ne perdait jamais son sang-froid*, je le vois qui prend mon bout de papier et se met à pleurer de joie! Je le surprenais toujours, mais pas à ce point! Et maintenant vous voyez, je suis vieille, et je reste la seule institutrice* du village, mais il n'y a plus d'enfants car tout le monde habite la ville.

Vocabulary List (in alphabetical order):

Institutrice (F)	schoolteacher
Maladie (F)	disease
Maigre (adj)	skinny
Même si	even though
Moisson (F)	harvest
Ordonner	to order sb. to do sthg
Patrimoine (M)	In this context, financial assets
Point du jour (M)	sunrise
Sang froid (M)	countenance/cool